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TAKE WING

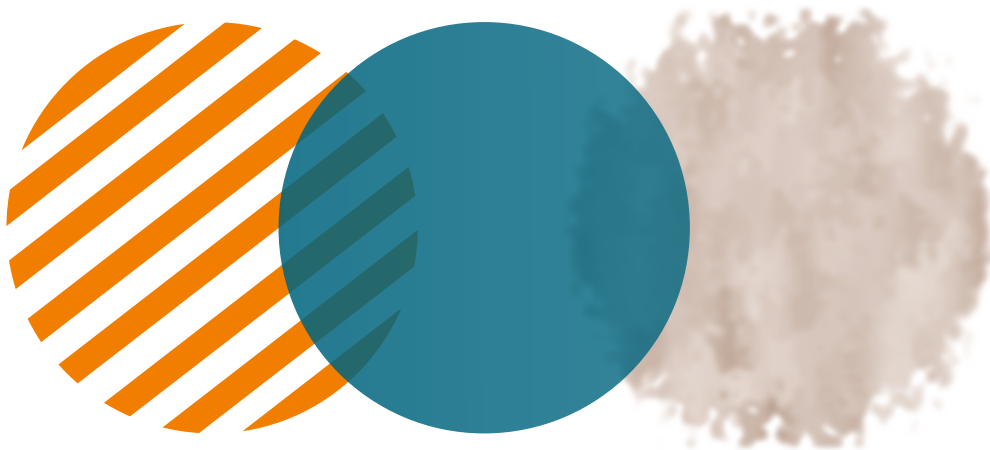# Redefining Learning Journeys
The Changing Perspective

Changing Perspective

A famous saying "Everything changes and nothing remains still .. ... you cannot step twice into the same stream" - defines today's leadership development.

Background

With change being the only constant, no two leadership situations are the same. While organizations today realize the importance of right leadership in driving success; they are unsure about how to develop their potential talent.

This paper is built on our insights from client experiences and hopefully comes as an aid to organizations in designing learning journeys that make a difference.

Finding the fulcrum

Leadership does not exist in a vacuum or within the boundaries of an organization. Not only do organizations get impacted by dynamic change but also the increased turmoil coming from the need to balance a number internal and external forces. Let's look at some of these alternate forces, additionally impacting organizations today :

- A continuously evolving business environment, creating unknown complexities and challenges, and bringing with it a constant need within organizations to simplify its processes and systems.

- With the wheel turning from consumption to experiential consumption, a need for organizations to switch gears between profit oriented business and business that is customer responsive.

- Changing work profiles especially the millennial who challenge the organizations with an impatient requirement for individual growth while organizations face challenges in balancing these needs with organization priorities.

These above inconsistencies coupled with competitive pressures calls for each organization to re-design itself and - find its own fulcrum.

Towards the start of new decade, each organization will struggle to find this unique point of balance, and leadership who will both create it and lead dynamic change towards this fulcrum.

The shifting wheel

In meeting the demands of the earlier described context, organizations globally are moving from standard processes and models to more agile systems. However, the CEO is no longer comforted only by models and processes, he demands the right 'leader' - ready & developed to take on organizational complexities.

The good news is that, to meet the demand of the changing environment and stakeholders like the CEO, L&D strategies too are changing their paradigms. We call this phenomena - **The shifting wheel**.

Below we highlight few global trends in L&D which are gaining sharper focus in organizations :

Global trends in L&D

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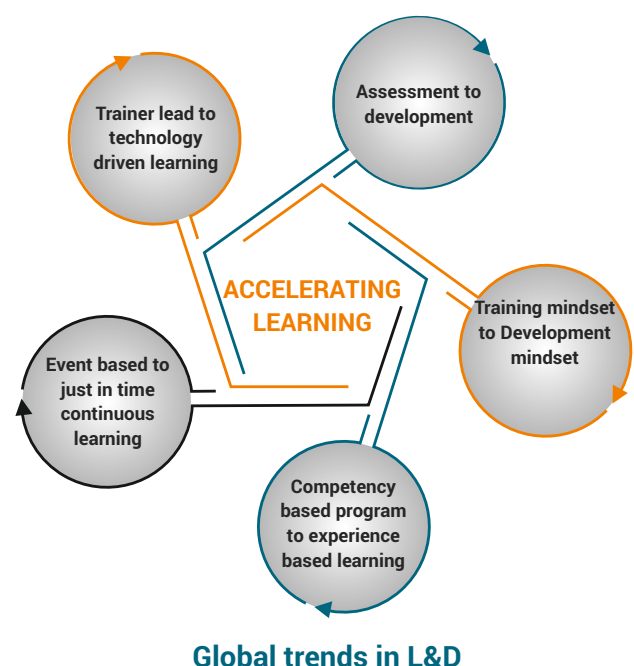
Our experience of working with learning journeys over the past 5 years

Since Indian organizations have been immersed in scripting their growth stories for the past few years, leadership development has followed as a natural progression. In our experience, most organizations fully understand that development is not just an event and much more needs to be done to create business results. Enter - leadership development journeys, emanating from this understanding.

Looking back at our experience, the results of these journeys has indeed been a mixed bag for organizations, consulting partners and the participant leaders themselves.

Some of the positive experiences are mentioned below :

• Greater focus on assessments has brought more data and better clarity around development gaps.

• Potential development for emerging leaders is a motivator. Leaders/participants feel more engaged and empowered as a result of understanding what needs to be developed and how this would happen because of the integrated approach the journey provides.

• Because of the adoption of the concept of 70:20:10 by organizations a more holistic and effective development framework has come into existence. Development focus has moved up some notches.

However, equally, there are challenges that this approach has brought.

Challenges:

1. While all stakeholders understand the value & importance of leadership development, the focus given is still not enough. Balancing the results in the here and now vs. the important but not urgent development journeys, is no easy task for stakeholders, and even those leaders committed to their development find their focus wavering.

2. Leadership development is real hard work. Besides the ecosystem support, it requires insightful understanding of strengths & gaps by the participant leaders and a strong support through coaching to build behaviors. The learning processes adopted by organizations are usually disjointed, based on "what sells internally" and is easy to implement. The measures are loosely defined and focused on less relevant things-eg feedback scores post workshops. Partly this is because it is hard to do harder things in an already complicated world. And mostly, because it requires a shift in mindset & skill set of stakeholders-always tough to accomplish. Companies and leaders who decide to embark on this journey need to be prepared to work hard.

3. We spoke about disjointed processes earlier - Our experience is that one way that organizations respond to leadership journeys is by looking at partners who are known & credible in their areas. These "specialist" partners are great in their specific areas, but integrating the specific pieces together becomes another big challenge, leading to a considerable loss of effectiveness.

4. Most organizations find it difficult to manage the 70% learning (70; 20; 10 principle). They lack skills to link competencies to on - the - job business projects that are supported by effective learning structures. Skill gaps in coaching further reduces the efficacy of leadership journeys especially where behavior development is key.

5. Leadership behaviors of engaging in development process continues to be less visible particularly in not so mature organizations where measurements/KPIs' around "developing talent' are not in place. Obviously, such organizations have challenges in building a development culture.

6. For a participant leader, the consequence of a hard earned development has to be some movement - firstly the changed behavior has to be acknowledged, next the insight of how this is of help in the current role or future role has to be established. Most often, this is left to the individual to figure. It is no wonder that the once motivated participant leader soon becomes a passive follower.

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What then are the options that organizations have?

1. Development & Business results are interlinked comprehensively. Unless business leaders & HR/OD leaders don't work together to create and support this linkage, a virtual tug of war will pull people in opposite directions. When reviewing people processes, companies would do well to link these strongly to business results.

2. OD/L&D functions need to build confidence in their abilities to add value to business, constantly build relevant skills, get out of their silos to work shoulder to shoulder with business.

3. Build KPIs' around developing people and ensure that these are a part of every leader's goal sheet. Ensure skills of coaching & developing others is in place and these are reviewed periodically. Create space to learn.

4. Review Competency/Talent frameworks periodically, so that the measurement & development is happening in the right areas.

5. Most important is to build commitment. Take small bites. Learning journeys are a must for organizations - but sustaining them to get the right results requires alignment, skills & leadership behaviours. Keep at it - you would arrive at desired results, slowly but surely.

Conclusion

Leadership development is not a choice. While discussions for answering questions like - develop for now/develop for future or develop all vs develop potential leaders will carry on , the key point is that organizations need to find their fulcrum, learn from the past and embark on leadership development journeys with clear measures around what will create the most significant results. Combined with a distinct approach & a design to deliver multiple learning experiences organizations can hope to accelerate leadership capital significantly.

Reference

- Rethink Your Leadership Development Strategy, Neuroleadership Institute, Dr. David Rock
- How can organizations develop their leadership capability?, IBM (February 2014)

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About InspireOne

We are a leading consulting firm offering organizational and leadership development solutions.

With nearly two decades of experience in the consulting domain, we help organizations convert their people and organizational capabilities into corporate value. We want to see businesses prosper.

We believe that the road to unparalleled success is when organizations are able to convert their most valuable asset- their human capital- to organizational capability. That is why InspireOne has united with a single purpose- of being the preferred partner in helping organizations and leaders grow by unleashing the optimal power and potential of their people.

3
Global Partners

2000
Professionals Globally

50
Countries Represented

100000
Number of People Inspired

250+
Clients Worked With

Our Partners

Our partners are leaders in their respective areas of expertise with years of researched know - how and worldwide experience. Together, we catalyze and improve business performance by developing your most valuable talent - your people.

Business Partner IBM	TACK INTERNATIONAL	TMI
Global pioneer in Human Capital Management solutions including Employee Assessments, Engagement Surveys & Talent Development	World renowned expert in Sales Development and Sales Force Acquisition & Evaluation for leading international businesses	Global leader in Organization Development and Performance Enhancement with over 40 years of experience

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