

The Evolution of Management Education

The last decade has seen a major shuffle in the world order. Developed countries have seen their markets saturating and have started eyeing the second and third world countries.

In this changing world order, the balance of power seems to be moving back and forth. But it will ultimately rest on the nations who have been able to proactively anticipate and manage the change, without doing away with its core competencies.

This new world order has had its share of winners and losers. History has shown that institutions, which have been able to anticipate the changes and have been able to accept and adapt to the changes, have survived the test; the others have become a part of the history. Lately, countries like China have shown that even elephants can dance.

In India, as we integrate ourselves with the global economy, we have started realising the change in our lives. For many years we lived in a closed economy, believing in self-sufficiency rather than inter-dependency. The Licence Raj ruled our lives and we had monolithic organisations that were insulated from the changes happening outside. The result was lack of competition, complacency and monopolistic regimes.

But when India opened her doors to the world economy, these were the organisations that suddenly started feeling the carpet being

pulled from under their feet. Suddenly the switch from a seller's to a buyer's market took place; customers who had to stand in a queue for five years for their products were now being wooed by international organisations. Some of the resident monoliths, who woke from their slumber, managed to survive; others just lost out in the race and some even vanished.



Clearly, the large organisations that survived had not geared up for the change and had to pay a heavy price. These organisations now had to compete with more lean and trim organisations, which could produce the same quality of goods at lesser prices. Organisations had to now listen to their consumers, their employees and vendors. Besides technological advancement started influencing the lives of the people.

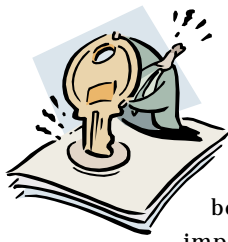
Computer literacy and the Internet have gone from being a luxury to a necessity. Our monoliths, in their need to be competitive had to shed some of their flab: either the current employees had to be trained and upgraded or jobs had to be found to suit their skills. Minds had

to be trained and attitudes changed. CEOs had to be more answerable to the real owners – the shareholders – and had to innovate and find solutions and strategies to maintain the bottom line and keep the top line healthy. The erstwhile successful family-run organisations also started moving towards professional managers and CEOs to adapt to the changing order.

The history of management education in India dates back to the 1960's when the foundations of the first Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad were laid.

With the changing dynamics of the business environment, indigenous industry realised the need for employees having a formal education packaged with the experience of real life case studies.

It was no longer just important to be good at number crunching to be able to manage, but also important to manage people which is the vital raw material for any industry. Hence, the shift started taking place from IQ [Intelligence Quotient] to EQ [Emotional Quotient]. The new industries like the software industries and the consultancy group started demanding 'knowledge workers'. Managing people became a buzzword. The CEO now had to be more of a generalist than a specialist, for he had to have an equal balance towards everything to keep the ship



afloat.

It is in this regard that management education became very important; as it provided insight into several areas so as to give a person a wider perspective. It helps future managers broaden their horizons and think from the other's perspective.

However, there is a need for management schools to lay emphasis on the Indian environment. We have been dwelling on foreign environments

for so long now, in spite of the fact that they are so alien to our culture – more so because as a country, we are a multicultural and pluralist society, providing far more diversity than most cultures abroad. It is a challenge in itself to manage this diversity. Besides India is also a vast country strong on human resources but weak in capital, which also becomes extremely challenging to manage.

Maybe as a part of the curriculum, students may be sent to work on a farm in some rural area for two months to get used to the real India. It is an experience like this that would help Indians stay in touch with their roots and not get carried

away by foreign cases. HLL, one of the major multinational companies that is considered to be an excellent training ground for corporate India, practices this strategy of putting their young urban managers in an absolute rural environment for two or three years. This helps them keep in touch with their target audience while developing strategies for servicing them.

Failure, they say is the doorstep to success, but sometimes the price of failure could be too high. Staying in touch with reality could help to avoid reinventing the wheel

- Ashish Deshpande
Associate Vice President,
Kotak Mahindra Mutual Fund

It's all about attitude

Harvard and Stanford Universities have reported that 85% of the times, the reason a person gets a job and gets ahead in that job is due to attitude; and only 15% is because of technical or specific skills. Don't you realise that you spend a whopping sum on your education and so little on building your positive attitude? That hurts.

Now here's an interesting thought. With the "right" attitude, you can easily develop the necessary skills. So where should your emphasis be? Skill building? Attitude building?

Unfortunately, "Neither" is the real answer for many people. Perhaps if more people knew how simple it is to develop and maintain a positive attitude they would invest more time doing so. So here we go.

Five steps to staying positive in a negative world:

1. Understand that failure is an event, it is not a person. Yesterday ended last night; today is a brand new day, and it is yours. You were born to win, but to be a winner you must plan to win, prepare to win, and then you can expect to win.
2. Become a lifetime student. Learn just one new word every day and in five years you will be able to talk with just about anybody about anything. When your

vocabulary improves, your I.Q. goes up 100% of the time, according to Georgetown Medical School.

3. Read something informational or inspirational every day. Reading for 20 minutes at just 240 words per minute will enable you to read 20 (200-page) books each year. That is 18 more than the average person reads! What an enormous competitive advantage . . . if you'll just read for 20 minutes a day.
4. The University of Southern California reveals that you can acquire the equivalent of two years of a college education in three years just by listening to motivational and educational cassettes on the way to your job and again on the way home. What could be easier?
5. Start and end the day with positive inputs to your mind. Inspirational messages cause the brain to flood with dopamine and nor epinephrine, the energizing neurotransmitters; with endorphins, the endurance neurotransmitters; and with Serotonin, the feel-good-about-yourself neurotransmitter.

Begin and end the day by reading or doing something positive! Remember: Success is a process, not an event. Invest the time in your attitude and it will pay off in your skills as well as in your career.