

COST OF POOR LEADERSHIP

by

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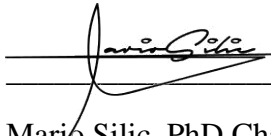
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## **Dedications**

Dedicated to all the wonderful people who helped me on my journey of attempting to be a better leader.

To all my team members, peers and leaders who taught me everything about leadership, a wholehearted thank you.

This research is an attempt to help organizations and aspiring leaders achieve success in their journey as leaders and to provide some insights on how to be a better leader.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would not have been able to do this without all the help, support and trust my team members had in me as their leader throughout my career.

All the success we enjoyed together is because of each of one of you, and wherever we fell short maybe i did not do a good enough job.

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## SUMMARY OF THE THESIS

- CONTRIBUTION TO THE CURRENT STATE OF KNOWLEDGE
- THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION
- METHODOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTION
- OUTLINE OF THE THESIS
- THEORETICAL APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY
- RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION
- MAIN FINDINGS
- STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS
- AUTHOR BIO

### **Contribution to the current state of knowledge.**

Leadership is not for everyone. Before you make anyone a leader the first and foremost question that needs to be asked is if the person is passionate, capable and has an intrinsic desire to inspire others to become great and do great things for the organization.

A wrong decision at this stage goes on to impact the organization in loss of revenue, customers, employee engagement and profitability. *Most people understand that subpar leaders/managers have a negative impact on the organization. However, when you look at how big the cost of poor leadership really is, then you begin to re-examine the importance of leadership within the company.* Poor leadership is undoubtedly one of the main potential factor that can lead an organization to failure . A consistently successful business is more likely to have capable leaders who are able to steer the organization towards the desired goals, vision and mission.

*Leaders influence a variety of outcomes such as customer satisfaction, sales, revenue, productivity, employee satisfaction and employee retention. Conversely, poor leadership can have a negative impact on all the above, lack of growth in business can also have further impact to economy, loss of jobs and livelihood.*

Poor leadership can be defined as leadership style, intents, actions that are pushing an organization away from realizing the organizations goals, mission and vision. Bad managers cost businesses billions of dollars each year and having too many of them can bring down a company. The only defense against this problem is a good offense, because when companies get these decisions wrong, nothing fixes it.

Leadership development is an area which has the potential but is not able to solve the crisis of poor leadership in most organizations. Leadership development programs do not yield immediate results, there is a lack of credible leadership development programs,



there is no time and effort factored in for developing leaders. This results in substandard leaders across the leadership hierarchy of the organization.

Finally, an important aspect in this cycle is lack of contribution from academia. Schools and colleges do not have a concept of imbuing leadership skills and traits in students as part of their graduation curriculum, this means that organizations and business have the task of identifying first time managers in an environment where all entry level employees are only technically qualified and do not possess any leadership skills.

Through a combination of research, studies and qualitative surveys, this research attempts to address Cost Of Poor Leadership and provides a solution framework for resolution and for creating a steady pipeline of successful business leaders.

Chapter I pages 8 to 13 of the thesis provides more details.

### **Theoretical contribution**

Gallup CEO Clifton J (Gallup, 2013) famously wrote in the summary accompanying his organization's 2013 State of The American Workplace employee engagement study 'The single biggest decision you make in your job-bigger than all the rest is who you name manager. When you name the wrong person manager, nothing fixes that bad decision. Not compensation, not benefits nothing'.

'People leave managers, not companies' (McCrae, 2020).

Poor leadership practices cost companies millions of dollars each year by negatively impacting employee retention, customer satisfaction and overall employee productivity. Gallup (Hartner and Rigoni, 2016) finds that companies fail to choose the candidate with the right talent for the job 82% of the time. Conventional selection processes are a big contributor to inefficiency in management practices; they apply little science or research to find the right person for the managerial role.

Most managers believe they were hired for their current role because of their success in a previous non-managerial role or their tenure in their company or field (Beck and Harter, 2014). The needs of a first time manager are very unique and this is a crucial aspect that gets missed out by several organizations (Gentry, Logan and Tonidandel, 2014). While the requirement of supervising maybe accomplished by placing people in managerial positions, the fact is these are not necessarily leaders who are capable to take the organization forward (Mundet, Laureiro Martinez and Osterchrist, 2021).

Insights compiled in Mercer|Mettl 'Leadership Development Trends 2019' report were based on a survey of over five hundred leadership experts including CXOs, leadership coaches and organization development specialists. The survey revealed that around 80 percent of the organizations are currently facing a leadership talent shortage. (Metzl, 2019). As individuals reach higher levels of roles and responsibilities, there is a real need to develop additional skills and capabilities.

With higher roles and responsibilities higher the expectations (Terblanche, Albertyn and Van Coller-Peter, 2018). The critical aspect however is that along with developing and providing new leaders at various levels of hierarchy, it is important to ensure that these are good leaders. We don't need more leaders, We need more good Leaders (Newstead *et al.*, 2019).

According to a Deloitte insights study (Stockton, 2014) the leadership gap is the biggest talent challenge that organizations are facing around the world. 86 % of companies are calling it important or urgent, and an astounding 85 % of executives report that they are not confident in their leadership pipelines. This talent shortage is not due to lack of skills in employees. Instead, they lack the necessary training to transform into effective leaders. The study finds that 61% of companies do not offer any leadership training, while 66 % say they are weak in developing leadership skills among millennials.

The study by Stockton H for Deloitte insights (Stockton, 2014) finds that the dearth of leadership training has a negative effect on organizations. The study found that the average company forfeits more than \$1 million annually in untapped potential and loses up to 50 percent of productivity because of subpar leadership practices. High-impact companies in the United States spend more than \$3,500 per person each year to develop mid-level leaders and over \$10,000 to develop senior leaders (Stockton, 2014).

Forbes in a series of articles states that by 2025 millennials will comprise 75% of the workforce and 65% of millennial leaders feel unprepared for their leadership role and 87% of companies say they don't do an excellent job developing leaders at all levels (Friedman, 2019). Good leaders are hard for companies to find these days. A leadership shortage is upon us, as companies struggle to find the right entry-level employees who can step-up as leaders for their organizations going forward. Along with the quantity, the quality of leaders is critical to enable and drive the success and growth of business (Segal Edward, 2021).

It's important to note especially in the current economic climate that finding great managers doesn't depend on market conditions or the current labor force. Large companies have approximately one manager for every 10 employees, and Gallup finds that one in 10 people possess the inherent talent to manage. When you do the math, it's likely that someone on each team has the talent to lead but chances are, it's not the manager. More than likely, it's an employee with high managerial potential waiting to be discovered (Edmondson, 2011).

Globally organizations are facing a shortage of leaders across the hierarchy. Good leaders are needed not just at the entry level, the shortage of leaders exists upto the CEO levels (Carpenter *et al.*, 2019).

Chapter II pages 14 to 30 of the thesis covers literature review.

## **Theoretical approach and methodology**

The two primary reasons behind poor leadership are due to the fact that leaders have behavioral issues and leaders may simply lack appropriate leadership skills (Ibrahim and Daniel, 2019). Research indicates that half of all senior external hires in organizations fail within the first 18 months causing significant costs and other related impact (Church, 2014). Learning from bad leadership (Rababah, 2015).

It is, however, possible with committed efforts to alter individuals' personality or abilities after reviewing and analyzing results from a feedback mechanism or a feedback tool. It is also possible for individuals to build a deeper understanding of their preferences, desires and passion and the relevant implications of these.

The need of the hour for corporates is to invest in a very robust organization development team who are capable of identifying potential and also enable these high potential employees to take on leadership roles. (Fulmer, Stumpf and Bleak, 2009). A talent management strategy can ensure that organizations can create a self-sufficient pipeline of leadership talent and pool to cater to business growth and replenishment of leaders. This will help organizations to not only build their own steady pipeline of successful leaders but will also help to inculcate leadership aspects into top talents much before than they are promoted to leadership levels and roles (Mabey, 2013).

Research shows a lack of contribution from schools in producing a pipeline of students who can take on prime leadership positions early in their career. Academia is focusing only on theoretical concepts of management and does not have a curriculum for leadership concepts and traits to be inculcated in students early on. The criticisms on academia being unable to produce pass outs with more than just technical capabilities is coming not just from students, employers, and the media, but also from deans of some of the most prestigious business schools. Chapter II of the thesis has more details.

### **Outline of the thesis.**

Qualitative research involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data such as text, emails, audio, video through interviews and surveys. The objective is to understand concepts, opinions, experiences to gather in-depth insights into a problem and generate new ideas. Qualitative research can be in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and observations. A good method of a qualitative research would be interviews. Interviews can be structured, semi-structured or un-structured.

For the area of research, my target audience are senior leaders of an organization, leaders who are classified as successful by their organization and leaders who could not succeed as per the norms established. I am including academia as a key stakeholder since colleges have a large stake in the quality of employable graduates.

#### Key participants for interviews considering the size and scope of the research :-

1. Corporate leaders - Senior Vice-presidents, VPs, General Manager levels.
2. Leaders who were classified as successful - Senior Manager, Director levels.
3. Employees who were made leaders but were unsuccessful in their leadership role.
4. Academia stakeholders- Professors, Teachers, Campus placement executives.

There was two phases to the qualitative research :-

- The first phase was collecting responses from a semi-structured questionnaire.
- The second phase was having a brainstorming session on the responses.

Chapter III pages 34 to 43 of the thesis covers this section.

Questionnaires can be found in the thesis document under annexure sections.

#### **Methodological contributions**

Text mining of results, verbatim feedback, direct and comparative analysis from the research survey and brainstorming provided results which were conclusive.

93% of the successful leaders that were surveyed had participated in leadership trainings before they took on the role of a leader. In comparison, 80% of the unsuccessful leaders stated that they did not have any form of leadership training before they took on the role of a leader.

Successful leaders identified skills such as empathy, trust and culture as some of the top skills and behaviors that helped them succeed as a leader. Successful leaders identified values, culture, ethics and trust as the key reasons for their success. Leadership Ethics (empathy, humbleness, transparency, fair, unbiased approach, trust, patience, integrity) along with communication style led the charts for successful leaders.

A deep dive of the promotion process identified competency and skill as the top skills needed for promotion followed by a desire to lead. Coaching, mentoring led the charts followed by continuous learning and development programs.

100% of academia survey participants were in agreement that there would be benefit from introducing leadership concepts in their curriculum. They also felt that introduction of leadership training programs in the curriculum would be highly beneficial especially in honing student skillsets.

Chapter IV Results pages 44 to 76 of the thesis.

### **Research contributions**

This research was meant to delve into a very vast area with objective and subjective concepts, tangible and intangible outputs. While the thesis provides several key insights the below five are the researchers unique suggestions. From the resultant learning listed below are five impactful concepts, these are unique novel concepts and are combination of tried and tested practices.

I am providing five *unique novel* methods to help improve the area of knowledge.

### 1. Employee Lifecycle

Employee lifecycle starts from hiring to separation of an employee in an organisation. In our context of leadership this lifecycle becomes crucial. To address the issue of poor leadership the entire employee lifecycle has to be optimised to make it seamless, efficient and effective. This will result in high performing individuals and teams, leads to nurturing best in class leaders.

Page 161 in the thesis has more details.

### 2. Culture Panel.

A recommendation is for organizations to create 'Culture Panels'. A culture panel is a group of employees who are trained to identify cultural fitment through a series of questions and activities. A culture panel normally consists of employees at various levels and roles, and they are empowered to interview any hires at all levels. The most important aspect is that the organization should be heavily invested in this idea, the panel should be empowered and their decision should be binding and not subject to review and overturned. This innovative approach can really help to bring in the right cultural fitment into the organization.

Culture panel details can be found on Page 108 of the thesis.

### 3. Leader as a Coach.

In the new age of global economy, leading teams and performing a leadership role is getting more complex. Traditional leadership styles are not able to overcome leadership challenges in this new age global business with diverse and complex workforce and challenging business environment.

In these circumstances, I recommend a leadership style called 'Leader as a Coach'.

The fundamental principle in this style of leadership is a leader wearing the hat of a coach creates an environment of psychological safety which is the next level of trust.

Coaching leadership style creates positive environment, empowered employees, higher levels of engagement and retention, creativity, strategic thinking. Innovation thrives. To address the challenges of poor leadership and to build an organization for future, adopting a Coaching style of leadership would certainly help leaders and organizations. Leader as a coach details can be found on page 152 of the thesis.

I had the pleasure of co-publishing with Dr. Anna Provodnikova my article on Leadership Styles in IBIS Journal. Available at <https://gbis.ch/index.php/gbis/article/view/45> .

#### 4. OKRs and BSC.

The old adage of what gets measured gets done is true, but more important is what has to be measured, why is it important and how will it be measured and what happens if it is not met defines the success of leaders and organizations.

The suggestion from this researcher is to use OKRs and Balanced scorecard together. Best in class leadership ensures that organizations have a vision, mission, purpose which focusses on the ‘what’ ‘how’ and ‘why’. Using OKR and BSC together, leaders are able to transition the purpose and vision to goals and cascade those goals across every individual employee of the organization. Culture, values and principles flourish and remain the core foundation of the organization.

OKR is Objective and Key Results, they are the individual goals and aspirations, they are the building blocks for an organization. Balanced Scorecard or BSC comprises of four key elements - Financial, customer, internal process, and capacity. The four steps of a BSC are translating the vision into operational goals, communicating the vision and link it to individual performance, business planning, feedback and learning. Therefore combining both OKRs and BSC is a unique and novel mechanism to convert strategy to execution cycles. Creates impactful performance and high performing leaders, build leadership and organizational success. Page 172 to 179 has details on this novel concept.



## 5. PPCP framework

PPCP framework stands for People, Performance, Customer and Profits. The basis of my framework is if an organization takes care of its People they will Perform to their Customers satisfaction which in turn will lead to Profits.

In the PPCP method, I envisage a framework with a primary focus on people, caring for people means people are empowered and enabled to discharge their duties in a timely manner. Employee satisfaction is paramount in this model, leads to a culture of development and learning, coaching and mentoring, feedback, feedforward and growth of employees. In such an environment it is common to notice high employee engagement and satisfaction, there is ownership and accountability to all outcomes and employees strive to go over and beyond expectations.

Customer expectations being met or not met are a natural outcome of organizational performance, therefore a framework which provides an environment of high performance standards results in customer satisfaction. A satisfied customer is an asset to an organization, a satisfied customer also is a reference to the organizations capability and leads to more business opportunity both from existing business and new business opportunity.

Profits are what makes an organization sustain, grow and scale. An outcome of high people engagement, exceeding performance standards, high levels of customer satisfaction leads to higher revenue and profits.

A culture of focusing on the four pillars of People, Performance, Customer and Profits in that order of priority ensures high level of operational excellence. Successful leadership outcomes will enable a PPCP framework and implementation of the framework will enable outstanding leadership.

More details on the PPCP framework can be found in page 180 of the thesis.

## **Main findings**

This research suggests that the impact of leadership is on people, process, customers, cost and revenue, scale, jobs and livelihood and expands into the community and economy of the state. So the problem is not limited to just any one area, the consequences are far and wide. Similarly the positive impact of good leadership also stretches far and wide. While leadership is debated and discussed like no other topic, the value and importance or acting on the need to create good leaders is limited.

There have been research conducted in some of those areas which are attributed to leadership. Cost of poor quality (Mahmood *et al.*, 2014), cost of employee turnover (Subramony and Holtom, 2012), cost of poor customer satisfaction (Piriyathanalai and Muenjohn, 2012) cost of employee dissatisfaction (Ahmad *et al.*, 2014) are some of the common research topics that are available and the literature review identified these and the findings.

Interestingly, items such as cost of poor quality and cost of poor customer satisfaction are also attributed to poor leadership practices. However, when you look at these definitions it does not imply leadership related concerns though the findings state that capable and effective leadership could have prevented these costs from occurring. In comparison, cost of employee turnover and cost of employee dissatisfaction at the outset feels like leadership cause and effect. The research done into these areas proves that the reason for these failure points was poor leadership.

While there are formula and calculation recommended to measure these failure points, the fact remains that there is subjectivity in these measurements. For example- cost of poor quality has several measurement formula, though there are no standard and prescribed method the common method is as follows:- ‘Cost of Poor Quality = Cost of External Factors + Cost of Internal Factors’.

The challenge with the above formula is that though there are quantified numbers for internal and external factors these are all tangible factors. Such as the cost of a product or cost of a returned product due to poor quality, cost of creating or building the product and so on. Intangible factors such as the impact of the poor quality on the sentiment of a buyer or the negative feedback that the poor quality will cause for future sales, the impact of the poor quality on the morale of employees who worked on it and so on are all intangibles that cannot be measured in these standard cost assumptions. In some cases there is a percentage allocated as possible costs within the formula however the concern is that this is an assumption since there is no scientific method to determine the extent of the intangible cost and its implications. Cost of poor quality was a challenge for the manufacturing industry which has been in business the longest however in spite of this there is no one single standard method to arrive at an objective measurement for this failure point. Interestingly though there seems to be consensus that leadership failure contributes to poor quality.

From the findings on Cost of employee turnover, the most commonly used method of measurement was to take the 1. vacant position coverage cost plus 2. the cost to fill the vacant position plus 3. onboarding cost and the 4. productivity ramp up cost. To arrive at the final cost the totals can be annualized with the number of employees lost in a twelve month period against the total employees that were available in the same group at the beginning of the cycle. As you can see the formula itself is complex, challenging and constantly changing with numbers which are impacted by internal and external conditions. Even after arriving at the above costs, there are several factors that are missing such as the impact to performance and quality due to the employee leaving the organization, employee morale in the group, the employees feedback to the outside hiring market on reasons to leave and so on are all factors arising out of turnover.

There are several intangibles that are hard to determine and measure. To make it easier some organizations use a standard cost of 30 percentage of an entry level employees base salary as cost of employee turnover and this could go as high as 150 percentage for a senior level executive. This again is an assumptive way of calculating cost of employee turnover. Cost of employee turnover which has been researched and debated for decades does not have one standard method of measurement depicts the complex nature of organizations and the impact of leadership on all aspects of the business.

Cost of low employee morale or reduced customer satisfaction can be given a certain value to be measured, however similar to the other costs associated with poor leadership, there are factors which will be either assumption based allocation or could be totally not considered for calculation.

Each failure point such as cost of employee turnover, cost of poor customer satisfaction, cost of poor quality, cost of employee dissatisfaction and many other such failure points all arising out of poor leadership has both tangible and intangible impacts. Even within the possible factors that are considered for measurement, there is so much ambiguity and subjectivity making the reported cost not fully complete. Each of these failure points do not have a standard all-inclusive method of calculation.

If poor leadership impacts all areas of an organization and there are several failure points that are caused due to poor leadership and if each of these failure points do not have a complete objective method of calculation then arriving at the total cost of poor leadership is impossible. Therefore it is clear that poor leadership cannot have a direct dollar amount attached to it. It cannot be entirely measured as a single absolute unit. It is a combination of all failure points in an employee lifecycle and each failure point has tangible and intangible factors. Each resultant tangible factors could be potentially measured in some cases but fact is that even tangibles cannot be completely accounted

for in each failure calculations. Further to add to this overwhelming situation there are intangible costs and implications which cannot be measured.

There are various aspects in the business cycle which can be impacted and attributed to poor leadership for which some specific costs can be attached however the sum total of all the negative impact due to poor leadership is an infinite value. The best approach for an organization is to prevent poor leadership from creeping in.

The first step to fixing a problem is to identify and acknowledge the problem.. The survey and feedback from stakeholders and subject matter experts corroborated the findings from the literature review. An outcome from the survey of stakeholders and subject matter experts was their insights and solutions to the problems that existed. Findings from the surveys and the results analyzed assisted the direction of the solution framework. The way forward for all concerned as an outcome from this research is to utilize the findings from the research and tap into the solution framework and incorporate it into the operational mechanism. The challenges and situations in each organization will be unique, while some organizations may need to use the entire solution framework, some may need only certain parts of the solution.

Solution to poor leadership is not about focusing on the individual but has to be a holistic view on what led to the individual becoming a poor leader. Poor leadership is a symptom of a larger problem, therefore the problem has to be identified and addressed. The root cause has to be eliminated otherwise the problem will persist causing irreparable damage. There could be specific cases of individual incompetence, poor behavior, inappropriate culture and disjointed values but in those cases the organizations systems and process should be capable to identify these and either correct or prevent the individual from actually reaching a position of leadership.

Poor leadership happens due to a combination of reasons as evidenced in this research. Fixing poor leadership after it has occurred is only a temporary cure with substantial costs attached, implications have already been incurred.

Poor leadership has to be prevented. Prevention is better than cure.

The executives and leadership team of an organization has the responsibility of ensuring that a) good leaders are leading teams b) adequate leadership pipeline is available c) succession planning is a well-defined process d) learning and development function is capable and adequately staffed e) policies and processes that help enable a learning culture of empowerment and development. This is after values, vision, purpose are converted to organizational plan and strategy.

### **Structure of the thesis**

The thesis is organized into 6 chapters. Each chapter has sub sections or parts which together sum up the objective and agenda of the chapter.

Chapter I is the Introduction to the thesis and 5 sub-sections. Research problem, Purpose of research, Significance of the study and Research purpose.

Chapter II covers Review of Literature. Theoretical framework, Theory of reasoned action, Human society theory.

Chapter III is Methodology and 12 sub-sections. Overview of the research problem, Operationalization of theoretical constructs, Research purpose, questions and design, Population and sample, Participant selection, Instrumentation, Data collection procedures and analysis, Research design limitations and Conclusions.

Chapter IV is Results with 6 subsections with results from the qualitative survey.

Chapter V is Discussion with 8 sub sections on findings and suggestions.

Chapter VI has Summary, Implications, Recommendations.

In the thesis there are a total of 21 graphical representations. There are 6 Appendices.

## **Author Bio**

Ramesh Kumar is a passionate student of leadership.

Ramesh has over 25 years of professional experience of which more than two decades has been at various leadership roles. Ramesh has been at the senior executive level for several years leading and transforming leaders and business into growth mode. He has led global teams of more than 5000 people and has been a leader to several Vice-Presidents and Directors. Ramesh has led business portfolios across technology, services and products with large revenue and P&L. Known and regarded for his customer advocacy, he has built great relationships with fortune 500 executives globally.

Ramesh is a Post-Graduate in Human Resources and Marketing, working towards a Doctorate in Business Administration with specialization on Leadership. He is a Marshall Goldsmith Certified Leadership and Organization Coach, Ramesh was personally coached and certified as Executive Coach by John Mattone. He is a Professional Certified Coach ( PCC ) from the International Coaching Federation ( ICF ). Ramesh is DiSC Certified Partner, Emotional Intelligence Certified Coach and NLP Certified Coach Practitioner. Six Sigma, Lean and COPC certified practitioner.

Ramesh is a guest lecturer at leadership conclaves and seminars. He is a regular speaker at many colleges and universities addressing students on various leadership topics and preparing them for their future corporate careers. Ramesh is an avid reader and writer, very well regarded for his leadership articles and blogs. A peoples leader and a successful corporate executive, Ramesh has a track record of grooming and developing many first time leaders to several senior executives . An optimist, coach, mentor and advisor, Ramesh is focused on enabling organizations and leaders become more successful by better strategy and execution with a people first approach.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/ramesh-kumar-2669b15/> .

## COST OF POOR LEADERSHIP

Directed by Dr. ANNA PROVODNIKOVA

### ABSTRACT

Leadership is not for everyone. Before you make anyone a leader the first and foremost question that needs to be asked is if the person is passionate, capable and has an intrinsic desire to inspire others to become great and do great things for the organization.

A wrong decision at this stage goes on to impact the organization in loss of revenue, customers, employee engagement and profitability. Most people understand that subpar leaders/managers have a negative impact on the organization. However, when you look at how big the cost of poor leadership really is, then you begin to re-examine the importance of leadership within the company.

Poor leadership is undoubtedly one of the main potential factor that can lead an organization to failure. A consistently successful business is more likely to have capable leaders who are able to steer the organization towards the desired goals, vision and mission. Shortage and scarcity of good leaders who can succeed consistently across the business and organizational hierarchy is real. From entry level leaders to the top of the hierarchy there is a scarcity of good leaders. This scarcity and shortage of capable leaders who can lead organizations to success will only increase in the coming days, months and years and will continue to be a bottleneck for growth of businesses.

Through a combination of research, studies and qualitative surveys, this research will attempt to address the Cost Of Poor Leadership and also provide a solution framework for creating a steady pipeline of successful business leaders.



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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

### **1.1 Introduction**

Leaders and leadership have been one of the most widely discussed topics in the corporate world. The impact (positive or negative) that leaders have on business is considered the differentiator to the extent of success or failure of an organization.

Leaders influence a variety of outcomes such as customer satisfaction, sales, revenue, productivity, employee satisfaction and employee retention. All of these collectively leads to customer loyalty, innovation, ultimately leading to higher revenues and profits. Conversely, poor leadership can have a negative impact on all the above, lack of growth in business can also have further impact to economy, loss of jobs and livelihood.

Symptoms of poor leadership are low employee engagement, high employee turnover, consistently not meeting the company goals, poor customer loyalty, low customer retention, low employee satisfaction and so on.

Most people understand that subpar leaders/managers have a negative impact on the organization. However, when you look at how big the cost of poor leadership really is, then you begin to re-examine the importance of leadership within the company.

A consistently successful business is more likely to have capable leaders who are able to steer the employees of the organization towards the desired goals, vision and mission.

Poor leadership is undoubtedly one of the main potential factor that can lead an organization to failure. Poor leadership can therefore be defined as leadership style, intents, actions that are pushing an organization away from realizing the organizations goals, mission and vision.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

Leadership is a very common and relatively simple and easy topic for people to talk about. Everyone seems to know something about it and most agree it's important for organizational success. But when it gets right down to basics and brass tacks, rubber meets the road, business leaders find it making the case to actually invest in leadership become much more difficult. This is due to the fact that justifying a return on investment is difficult or as a matter of fact the outcome is not immediate. There are always other priorities for businesses which seem immediate as compared to developing leaders.

Leadership consists of intangible aspects and as part of this reason there is no specific area in a business case or a profit and loss statement that we can allocate leadership as an item. Therefore, the hesitation amongst businesses and leaders in allocating budgets to build better leadership. However there is plenty of research that emphasizes that leadership has an all-round impact on most items in a balance sheet of a business. By digging into leadership literature and research and analyzing business impacts and outcomes it is in fact possible to assign costs of failed leadership.

Since the overall negative impact and consequences could be severe therefore it is wiser to plan and invest in a good leadership pipeline.

If you are a leader who does not pay much attention to the quality of your leadership and that of your team, the evidence from this research will prove that the eventual poor results, lack of consistency, not realizing full potential and so on will convince you to invest wisely in leaders and leadership.

A common practice in an organization is to identify the top talent through achievement of KPI OR metrics and promote them as managers. More often than not, most of these people who get promoted are trained in systems and tools to manage, however they are not trained or clued into leadership components such as building trust,

culture, motivation, listening. Infact most first time managers believe they were promoted due to their technical skills. The decision makers in this process too acknowledge this.

This haphazard mechanism results in substandard quality of supervisors, meaning, that most of them do not possess the requisite capabilities to become successful as leaders. This process of promoting people as managers purely based on their technical and job-related skills and expecting them to become leaders without proper immersion on leadership aspects is one of the key reasons for the poor quality of leaders.

As businesses grow or as part of an employee career growth some of these managers get promoted to higher levels, the wheel of mismanagement and poor leadership continues since most organizations have not factored in a sound and well thought out leadership development programs. Further, as leaders grow in their roles and responsibilities the skills and traits needed to lead keeps evolving.

Therefore, identification of potential, harnessing and grooming of talent, retention and development all becomes key to enable a successful business, deliver scale and keep the results. The way forward is to convince leaders in an objective method about the benefits and critical need to focus on leaders and leadership.

Employees who join an organization are hoping to make a career for themselves. Many of them end up unhappy and leave the organization due to poor leadership, unjust performance management methodology, lack of development and growth opportunities.

Finally, the missing link in the whole leadership cycle is the first stage of the supply chain which in this case is the academia. While most universities and colleges are churning out graduates in large numbers, the graduates are only taught technical skills and competencies which may help in landing a job however this is not helping in building leaders. The concept of teaching leadership skills, competencies or traits is not a part of the curriculum in most schools and colleges. Academia has a crucial role to play in



helping create a pipeline of graduates who are competent and comfortable with leading teams as soon as an opportunity arises. Schools have an advantage of having a captive audience eager to learn and wanting to prove themselves in the business world. Schools and Universities are a perfect environment to groom and imbibe skills, traits and competencies needed to be a good student of leadership.

A deep research and study on the positive impact of leaders on business along with the adverse cost of poor leadership will bring the attention and focus into the need for building better quality of leaders and to ensure a steady supply and pipeline of leaders who can succeed at all levels of hierarchy.

### **1.3 Purpose of Research**

Poor leadership surrounds us, it is a fact of life. The notion that poor leadership has negative effects for individuals and organizations is not new. Poor leadership is undoubtedly one of the most potential stressors in the workplace. Bad managers cost businesses billions of dollars each year and having too many of them can bring down a company. The only defense against this problem is a good offense, because when companies get these decisions wrong, nothing fixes it. However, businesses that get it right and hire and train leaders based on talent along with a scientific approach to development will thrive and gain a significant competitive advantage.

Organizations globally are facing a genuine shortage of good capable leaders who have the ability to steer an organization to success. This shortage of good leaders is across the hierarchy, right from the entry level manager to the CEO. An unfortunate result of this shortage and scarcity of good leaders means businesses are unable to scale to their potential. Start-ups are not able to optimize the brilliant idea which was the reason for their coming into business. There are lots of promising businesses which are either shutting down or not able to live up to the expectations of all stakeholders. All

these directly impacts employee welfare, career and job loss, stress at work place, impact on lives and livelihood and so on, eventually leading to a negative impact on the economy of the state.

#### **1.4 Significance of the study**

While organizations recognize and acknowledge the impact of leadership on their business, there is a lack of effort, willingness and motivation to actually measure the true impact. Placing employees who are unable to lead effectively in leadership roles is causing significant damage which organizations are unable to determine. Further, organizations do not have a methodology to identify who their top and bottom level leaders are, apart from relying on metrics which are not necessarily aligned to the true value of the organization. Even in cases where organizations are able to identify their poor leaders they do not have a mechanism of course correction.

As businesses grow or when leaders exit, there is no credible mechanism to promote leaders to the next level. Related to this is the fact that the skill sets needed at higher levels of leadership are vastly different to mid and junior level leadership.

Leadership development is an area which has the potential but is not able to solve the crisis of poor leadership in most organizations. Since a lot of the investment needed for leadership development do not yield immediate results, there is both a lack of credible leadership development programs or there is no time and effort factored in for developing leaders. This results in substandard leaders across the leadership hierarchy of the organization.

Finally, an important aspect in this cycle is lack of contribution from academia. Schools and colleges do not have a concept of imbibing leadership skills and traits in students as part of their graduation curriculum, this means that organizations and business

have the task of identifying first time managers in an environment where all entry level employees are only technically qualified and do not possess any leadership skills.

### **1.5 Research purpose and Questions**

The objective of this research is to study, analyze, highlight and address the issue of cost of poor leadership and provide a solution framework for creating a pipeline of good business leaders consistently who can lead and scale businesses successfully.

1) A deep research on the positive impact of leaders on businesses along with the adverse cost of poor leadership will bring the attention and focus into the need for building better quality of leaders.

2) This research will work towards creating a solution framework to help organizations build their own steady supply and pipeline of leaders who can succeed at all levels of hierarchy.

3) This research and proposal would focus on how academia can incorporate leadership concepts into their curriculum and help enable graduating students to have an up-start to becoming better leaders early in their corporate journey.

This study and research will also involve the following:-

a) establish that there is a need to address the scarcity and shortage of successful leaders.

b) establish with complete clarity the definition of a successful leader.

c) define the characteristics and traits of a successful leader.

d) define a leadership style which is best suited for the current global market conditions.

## CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

As evidenced in the research method 1, shortage and scarcity of good leaders and leaders who can succeed consistently across the business and corporate hierarchy is real. From entry level leaders to the top of the hierarchy there is a scarcity of good leaders. This shortage of capable leaders who can lead organizations to success will only increase in the coming days, months and years and will continue to be a bottleneck for growth of businesses. Lack of growth in business can have further impact to economy, loss of jobs and livelihood.

As outlined in the concept paper, the objective of this empirical research is to combine research with qualitative tools such as surveys, interviews, focus groups and observation across stakeholders, study, analyze, highlight and address the issue of Cost of Poor Leadership and provide a solution framework for creating a pipeline of good business leaders consistently, who then can lead and scale businesses successfully.

Gallup CEO Clifton J (Gallup, 2013) wrote in the summary accompanying his organization's 2013 State of The American Workplace employee engagement study 'The single biggest decision you make in your job-bigger than all the rest is who you name manager. When you name the wrong person manager, nothing fixes that bad decision. Not compensation, not benefits nothing'.

'People leave managers, not companies' (Lipman, 2015).

Poor leadership practices cost companies millions of dollars each year by negatively impacting employee retention, customer satisfaction, and overall employee productivity (Yukl, 2008).

## **2.2 Theory of Reasoned Action**

Gallup surveys (Gallup, 2010) finds that companies fail to choose the candidate with the right talent for the job 82% of the time. Conventional selection processes are a big contributor to inefficiency in management practices; they apply little science or research to find the right person for the managerial role. Most managers believe they were hired for their current role because of their success in a previous non-managerial role, technical skills or their tenure in their company or field (Beck and Harter, 2014).

The needs of a first time manager are very unique and this is a crucial aspect that gets missed out by several organizations (Gentry, Logan and Tonidandel, 2014). While the requirement of supervising maybe accomplished by placing people in managerial positions, the fact is these are not necessarily leaders who are capable to take the organization forward (Walker, 2002).

A study by “The Ken Blanchard Company” found that less than optimal leadership practices costs an organization an amount equal to as much as 7% of the total annual sales. The study found that most organizations are operating with a 5-10% productivity drag that better leadership practices could eliminate. Better leadership can generate a 3-4% improvement in customer satisfaction scores (Blanchard, Ken and Johnson, 2008).

While there are a few publications stating that there is no shortage of leaders, however the overwhelming feedback, commentary and counter arguments from industry experts and business leaders expressing their concerns that there is infact a shortage of leaders, especially capable leaders who can be successful consistently.

In its latest report titled 'Leadership Development Trends 2019', Mercer|Mettl, leading talent assessment firm, has mapped key leadership practices followed by organizations in the current business landscape (Mettl, 2019).

Insights compiled in Mercer|Mettl 'Leadership Development Trends 2019' report were based on a survey of over five hundred leadership experts including CXOs, leadership coaches and organization development specialists.

The survey revealed that around 80 percent of the organizations in India are currently facing a leadership talent shortage either because the present leaders are on the verge of retiring or because millennials prefer to change jobs frequently. The survey was conducted across industries including AI and machine learning, telecom, education, retail, media and entertainment, pharma & healthcare, BFSI, BPO/KPO, management consulting, human resource, government sector and NGO (Mettl, 2019).

It is important to note here that leadership talent shortage is not a recent or new issue and it has been a problem for a long time. Organizations have continued to grapple with the shortage of capable leaders across the hierarchy, and most believe this trend will only continue to increase.

Harvard Business Review In its 2010 journal carried a post by Ashford Sue and DeRue Scott "Five Steps to Addressing the Leadership Talent Shortage" stated that nearly 60% of companies are facing leadership talent shortages that are impeding their performance. Another 31% expected a lack of leadership talent to impede their performance in the next several years. Yet, in 2009, U.S. companies spent an estimated \$ 12 Billion (24% of their overall training budgets) on leadership development programs. Considering that businesses have grown exponentially in the last decade the demand for leaders and spend on leadership development programs has increased significantly (Ashford and DeRue Scott, 2010).

Interestingly, to address some of the leadership shortage and also hoping to reduce the cost of operations, there have been attempts in the past to get groups of people to work together in teams without necessarily having a leader amongst them through

“Self-Managed Work Groups” Or SMWG, however the results have been far less beneficial than having team leaders (Elmuti, 1997) .

As businesses grows, along with it, the leaders running those businesses could also get promoted to higher levels. As individuals reach higher levels of roles and responsibilities, there is a real need to develop additional skills and capabilities. With higher roles and responsibilities higher the expectations (Terblanche, Albertyn and Van Coller-Peter, 2018).

The critical aspect however is that along with developing and providing new leaders at various levels of hierarchy, it is important to ensure that these leaders are good leaders. We don't need more leaders, We need more good Leaders (Newstead *et al.*, 2019).

### **2.3 Human Society Theory**

Leadership development programs typically focus on the most senior levels of the organization. But when organizations broaden their reach to be more inclusive of all employees, they reap the benefits. As businesses grow, the need arises to add more employees at the entry levels, thereby, there is always a demand for entry level leaders.

Further, there is a constant turnover amongst leaders due to opportunities of growth, retirement and so on which means there is always a demand for replenishment and replacement of leaders and leadership roles. This cycle of growth along with turnover means there is need for more good leaders at both the entry levels and across the hierarchy of the organization.

According to a Deloitte insights study (Stockton, 2014) the leadership gap is the biggest talent challenge that organizations are facing around the world. Eighty six percent of companies are calling it important or urgent, and an astounding 85 percent of executives report that they are not confident in their leadership pipelines. However, this

talent shortage is not due to lack of skills in employees. Instead, they lack the necessary training to transform into effective leaders. The study finds that 61 percent of companies do not offer any leadership training, while 66 percent say they are weak when it comes to developing leadership skills among millennials.

The study by Stockton H for Deloitte insights (Stockton, 2014) finds that the dearth of leadership training has a negative effect on organizations. The study found that the average company forfeits more than \$1 million annually in untapped potential and loses up to 50 percent of productivity because of subpar leadership practices. High-impact companies in the United States spend more than \$3,500 per person each year to develop mid-level leaders and over \$10,000 to develop senior leaders (Stockton, 2014).

Forbes in a series of articles states that by 2025 millennials will comprise 75% of the workforce and 65% of millennial leaders feel unprepared for their leadership role and 87% of companies say they don't do an excellent job developing leaders at all levels (Friedman, 2019). Good leaders are hard for companies to find these days. A leadership shortage is upon us, as companies struggle to find the right entry-level employees who can step-up as leaders for their organizations going forward. Along with the quantity, the quality of leaders is critical to enable and drive the success and growth of business (Segal Edward, 2021).

It is important to recognize that a person performing a leadership role has two fundamental job aspects of leading and managing. Leading is building trust, relationship, motivation, culture and results in influencing people to work together to move in a direction desired by the vision and mission of the larger group. Managing is more about administration of tasks such as planning, organizing, staffing, directing, controlling and coordinating. Collectively both leading and managing together forms leadership (Ciulla, 2020).



Aspects of managing such as planning, organizing, staffing, directing, controlling and coordinating are achieved through tools, processes, applications, systems and managers are trained to operate and use these tools and systems.

Aspects of leadership however have to be coached, learnt by observation, practice, beliefs, values, culture and so on. However, all of these leadership traits can be imbibed with time and effort by an individual.

The important aspect of leadership characteristics and traits is that the sooner these gets cultivated and practiced by an individual, the easier it becomes and then it gets ingrained into the person.

A common practice in an organization is to identify the top talent through achievement of key performance indicators, metrics or goals and promote them as managers. More often than not, most of these people who get promoted are trained in systems and tools to manage, however they are not trained or clued into leadership components such as building trust, culture, motivation, listening skills, team building and so on. This haphazard mechanism results in substandard quality of supervisors, meaning, that most of them do not possess the requisite capabilities to become successful as leaders.

This process of promoting people as managers purely based on their technical and job-related skills and expecting them to become leaders without proper immersion on leadership aspects is one of the key reasons for the poor quality of leaders.

Poor leadership surrounds us, it is a fact of life. The notion that poor leadership has negative effects for individuals and organizations is not new. Poor leadership is undoubtedly one of the most potential stressors in the workplace.

We find that the two primary reasons behind poor leadership are due to the fact that leaders have behavioral issues and leaders may simply lack appropriate leadership skills (Ibrahim and Daniel, 2019).

Gallup survey (Hartner and Rigoni, 2016) finds that companies fail to choose the candidate with the right talent for the job 82% of the time. Conventional selection processes are a big contributor to inefficiency in management practices; they apply little science or research to find the right person for the managerial role. Most managers believe they were hired for their current role because of their success in a previous non-managerial role or their tenure in their company or field (Beck and Harter, 2014).

Bad managers cost businesses billions of dollars each year and having too many of them can bring down a company. The only defense against this problem is a good offense, because when companies get these decisions wrong, nothing fixes it. Businesses that get it right, however, and hire managers based on talent will thrive and gain a significant competitive advantage. Gallup, a leading employee engagement survey organization globally states that the single greatest cause of employee disengagement is poor Leadership.

Most companies promote workers into managerial positions because they seemingly deserve it, rather than have the talent for it. This practice doesn't work. Experience and skills are important, but people's talents -- the naturally recurring patterns in the ways they think, feel, and behave -- predict where they'll perform at their best.

Talents are innate and are the building blocks of great performance. Knowledge, experience, and skills develop our talents, but unless we possess the right innate talents for our job, no amount of training or experience will matter (Tohidi and Jabbari, 2012).

Gallup finds that great managers have the following talents:-

They motivate every single employee to take action and engage employees with a compelling mission and vision.

They have the assertiveness to drive outcomes and the ability to overcome adversity and resistance.

They create a culture of clear accountability.

They build relationships that create trust, open dialogue, and full transparency

This researcher further found that there are some qualities that a good leader must possess in order to enhance the affairs of an organization; some of such qualities are as follows:-

**Being objective:** Ability to understand, relate to situations and consequences before making decisions. The ability to look at issues and problems practically without bias.

**Think of the big picture :** Leaders should understand the larger objectives and goals of the organization so that they can bring the team together to see the big picture, laying bricks versus building a castle concept.

**Determine priorities:** The ability to recognize what is important and what is not.

**Relationship Management :** Interpersonal relationship, strong human relations attitude, delegation, trust and related skills will earn the leader healthy respect.

**Crisis manager:** Ability to settle disputes and conflicts, proactive and planning. Think on the feet, flexible and nimble.

**Decision making:** Decisive on-time decision making is key to successful leadership.

(Gandolfi and Stone, 2016).

Combining the elements from Gallup and after adding the above qualities and if these are in fact the qualities that determine and define a successful leader, then why is it that most organizations lack leaders who either already possess or can display, learn, imbibe, inherit these concepts and traits (Conger and Fulmer, 2003). However, it is clear that all of these requirements to become a successful leader can be trained, learnt, inculcated in any employee who has a desire to lead. So the heavy lifting has to be done by the organizations to identify, groom, train and mentor employees to become successful leaders (Byham, Smith and Paese, 2002), Ofcourse the individual has to work hard and should have the passion and willingness too but the onus lies with the organization (Valdiserri and Wilson, 2010).

It's important to note especially in the current economic climate that finding great managers doesn't depend on market conditions or the current labor force. Large companies have approximately one manager for every 10 employees, and Gallup finds that one in 10 people possess the inherent talent to manage. When you do the math, it's likely that someone on each team has the talent to lead but chances are, it's not the manager. More than likely, it's an employee with high managerial potential waiting to be discovered (Groves, 2007). While these may be challenging and daunting however in reality all of these happens seamlessly with commitment and a desire to lead (Edmondson, 2011).

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader states Adams J Q (Adams, 2016).

According to Maxwell J, Leadership is influence, nothing more, nothing less (Maxwell, 2002).

Here, this researcher must state that it is a fact that even after a century of research, there is still no agreement on a common definition of leadership though there

are several quotes and theories, with coaching gurus and management leaders stating their own versions.

This researcher summarizes that ‘leadership can be defined as a process whereby an individual influences a group of people to achieve a common goal’ or ‘leadership is the ability to influence a group of people to believe, act, and work together to meet the greater good’.

In the last several years, there have been different classification systems to define the dimensions of leadership.

The most popular leadership theories are:-

Trait approach, skills approach, style approach, situational approach, contingency theory, path-goal theory, leader-member exchange theory, transformational leadership, servant leadership, authentic leadership, team leadership, and psychodynamic approach (Jahan, 2018).

To re-iterate, it is important to recognize that a person performing a leadership role has two fundamental aspects of leading and managing (Kotterman,2006).

Collectively both leading and managing together forms leadership (Yukl, 2008).

Cliffe S (Cliffe, 2015) in a Harvard business review article ‘leadership qualities v/s competence: which matters more?’ says that whilst both skills (leadership qualities and competence) are important, it is risky to over-emphasize leadership qualities over task competence.

However, in another Harvard business review article, Michel J (Michel, 2014) identifies supportive leadership as being the most effective form of leadership. He argues that leaders should push people in joining them in their mission of penetrating new territories. Michel J also says that effective leaders put others before self and lists down four things which are imperative for this kind of leadership: listening to other people’s

ideas, embracing and promoting a spirit of selfless service, asking great questions, and not falling prey to your own publicity.

This leads the researcher to the concept of servant leadership. Though there has been substantial research attempted and completed into various forms of leadership including mainstream accepted leadership styles such as democratic, transactional and transformational leadership there is very little research on servant leadership by way of actual comparison (Gandolfi and Stone, 2016).

Servant leadership in its entirety or certain components can be a solution to some of the vast challenges that face leaders and leadership in organizations globally.

This researcher will attempt to bring into focus some of the components of servant leadership and transformational leadership into this study to establish superior leadership components.

A key aspect of this research is not only to solve the problem of quality of leadership but also focus on good leadership pipeline and succession planning. In the preliminary literature review this researcher produced substantial evidence and research which proved the shortage of good leaders across the line of command. That means there is a shortage of good leaders from the first line of managers to the CEO level.

Globally organizations are facing a shortage of leaders across the hierarchy. Good leaders are needed not just at the entry level, the shortage of leaders exists upto the CEO levels (Carpenter *et al.*, 2019).

As individuals reach higher levels of roles and responsibilities, there is a real need to develop additional skills and capabilities. With higher roles and responsibilities higher the expectations (Terblanche, Albertyn and Van Coller-Peter, 2018).

The critical aspect however is that along with developing and providing new leaders at various levels of hierarchy, it is important to ensure that these leaders are good

leaders. We don't need more leaders, we need more good Leaders (Newstead *et al.*, 2019).

Dr.Zenger J and Dr. Folkman J argue that extraordinary leaders can be developed through a process combining elements of creating a competency model based on hard data analysis, providing leaders with insightful awareness about how well they perform on this model, making feedback motivational and assisting in creating personal development plans followed by providing appropriate skill development, Involving the manager and finally creating sustainment (Zenger, Folkman and Edinger, 2009).

While the above is a very good model for leadership development the question that the research has not answered is the process of who will do the leadership development for the managers, how will managers be identified, how will skills be imparted to new managers and so on (Ibrahim and Daniel, 2019).

Leadership development or developing leadership potential and the role of organization development team as part of strategic talent management is a key concept that several organizations miss out on. As evidenced earlier, Organizations spend several hundreds of manhours and dollars on leadership development as ways to improve their leadership talent. However very few organizations get the leadership development programs and concepts right.

There is also very little mechanism to calculate the ROI ( return on investment ) from these organization development programs (Mabey, 2013).

Research indicates that half of all senior external hires in organizations fail within the first 18 months causing significant costs and other related impact (Church, 2014).

It is possible with committed efforts to alter individuals' personality or abilities after reviewing and analyzing results from a feedback mechanism or a feedback tool. It is also possible for individuals to build a deeper understanding of their preferences, desires

and passion and the relevant implications of these. As a result of these activities it is possible to develop new behaviors and work around skills. This can be done through coaching, mentoring, observation and feedback and consultation.

A mentor mentee or a coach and coachee relationship in a safe and secure environment where transparency and respect are primary factors. The impact and results from these interventions are proven to provide substantial benefits for all involved.

These new work around skills will help individuals achieve their performance goals and make an impact on the organization and is likely to translate into enhanced potential, for all parties concerned. The individual, the team, the manager and the organization benefits from this effort.

At this stage it is important for this research to focus on the goal setting process of an organization. As they say, what gets measured gets done. The role of a leader is to help identify organizational goals, help devise appropriate strategies to achieve such goals and provide direction and motivation for the group so that agreed upon goals can be attained. The leader must recognize the value system that operates in a variety of work group and situation. They must listen to questions as well as provide answers. She or he must comprehend the difficulty of being a subordinate so as to understand the fear (Klanwaree and Choemprayong, 2019).

A common trend seen in several organization is a flawed method of key performance indicators or goals that are used to measure success. Most of these goals are inside out and not necessarily using the outside in concept (Saeed *et al.*, 2015). This means there could be situations where all goals are met or reasonably achieved but inspite of that the organization is not making progress, employees are unhappy and customers are not satisfied, revenue and profits are not stable or not increasingly better (Mone and London, 2018).



There are many versions of measurements used across the corporate landscape globally. KPIs, KRAs, OKRs are the most common measurements used. Though the measurement and metrics may differ the objective is relatively same across businesses and mostly cover customer, people, financials, shareholders and society.

Key performance indicator (KPI) are defined as performance metrics that evaluate the success of an organization or of a particular unit or activity. KPIs can apply to projects, programs, products, and a variety of other initiatives or period of time. They can measure the success of anything from sales goals to customer metrics to financial aspects.

Key result area (KRA) is a strategic factor either internal to the organization or external, where strong positive results must be realized for the organization to achieve its strategic goals. KRAs are not necessarily performance measurements, but rather help break down your vision and goal into specific categories that will drive success.

Objectives and key results (OKRs) are defined as a metric that outlines company and team objectives along with the measurable key results that define the achievement of each objective. OKRs represent aggressive goals and define the measurable steps you will take towards achieving those goals.

One of the key differences between OKRs and KPIs is the intention behind the goal setting. KPI goals are typically obtainable and represent the output of a process or project already in place, while OKR goals are somewhat more aggressive and ambitious.

With KPIs, you are trying to figure out how well you are doing right now, how healthy your company is, and how your current initiatives are performing.

OKRs are more about development and growth and whether you're on track to reach the goals ( LBL Strategies Team 2017 ).

The balanced scorecard :-

The balanced scorecard or BSC was originally developed by Dr. Kaplan R and Dr. Norton D (Kaplan, Norton and others, 2005). Their framework measures organizational performance using both “lagging” indicators of financial performance and customer outcomes, and “leading” indicators of internal processes, skills. Linking the leading and lagging indicators was revolutionary at the time of their first article and book. It's a standard practice of strategy management even today. Balanced scorecard or BSC comprises of four key elements - financial, customer, internal process, and capacity. The four steps of a BSC are translating the vision into operational goals, communicating the vision and link it to individual performance, business planning, feedback and learning.

Criticism for BSC was lack of rigor, lack of an overall score, not reflective of all stakeholder needs. Even though the BSC was comprehensive and received widespread recognition and usage to this date, BSC over a period of time start to fade away from corporate goal planning and methodology (Deem, 2009).

BSC initiatives fail largely because organizations don't use the scorecard as a coaching tool, there is frequent change in strategy but most importantly because culture is not embedded into the BSC measurement systems. Cutting across the four pillars of BSC an organizational culture is key to the effectiveness of BSC (Rababah and Bataineh, 2016).

Whether it is OKR or KPI or a balanced scorecard, the measurement metrics should cover all aspects of why a business exists and what it wants to achieve and for consistent success it is imperative that culture is at the core of all measurement and intangible aspects are weaved into any outcomes. Culture eats strategy for breakfast Drucker P (Drucker, 2016).

Culture is the crucial missing link in BSC and even in other measurement methodology Incorporating a positive culture into everything the organisation wants to do

is even more important in the current volatile, uncertain and complex environment. This researcher noticed that most of the new age organizations operating in the field of technology, retail, banking and financial services, telecom and who employ mostly workers from the science, technology, engineering and mathematics background prefer to use OKRs.

This researcher would attempt to bring the various measurement methodology together through an empirical research and along with quantitative and qualitative survey mechanism. Layering the intangible aspects and cultural aspects would make the measurement methodology more humane is the belief of this researcher.

A strong measurement methodology will in itself enable a growth mindset and create succession pipeline and develop more capable leaders. While the responsibility and ownership on identifying and building leaders and leadership pipeline belongs to the organization and to the corporates, the organizations and corporates need help from academia.

The critical aspect however is that along with developing and providing new leaders at various levels of hierarchy, it is important to ensure that these leaders are good leaders. We don't need more leaders, we need more good Leaders (Newstead et al., 2019).

## **2.4 Summary**

A leadership shortage is upon us, as companies struggle to find the right entry-level employees who can step-up as leaders for their organizations going forward. Along with the quantity, the quality of leaders is critical to enable and drive the success and growth of business.

It is, however, possible with committed efforts to alter individuals' personality or abilities after reviewing and analyzing results from a feedback mechanism or a feedback

tool. It is also possible for individuals to build a deeper understanding of their preferences, desires and passion and the relevant implications of these. As a result of all these activities it is possible to develop new behaviors and work around skills and traits.

Through coaching, mentoring, observation, feedback and consultation, a variety of skills and self-awareness can be developed. A mentor mentee or a coach and coachee relationship in a safe and secure environment where transparency and respect are primary factors. The impact and results from these interventions are proven to provide substantial benefits for all involved.

The need of the hour for corporates is to invest in a very robust organization development team who are capable of identifying potential and also enable these high potential employees to take on leadership roles. The organization development (OD) team is also responsible for creating and enabling leaders to step into new leadership roles and grow up the leadership and hierarchy (Fulmer, Stumpf and Bleak, 2009).

A robust OD team and talent management strategy can ensure that organizations can create a self-sufficient pipeline of leadership talent and pool to cater to business growth and replenishment of leaders. This will help organizations to not only build their own steady pipeline of successful leaders but will also help to inculcate leadership aspects into top talents much before than they are promoted to leadership levels and roles (Mabey, 2013).

Further, feedback from experienced industry experts, business leaders and feedback from academia stakeholders is that academia across graduation schools, universities, colleges teach for technical skills, for example there are engineering colleges, medical colleges, design universities and so on and the curriculum is entirely filled with specific technical concepts, knowledge and information. There may be concepts of management such as planning, staffing, budgeting, taught in several courses

as part of academics, however there is no curriculum focusing or delving on leadership concepts. Even in management courses or business administration, the curriculum is focused on administration and management policies, tools and mechanism and there is no focus on leadership concepts.

This researcher identified and highlighted as part of the research method 1 and II that a key missing element in this cycle of creating leaders especially entry level leaders is academia. Existing research shows a lack of contribution from schools in producing a pipeline of students who can take on prime leadership positions early in their career.

Academia is focusing only on theoretical concepts of management and does not have a curriculum for leadership concepts and traits to be inculcated in students early on.

Today, however, MBA and other graduate programs face intense criticism for failing to impart useful skills, failing to prepare leaders, failing to instill norms of ethical behavior and even failing to lead graduates to good corporate jobs.

The criticisms on academia being unable to produce pass outs with more than just technical capabilities is coming not just from students, employers, and the media, but also from deans of some of the most prestigious business schools (Bennis and O'Toole, 2005).

The setting up and growth of finishing schools are another indication of the missing link or the gap in quality and expectations between what academia produces versus what is expected by corporates. Finishing schools are doing the role of bridging the gap between academia and corporates however finishing schools are unregulated, scarce, an additional effort by students. This is a selective option for students and comes at a high price. Most students may not even be aware of the qualities, traits, competencies that are needed of them to excel in the corporate world and become successful leaders.

If one of the purpose of academia and graduate education is to create employment, develop leaders and executives then the critical aspect of imparting these skills is overwhelmingly missing in schools and academia.

As part of this research, the attempt is to identify ways to incorporate leadership components into the curriculum for students. Not only will this help students get an upstart into leadership when they take up employment, universities benefit by making them more viable for student enrolments. This effort will also help businesses create better first time leaders. Accomplishing this task will be a win for all parties involved.

From the research methods I and II this researcher evidenced that the two primary reasons behind poor leadership are due to the fact that leaders have behavioral issues and leaders may simply lack appropriate leadership skills (Ibrahim and Daniel, 2019).

From the research done so far by this researcher, it is clear some of the steps that lead to great leadership are to invest in leadership and leaders, strong pre and on-boarding, leverage coaches, consultants and mentors for managers and leaders, deploy and emphasize on leadership and talent development strategy, clarity and well defined success metrics and enable teams to achieve those, feedback and feed front ( proactively providing guidance) repeat the cycle and most importantly drive a positive culture top down. Aspects of personal growth, compensation and career aspirations too are important however they are more individualistic in nature and not team agenda (Church and Silzer, 2014).

Further, there have been research into various outcomes which are attributed to poor leadership such as a few below:-

Cost of employee turnover (Subramony and Holtom, 2012).

Cost of poor quality (Mahmood *et al.*, 2014).

Cost of employee satisfaction (Piriyathanalai and Muenjohn, 2012).

All of the above costs, including several other such negative impacts are outcomes of poor leadership however the sum total of all aspects which together results in cost of poor leadership is an area which has not been researched and addressed.

From the research done so far by this researcher, and from the existing research that was reviewed and studied, it is clear some of the steps that lead to great leadership are to invest in leadership and leaders, strong pre and on-boarding, leverage coaches, consultants and mentors for managers and leaders, deploy and emphasize on leadership and talent development strategy, clarity and well defined success metrics and enable teams to achieve those, feedback and feed front ( proactively providing guidance ), repeat the cycle and most importantly drive a positive culture top down.

## CHAPTER III : METHODOLOGY

### **3.1 Overview of the Research Problem**

The problem arising in organizations due to poor leadership is extensive, however the actual impact is a combination of tangible and intangible results. Organizations have a challenge in hiring first time leaders, there is no standardized way to promote employees to leadership roles and there is a challenge in creating a sustainable leadership pipeline. Poor leadership costs organizations significant amount of resources such as people, time, effort and money. All of these means that businesses are losing out on opportunities to scale and perform to expectations. Employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction gets affected due to poor leadership.

The objective of this research is to highlight the impact arising due to leadership issues and provide solutions. The challenges and impact of poor leadership is a primary

reason for business failure. The concepts of good leadership are well articulated and researched, the impact of poor leadership are significant. The purpose of this research is to highlight the cost of poor leadership and provide potential solutions. Organizations and leaders should be able to utilize the findings from the research and solutions which can be implemented to overcome challenges that arise due to poor leadership.

### **3.2 Operationalization of Theoretical Constructs**

Though there are multiple methods to conduct research the more common methods that are used are quantitative method, qualitative method, and a combination method (Book, 2014). From the research done thus far as part of the literature review process for this analysis, the quantitative and existing research methods were found to be focusing only on subsets of the impact arising out of poor leadership. This study while focusing on the issues arising due to poor leadership is not looking to calculate a value instead this study is focusing to prioritize the challenges of poor leadership which has not been highlighted or discussed. The study further aims to provide solutions to challenges arising out of poor leadership and also propose mitigation plans and create succession planning.

Qualitative method of research using in-depth interviews from stakeholders to explore the reasons for poor leadership, the impact of poor leadership, building successful leaders and creation of leadership pipeline is the objective. The data sets that will be collected will undergo comparative and triangulation to validate the findings and substantially increase the credibility of the findings and the mitigation through a solution framework (Flick, 2018).

### **3.3 Research Purpose**

As part of this research there will be examination and reviews of existing research, studies and other quantitative material that already exists, studies will be done



to examine relations and impact between several variables. I will also be conducting qualitative survey with stakeholders from businesses and academia. The objective of this research is to combine research with qualitative survey across stakeholders, study, analyze, highlight and address the issue of cost of poor leadership and provide a solution framework for creating a pipeline of good business leaders consistently who can lead and scale businesses successfully.

### **3.4 Research Questions**

#### Research questions for corporate leaders :-

Primary questions: -

1. What is your definition of a successful leader?
2. How do you plan for succession planning?
3. What is the process you follow to promote an individual to a team manager?
4. How do you develop your leaders to grow to the next level in hierarchy?

#### Research questions for successful leaders:-

Primary questions: -

1. What are the challenges you faced during the time you were doing the role of a leader and how did you overcome those?
2. Were there any leadership trainings that you were a part of before you took on the role of a leader? Yes or No, If yes then please provide the training details.
3. What are the components that helped you to succeed as a leader?
4. What are your learnings as a leader that you want to share with others?

#### Research questions for employees who have not been successful as leaders:-

Primary questions: -

1. What are the challenges you faced during the time you were a leader?

2. Were there any leadership trainings that you were a part of before you took on the role of a leader? Yes or No, If Yes then please provide the training details.

3. What are your learnings from your time spent as a leader?

4. Did you enroll in any leadership development programs after your tenure as a leader?

Research questions for academia stakeholders:-

Primary questions: -

1. What concepts of leadership programs do you have in your student's curriculum?

2. Will your school benefit from introducing leadership concepts into your curriculum?

3. Would you be keen to incorporate leadership training in your students curriculum?

Follow up and secondary set of semi- structured questions for in-person or video conference interview with all participations.

1. Leadership styles and what styles works best to address poor leadership.

2. Go to market strategy and what is working well to help leaders.

3. Onboarding new employees, challenges and best practices to help build leaders.

4. Succession planning process for leadership pipeline.

5. Employee lifecycle management process to help leadership practices.

6. Solution Framework to help leadership execution.

7. Best in class practices to eliminate poor leadership.

### **3.5 Research Design**

The interviews will be conducted through a questionnaire. Each interviewee will get a document with the questions, interviewee will fill in their responses to the questions

and submit it back to the researcher. The researcher and the interviewee will do a telephone conversation to dig deeper into the primary and secondary questions for more qualitative feedback (Lee and Lee, 1999). Once the interviews are concluded, the researcher will consolidate all of the responses, analyze, study, conduct text mining analytics and create a modelling to arrive at conclusive outcome. It is important to note that some of the problem statements and resultant findings from quantitative research has been considered while framing the questionnaire for the qualitative survey (Robinson, 2014). This is to ensure that the questions are relevant and appropriate to the challenges faced due to poor leadership issues. The variables resulting out of some of the comparisons between the methods are addressed as part of the qualitative survey questions. However the qualitative survey feedback is given importance and priority for the research.

### **3.5 Population and Sample**

1) I conducted interviews with corporate leaders at executive levels of Directors, Vice-Presidents, Senior VPs who are leading teams to get clear understanding of the drivers to succeed.

2) Interviews with leaders who have been :-

a) classified as successful

b) those who were classified or believed were not successful.

3) I conducted interviews with representatives from academia to understand the opportunity or challenges to introduce leadership concepts into student's curriculum.

The sample size of interviews was expanded until I reached a data saturation point wherein the data is directionally conclusive. Further, along with the primary questions, there was supplementary questions to aid more clarity as and when needed.

Considering the size and scope of the research :-

1. I interviewed 15 corporate leaders ( directors ,vice-presidents, SVPs ) from people intrinsic businesses each leading a team of upwards of 50 people.

2. I interviewed 15 employees who have been classified as successful leaders to understand their experiences.

3. I interviewed 15 employees who have been classified as unsuccessful or believe were unsuccessful as leaders to understand shortcomings they encountered.

4. I interviewed stakeholders from academia, I interviewed professors and heads of department at universities. A sample size of 15 academicians from technical and management subjects spread across 5 universities were interviewed.

The leaders were from a combination of people intensive businesses, leaders were spread across the global organizations, age groups, gender and diversity was considered to provide an unbiased feedback. Same practices was considered for all other groups to ensure unbiased feedback was collected.

### **3.7 Participant Selection**

The selection of participants has been arrived at considering the scope and impact of the research (Datt and Chetty, 2016). Corporate leaders are the senior executives who makes strategy for the organization. Questions addressed to these leaders are directly related to the various aspects of expectations that they have from a leader. The successful leaders are the ones who have proven their leadership skills as established by their organizations. The feedback from these leaders will help in addressing the core needs and requirements to being a good leader. Employees who were assigned a leadership role but could not be successful are in the participant list since they provide an opposite perspective to the successful leaders. Academia is a stakeholder in the process and their involvement to provide leadership skills to graduates forms the questions for the teaching faculty.

The interview will be two stages, first a questionnaire will be sent to the participants and followed by a telephonic conversation preferably by video conference and wherever possible a face to face in-person meeting to go into depths of the feedback. A prior consent was taken and only participants who provide their consent were considered (Schoonenboom and Johnson, 2017). All the documents that were collated during the study were recorded and securely stored to protect the confidentiality of the interviewees and to ensure the highest ethical standards were met through signed consent by the participants.

### **3.8 Instrumentation**

The data for this research was collated through a primary questionnaire and then followed by a deeper open ended conversation. The study used a framework and had a list of open ended questions, wherever there was a close ended question it was followed up with commentary on the reasoning, the study was more of structured questions followed by a semi-structured interview process. While the primary source of information was through the structured and semi-structured process of questions and interviews the secondary methods used were to review documents, journals, government websites, employment data, success and failure of startups (Schoonenboom and Johnson, 2017). Semi-structured interviews helped this researcher to get into depths of the issues around leadership and potential solutions. During the interviews the expertise from each of the participants and their experience was documented, specific solutions to key problems were discussed by the participants. The concept of first doing the formatted questions and then followed up by the interview meant that the participants were more relaxed and openly aired their views during the interviews (Creswel and Clark, 2014).

All of these helped the researcher to delve and focus on extensive information beyond the available literature on leadership and its impact, the framework for a solution to address the issue of poor leadership.

### **3.9 Data Collection Procedures**

There are two types of data in the research study (Castleberry and Nolen, 2018).

Primary data is collected through questionnaire that was provided to participants followed by interviews. Records of written notes were collated by sending out questions in a word document and requesting participants to fill out their responses to the questions. This was followed by interviews by video conference and wherever possible through face to face in-person meetings. In terms of data collection interviews and feedback from the surveys is the most common way of data gathering for qualitative research studies. The primary source of information for this study was through the process of questionnaires and in-depth interviews.

Secondary data is considered from literature reviews and relevant studies. Journals and articles and readings of text books were considered for secondary data.

The participants were first provided a consent form and the purpose, objective and process for the research was explained to each one of them. Upon consent from the participant they were sent a word document of the questionnaire via digital form such as email and were provided 15 days to complete and return the survey. The standard time that was expected to complete survey was approximately 30 to 45 minutes. Once the survey was received the findings were recorded and consolidated. Following this the participants were requested to join for the interview either via a video conference or in person face to face meeting. The time for the interview was 30 minutes per participant. The minutes of the interview was written down and consolidated with consent from the

participant. The consent from the interview was extensive verbatim comments, observations and feedback from experience by the participants (Sin, 2005).

### **3.10 Data Analysis**

Data analysis can be a challenging and time consuming process especially when there is qualitative feedback, verbatim comments and the researchers own knowledge and experience of the domain especially if the topic of interest is a domain expertise of the researcher and section of the participants (Castleberry and Nolen, 2018). The study used Microsoft word, Microsoft excel for data collection process and as part of the analysis text mining was conducted to pick up key trends, themes and common variables. There was comparative analysis to eliminate any outliers (Taylor, 2005). Comparative analysis also gives common themes and guidelines from the data analysis. The steps conducted in the process of analyzing the data was to first review the data to ensure that there was complete understanding of the information that was gathered. Since the data sets was large and lengthy it was organized by categories, segregating by categories helped in analyzing specific areas and also comparing each area of response amongst the different category of participants.

Interpreting the data sets and attaching relevance to the themes emerging, identifying similarities and differences in responses is important to ensure that common trends are identified and there is no bias in reporting. Using text mining technology lengthy and long sets of verbatim feedback was quickly converted into common themes and key highlights.

### **Reliability And Validity of the study**

Qualitative study depends on how reliable and valid the study is from a data dependability and credibility point of view (Lakshmi and Mohideen, 2013).

The outcome of the study has to be transferable and has to have the ability to be replicated. Scalability is another key aspect. All these factors leads to the reliability and validity of the study (Roberts and Priest, 2006).

Apart from the merit of the participants chosen for the qualitative study, this researcher has ensured that each participant is fully aware of the purpose of the study and their role in the research (Kaiser, 2009). The participants were provided adequate advance notice, plenty of time was provided to complete the survey and the interviews were conducted at a time and place convenient to the participant. Confidentiality was assured and will be maintained to ensure that participants were forthright in their feedback.

To ensure that the study is valid and can be replicated large sets of diverse data sets was used. Along with the qualitative data there was studies done from existing literature, journals and text books, comparison with existing studies done to ensure that authenticity of feedback is verified and checked. During the interviews the body language, emotions of the participants was considered and efforts were taken to make the participants comfortable and relaxed. To ensure that probability of data saturation is achieved all participants thoroughly responded and addressed the research questions. The standardization of questions and responses along with the more than adequate sample size considered ensured that a high probability of data saturation was achieved.

### **3.11 Research Design Limitations**

The method of validation and trustworthiness of this research is built up based on credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Lakshmi and Mohideen, 2013). To ensure that there is trustworthiness in this research triangulation approach is adopted in this study. Data collection for this research included several methods such as questionnaires, interviews, observations, document and literature analysis which are able



to triangulate against each other. To cross check data consistency and repeatability of the study multiple data collection methods were used and triangulation was conducted to improve the trustworthiness of this research. The study has a good sample size which helps in ensuring higher validity and reliability (Maxwell, 2021).

However there are some limitations such as the personal biases of the participants since they are all subject matter experts of the domain or have experience in their field. Some of the participants may have their own experiences which are driving their responses in a particular direction. The data collected from the participants during the process were assumed for honesty, integrity and considered as unbiased since the participants agreed and provided consent and they voluntarily agreed to participate in the study (Sin, 2005).

### **3.12 Conclusion**

This chapter outlines the methodology used to conduct the qualitative research. The findings from this study could help to further analyze the reasons for poor leadership and its impact on businesses. The research methods used including quantitative and qualitative methods have been reviewed. Rationale and reasoning to support the study are discussed in this chapter. Questionnaires and interviews were used as primary and secondary mechanism while studying of journals, literature and books were conducted to further validate the findings. Comparative analysis and triangulation of data factors were considered and limitations were stated.

## **CHAPTER IV:**

### **RESULTS**

#### **4.1 Research Questions Corporate Leaders**

##### **Question One.**

What is your definition of a successful leader?



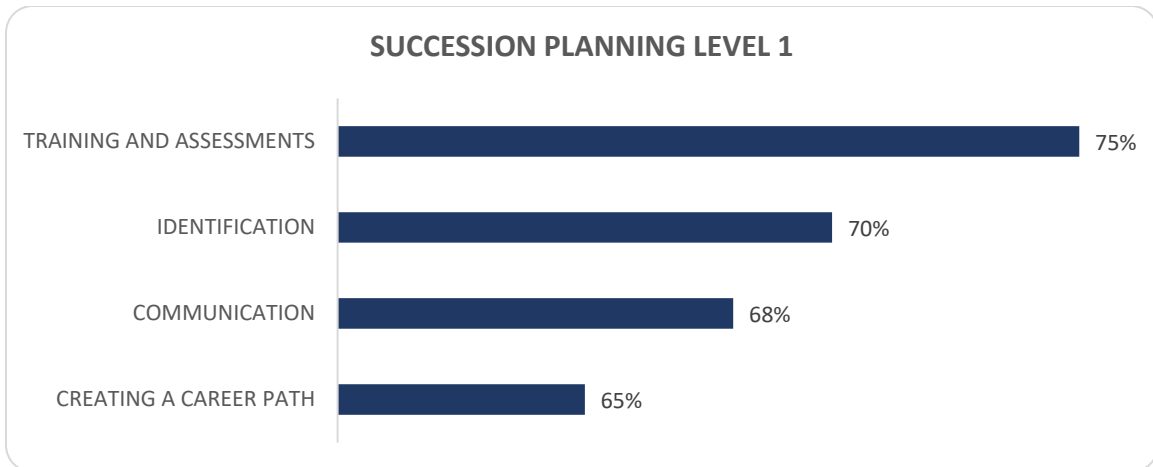
*Fig 1 Definition of successful leader survey of corporate leaders.*

The corporate leaders who were surveyed felt that for their definition of a successful leader the top skill that was needed and identified was empathy followed by good listener and passionate. Cost optimization was the next aspect that corporate leaders considered key to being successful as a leader.

A sample of 15 corporate leaders were chosen for the survey and 100% of the corporate leaders who were asked to participate in the survey completed the survey.

**Question Two.**

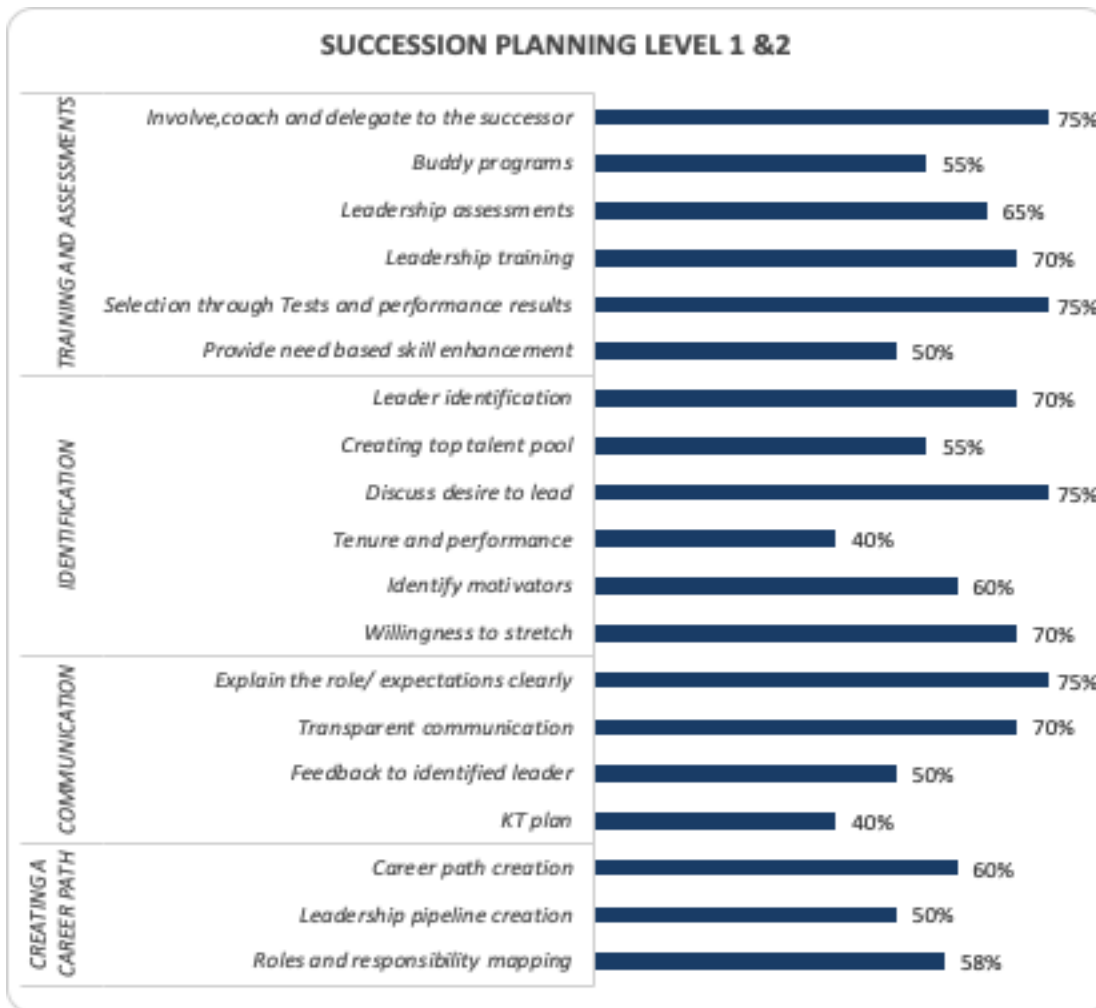
How do you plan for succession planning?



*Fig 2 Succession planning level 1.*

Corporate leaders expressed that training and assessments are the biggest criteria for succession planning. Identifying talent and communicating effectively was the other areas that was identified as key. Creating a career path for succession planning was top of the item for succession planning.

Since the above four buckets were vast, a deep dive analysis was conducted into each of the four buckets. The above figure is level 1 and the analysis of each of the buckets into level 1 is provided in the graph below.

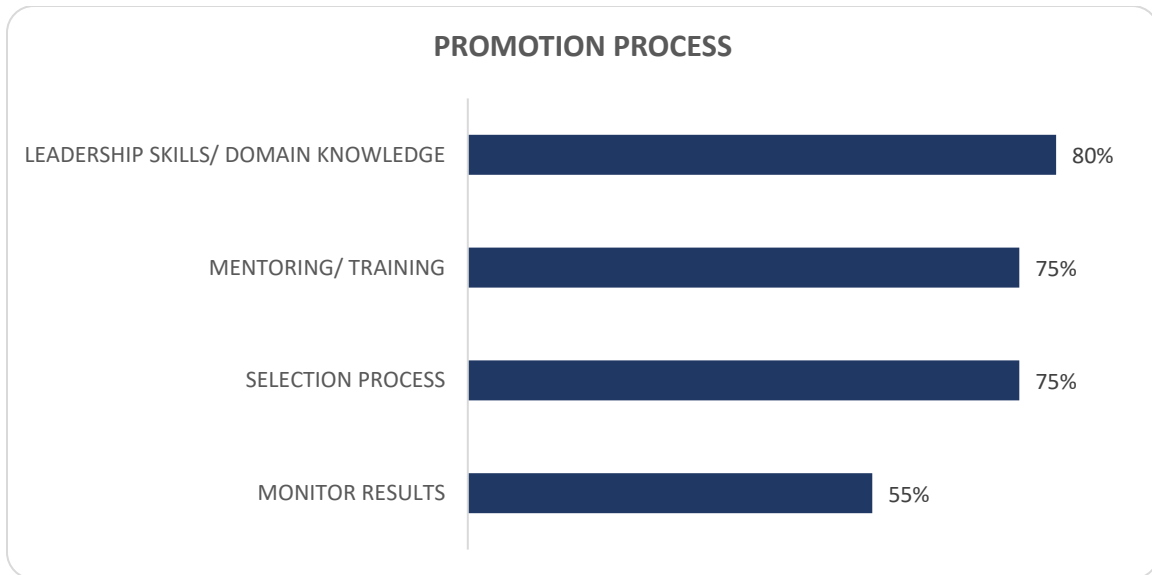


*Fig 3 Succession planning level 1 and level 2.*

The succession planning level 1 was further analyzed and each of the four buckets were further split into categories as mentioned by the corporate leaders. From the deep dive level 2 it is clear that involving, coaching, delegating and formed the biggest bucket of training and assessments category. Under the identification the process of identification of talent was a clear priority for corporate leaders. Communication of the role clarity was considered important and creating a leadership pipeline was also a top need as per this survey amongst corporate leaders.

### Question Three.

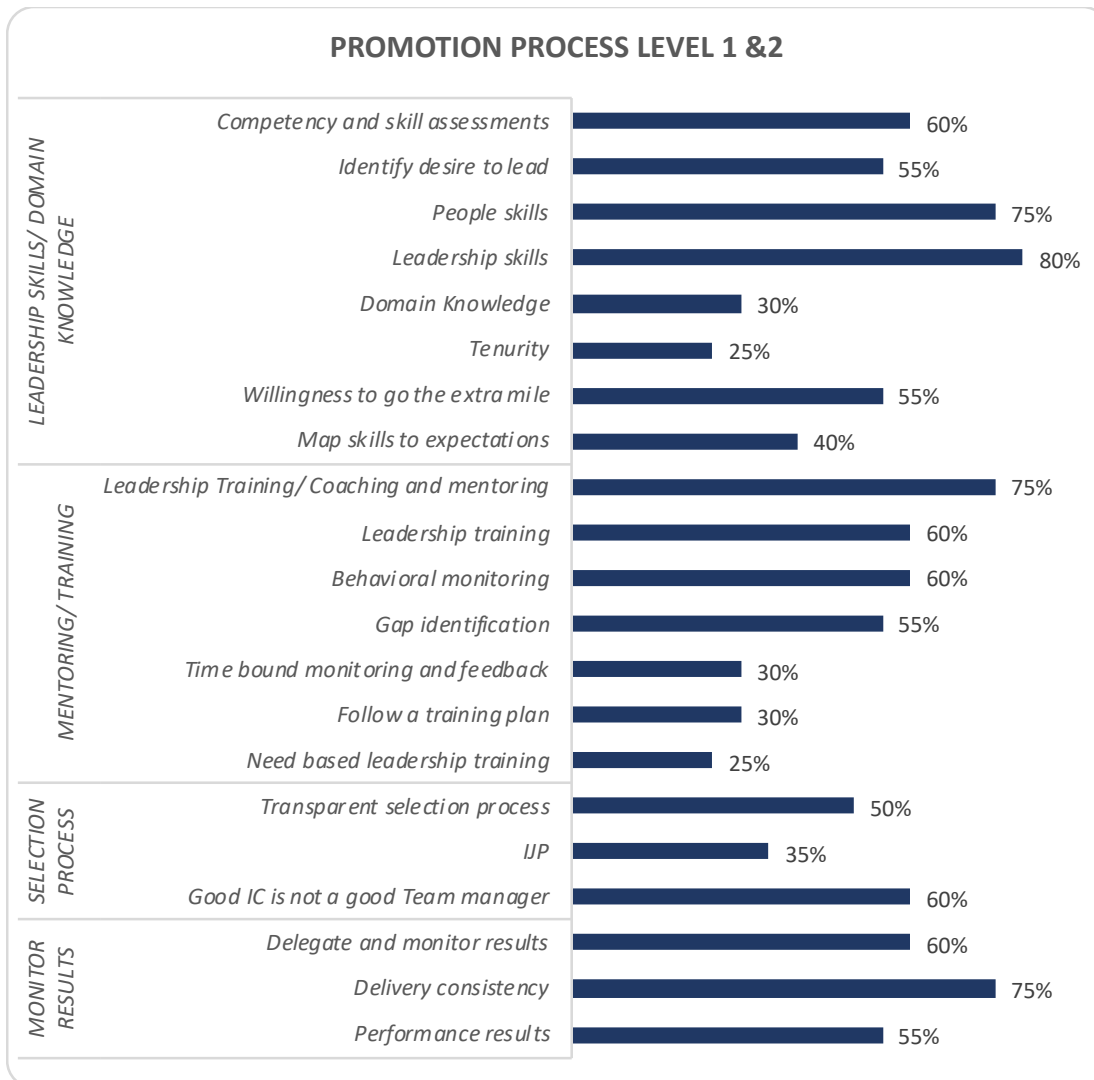
What is the process you follow to promote an individual to a team manager?



*Fig 4 Process followed for promotion.*

As identified by corporate leaders in the survey, leadership skills and domain knowledge ranked as the top priority to promote an individual to a team manager role followed by mentoring and training. The process of selection came next and monitoring of results was the fourth bucket.

Considering these were large and elaborate areas a further deep dive of each of the buckets was done to identify level 2 in each bucket. The next level of analysis of the promotion process is provided in the following graph.



*Fig 5 Promotion process level 1 and level 2.*

A deep dive of the promotion process identified competency and skill as the top skills needed for promotion followed by a desire to lead. People skills and leadership skills was the next followed by domain knowledge. Training, coaching, mentoring all were considered important under the training bucket. Transparent selection process was called out as important and delegation with monitoring was another aspect under the results and monitoring category.

#### Question Four.

How do you develop your leaders to grow to the next level in hierarchy?

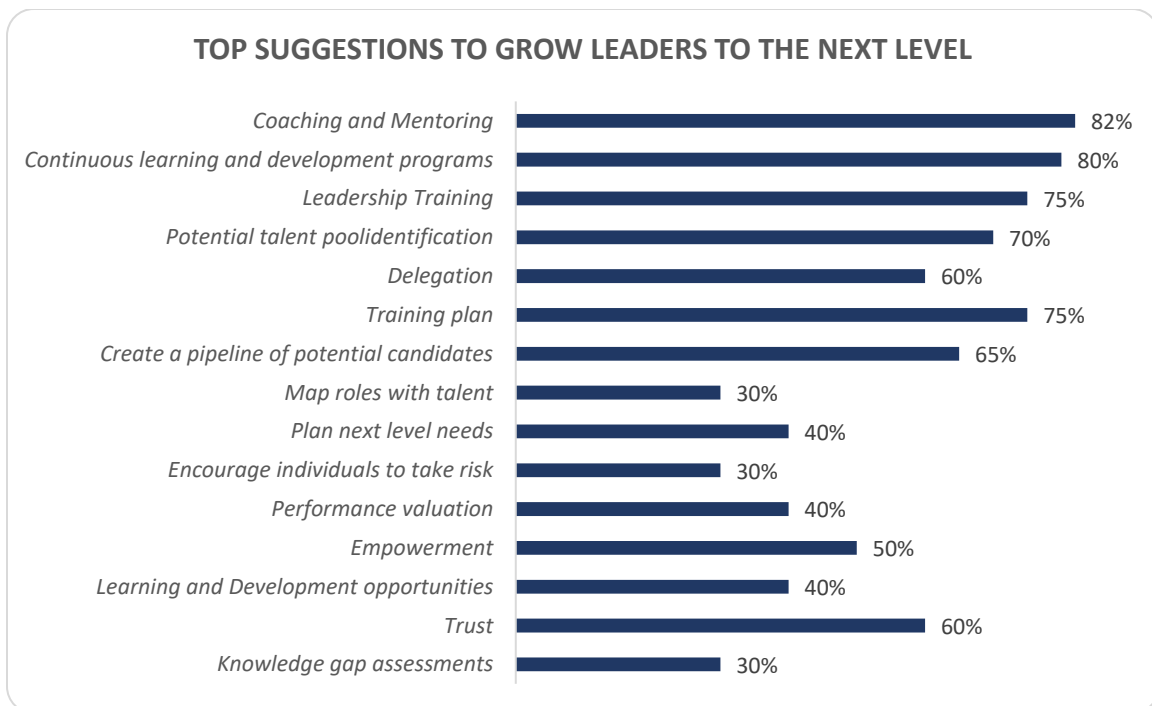


Fig 6 Top suggestions to grow leaders to the next level in hierarchy.

There were 68 points from corporate leaders on how they develop their leaders to grow to the next level of hierarchy. Coaching, mentoring led the charts followed by continuous learning and development programs. Leadership training and talent pool identification was another key aspect that was identified in the analysis. Delegation, training plans, creating a pipeline, mapping roles with talent also found top mentions.

#### Summary of results from the corporate leaders survey.

There was a 100% survey fill rate or survey take rate by the corporate leaders. They were eager to provide responses to what they felt were the definition of successful

leaders, they provided comments on their process of identifying talent for growth and succession planning and how they believed their process of developing their leaders to higher levels of hierarchy.

Under the definition of successful leaders, the corporate leaders were more in agreement to areas of work delegation, focus on goals and results. Domain knowledge or subject matter expertise, less of micromanagement were area that corporate leaders called out as skills of successful leaders.

Corporate leaders expressed their method of succession planning by first identifying talent and then create a career path followed by communication the role and expectations along with training and assessment. There was more emphasis on training and assessment as part of the succession planning process.

The most common process mentioned by corporate leaders in promotion an individual to a team manager was identifying talent with the required skill set and knowledge and mentor, train and coach the individual followed by monitoring results. Comments were seen about following a transparent process and internal job postings. One comment that stood out was that a good individual contributor does not make a good team manager.

In summary, the results of the survey saw a varied responses to each questions and the analysis focused on picking the top buckets of responses. Corporate leaders expected a successful leader to not only show the leadership qualities such as empathy, coaching skills and so on but there was expectations on cost monitoring, goals focus and result orientation. It could be attributed that corporate leaders expectations from successful leaders also were a clear indication of what the goals and expectations their organizations had from the corporate leaders.



## 4.2 Research Questions Successful Leaders

### Question One.

What are the challenges you faced during the time you were a leader and how did you overcome those challenges ?

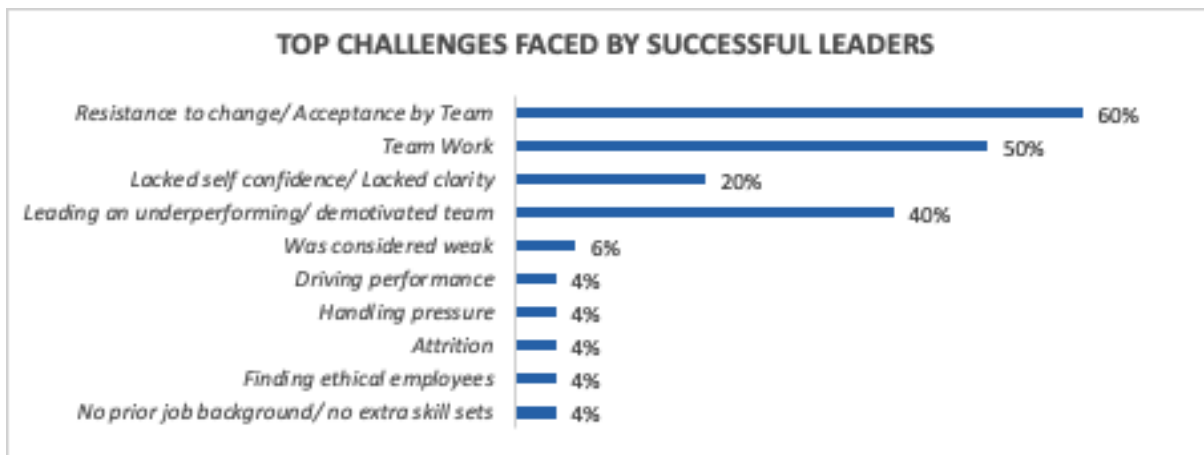


Fig 7 Challenges faced by successful leaders.

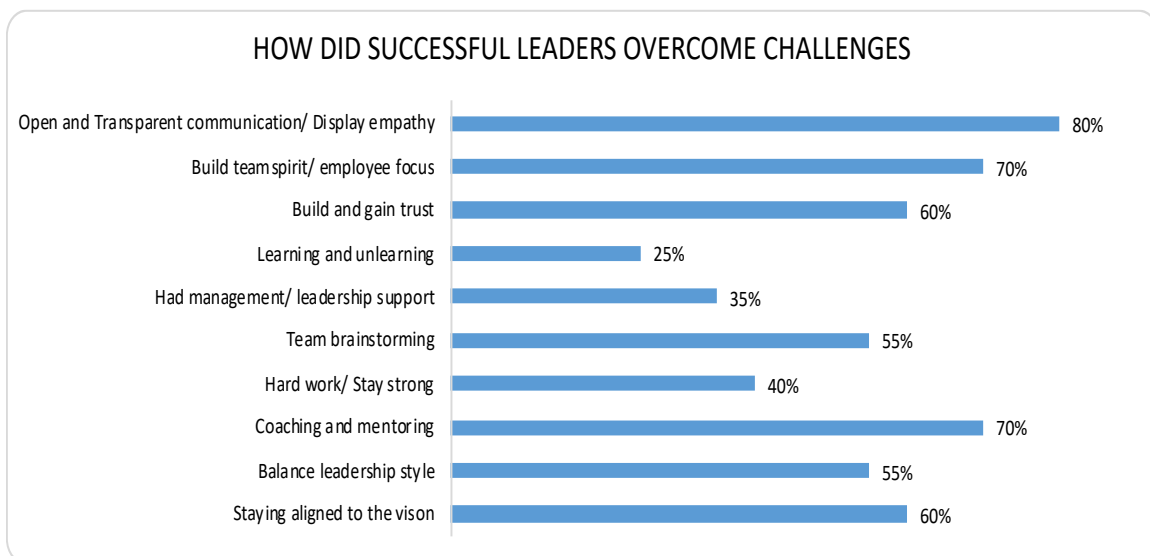


Fig 8 Overcoming challenges by successful leaders.

Figure 7 highlights the challenges faced by successful leaders when they became leaders. Team acceptance was the top most challenge followed by lack of team work faced by successful leaders. Most of the challenges were around lack of self-confidence and team management. Leading underperforming teams was another key callout.

Successful leaders methods to overcome the above challenges is provided in the figure 8 , open transparent communication, empathy, employee centricity and open to learning and unlearning. Leadership support and strong work ethics were the significant contributors identified by successful leaders for overcoming the initial challenges they faced when they became leaders.

**Question Two.**

Were there any leadership trainings that you were a part of before you took on the role of a leader? Yes or No, If Yes then please provide the training details.



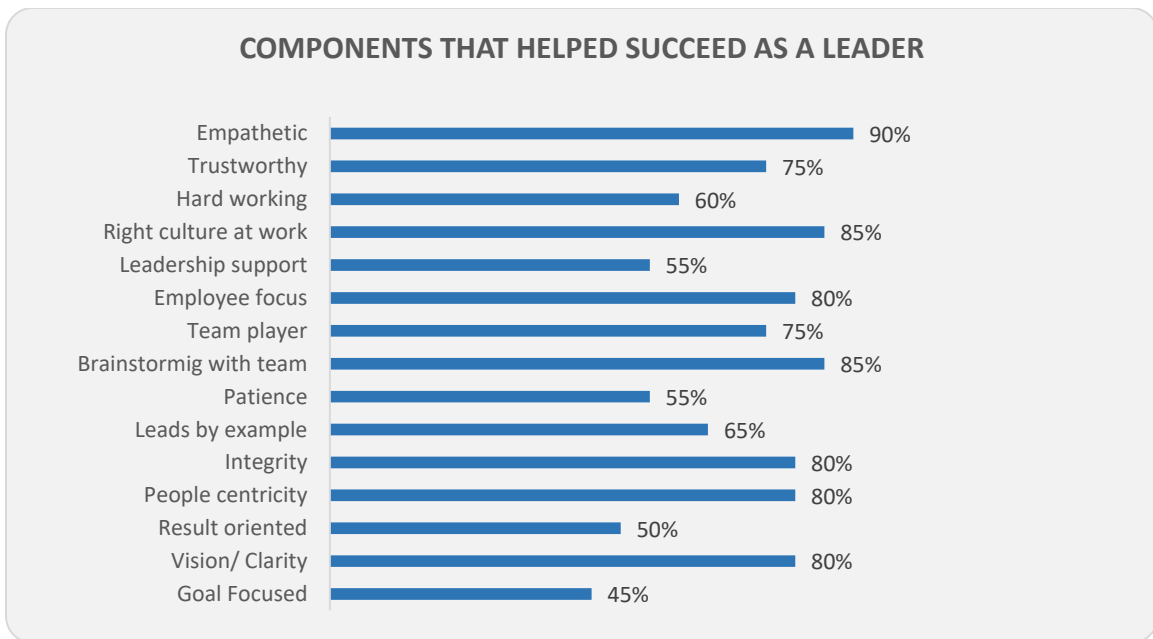
*Fig 9 Leadership training attended by successful leaders.*

93% of the successful leaders that were surveyed had participated in leadership trainings before they took on the role of a leader.

Leadership oriented trainings, people oriented trainings, strategic trainings, personality development training were the top training sessions that were attended by successful leaders before they took on the role of a leader.

**Question Three.**

What are the components that helped you succeed as a leader?



*Fig 10 Components that helped succeed as a leader.*

Successful leaders identified components or skills such as empathy, trust, hardworking, culture, leadership support and focus along with team player as some of the top skills and behaviors that helped them succeed as a leader.

#### Question Four.

What are your learnings as a leader that you want to share with others?



*Fig 11 Learnings as a successful leader to share with others.*

Successful leaders identified values, culture, ethics and trust as the key reasons for their success that they wish to share with other. This was followed by being unbiased and fair. Empowering their teams came as their point followed by being patient. Delegation, customer facing skills, empathy, transparency also made it to their top of the list.

#### **Summary of results from the survey of successful leaders.**

Successful leaders identified challenges such as getting the respect of their team members when they took over the leadership role and leading underperforming teams, using open transparent communications and leading by empathy and trust they were able to overcome these challenges. 93% of the surveyed leaders admitted to having undergone some form of leadership training before they took on the role of a leader. One of the leader admitted to having undergone technical training along with leadership training before becoming a leader. They believe that focusing on values, culture and empowering teams, being unbiased and leading with trust are the key to being a successful leader.

### 4.3 Research Questions Unsuccessful Leaders

#### Question One.

What are the challenges you faced during the time you were a leader?



*Fig 12 Challenges faced by employees who were not successful as leaders*

Employees who were classified as not successful in their role as leaders cited that there were no leadership training imparted to them before they took on the role of a leader. They also had the issue of non-acceptance by their team and resistance to change as their reasons for not being able to be successful. Role clarity, lack of support by their leadership, leading an underperforming team were the other primary reasons provided.

#### Question Two.

Were there any leadership trainings that you were a part of before you took on the role of a leader? Yes or No, If Yes then please provide the training details.



*Fig 13 Opportunity leaders and leadership trainings*

80% of the survey respondents stated that they did not have any form of leadership training before they took on the role of a leader.

Of the 15 individuals who were surveyed, 12 of them stated that they have not had any leadership training before they took on the leadership. 3 out of 15 stated that they had some form of training before they took on the role of a leader.

Of the 3 survey respondents who had stated that they had some form of training before taking on the role of a leader, 2 of those respondents stated that the training they attended were technical trainings and not leadership training.

**Question Three.**

What are your learnings from the time you spent as a leader?



*Fig 14 Learnings of opportunity leaders from their leadership time*

Lack of leadership training before taking on a leadership role stood out as a primary feedback from the leaders who were unsuccessful in their tenure as a leader. This was followed by the lack of acceptance by their teams, they felt that there was lack of empowerment. Another important feedback was the inability to spend time with their teams, delegation was called out as an issue, leadership transition and clarity of roles and responsibilities were other major areas of concern as identified by these survey respondents. Some of the other areas included communication skills and commitment to their roles.

**Question Four.**

Did you enroll in any leadership development programs after your tenure as a leader?

100% of the respondents to this question answered ‘Yes’. Of the 15 survey respondents all of the survey respondents confirmed that they went on to attend a leadership level training program. Top four leadership training that were identified are :-

- Leadership oriented.
- People oriented.

- Strategy and business management.
- Personality development.

### **Summary of results from the survey of unsuccessful leaders.**

Leaders who were classified as not successful stated that there were no leadership training imparted to them before they took on the role of a leader. 80% of the survey respondents stated that they did not have any form of leadership training before they took on the role of a leader. Lack of leadership training before taking on a leadership role stood out as a primary feedback from the leaders who were unsuccessful in their tenure as a leader. This was followed by the lack of acceptance by their teams, they felt that there was lack of empowerment. Another important feedback was the inability to spend time with their teams, delegation was called out as an issue, leadership transition and clarity of roles and responsibilities were other major areas of concern as identified by these survey respondents. Some of the other areas included communication skills and commitment to their roles. 100% of the respondents confirmed that they went on to attend a leadership level training program after their unsuccessful stint. This confirms that they felt the reason for their lack of success was due to the fact that they did not have any leadership training prior to taking on the leadership role.

### **Comparative analysis.**

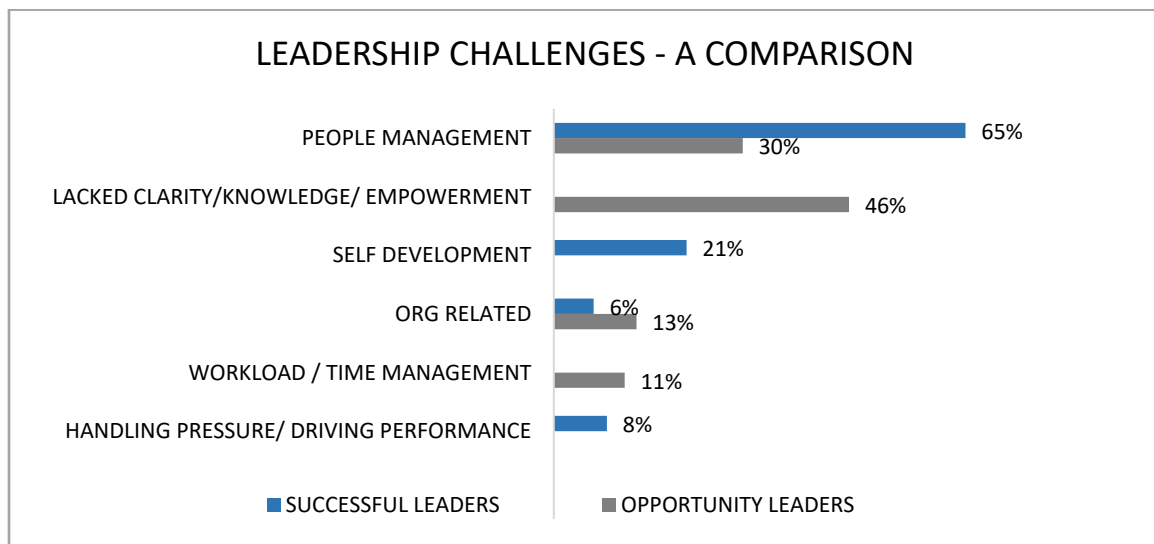
In this section of the analysis the objective would be to compare responses from each section of respondents to similar survey questions. The intention of this comparative study is to identify similarities or difference of opinion to the same question between the Corporate Leaders, Successful Leaders and Leaders who were unsuccessful or had opportunities during their leadership tenure. Along with comparative study the earlier responses will be mapped to make the findings comprehensive.

### **Comparison of leadership challenges successful and unsuccessful leaders.**



Comparison of leadership challenges faced by successful leaders and leaders who were unsuccessful or had opportunities in their tenure as leaders is provided below.

The below comparison should also be considered and read along with the challenges identified by successful leaders and how they overcame those and the challenges identified by unsuccessful leaders as shown in the previous pages.



*Fig 15 Leadership challenges successful Vs unsuccessful leaders.*

The top challenge faced by successful Leaders was related to people management while opportunity leaders encountered more of lack of role clarity, knowledge and empowerment as their top challenge. Successful leaders identified self-development opportunities that would enable them to be a better leader.

Opportunity leaders were challenged with workload and found it difficult to manage time. Both the leader types had organization related issues, though the percentage of opportunity leaders voicing it out was comparatively high.

When looking at the feedback separately, team acceptance was the top most challenge faced by successful leaders while lack of leadership poised a major challenge

to leaders who were unsuccessful. Lack of leadership training clearly reflected as the primary challenge faced by unsuccessful leaders.

In summary from both the comparative analysis and from looking at the feedback for each category of leaders separately, it is evident that successful Leaders spent most of their time focusing on people management when compared to leaders who were unsuccessful. The leaders who were unsuccessful had challenges on understanding the roles and responsibility that comes with being a leader. While both categories felt empowerment was an issue however the successful leaders found ways to address that whereas the leaders who were unsuccessful struggled with it.

Unsuccessful leaders spent more time on work load which seems to be more of focusing on administrative tasks, monitoring and reviewing as compared to leaders who were successful who utilized more of their time on self-development and people management. Leaders who were successful seem to have been able to manage through the organizational related issues as compared to the leaders who were unsuccessful.

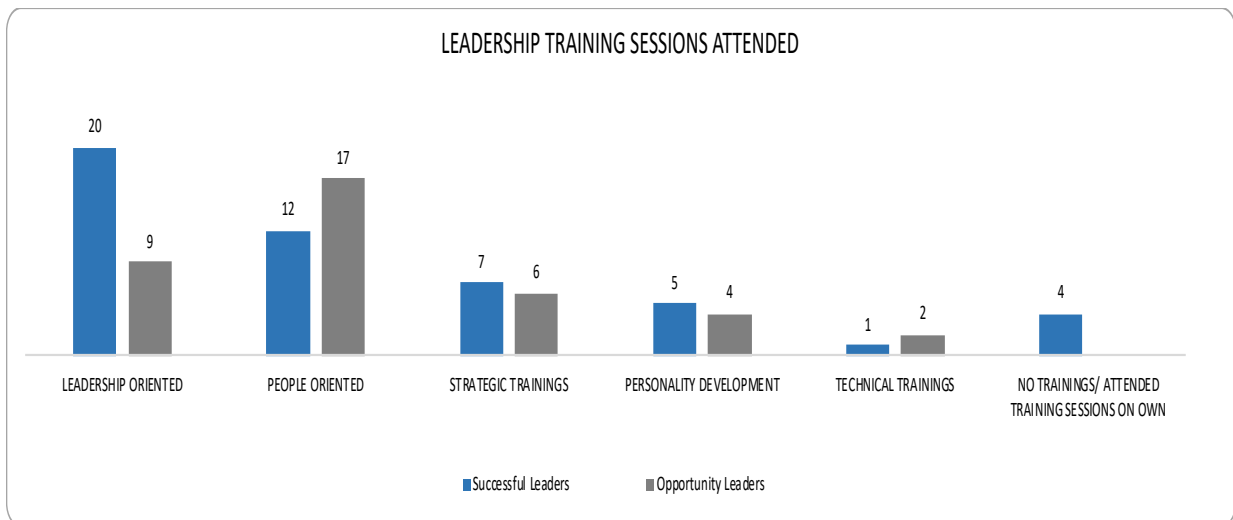
In conclusion this comparison directionally provides insights into the skills, traits and behaviors which goes into making leaders successful.

### **Comparison of leadership training types, pre and post leadership role.**

From the survey responses as presented in the previous pages, 93% of successful leaders had attended leadership training before taking on their leadership roles, whereas only 3 out of 15 or only 20% of unsuccessful leaders had taken any training prior to their leadership roles, and even out of those 3 who underwent training 2 of them attended technical training and not leadership training.

The below graph shows a comparative representation between the types of leadership training that was attended by successful leaders before they took on their leadership role. This is compared to the leadership training that unsuccessful leaders

attended after their tenure as a leader, or in other words they found some of the below qualities were missing in them during their tenure as leaders which impacted their role as leaders. As seen in the graph below, successful leaders had attended leadership orientation, people oriented trainings, strategic trainings, personality development as part of their leadership training prior to taking on the role of a leader. Whereas unsuccessful leader did not have these training prior to taking on the leadership role, however during their tenure they realized the gaps and then went on to attend people oriented trainings, leadership, strategic trainings and personality development.



*Fig 16 Leadership training Successful leaders Vs post failure trainings*

In summary from the all the above analysis it is evident and proves that leadership training is a must before anyone can take on a leadership role. Promoting people just based on pure technical skills without leadership skills creates failed leaders. Leadership training is key to helping leaders succeed in their leadership roles. The types of leadership training should be focused on leadership qualities, people leadership skills, strategic thinking, personality development, culture, empathy and such leadership skills.

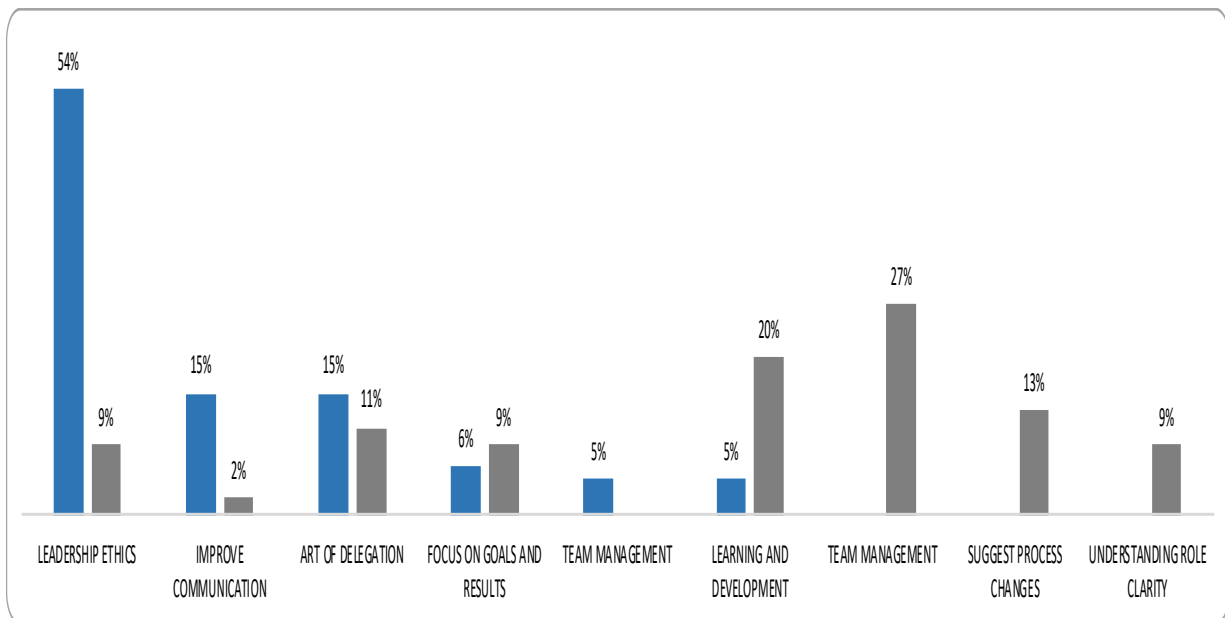
### Comparison of learnings from leadership tenure.

Q4: What are your learnings as a leader that you want to share with others?

(successful Leaders)

Q3: What are your learnings from your time spent as a leader? (opportunity

leader)



*Fig 17 Learnings from leadership tenure comparison successful vs unsuccessful leaders*

Leadership learnings between successful and opportunity leaders varied significantly. While 54% of successful leader comments mentioned that they felt qualities like values, culture, ethics, trust, fairness, empathy and patience were key learnings.

Opportunity leader comments tilted more towards team management, importance of developmental trainings, need of clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

Successful leaders focused on core leadership aspects whereas unsuccessful leaders were predominantly focusing on administrative tasks, they also faced challenges in their role as leaders since they lacked the leadership skill sets.

In summary it can be concluded that leaders who were successful in their roles had a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and they knew the key leadership aspects and traits that are important to lead. This could be a combination of skill and traits that were identified in them before they were made a leader, and along with leadership trainings they attended prior to taking over the role as a leader helped them develop and improve some of these skill sets further. These trainings also could prepare them for their role as leaders whereas the leaders who did not undergo any of the leadership trainings were unsuccessful in their roles as leaders.

From the survey it is also clear that the leaders who were unsuccessful could also have been promoted as leaders without identifying if they indeed had the leadership capabilities in them before they were moved into a leadership role. In addition to this erroneous way of promoting to leadership roles and combined with no leadership training provided resulted in these leaders becoming unsuccessful in their roles as leaders.

### **Comparison of corporate leaders definition vs successful leaders mantra.**

Q3: What are the components that helped you to succeed as a leader?

Q1: What is your definition of a successful Leader? (corporate leaders)

The idea of this comparison is to understand the expectations that a corporate leader has from a successful leader versus the components that helped a leader succeed in their leadership role.



*Fig 18 Corporate leaders expectation vs successful leaders components for success*

Leadership ethics (empathy, humbleness, transparency, fair/ unbiased approach, trust, patience, integrity) along with communication style dominated this category. Both the corporate leaders and successful leaders views matched on these aspects. In other words, corporate leaders expect a successful leader to exhibit all these leadership skills. Successful leaders also believed that these skills were important in their success as leaders.

There were 6 broad categories which were not mentioned by the successful leaders that the corporate leaders felt defined a successful leader. Topping that list was 'driving cost and performance' and that leaders should be 'inspirational'.

Work delegation, focus on goals and results, domain knowledge and less micromanaged work environment were defined by corporate leaders as traits of a successful leader.

Successful leaders did not have these aspects of cost, domain knowledge in their components on what got them success. However, successful leaders observed that organisation and management support played a crucial role in their success.

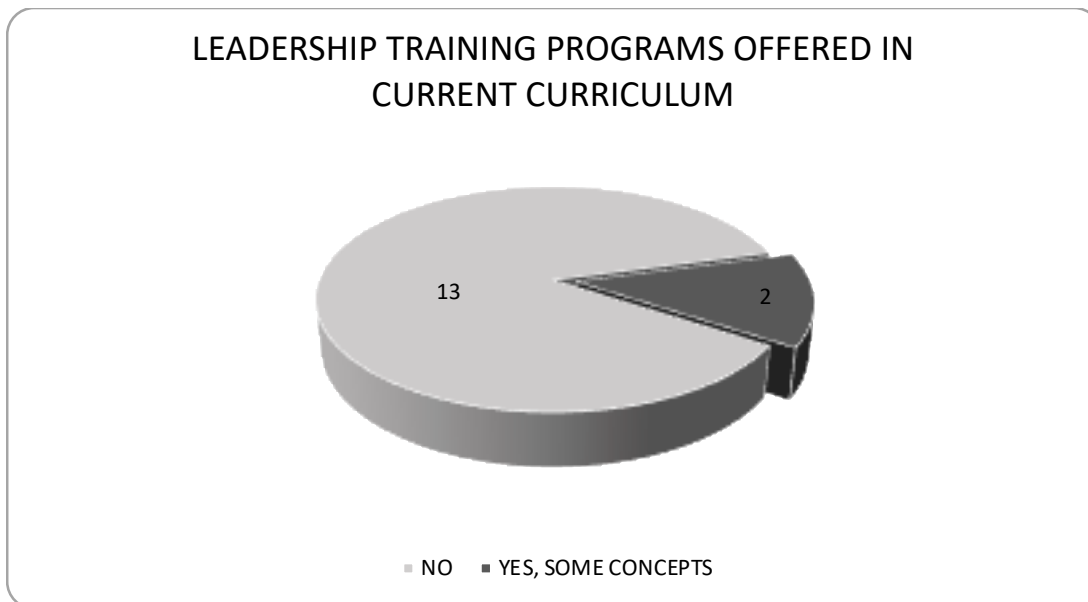
The areas where there were difference of views such as corporate leaders expecting a focus on cost was missing from the successful leaders and this could be related to the goals of a corporate leader having focus on costs and therefore the expectations that leaders down the chain remain focused on the cost aspect. Successful leaders did not have domain knowledge as a criteria as compared to corporate leaders expectations and this is primarily due to the corporate leaders focus on delivery goals.

In summary this comparison analysis and read along with the earlier analysis on previous pages from the corporate leaders and successful leaders directionally provides an insight that leadership ethics (empathy, humbleness, transparency, fair/ unbiased approach, trust, patience, integrity) along with communication styles are critical to the success of a leader.

#### **4.4 Research Questions Academia**

##### **Question One.**

What concepts of leadership programs do you have in your student's curriculum?



*Fig 19 Leadership programs in curriculum*

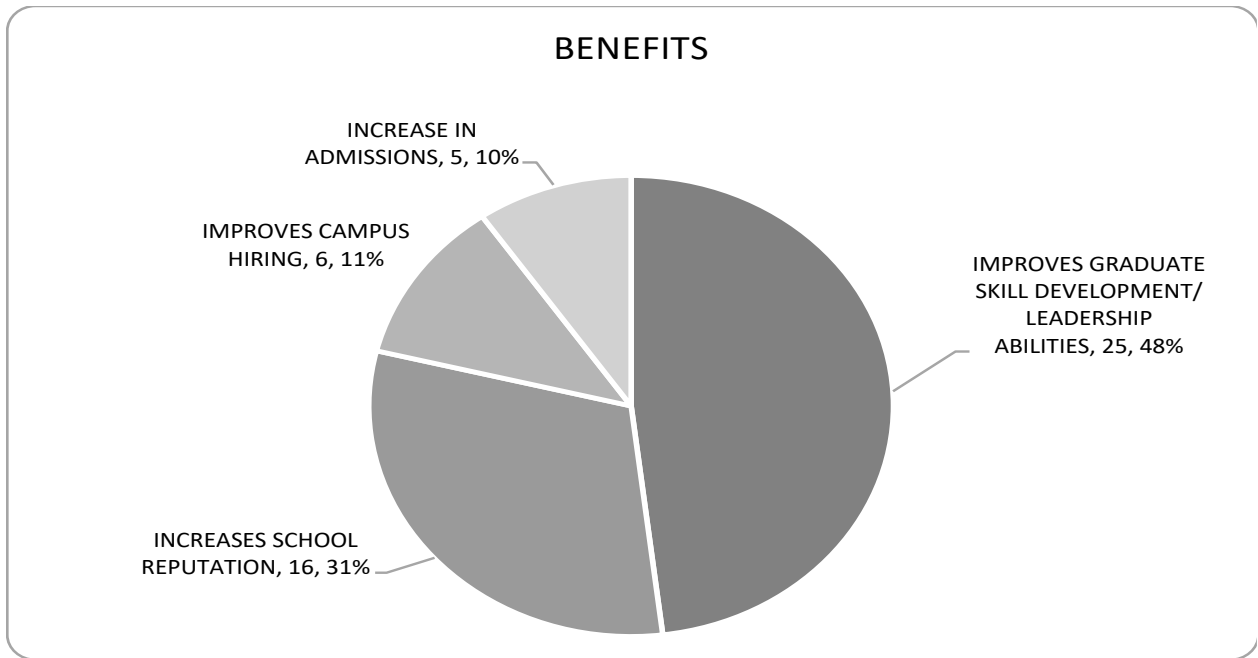
While 13 of 15 survey participants from academia stated that they did not offer leadership training programs in the current curriculum, 2 participants mentioned that they did have some basic leadership modules in their curriculum. However most of the concepts that were identified are not entirely leadership concepts but financial and management concepts.

**Question Two.**

Will your school benefit from introducing leadership concepts in your curriculum?

100% of academia survey participants were in agreement that their school would benefit from introducing leadership concepts in their curriculum, comments that the introduction of leadership training programs in the curriculum be highly beneficial especially in honing student skillsets.





*Fig 20 Benefits of leadership training in curriculum*

**Question Three.**

Would you be keen to incorporate leadership training in your student’s curriculum? If yes, what are some of the leadership components that you wish to introduce.

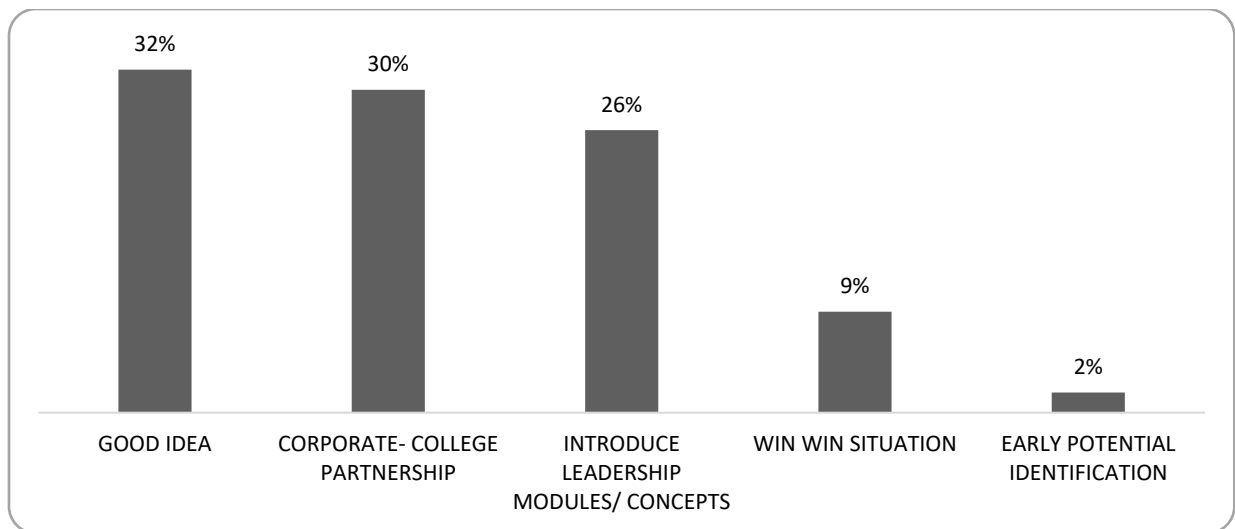
100% of academia respondents said Yes to this question. Given below is the list of leadership concepts that the academia wish to introduce into their students curriculum.

- Leadership.
- Culture, respect, values, humility.
- Goals and presentation, personality development.
- Delegation, empowerment, communication.
- Public speaking.
- Motivation and emotional intelligence.

#### Question Four.

What are your recommendations to develop leadership skills in school?  
(academia).

32% of the 53 comments from the academia felt that introducing leadership training programs in schools was a good approach. The other 68% comments not only felt that it was a good idea but also had comments around corporate-college partnership, introduction of leadership concepts and early potential identification.



*Fig 21 Recommendations to develop leadership skills in school ( academia).*

Verbatim comments provided by academicians in the survey are listed below :-

- Schools must depute teaching staff to spend time in corporates and understand scenarios and take it back to create modules for students.
- If universities are a hub for companies to do campus hiring then companies must be willing to step in and support schools.
- Corporates leaders should volunteer to teach students as guest lectures.

- Learning the concepts of leadership earlier in life will help students overcome the stress of corporate challenges.
- Schools should have syllabus focusing on leadership roles which are real-life in today's corporates.
- Especially in technical schools there is a real need to have leadership concepts in the curriculum.
- Schools have to consider their responsibility to both the passing out students and their career aspirations.
- Not only will students and corporates benefit from this but even the teaching staff will get more exposure as this process expands.
- Schools can easily fill the gap and later the corporates can take it forward as part of their leadership development programs.
- Corporates can identify right at the campus hiring time of who their future leaders can be from the student lot.

#### **4.5 Summary of findings.**

The corporate leaders who were surveyed felt that for their definition of a successful leader the top skill that was needed was empathy followed by good listener and passionate. Cost optimization was the next aspect that corporate leaders considered key to being successful as a leader. Corporate leaders expressed that training and assessments are the biggest criteria for succession planning. Identifying talent and communicating effectively was the other areas that was identified as key. Creating a career path for succession planning was top of the item for succession planning. Involving, coaching, delegating formed the biggest bucket of training and assessments category. The process of identification of talent was a clear priority for corporate leaders. Communication of the

role and clarity was considered important and creating a leadership pipeline was also a top need as per this survey amongst corporate leaders.

As identified by corporate leaders in the survey, leadership skills and domain knowledge ranked as the top priority to promote an individual to a team manager role followed by mentoring and training. The process of selection came next and monitoring of results was the fourth bucket.

A deep dive of the promotion process identified competency and skill as the top skills needed for promotion followed by a desire to lead. People skills and leadership skills was the next followed by domain knowledge. Training, coaching, mentoring all were considered important under the training bucket. Transparent selection process was called out as important and delegation with monitoring was another aspect under the results and monitoring category. Coaching, mentoring led the charts followed by continuous learning and development programs.

Leadership training and talent pool identification was another key aspect that was identified in the analysis. Delegation, training plans, creating a pipeline, mapping roles with talent also found top mentions.

The most common process mentioned by corporate leaders in promotion an individual to a team manager was identifying talent with the required skill set and knowledge and mentor, train and coach the individual followed by monitoring results. Comments were seen about following a transparent process and internal job postings. One comment that stood out was that a good individual contributor does not make a good team manager.

The results of the survey saw a varied responses to each questions and the analysis focused on picking the top buckets of responses. Corporate leaders expected a successful leader to not only show the leadership qualities such as empathy, coaching

skills and so on but there was expectations on cost monitoring, goals focus and result orientation. It could be attributed that corporate leaders expectations from successful leaders also were a clear indication of what the goals and expectations their organizations had from the corporate leaders.

Successful leaders felt that team acceptance was the top most challenge followed by lack of team work in their teams when they took over as leaders. Most of the challenges were around lack of self-confidence and team management. Leading underperforming teams was another key callout.

Successful leaders methods to overcome the challenges they faced were to have open transparent communication, empathy, employee centricity and open to learning and unlearning. Leadership support and strong work ethics were the significant contributors identified by successful leaders for overcoming the initial challenges they faced when they became leaders.

93% of the successful leaders that were surveyed had participated in leadership trainings before they took on the role of a leader.

Leadership oriented trainings, people oriented trainings, strategic trainings, personality development training were the top training sessions that were attended by successful leaders before they took on the role of a leader.

Successful leaders identified components or skills such as empathy, trust, hardworking, culture, leadership support and focus along with team player as some of the top skills and behaviors that helped them succeed as a leader.

Successful leaders identified values, culture, ethics and trust as the key reasons for their success that they wish to share with other. This was followed by being unbiased and fair. Empowering their teams came as their point followed by being patient. Delegation, customer facing skills, empathy, transparency also made it to their top of the list.

Successful leaders identified challenges such as getting the respect of their team members when they took over the leadership role and leading underperforming teams, using open transparent communications and leading by empathy and trust they were able to overcome these challenges. They believe that focusing on values, culture and empowering teams, being unbiased and leading with trust are the key to being a successful leader.

In comparison, leaders who were classified as not successful in their role as leaders cited that there were no leadership training imparted to them before they took on the role of a leader. They also had the issue of non-acceptance by their team and resistance to change as their reasons for not being able to be successful. Role clarity, lack of support by their leadership, leading an underperforming team were the other primary reasons provided.

80% of the survey respondents stated that they did not have any form of leadership training before they took on the role of a leader. Of the 15 individuals who were surveyed, 12 of them stated that they have not had any leadership training before they took on the leadership. 3 out of 15 stated that they had some form of training before they took on the role of a leader. Of the 3 survey respondents who had stated that they had some form of training before taking on the role of a leader, 2 of those respondents stated that the training they attended were technical trainings and not leadership training.

Lack of leadership training before taking on a leadership role stood out as a primary feedback from the leaders who were unsuccessful in their tenure as a leader. This was followed by the lack of acceptance by their teams, they felt that there was lack of empowerment. Another important feedback was the inability to spend time with their teams, delegation was called out as an issue, leadership transition and clarity of roles and responsibilities were other major areas of concern as identified by these survey

respondents. Some of the other areas included communication skills and commitment to their roles.

The top challenge faced by successful leaders was related to people management while opportunity leaders encountered more of lack of role clarity, knowledge and empowerment as their top challenge. Successful leaders identified self-development opportunities that would enable them to be a better leader.

Opportunity leaders were challenged with workload and found it difficult to manage time. Both the leader types had organization related issues, though the percentage of opportunity leaders voicing it out was comparatively high. Team acceptance was the top most challenge faced by successful leaders while lack of leadership posed a major challenge to leaders who were unsuccessful. Lack of leadership training clearly reflected as the primary challenge faced by unsuccessful leaders.

From both the comparative analysis and from looking at the feedback for each category of leaders separately, it is evident that successful leaders spent most of their time focusing on people management when compared to leaders who were unsuccessful. The leaders who were unsuccessful had challenges on understanding the roles and responsibility that comes with being a leader. While both categories felt empowerment was an issue however the successful leaders found ways to address that whereas the leaders who were unsuccessful struggled with it.

Unsuccessful leaders spent more time on work load which seems to be more of focusing on administrative tasks, monitoring and reviewing as compared to leaders who were successful who utilized more of their time on self-development and people management. Leaders who were successful seem to have been able to manage through the organizational related issues as compared to the leaders who were unsuccessful.

Successful leaders had attended leadership orientation, people oriented trainings, strategic trainings, personality development as part of their leadership training prior to taking on the role of a leader. Whereas unsuccessful leader did not have these training prior to taking on the leadership role, however during their tenure they realized the gaps and then went on to attend people oriented trainings, leadership, strategic trainings and personality development.

Leadership learnings between successful and opportunity leaders varied significantly. While 54% of successful leader comments mentioned that they felt qualities like values, culture, ethics, trust, fairness, empathy and patience were key learnings; Opportunity leader comments tilted more towards team management, importance of developmental trainings, need of clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

Successful leaders focused on core leadership aspects whereas unsuccessful leaders were predominantly focusing on administrative tasks, they also faced challenges in their role as leaders since they lacked the leadership skill sets.

In summary it can be concluded that leaders who were successful in their roles had a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and they knew the key leadership aspects and traits that are important to lead. This could be a combination of skill and traits that were identified in them before they were made a leader, and along with leadership trainings they attended prior to taking over the role as a leader helped them develop and improve some of these skill sets further. These trainings also could prepare them for their role as leaders whereas the leaders who did not undergo any of the leadership trainings were unsuccessful in their roles as leaders.

From the survey it is also clear that the leaders who were unsuccessful could also have been promoted as leaders without identifying if they indeed had the leadership capabilities in them before they were moved into a leadership role. In addition to this



erroneous way of promoting to leadership roles and combined with no leadership training provided resulted in these leaders becoming unsuccessful in their roles as leaders.

Leadership Ethics (empathy, humbleness, transparency, fair, unbiased approach, trust, patience, integrity) along with communication style dominated this category. Both the corporate leaders and successful leaders views matched on these aspects. In other words, corporate leaders expect a successful leader to exhibit all these leadership skills. Successful leaders also believed that these skills were important in their success as leaders.

There were 6 broad categories which were not mentioned by the successful leaders that the corporate leaders felt defined a successful leader. Topping that list was 'driving cost and performance' and that leaders should be 'inspirational'. Work delegation, focus on goals and results, domain knowledge and less micromanaged work environment were defined by corporate leaders as traits of a successful leader.

Successful leaders did not have these aspects of cost, domain knowledge in their components on what got them success. However, successful leaders observed that organisation and management support played a crucial role in their success.

The areas where there were difference of views such as corporate leaders expecting a focus on cost was missing from the successful leaders and this could be related to the goals of a corporate leader having focus on costs and therefore the expectations that leaders down the chain remain focused on the cost aspect. Successful leaders did not have domain knowledge as a criteria as compared to corporate leaders expectations and this is primarily due to the corporate leaders focus on delivery goals.

While 13 of 15 survey participants from academia stated that they did not offer leadership training programs in the current curriculum, 2 participants mentioned that they did have some basic leadership modules in their curriculum. However most of the

concepts that were identified are not entirely leadership concepts but financial and management concepts. 100% of academia survey participants were in agreement that their school would benefit from introducing leadership concepts in their curriculum. They also felt that introduction of leadership training programs in the curriculum would be highly beneficial especially in honing student skillsets.

Given below is the list of leadership concepts that the academia wish to introduce into their students curriculum:-

- Leadership.
- Culture, respect, values, humility.
- Goals and presentation, personality development.
- Delegation, empowerment, communication.
- Public speaking.
- Motivation and emotional intelligence.

32% of the 53 comments from the academia felt that introducing leadership training programs in schools was a good approach. The other 68% comments not only felt that it was a good idea but also had comments around corporate-college partnership, introduction of leadership concepts and early potential identification. Comments provided by academia stakeholders as suggestions to introduce leadership concepts are added as part of Fig 21 in the above analysis of the surveys conducted for academia stakeholders.

#### **4.6 Conclusion.**

Objectives or goals are the first step that makes for a successful organization with high performing leaders and leadership pipeline. This survey and analysis proves that corporate leaders views on what makes for a successful leader matched with the successful leaders views in almost all aspects, the one area that it didn't match was on cost and domain knowledge importance. Corporate leaders were governed by goals which

had a focus on cost and KPIs of delivery. While cost and delivery are important aspects in business, it was interesting that leaders who were successful did not mention either of these aspects, It can therefore be concluded that they were either achieving the cost and delivery aspects through their leadership skills without having to over-emphasize on these. This could also be due to lack of all goals being cascaded down to all level of leadership. However, the overarching finding from feedback provided by corporate leaders and successful leaders was that leadership skills such as empathy, values, culture, transparency, empowerment, delegation are key to being a successful leader.

From this survey and analysis, there is clear evidence that just nominating people as leaders without due assessments or just based on their technical capabilities or delivery results is a clear path to failure. Promoting people just based on pure technical skills without leadership skills creates failed leaders. The first and foremost step is to have a plan in place to identify leadership skills, behaviors, an intent and desire to lead and then create a pool of talent from this group for leadership training.

It is evident and proves without doubt from the survey and analysis that leadership training is a must before anyone can take on a leadership role. Leadership training is key to helping leaders succeed in their leadership roles. The types of leadership training should be focused on leadership qualities, people leadership skills, strategic thinking, personality development, culture, empathy and such leadership skills.

According to the findings from this survey, leadership ethics (empathy, humbleness, transparency, fair/ unbiased approach, trust, patience, integrity) along with communication styles are critical to the success of a leader. A well thought out succession planning, creating leadership pipeline, empowering leaders with leadership skills is vital for an organization to create a pipeline of leaders.

Academia stakeholders agree that there is a lack of leadership concepts in the curriculum of students, they also agree that introducing such concepts of leading in the students curriculum will benefit the students, the schools and the corporates making it a win-win strategy for all parties. The leadership skills that academia stakeholders proposed to include in student curriculum matches with the skills that was found as key for a successful leader across this survey and analysis.

## CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

From the extensive literature review that was carried out as part of this research, it was very evident that poor leadership is a root cause for organizational failures. Poor leadership not only costs organizations a lot of money, it also leads to customer dissatisfaction, employee dissatisfaction, loss of jobs and impacts livelihood, eventually either leading to lack of scale and growth and to organizations running out of business and eventually having to even shut down. In most cases it was evident that due to poor leadership, organizations were unable to sustain their business, they were unable to scale and grow business and in many cases it resulted in lack of revenues, lack of growth, customer churn and employee dissatisfaction.

There was substantial research evidence which identified skills and behaviors that were needed for a successful leader. The research pointed to identification of talent to lead, skills sets that were needed to be a first time leader, leadership development trainings, importance of succession planning and creating a pipeline of leaders within the organization to take on new roles and responsibilities.

The research also pointed to the importance of goals and goal setting, the overarching direction of vision and purpose of an organization impacted goals and metrics. There was substantial evidence that went on to prove that organizations have to get the end to end employee lifecycle management process in tune with the overall objectives of what the organization stands for and wants to achieve. Organizational culture and values proved to be a significant differentiator in successful organizations.

Good leadership was at the centerstage of all successful organizations. Successful leaders were shown to positively impact the four pillars of an organization. People, performance, customer and profitability. Successful leaders were shown in the research to be the ones who cared for their people and in turn the people performed to the expectations of customers or businesses and that led to desired profits. Literature reviews established that successful leaders were the ones who led with empathy, humility, were trained on leadership concepts, they focused on culture and values, they created more leaders in their groups. A collection of these went on to create successful organizations.

All the above insights from the research were further justified by the qualitative research arising out of the surveys conducted as part of the research methodology. The anecdotal feedback that was collated from subject matter experts as part of the research also corroborated what was found in the empirical research.

Based on all the facts and figures that has been uncovered up until now the next steps would be to provide a solution framework which will help organizations to build a pipeline of successful leaders, the framework will also make suggestions for enabling best in class solutions across the end to end employee lifecycle.

For an organization to enable and support an environment to nurture good leaders and leadership it is important to create that supportive environment. Therefore hiring the right talent, training and enabling the talent with the right skills, supporting and developing the talent to grow and learn, creating the right goals to measure and providing feedback to employees to succeed, building a culture of trust and values, all of these are important to create, support and grow successful leaders.

Leaders need a supporting environment to flourish and create more leaders. Therefore poor leadership issues has to be looked at holistically and in an end to end manner, only then can poor leadership issues be addressed. Apart from individual

capability of a leader, leaders become successful when the environment they operate in is conducive to succeed. The conducive environment is created by focusing on the entire funnel of an organization. The funnel starts at the top with the vision, mission and purpose to the transition of vision to goals, hiring, training and delivery of services, the end to end lifecycle of employee engagement.

While there are several external factors such as the market conditions, the geographical location pros and cons, talent pool availability, type of business vertical the organization is operating in and so on, it must be noted that many factors are not in direct control of the organization. The organization may be able to influence some of these factors to some extent but not in control entirely. One such area that the organizations can influence either on its own or through a collective effort is academia and the quality of output from academia.

The rest of this research will be focusing on discussing the outcome from the interviews that were conducted during the in-person or video conference with all the participants. The objective is creating a conducive environment in organizations which can lead to building successful leaders and leadership pipeline.

### **5.1 Discussion of Results Academia**

From the research done so far and combining that with the survey feedback by academicians it is very clear that schools ( colleges, universities ) do not have a formal leadership training concept and content in their student curriculum. It is also evident that having early interventions done to inculcate leadership concepts will enable students to grasp and improve leadership behaviors that are needed once they enter their professional career. Not only are these concepts helpful when they are offered a leadership level role but they come in handy even with coping and learning to work within an organization.

From the research and studies done so far, survey results, feedback from leaders and other stakeholders all affirm that the key aspects that can help an early or first time leader are mostly around behavior skills and relationship skills. While employees learn most of it at their workplace, having an early introduction to these concepts during the student life will provide an upstart to them when they enter the corporate space.

This entire framework of having leadership concepts included into the students curriculum has to be a multi-pronged approach. There has to be ownership and accountability and a measurement criteria for each areas of the framework. There are three parties involved in making this framework successful.

The academia stakeholders are the primary stakeholders and these include the school administration, content creators in the schools, planning members, marketing team at the school, the professors or lecturers or teachers as we know them in some parts of the world. Collectively we will call them as academia stakeholders.

The next set of stakeholder are the representatives from the corporates or the organizations / businesses that benefit from campus hiring or intake of employees from these schools. These stakeholders are the hiring, training and business teams.

The corporate stakeholders are a buyer of the services and at the same time they have to be the provider too. They are the buyers since they get the benefit of hiring these employees who have been upskilled by schools, they are also the providers too since they have the responsibility of providing the skills sets that they are noticing emerging from their successful leaders, they also have the responsibility of constantly providing feedback on the quality of leadership skills that they observe from the students who are passing out with the new skills and have joined their organizations. These organizations also have to provide the brief overview of their businesses and how they expect employees to turn up at work, goals, objectives purpose and so on. While the academia



doesn't have to create organization specific training programs it is important to have the basics incorporated into their students curriculum. Most organizations would have their objectives centered around people, performance, customer and profitability and their vision would be focused on some sort of transformation, enablement or simplification. Academia can easily create the foundation on these larger purposes as corporate vision and purpose.

Apart from the above aspects the next step of the framework is to enable or provide the academia teachers the skills needed to conduct these leadership training programs. Most of the teachers in schools are well versed in their area of expertise and the concept of leadership training maybe a new domain for them, therefore it is imperative to conduct a full-fledged upgrading program and a periodic refresher program for all academia stakeholders who will be involved in upgrading students with leadership skill sets. The content for training the teachers or train the trainer program can be created by a combination of corporate stakeholders and their academia counterparts. Once this has been done the combined group can devise the content to be used to train the students.

A periodic refresher is needed for all the trainers / teachers of the schools. This is to ensure that their skills and understanding of the subject stays up to date. The combined group should also review and refresh the content periodically to keep it updated.

There should be care taken and due consideration given to ensure that the students are not stretched or overburdened by the addition of the leadership concepts into their curriculum, rather these should be considered as a deviation from their routine technical studies and concepts should offer stress relieving activities. Many of these concepts can be taught in a team building environment and as outdoor activity. Organization use a lot of gamification into their training modules. Schools can borrow the gamification of some of the leadership concepts into their curriculum. Ofcourse these are items to be given

undue attention but from the research done so far as part of the literature review and the feedback from teachers at schools it is clear that leadership concepts training in schools will be a refreshing addition to the students in their exhaustive technical curriculum.

Executives from corporates can be added as guest lecturers by the schools to conduct some of the leadership training for their students. This will not only be exciting for the students but a learning for the corporates from their student interactions.

Corporate executives from the business, human resources, learning and development teams can conduct some of these sessions for the students. This will give the students real life perspectives and also provide an opportunity to get to ask questions on the working of the corporate world and the demands of a corporate career. Further, organized tours of the corporate offices and offering a glimpse into the day to day aspects of a corporate job can help prepare the students to get ready for what's ahead for them in the careers.

In the same context, it will be important to ensure the teaching staff at schools are also provided a detailed view of the life of an employee and a leader at work. They should also be able to relate to the challenges and opportunities that students will face when they enter the corporate world. This will further help the teaching staff to relate to the training concepts and provide directions and inputs to students.

The content for leadership training is easy to create for the students curriculum, in most cases it is already available with organizations and corporates, however the challenge is for all parties to come together and collaborate and create a path forward. It is evident that corporates and organizations will benefit out of this initiative, it is evident that academia believes this is an area of importance for them, students will benefit, the next step is for all stakeholders to come forward and make this happen. This is also an opportunity for communities, governments ,establishment responsible for job creation to

step in and support this initiative to make it a standard process. Local governments are a stakeholder for job creation and economic growth and have to be involved in this process of collaboration and ownership between academia and corporates.

## **5.2 Discussion of Results Solution Framework**

### **Solution framework.**

The next section of this thesis focusses on creating a solution framework across all the aspects of an employee life-cycle. Employee life cycle starts from hiring an employee to until the exit of the employee from the organisation. This entire lifecycle of an employee is crucial in our context of leadership. The employees who are hired go on to become leaders, until they become leaders they are performing certain roles for the organisation as individual contributors or team members in a group. Many of them go on to climb the ladder of corporate career. Each of the employee in the organisation has to deliver to the expectations that the organisation has from each of them and their roles. So be it a leader, or an entry level employee all of them have equal roles and responsibility to play to ensure the overall success of the organisation.

It is crucial that in the supply chain cycle all spokes or sections perform their expected tasks perfectly to ensure the wheel moves forward. The first aspect of hiring is the start of the employee life cycle. You reap what you sow, therefore the process of ultimately building an effective and efficient organisation starts with bringing the right quality of employees. These best in class employees who suit an organisation's culture, values, requirements and are the right fit will then go on to become either high performing employee or later on as leaders. Hiring could be for leaders or team members, however getting the right candidate who will fit in with the culture and values of what the organisation stands for starts at the hiring stage.

Once an organisation has brought in a new hire at whichever levels of hierarchy, the other aspects of an employee life cycle determine how successful the individual will be and this in turn will determine the contribution to the organisation's success. An employee has to be nurtured, trained, compensated and developed to continue to perform and eventually move up in their career and deliver to expectations in each of the roles they are assigned. Organisation is investing resources both time and money and therefore it is important to retain the most important resource which is the human resource. Retention of employee is a key factor that goes on to make the difference to an organisation's success. While doing all of these the organisation has to factor best in class experience for their employees and customers, brand recall, value for society and stakeholders, ensure profitability in business and expand their footprint.

To address the issue of poor leadership the entire employee lifecycle has to be optimised to make it seamless, efficient and effective. This will result in high performing individuals and teams, lead to nurturing best in class leaders and all of this will contribute to consistent success for the organisation. Irrespective of whether an organisation is hiring for freshers, experienced candidates, individual contributors, team members or leaders the basic structure remains the same with some tweaking depending on specific needs. Rest of the process such as performance monitoring and management, growth and retention and so on are uniform practices that cut across the organisation. However there would be slight modifications depending on roles, levels, titles, location and so on but these are easily customisable from the below framework.

The employee lifecycle can be broadly split into:-

1. Sourcing.
2. Selection.
3. Onboarding.

4. Performance management.

5. Growth.

6. Retention.

Though there are several aspects which are involved in an employee career, we can broadly classify these as the primary ones. It is also important to mention that some of the above aspects could have overlap, such as sourcing and selection. It is also important to note that each of these aspects are inter-linked and could have lasting impact through the life-cycle of an employee.

Ongoing learning, rewards and recognition, compensation, engagement activities are amongst the various aspects that surrounds the career and employment life-cycle, however all of these sub-sets feed into the main aspects. Interestingly each of the sub-sets or multiple sub-sets could be important contributors to all or some of the primary aspects. For representation and reference let us call the top 5 aspects as primary contributors and everything else as sub-sets of the primary aspects.

In the next sections let us look into the standard ways organizations are conducting each of these aspects and also elaborate how some of these could be done differently or how some of the successful organizations are able to accomplish and execute some of these functions better.

### **5.3 Discussion of Results Onboarding.**

#### **Sourcing.**

The process of sourcing starts with the creation of a job description. A job description is a detailed document of what's expected from an employee as part of her / his role. You cannot hire someone until you are absolutely clear of what is expected from the role. In this regard as a first step in the employee life cycle, several organizations do not spend adequate time on creating a detailed job description. This researcher also

noticed that in many organizations that do a fair job of creating a job description, the focus of the document is mostly on what's expected from an employee. There is hardly any mention of what the employee will get in turn from the organization. There is no mention of what the organizations is trying to achieve, nor its vision and mission. The job description seldom details the ways an employee will be measured, rewarded and empowered to achieve a satisfying work-life balance.

Hiring talent that will lead the organization forward needs an effective, engaging and inclusive job description. A good job description should combine a little bit of marketing, though focus should be on not making it too "salesy" and should be a document of facts and truth. This should add to the organizations vision and mission and what the employee will contribute to making this vision successful.

In addition to the role description there should be clarity and detailing of the skills and competencies needed to execute and perform well in the role. While detailing the skills and competencies care should be given to ensure there is nothing vague and left to imagination. The skills and competencies should be measurable and with absolute certainty and clarity.

To ensure that the organization is able to attract diverse pool of talent, there is a need to ensure that the job description focusses on gender neutrality, doesn't alienate people of color, race, ethnicity, differently abled.

A key task as part of creating the job description is to get the title of the role right. While it is fancy to pick a "cool" title, it also could be the reason many candidates do not want to apply for that role since the title puts them off. For example- if you are hiring for a marketing executive then call the title as "marketing executive" instead of something like a "marketing guru".

There is plenty of research to suggest that sometimes a weird title may also indicate a lack of seriousness and focus to the role. While creativity can help the organization have their job title stand out, there could be several potential candidates who are either not aware since they are searching for the job under a different title or they do not apply for the role since the title doesn't convey a serious career growth. One way is to integrate industry standard language into the job titles which can lead to a larger target market penetration. An example can be an often used role of an account manager being advertised as client success manager. You could still do the modelling well to ensure that you are communicating that the candidate will do much more than an account manager in the client success manager, however the foundation of the role remains as someone responsible for a customer success.

The job description could start with a short engaging overview of the job, how it contributes to the larger company objectives, however the better job descriptions also link it to the betterment of society as a whole. For example relating a job or a role and how it will be helping make customers' lives better or solve business or social problems are more attractive and fulfilling. Include wordings such as being a part of a group of people solving a set of problems or making activities simple and easy for customers.

Job Descriptions which cater to self, company and society as a whole are more endearing and appealing than just listing out a set of tasks to be done at work. A good practice is to group sections of skills and traits into larger buckets such as technical skills, management and leadership skills, communication skills and so on.

According to the national center for women and information technology published survey, using over the top language such as rock stars may deter certain sections of the society from even applying to a role. Therefore care should be taken to avoid superlatives

or extreme modifiers. The idea here is to ensure that the document focusses responsibilities, growth and development instead of a narrow set of abilities.

The objective of a job description is to make a potential candidate excited about the role, the company, the transformation happening in the industry the company is operating. A good job description also talks of the growth of the industry the company is operating in followed by the growth the company is expecting.

Non-negotiable items such as qualification, background checks, compliance and information security related criteria should be called out clearly. There should be absolutely no ambiguity in detailing these critical requirements, preferably upfront or even under a non-negotiable terms and conditions. Many organizations and job descriptions either avoid or ignore these, in some cases they are hidden deep within a job description document which all parties tend to miss out on. Another best practice some organizations do is to create some sense of urgency to fill a position. Though there are pros and cons to this approach especially if the urgency is not real, however as long as the organization is fair and follows an ethical approach to the hiring process this is a good practice to follow. Creating an urgency to the role conveys a sense of importance to the role, also taps into a larger set of candidates. Care should be taken that once the hiring happens the joining date is not delayed causing any inconvenience to the candidates.

The missing aspect in many job descriptions which some organizations have addressed and are reaping the benefits. The importance of culture in the job description which is right at the first stage of an employee life-cycle.

Culture should speak for itself in the document, culture fit is as much important for both the employee and the organization. Culture is not just about highlighting benefits, perks, flexible schedules though it is important to call all of these as employee



engagement activities in the job description. Culture is a combination of values, rituals, diversity and inclusion and genuine care for the employee well-being.

Finally, just as an hiring manager is judging a resume, candidates are also evaluating the decision of taking on a role in an organization based on the one document they have in front of them which is the job description. Therefore, it is crucial to have the job description cover all of the aspects that has been discussed above.

To recap, the list of items that are mandatory in a job description are as follows:-

- Title and summary of the role – engaging overview.
- Who the organization is- include vision, purpose, values, industry, rate of growth.
- Role- purpose, big picture, growth, team, contribution to organization and society.
- What's in it for both employee and organization- growth, engagement, work-life.
- Non negotiables- qualification, compliance, back ground checks.
- Skills, competencies, traits- readily needed and trainable.

### **Target market and Go to market.**

Once the job description is done satisfactorily, It is important to ensure the right target market is identified and the right method to reach the market is utilized. Many organizations struggle with this phase. A go to market strategy allows the organization to be effective and efficient and utilize the available resource to the optimum. A lot of research and time has to be spent on the right approach and the right target market along with the best approach to tap into that market. Due to consideration has to be given for both out-bound targeting and to enable inbound walk-ins if that is a viable method.

Some of the basic steps needed to build a target market and a go to market strategy are as follows:-

- Understand who is your potential candidate.
- Demographics.
- Your value proposition.
- Pricing and return on Investment.
- Social media.
- Success metrics.
- Internal referral.

Understanding your potential candidates is key to ensure you are targeting the right segment of society. For example, if a company is hiring a designer then it makes more sense for the targeting to be focused on design colleges or similar organizations who are good at design offerings thereby there are lot of designers waiting for new opportunities.

Demographics play a crucial part in where you want to target and the go to market strategy. If the major population of your potential candidates are living in a different town then it makes more sense to focus your advertising in that town rather than in your locality. Similarly the age group of your potential candidates would play a major role in the way you are targeting them. If your primary source of potential candidates are former defense personnel then your strategy should be to focus on areas with defense localities.

If you are looking to target young college graduates then advertising in college campuses and campus recruiting would be more suitable.

Value proposition is what makes your organization better than the others, how the role and job offer can be more enriching than what else the market is offering. Value proposition should cover both current and future benefits for a candidate.

Pricing and return on investment is an internal measurement criteria and relates to optimum usage of the budget and return on expense. This is extremely crucial metric to plan, track and optimize. This metric will determine the options of go to market and target channel. There are several mechanism and channels available for going to market with your requirements such as advertisement in print media, or digital channels, bill boards and so on, however organizations should understand the pricing for each and the returns each of the channels are delivering in fulfilling the requirements. Based on this metric, organizations can then choose to hone in on suitable channels which meets their requirements in the most cost effective and efficient manner.

Social media is seeing a lot of action for hiring. Most organizations are tapping into the strength of social media to source their candidates. Depending on the organizations brand recall and value, penetration of both candidates and the organization in social media circles, this channel is proving to be a cost effective medium to source candidates. However due to the increasing spread and usage of social media it is all the more important to ensure the job description is specific and has absolute clarity on the requirements, benefits and challenges of the role.

Success metrics apart from having the pricing and return on investment should focus on the quality of the candidates right through the screening to onboarding and performance of the candidates atleast till the first few months post joining.

Success metrics should also measure employee retention for a period of not less than atleast 90 days from joining date. There should be a comparison for success metrics with the channels from where the candidates are sourced and relate it to all the metrics to showcase channel wise comparison. This will help organizations to decide which channels are performing and at what cost benefit. Success metrics should be at the core of decision making in any go to market and talent acquisition strategy.

Internal referrals are the most underrated amongst all talent acquisition strategies of most organizations. Though there is substantial evidence which proves that candidates who are hired through internal referrals tend to perform well and also have a longer retention period in the organization. There is more affinity and loyalty to the organization. Candidates who join via internal referrals are equipped with strength and opportunities of the organization, they understand the benefits and challenges, in short there is no sudden surprise or shock for a new employee. Internal referrals are cost effective and in many cases rewarding for the existing employee who is doing the referral since most organizations do reward the employees who are referring new candidates.

Apart from creating some incentives for existing employees to refer candidates, organizations stand to benefit from a ready pool of matching talent who have a higher chance of joining, performing and also staying in the organization for longer period. Several organizations have mastered the art of internal referrals and are reaping the rewards and benefits.

A related aspect of internal referrals are internal job postings; internal job postings offer the role to any existing employee who is aspiring to move into a new role. Internal job postings are of two natures, one which is a promotion and the other which is a lateral movement.

An internal job posting for a promotion would be for example when an organization is looking for a senior manager in compliance and offers this role within the organization and existing employees who fulfill a certain criteria qualify to apply. The understanding here is that those who apply are probably at one level lower in the hierarchy at a manager level and they get to apply to a senior manager level as a promotion. This is a way of rewarding and creating a culture of growth within the organization.

The other internal job postings are more of a lateral movement, an example would be a manager working in human resources aspires to move to learning and development function and when there is an opportunity in the learning and development function the manager in human resources gets a chance to apply.

Lateral movements are a fine way of rotating talents internally creating a culture of job satisfaction through job rotations and new learnings and challenges. Organizations that do internal job postings are greatly rewarded by higher employee morale and motivation.

Be it lateral movements or internal job postings, referrals or any other aspects and innovative ideas the organizations is trying, all of these are excellent mechanism to create more positivity within the organization. The feel good factor about opportunities and growth becomes visible. It is a fact that organizations need to focus on external marketing but the lesser known fact that internal marketing is equally important. Internal marketing ensures that employee motivation is high, there is much more positive energy in the work area and the buzz that gets created is very contagious in a positive way.

### **Selection.**

Once you have the job description and the target market and go to market strategies completed the organization approaches the selection process. Selection process is at the core of starting a new relationship. Both the candidate and the organization are probably meeting face to face in a physical ( or in video conference set up ) for the first time. This stage offers a lot of insights to both the candidate and especially the interviewer in terms of body language, tone and emotional shifts of the candidate.

Before elaborating further on the actual selection process it is important to call out that some of the better selection process is where the interviewers are calibrated and certified to conduct interviews. As part of these calibrations and certifications,

organizations which have mastered the art of selection do ensure that interviewers are trained to remove any personal biases such as age, gender, ethnicity, demographics, academics and so on.

Candidates are reviewed entirely on what they bring to the organization in terms of their capability and talent and there are no biases driven by the interviewers personal choices. Further, the interviewer is also trained to be respectful to the candidate, check for body language, comfort and discomfort to questions, emotional shifts, resistance and so on during the conversation. There has to be some parity amongst interviewers and clarity on what is expected from candidates. Interviewers should also be trained to portray the organization in the way that is appealing to the candidate.

The broad stages of a selection process can be split into as follows:-

- a. Screening.
- b. Assessments.
- c. Interviewing process.
- d. Background checks and references.
- e. Decision and job offer.

Each of the above stages can be further divided into sub-sections which we will review below.

### **Screening.**

Screening is not a standardized process in many organizations, mostly done based on the roles, needs, market, demand and supply. However there are certain best practices that some organizations have created and developed over a period of time which can be incorporated for better results. Some findings are a result of trial and error however there are several standard practices followed which provides better predictable outcomes.

Technology and the advancement in using technology and tech enabled solutions and products, there are significant changes across all aspects of candidate screening. The changes are especially visible in the last decade. It must be added that while the overall holistic process has got upgraded and elevated, the much needed changes are more apparent in the screening process. Technology can replace a lot of human intervention during the screening process, however it must be noted that an augmentation or balance between using tech enabled solutions with human intelligence supervising for nuances probably works the best.

The three most crucial aspects that a recruitment or hiring team performs can be consolidated as sourcing, screening and selection. It must be said that with the advent of multiple job portals and the popularity of social media, sourcing has become much more simpler than it was earlier. But the flip side to this is the fact that this exposure to a job opening has increased significantly leading the humongous volumes of resumes, candidates and applicants. Therefore it gets even more challenging for the recruitment team to identify the right candidate within the prescribed timeframe amongst the huge volume of applications.

Candidate screening can be simply summarized as the process of reviewing job applications and it involves flipping through or checking over several resumes to find the closest application from a candidate that matches the job description in terms of qualifications, experience, skill sets and organization fitment.

Despite all the advancements in technology, screening is still a very high human intensive aspect in the recruitment process. There are many research and analysis, findings on time taken to screen a successful application, the average time spreads across the 12 to 24 hour of screening time for a successful candidate hire. Keep in mind these are averages and depend on a lot of factors such as the type of role, level, geography and

so on. Further as organizations want to get leaner in terms of employee headcount and trim down staff or reduce headcount for cost optimization purposes the first go to departments are the support functions such as recruitment. These functions do not generate revenue and are always seen as a cost centre, therefore falls under higher scrutiny in terms of ROI. All of this means that recruitment teams are small in number and size and this will continue to only get smaller, especially with a combination of cost optimization focus, technology and companies constantly trying to develop methods to replace human intervention for screening if not augment with technology. Ofcourse screening as an activity should take significantly lesser time in the entire hiring process. Screening is a filter, the objective is to ensure good matching candidates go through the funnel and the others are filtered out. Screening is an optimization process in hiring.

The process of candidate screening ideally should follow a set of actions or activities. Even before the actual screening begins it is important to ensure that the person doing the screening has a deep understanding of the requirements, objectives, expectations that the organization has from the role. This is non-negotiable, Unless it is absolutely clear on the expectation from the role the screening process is bound to fail.

The primary or first check that is a part of the screening process is to look for role fitment in terms of qualification, this may include experience, academic background, skills, competencies and so on. Some part of these checks could be done by a human or using technology and artificial intelligence.

The second aspect of the screening process is to conduct the must have requirements, these could be a valid work document, it could be specific technical skills. Some of the non-negotiable aspects of the role fall under this aspect of screening.

Most recruitment screening process further look for good to have qualifications, such as prior experience in the same domain, or previous accomplishments or additional



skills which could be a value add to the organization. These are not necessarily the must haves, but these are the good to have qualification which adds value to a candidates profile.

At this stage a good recruiter then looks at the overall candidate profile in a much more holistic view. A combination of all that she has reviewed and ticked off as positive then goes on to making the candidate profile a select for the next round of interview.

In summary a combination of must have requirements plus good to have qualifications and then an overall overview of the candidate holistically is what an ideal screening process should cover.

Become aware of unconscious bias, we all tend to favor similarities, we are more likely to get well with people who have same interests or background. Not just during screening but during the entire hiring process, this and other biases can be harmful. There should be adequate coaching provided to the recruitment screening staff to overcome such biases.

A large part of the screening process is reviewing the resume. A recruitment executive focused on screening may be looking at resume formatting, words and grammar, unexplained job gaps, look for typos and so on, however while these are important the recruiter must be trained on making objective decision making. Cover letters are very common nowadays, cover letters can provide reasons such as motivation for the role, strength and weakness, goals and aspirations. Recruiter should have an eye for detail along with a temperament to make informed decision on selection or rejection. Crucial point here is that there has to be an objective process of both elimination and selection.

Some of the more successful screening teams infact make notes of observation from their screening process and pass it on as probable questions for the next round of interview and selection process.

Throughout the recruitment process it is very important to ensure that the candidate experience practices are relevant and appropriate to the brand and values of the organization. Regardless of whether the candidate will be hired or not, or whether the candidate chooses to join or not, the experience will determine if the candidate will become an advocate for the organization or not.

A key metric that screening process should track is recruitment conversion rates. Conversion rates should be tracked from application to clearing the screening stage. This conversion rates can give organizations insight into the top of the funnel application quality and the effectiveness of screening. Screening pass to selection pass is another conversion rate that will provide insights into the quality of candidates who are clearing the screening process.

The key here is for every person in the recruitment team and other concerned stakeholders to recognize and remember that best talent in the market is available to be hired for a limited period of time. Some of the studies point out that on an average a good talent remains available in the market for not more than 12 days. Again these are averages, however the important point is that apart from the quality of screening process to identify and process the best suited candidate to the next round of interview, the critical point is to ensure that the screening process takes the least amount of time possible. Speed is of great importance in the screening process.

The efficacy and effectiveness of an organizations screening process is undoubtedly a crucial step that will determine the ultimate quality of employees in the

organization. Therefore screening is one of the more crucial aspects in hiring process that should get due attention that it deserves.

### **Assessments.**

Assessments are basically the stage at which the hiring team is checking the essentials. During this stage normally there are some tests conducted, there are tests to evaluate for technical skills, administrative skills and other job related tests.

Two of the tests that have been around for a while are aptitude test which are mostly used to measure job relevant abilities and personality tests which are used to identify candidates character strength and behavioral traits, mostly which aid and are necessary for the role. Several successful screening process have embedded cultural panel assessments or tools and assessment to gauge and judge the candidates cultural affinity and ability to imbibe and demonstrate the values and ethics of the organization.

Psychometric assessments and others have gained in popularity in many organization.

### **Interview.**

Interviews could be stressful especially for the candidates. For an interviewer it is equally important since the interviewer is representing the organization. Both parties the candidate and the interviewer are being evaluated and both want to leave a good impression. Therefore from an interviewer perspective it is important to choose the right questions. Preparation for the interview is crucial, a deep understanding of the organization and the role is mandatory. Creating a positive, calm and comfortable environment can enable an authentic conversation. Not just asking questions but listening with intent and understanding the mindset of the candidate will lead to a much better outcome. Some of the questions can range from skill based questions especially if the interviewer is a direct hiring manager. Behavioral questions will help understand the

candidates thinking and reaction to various situations and context. Value based questions are key essentials to examine a candidates cultural fitment.

Effective communication is a key attribute to identify if the candidate is a good listener, are the answers on point or vague. A good communicator could provide examples for clarity of understanding and to explain their point of view. The interviewer should be able to gauge the attitude of the candidate. Attitude can convey pride of achievements or arrogance and ego. During interview conversations, consistency can be assessed. Consistency with previous responses and whatever is mentioned in the resume.

Some of the best in class organizations have processes to certify interviewers and only those who are certified can do interviews. This means that most line managers, human resources hiring team members, panel interview members and so on have to undergo an internal training and certification process before they can actually conduct an interview with a potential candidate.

As part of these certification programs interviewers are trained to identify body language, facial expressions, emotions and so on of the candidate, they are also trained to ask right and relevant questions, behavior during the interview, list of questions, actions that can be done and those that must not be done. A key aspect and reinforcement that many organizations do across their hiring cycle is to remove personal biases.

Interviews are done by various members of the organization, human resource recruiter, hiring manager definitely does interview, there could be a panel of interviewers. All of these are customized to the role, level being hired. However some of the fundamentals of the interview process remain the same. Respecting the candidates privacy, confidentiality, time and effort are all crucial elements of the interview process.

### **Background checks and references.**

Background checks are very important especially when you bring onboard new employees especially in areas which handle sensitive and confidential information, fraud and prevention areas, departments where there is access to personal information and finances. Background checks protect the organization to a large extent by filtering out candidates who have a history of acts and actions which can cause damage to the organization. This damage can be financial, legal, social or any similar areas which could impact the organization negatively. Even though a candidate has demonstrated consistent behavior and ability through the process of recruitment it is important to conduct a thorough background check to uncover any issues that would have not come up until now. While doing a background check it is important to consider local laws, candidates privacy and other legal requirements as per the local guidelines. It is advised for an organization to have their own internal policy guidelines covering background checks.

Background checks are normally conducted for criminal history, credit reports, verification of identity, qualification, educational certifications and other criteria mentioned in the resume or needed to fulfil the job requirements. In some cases drug checks are also a part of the background checks. It is highly advisable to use a professional agency to conduct background checks on behalf of the organization. Background checks scope and requirements vary from role to role, locations, local guidelines, customer requirements and so on.

References are another important checks that several organizations rely on to ensure that they are learning more about the candidates. References are mostly provided by the candidates previous supervisors, previous organizations human resources team, peers and colleagues. It is important to keep the questions for references relevant and brief, consider the candidates confidentiality and privacy. References are mostly done for

senior levels of leadership roles though many organizations also conduct this for all leadership roles, in some cases it is conducted for certain critical and important roles too.

### **Decision and job offer.**

The final stage of the hiring process culminates with a decision to either hire, on hold or reject. It is important for an organization not to keep the candidate guessing on next steps. Transparent and open communication is very important in the entire hiring process. If a candidate is hired then the experience will go a long way in creating an happy employee, if the candidate is rejected the candidate will still continue to spread feedback about the organization. Therefore conducting the interview process keeping in mind the candidate experience is important. At any stage if the organization feels that it will not proceed with the candidate then it is important to immediately notify the candidate about the decision and also provide feedback on the reasons for the decision.

As part of the job offer, it is advised to have an internal compensation and benefits executive or a human resource personnel along with the hiring manager explain the compensation structure, benefits and any other monetary aspects involved. The candidate should have absolute clarity on the remuneration package and additional benefits such as insurance or family welfare cover and so on. Similarly some offer letters are cumbersome to even understand and decipher, it helps all parties to make the offer letter easy to understand and also comprehensive enough to convey relevant information.

The job offer should not be a task, it should be a celebration of starting a special relationship between the candidate and the organization. Therefore due importance has to be accorded to this final part of the hiring process.

### **Measurement and next steps.**

Good recruitment teams and their processes follow through with the candidate until the candidate has accepted the offer letter and confirms the joining date. In some

cases it is advised to even follow through and take feedback if the candidate has submitted their resignation letter and have mutually agreed upon a last working date. Since most candidates would have a notice period in their current organization it is advised to also follow through right until the date of joining. These are to reconfirm the commitment from a candidate to join as agreed upon.

At this stage the recruitment process is completed, we shall discuss some of the overlap of recruitment with the onboarding of a new hire in the subsequent section however it is important to summarize some key actions as learnings from the entire end to end process of recruitment.

The recruitment process is long and challenging, but with planning and proper execution this is worthwhile. With a good combination of tools, techniques and a good set of team members the recruitment process can be transformed. A good application tracking system (ATS ) is a key tool which can be leveraged by hiring teams. A good ATS can track a candidates end to end hiring journey through automated screening tools, evaluation systems and procedures, test and techniques, schedule interviews, collaborate within the interview team members and recruitment panels. Finally it is important to revisit and evaluate the process each time to ensure all anomalies are ironed out and sorted to make the end to end process smoother and efficient, both for the candidate and for the organization. Let us summarize and review some challenges and best practices below. These are standard and can be tweaked and customized to individual needs.

A good practice for recruitment team in any organization should be to measure two metrics which are quality of hire and time taken to fill the vacancy. Each of the process within the recruitment cycle should have these two goals in mind. Both of these goals are equally important and i would suggest quality of hire to have a higher

weightage amongst the two goals since the damage is irreversible if you hire a poor quality whereas the impact of a delayed hire is still reversible.

Quality of hire can be measured by on the job performance of the new hire, the rate of attrition or turnover of the new recruits, satisfaction levels of the hiring manager are some of the methods to measure the quality of hires. An organization can choose one or a combination of these methods. Some organizations also measure the satisfaction of the new hires periodically to tweak some of the internal processes. Most ATS tools do not track the quality or success of new hires, but upon integrating these tools with internal performance measurement tools a fair understanding of what went well and challenges can be identified.

Time to fill is another metric that most often organizations measure, however the intent of measuring should not just be focused on the ROI or impact to revenue but also from a larger perspective of brand attractiveness, effectiveness of sourcing, screening and other recruitment process, compensation benchmarking, talent pool availability and so on. With the increasing number of applications and the supply demand ratio tilting towards higher supply than demand for several types of roles along with the advent of wider reach via social media and other digital channels there is an influx of resumes for each role on offer. This doesn't mean that there are more deserving candidates out there but just means that there are more candidate applying in the hope of landing a job.

This means the recruitment team is now challenged with a larger pile of resumes to screen for each role. An effective ATS tool could be a game changer since adding more recruiters to screen resumes is not a wise decision. ATS tools can screen large number of resumes using keyword filters and ensuring a good talent doesn't get eliminated. Speed and accuracy are outcomes of using a good ATS.



Especially with the advent and easy access to AI ( artificial intelligence ) driven tools, organizations can use AI enabled ATS to ensure they get exactly what they want from a candidate at a much quicker time.

Candidate selection is about filling a vacancy with the right candidate using techniques and tools to gauge fitment within the organization. A good selection process should further for the probability of the success and growth path of the candidate in the organization. It is not enough if a candidate is just hired for a specific role. The role may become redundant or the candidate can outgrow a role with time. Therefore to summarize the process of recruitment is not just to bring in a suitable candidate for the vacant opportunity but to also gauge and measure the probability of success of the candidate in that role and also to assess the potential of the candidate to take on larger roles in the organization. This is a critical step in building a leadership pipeline for the organization. Not only is this effective in building a leadership pipeline but when an organization hires good quality of employees then leading them is a far easier task than otherwise.

Some of the points that an organization must be keep in mind during the hiring process are that candidates are not just job seekers they are an organizations future. An organization is potentially hiring a good performer who can go on to be their potential next breakthrough leader. If done well, they can positively impact other employees of the organization, drive a better culture. Further, candidates impact an organizations brand not just as an employee but also as a referral to the outside world, a brand ambassador. A candidate could be a consumer too of the brand or the organizations product or services.

In summary, for several valid reasons it is critical that an organizations is focused on candidate experience throughout the process of selection. A loosely fitted selection process therefore will cause a hugely negative impact to the organization.

Every role is unique. Each role requires a set of specific skills, competencies and personality therefore each role needs a specific and reciprocal method of selection. Adopting a single approach to selection process is fraught with failure and risks and can cause severe damage to the organization.

A good recruitment process should be a good combination of both technology and human recruiter. An overdependence on either will invariably cause delays, poor quality and inefficiency. Use technology and human in the right proportion and for the appropriate task and activities best suited for both.

Keep a proper mix over data dependencies and gut feel based hiring. Data plays an important role in screening and selection. Gut can probably help in some situations of uncertainty but a data driven approach to screening and selection is always useful. Though remember not to allow data dependency to delay decision making.

Candidate experience has been already discussed, but this aspect cannot be over-emphasized. The impact of candidate experience can adversely or positively affect the organization in more ways than one can imagine.

While it is easy for organizations to adopt any method, technology or process that are available or prevalent in the market, it will help to remember some of the above practices and make a mix and match of what works for the organization in specific. The best judge are the recruitment team and the stakeholders within the organization.

However these above practices can be customized to deliver outstanding results consistently. You are not just hiring a candidate, you are creating an experience, you are hiring for performance, scale and success. You are hiring for your future.

### **Culture Panel.**

A recommendation is for organizations to create 'Culture Panels'. A culture panel is a group of trained and empowered employees who interview candidates for culture

fitment. These employees are trained to identify cultural fitment through a series of questions and activities. This process can be evaluated and started with a small group of new hires and then scaled as per needs. A culture panel normally consists of employees at various levels and roles, and they are empowered to interview any hires at all levels. The most important aspect is that the organization should be heavily invested in this idea, the panel should be empowered and their decision should be binding and not subject to review and overturned. This innovative approach can really help to bring in the right cultural fitment into the organization. This culture panel also should monitor the behavior of the new hire atleast for the initial 6 to 9 months to measure their success criteria.

Innovative ideas and concepts such as the culture panel all adds to creating a sense of togetherness amongst employees in the organization. Ideas and concepts that were listed above all go together to enable leadership. The idea is when an organizations gets all the spokes in the wheel to operate in the expected way then that gives the leaders more and more bandwidth and flexibility to focus on their core area of responsibility which is towards their people and thus making them more successful as leaders.

### **5.3 Discussion of Results New Relationship**

#### **Onboarding.**

Onboarding is the process of welcoming and integrating new hires into the organization. After a successful hiring process Onboarding is the next significant step into ensuring the new hires are comfortable and are setup to succeed and scale as soon as possible. All new hires are tentative and unsure, there is excitement and anxiety and therefore onboarding is crucial to ensure the fear and excitement, the uncertainty and anxiety are all addressed and employees feel good about their decision to join the organization.

Between hiring and onboarding teams it is important to keep the new hire engaged and involved especially in the phase when the new hire has accepted your job offer and has still not officially joined you. Keeping the new hire engaged during this phase will help reduce drop outs.

Before we move further let us look at some statistics that are available in the market today which goes on to establish the importance of onboarding. A Deloitte study suggests that 4% of employees quit after a disastrous first day while 22% of turnover happens within the first 45 days due to poor onboarding. Wynhurst group study shows that employees are more likely to remain in the organization for atleast 3 years 58% of the time if onboarding is done right. IDC study suggests on an average it costs 37BN USD for US companies due to poor onboarding. A leading India based IT organization who also runs their own call-centre in a study showed that employees who had a proper onboarding had upto 50% higher customer satisfaction in the first 7 months as compared to others who did not go through the same onboarding process. Forbes suggests that employees who have received a proper onboarding process have higher retention rates and upto 69% of them stay in the organization for more than 3 years.

A study published in the academy of management journal found that the first 90 days of employment often called the probationary period is pivotal to building rapport with the company, management and coworkers. When support levels were high from the team and leaders, new hires had more positive attitudes about the job and worked harder. When support and direction were not offered, the inverse occurred leading to unhappy and unproductive employees who didn't make it much further than four months.

Most organizations have a training program for new hires, however it is important not to confuse training with onboarding. While companies are aware of the importance of

training and onboarding, it is important to have both and not let the misconception that onboarding is about collecting documents or administrative set of tasks.

Onboarding can be defined as the process or design and method of what a new hire feels, sees and hears after they have joined the organization. The duration of onboarding could be anywhere from one week to 90 days depending on the scope of the role. While training could have a role and in some cases integrated into the entire onboarding process it is important to understand that training does not represent the entire scope of onboarding.

A structured onboarding is key, onboarding is more than just orientation or introduction to the company. It has to be a real experience. Onboarding has to be a multi-faceted approach that begins well before the first day on the job and which is best done as a highly personalized and individualized process.

Onboarding has to be crafted as a very personal and specific individualized process, employers should not waste the initial opportunities to make the new hire feel special and this in turn will create motivation for the new hire from the beginning of their tenure. They have to feel valuable and special. An easy but effective way is to seek feedback throughout the onboarding process, not only does this make the new hire feel valued but also provides insights into the functioning of an organization.

Onboarding should start much before the first day or the effective joining day of a new hire. All possible documentation, enrolling into systems and tool wherever applicable and appropriate could be done much before the joining date, this will help reduce the pressure on the new hire and the organization during the initial days of the new hire. Send out all relevant materials including a personalized welcome letter from the CEO or the business head much before the employees first day in office. Documents can be sent either electronically or through post. The intention is to reduce all administrative

and related tasks prior to the joining date itself. Another benefit of doing some of these is to keep the employee engaged through the phase which is post accepting your offer of employment and actual joining date. This helps to reduce the dropout rate of new hires.

A structured and effective onboarding process involved several teams and departments within an organization. Therefore one single owner who can co-ordinate end to end onboarding will make the process smoother for both sides. All executives and employees who are involved in the onboarding process should be trained and well versed with their areas, topics and also should be either able to address queries if not get a resolution through proper follow through. A good onboarding process will have a buddy and mentor system. A buddy will help address all the questions, concerns and requirements of the new hire, whereas the mentor will be assigned to ensure that from the training phase to fully productive phase all performance related aspects are coached and covered. Work place such as the work station, materials such as computers and business cards and any items that an employee needs to do the work as agreed and as per the policy of the organization should be ready and in proper working condition upon the arrival of the new employee. This is basic hygiene and non-negotiable. However the practice of just showing a new hire their workstation and calling it onboarding is the cause for high turnover and poor performance and undesirable culture. On the other hand if the onboarding process is thorough, effective and exciting then it leaves a great impression of the company that can secure long term retention and better performance results through higher motivation and long lasting positive culture.

Some organizations also do a gamification of their onboarding, while this is interesting concept there has to be care taken not to dilute the essence of onboarding therefore a balance is important.

Right through the onboarding process it is important to keep reiterating that the new hire is important to the organizations success, the mentor should show the larger picture of how the organization benefits from the new hires performance and also about how the new hire can go on to succeed and grow to higher levels within the organization.

The buddy, mentor and all other persons involved in the onboarding should constantly talk about the values, mission, vision and reiterate the culture of the organization.

It is important to ensure the new hire gets a copy of the agenda detailing every single aspect of the onboarding including details of calendar, individuals with contact details for each requirement, help desk, go to help details and all of these should be done much before the onboarding. This will help strengthen the belief in the new hire that they matter to the organization. This will also ensure that the entire onboarding is structured and properly planned.

In summary, we can conclude that onboarding is a crucial aspect in the employee lifecycle management. Organizations that have a structured and efficient onboarding process will stand to gain in better retention, employee satisfaction and higher levels of performance. This in turn means a larger pool of employees to groom to the next level of leadership. In the long run this creates a culture of growth and highly empowered employees.

Leading employees who are intrinsically motivated, positive culture, high performers gives the leader and the organization an opportunity to spend more quality time to groom and develop more leaders within the system. When performance is strong and other key indicators are healthy then it provides the organization much more bandwidth to invest in their human resources. Considering all the benefits we can

conclude that a strong structured efficient and effective onboarding process is a gateway to creating a pipeline of capable leaders.

### **Training.**

Organizations should not consider training to be a part of the onboarding process and that is the right method. Though training can be considered within the overall part of the onboarding process the scope of both training and onboarding are different.

Onboarding is a proper induction of an employee into the organization whereas training is all about 'how what and why'. Having a good training process will ofcourse enable the new hire to perform better.

Training for new hire is for specific technical skills and most organizations do this right since the new hire training ultimately provides the delivery which results in direct revenue. Training for new hires focuses mostly on the 'how what and why' which is meant to enable them to deliver their operations, however the training which is focused on systems usage, processes and policies, tools is to help the new hire navigate through their daily tasks and administrative requirements of the organization.

Training is mostly a combination of new hire training and on the job training and in most cases it is specifically meant for a certain set of roles. Leadership roles may not have new hire training if the roles are meant for leading people. The only training these leaders would have is limited to administrative activities.

Wherever an organization does new hire training it is important for proper handholding and support right through the training period. There has to be absolute clarity on the timelines, assessments, outcomes and so on from the training. Since the content of these functional trainings are dependent on the deliverables they are done right most of the time. Only aspect to remember is the employee experience and satisfaction through the training period. The quality of trainers is another element that has to be



considered. The trainers have to be well-informed about their subject, they should be able to hand-hold and mentor the new hires through the training period.

In most cases the trainers and the new hires build a good rapport and connect, there has to be a smooth transition between the trainers and the next manager of the new hires. One good practice is to loop in the supervisor or the manager right at the training stage itself to build a rapport with the new hire so that there is no lost in transition situation.

While the training content and curriculum is very specific to the role, organization and deliverables, it is key to ensure the speed, pace and learning abilities of the new hires are kept in mind. Most new age organization use a lot of gamification as part of the training process. While the new hires are probably coming in with subject matter skills from the previous experience or educational background, it is important to enable them to move from a subject matter skill to a subject matter expert since they will be probably using a lot of their skills real time to either build or solve for their end customers.

The important aspect is to continue to enhance the feeling of the new hire that the decision of joining the organization was the right choice. During training the concepts of values, culture, mission and vision can be reinforced since the new hires are in the learning mode right through the training phase.

A new hire who has been trained well will be a confident person who will go on to perform well and remain in the organization for a longer period. This is a metric that the recruitment team and the training team should track and report. Apart from the new hire training there are ongoing retraining and upskilling that an organization does for its employees and these are specific to the job or role that has to be performed by the employee. There are trainings which are of upskilling and new learning for employees.

Some of these can actually motivate and retain employees, help better performance and help spread positivity within the organization.

Many organizations also have practices and policies of supporting employees to pursue professional courses, support technical and skill based development programs, do skills upgrading and so on. These are all good practices however the policy around who gets what and when should be transparent and unbiased.

While this chapter was specifically focused on new hire training which is related to enabling a new hire to perform to expectations on the job, in the subsequent chapters we will delve on the important aspects of ‘On the Job Training’, leadership development focused enablement, developing an employee to grow into a leadership role and then further learnings to scale the leadership hierarchy.

It is important to get the first step of bringing in the right people and get them to perform the expected way since that allows an environment for leaders to develop and thrive in an atmosphere where they don’t have to worry about delivery standards. They can spend their entire time developing their people. This leads to more success as leaders and develops more potential leaders in the pipeline.

## **5.4 Discussion of Results Delivery**

### **Performance management.**

At its core, performance management is about aligning the performance of an employee with the overall success of an organization. Performance management could include various aspects which we will cover in detail, however some of the key objectives of a robust performance management are focused on helping employees improve in their day to day work, work on their key skills, identify a low point and build up to recover from that point and continuously develop in a cyclical method or in a periodic fashion, to enable and support high performance consistently.

Performance management is misconstrued by many organization as just a rating system or assigning ratings to employees, however progressive organizations understand that performance management is much more than just assigning ratings.

Performance management process starts with the understanding of what an organization wants to achieve both in the long term and for a specific measurable period. Once this is established the next stage is how an organization seeks to steer employee performance towards the larger objective of the organization. Basically, it sets the foundation for performance management, what are the key goals and how often employees are evaluated against those goals, how they are evaluated, and how evaluations can occur in a consistent and unbiased manner, even in a transparent fashion.

As part of a robust performance management process there should be four key components. The key components are organizational culture, open healthy and transparent communications, suitable skilled leadership, employee interest. In many ways these components are interconnected. In an ideal best case scenario they could even boost one another. Many successful organizations have understood this and have worked hard to ensure these components are built into their performance management methods.

Culture matters since this is overemphasizing method of how employees are motivated by their surroundings to deliver results, and improve and remain motivated.

Open communication leads to transparency as a method to boost performance, commits employees to the organizations purpose. Skilled leadership results in bringing together all aspects of performance management and leading by example, motivation through appreciation.

Employee skills and interests addresses the how, why and what's in it for me questions from an employee's perspective. This leads to improvement in employees performance, morale and what they wish and like to see for themselves in their career.

Within the performance management method, a performance management cycle is a model that allows management and employees to better achieve organizational goals through a structured process of employee development. Performance management cycle is a part of the performance management process or performance management strategy. Benefits of using a model such as this are collaboration, flexibility, structured assessments, better performance, scalable, replicable processes and higher employee motivation. This cycle of performance management is a continuous process and it involves for planning, measuring, reporting and analyzing employee performance. Its focus is that enables the overall goal of performance management and aligning the success of employees with the overall success of an organization. During this cycle some of the key activities includes setting of appropriate goals and explore how an employee can achieve those goals, enable and support the employee through resources and other tools and techniques to put those goals into action and finally review and reward performance in comparison to the goals attainment.

When done properly and with all components playing the right part this cycle allows performance management to function as a holistic process to deliver top results both for employees and the organization.

In summary, performance management cycles help improve an organizations overall success, making it repeatable and consistent, predictable and scalable. The secret is that this cycle helps boost employee engagement and enables the employees to reach their maximum potential and also leads to professional development. This cycle also helps increase productivity and team work since goals all aligned to the larger organizations perspective and requirements. This cycle also provides for an opportunity of feedback and review, helps develop trust between team manager and team member, better collaboration within and in between teams, and all of these leads to recognition and

rewards, identification of top talent and provides a framework for employee development. Considering the impact and benefit of using a robust performance management cycle as part of an overall performance management framework it is highly recommended that organizations leverage and utilize this model.

Performance management is a continuous cycle which involves some of the key areas listed below:-

1. Planning.
2. Monitoring.
3. Developing.
4. Reviewing.
5. Rewarding.

While there are plenty of variations to the process most performance management cycle consists of these five phases. In some cases there are only four phases and developing phase is integrated into one of the phases or developing is considered outside the cycle. However it is recommended that developing is considered a key part of this end to end cycle. The steps or number of phases may vary but generally all of the models follow the same logical flow.

### **Planning.**

At a high level, planning phase consists of organizational goal setting and employee goal setting. In some models at this stage there is emphasis of creating a development and a Job description review. Planning is the overarching concept, planning has several distinct steps, a first step or primary focus area as part of the planning phase is the organizational goal setting. The overall organizational goals are then split into smaller chunks to reach every employee as their own goals to achieve leading to an employee goal setting. In some models the next step is to create a development plan and a review of

the role in achieving the overall goal, however it is not mandatory since planning phase is primarily focusing on setting organizational goals and then segregating those into individual employee goals. The setting up of organizational goals is the absolute crucial step. These goals can be for a period of time and is usually one year time frame and then split into half-year and quarterly. This can be further split into smaller period frequency as per need. It is recommended that frequent check ins and review actually help improve goal adherence.

Once the organizations goals are established then all team and employee goals are aligned and tied up together to reach the overall organizational goals. This alignment is what enables and supports organization to perform to its optimum levels.

The importance of having SMART goals is crucial. Most organizations today follow the SMART goal setting framework. SMART stands for specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely. Goals should allow employees to not only meet current expectations but also to improve upon those, develop new skills while continuing to improve upon existing skills. It is important that every goal is clearly demonstrated on how it contributes to the larger good of the organization. At the time of goal setting it is also important to identify if there are any skills gaps, training needs, skill enhancement and collectively the manager and the employee should work together to address these.

In the planning stage the entire ground work for success has to be laid down clearly and articulated with absolute clarity and transparency. Apart from the organizations overall strategy for the business the personal objectives of employees and their teams including development goals, tasks, targets, actions and outcomes, behaviors are all discussed, debated and confirmed. Once this is finalized and the management team is clear of what's expected of everyone only then this should be taken to the larger employee population. This collaborative process is highly important since as employee

who is clear and understand how his/her goal will lead to the overall organizations success will be more motivated and invested in succeeding.

While deciding the SMART goals it is important to ensure the following:-

**Specific** - The goal is clearly outlined, there cannot be any ambiguity or lack of clarity on the goal and what it means. There has to be detailed information on what is to be achieved, how it will be measured, how it should be done and how well it must be done and why it is important.

**Measurable**- The goal must be measurable with target and measurement criteria clearly articulated. Definite and measurable indicator are made transparent and agreed to, there must be a method to measure and report, and clearly state if it has been achieved.

**Achievable**- There has to be a balance between aspiration and realistic. While the goal should be such that it stretches the employee, it should not be so unattainable or lofty as to not be realistically achievable at all. If the goal is not realistic then the employee would lose interest in attempting to achieve and at the same time it should not be a easily achievable goal which doesn't motivate the employee to push and work harder to achieve.

**Relevant**- The goal has to be meaningful, and it has to align and add to the overall goal of the organization, the goal has to be in line with what the employee is working on and has control over, is in line with both the employees role and the overall goals of the organization.

**Time-bound**- The goal has to have a clear start and end date, there should be a definite timeline as to when this goal should be completed. There should be milestone based timelines attached to the goal.

It is a best practice to ensure that each of the employee goals should align with the organizations goals and contribute to achieving them, making sure that all goals align to

the overarching organizational goal and strategy will ensure a cohesive one-team overall strategy. While setting these goals, management can also put in place an employee development plan, this plan can focus on the current level of skills and what needs to be added to the skill set to ensure goal attainment and employee development. This can be a two pronged approach. Right at the beginning stage of performance management cycle, management can identify areas of training and development in which an employee needs to be supported and set goals that will achieve that. Further, creating an employee development plan will demonstrate that management is actively working with the employee to assist them in becoming a more skilled and valuable player in the organization.

In summary, planning is all about setting performance expectations and goals for groups and individuals to channel their efforts towards achieving organizational goals and objectives. It also includes the measures, methods, frequency that will be used to determine whether expectations and goals are being met.

A best practice is involving employees in the planning process which will help them understand the goals of the organization, what needs to be done, why it needs to be done and how well it should be done. This will ensure that employees have their full commitment to the organizations goals, the organizations goals will become their own goals, all of this leads to commitment and motivation for employees to stretch themselves for the sake of their own success and the success of the organization.

### **Monitoring.**

Monitoring phase can also be called as performing or activity or acting phase. This is a constant and continuous phase and is the period in which the employees of the organization are actively working on their goals as part of their day to day responsibilities and tasks. Delivery of activities will always be an ongoing action, though the goals and



objectives could change periodically. During this phase of performance management cycle, an employee could also undergoes some sort of training to deliver to his responsibilities or undergo development plans to meet their objectives for the said period. Therefore monitoring is the key to keep a track of progress, look out for problem areas or be aware of potential problem areas and then work towards fixing those.

During this stage a manager or the supervisor of the employee has a large and important role to play. The manager has to ensure that there is adequate support, training and appropriate help through needed resources made available to the employee to deliver to his goals. An equally important responsibility of the manager and management is to do regular check-ins with the employee to monitor progress. Organizations and teams follow various frequency to do these check-ins, but in many progressive and high class organizations there are frequent check-ins that happen.

Check-ins are not necessarily a detailed review but conversations to gauge the progress and support if needed. Care should be taken that check-ins do not become micro-management and it is a process to ensure that the goals that have been signed up are on track, to check if there is any assistance and support needed, identify bottlenecks and offer solution.

Some topics and conversation starters can be centered around some of the areas such as :-

a) accomplishments- discuss the most successful and proud moments for the employee for the period of time under discussion, share some insights on the managers perspective of the accomplishments, focus on the positives.

b) discuss progress and what went into meeting some of the goals and why not, if some of the goals were not met.

c) what's getting in the way or the road blocks and challenges that are stopping the employee from achieving the goals, focus on what can be facilitated and supported to help.

d) many organizations and smart leaders are willing to revisit and change the goals at this time if they realize the goals were unrealistic based on the challenges and road blocks, or this is a good period to offer assistance and help to the employee if the challenges can be overcome through assistance and support.

e) a good conversation or check-in focusses on the support that the management can offer to the employee, both in terms of enabling and helping and ongoing assistance if needed.

f) a summary of the conversation or a recap of past conversations and performance and in comparison to the current one, a recap of the current conversation and next action plans are all items that could be discussed to make the check-in more collaborative and futuristic.

Monitoring focusses on consistently measuring performance results and providing positive ongoing and constructive feedback to employees and teams, this is focused on not just goals achievement but overall development. Ongoing monitoring provides the environment and opportunity to collaborate, check the overall health of the business, check how employees are faring and their overall feel and progress towards their goals. A key objective or result of ongoing monitoring is also to identify bottlenecks and problems and proactively address those at the earliest.

In the performance management cycle model, monitoring plays a very key role as it functions in achieving the goals that was set out in the planning stage. Monitoring has to be frequent and it loses effectiveness if done only once or twice the year. Management must meet employees on at least a monthly basis to check in on progress in a proper

structured review, however more importantly there has to be atleast a weekly conversation to check-in. The more frequent the check-in process the more beneficial to all parties involved. Having a large long term goal can seem a challenge or distant and therefore it is beneficial to all to break these into smaller chunks and review for progress and course correct as and when needed.

### **Developing.**

Developing refers to the process of enabling and or increasing the capacity and capability to perform. Employees are assigned goals based on the vision, goals and strategy of the organization, employees are hired or assigned to their roles through job description and goals are developed based on the potential, skill sets, capabilities and capacity of employees. Sum total of employee goals lead to the organizations goals.

In a real life business environment however, there are constant changes and upgrades to business processes, customer and business requirements ,expectations and performance challenges. All of these mean that there is often the need and pressure on employees to deliver to their goals. This is where development phase plays the role, to upskill employees, to offer new skills through training and assignments which introduce new skills or higher levels of responsibility, improving work processes or other methods.

A combination of all the above efforts to upskill and uptrain an employee through training, skill enhancement, skill reverification, process changes and upgrades, on the job training and so on collectively are part of the developing phase in the performance management cycle.

Many organizations plan for development at the planning stage, many organizations bring in the development phase post the monitoring period. There is no one right way to do this though it is advised that development requirement has to be planned

and budgeted at the planning stage and from there on it has to be consistently adhered and addressed throughout the performance management cycle.

An added advantage of providing employees with training and development opportunities is that it helps build confidence apart from helping in good performance, it also strengthens job related skills and competencies. With the ever changing business world this also helps employees keep up with the changes in the work place such as the introduction of new technology for instance.

Development efforts can motivate , encourage employees and strengthen good performance and helps employees keep up with the changes in the workplace. Employees realize and recognize that the organization cares for them and their goals, employees appreciate the investment that the organization is doing on upgrading their skills.

Output of development actions also helps in leaders to focus more on building careers and leadership coaching, mentoring and spending more time on conversations with their team members. This cohesiveness leads to more employees aspiring to take on new challenges and leadership roles. Once an employee is delivering quality results and meeting goals then there is an environment of positivity and growth mindset.

Development phase of ‘On the Job Training’ has to be a constant in any employees life cycle at work place. Development activities can be either done by inhouse subject matter experts or supervisors or it can be outsourced to external providers, however one of the best practices is for the supervisor of the respective employee to take an active role in the development of the employee. Development activities are not a one-time action but a continuous process. This process of upskilling employees creates a learning culture within an organization. A learning culture is crucial to move the organization forward and make it flexible and nimble. Employees across the levels and roles in the organization are provided a platform to learn and upskill, to grow and build.

This concept takes its roots from the need to progress and prosper. An organization that creates a learning culture will have high performance levels, satisfied customers and engaged employees. All of these means there is a solid and strong pipeline of leaders who are ready to take the organization forward. Therefore the learning culture is the key differentiator for any organization.

### **Reviewing.**

In the context of formal performance appraisal a rating system means evaluating employee performance against the goals and standards that were established in an employee's performance plan at the planning stage and then assigning a rating based on the actual results that the employee delivered for that period of time. The performance rating also has a bearing on various other aspects such as benefits and retention, impact in case of a need to reduce headcount.

Rating systems have seen a lot of debates with experts vouching for and against this mechanism. While the benefits are that it provides the organization with a clear view of their top and bottom performers, helps with compensation and retention, training needs identification and so on, the negatives are the impact on the employees morale, bucketing of employees based on rating, another issue is that although a group's performance may have an impact on the employees output, the rating is not for the group but the employee in specific. In the subsequent portions of this thesis, i will delve deeper into the pros and cons and make recommendations.

Reviewing as a process is done in specific period of the calendar or financial year of an organization. Could be done once or twice or four times in the specific annual period. Monitoring consists of short, frequent and focused check-in meetings on goal progression and what's needed to help or support the employee in achieving their goals,

reviewing is more comprehensive and takes a step back and measures progress on the employees overall development plan for the period.

In the review process the intention is not just the status of the goals but the overall performance of the employee, the learnings, impact of factors such as training, development, planning and career development are considered.

In progressive and successful organizations reviews not only include performance assessments but also includes self-assessments, 360 feedback assessments which includes inputs from peers and managers. The objective of this collective feedback process is for a constructive review and feedback, coaching and career aspirations and development need identification. The best review process is a two way discussion, with both parties receiving and providing feedback and documenting for future requirement and needs.

Some of the areas that can be covered during the review process are on goals achievement and what worked and didn't work, the completion levels against targets and plans, what should be done same or differently in future, how can the organization help, how can the employee help with the learnings. The review should focus on the employees career and future development plans and actions, requirements and support.

The review process should be seen not just as a mechanism to see if goals were met or not, but should be seen as an opportunity to build collaboration with the employee. Ensuring employees are involved and committed throughout the phase of the performance management cycle will result in highly motivated and diligent employees who will stretch for their own goals and the goals of the organization.

The review stage will provide insights into how appropriate the planning was, if proper monitoring was done, if the development activities were effective, the review process will provide deep insights to the organization both on the results and the process in itself, insights on whether the goals at the planning stage was realistic, if the goal was

in line with the organizations objective, did the employee learn and grow, gain knowledge and experience, did the employee get the adequate support, how could the process be streamlined better for future and so on are some of the insights that can be gained from a properly done review process.

A review process should be considered as a perfect mechanism to develop and groom employees for future leadership roles. Existing leaders can be further developed to senior leadership levels. This cyclical process creates opportunities for both the organization and employees to contribute to the leadership pipeline.

### **Rewarding.**

Work should be rewarding, from emotional aspect to growth and it has to be rewarding financially too. Good work should be appreciated and recognized.

It is beneficial to match and tie rewards directly to performance and in the cycle of performance management this is one of the most sought after phase especially by the recipient, if done well both the receiver and giver will be happy doing this phase.

Rewarding is not just about monetary benefits but it should encompass all aspects of growth, development, appreciation, skill enhancement, career planning and monetary aspects.

Recognition should be meaningful, there has to be clear intent displayed in the welfare of the employee, this cannot be done as a task. Studies have shown that engagement levels can increase by around 40% when employees are recognized and appreciated for the work they have done. The positive environment created spreads fast across the organization leading to further commitment and engagement.

Rewarding means acknowledging the contributions of employees and providing incentives and recognition as a means of appreciation. Rewards could be for specific employees or for a group of employees. There are several ways to reward for good

performance ranging from a sincere ‘thank you’ to salary increases, bonuses, public recognition during events and awards, promotions and future opportunities.

Rewarding section cannot be overlooked, employees who do not receive a proper reward for their contribution to the organizational goals will lose motivation for the coming period, they will lose faith in their organization and their leaders. This will lead to demotivated and disengagement and eventually an exit from the organization. In most organizations it is common practice to compensate employees as per the policy, business condition, market place strategy, type of role and so on, however the reward cycle is much more than paying salary. The importance is when organizations fairly rewards employees and gives them their due recognition for efforts, works on developing their careers and ensures their well-being then the employees will continue to work hard and remain committed to the organization.

It is important that rewards should be merit-based, employees can easily see through biased decisions and when some of their colleagues are rewarded without a cause whereas when employees see a high performer rewarded then it demonstrates the value the organization attaches to performance. Though adequate care has to be taken on how this is done, the objective is to inspire other employees to perform better for themselves and not to make them look small, not important or insignificant.

Once the reward stage of the performance management cycle model is completed the management team and the employee should meet to review the end to end cycle. Both sides should view the entire performance management cycle and discuss any opportunities, issues, what worked well and what were the challenges and then begin to have initial talks about the coming cycle.

The feedback, observation and comments from employees should be consolidated and appropriate action should be taken to review and address issues and opportunities to



make the cycle more effective and better than the previous cycle. Employees have to be given the feedback that based on their views the organization has addressed issues to smoothen the process.

Finally, at the end of the cycle during the conversation with the employee an important topic should be on the upcoming cycle. Employees can provide great insight on what should be the goals, focus areas and strategies for the future, including aspirational goals and how to work together to achieve those goals. Best in class organization consolidate their employee views and then present it to the executive management team who will use some of the pointers from these feedback to work on the organizational goals and outlook for the coming periods. Insights from employees can prove to be a significant value add to the organization and this is an avenue that many best in class organization tap into as part of the performance management cycle.

The importance of performance management cycle in businesses is understated. Having a sound, efficient and well thought out and well intentioned performance management cycle is crucial to maximize performance output of employees, this ensures that organizational goals are being driven across the organization as one single unit, rigorously tracked, monitored and reported, course correction is done at the right stages as and when needed, and finally the period under consideration is celebrated. The performance management cycle allows the organization to continuously review and revisit, measure and monitor, and be flexible and aware on when and what changes are needed to steer the ship towards the shore. This flexibility provides greater mobilization, support and control of the steering of the organization towards the desired outcomes. Employees benefit immensely too, they realize and recognize that they are a valued member and part of the process, skills are developed and growth is taken care of and there is rewards for the work done well.

Ideally a good performance management should be enabled and supported by a tool or software. This way a lot of the notifications, documentations, process flows and next steps are all automated with reminders, follow through and ease of use. Using such a software or system helps in substantial time getting utilized for discussions and the system takes care of all the other tasks and routines. This also allows for frequent performance review feedback which means feedback is given in suitable portions and are specific to either an event or occasion.

It is important to note that a performance management cycle is a framework for ensuring optimal performance in an organization. A cycle maybe the steps or stages within the process but the framework is your end to end mechanism for managing performance. A performance management framework establishes the competencies and skills sets needed for the role ,the factors and indicators which determines the success metrics, enablement, support and training that lead to success, further progressing to continuous and ongoing development and training for future.

Performance management cycle is a brilliant model however to make the most of it there has to be commitment and adherence. Organizations have to believe in doing this right and have to coach employees to adhere to the cycle. Planning, check-ins, reviews and conversations are time consuming, leaders and organizations should ensure adequate time is scheduled and allocated for these activities. The behavior of aligning and believing in the cycle should be exhibited right at the executive levels of the organization.

Leaders and managers, supervisors should model the coaching mindset, they should see themselves as coaches and enablers for their employees, they should be willing to go the extra mile to support and provide support to their employees to succeed.

Finally it is important to remember that performance management model is a cycle and the cycle has no definitive starting or ending stages, it is a never ending

process, it finishes a cycle to start again. The focus of a performance management cycle is on continuous development.

Having a well-oiled performance management cycle leads to the benefits that have been listed out in this chapter, another key benefit is this model also creates an environment for employee and leadership development. A strong performance management model enables an organization to create its own high potential employees.

High potential employees are not the same as high performing employees. While high performing employees are crucial for the organization it is also important to identify high potential employees. A combination of high performing and high potential employees form the crux of the upcoming leadership pipeline of the organization. We will delve more into the high potential employees in the subsequent chapters when we discuss succession planning. The performance management model also is a great opportunity to move the entire workforce into the next level of performance. Performance management is not about bottom quartile management, it is about helping the bottom quartile to move up to the meeting expectations category, moving the meeting expectations category up to exceeding expectations and outstanding categories.

Organizations, policy makers and leaders must understand that a carrot and stick policy does not work in the long term. The policy of offering something or called as a carrot to appease the employee to achieve something and the stick or the method of punishing for not achieving a certain target has limited shelf life. This worked to some extent in the past especially in blue collar jobs however in the knowledge workforce market this is very short-lived. This policy just appeals to the extrinsic motivation of reward and fear and causes a toxic environment. Instead the focus should be on inspiring employees to work up their intrinsic motivation. In this method the fundamental belief is that all employees are intrinsically motivated to succeed and the leaders of the

organization have to inspire them to succeed. This is a long lasting and empowering method of driving results.

## **5.5 Discussion of Results Leadership Development**

### **Leadership development plan.**

A leadership development plan is a useful tool to ensure that an organization has pipeline of leaders both to support the current requirements and also for future requirements. A continuous evolution and success of an organization is linked to the ongoing growth and continuous evolution of its leadership. Therefore creating a solid leadership development plan not only helps enhance the current quality of leaders but the plan can also outline detailed steps to identify, develop and nurture the next generation of leaders within the organization.

Leadership development plan is usually a very well structured and long-term plan, the objective of this strategic plan is to help employees gain and develop competencies, traits and behavior and to prepare them for growth into higher levels of the hierarchy. Best in class leadership development plans are personalized for the unique needs of the employee, the role and the organization. These plans have learning objectives, activities and engagements that an employee will undertake to progress in their career.

In an organization anyone can be placed in a leadership role, but not everyone will be successful as a leader at various levels without the right combination of environment, conditions, motivations, training, coaching and importantly an inherent desire and natural talent to lead.

As discussed several times in this thesis, addressing poor leadership skills is the key to an organizations success, and it starts with addressing these issues at the root of the problem which is placing people in leadership roles without proper consideration. As

discussed in the literature review majority of the organizations have leadership programs but only a few describe their programs as best in class.

Having a leadership program which is not helping the cause may ultimately lead to failures at both the participating leaders and their organizations.

A leadership development plan is a strategic documented plan that helps an organization navigate their employees towards professional development. This plan also should address the career aspiration of emerging and potential leaders to senior leadership positions. With a leadership development plan an organization can help an employee achieve greater overall career satisfaction, create and enable more opportunities and challenges and lead to impactful career for the employee and successful leadership pipeline for the organization.

Creating a world class leadership development program starts with equipping leaders with the specific skills, tools, behaviors that are needed to lead others to success. The premise of a best in class leadership program is to produce more leaders who are capable of leading the organization to greater success and also to create aspirations within employees to take up leadership roles. Leadership is a social process of influencing others. A systematic process of developing good leaders is fundamental to a long term success for the organization, yet many organization often overlook it or are not focused on this as a priority. Leadership development can be expensive both from a direct cost of resources and indirect cost of time spent on these activities but when done right this cost directly impacts the bottom line of the organization in a very positive manner.

Leadership is a process to influence a group towards a specific goal or mission. Leadership is a behavior and great leaders do not just tell people what to do, they empower people to make decisions that support the goals and vision of their group. Management is not the same as leadership, managers facilitate people, process and

product, they implement strategies and focus mostly on solution finding whereas leaders get people to live the vision. All leaders are not necessarily born leaders, people can learn leadership behaviors. Therefore the onus is on organizations to ensure they develop people to become leaders who can take their business forward. The individual who is passionate and has an inherent desire to lead also benefits by an enriching career as a leader, therefore the mutual benefit for both the organization and the individual.

The ideal leader is one who can inspire and motivate and displays high levels of humility and honesty, is good at building relationships, flexible, proactive strategic and culturally competent. All of these can be developed through right interventions.

#### **Leadership development strategy.**

Leaders deal with changes at work place on a continuous basis, some are changes brought in by evolving customer needs, some internal changes, new technologies, environmental changes, political and others, some changes are in control or controllable and some are brought about by uncontrollables. Irrespective of these, the leader is expected to steer the organization forward. Even if there are no changes there is a continuous evolving needs and demands at workplace be it through new employees joining in or the leaders growing to higher levels and so on. The leadership development strategy has to bear in mind all of these factors.

Further, some other key areas to consider are:-

- Commitment of senior leadership team towards leadership development strategy.
- There has to be a deep structural alignment between strategy and human resources.
- Financial support and resources over extended period of time.

- Succession planning and dependency on leadership development pipelines.
- Organizational and employee lifecycle.

The organization must be able to have solutions or should have plans to address some of the above factors. The next aspect is to consider some of the challenges that can arise, challenges are due to internal obstacles, capabilities of the participating employee, challenges with the learning development program itself and so on, Some of the common challenges are listed below:-

- Lack of resources, both funds and time, right quality of people.
- Lack of engagement and support from senior executive teams.
- Priority of the organization and the lack of a mindset of learning.
- Commitment to the organization, lack of learning systems and culture.
- Leadership development done for senior leaders and not across levels.
- Lack of long term commitment.

Challenges organizations face are that their leadership bench is not diverse, not able to scale, they do not have effective succession management process or the process does not yield the right leaders at the required timeline. A combination of all these factors result in a weak pipeline of leadership talent right across the leadership chain.

Apart from these which are challenges brought about from an organizational perspective there could be challenges which are from an individual perspective such as:-

- Lack of an inherent desire to lead.
- Lack of passion and commitment to be a leader.
- Lack of follow through and rigor.

While creating a leadership development plan it is important to ensure certain components such as creating a career vision, development goals have a clear timeline,

actionable steps which can be measured periodically, and regular assessments of the overall development plan.

A career vision is the first and foremost important part of the plan, this sets the tone and pace for the development of an individual and the strategies that are needed to take the individuals learning goals forward. There has to be commitment and buy in by both the individual and the organization to make this plan a living document.

Each of the leadership development goals must have a clear timeline, these timelines must be specific to ensure that vision becomes a reality. Timelines are known to help make proactive steps to meet goals within the timeline specified.

The objective of measuring each of the actions will ensure that there is accountability and ownership of commitments. The goals set must be measurable and realistic. There has to be monitoring of progress to set activities on daily, weekly, monthly basis as per the need.

Leadership development plan has to be regularly assessed to keep it on track and relevant. The plan will never be perfect therefore there has to be evaluation and course correction if and when needed. Assessments can lead to a feedback opportunity. This mechanism can further help to tweak or change current and future development plans as needed.

### **Leadership development program.**

Leadership development programs are for the entire organization and not just for the senior leadership or focused on the first time leaders. A best in class leadership development program should be able to focus on the young ambitious employee who have shown their will and passion with an inherent desire to lead. These people normally would have a few years of experience and are keen to explore leadership roles to



accelerate their career. An executive development program can provide mid-level leaders with the necessary skill sets that are needed to progress to higher levels of leadership.

Leadership development programs can also be programmed for senior leadership levels right up to the CEO or even for the board members. These type of development programs are needed to keep the executives stay focused and on track with the new developments in leading, enable them to scale their leadership skills and behaviors further.

Leadership development programs are an essential part of the overall comprehensive development plan. A sum of all programs can make the overarching development plan comply to the various needs and demands of a learning and growing organization. By integrating leadership development training concepts and programs into the overall plan, an organizations learning and development team can be ready to identify opportunities and create specific programs for each opportunity. Overtime, the team will become confident and develop expertise to pick the right program for the right opportunity in a timely manner.

### **Approaching a leadership development strategy.**

The goal of leadership development program is primarily to enhance the capability and capacity of individuals to become better leaders in their current and upcoming roles and responsibilities. Effective leadership programs should align with the vision and strategy of the organization and should offer development opportunities that are tailor made and specific to each individual employee.

As a first step in leadership development program is the identification of potential leadership skills within existing employee base. This could be for first time leaders programs or could even be for promotion of leaders to higher levels of the organization. Identifying potential talent for further development can be challenging task since there

are various factors to consider such as current performance levels, pedigree, intelligence, passion, drive and desire, popularity, feedback from peers, supervisor and reportees or a 360-degree feedback mechanism. There can be a combination of some of the above however this stage of identification has to be well thought through, transparent and communicated to all employees.

Listed below are some of the steps to create a plan:-

The first step is to identify talent from the pool, the assessment and identification of talent. Some organization have a formal leadership development program that they have built and created for their internal needs, from these readily available talent pools they select individuals for specific leadership development plan. As discussed previously the qualification and criteria to be selected into these talent pools have to be transparent and should cover the basic expectations from a leadership role, this pool though can have performance as a criteria but along with that the overarching capability and desire to lead should have been identified. The talent pools capabilities, qualification, criteria and so on depend on the roles and levels that these individuals have been identified for.

Identifying and selecting the best potential leaders as part of the leadership development plan and programs is critical. Employers and supervisors need to watch out for unconscious bias while selecting employees for leadership development and promotions. Care should be taken to ensure that employees with significant potential are not left out since they are not favored by their managers due to a variety of reasons which can really hurt the organizations future leadership pipeline. These biases also lead to diversity related challenges. Leadership development is not just to be focused on high performers, the plan should be able to identify high potentials.

Once an organization is committed to the goal of leadership development there are several tools and techniques that are available to help the organization achieve their

objectives. There are several personality assessments which are popular and could be used to identify leadership potential, cultural fitment, leadership traits. Some organizations use 360 degree feedback mechanism to identify fitment and opportunities.

Some organizations may not have a formal talent identification process or assessment procedures to create a talent pool of potential leaders, for such organizations a simple 9 box grid is effective starting point.

A 9 box model measures potential which is future performance capacity against current performance. The employees can be bucketed into each of the buckets in a 9 box grid, and among the boxes are high potential and high performers. Organizations can then develop plans for each of the buckets and high potential, high performers can qualify to be in the talent pool for leadership development.

For any leadership development plan to work there has to be buy in from all parts of the leadership, the employees manager or supervisor has to be fully aligned and the employee has to consent and willing to go the extra mile. A leadership development plan needs significant investment into the development of an employee so therefore it is important that all stakeholders involved are looped in and bought into the concept and idea of leadership development plan.

There may be an overarching leadership style or trend within an organization or within certain specific groups. The leaders must be aware of these subtle nuances and plan accordingly to ensure that both the organization and its vision along with the employee are benefitted by the eventual outcome of the learning interventions. In this stage, identifying the key leadership competencies needed for the organizations current and future requirements becomes important. These competencies will have to become the foundation of the development plan. Developing and grooming leaders to take on the

current and upcoming and unknown challenges will ensure that the organization can continue to be on course to meet its objectives.

An environment of peer accountability can be a fantastic culture for an organization to work towards. While there are multiple competency needed for leaders the primary three focus areas for a development plan should be the competency to lead the organization, competency to lead others and competency to lead self. Within each of these competencies there are several other competencies such as social, conflict, decision, emotional intelligence and so on. In the current global workforce and digital economy many organizations are also focusing on digital competency, cultural and agility competencies.

To address the areas which an organizational development program should focus on depends on the outcomes from the assessment of the selected talent pool. The results of the assessments when compared to where the organization wants to be will form the basis of the development plans. The assessments will highlight the competency gaps that needs to be addressed to enable the employee to scale the leadership levels. Use the gaps to identify, create and design the best suitable development plans which can then bridge the gap between current levels and expected levels.

Creating or designing the leadership development plan has to be a combined effort between the business leaders, human resources team and led by the subject matter experts from the learning and development team. Some of the methods that can be used are :-

1. Self-paced learning through learning management systems, these are easily available and most are online programs.

2. Mentoring is another method which pairs a potential leader with established leaders of the organization.

3. Buddy or shadow concept where an employee gets a real time perspective of what happens in the work place while buddying with a leader.

4. Certifications and professional development courses are typically offered by external agencies who provide training and then certify employees though most of these can be technical in nature but there are several leadership related courses and certifications that are available in the market.

Apart from these there are some very well-known and established methods given below.

1. Coaching is often a very well established and proven method of developing leaders and leadership pipeline. Individual coaching mechanism follows a similar concept of diagnosing, coaching and periodic review of progress. Coaching is one of the best methods an organization can utilize to tap into the potential and develop leaders. Though there are daily coaching opportunities and coaching moments a focused coaching plan can help address some of the identified gaps between the assessment and expectations.

2. Mentoring is a form of hand-holding. In this method a senior leader takes the mantle and responsibility of grooming a junior person. The gaps are discussed and the mentor takes the ownership and responsibility to work together with the individual to support, groom and enable the individual to address the gaps or learnings.

3. Peer to peer or leader to leader pairing is another method which many organizations are slowly leveraging. In this concept there are several advantages and encourages sharing of ideas and concepts between two identified leaders.

4. Group development programs are run for a batch of talent pool with same levels of capabilities and requirements. This is similar to team building activities and team development initiatives. This concept nurtures team work and collaboration and can

help groups to overcome gaps that are identified as potential roadblocks for the organization.

There are other modules on change management, communication, influence and negotiation, vertical and horizontal development, diversity and role of leaders in driving diversity are some of the leadership development programs that are trending in best in class organizations who are leading the chart in terms of leadership development programs.

Poor leadership levels are most notably seen in organizations which do not invest in leadership development. Ultimately a leadership development plan is what helps an organization build a strong and steady pipeline of capable leaders. These leaders are tasked with steering the organization forward.

An organization which has a strong leadership development plan and program is assured of producing leaders who are best in class and are equipped with leadership capabilities to navigate the organization forward.

## **5.6 Discussion of Results Succession Planning**

### **Why and what is succession planning.**

Businesses or organizations cannot be run without talented people readily available or identified to move into positions when an existing person leaves from that role. Succession planning is a function of planning for workforce to maintain business continuity, it is a plan to ensure that leaders with high potential are ready to take over from an existing person who is moving out or moving to another role and responsibility. The purpose and objective of succession planning is complex, this is not about managing or controlling damage or to replace a leader quickly, instead it is about having a ready leader who has been prepared to take over the job and comes with a high potential to

succeed. The objective of succession planning is not just to fill a role quickly but more importantly to ensure that the person taking over the role has the potential to succeed.

Every organization will have to deal with leadership turnover, this turnover can be due to various factors such as retirement, promotion to a higher role either internal within the organization or external, moving to a lateral role and so on. Some exits are planned and some are not planned, irrespective of the factors and reasons for the leadership role opening, organizations should have a plan in place to replace and fill the open position quickly and successfully. Knowing who your leadership exits is just one part, since there could be several exits that are unplanned. Known exits are easy to plan, but planning for both known and unknown is key to an effective succession planning.

Succession planning helps in keeping an organizations hiring related costs lower as it ensures that there is a pipeline of internal leaders readily available which brings the external hiring related resources plus cost of recruitment sources and agencies cost down. There is positive impact to the employer brand since this is seen as a place to join and grow by the employees, culture and brand stability remains high, employee satisfaction and retention increases.

The demand for succession planning will continue to increase especially in geographies where there is a higher age of employees and retirement options are considerably higher.

First and foremost, it is important to understand that an effective, efficient succession planning doesn't happen instantaneously. For a seamless transition plan an organization has to invest in thinking ahead with a 12 to 36 months plan. This plan is a process of preparation, succession planning is about preparing the organization for a seamless mechanism of creating a leadership pipeline, succession planning is not pre-selection it is about creating a pipeline of leaders for every single role in the organization.

Many organizations believe succession planning is only needed or only suited for large organizations, infact that is not true at all, small organizations with limited resources will benefit significantly from succession planning. All organizations irrespective of their size needs to have a succession planning to ensure business continuity.

Some of the key reasons for investing in a succession planning are :-

1. Address talent scarcity.
2. Knowledge retention within the organization.
3. Identify skill gaps and train for leadership roles.
4. Empower leaders with unique or specialized skills and competencies.
5. Employee retention and motivation.
6. Business continuity.
7. Growth mindset.
8. Understand the competencies, skills sets that are needed and exists internally.
9. Geography, demographics and its impact on organizational decisions.

### **Components of a succession plan.**

Creating a leadership pipeline is the primary outcome or objective of a seamless succession plan. Before an organizations starts to work on creating a succession plan it is important to understand that this is a highly intensive process which is time consuming and challenging but at the same time is highly rewarding and beneficial for all parties involved. In most organizations it is easier to back fill a position at the junior leadership levels but at the top of the pyramid it gets very challenging to fill leadership roles. The process of identifying the organizations high potentials and adding more people constantly into the high potential bucket is the key to creating a pipeline.

Identification of the key talent to be included in the high potential bucket in the 9 box grid that was explained earlier in this thesis is the first step in building a leadership



pipeline. Even though there may be no open positions to fill the process begins with the identification. Cultivation of the pipeline and nurturing the pipeline is the first stage of a succession plan which will lead to a steady successful leadership pipeline.

Investing in the development of leaders in the high potential bucket is the next stage. While it is important to focus on developing certain specific skill sets across the employee base, what matters the most in the high potential bucket is to develop their leadership skills to succeed or transition into the next level of leadership role. This means that employees in the high potential bucket are being helped to develop relevant skills that will help them succeed in their next identified levels, align the company culture and they are exposed to higher levels of roles and responsibilities, eventually preparing and getting them ready to take on newer challenges but more importantly making them ready to succeed in their next levels of leadership. Mentoring, coaching and leadership programs are a great way to prepare high potentials to take on more challenges and also make them more confident, eventually ensuring their success.

Organizations, businesses, people and expectations are constantly changing and evolving, therefore it is necessary to regularly monitor the process of identification of high potential. It is also important to measure and monitor the results of the high potential who are moved to newer and larger roles. Monitoring, reviewing and assessing the leadership strength in the high potential bucket and matching the skills to the changing business trends is important to ensure that the entire identification process, training process and successful implementation process is all working according to plan.

A fundamental question that arises in most organization is on the ownership and responsibility of a succession planning or who should own and lead the succession planning strategy. Based on the impact that succession planning has and the investment and effort that succession planning has, it is important for the human resources to own

succession planning. Succession planning and workforce requirement planning are interlinked and therefore human resources teams will have to take the ownership, this is about the future asks of the organizations key resources which is people and human resources team are the best placed to own and lead succession planning strategy.

Further in most organization the learning and development function is rolled up under the human resources function forming the larger HRD or human resources development function. The learning and development team has the responsibility of creating skill based competency for each role, identifying training needs and creating a documented training need analysis for each role, developing training content internally or leveraging external agencies to fix the gaps identified as part of the training need analysis, monitoring and reviewing progress and results are all the responsibilities of the learning and development function in an organization. Therefore the human resource function should own and lead the succession planning with partners from learning and development team and stakeholders from the various other functions as part of the succession planning strategy.

#### **Steps to create a succession plan.**

The key steps to create a succession plan are as follows:-

1. List the key positions in the organization. The process of succession planning starts with an organization identifying the role and responsibilities that are key to the success of the organization. For each of these roles the competencies, qualification and skill sets have to be written down. Important to note here that an organization must have a documented competency and skills based job description for each role and then it is important to identify key roles within each area of the organization. It will be good to ask internally the impact of day to day delivery of each position and the impact if that person or role doesn't exist. This step can help create a priority list amongst roles. All roles are

important in an organization, however succession planning as a process depends on the impact of each role, complexity of the skills needed, availability of those skills internally or externally, trainability and so on. Priority of succession planning for each role depends on these factors. Higher the challenge of replacing a role higher the priority needed for succession planning for that specific role.

2. Identify potential talent. Once the roles have been identified and priority established then the next actions are to list down people in those roles who are nearing retirement or any known transfer of roles, vacancy due to promotion and so on. Further each organization should have an early warning system to categorize employees into zones based on their engagement, the idea of using this mechanism is to ensure there is some sort of idea on who in these roles are more vulnerable to exit the organization due to opportunities externally or health issues or any other factor. The objective of the above exercise is to create a list of known or reasonably well aware list of open roles that will come up in the near future. Once an organization has an understanding of the possible departure of certain roles the next step is to identify potential talent who could fit in or move into these roles.

Succession planning should consider the option of which internal employee would be the strongest candidate from the high potential bucket to move into this role and what training would be needed and the time duration for the transition process. In most cases the obvious choice for a successor would be the next in line person in the organizational chart however it is advised to also explore talent laterally or other promising candidates from the high potential bucket. There could be situations where there are no candidates internally who are ready to take over the role, in such cases it is good to get an understanding of the external hiring options and plan for those in advance. This situation calls for a deep understanding of the market conditions, time for turn over or the time

taken to hire and bring the candidate onboard, time taken to have the candidate fully productive or the learning curve. The other preferred option is to ensure there is advance planning for succession for these types of roles internally. While identifying succession planning it is also important to factor in the costs of hiring externally for each role, cost of internal upskilling process, understand the budgetary constraints and work towards planning these as part of the periodic or annual financial planning process. An important aspect to consider and remember is that there should be no unconscious bias or personal bias during any of the stages of succession planning. The core committee of succession planning should ensure that the succession plan is transparent and based entirely on merit otherwise the essence of doing a succession plan will fail and cause employee dissatisfaction and poor leadership outcomes.

3. Communication. Once individuals are identified for key positions as part of the succession planning, it is a good proactive practice to make them aware. This step can be considered as establishing an understanding with the employee on the reasons why that employee was considered, what are the expectations from the employee in terms of engaging in upskill programs and requirements, timelines and activities, measurement of the results of the training and so on. It is important to ensure that there is absolute clarity that there are no guarantees and the situation could change, this overarching theme of the communication is that this initiative is the organization's way to develop the employee for potential career growth.

4. Development and progress. Most of the second in line or next in line candidates probably have a fair understanding of the role that they are reporting into and organizations may be investing in delegation of tasks and priorities as a culture. However as part of the succession planning the above preparation has to be accelerated. Succession planning process has to emphasize on the development process with the primary

objective of success being the main criteria. For each role identified as part of the succession planning there has to be list of training, mentoring ,coaching and related activities that have to be accomplished and completed to ensure the next candidate taking the role has the maximum opportunity to succeed. The key objective of a succession planning is to ensure success of the successor. Therefore identification of the skills for each role, gaps identification and methods to fill the gap forms the core area of the development process in a succession planning. Most areas of development are around communication skills, interpersonal relationship skills, empathy, business acumen and so on which are all trainable and in most cases there is just the need to upskill since existing leaders in the high potential bucket would already possess some of these skills. The four pillars of a role are activities or tasks , competencies and skills needed, needs and changes as the role evolves and value additions that are identified to make the role even more enhanced. Most of the development activities should have to be focused on these four pillars to make the candidate successful as part of the succession planning process.

5. Transition. All succession planning should ideally ensure that the person who is leaving the role is an active participant in the handover process. The handover process should have adequate time factored, neither rushed nor too long a period but a balanced timeline to ensure a complete hand over of knowledge, the organization, process and planned next steps or upcoming next steps. During the handover process it is advised that the process is objective, well documented with key agenda items and the receiver is able to sign off on both the understanding and impact of each item. The receiving employee should be trained to filter out any biases, should be provided support by the other supervisory and skip level leaders, should have enough opportunity to verify facts and figures during the transition period. A best in class idea is that the employee who is exiting the role should be an active participant in the succession planning process from

hiring to developing and then to transition. This helps in ownership during the transition process and the employee who is leaving has an interest in ensuring the next person has all the chances, potential and is empowered to succeed.

6. Documentation, review and recreate. At the end of the transition process it is important to document the end to end process flow with the bottlenecks and challenges, learnings and obstacles to ensure that the process of succession planning gets more refined and seamless. The documentation process has to be reviewed and calibrated by all parties involved, there has to be a feedback mechanism especially from the person who moved into the new role. This will establish the effectiveness of the planning and will also highlight some of the opportunities.

### **Succession planning at the core of leadership pipeline.**

Succession plan simply put is the process of identifying and developing the next leader to take over an upcoming opportunity. The process actually provides for an opportunity to make the next leader even better than the previous one. The notion here is the organization knows what has to be done and how it has to be done, it is about doing this better the next time. Therefore succession planning is at the core of developing a steady pipeline of strong and successful leaders who can go on and make a bigger impact in their next deployment.

Succession planning process creates a learning organization, though only a pool of high potential talent are able to get into the succession planning pool, this environment itself creates a belief in growth opportunities and aspiration for excellence as a value flourishes across the organization. When done the right way, the sight of another colleague progress in their career will create the aspiration and desire in other team members to replicate the same for themselves and their careers.

Organizations who have a seamless and effective succession planning process and strategy are known to have better quality of leaders. This awareness is one of the causes for many other organizations to invest and rely on a succession planning for their leadership pipeline requirements.

The steps listed above are some of the suggestion and ideas collated from best in class organizations and can prove to be a key differentiator for organizations looking to strengthen their leadership quality and leadership pipeline.

### **5.7 Discussion of Results Leadership Styles**

The new age global economy with its diverse workforce needs leaders with special skills. The nimble, aspirational and talented global workforce has unique requirements and expectations from their organizations. Organizations are expected to not only provide employment but are measured on employee satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is becoming directly related to employee satisfaction. All of these means leading teams now have become much more complex. Leadership styles are now under scrutiny and debated much more than ever before. Leveraging and adapting to the right leadership styles can be the differentiator for both the leaders and the organization.

In the new age of global economy, younger , flexible, nimble global workforce across the trending industry verticals such as retail and ecommerce, banking and financial services, telecommunication, hospitality, travel and STEM industries (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) leading teams and performing a leadership role is getting more complex an interesting.

While it is common knowledge that there are several styles of leadership, there is not much of prescription or information on which style of leadership is better. There are various articles and research on different styles of leadership and how each of them are evolving and some probably are not as much in vogue as the others.

For example a role of a personnel manager has been progressively changed to a human resource manager. And the word manager is slowly replaced by leader.

In this regard, it is important to recognize that a person performing a leadership role has two fundamental aspects of leading and managing.

Leading is building trust, relationship, motivation, culture and influencing people to work together in a direction desired by the vision and mission of the larger group, Whereas, managing is more about administration of tasks such as planning, organizing, staffing, directing, controlling and coordinating.

Aspects of managing such as planning, organizing, staffing, directing, controlling and coordinating are achieved through tools, processes, applications, systems and managers are trained to operate and use these tools and systems. Managing is a process of combining, systems, tools, policies, process and so on. Most of these are learnt on the job and some aspects are even covered by academia and schools.

Aspects of leadership however have to be coached, learnt by observation, practice, beliefs, values, culture and so on. There has to be an inherent desire, commitment and passion to lead. All of these leadership traits can be imbibed with time and effort by an individual. The important aspect of leadership characteristics and traits is that the sooner these gets cultivated and practiced by an individual, the easier it becomes and then it gets ingrained into the person. Collectively, both aspects of leading and managing is expected from leaders.

Leaders and leadership have been one of the most widely discussed topics in the corporate world. The impact (positive or negative) that leaders have on business is considered the differentiator to the extent of success or failure of an organization.

Leadership is not for everyone. The first and foremost question that needs to be asked before we plan to make someone a leader is if the person is passionate, has an



intrinsic motivation to lead, desire and drive to inspire others to do great things for all and for the organization. A wrong decision at this stage goes on to impact the organization in loss of revenue, customers, employee engagement and profitability.

Leadership is a very common and relatively simple and easy topic for people to talk about. Everyone seems to know something about it and most people agree it's important for organizational success. However, when it gets right down to basics and brass tacks, businesses find it difficult to justify the case to actually invest in leadership.

This is due to the fact that justifying a return on investment is difficult or the outcome is not immediate. There are always other priorities for businesses which seem immediate as compared to developing leaders.

Leadership consists of intangible aspects and as part of this reason there is no specific area in a business case or a profit and loss statement that we can allocate leadership as an item. Therefore the hesitation amongst businesses and leaders in allocating budgets to build better leadership. However there is plenty of research that emphasizes that leadership has an all-round impact on most items in a balance sheet of a business. The way forward is to convince leaders in an objective method about the benefits and critical need to focus on leaders and leadership.

Businesses that get it right and hire and train leaders based on talent along with a scientific approach to development will continue to thrive and gain significant competitive advantage.

In the last several years, there have been different classification systems to define the dimensions or styles of leadership. The most popular leadership styles are: trait, skills, style approach, situational approach, authentic leadership, team leadership, directional leadership, transformational leadership and servant leadership.

While each of these styles have their own merits and demerits, some of the styles such as transformational leadership and servant leadership are getting more attention and focus. These styles are now more often debated in the corridors and boardrooms of corporates, in the media and HRD conclaves. Stakeholders are giving more attention and focus to these styles as compared to the other styles, since they feel these are more appropriate and relevant to the current business environment and talent pool.

The challenge is when put to practical test and when rubber meets the road, some of these leadership styles actually run into roadblocks and challenges. Organizations are very quick to move from one leader to another and from one style to another at the first sight of resistance or failure.

Studies, research and several case studies shows that impact of good leadership takes time and the organizations who are more patient and persevere are able to reap long term rewards.

Transformational leadership style is widely believed to cause change in individuals, systems, processes and eventually resulting in innovation, change, transforming followers into leaders. Transformational leaders inspire their followers to achieve significantly higher and better outcomes and eventually transform from followers to leaders. They create intellectual stimulation leading to innovation and higher sense of ownership.

However the challenge is the leader entrusted with driving this transformational change is someone with a lot of charisma, centre of attraction, may result in self-promotion, the assumption is that everyone in the team is already a follower. The fear is this maynot be a scalable model and there is always a risk of followers losing more than they gain from this model. In several instances we have seen that followers remain followers while the leader continues to be the prominent personality. The leader driving

transformational leadership has the ability to inspire, influence, drive innovation but the demerits are that there is a fear of burn out at the other end since the receiver must be at the same pace as the driver of transformation. Another fear is that in this style there is a probability of more “telling” than enabling. Therefore, while change and transformation happens, it may not be consistent and constant.

There is some valid belief that this style probably works in smaller groups or specific projects and not a viable option for organizational transformation through leadership. Driving a transformational leadership style consistently for a long period of time is a challenge. It is also important to note that transformational leadership is a combination of multiple styles of leadership which in itself can lead to multiple challenges since each style comes with its own pros and cons.

Servant leadership is a much more recent leadership style though we may even state that it is not necessarily a leadership style but rather a way of ‘behaving’ over a period of time. Servant leadership compliments the democratic way of leading and has similarities with transformational leadership style. Servant leadership style focusses on the key aspects such as listening, empathy, awareness, persuasion, healing, growth of people and so on.

The primary difference between transformational leadership and servant leadership is that servant leaders develop people whereas the transformational leaders inspire people.

In servant leadership environment it is generally noticed that teams have higher morale, collaboration, highly ethical behavior however the challenges or disadvantages of servant leadership is that it takes time, both the leader and the team members have to remain engaged, understanding needs and creating workable plans can take time. There is a high chance that the teams can lose sight of goals, it may not work in all situations and

for all organizations. It has been observed that teams start with a high level of motivation since they feel important however at times when they need someone else to solve a problem then there is a tendency to lose motivation.

In servant leadership the self-sacrificing behavior makes it not a very aspirational or scalable model since there is a sense of power and authority that is attached to being a leader. A certain level of ego is a normal behavior of people at leadership position, without the power and ego not many people may aspire to be a leader of this style.

In both transformational and servant leadership there is a strong element of mentorship. With mentorship, one creates a sense of support system which means team members are often looking for help which can lead to an environment of constant suggestions from the leader which eventually leads to directional leadership.

The question remains of how scalable are these styles, are these replicable and repeatable, predicting a time bound outcome and sustenance could be a challenge in these styles of transformational leadership and servant leadership.

This leads us to the concept or style of leadership called 'Leader as a Coach'.

The fundamental principle in this style of leadership is a leader wearing the hat of a coach creates an environment of psychological safety. Trust is mandatory in all of the new age leadership style, be it transformational style or servant leadership however coaching leadership style attempts to bring psychological safety which takes trust to the next level.

Trust is interpersonal however an environment of psychological safety nurtures happy, high performing people and teams. Psychological safety ensures role clarity, support group and interdependence and creates an environment of team work, ensures there is an environment of learning. In this environment there is an assurance or safety feeling that people can speak up and they will not be punished, embarrassed or sidelined

for speaking up. An outcome of this environment is higher engagement, constant learning, improved performance and development.

Leader as a coach or a coaching leader focusses on bringing out the best in each of the team members, they encourage conversation and collaboration, there is constructive feedback, though always focusing on being supportive than judgmental.

In this style of leadership, change is continuous, evolving and transformational in team members. There is a larger wholistic thinking that emerges and people are able to tap into their own internal resources to identify and solve for problems and also create proactive solutions for future.

The key aspect of a coaching leadership style is the ability to ask good questions. This style replaces the styles of telling people what to do, instead they guide team members to arrive at the right decisions or answers on their own.

While motivation and developing people are considered high on leaders agenda in all of the newer styles of leadership such as transformational and servant leadership, we don't see this happening consistently in reality. This is due to various real-life challenges and situations in the work place however when leaders develop the ability of having effective conversations they empower others to develop themselves.

In the leader as a coach style the approach itself encourages independent problem solving and ultimately leads to improved performance and creates future leaders out of the team members.

Coaching leadership style incorporates the key aspects of transformational and servant leadership such as empathy, listening, respect however the unique value addition and difference is that in a coaching leadership style the leader guides or encourages the team member towards creating his or her own solutions to situations. This leads to higher levels of ownership and engagement. The person with a situation is guided and navigated

to find the solution for the situation. This means that the approach to the solution becomes their own agenda. Execution becomes flawless, eventually this becomes a means for strategic thinking. Team members are encouraged to take their own discoveries as learnings for future. This means that not only a team member gets guided by the leader to think of a solution but is also encouraged to use similar learnings for future situations.

An environment of coaching leadership creates employees for the future. Employees understand their responsibilities and ownership, they are quick to arrive at resolution, problems turn into solutions faster and solutions become their own solutions leading to more ownership, engagement and eventually creates a learning organization.

There is always a better way of solving the problem next time, a culture of room for improvement and opportunities develops, this is not seen as negative but about fostering growth. Increase in motivation and loyalty happens as an outcome of this sense of belonging.

The objective of a coaching leadership style is not to target a set of results, the goal is to empower individuals to become the best version of themselves. The shift of mindset, unblocking of mental obstacles, stoking awareness of a different approach to solving, creating and building. All round growth and results are then bound to happen, consistently.

Coaching as a leadership style creates positive environment, empowered employees, higher levels of engagement and retention, creativity, strategic thinking. Innovation thrives.

The increasing appeal and interest to be a coaching leader among aspiring leaders is that apart from the consistency of results and overall benefits, the leader doesn't have to go to the extreme of self-sacrificing behavior needed for a servant leadership style nor

get into the mentoring / directional mode of some of the other leadership style. This is more of a balanced approach to leading.

This doesn't mean coaching style leadership doesn't have its own challenges. Similar to the transformational and servant leadership style this style too takes time. Leaders must be prepared and skilled to lead in this style of functioning. Team members should be of a certain level of caliber and maturity.

Leaders who are used to operate in an environment of control or used to being a mentor or centre stage high visibility style of functioning may not be best suited for this environment. The answer is there is no 'one style' which fits all requirements. A directive style of leading may be most effective in an environment where there is a need of urgency, staff who are more used to operating in an environment of control, whereas a project based delivery may need a much more tactical style of leading. An emerging situation of business transformation may need a thinking of directional or transformational leadership. A mature team would benefit from servant leadership style.

Each leadership style has its own merits and challenges. Under these circumstances, a leader who is able to switch hats amongst various styles, depending on the need and situation seems to be able to deliver results successfully. Therefore is it best to say that a combination of leadership style depending on needs and situations maybe the best route ? Maynot be true though, since while the combination approach can provide results in the interim however long term transformation and consistency of success is not guaranteed.

Organizations with leaders who embrace and exhibit a coaching style of leadership will continue to be consistently successful, a visible transformation happens and a steady pipeline of capable leaders emerge out of such teams. In a coaching style of

leading apart from the team member benefiting immensely, the leader is constantly learning and developing which creates an environment of growth for the leader.

Building an organization for future would certainly benefit from a Coaching style of Leadership. So we could say that Coaching Style of Leadership is one such style which will be at the forefront of leadership styles in the new and emerging global economy.

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader (Adams, 2016).

### **5.8 Discussion of Results Employee Life-Cycle**

The end to end process of hiring to exit of an employee covers the employee lifecycle at an organization. Though there are factors which can happen impacting the pre-joining and post exit of an employee, the direct in-control aspects start from the date of joining to the date of exit, everything that happens within that timeframe can be considered as an employee lifecycle with an organization. The aspects of pre joining during the hiring phases and the experience around those phases obviously impacts an employee and the organizations brand value. Similarly the experience of an employee during the actual tenure will also impact the type of reference and word of mouth marketing that will happen from the employee post the exit.

Broadly classified areas within an employee lifecycle are recruitment, onboarding, development, retention and separation. We could add attraction as another area within the lifecycle however since there are indirect factors that have more control over attracting than direct factors for this chapter we will focus on the rest of the five areas. The employee lifecycle is an interconnected wheel, a negative impact in any one area can continue to remain in the mind of an employee even as they enter into the subsequent areas . Though a positive impact in one area does not necessarily guarantee similar mindset in other areas. All this leads to the fact that engaging an employee



through the lifecycle is an ongoing continuous process. As leaders in an organization it is important to know each stage and how it can be utilized to deliver high levels of motivation and engagement in any environment. The employee experience is directly linked to engagement and therefore managing the employee lifecycle can be essential for an organizations performance, growth, learning and development of people. Employees at each stage have different levels of expectations so therefore segmenting engagement activities accordingly delivers the maximum benefits.

With every new person walking into through the doors of the organization the unintended challenges and consequences really thrive at the beginning of the employee lifecycle which is when a new person joins. The organization is exposed to new experiences, can result in positive or negative impact to culture, values, customer and employee satisfaction. While success is a team effort it is important to recognize that a single individual can cause severe damage to the organization. However in every stage there is an opportunity to turn around events to benefit the organizations larger interest.

Leveraging the stage of newness by communicating frequently with employees can considerably motivate and engage the new employees. Always hire for attitude and behavior and train for skills when there is skill gap. Focus on personality since these employees could be your future leaders. Basically remember that every new employee who walks in through your door is an opportunity for an organization, to convert that employee into the leadership pipeline for successful leadership role in the future and until that happens motivate and engage the employee to grow into high potential bucket.

The focus to retain should start right at recruitment. If an organization has done the recruitment process right and brought in the right set of individuals then it is crucial to inspire them to deliver results. High performing employees are engaged better than the average performers. High performers should be encouraged and all they need is an

environment conducive for them to deliver, therefore the leaders role is create a conducive environment by removing bottlenecks and hurdles and by facilitating, mentoring and coaching. Making sure that they feel trusted and valued will result in the employees wanting to progress not just in their performance levels but they would want to progress in their career. Leaders must create the 'I too want to be a leader' culture in the organization. Each and every employee who walks into a career is keen and desires to grow in their career, the dependencies are mostly around their individual drive and passion, their skill sets and capabilities and an environment which is supportive and enables the employee to realize their true and full potential.

An organization is the environment obviously, however the organization can play a large role in creating passion, desire and help improve the skills and capabilities of the employees so that they go on to realize their full worth and potential. This ofcourse benefits the individuals and leads to the benefit of the organization by creating the right set of leaders and leadership pipeline. The basic tenet of any employee lifecycle management is to have a consistent leadership behavior and culture across the lifecycle of an employee. Leaders have to be approachable, when employee notice that their leaders are approachable then it instills confidence. This approachability then becomes the culture as subsequent leaders who develop from within recognize this behavior and want to emulate it. Be approachable.

At every phase of the lifecycle an employee must recognize that the leadership will not punish them for a failure, leaders have to show that they are not afraid to take risks. This creates a culture of floating an idea to the team and experimenting, learning from failures and learning to the right things better. Be accepting of failure.

Organizations could do well to rely on a combination of their own practices and values to drive a certain behavior right through the lifecycle of an employee. To

standardize the principles and behaviors so that an employee gets the same feeling at each stage of their career organizations could consider some existing models and add their own methods to these models. SCARF model (Rock and Cox, 2012) is a very interesting model which talks of five domains of experience that activates strong threats and rewards in the human brain thus influencing a wide range of human behaviors. The SCARF model stands for status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness, and fairness. This model was highlighted as the management idea by various journals and management gurus and was named as one of the ‘best ideas of 15 years’ by strategy-business journal.

All of us react to these domains of experiences, organizations might as well train their leaders to align their thinking to how a receiver would react to a situation. Having an understanding of how each of us would react to a situation and then accordingly practice our behavior will help build effective communication and relationship. Each of these five status can cause an away or a towards behavior. Leaders need to know how to address these situations, this needs practice but more importantly needs awareness.

Maslow hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943) is a proven concept that has been in the management circles for several years now. There are several version to the original model that has been published to help organizations to leverage to create their own internal mechanism. This concept is a proven and well established way humans think, react and behave. Considering that this concept is well established and commonly taught in schools and most people are already aware, the human resources with the help from learning and development teams could consider utilizing this mechanism to create their employee policy and benefit, growth, reward and recognition methods.

While there are several models and concepts available in the market, the idea is for organizations to use a combination of available methods and combine it with their own internal mechanism. The reason being each organization is unique with their own

strengths and challenges all dictated by types of business, demography, culture, people, stability and so on, therefore it is important to bring in their own methods of dealing with employee engagement. When an organization leverages something that is tried and tested and merges it with their own models then the result can be significantly beneficial.

Six thinking hats is one such concept which helps leaders to use various thinking types to a situation. Six thinking hats (De Bono, 2017) when practiced and used can help leaders view each situation from various angles including the possible angles that someone else would be viewing.

Eventually the idea is that an employee at each stage of their cycle in an organization is experiencing a certain behavior, culture, there are both tangibles and intangibles, all of these are getting ingrained into the employee and these eventually are the same behaviors and reactions that the employee will also exhibit when they reach a leadership level or even before. Culture is contagious. It could be positive culture or negative culture, therefore actions and reactions, behaviors that are exhibited by leaders in each situation is observed and learnt by their team members who in turn would emulate and behave the same way that they have learnt. If an organization has to build good leaders then their existing leaders have to walk the talk. The existing leaders have to be good leaders to create more good leaders. Coaching and developing has to start with the existing leaders who will then go on to create more good leaders.

Finally, in the employee lifecycle the last stage is separation. This researcher considers separation in most cases as a result of failures on the part of the organization, however there are certain situation leading to separation which cannot be attributed as a direct organizational failure. Example a leader moving on to another organization since they have reached the highest level of growth within their organization or geographical limitations or health related movements and so on. However, every time an organization

loses an employee it is crucial to understand the reasons and causes that led to the separation. Understanding the employee lifecycle will help identify the triggers.

Separation normally is a combination of several reasons and there is always a main or first trigger which then leads to several triggers and finally ends up as a strong enough reason for the employee to consider exiting an organization.

Separation can be classified as desired and undesired. Desired attrition or separation is when an organization decides to terminate the services of an employee. This could be due to several factors such as poor performance, behavioral issues, disciplinary issues, ethics, values, compliance or any such issue which can be classified as negatively influencing or impacting the organizations goals, values and purpose. In each of these cases organizations can view a desired separation as a good outcome from a bad situation however there has to be a detailed analysis on why the employee had to be separated or the causes for behavior, performance or other issues which led to the separation. This analysis will help identify the loopholes in the system. Example if the employee was not able to perform to required standards was the employee a bad hiring choice, could training have been done better, was the direct manager not able to improve performance through coaching and feedback and many such questions could be addressed leading to the separation situation. Just closing the separation as a desired separation and attributing a cause or reason will not help the organization in terms of leadership effectiveness, cost of operations, performance standards and importantly employee engagement. A detailed analysis will help the organization fix the loopholes and ensure that the same mistakes are not repeated.

There could also be a separation which is caused by reduction in force due to business reduction due to several factors. However, irrespective of the factors leading to separation due to business reduction it is very damaging to the organizations brand, its

leadership ethos and the culture. Every time an employee is exited for no fault or no reason just because the business does not need the employee due to factors such as business reductions there is a damage to the employee engagement. The only way to salvage this situation is by leaders showing courage and transparency and communicating the message to the employees, not just to the employee who was exited but to the entire organization on why this separation was done, causes and reasons and how it will be addressed so that such separations do not happen in future. Importantly once this communication has been done it is imperative that leadership sticks to its communication.

Employees are willing to understand and accept the reasons however if the reasons for business reduction are due to uncontrollables then there is faster acceptance, but if it is due to poor planning then leadership has to show the courage and accept their failure and mistake and also ensure that such failures are not repeated. In case the separation was for cost reduction purposes or driven by the action of keeping cost at a certain margin then the employees start losing faith in their leadership. Separations done for cost purposed have a multiplying impact and the organization will have to bear the consequences of several employee exits due to their lack of trust on the leadership.

Undesired separation or undesired attrition is when an employee exits the organization against the wishes of the organization. This is mostly when good employees who are performing to expectations and the organization values them decide to exit. Analyzing the reasons contributing to the employee exit will provide valuable feedback to the leadership. The exiting employee could be already a leader or could be a potential leader and therefore apart from the impact to delivery there is a loss of leadership talent. There is significant opportunity lost and cost impact when attrition happens.

Understanding the triggers, analyzing the causes and reasons that led to an employee exiting the organization is extremely important to the organization. Attrition

has a cost attached to it, there is performance impact, talent erosion and also causes a ripple effect amongst other employees too.

The cause and reasons of separation and the experience of the employee throughout the employee lifecycle will then determine the employees views and feedback of the organization post exit. This feedback if positive can immensely benefit the organization since several new employees, existing employees and most importantly all those considering employment and career with the organization will act and react to this feedback from the employee who exited the organization. However if the feedback happens to be negative then it can be really harmful to the cause of the organization and even its leaders and leadership.

There are several ways for an organization to collect feedback from employees who exit an organization. Standard process is for a feedback conversation with the line manager, followed by human resources and in some cases the skip level leadership members. However this can be effective only if the exiting employee feels safe and only then will there will be honest feedback provided. Some organizations do a follow up feedback which means that someone from the organizations human resource department or even a third party external agency reaches out to the employee who exited post 30 or 60 days to collect feedback and reason for their leaving the organization. In most cases it has been found that the feedback given after the employee has exited the organization is different to the feedback that was provided during the time the employee was still in the organization but in the notice period or the during the last few days before the actual exit happened. This is primarily due to the fear factor, therefore to get honest feedback it will help to do a follow through feedback post exit and match it with the feedback provided during the notice period or just before the last days at work. With the advent of social media and such other mechanism for employees to share their feedback especially post

their exit it becomes important for organizations and their brand to ensure that when employees exit they go out as positive brand ambassadors for the organizations.

The end to end employee lifecycle provides organizations opportunity to do the right things at each stage of the cycle. Organizations that create a consistent seamless engaging experience for their employees will benefit from high potential employees who are engaged and delivering quality results. Many of these high potentials will be the pipeline of leaders who can take the organization to success. It is important for organizations to nurture and develop these talents to become the leaders for tomorrow.

Further, taking care of the employee lifecycle will provide results that will help the organization move towards its vision. When the organizations key delivery goals are met that helps their existing leaders to invest more time in people development, whereas when goals are not met then leaders are busy spending time on fixing delivery and not able to spend those precious time with their people development practices, which infact is their core responsibility.

The employee lifecycle is a great opportunity to identify high potentials, at each stage the challenges and expectations from employees are varied. Organizations need to have an eye for detail to capture leadership behavior and skills, nurture those skills to create their pipeline of leaders. Every opportunity should be viewed from a perspective of growth and development, sum of all employee growth eventually means the organization is growing. A culture of learning and growth is what truly distinguishes great leadership.

## **5.8 Discussion of Results Best in Class Practices**

Any organization as part of their objectives of being in business will have their vision, mission and purpose outlined. This could be a combination of what the owners and founders, board of directors, shareholders or investors would have expected as an outcome of setting up this business. Having a vision and purpose lays down the core



principles of the organization, The mission guides the organization and we could call it as the guiding lamp.

At this stage an organization must focus on the three core objectives of ‘what, why, and how’. The ‘what’ explains the objective of the organization, the ‘why’ explains the need or the reason for the organization to be in business and the ‘how’ details the path or route that an organization takes to achieve their objective. It is important that organizations use these three fundamentals in the right context and frame since these form the overall messaging of the organization both externally and internally.

The best in class organizations start with the ‘why’ followed by ‘how’ and ‘what’ in that order. Unless the messaging is clear and appealing the organization cannot appeal to both internal and external stakeholders such as employees and customers.

While this stage is determined by the investors, board and the founders or owners, it is best advised that there should be considerable focus and effort put into forming this core area of the organization since everything that flows through post this stage is an output or result of what gets coded in this stage of purpose, vision and mission. Results or outcomes such as revenue, profits are outputs and outcomes of actions and activities, should not be confused with the ‘what, how and why’.

For existing businesses and organizations who are not starting anew, the annual planning period is an opportunity to tweak and change some of their core principles. Care should be taken that any changes and tweaking of the core principles should be completely thought through by brainstorming amongst a panel of team members including several stakeholders across the spectrum of the organization and most importantly the communication has to be clear, transparent and should leave no room for ambiguity. Customers, employees and all stakeholders must be completely aligned and aware on why changes if any have been made.

Some of the best in class organizations would take feedback from their employees and customers on an ongoing basis and these feedback would eventually get into the tweaks and changes to their core principles. In most cases the vision, purpose and mission statement would cover, focus and include meaningful impact to customers, employees, stakeholders.

It is important to note that changes mentioned here are not extreme or items that will shake the fundamental objectives of the organization but more of adjustments and corrections to help steer the organization towards its desired path.

### **Goals.**

Once the objectives or the vision, mission and purpose are finalized the next step is to ensure these are clearly documented, articulated, communicated with communication being the key. The next stage is the process of going about a set of actions and activities to reach the objectives. This leads to a timeline based planning process. Planning is an annual exercise in most cases with a review and course correction at the semi-annual and quarterly periods of the year. Planning is an elaborate, time intensive exercise and therefore due importance and time has to be allocated. In the previous chapter of performance management cycle planning phase was discussed in detail.

Under the planning exercise the key aspect is goal setting. Goals are the backbone of any organization. Goals lead the organization towards the end objective, the steering wheel which guides and navigates the entire vehicle. Goals are metrics and numbers that arise out of splitting the vision and purpose into small chunks of actions which are execution focused and can be measured and reported, are timebound, can be cascaded down to each and every employee. Reverse the funnel and a step up deck or a

consolidated view of all employee goals should add up to the organizational goals leading to the purpose, vision and mission of the organization.

Earlier on we discussed that the role of leadership is to help identify organizational goals, help devise appropriate strategies to achieve such goals and provide direction and motivation for the group so that agreed upon goals can be attained.

A common trend seen in several organization is a flawed method of key performance Indicators or goals that are used to measure success.

Most of these goals are inside out and not necessarily using the outside in concept, this means there could be situations where all goals are met or reasonably achieved but inspite of that the organization is not making progress, employees are unhappy and customers are not satisfied, revenue and profits are not stable or not increasingly better. Further, the planning stage was not complete, the vision, mission and purpose did not match the goals or the goals that were set did not add up or total up to the overall purpose and plan for the year, the rest of the performance management cycle did not properly ensure that the strategy and execution were aligned. Therefore the first and foremost step is to ensure that the goals and plan are aligned. This has to be established at the planning stage and constantly monitored and reviewed, course correction done as and when needed, proactively.

Once the objectives are established then the next step is to cascade it down to each and every department and each and every employee in the organization. Every employee should realize and recognize that the brick they are laying will eventually go on to build the chapel.

Goals come in various forms, there are many versions of measurements used across the corporate landscape globally. KPIs, KRAs, OKRs are the most common measurements used. Though the measurement and metrics may differ the objective is

relatively same across businesses and mostly cover customer, people, financials, shareholders and society.

To recap , key performance indicator (KPI) are defined as performance metrics that evaluate the success of an organization or of a particular unit or activity. KPIs can apply to projects, programs, products, and a variety of other initiatives or period of time. They can measure the success of anything from sales goals to customer metrics to financial aspects. Key result area (KRA) is a strategic factor either internal to the organization or external, where strong positive results must be realized for the organization to achieve its strategic goals. KRAs are not necessarily performance measurements, but rather help break down your vision and goal into specific categories that will drive success. Objectives and key results (OKRs) are defined as a metric that outlines company and team objectives along with the measurable key results that define the achievement of each objective. OKRs represent aggressive goals and define the measurable steps you will take towards achieving those goals.

As shared earlier, one of the key differences between OKRs and KPIs is the intention behind the goal setting. KPI goals are typically obtainable and represent the output of a process or project already in place, while OKR goals are somewhat more aggressive and ambitious. With KPIs, you are trying to figure out how well you are doing right now, how healthy your company is, and how your current initiatives are performing. OKRs are more about development and growth and whether you're on track to reach the goals.

The Balanced scorecard or BSC framework measures organizational performance using both “lagging” indicators of financial performance and customer outcomes, and “leading” indicators of internal processes, skills. Balanced Scorecard or BSC comprises of four key elements - Financial, customer, internal process, and capacity. The four steps

of a BSC are translating the vision into operational goals, communicating the vision and link it to individual performance, business planning, feedback and learning.

BSC initiatives fail largely because organizations don't use the scorecard as a coaching tool, there is frequent change in strategy but most importantly because culture is not embedded into the BSC measurement systems. Cutting across the four pillars of BSC an organizational culture is key to the effectiveness of BSC.

Whether it is OKR or KPI or a Balanced scorecard, the measurement metrics should cover all aspects of why a business exists and what it wants to achieve and for consistent success it is imperative that culture is at the core of all measurement and intangible aspects are weaved into any outcomes. Culture eats strategy for breakfast was the famous leadership quote of Drucker P which is becoming more and more relevant.

Culture is the crucial missing link in BSC and even in other measurement methodology Incorporating a positive culture into everything the organization wants to do is even more important in the current volatile, uncertain and complex environment.

OKRs and Balanced scorecard don't compete, infact OKRs can actually complement the BSC framework. OKRs are the individual goals and aspirations, they are the building blocks for an organization.

Based on all the studies and research conducted by this researcher, it is evident that Balanced Scorecard or versions of it is still the most relevant and more pertinent measurement standard that exists today. Many established and best in class organization are continuing to use the framework of a balanced scorecard however they edit or add their own organizational standards or requirements into the framework making it very customized to what their organizations stands for and expects to achieve.

### **OKRs and BSC.**

The suggestion from this researcher is to use OKRs and Balanced scorecard together. OKRs are one of the best mechanism to measure progress, OKRs are able to track an individual, team and the organizations progress towards outcomes and at the same time makes the focus on development and aspiration. This is not just about measuring against a defined metric but more about creating a path to achieve aspirational goals. Apart from highlighting results, OKRs are future looking, provides early guidance on how the individual, team and group are performing and provides an opportunity to course correct and shows the path to achieve aspirational goals. This is more than meeting targets or tracking against set targets, OKR are more visionary than metrics.

OKRs are known to drive agility in teams, having agile framework is known to create effective and efficient teams, OKR enables teams to work in an agile framework, the flexibility of change which is very crucial in today's volatile, uncertain, complex business environment.

In most of the progressive organizations empowering employees to adopt and deliver stretched goals is known to create higher employee engagement, OKRs provide a strong platform to support this environment. Global organizations in the current economy with their impactful purpose and vision depends on multiple groups and teams to come together and deliver as one unit. This is no more silos and individuals but about groups performing and enabling each other. Under these circumstances, OKRs support cross functional alignment and can bring together global diverse teams to perform as one unit. There is scope for high performers to buddy and support others in the teams who need help and support thereby bringing the overall standards of delivery to several notches higher. OKRs are easy to plan and execute, provides for engaging employees and importantly it helps to learn from both success and opportunities.

OKR stands for Objectives and Key results, and by the nature of the framework itself it helps organizations implement and execute strategy. Benefit of the framework include a better focus on results that matter, increased transparency and better alignment to the overall purpose. The objective tells the organization where to go and several key results which adds up to the results needed to achieve the objective. Initiatives under the OKR are projects, tasks and activities that will help achieve those key results.

OKR framework helps employees prioritize, align, measure the outcome of efforts that are needed to meet the results and provides the opportunity for feedback and learning. OKRs helps in bridging the gap between strategy and execution and moves from an output to an outcome based approach.

Objective is a description of something that an organization would like to achieve. It helps set the direction, it is a destination of where the organization wants to reach. An objective should not be technical and not just a metric. Objective should be tangible, measurable and should be transparent and every employee should be able to understand and relate to the objective. Some examples of an objective could be :- Increase sales booking by xx, increase business by xx, improve customer satisfaction by xx, strengthen culture in the organization, grow corporate global business and so on. An objective is where an organization wants to go and sets a clear direction, a destination on a map.

Key results are measurable outcomes required to achieve the outcome. It must contain a metric with a start and target value. Key results measure progress towards the objective, with milestones and achievement against the target. Some examples of key results could be :- Win xx deals worth xx value in bookings by dd/mm, grow revenue by xx in xx months, increase customer satisfaction to xx percentage, increase employee satisfaction to xx and so on. Key result shows the organization how it is progressing

towards the objective. In the example of a destination on a map, key result is a signpost with marker to show how much distance has been covered.

To achieve the key results there are a set of initiatives, actions, tasks that teams and organization will undertake. Initiatives describes what a team or organization will undertake to achieve key results. It is a description on what has to be or will be done to reach the destination. In the example of a destination on a map as the objective, key result is a signpost with distance covered and initiatives and tasks are actions such as filling gas, preparing the vehicle for the destination and so on.

In summary an example of an OKR could be as follows :- Objective could be 'To be a top place to work in India' therefore a key result could be 'reach top 10 in great place to work' and an initiative could be to 'hire a culture panel'. Another example of an objective could be 'Create an environment of outcome driven culture' therefore a key result could be 'make 100% employees work align to OKRs' and an initiative could be 'run a feedback mechanism to arrive at goals'.

BSC helps in translating an organizations vision into operating goals which is one of the most important aspects which many organizations struggle to accomplish. When this is done right then the next steps are all about executing to the goals and operational requirements. The BSC framework provides for communication of the vision and linking it to teams and individuals. Doing this effectively has proven to be a challenge for many organization. Communicating the vision and linking the translating goals to each department and individuals is probably the biggest activity bridging vision to reality. Effectively doing this transition is a major milestone to accomplish.

At this stage BSC helps to actually formalize business plans. While the teams and individuals become aware of their deliverables, planning to execute on these expectations



form the business planning which BSC can accomplish through its framework. Finally, closing the loop with feedback and learning.

An exciting part of BSC framework is the ability or the space for feedback and learning which are critical for course correction and future opportunities. Unless this part is addressed and executed well there will be limited opportunities for course corrections, learnings, development. With this perspective and information it is very clear that as a framework BSC offers the right approach for an organization to translate vision into goals, communicate the vision with clarity, link the goals to teams and individuals, offer feedback and learning.

Best in class leadership ensures that organizations have a vision, mission, purpose which focusses on the 'what' 'how' and 'why'. The leaders are able to transition the purpose and vision to goals and cascade those goals across every individual employee of the organization, build OKRs and use a BSC framework. Leaders provide for an environment of feedback and learning and repeat this cycle and at every stage brainstorm and involve larger groups with transparency. Culture, values and principles flourish and remain the core foundation of the organization

Operational excellence helps an organization to focus on growth and execution of their strategies better and to do more for their customers, employees and stakeholders. A combination of vision, structure, people and culture enables operational excellence. The core of an organizations existence has to do with the operations or delivery its services to its customers. Ultimately this determines the success and failure of an organization.

Operations or delivery of services or products or whatever area the organization is focusing on leads to revenues for the organization. Doing the operations stage right to the expectations of the customers is paramount in the scheme of things for any organization. This stage determines the leaders and the lagers. Organizations can be in the range of not

meeting customer expectations to meeting customer expectations and exceeding customer expectations. Depending on the range they operate in, the extent of business sustenance and growth varies. An organization which is consistently exceeding all expectations of their customer base will obviously stand to grow and flourish whereas an organization which is below expectations runs the risk of losing business to their competition and an organization which is meeting expectations can consider to either retain their business or runs the risk of losing business to a competition who can exceed performance level expectations. Apart from hiring the right talent and offering the best training and environment to deliver it is important to have a framework to bring the end to end delivery mechanism together. It is important for each and employee of the organization from the entry level employee to the CEO to have a framework in their mind to go about their daily activities. One such framework that I suggest is the PPCP model.

### **PPCP framework**

PPCP framework stands for people, performance, customer and profits. The basis of this framework is if an organization takes care of its people they will perform to their customers satisfaction which in turn will lead to profits. This is a basic and simple framework for anyone in the organization to remember and follow. Every time there is an action or activity each employee should be encouraged to think which of these four pillars will be impacted by their actions. Meetings should have agenda which link the meeting outcome to one or multiple or all of these pillars.

In a PPCP framework primary focus is on people, caring for people means that people are empowered and enabled to discharge their duties in a timely manner. Employee satisfaction is a prime focus area for the organization in this model, a culture of people friendly policies, development and learning culture, coaching and mentoring, feedback and feedforward environment, growth and well-being of employees are a prime

focus for the organization. In such an environment it is common to notice high employee engagement and satisfaction levels, there is ownership and accountability to all outcomes and employees strive to go over and beyond expectations leading to a organization which produces higher than expected levels of results.

As part of the PPCP framework, performance expectations are achieved through a constant focus on training, empowering and developing employees. There is transparency on the results achieved, monitoring and feedback are a constant and continuous activity, leaders are empowered to support and groom employees. Feedback is constructive and not judgmental. The environment fosters team work and collaboration. A culture of coaching and mentoring is prevalent in this environment.

Customer expectations being met or not met are a natural outcome of organizational performance, therefore a framework which provides an environment of high performance standards results in customer satisfaction. A satisfied customer is an asset to an organization, a satisfied customer also is a reference to the organizations capability and leads to more business opportunity both from an existing business and new business opportunity. Word of mouth is the best form of marketing.

Profits are what makes an organization sustain, grow and scale. This also leads to adequate remuneration and compensation for the employees. An outcome of high people engagement, exceeding performance standards, high levels of customer satisfaction leads to higher profits.

A culture of focusing on the four pillars of people, performance, customer and profits in that order of priority ensures high level of operational excellence. The framework of PPCP also bonds and unites the organization to one single motto. Every employee is encouraged to think the impact of their decision on these pillars. This approach of linking each decision and action to these pillars also helps in fostering an

entrepreneur mindset within each of the employee. In such a culture all employees start to take more ownership and responsibility towards their actions. Every employee will eventually reach a stage of considering if whatever they are doing is not helping one of the four pillars then that activity or time spent is not productive and not in the larger interest of the organization.

### **Components of operational excellence.**

The three components of operational excellence can be summarized as leadership and strategy, culture and engagement and continuous improvement. Cultural enablers such as leading with humility and empathy goes a long way in establishing a high performing organization. Respect and adherence to organizational values and beliefs form a large part of the cultural enablers. Leaders are expected to walk the talk in this framework. Leadership strategy and aligning the purpose and vision to the strategy ensures a clear path forward. The objective of customer satisfaction through a culture of training, growth and development leads to operational excellence. High performing individuals and teams enabling and supporting one another is a common sight in such frameworks.

Continuous improvement is a sign of a learning and empowered organization. Business objectives are constantly changing, there is a cycle of new employees coming in to an organization therefore there is a need to focus on continuous improvement. Continuous improvement is a mindset that challenges status quo and promotes critical thinking of practices and policies. As part of continuous improvement, risk and business continuity also is constantly evolving. Businesses are at risk from internal and external sources, continuous improvement is not just about improving existing mechanism of delivery but also focuses on risk, business continuity and plans of recovery.

As part of continuous improvement organizations must leverage tools and techniques to measure and optimize. Continuous improvement is also about focusing on results, outcomes in each function and area of the organization, even if targets and goals are achieved the philosophy of continuous improvement is to identify opportunities to do better and further optimize results without reducing the standard of output. There are several tools and techniques that are available to enhance and optimize performance levels.

Leaders and organizations must be constantly looking at methods to improve upon their performance levels even when they are meeting or exceeding targets. It is equally important to understand what are the drivers for meeting or not meeting performance levels. Once the drivers are known then it becomes easier to address. There are several methods such as six sigma, lean and other methods that are used to improve performance.

Leaders should be open to accept these methods, they may not have to be experts in these methodologies but should be comfortable to invite experts into their areas to assist them as and when needed. All organizations and businesses have competition, both from other organizations and also from automation, tools and technologies. Customer expectations are always increasing, therefore organizations have to be on the lookout for improvements in the way they operate and deliver results. Optimization efforts are not only external facing but also internal facing such as driving efficiency to reduce cost, improving employee engagement to reduce employee attrition and so on. A robust operational efficiency model can assist organizations to meet and exceed internal and external expectations and also help in business transformation and scale.

The actions elaborated in this section will enable an organizations leadership to navigate the organization to success, ensure employees are happy and engaged,

customers and stakeholders will be pleased with outcomes, revenue, profits and other metrics will steadily show a progressive trend.

As part of the literature review there were challenges identified and the solution framework has addressed all of the challenges so far in this research. Each part of the solution framework has dealt with challenges that were impeding leadership, reasons that were contributing to poor leadership and lack of leadership pipeline. There were three items that was called out by various researchers and also noted in the literature reviews. This section of the research will focus on addressing and mitigating those challenges that have not been directly addressed so far in this research, though it has been covered as part of various initiatives. The three items that will be covered are listed below:-

1. Understanding the leadership challenges of first time managers (Gentry, Logan and Tonidandel, 2014) and increasing retention and success of first time managers (Mundet, Laureiro Martinez and Osterchrist, 2021).
2. Empowering leadership in management teams (Srivastava, Bartol and Locke, 2006).
3. Learning from bad leadership (Rababah, 2015).

### **First time managers.**

This research has covered salient parts on leadership identification, development of leaders and leadership concepts that should be included in developing leaders, the high potential identification and development using external resources if needed, internal learning and development teams, goal setting, performance management, feedback, coaching and so on are all items that contribute to successful leadership. While reading and implementing strategies provided in the research will help address the challenges of first time leader identification, success enablers, retention and so on, the next few pages of this research will specifically focus on providing certain suggestions to first time

managers which will help them succeed, organizations will have higher success rate and retention of their first time managers (Plakhotnik, 2017).

First and foremost first time leaders need to acknowledge that there will be changed relationships, especially more so when it is an internal promotion. There will be changed equations with a previous team mate versus treating that team mate as a member of the team. Finding a sudden balance between a friend and a supervisor can be challenge and the ways to resolve this is through transparent communication and acknowledgement of the changed relationship. This conversation is not an easy one but it has to be had as soon as possible. A first time manager has to put in efforts to build trust in the new environment, building trust happens when there is effective and open communication. Trust ensures that team members will put in extra effort at work and they become more happier in their roles. Having frequent check-ins and one on ones and eliciting feedback and providing feedback along with transparency helps build trust (Sillett, 2015).

As part of the changed relationships first time leaders must recognize and be prepared for addressing conflicts. Conflicts happen in all levels of the hierarchy and leaders are constantly facing those conflicts however in those cases the leaders have probably got more experience and have handled conflicts previously too. In the case of a first time leader conflicts could be an entirely new area that they have not been exposed. Being aware and prepared for conflict is a good way to handle conflicts. The best way to begin a conflict resolution process is to address the conflict and not ignore hoping that the conflict would go away. Conflicts unless addressed and resolved never goes away, it may fade out from the surface but will grow into a larger issue eventually. Active listening and empathy are two known solutions for resolving conflicts. Acknowledge the employees feeling and understanding their perspective will help the leader to get to the root cause of the problem, resolution for a conflict should be a collaborative solution finding approach.

Active listening is a skill that gets developed over a period of time. The first step is to become an effective listener. Effective listening provides an opportunity to ask the right questions.

Many people are not listening in a conversation but waiting to speak, instead staying focused on the things that the other person is saying will allow person to express themselves fully. As one gets comfortable with effective listening skills then the next stage will be to uplift to active listening. Active listening is the ability to listen and repeat the message in the same words and similar phrases, use metaphors if needed, and then to replay the message in own words and ideas to get acceptance of the conversation. Effective listening, acknowledging the situation, empathy, all provides for a good set of skills to manage and resolve conflicts. Active listening takes the leader to much higher levels of leadership effectiveness and capability.

Delegation of responsibilities is a sure way to win over team members. Delegation should not be misconstrued with absolving one of their own responsibilities, it is more of shadowing, supporting and then pulling back and allowing the team member take over that responsibility. Effective delegation is a key leadership skill not just at the first time leader level but right upto the CXO levels. Delegation results in empowering, earning trust and respect, psychological safety and pride in the team members while allowing the leader to focus on more priorities.

It is a fact that having a good relationship with one's manager and the line of command is crucial for any employee and this is especially important for a first time leader. As a first time leader it is important to invest much effort in building a relationship with the manager. From the literature review findings there was evidence provided by Gallup (Hartner and Rigoni, 2016) in a survey which found that more than 50% of the people have at one point or another had a manager they disliked so much that



they quit their job over it. From the literature review we found several research on this topic.

People leave their managers and not their company (Buckingham and Coffman, 2014). All of this goes on to suggest that as a first time leader it is important to invest in relationship with the supervisor, Some of the ways to do this is to constantly ask for feedback from the manager, find mutual grounds to build rapport, convince the manager that their interest is priority, get the managers buy-in on important aspects at work and also ensure the manager is kept aware of proceedings proactively.

Having a mentor at work is equally important and this is more true for a first time manager. All the research thus far suggests that a mentor plays a crucial role in supporting and guiding and helping to overcome challenges. A mentor can work with the first time manager to enable a growth mindset. Having a static mindset as a first time leader level is detrimental to growth and success, therefore shifting from a static mindset to a growth mindset is important and a mentor can actively help to work on this shift in thinking.

Good leaders are known to have an ability to relate to each of their team member as per the team members personality and working habits. A mentor can successfully help a first time leader to develop this capability of segmenting team members and relating to them accordingly. A mentor can help the first time leader to focus on quick wins, these quick wins are those low hanging fruits which can build a cohesive team quickly. The first time leader will benefit from having a mentor who will help prioritize activities, help establish behaviors and conversation tips to build rapport with team members and peers. While managing up is important so is leading the team and equally important is peer relationship, establishing a strong peer to peer level relationships are important for all levels of leaders especially a first time leader.

Finally, it is important not to get discouraged. As a first time leader there will be several roadblocks and challenges, bottlenecks at every stage. Perseverance and persistence are key in winning over these initial set of challenges that a first time leader would face. This research and thesis has several aspects that can help leaders and this chapter in particular lists some of the key actions that a first time leader can utilize to become a successful leader. Just like any leader at every level, a first time leader should continue to invest in upskilling their leadership skills and capabilities, learn and inculcate behaviors that are needed not just to overcome the current set of challenges but to prepare for a long and rewarding leadership career.

### **Empowering leadership.**

Organizations that have a culture of empowerment have a higher success rate of leaders and leadership effectiveness. If you have capable leaders and if they are not empowered to make decisions then they get stifled, decisions gets stalled and the organization does not move forward and eventually leads to failure. Empowerment is a chain reaction, effective leaders empower their employees and this ripple effect ensures a fact paced, lively and engaged set of employees. With the millennial global workforce appreciating the need for development into larger roles it is even more important for organizations to empower their leaders who in turn can create a culture of empowerment.

Empowerment leads to ownership and accountability, leads to delegation, creativity and innovation. As the concept of work changes to much more beyond a pay-check, employees are looking at job satisfaction and a sense of achievement and this is especially true at leadership levels. Listed below are some steps that can lead to empowerment at leadership levels which can then turn into a behavior and culture.

An organizations vision is a binding factor especially at the leadership level. Having a compelling vision is the first step, however more important is to share this

vision in a simple and easy to relate message to the leaders. Leaders must be able to relate to the vision and how they could contribute to the vision. Encouraging leaders to think and participate in ways to support the vision. They should be able to produce results that are measurable and tangible towards the vision. Having a role in a vision and working towards contributing towards that vision is a huge boost for empowerment.

Respect is a key ingredient for empowerment. An easy way to show respect is to genuinely ask for inputs and feedback. This could be towards generating ideas or to evaluate progress. Seeking inputs helps getting involvement. Irrespective of the quality and nature of ideas acknowledging the effort and time to provide ideas and inputs should be appreciated. When each leader is respected and involved they will do the same with their groups. One easy way of spreading the culture of respect in an organization is to begin at the top of the chain (Spreitzer, De Janasz and Quinn, 1999).

Decision making and authority to facilitate is another important aspect towards empowerment. Leaders should be given not just responsibilities but they should be empowered to make decisions. Decisions could be financial, people, policy related. Empowered leadership groups should have a matrix based approval hierarchy in place. A leader should not have to go to their superiors for approvals which could be done at their levels, therefore a level based matrix of approval should be worked out in the organization. Nothing is more frustrating that leaders having to go and seek approval from their higher ups on areas that they are competent to make decisions. Every decision does not have to be made at the top. Having to push decisions upwards kills ownership and accountability and creates a sense of frustration. It also delays decision making. A culture of control goes against a culture of empowerment.

Leaders need to be in the know. They need to know progress, challenges, next steps, results and outcomes. An empowered leader is a well-informed leader.

Organizations and organizational culture should not use information as power, this is a negative behavior that should be avoided. When someone at the top leadership withholds information then the concept of information associated to power spreads very fast. In very quick succession leaders at all levels to feel powerful will withhold information from their subordinates creating a very dissatisfied workforce. Sharing information creates empowerment, though there is a thin line and balance between certain company confidential information that can be withheld for compliance or regulatory and such purpose. Other than these confidential aspects any information that is beneficial, creates awareness, must to know and so on should be shared with leaders. Not sharing relevant information on time could also lead to gossip and fear mongering which are all unhealthy in an organization. Well-designed transparent communication and frequent communication is a sure shot way to empowerment and a culture of empowerment (Wilkinson, 1998).

Having a role in the vision of the organization and contributing to that vision is a great feeling of accomplishment and leads to feeling empowered. To take empowerment to the next level organizations must develop and invest in rewarding efforts and celebrating success. Genuine efforts must be recognized, there are situations when efforts may not match results however a culture of appreciating genuine efforts leads to a morale boost and that creates a feeling of gratification and a desire to contribute more. Success ofcourse should be appreciated. A combination of recognizing genuine efforts and appreciating success and rewarding both creates a sense of empowerment. This environment encourages employees to take risks and try new ideas leading to creativity and innovation. Genuine efforts, creativity, innovation and involvement all leads to success and success breeds more success. Empowerment is highest in this environment.

A good strategy to empower leaders is to allow them to use mistakes and failures as learning opportunities. All ideas, efforts don't materialize in success. There could be several instances when leaders fail. Encouraging and allowing leaders to learn from their mistakes creates an environment of learning and transparency, leaders are willing to accept and learn from their mistakes and failures. Offer mentoring and advice as support when leaders fail. If there is a need to reprimand then it has to be done in private however always praise in public. A culture of coaching, learning from failure, praise in public and reprimand if needed only in private are all behaviors that lead to empowered leadership.

Care, create and convert. Leaders go through a lot of stress at work place. High expectations, tight schedules, delivery and cost pressure, people aspirations and so on can be highly stressful. Organizations have to invest in caring for their leaders well-being. When leaders recognize that their organizations genuinely care for them they get more involved and contribute much more. Organizations have to create more opportunities for their leaders, opportunities to grow and learn. Leaders are so engrossed in their day to day work pressures that seldom do they have time to focus on their self-learning and personal growth. Organizations must consider both these aspects and invest in their leaders learning and growth which in turn will benefit both the leader and the organization. Once a leader is ready for larger and higher levels of responsibility the organization must proactively ensure that the leader is transitioned into those growth positions. It is the onus on the organization to create career path and career progression for their leaders. Care, create and convert are all aspects which lead to an empowered leadership team.

### **Learning from bad leadership.**

Be the leader you always wanted to have. Observing your leaders can offer significant amount of learning. While the idea or intent is not to copy or be a clone, the

idea is to learn the best practices that makes a leader successful. Similarly there is learning to be had by observing bad leaders and leaders with poor leadership. Learning good lessons from bad leaders is a sure shot way to eliminate bad skills (Self, 2020).

Everyone wants to work with good leaders, bad leaders don't come with a tag that they are bad leaders, it is about identifying key behaviors and results coming from teams and their leaders and then determining if these are the values, behaviors and culture that benefits the organization and the people.

A key lesson to learn from bad leaders is that if you want loyalty from your team members then you need to be loyal to them. Around bad leaders the team is carrying out activities due to the power and control and there is no learning, lesson to be learnt is to respect people and they give you their respect. If a leader expects unconditional commitment and support from the team then the leader should display the same to their team. Most bad leaders tend to cover up people related problems.

In teams led by bad leaders there could be a period of meeting expected metrics, however employee satisfaction remains low with higher employee exits and overtime the results too start failing. Bad leaders tend to cover up people related issues since bad leadership impacts people first before it starts to impact overall results.

Bad leaders never show their vulnerable side. They believe being vulnerable is a sign of weakness. While emotional outburst is not equal to vulnerability, expressing emotions appropriately generates trusts and creates an environment where others too are comfortable to express their own emotions and feelings. This leads to psychological safety within the team. Being vulnerable and expressing emotions is a great sign of a secured and confident leader.

With bad leaders there is no concept of feedback or encouraging new ideas. An environment which does not provide an opportunity to brainstorm and generate new ideas and feedback stifles innovation.

Leading with humility is something rarely noticed with bad leaders. Bad leadership is synonymous with arrogance. Bad leaders do not consider people as their key resources. Good leaders see people as source of their strength, they rely on their people to provide ideas and strategy whereas bad leaders consider people as a cost centre.

Bad leaders behave differently in each situations, they create inconsistencies in their leadership style. They exhibit different behavior styles in different settings, they may say all the right things in large groups due to the need to be popular, they exhibit an entirely different style when amongst their core followers and they exhibit a very different style in front of people who they are not comfortable with and they react differently when under stress. A good leader exhibits the same behavior and walks the talk irrespective of the environment regardless of stress and situation.

Good leaders accept and embrace failures and mistakes. They are ready to coach and mentor their team members who tried and failed. They are equally comfortable to accept their mistakes and failures and course correct. Learning from good leaders is a practice that is endorsed and appreciated. Everyone wants to learn from good leaders. It is important to remember that case studies are born and created from both from good and bad, success and failure.

A bad leader is a case study of failure. Therefore making a documented case study on the behaviors of bad leaders and the impact of bad leaders on businesses will be a case study for future leaders. Along with relying on coaches and mentors to guide leaders it is also helpful to look at leadership failures from bad leaders.

Realizing and learning what Not to do in a position of power can be truly enlightening for a leader. The list of items that are classified as the ones that has to be practiced or the to-do's and the list of items that are in the do-not's are a source of learning for leaders and future leaders. Bad leadership behaviors can become detrimental to the organizations progress and culture, therefore identifying and course correction on time is the key. Bad leaders are not bad humans, it is about how they learnt their skills, they can be coached and developed to do the right things. Therefore identification is the first step, followed by coaching, mentoring and guiding. When positive results are consistently visible then bad leaders embrace the good learnings and are often seen to change over a period of time.

Some key pointers listed below:-

- Bad leadership relies on power and authority.
- Power is not equal to leadership.
- Leadership is influence.
- Never confuse authority with leadership.
- Authority is not leadership.



## CHAPTER VI: SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### **6.1 Summary**

This research was an elaborate exercise to identify the impact of leadership on organizations. Key findings from existing research on all areas of leadership and the impact of leadership was reviewed and brought to the working of this thesis.

Research suggested that the impact of leadership is on people, process, customers, cost and revenue, scale, jobs and livelihood and expands into the community and economy of the state. So the problem is not limited to just any one area, the consequences are far and wide. Similarly the positive impact of good leadership also stretches far and wide. While leadership is debated and discussed like no other topic, the value and importance or acting on the need to create good leaders is limited.

As a community, we are observing that good leaders and leadership is lacking and this is not just in the corporate world but even in other walks of life such as politics, government, establishments and so on, we notice a behavior of authority is trending in most parts of our lives. Authoritarianism goes against the principles of leadership.

For this research, extensive review of existing literature was carried out and in most cases wherever there was a problem identified by one research there was a solution provided by another researcher. There were pockets of solutions but problem areas were far more and left open-ended. In this research apart from identifying the problem areas the objective has been to provide solutions to those problem areas.

To all the problems that were identified but left without a solution, this research has provided solutions. The solutions provided in this research has been arrived from a combination of bringing together some of the findings from the vast existing research that is already available, followed by this researchers own corporate experience of more than two decades, the solution framework was aided by the extensive surveys and feedback by subject matter experts who have hands on experience in their own fields such as leaders from the corporate business, successful leaders, leaders who were not successful and the academia stakeholders. Several journals, articles and books by leadership gurus and experts were considered in this research.

The framework of solution provided is detailed and covers all aspects of an employee lifecycle. There is evidenced research, feedback and suggestions from experts and personal anecdotes all together forming a consolidated approach towards problem resolution and proactive practices that organizations can leverage.

From go to market strategy for attracting the right talent with fitment of skills, capabilities the research provides best in class suggestions for new hire onboarding,

training and transition to full time production. There is also a section on cultural fitment which can go a long way to helping organizations build a positive culture.

There are extensive material provided here for performance management and goal setting. A unique concept of blending OKRs and BSC is provided. This method has proven to be a successful model for bringing together culture, performance and aspirations all working towards the mission, purpose and vision of the organization.

Leadership development has been the centre-stage of this research. Hiring and bringing in the right set of leaders, training and developing them for future roles and responsibilities is covered in detail. The role and responsibility of the organization in identifying, grooming and nurturing potential leadership talent has been explained in detail. Developing this talent into leaders and transforming the organizations leadership pipeline is a critical factor to build leaders and leadership pipeline. This entire process of leadership identification and development has been a challenge for many organizations, therefore this challenge has been addressed in detail in this research.

Succession planning is often not a well thought strategy especially in organizations which have a symptom of poor leadership in various areas of their leadership levels. There are recommendations provided on how to devise and implement a well-defined succession planning and strategy.

Most organizations do not factor much attention into the type of leadership style which leads to the values and culture of the organization. In this research there is content provided on various styles of leadership and how that impacts the values of the organization. A concept of people, performance, customers and profitability is explained and how those four pillars go together to deliver value.

Poor leadership impacts several areas of an organization directly and then the fallout of this failure spreads to all areas eventually causing unmeasurable impact. Direct

impact could be measured in specific cases however the sum total of direct plus indirect impact is too hard to measure.

There have been research conducted in some of those areas which are attributed to leadership. Cost of poor quality, cost of employee turnover, cost of poor customer satisfaction and cost of employee dissatisfaction are some of the common research topics that are available and the literature review identified these and the findings.

Interestingly, as evidenced in the literature review, items such as cost of poor quality and cost of poor customer satisfaction are also attributed to poor leadership practices. However, when you look at these definitions it does not imply leadership related concerns though the fact remains that capable and effective leadership could have prevented these costs from occurring. In comparison, cost of employee turnover and cost of employee dissatisfaction at the outset feels like leadership cause and effect. The research done into these areas proves that the reason for these failure points was poor leadership. The primary cause for each of these items were attributed to poor leadership.

While there are formula and calculation methods that are used and followed by organizations to measure these failure points, the fact remains that there is subjectivity in these measurements. For example- cost of poor quality has several measurement formula, though there are no standard and prescribed method the common method is as follows:-  
'Cost of Poor Quality = Cost of External Factors + Cost of Internal Factors'.

The challenge with the above formula is that though there are quantified numbers for internal and external factors these are all tangible factors. Such as the cost of a product or cost of a returned product due to poor quality, cost of creating or building the product and so on. Intangible factors such as the impact of the poor quality on the sentiment of a buyer or the negative feedback that the poor quality will cause for future sales, the impact of the poor quality on the morale of employees who worked on it and so

on are all intangibles that cannot be measured in these standard cost assumptions. In some cases there is a percentage allocated as possible costs within the formula however the concern is that this is an assumption since there is no scientific method to determine the extent of the intangible cost and its implications. Cost of poor quality has been in discussion for the longest period of time, much before the science technology or new age businesses came in to the business world. Cost of poor quality was a challenge for the manufacturing industry which has been in business the longest however inspite of this there is no one single standard method to arrive at an objective measurement for this failure point. Interestingly though there seems to be consensus that leadership failure contributes to poor quality.

From the findings on Cost of employee turnover, the most commonly used method of measurement was to take the 1. vacant position coverage cost plus 2. the cost to fill the vacant position plus 3. onboarding cost and the 4. productivity ramp up cost. To arrive at the final cost the totals can be annualized with the number of employees lost in a twelve month period against the total employees that were available in the same group at the beginning of the cycle. As you can see the formula itself is complex, challenging and constantly changing with numbers which are impacted by internal and external conditions. Even after arriving at the above costs, there are several factors that are missing such as the impact to performance and quality due to the employee leaving the organization, employee morale in the group, the employees feedback to the outside hiring market on reasons to leave and so on are all factors arising out of turnover. There are several intangibles that are hard to determine and measure. To make it easier some organizations use a standard cost of 30 percentage of an entry level employees base salary as cost of employee turnover and this could go as high as 150 percentage for a senior level executive. This again is an assumptive way of calculating cost of employee

turnover. Some of the contributing tangible factors for employee turnover due to poor leadership can be measured in absolute unit of currency to some extent only and not in certainty, however a subsequent intangible impact is the impact on employer brand in the market which has far reaching consequences.

Cost of employee turnover which has been researched and debated for decades does not have one standard method of measurement depicts the complex nature of organizations and the impact of leadership on all aspects of the business. Same is the situation with cost of poor quality.

Cost of low employee morale or reduced customer satisfaction can be given a certain value to be measured, however similar to the other costs associated with poor leadership, there are factors which will be either assumption based allocation or could be totally not considered for calculation. A low employee morale can be contagious in many ways, it could even impact a customer delivery or create pockets of unhappy employees therefore attributing one value is incorrect. Similarly impact to customer satisfaction could directly impact that customer business, however the resultant negative feedback from that customer could impact several other current business or prospective business.

Each failure point such as cost of employee turnover, cost of poor customer satisfaction, cost of poor quality, cost of employee dissatisfaction and many other such failure points all arising out of poor leadership has both tangible and intangible impacts. Even within the possible factors that are considered for measurement, there is so much ambiguity and subjectivity making the reported cost not fully complete. Each of these failure points do not have a standard all-inclusive method of calculation.

While there are known failure points there are several unknown failure points due to poor leadership. Within the known failure points there are intangibles which makes it impossible to accurately assign a cost for that failure. When we add to this the intangibles

or the unknowns arising out of these failure points the cost of failure is impossible to determine.

If poor leadership impacts all areas of an organization and there are several failure points that are caused due to poor leadership and if each of these failure points do not have a complete objective method of calculation then arriving at the total cost of poor leadership is impossible. Therefore it is clear that poor leadership cannot have a direct dollar amount attached to it. It cannot be entirely measured as a single absolute unit. It is a combination of all failure points in an employee lifecycle and each failure point has tangible and intangible factors. Each resultant tangible factors could be potentially measured in most cases but fact is that even tangibles cannot be completely accounted for in each failure calculations. Further to add to this overwhelming situation there are intangible costs and implications which cannot be measured.

There are various aspects in the business cycle which can be impacted and attributed to poor leadership for which some specific costs can be attached however the sum total of all the negative impact due to poor leadership is an infinite value. The best approach for an organization is to prevent poor leadership from creeping in to their organization. The first step to fixing a problem is to identify and acknowledge the problem. The literature review was focused on identifying and acknowledging the problem. The survey and feedback from stakeholders and subject matter experts corroborated the findings from the literature review. An outcome from the survey of stakeholders and subject matter experts was their insights and solutions to the problems that existed. Findings from the surveys and the results analyzed assisted the direction of the solution framework.

The solution framework comprises of material from existing research both in terms of identification of problem areas and possible solutions.

As part of the research, lot of data both numerical and contextual, verbatim feedback from subject matter experts were analyzed to provide results and outputs which are found in the solution framework. Detailed text mining of feedback and verbatim comments from the subject matter experts were conducted to arrive at key challenges, opportunities and mitigation and recommendations, all of these are found in the results section and the solution framework.

This researcher has more than two decades of experience in leadership roles at various levels, so observation and measurement that was directly experienced by the researcher also contributed to the solution framework.

The solution framework therefore is a combination of all of the above methods and methodology.

## **6.2 Implications**

Solution to poor leadership is not about focusing on the individual but has to be a holistic view on what led to the individual becoming a poor leader. Poor leadership is a symptom of a larger problem, therefore the problem has to be identified and addressed. The root cause has to be eliminated otherwise the problem will persist causing irreparable damage. There could be specific cases of individual incompetence, poor behavior, inappropriate culture and disjointed values but in those cases the organizations systems and process should be capable to identify these and either correct or prevent the individual from actually reaching a position of leadership.

Poor leadership happens due to a combination of reasons as evidenced in this research. The core objective is to identify and address poor leadership, however if the entire ecosystem of the organization is not conducive then the leader will be constantly struggling to fix performance, people, profitability and customer issues.



Fixing poor leadership after it has occurred is only a temporary cure with substantial costs attached, implications have already been incurred. Poor leadership has to be prevented. Prevention is better than cure.

### **6.3 Recommendations for Future Research**

This research concentrated on all areas of leadership and the impact of poor leadership on businesses. This research was global in nature with participants and examples, case studies all covering global areas and domains. Therefore the results and outcomes can be believed to be universal in nature. The findings and analysis were all focused on leaders as individuals and the eco-system to support individuals to become better leaders. The research also delved into organizational practices and policies to enable better quality of leaders and leadership pipeline.

This research has not focused on monetary aspects of compensation, benefits, incentives, market driven financials, payment and wealth creation expectations both for leaders and employees. Future research can focus on studying compensation and monetary aspects and its impact on employees and leaders. Quantitative studies can be an area for future research to further determine the compensation and related impact to employees and leaders.

As a future action, this researcher intends to publish this study in journals and books and make it available to organizations. Copies of this research will be provided to aspiring leaders and current existing leaders and also to academia stakeholders.

Findings, recommendations and solutions that have come out from this research will then be measured to understand the impact of this research.

### **6.4 Conclusion**

This research is an honest effort to highlight the issue of poor leadership in organizations and to help provide actionable insights and plan of action to help organizations overcome the challenge and threat posed by poor leadership.

The way forward for all concerned as an outcome from this research is to utilize the findings from the research and tap into the solution framework and incorporate it into the operational mechanism. The challenges and situations in each organization will be unique, while some organizations may need to use the entire solution framework, some may need only certain parts of the solution.

The exciting part of this research is that it is broken down into separate sections of the employee lifecycle, even implementing portions or sections of the framework in specific areas of the employee lifecycle can bring in positive dividends to the organization. Each section comprises of suggestions which are outcomes of subject matter experts feedback along with research and findings. The approach taken in this research and solution framework makes these solutions and mitigations specific, direct and relevant. The mitigations provided are easy to implement and will provide consistent long term results. There will be both tangible and intangible benefits from each of the suggestions that have been made since the intention was to offer both process changes which provide tangible results and people focused nuances which are culture, value and behavior focused.

There are recommendations for academia, mostly provided by academicians which makes it easy to implement these ideas in schools. A collaboration amongst corporates and academia is the suggested mechanism to enable pass outs from schools possess invaluable leadership skills. These skills can then be tapped into and further nurtured by organizations.

Throughout the research the focus of the solution framework and the recommendations have been to eventually help leaders and leadership. However good a leader is, it is important for an organization to do whatever is in its control to make it easier for the leader. The purpose is to provide as much opportunity to a leader to spend time with their people. When all areas of an employee lifecycle is done right then obvious outcome is results are met, which then means a leader can spend most of their time with their people to coach, mentor and develop them. This results in creating a pipeline of leaders for the organization. This creates a cycle of progress.

The belief that an organization could just bring in external leaders and expect them to transform the organization and deliver doesn't work without solving the employee lifecycle processes. Yes, organizations need good leaders and as described in this research, there is a way to bring in good leaders and also build good leaders from within, however these leaders have to be empowered to create the best possible employee lifecycle which then helps and supports the leaders in their vision. There has to be persistence and perseverance, there are no short-cuts.

Leaders who probably were successful in their earlier stint or in the previous roles could have operated in an environment which was conducive for optimal leadership Or they could have led teams which were best in class or they could have been in organizations where the entire employee lifecycle was operating at high efficiency. So just by bringing in that leader and expecting overnight success is a myth.

The executives and leadership team of an organization has the responsibility of ensuring that :-

- a) good leaders are leading teams
- b) adequate leadership pipeline is available
- c) succession planning is a well-defined process

d) learning and development function is capable and adequately staffed

e) policies and processes that enable a learning culture of empowerment.

This entire cycle has to be repeatable, scalable, predictable and sustainable. This research has provided guidelines and framework on these aspects. Doing all of these actions consistently will provide an environment which will be helpful for leaders to flourish.

The objective has to be to create an organization with the right set of leaders who are focused on the employee lifecycle. This approach will help steer the organization towards its goals, mission, purpose and vision. Every time an action is performed within an organization the question needs to be asked is 'who are you doing this for'. If the action doesn't benefit its people or its customers then it is not a priority.

#### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ATS : Automated Tracking System.

BSC : Balanced Score Card.

BFSI : Banking, Financial Services and Insurance.

BPO : Business Process Outsourcing.

CSAT : Customer Satisfaction.

CEO : Chief Executive Officer.

CXO : An acronym for a C suite executive.  
ESAT : Employee Satisfaction.  
HRD : Human Resources Development.  
IT : Information Technology.  
KPI : Key Performance Indicators.  
KPO : Knowledge Process Outsourcing.  
KRA : Key Result Area.  
L&OD : Learning and Organizational Development.  
NGO : Non-Government Organizations.  
OKR : Objective and Key Results.  
OD : Organizational Development.  
PPCP : People, Performance, Customer, Profitability.  
ROI : Return On Investment.  
STEM : Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics.  
USD : United States Dollar.

#### APPENDIX A SURVEY COVER LETTER

Dear .....

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the research on Cost of Poor Leadership that i am conducting as part of my Doctorate studies.

I would like to acknowledge and appreciate the time and effort that you are willing to commit to support and help in this research.

As discussed over the telephone, I am attaching a word document which has a set of questions for your response. I would highly appreciate and encourage that you please respond in full detail and if there are any questions please feel free to reach out to me. The questionnaire will take approximately 30 minutes time and I would request you to submit the responses back to me within 15 days.

Further, we discussed about setting up an in-person meeting to discuss a set of semi structured questions that i am attaching here for your reference. Due to some reason if we cannot meet in person then i shall be setting up a video conference for us. This meeting is expected to take 30 to 45 minutes. I will be scheduling this at a mutually convenient time and place. I shall be recording or capturing this conversation for my research.

All the above information will be confidential. Any information obtained from this research may be used in any way thought best for this study.

I thank you for your time and support.

Ramesh Kumar

Date

APPENDIX B INFORMED CONSENT

I, .....agree to participate in the research on Cost of Poor Leadership conducted by **Ramesh Kumar** as part of his Doctorate studies.

I have been told of the confidentiality of information collected for this research.

I agree to participate in one or more interviews for this research. I agree to submit my responses to the primary questions via email. I also willingly agree to participate in the interview session for the secondary questions which will be a face to face in-person meeting. If due to any unavoidable circumstances we cannot meet in-person then the interview will be via video conference.

I understand that such interviews and related materials will be kept completely anonymous and that the results of this study may be published in any form that may serve its best.

I agree that any information obtained from this research may be used in any way thought best for this study.

.....

Signature of participant,

Date:

Participants identified will be contacted through telephone or email to discuss their interest in participating for the research on Cost of Poor Leadership.

During the preliminary conversation I will explain the objectives, process and confidentiality aspects. I will explain to each participant the reason for choosing them, their roles in the research and the expectations from them in terms of responses and time commitments. Upon receiving a confirmation of participation they will be briefed on the process of primary and secondary survey process.

Primary survey questions which are structured will be sent to participants and they will be given 15 days to respond. If there are any responses that are not clear then I will reach out to them for further clarification. The approximate time to respond to primary questions is expected to be around 30 minutes.

The secondary questions which are semi-structured need a conversation which is either in-person or via video-conference. The approximate time scheduled for this meeting is 30 to 45 minutes. I will be setting up the meeting place or the video conference schedule as per mutual convenience.

During this meeting I will be capturing the entire conversation by recording or by writing down the minutes of conversation. Participants will be informed and consent taken for recording and capturing the conversation.

Participants will be thanked and appreciated for their time and participation.

## APPENDIX D SURVEY QUESTIONS



**Research Questions for Corporate leaders:**

Name of the Participant:

Role:

Title:

Organization:

Total work Experience:

Primary Questions: (minimum 25 words for each question )

1. What is your definition of a successful leader?
2. How do you plan for succession planning?
3. What is the process you follow to promote an individual to a team manager?
4. How do you develop your leaders to grow to the next level in the hierarchy?

**Research Questions for employees who have been successful as leaders:**

Name of the Participant:

Role:

Title:

Organization:

Total work Experience:

Primary questions: (minimum 25 words for each question )

1. What are the challenges you faced during the time you were in the role of a leader and how did you overcome those?
2. Were there any leadership pieces of training that you were a part of before you took on the role of a leader? [ Please answer with a Yes OR No] If Yes, please provide the training details.
3. What are the components that helped you to succeed as a leader?
4. What are your learnings as a leader that you want to share with others?

**Research Questions for employees who have not been successful as leaders:**

Name of the Participant:

Role:

Title:

Organization:

Total work Experience:

Primary questions: (minimum 25 words)

1. What are the challenges you faced during the time you were doing the role of a leader?
2. Were there any leadership pieces of training that you were a part of before you took on the role of a leader? [Please answer Yes OR No] If Yes, please provide the training details.
3. What are your learnings from your time spent as a leader?
4. Did you enroll in any leadership development programs after your tenure as a leader? [Yes | No] If Yes, please provide the training details.

**Research Questions for academia stakeholders:**

Name of the Participant:

Role:

Title:

Organization:

Total work Experience:

Primary Questions: (minimum 25 words)

1. What concepts of leadership programs do you have in your student's curriculum?
2. Will your school benefit from introducing leadership concepts into your curriculum? [Yes | No] If Yes, please provide the benefits details.
3. Would you be keen to incorporate leadership training in your student's curriculum? [Yes | No] If Yes, please provide the details.
4. What are your recommendations to develop leadership skills in school?

Name of the Participant:

Role:

Title:

Organization:

Total work Experience:

Follow up and secondary set of semi- structured questions for in-person or video conference interview with all participations

1. Leadership styles and what styles works best to address poor leadership.
2. Go to market strategy and what is working well to help leaders.
3. Onboarding new employees, challenges and best practices to help build leaders.
4. Succession planning process for leadership pipeline.
5. Employee lifecycle management process to help leadership practices.
6. Solution Framework to help leadership execution.
7. Best in class practices to eliminate poor leadership.

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