

I or T Leadership

Participating in a Leadership Program attended by 92 participants from 26 countries with 45 speakers coming from diverse fields ranging from Corporate Captains to Musician to Sports Coach to Neurologist to Sculptor Artist to Academic Dons has been an experience and this is an attempt to share my learnings with larger audience.

Since two weeks knowledge summed up in one lot would be torture for me as well as reader, I intend to initiate a series, this being its first episode, more for inviting engaging dialogue than simple sermons.

As usual, **Disclaimer**, it is not an exhaustive list and not in order of priority for dos or don'ts. The ideas and references belong to anyone but me and I have thanked to and got permission from each one personally to share with anyone who cares to read.

Use it as it suits you and comment / share your experiences / observations, as you deem appropriate.

Dive deep before you look around

Coming from a long time and holding CEO of a diversified Fortune 100 company, one better pays attention to. The message is loud and clear, develop deep functional expertise before one aspire to be even a manager, not to talk of a leader. People respect for your knowledge, position only gets you authority that is more feared than appreciated.

In an uncertain and chaotic world of today, there is no escaping from getting your hands dirty. Authenticity is a premium virtue that one looks upto and it comes when you have "been there, done that" and learned tricks hard way. Unfortunately, there is no short cut, not as yet at least. Evidence galore and diversified, from Henry Ford to Sachin Tendulkar, Nelson Mandela to Amitabh Bachchan, John D. Rockefeller to Napoleon Bonaparte; the list is endless and timeless but the common trait is doing all what it takes to achieve what one aims to with perseverance, passion and purpose.

In an age of stakeholders and regulators activism, ruthless investors and continuous & continual innovation, functional expertise assumes further significance and importance since:

- Deep knowledge is necessary to make sense of seemingly endless piles of data that is available at a click of the mouse.
- With Speed of Decision Making assuming critical dimension differentiating between success and failure, there is little room, if any, for guess work.
- With business paradigms shifting in multiple orbits, simultaneously, at ever increasing speed and with potential tectonic consequences, Capability, Competence, Confidence & Courage form a necessary gear to weather the ongoing storms which come from deep level of expertise.
- Since the market and competition for most of the products and services is global and democratic; place, size and shape agnostic, should the core skills not be world class?

While corporates and governments are now promoting **T Leadership**, one must remember that **I** comes before **T** in alphabet and it is applicable for leadership as well and vertical bar is longer than horizontal one in **T** signifying the importance of competence over coverage.

In the next episode, I shall cover "**Humility is no longer a choice – we ignored it when we could**"

Till then, look forward for your thoughts & comments, brutal as these may (should) be.