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# U&I

The InspireOne Newsletter

■ VOL 1 ISSUE 2 ■ Jan 2009 — Mar 2009

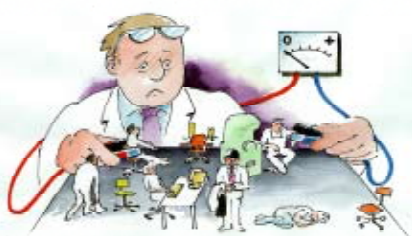
# MOVING UPWARD DURING A DOWNTURN

**LEADER'S PERSPECTIVE**

MAKING CHALLENGING TIMES WORK FOR YOU

**InspireWire:**

What's new at InspireOne?

**Is There An Energy Crisis In Your Organization?**

While examining the challenges of high performance during a slowdown, it is imperative to consider the cultural aspect of nurturing productivity. During tough times, the energy levels of teams and organizations are likely to get impacted. InspireOne believes PROACTIVITY-METER is the key to driving productivity and combating slowdown fatigue.

To know more about the meter, turn to page 9.

**TACK's New Banking Product**

TACK UK, our partner for Sales and Sales Management Solutions has a success record of over 60 years in the area. With vast experience spanning across countries and cultures, it offers world class training programs in a variety of business skills. The most recent addition to its repertoire of programs is a product specifically customized for the BANKING SECTOR.

To know more about the products, turn to page 6.

# From the Editor's Desk

Dear Friends,

2008 has been a difficult year with most companies being adversely impacted at some point in time or the other. Companies are now finalizing plans for 2009, amidst the current business environment of reduced consumer spending.

However, opportunities still stand; in fluid markets and particularly in tough economic times, speed of movement is key to success. Companies that are agile will leverage the recessionary times to harness unique opportunities for their upward mobility. What drives this agility?

In this edition of U&I, we evaluate the *Leader's prescription for making challenging times work for you* through workforce productivity. We focus on the Big "P"...the performance factor; on the what and how of moving upwards during a downturn. We spoke with some of the industry leaders to get their views on how a slowdown can become an opportunity to become more productive, innovative and cost-efficient and be revitalized for the upturn, when it arrives!

In this volume, you will find the U&I special: In Conversation with experts from hospitality and travel industry: Vijay Sethi, Head Service Quality & Customer Care at Thomas Cook and Mohit James, Vice-President HR from VIP Industries. In the article titled, "You Have Too Much Time" Suman Sethi, Head, Performance Enhancement Practice, InspireOne shares a counterintuitive view on the linkage between time and productivity. Don't miss our U&I showcase that discusses the Pro-activity Meter: a tool to help you build the right environment for enhanced productivity. Also showcased is the brand new Banking Product Line by our partner for Sales and Sales Management solutions, TACK UK.

We hope you enjoy reading this volume of U&I as much as we do presenting it to you. Would appreciate your feedback; let us know what you think by sending your thoughts to [deepak@inspireone.in](mailto:deepak@inspireone.in).

Happy Reading!

We are pleased to inform you that TMI Associates is now InspireOne. Our new name is in keeping with our evolution and growth, and enables us to effectively align with our global partners TMI Global, CHPD, UK and TACK, UK.



**InspireOne**

InspireOne reinforces two facets of our philosophy:  
**Inspiration:** ability to activate positive change by connecting to the minds and hearts of people.

**One:** our aspiration to be the ONE Partner for all human development needs and to enable our customers to be No. 1 as individuals, teams and organizations.

Our new corporate logo, shown alongside, portrays how a single unit from "I" is inspired to break away to a new direction, thus revealing the "1"

Despite the change of our name, our promise remains the same: to bring the best global know-how to customers in India.

# In conversation with....

IN 2008, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL ran an article that discussed the relationship between productivity and recessions. According to the article, during the last six US recessions since 1970, worker productivity grew at a sluggish 0.8% on an average. However, amid economic weakness since end of 2007, productivity is estimated to have grown at an average 2.5%. This defies productivity's usual behavior of *going up in good times and down in bad times*.

**T**hat productivity is staying strong even in bad times is testimony to the fact that companies are left with no choice but to demand more productivity from their workforce to avoid a big hit to their profits. In this U&I Special, we are *in conversation with Vijay Sethi, Head, Service Quality & Customer Service from Thomas Cook and Mohit James, Vice-President HR from VIP Industries* to discuss how organizations are responding to challenging times.

*A mixed response has been observed towards L&D strategies and spend in companies. Some have cut back training and people development budgets; others feel this is the time to ramp up skills of employees to enhance productivity levels and to be ready for the upturn. Your comments please.*

**Vijay Sethi:** There certainly has been a mixed response to this. Learning is the key to employability and L&D should be an ongoing process, especially in the service industry, where there has always been scarcity of skilled resources; however, it may be prioritized as per pain areas during such times. Under such conditions, people also get affected with a sense of insecurity and uncertainty leading to lower productivity and self-esteem. Keeping the L&D initiatives steady provides a great sense of security and reposes tremendous confidence in people towards the organization. Also sustaining productivity of people during tough times depends on how multi-skilled the staff is. Rather than focusing on multi-skilling during challenging times only, it must be an integral part of an organization's L&D strategy.

**Mohit James:** There has been a mixed response: I feel that economic ups and downs are no stranger to business and impact each organization differently. Organizations that survive through such a testing economic environment have their fundamentals in place...they do not digress



Vijay Sethi,  
Head , Service Quality &  
Customer Service  
Thomas Cook Group.

Mohit James,  
Vice President, HR,  
VIP Industries.

from their chosen L&D strategies in such times, but instead improvise and do the best within available resources. Maintaining focus on people strategy is as important as doing so on business strategy.

*What is the impact of current economic slowdown on your workforce productivity, motivation and energy levels?*

**Vijay Sethi:** Communication at any given time, more so during slow down, is the key driver in keeping the work force motivated. I feel that leadership of the organization must proactively communicate with their staff and apprise them of the actions required to be taken and what is expected from them during these times.

**Mohit James:** There is awareness in the workforce to conserve resources and to perform better. This in itself provides energy and impetus to be more productive. At VIP we are utilizing this time to widen our distribution base especially in retail-led formats as reduction in commercial realty has offered an opportunity to expand this channel. While we have launched a new advertisement campaign for our flagship brand; we are also working on strategies for marketing our value-brands because in times like these, the consumer may look for economic value through competitively priced products. We've also launched a few company-wide programs focusing on Customer Service and Waste



Management that are keeping our workforce aligned and excited.

*Have there been any cutbacks in employee benefits/ renegotiation of salary benefits or pink slips in this industry?*

**Vijay Sethi:** Not so far.

**Mohit James:** Not yet in our industry. The industry is mature and has neither seen unprecedented growth as experienced by sunrise industries nor a decline as experienced by some other industries. As a result, we have taken a balanced approach between employee costs and earnings. Like every year and as a part of our HR philosophy we will continue to weed out inefficiencies in our staff and focus on enhancement of our talent quality on an ongoing basis. We are urging our staff to save by managing costs such as travel, communication and other business-related areas to avoid a situation of manpower reduction.

*What in your view are the key elements of culture that need to be impacted to tide through and enable organizations to emerge stronger in times of slow growth?*

**Vijay Sethi:** Focus on cost control, consistent communication, brainstorming with employees on creative ideas to enhance productivity with optimum usage of existing resources. Also important is highly effective daily governance with concern but not panic.

**Mohit James:** Organization culture is the key for success in any environment...in such times, strength of the core purpose and values of the organization will act as a beacon of light while giving comfort to all. Adaptability and a strong capability to innovate would be critical and would help organizations emerge stronger.

*In your opinion, what successful leadership behaviors need to be employed to deal with such change? Do you think leaders of India are equipped to manage people in this environment?*

**Vijay Sethi:** Hands on, leading from front; and taking the

bull by the horn and not by the tail is key for successful leadership during tough times. Indeed, India has this great leadership potential; with the ever changing scenario, the human capital has been a priority and the Indian corporate Leadership is savvy and sensitive to the importance of development and training of people.

**Mohit James:** Judgment, perseverance and leading in a positive manner would be key leadership traits that I would call upon in a leader to manage in these challenging times. There are leaders in India who are equipped to manage people in such an environment but they are definitely not many.

*What would be the focus areas for L&D during such times?*

**Vijay Sethi:** Developing people through refreshers and skills that impact customer service.

**Mohit James:** Skill building, team work and behavioral training - areas, which people were unable to previously allocate time for. We are focusing on building a Branded Customer-oriented Culture in the company in line with our strategy to build retail or direct consumer facing business for the future.

*What will differentiate organizations that emerge stronger from ones that may succumb to the prevailing environment?*

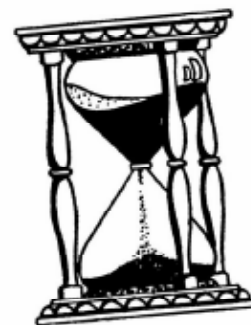
**Vijay Sethi:** Robust process controls, effective daily governance, clear communication, Multi skilling, training and honing.

**Mohit James:** Continued success and reward through customer advocacy and employee-led innovations will differentiate organizations as ones that continue to align their business and people development goals.

*Vijay Sethi heads the Service Quality & Customer Care department at Thomas Cook. He brings to the company 23 years of hospitality and travel industry experience.*

*Mohit James is Vice-President HR at VIP Industries. He has been with them for 5 years and has a total of 18 years of experience across sectors such as Manufacturing, IT, Service industry and Consulting.*





# You Have Too Much Time!

**Suman Sethi - Head, Performance Enhancement Practice, InspireOne .**



**A**PRIL TO MARCH 2008 ... a mere eight months ....and yet for many of us our world as we knew it seems to have had a volte-face. Our organisations, roles and our career paths as were charted in April seem to be a faraway reality for most and a mirage for some. The global economic slowdown has impacted all irrespective of the industry and level. It is imperative now that everyone creates and adds value consistently and it seems that time is running out on us.... Or is it?

There are two views to this. The first one being that what used to be expected from “star performers” is now the bare necessity in the current global scenario. If one wants to retain the same position, the “desirable” performance levels have become the “essential”.

On the flip side, even in this hour of uncertainty and despite organisations presumably having the “license to fire” – some people do not have to lose any sleep. Time is not running out on them, in fact time seems to unfairly favour them. They seem to have the time to create spectacular results, create differentiation through consistent productivity and even have a semblance of work life balance ... Who are these people?

These are people, who have been able to maintain

consistently high productivity. For organisations and individuals, productivity can help build immunity to all evils... even the slowdown!

The only question that needs to be answered is – how do we ensure high levels of productivity? Organizations and management gurus spanning decades would testify that high productivity has been achieved when organizations have utilized the resource of time in alignment with their main priorities and goals.

To embark on this journey, the starting point is to acknowledge that we have enough (and in some cases too much!) time to achieve what we want in life – professional and personal. It is when we have been busy bemoaning the lack of time that we have achieved the least.

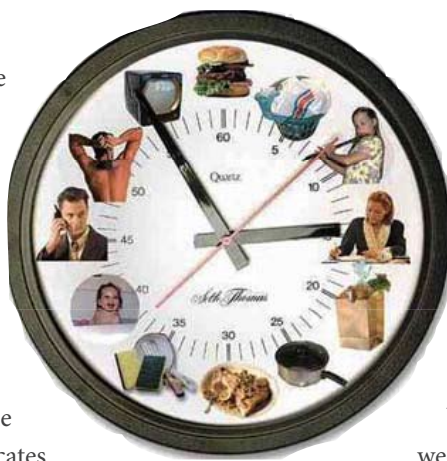
In fact, organizations are now more than ever sensitized to the fact that if the resource of time is deployed optimally it can help leverage all other resources. We saw an example of that, when a large Indian conglomerate recently decided that it is imperative for its leadership team to leverage time and enhance its productivity. With the objective of establishing the desired culture of productivity, a top management workshop was scheduled. Because the leaders could not make time for it, there were several date changes. Finally, even on the date of the program, the workshop started late because only the head of the group was on time. However, from a beginning that defied the very purpose of the workshop to the end of the day, the leadership team acknowledged that the change had to commence from them and that they had to imbibe it and the lead from the front. Their chairman was convinced of the fact that if the team learns how to manage time well, management of other resources driving productivity would follow suit.

To ensure that time is perceived and utilized in a strategic manner, it is paramount to establish what

the high priority goals are – for the growth of the organisation and the individual. Once that clarity has been achieved, time has to be planned and spent in alignment with those goals. This means focus on KEY AREAS that would help us achieve these goals. The Achilles heel for most people is the lack of focus on the “eye of the fish”. Too much time (research indicates almost 80%) is spent on non-value adding activities. Peter Drucker says that 20% of our time can get us 80% of our results. However, this is possible only when we focus on the eye of the fish – our key areas

Six years back, the leadership team of a financial organization underwent an intervention that used the key area approach as a proactive strategy to maintain alignment with strategic goals. They focused on their key areas and collective action planning that would take care of dependencies, potential crisis and optimal resource utilization. Today this is a way of life for all employees across levels in this organization.

Once the strategic intent and the will to effectively use time are in place then the tactical best practices can be brought into play to ensure that intent is converted to action and results. These help insulate us from the vagaries of our dynamic environment – interruptions, bosses, and colleagues, meetings, changing needs...



The idea is to move away from laundry “To Do lists”, which only tell us what has to be done at an activity level with no linkage to goals. These lists are dictated to us by the environment. The aim is to create an overview of what has to be achieved in the key areas and details of how it will be achieved in the windows of month, weeks and days, actually scheduling time for things to be done.

This key area based action planning ensures that you are the master of your time and not slave to it or the environment. You decide what is the best and the most productive way to use your time. You are also able to fit in the demands of the environment in the windows that are convenient for you.

The simple and timeless “time mantra” is that even though the changing environment may mean change in goals and priorities – the secret to achieve those goals lies in how each of us use our time in alignment of those goals. That alone will set us apart and save us from mediocrity.

*Suman Sethi heads the Performance Enhancement Practice at InspireOne. With over a decade of experience in the area of Human Resources, she is an accomplished consultant, trainer and change agent in the area of Personal Productivity and Effectiveness.*

## Taking Performance Management to the next level...

Our partner for leadership assessment and development, **CHPD**, has conducted over 30 years of research to develop solutions that help leaders to maximize organizational performance. CHPD's High Performance Behaviors (HPBs) framework categorizes 11 behaviors, identified as crucial to exceptional leadership against four clusters: Inspiring People, People Development, Business Thinking and Achieving Success. We have used this framework with various companies over the last year to ensure that leaders are able to strategically drive productivity in such times and take people to the next level of performance benchmark.

For instance, in 2008, a large leading FMCG major of the country had partnered with us to have 70 of their managers trained on feedback and coaching skills: a pan-India initiative with the aim of taking the PMS beyond appraisal period; impacting the feedback and coaching culture within the company and strategically driving performance.

Similarly, a leading global bank partnered with us to align its PMS to global processes and rationalize performance of people with that of the organization. While in good times, this can go ignored; managing productivity becomes imperative and a key concern for managements during slowdowns.

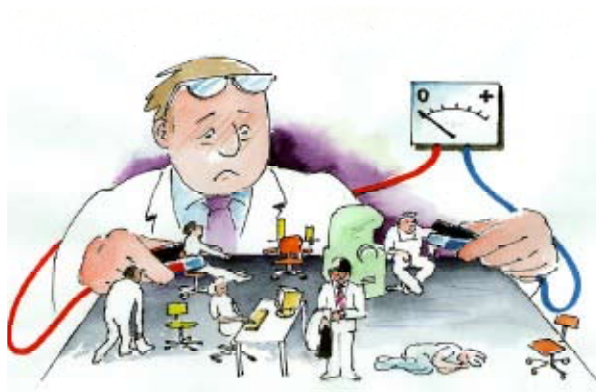
We found that once these initiatives were taken, performance management moved from a tactical to a more strategic level whereby even tools like performance conversations enabled leaders to drive productivity. It can be said that what differentiates performance management at such times is its ability to create a business impact in terms of increased workforce efficiency rather than remaining just a process.

To know more about our leadership development solutions, please contact [leadership@inspireone.in](mailto:leadership@inspireone.in).

# Is There An Energy Crisis In Your Organization?

When the going gets tough, the tough get proactive...

**W**HILE EXAMINING THE CHALLENGES of high performance during a slowdown, it is imperative to consider the cultural aspect of nurturing productivity. During tough times, the energy levels of teams and organizations are likely to get impacted. InspireOne believes PRO-ACTIVITY METER\* is the key to driving productivity and combating slowdown fatigue.



Low Energy Organization

Often it is assumed that the managers of the company are responsible for almost every failure and success. However, success and continued development can be ensured only if there is a whole hearted commitment by all employees.

When people do their best to ensure the success of the company, a special kind of personal commitment exists, which ensures that there is sufficient energy to be mobilized and used positively in line with goals; at InspireOne|TMI we call this *Employeeship*.

Employeeship is what separates companies that succeed from those that don't. It is what ensures that at the end of the day (week, month or year): organizations execute

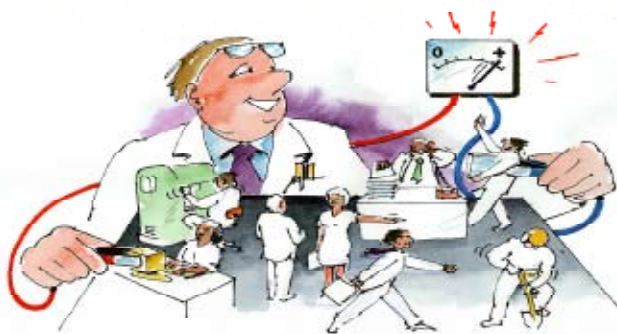
on their most important objectives—each employee, each team, and the company itself accomplish the things they set out to do. The PRO-ACTIVITY METER enables you to assess your organization's *Employeeship* level.

The "Pro-activity Meter" is more than just a set of a measuring tool. By using the "Pro-activity Meter" at regular intervals, you and your organization will benefit from the following:

Everybody will become aware of what it takes to be a good employee.

Everybody will become aware of how to perform well as a department.

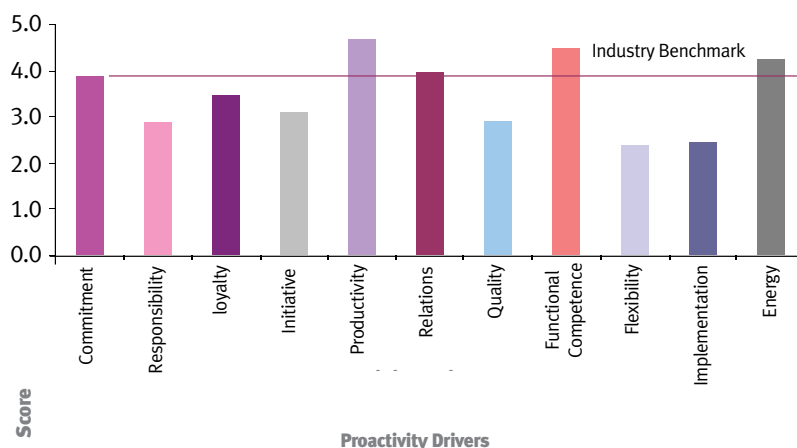
Everybody will gain clarity on their goals and be able to convert ideas into action.



High Energy Organization

\* Pro activity Meter InspireOne|TMI product.

## Proactivity Meter Report Snap Shot



### Low Pro-activity Organization

- People focus more on problem than on opportunities.
- Talk more about the past than the future.
- Wait around hoping things will change for the better.
- Have forgotten how to have fun together.

### High Pro-activity Organization

- Everybody focuses on opportunities not problems.
- Talk about the future rather than the past.
- Don't just talk about things, do something about them.
- Have fun at work and look forward to each day.

To know more about the Proactivity Meter, please contact [ambreenyaqin@inspireone.in](mailto:ambreenyaqin@inspireone.in)

## New BFSI Offering at **TACK** INTERNATIONAL

TACK UK, our partner for Sales and Sales Management solutions has a success record of over 60 years in the area, with vast experience spanning across countries and cultures. The most recent addition to its repertoire of world class training programs is a range of products specifically customized for the Banking Sector.

The banking industry is large and peculiar in its requirements, which warrants development of solutions that are customized and specific to the industry and to different kinds of banking services. That's why the TACK Banking Product Line comprises of solutions for Business/Commercial/Corporate banking as well as Personal/Private/Retail banking.

The Banking Line offers:

- Personal/Private/ Retail banking
- Sales and Service products such as Selling Private Banking Services, Selling Personal Banking, Branch Selling Skills, Branch Customer Service Skills, Customer Service by Telephone...
- Business/Commercial/ Corporate

–Sales and Service products such as Corporate Account Development, Selling Business Banking, Sales Skills Refresher Workshop, Profitable Negotiations, Successful Networking...

#### ■ Sales Management

–Range of management programs such as Leading Teams, Global Account Management, Channel Strategy and Planning, Profitable Sales Management, Channel Partner Excellence, Advanced Negotiation Skills, Field Sales Management, Marketing for Sales Professionals, Coaching and many more.

Because the sector is customer-driven, the new product line not only caters to organizations across levels - from fundamental to advanced, but also targets multiple customer touch points from sales to service, all of which shape customer relationships, experiences and subsequently loyalty.

To know more about this range of products, please get in touch with us at [sumitsahni@inspireone.in](mailto:sumitsahni@inspireone.in)



## inbox

*"I find U&I enriching and in-line with the thought process of our function and our organization. I look forward to receiving such inputs from Inspire One on a regular basis and hope to make the most of it by sharing the knowledge with my team members for necessary alignment of thought process and bringing about the much required change."*

Abhijit Chakravarty,  
Bharti Airtel Ltd.

*"Thanks for the newsletter. Your articles correlate with the new name of your organization: InspireOne!"*

Amlan Nayak,  
Training Manager, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance

*Thanks a lot for sending such a good news letter. The content and some of the key notes are eye catching.*

Dinesh Mohgaonkar,  
Daiken India

## FeedBack is Welcome

Do share your comments, feedback or stories with us.

Write in to us at [deepak@inspireone.in](mailto:deepak@inspireone.in).

For receiving this newsletter electronically, please email us with, "Subscription to the Newsletter" as the subject line.

## Open Programs Calendar

Program	Location	Date	Standard Price*	Special Promotional Price*
A Complaint Is a Gift	Bangalore	13th March	Rs 9000/-	Rs 7500/-
A Complaint Is a Gift	Mumbai	13th March	Rs 9000/-	Rs 7500/-
A Complaint Is a Gift	Delhi	13th March	Rs 9000/-	Rs 7500/-
Powerful Presentations	Bangalore	17th March	-----	Rs 9500/-**
Powerful Presentations	Mumbai	17th March	-----	Rs 9500/-**
Powerful Presentations	Delhi	17th March	-----	Rs 9500/-**

\*Service tax, extra as applicable.

\*The above price is applicable for 1-3 nominations from a single organization per program.

For 4+ nominations per program, avail a group discount of Rs.500/- per participant.

\*\*Special introductory price for the Powerful Presentations program.

To know more about our open programs, please contact [harleenkaur@inspireone.in](mailto:harleenkaur@inspireone.in)

## Unwind With Dilbert

