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## TÊTE-À-TÊTE

Anshoo Gaur

## WISE LEADERSHIP

Anshoo Gaur is the President and Head of Amdocs India and a member of Amdocs Senior Management team. Anshoo is also an Officer of Amdocs Ltd. Prior to joining Amdocs, at EDS/Mphasis, Anshoo was on the Executive team as the President of IT infrastructure management. In this role, Anshoo helped establish and rapidly grow the remote and domestic IT infrastructure management. He has been the winner of the Bloomberg - UTV IT CXO Award 2010 as Business Head of the year in APAC. Anshoo has over 22 years of cross cultural leadership experience, playing a wide variety of roles on strategic IT planning, operations management, process re-engineering, product management and development, customer and P&L management. Anshoo has been responsible to drive Amdocs' India delivery and business growth since 2007.



In Anshoo's view, wisdom is the ability to make decisions based upon a holistic understanding of a problem, taking into consideration the impact of the decision on implicit and explicit stakeholders. Exercising wisdom would imply that the decision is balanced, made for the long term, and for the greater good. Acting with wisdom requires that a person has deep subject matter expertise and knowledge, but this is not enough as 'dharma' and its exercise is also a pre-requisite for the decision to be truly **'wise'**.

Wisdom is acquired from experience and lessons learned formally and informally, stories, belief system that we grow up with and a conscious pursuit of the 'good'. Anshoo believes that the belief system is very important and that every culture has them. In the Indian context, 'Dharma' is central to stories and metaphors that we are brought up with and wisdom is what these stories impart. As we grow up, we often forget the 'dharmic' concepts, or feel that these concepts are not applicable as we pursue 'business' objectives. Hence, he believes that

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**Neha Pant**, is the Head of the Project Management team at Atyaasaa Consulting Private Limited. She is a Science graduate from Delhi University and a post-graduate in HR and marketing.

She has worked in Delhi as a high end skill trainer, and has looked after the learning and development initiatives of different corporates for about three years. At Atyaasaa she manages projects on HR consulting, training and OD.



**Shruthi Shanker**, Associate Consultant, Atyaasaa Consulting Private Limited, has completed her post graduation in Industrial Relations and Personnel Management, graduate program in Psychological studies, Australia along with a Masters in Industrial Psychology.

Her wonderful interpersonal skills and experience in the field of psychology help strengthen quality relations. She is highly passionate about learning, teaching, and painting.

Atyaasaa Consulting Private Limited is a leading Human Resource Training & Consulting Organization partnering with some of the best brands in the country and overseas. Atyaasaa has been a catalyst & a contributor in their quest for people development and business excellence. The core differentiator of Atyaasaa process is continual innovation, unique customization and use of state of the art technology tools implemented through ethical and experienced operations and human resource facilitators having contribution as their core value.

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we should constantly practice and re-visit our foundational belief system so as not to lose acquired wisdom.

He also believes that contributing towards the good of the organization, society and ensuring profitability are not mutually exclusive ideas. It is not an either-or selection. Wise leaders need to take into account the impact of every decision on all the stakeholders. The weights associated and assigned to the stakeholders are different based upon the issue at hand but they are never zero. According to him, wise leaders not only recognize the interconnectivity and make



the right decisions but also create an organizational culture where greater good does not become subservient to short-term profitability.

The average lifespan of a typical corporation is about 40 years and if a company is to survive beyond that, he believes that innovation and pragmatism balance the stakeholder needs.

If one goes by the recent data on global and Indian corporate scandals and/or prosecutions, whether it is Satyam or Enron, global collapse of the financial systems and companies like Lehman Brothers, Washington Mutual, recent insider trading prosecutions, and even high profile bankruptcies, we see that wise leadership is not as common as one would like it to be. From all these examples it is clear that wise leadership if not prevalent at the top it 'will not' be cultivated in the organization.

On the other hand, it is not all bad news; there are positive stories as well. One closer to home is the Tata group, where the ownership structure of the group is such that key shareholders are philanthropic trusts and hence by default there is a tight linkage between profitability and good of the society. So Anshoo believes that it starts at the top, but the good news is that it is possible to cultivate this trait at all levels across the organization and in fact this is a must for a wise leader who would wish to create something that will outlast them and future generations. Organizations today should emphasize on cultivating this trait.

When asked to share his views on 'Idealism' and 'Pragmatism' he believes that leaders should be romantic and idealistic. The world has big problems that need to be solved, and these will not be addressed if leaders take a conservative and traditional approach. The romanticism should be balanced with a dose of realism and yet again this is not an



either-or selection, it is romanticism and realism. As stated earlier, all stakeholders should be considered and given the appropriate weightage based upon the context of the decision at hand. This balance can then be called 'Pragmatism'. Leadership would not be wise if the balance was missing.

Anshoo shared a practical example of something his organization had to consider recently. They had to decide on whether providing medical insurance for employees' parents, from the societal point of view would be a good thing to do. The opposing vector was the business need for



them not to escalate operating cost and in-fact the desire was to reduce them. The pragmatic decision reached was that they included parents in the overall policy because of which they were able to obtain a policy where the premium was a lot lesser, and benefits were better than what an employee would get (for their parents) if they did so in the market. The premium for the parents would be picked up by the employee.



While, the long-term benefits are yet to be seen, this in his view was the right balance taking all stakeholders into account.

According to Anshoo, an organization codifies its purpose so that everyone has absolute clarity on the *raison d'être* of the organization and its fundamental purpose. This can be communicated and amplified further through the vision and mission statements. It's also imperative that all employees understand what the organization wishes to achieve in the long run. Training programmes to instill and create awareness about the basics are required on a regular basis. Most importantly, leaders must be role models who demonstrate the balance, communicate, verbalize effectively so that they can bring people along, and also mentor key leaders on pragmatic decision making which is central to building the lasting legacy.

In the situation where codification is not in place at the organizational level, the leader should do all the things that are mentioned above. In addition, leaders should create an environment of learning and sharing which cannot always be taught through formal channels and hence, it

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is important that leaders create informal forums for employee awareness and appreciation. Finally, he adds that dharma is the universal truth and hence leaders should emphasize on the basics of dharma which will help build the right foundation.



'Where we could be' is a state where an organization has balanced the needs of all stakeholders and thereby is supporting the pursuit of societal happiness while being profitable. At a philosophical level, one could say that organizations are like human beings that go through the cycle of birth and death. A way to break free of this cycle and attain 'Nirvana' (liberation, in the organizational context, this would be a sustained long-term socially responsible, growing, and profitable organization), is through the adoption of the common sense practices.

The change can be incremental and the magnitude will depend on the current state of the organization, and the appetite it has for change. But as he looks into the future, he sees that this is an inevitable change and will probably set the great organizations apart from the good ones.

In Anshoo's opinion, we see movement on another front that supports the above thesis. The United Nations has adopted Bhutan's proposal to include happiness as the ninth millennium development goal. The reason is that happiness is the ultimate goal of all human beings and

hence, it must also be the purpose of development to create the conditions enabling happiness. Organizations are a microcosm of society and it is hard to fathom that they can escape having these objectives that are not reflected in their goals.

When asked to share a few words of advice, he said he would encourage leaders to do a small exercise at the end of a business day, evaluate all the decisions they have made and consider whether in each decision they took into account the impact on all stakeholders (especially the society) and if indeed they struck the right balance. If not, he requests them to make a conscious effort the following day to strike the balance. If they do, he would request that they share/communicate their modus operandi with a mentee and this process should continue till a movement is created.



On a parting note, he would like to state that a good leader can touch lives in innumerable ways. Such power must be treated as a honour and responsibility while making decisions because these decisions not only impact the organization but all those who constitute the larger ecosystem.

## WISE LEADERSHIP - WHAT IT MEANS TO MODERN ORGANIZATIONS

**Dr Ranganathan Aiyar**

*Dr Ranganathan Aiyar is an alumnus of Oxford Brookes University UK and is presently the Director of JSPM's Kautilya Institute of Management and Research in Pune. Having worked for over 38 years around the world as Professor of Management and Administration, he contributed towards the world on consulting, research and teaching assignments. As a motivational and public speaker, he worked in over 15 foreign universities in the Faculty of Management and Administration and has substantial publications in the areas of Finance, Talent Management and Self Development.*



Changing business environment and trade across borders have exposed a different genre of people management. Therefore, a question lingers, what next? As C.K. Prahlad said, "We are not any more looking at the best but next." This has led to the re-definition of a leader. Is he the one to lead or to make people follow? Here comes 'wise leadership'. In the olden days, it was considered to be clever to change the working environment to organizational needs, but today, it is considered to be wise to change the organization to working environment. Competition has taught promoters and those who are in teams, to understand the needs of the community and accordingly change their pattern of leadership. Business schools and universities are seeking partners who can bring these in the curriculum design. No more are the degrees and diplomas relevant unless the outcome is to suit or acclimatize to the day to day happenings of the industry and commerce. Moreover, organizational leadership has also realized the basis of continued and loyal service input as elements of success in the long run.

Wise leadership therefore has to be more vibrant to be 'transparent and approachable to develop trust'. Transparency is considered the greatest weapon in the hands of the modern leader in business. It breeds an element of confidence of 'collegiality'. With the younger generation taking charge of issues, it needs that a promoter leader realizes the



extent to which the organization works transparently to enable everyone to know that things happen directly from the source. This also leads to establishing the missing link of 'trust' between the top and the work force. May be, executive and middle level coaching can bring this to practice.

FOUNDER'S COLUMN

Niket Karajagi

# THE ESSENCE OF WISE LEADERSHIP

*Niket Karajagi is the Founder Director of Atyaasaa Consulting Private Limited, Pune which contributes to top corporate brands globally. He is an established international management consultant and an innovative human resource trainer with niche areas of expertise and contributions. Niket is an authority on creativity and innovation, emotional intelligence and statistical methodologies apart from his operations background in understanding of management processes.*



Managers manage, Leaders aid and support performance so what do wise leaders do?

Wise leadership is all about working for a cause. Cause is the highest state of enabled wisdom through which a human being can operate. Cause brings focus and also nourishes one's soul. Visualize how boring and mundane it is to go to work just for the sake of going.

Cause and contribution must be delinked. Contribution is good but cause is going beyond it. Contribution essentially means helping someone in some way. However cause is working for creating collective success or satisfaction.

Senior leadership in an organization must have a clearly defined cause for which they must want to work. The cause could be a business cause or a social responsibility goal. Cause powers a human being to deliver superlative performance and create superlative collective success.

Cause is a purpose which is a calling of the heart. Very few discover it but once you have, you can't live without it. It is a desire operating at the highest potential of intelligence. He believes every individual on this planet is born for a cause. It helps not only discover self but also drives us to experience our personal power and abundance at spiritual and material levels.

Cause creates fear. It takes us into a realm of uncertainty. It shatters our belief and programming. It redefines our identity & relationships and this is the core reason why people do not wish to take this path. We find it dangerous as we stop enjoying the mundane. One surely has to pay a price for pursuing a career of cause.

There are lots of failures but a few successes can take us into an absolute state of ecstasy. The job then ceases to be a job, it becomes a passion; something for which one can give up anything. The price paid for living a life without a cause is much too high than the one with a cause. Cause is thus worth the price one has to pay.

One could take some time out in their life and introspect on what they wish to do. If they do not; and the time has come; it will shatter the ecosystem making one think and align. Some learn to live with this early life/midlife crises and the 'smart' take onto the path. Though a price has to be paid, it is worth in the long run. What's the point if we walked the planet without leaving a legacy behind? After all, a human being is born to win and only a cause will create that absolute win.



## PSYCHOMETRIC PROFILING

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*This is not a paid service. Your feedback on the tool will be highly appreciated and will help further improve this service.*

## BEANSTATEMENT

**"Personal and organizational abundance is a by-product of wise leadership"**