

RESEARCH REPORT



Developing Next-Generation Indian Business Leaders: The Keys to Success





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Foreword

In my years of experience in the banking industry and now as a board member of several organizations, there is no doubt that companies rely on talent to flourish. In today's India, there is a huge growth momentum. This momentum, however, presents significant leadership challenges as well. The question is whether India is developing enough leaders fast enough to keep up with this growth and subsequent demand. There is no doubt that we need more and stronger leaders for India. The sustained growth of Indian businesses has put a strain on existing leaders while creating an increased demand for "ready now" leaders. We need to identify practices and strategies to not only accelerate the next generation of leaders but to sustain and support them.

Most organizations invest in short-term training and programs, but too few persist with the long-term commitment required to develop the leadership strategy that sits in tandem with the business strategy. Instead of creating the talent masterpiece required for the future, most organizations want to doodle when it comes to people and talent development.

The war for talent is intensifying globally. In India, Western multinational corporations, local conglomerates, and even start-ups, are competing for the "best-in-class" talent. Indian talent is also being courted to take up overseas positions in global companies. The key question companies are grappling with is how to attract, keep, and develop the best?

In 2015, 65% of the Indian population was below 35 years of age, forming the single largest group of people of any age cohort anywhere in the world. Hope, optimism, and aspiration are springing in India, especially among this group of young adults, working professionals, and aspiring leaders. They are passionate about their careers and hoping their lives will be transformed. Within this 65% are our next-generation leaders for companies, public sector organizations, nonprofit entities, and the country.

Are we doing enough for our talents?

Are we able to engage and retain them?

Do we understand their challenges?

This study by the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL[®]) captures how organizations in India can develop a robust leadership pipeline with a global mindset, while honoring what is best and unique about India. This research speaks to the challenges next-generation Indian leaders are facing. It outlines what leading organizations can do to create talent sustainability and to support these leaders.

As India pushes ahead on the development path and occupies center stage in the global economy, we will need talented men and women who can lead rapid, well-orchestrated, and inclusive growth.

Without capable leadership, there will be chaos.

Om P. Bhatt
Former Chairman, State Bank of India
Mumbai, India



Executive Summary

When you ask chief learning officers to list their biggest challenges, “developing next-generation leaders” almost always shows up in the top three.

The need for a strong cadre of next-generation leaders (NGLs) is further accentuated in India because of hectic economic activity in recent years—activity that has presented large and diverse, yet complex business opportunities. The next-generation leader therefore becomes a critical link, not only to fulfill local and global aspirations of Indian companies, but also to help global organizations better understand the Indian market opportunity.

The emerging leaders however have a more challenging path to the top as compared to their predecessors. This is probably not a surprise, but why is it so?

The next-generation Indian leader, more than ever before, is faced with a tough volatile world, newer and more complex business models, hypercompetitive markets, and above all, an expectation from the society to create an environment for “inclusive” growth. Having grown up amidst middle-class thinking and deep cultural influences, the leader may have to reconcile demands resulting from external context with internal values and beliefs. The leader must balance the need to move quickly, thrive in complexity, and accomplish more, with the need to reflect, maintain stability, and balance societal needs.

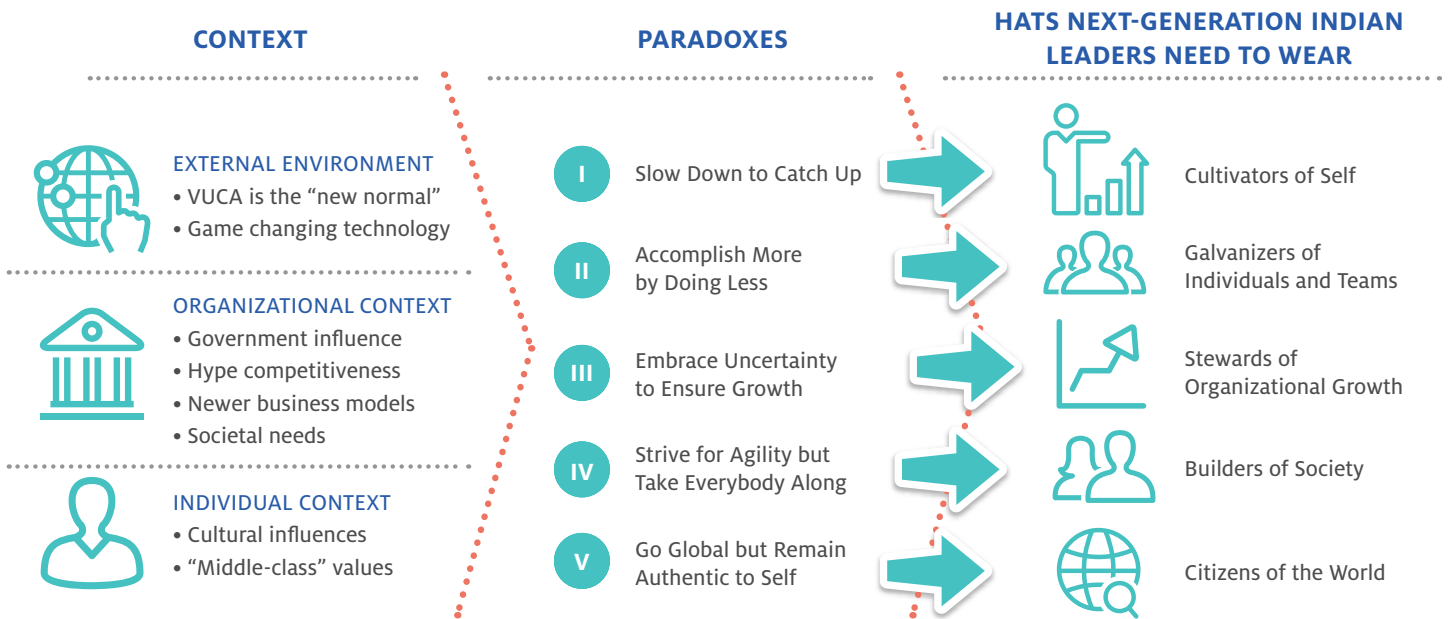
In order to excel amidst such paradoxes, the leader must play multiple roles. She needs to energize her inner self, galvanize teams, shepherd organizational growth, sustain societal needs, and be a model global citizen. Clearly the ask of the leader is huge!

The question, however, most Indian companies are asking is “how do we create a steady pipeline of such leaders?”

The Indian leader is at the core of the answer!

She must own her development journey, and enhance her capabilities by taking on ambiguous and sometimes risky career moves, developing meaningful networks, getting global experience under her belt, and spending time on self-reflection. Her manager, or the incumbent leader, must play the role of a mentor, orchestrating the “right” opportunities. The role of human resource leaders is that of a facilitator—to set up processes and systems for talent identification and accelerated leadership development. Finally, the organization, on its part, collectively must create a culture and community for learning and empowerment.

Developing Next-Generation Indian Business Leaders



Practices and Tips for Key Stakeholders to Accelerate Development

Next-Generation Leaders

1. Develop across.
2. Observe and reflect.
3. Embrace crucible roles.
4. Build a diverse developmental network.
5. Go global, early.

Current Senior Leaders

1. Increase tolerance for failure and balance with developmental support.
2. Bring forward developmental experiences and stretch roles.
3. Showcase your best talent.

Human Resource Leaders

1. Identify and celebrate high potential employees.
2. Initiate formal and informal mentoring programs.
3. Focus on experiences driving learning.

How This Report Is Structured

This report summarizes the research team's key findings. We first discuss the context in which the Indian leader operates, particularly with respect to the external environment, organization challenges, and individual preferences. The first section describes the obstacles organizations and leaders are facing, and the importance of having the right leadership talent to embrace these challenges and create new opportunities for growth and profitability.

The second section highlights paradoxes that the next-generation leader faces as a result of the challenging context.

The third section reveals the capabilities needed to navigate through this complex global and local terrain. Finally, we share development best practices and tips for current senior leaders, human resource leaders, and next-generation leaders.

Along with the key findings, we present Hindi/Sanskrit terms that may help emphasize the main messages. We have intentionally included these terms and frameworks to honor the nuances that they bring to the discussion. To those readers familiar with these terms, it offers a sense of familiarity that helps connect terms used in the Indian philosophical tradition to modern Indian organizational and leadership challenges. To readers unfamiliar with these terms and frameworks, it offers an additional lens with which to view the findings.



I. Context in Which the Indian Leader Operates

The external environment and organizational context in which Indian leaders operate define the challenges they may face, and individual values and beliefs influence how these leaders respond to such challenges. Indian leaders have witnessed a dramatic shift in context over the last few decades—from a stable, low-growth economy comprising government-controlled businesses using rudimentary technology, to a relatively volatile, moderate- to high-growth hypercompetitive environment comprising large and small enterprises embracing cutting-edge technical know-how.

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

Context that is outside of one's control or outside of the organization's control is driving change and adaptation in Indian organizations.

VUCA is the “New Normal”

As country and regional economies become more integrated and interconnected, the world's economic systems have become much more volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA). Low crude oil prices, a strong US dollar, rising interest rates in the United States, and the slowdown in China—all of these factors move in tandem and increase volatility globally. Closer to home, political uncertainty and infrastructure bottlenecks add to the uncertainty and unpredictability in the business environment. Another aspect of complexity has been the volatile nature of financial capital flows and the financial market indicators. Key characterization of this complexity is the difficulty in making predictions in a deeply uncertain local and global environment. Leaders at the helm of Indian organizations, therefore, must deal with an increased number of variables, and there is a growing interdependence between organizations and the macroenvironment.

Game-Changing Technology

Advances in technology are fundamentally changing the macroenvironment, with media, IT, banking, telecommunications, and retail sectors leading the way, thanks to leaps in big data analytics, mobile technology, and robotics. Regardless of the industry Indian organizations are impacted by these changes, especially as it pertains to making investments and managing risk. For instance, large telecommunications players such as Bharti Airtel, Reliance, and Vodafone have invested in 4G technology,¹ and must manage the risk of influencing a relatively immature market to embrace new services. Financial services organizations are increasingly providing services via the Internet or mobile technologies to meet the needs of current and future customers. According to PricewaterhouseCooper's 19th Annual Global CEO Survey, Indian leaders consider speed of technological change as a top new threat. Of those surveyed, 79% of Indian CEOs are concerned about the influence the speed of technological change will have on their organization's growth.²



ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

In addition to the external macro environment, organizational capabilities and context also influence the Indian leader.

Government Influence

The Indian government has the power to intervene and regulate how organizations do business. One of the leaders we interviewed explained, “our industry is increasingly having interventions from the government, which at times are very sudden and have far-reaching changes in the way we conduct business, thereby impacting both topline and bottom-line, the organization structure, and internal working dynamics.” To mitigate uncertainty and unpredictability, organizations are looking for ways to influence and work with the Indian government. The challenge of partnering with the government is a proactive response to what would otherwise be completely outside of the organization’s control.

Hypercompetitiveness

Access and retention of customers in hypercompetitive markets presents a significant challenge in terms of business growth and market share. Customers choose between existing large organizational players and smaller, newer entrants who do not always play by the same rules. More discerning and savvy customers mean organizations must become more customer-centric by understanding their needs and motivations in order to provide value-added services and products. Organizations are shifting from transactional customer relationships to longer-term, value-added relationships. One of our interviewees elaborated, “it all finally comes to say, ‘are you customer-centric?’ I think the real challenge is going to be aligning every process, every resource allocation, every people capability building, to meet the customer’s needs. I think that’s one of the challenges.”

Rapidly Changing Systems, Processes, Structures

As the external environment changes, organizations are challenged with aligning internal systems, processes, and structures to better meet the needs of customers and stakeholders. Aligning these systems may differ depending on the industry, the organization, and the customer. For instance, one progressive Indian organization we interviewed is realigning its sales force such that sales people in the field are able to address a portfolio of solutions rather than having separate sales staff for each product or service. Such changes are resulting in more efficient operations but matrixed organization structures.

Inadequate Talent

The most frequently mentioned challenge from within Indian organizations is the ability to attract, develop, and retain people with the capabilities and commitment needed for current and future organizational success. According to a 2015 ManpowerGroup's survey, 58% of India companies face talent shortages, compared to a global average of 38%.³ Shortages of talent in the employee marketplace means increased competition for talented individuals and underscores the need for organizations to develop talent internally. One Indian leader we interviewed explained, "in the context of an Indian company which is fast growing you never have enough talent. In reality, especially in Indian companies in growing sectors, there is a huge shortage of talent." He added, "while you may want to have a challenger, a successor for every important role, it is very difficult to do that."

Emergence of Newer Business Models

In addition to three traditional business models—asset builders (build, develop, and lease physical assets to make, market, distribute, and sell physical things), service providers (hire employees who provide services to customers or produce billable hours), and technology creators (develop and sell intellectual property), new-age enterprises are choosing to operate as network orchestrators⁴ (create a network of peers in which the participants interact and share in the value creation). Examples in India include Flipkart, Ola, Pumpkart, and pepperfry.com. Such new-age enterprises break away from the traditional ways of doing business; they are flat, agile, and nonsiloed.

Increased Awareness of Societal Needs

The social infrastructure in India is weak. For instance, according to a 2014 United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) report, almost 287 million Indian adults are illiterate—in fact one in three illiterate adults in the world lives in India.⁵ The physical infrastructure such as roads, electricity, transport, housing, etc., is also severely lacking. Also, according to the Pew Research Center, roughly one in 20 Indians earns a daily income of more than ten US dollars,⁶ so there is a huge number of people at the bottom of the pyramid in India. Operating amidst a "shouting" need for development, Indian organizations are increasingly trying to balance business goals with societal needs. Progressive organizations in India understand that they cannot work alone; they need to look beyond their immediate gains to build sustainable businesses. For instance, Tata Steel has developed and managed the city of Jamshedpur, where its steel plant is located, for more than 90 years. Tata Steel works in conjunction with the local government, district administrations, and international organizations to create a strong and resilient economy in urban and rural areas around Jamshedpur.⁷

Focus on Grassroots Innovation

Uncertainty, hardships, and intense focus on frugality has cultivated an ability in Indian organizations to improvise around obstacles—"getting most out of least for many." *Jugaad*, which is a Hindi word that loosely translates into "innovative fix," is at the center of local innovation. Tata Nano, the world's lowest-priced car, Sujal, a water filter using local rice husk, and Mitticool, a refrigerator of earthen clay, are a few examples of grassroots-level innovation.



INDIVIDUAL CONTEXT

Individual values and beliefs also play a critical role in shaping the leader. Cultural influences, along with experiences during formative years, shape Indian leaders' personality.

Cultural Influences⁸

Although evolving every day, India largely still remains a hierarchy-conscious society, particularly among older employees. Most attribute this psyche to family upbringing, where the most senior is to be respected and obeyed, the caste system, or the political environment where hierarchy was used to organize and manage the huge population. This hierarchy mindset has seeped into the corporate environment as well, much more so in government enterprises and family-owned and managed enterprises, than multinational corporations.

Middle-Class Values

The middle class is dominating in the country. While there are differing opinions, according to National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) estimates, India's middle-class population stands at 267 million.⁹ An average Indian leader therefore grows up in a household with deep focus on education as a vehicle to progress. Since there is a large population competing for limited resources, middle-class values also fuel an intense spirit of competition. Other values that middle-class parents impart to their children are modesty, respect for hard work, and the value of good deeds.

Present-Day Leaders in India and Their Beliefs about What Contributes Most to Effective Leadership

Within India's urban middle and upper socioeconomic classes, three generations of workers emerge: Partition, Transition, and Post-Liberalization (also called the Market Generation). Each generation has characteristics that arise from the unique culture, economics, and history of the country.

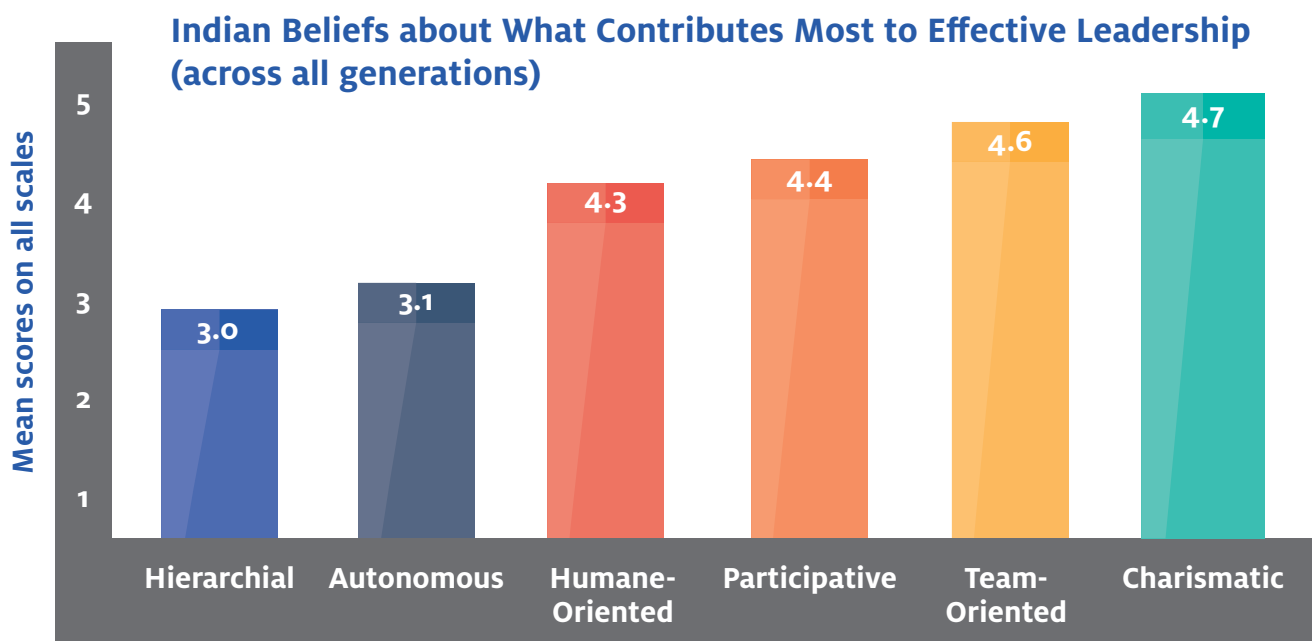
The **Partition Generation**, born 1944–1963 and roughly equivalent to Baby Boomers in the United States, grew up in a time characterized by instability. Many had to focus on meeting the basic needs of their families, such as food and housing, as well as trying to protect them from economic and social turmoil. The common perception of the Partition Generation is that its members are more willing to comply with authority than are younger generations because that is how they keep their jobs.

The **Transition Generation**, born 1964–1983 and roughly equivalent to US's Generation X, understands what the Partition Generation experienced but does not feel it as deeply because their experience

growing up was not as turbulent. Though they are concerned about maintaining cultural norms, they embrace more flexibility. They are likely to be cynical about leaders and have been less focused on obeying authority than the Partition Generation.

The **Post-Liberalization (also called Market) Generation**, born 1984–1993 and roughly equivalent to Millennials or Generation Y, has grown up in a world with exponentially expanding opportunities. Their childhood has been characterized by increasing economic openness, financial stability, and individual striving, in addition to the family and community striving that is typical in India. They want leaders who can be mentors. The Post-Liberalization Generation is perceived as being less concerned about getting along with authority.

Overall, all generations in India think that effective leaders are charismatic, team oriented, participative, and humane-oriented.



Source: "What Makes an Effective Leader? Generations in India Weigh In." Jennifer Deal, Sarah Stawiski, Meena Wilson & Kristin Cullen. Center for Creative Leadership (CCL®) White Paper (2014).

The Indian Philosophical Lens

Sanskrit/Hindi terms that explain the context in which the Indian leader operates.

 <p>Adhidaivik</p>	<p>Adhidaivik refers to situations that are outside of one's control, or more specifically for our purposes, outside of the organization's control, and happening in the macroenvironment. Adhidaivik challenges are economic downturns, natural calamities, political instability, or global socioeconomic changes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity)• Game-changing Technology
 <p>Adhibhautik</p>	<p>Adhibhautik refers to situations that arise from the immediate environment, and for our purposes, it specifically refers to the key stakeholders and internal capabilities of the organization. Adhibhautik challenges arise from competitors, customers, suppliers, partners, regulations, resource constraints, systems, and processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Government Influence• Hypercompetitiveness• Rapidly Changing Systems, Processes, Structures• Inadequate Talent• Emergence of Newer Business Models• Increased Awareness of Societal Needs• Focus on Grassroots Level Innovation
 <p>Adhyatmik</p>	<p>Adhyatmik refers to challenges that come from within an individual.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cultural Influences• Middle-Class Values



II. Paradoxes the Indian Leader Faces

Indian organizations need leaders with the ability to understand the outside business context and its impact on the organization, leaders who are able to influence the stakeholders and operational systems in their immediate environment, and those who can break away from cultural influences that may be outdated, while retaining values and beliefs that define their identity.

Organizations, especially Western multinationals, must appreciate that there is no one India. “There are multiple Indias rolled into one; for instance, the south of the country looks, feels, and behaves very differently from the north,” highlighted a senior banker. “India is all about paradoxes,” he added. Incumbent leaders and human resource departments must, therefore, embrace diversity of environments, experiences, situations, and talent in India.

The Indian leader himself grows up in an environment that grounds him in “middle-class” values; he operates in a very competitive environment with bureaucracy that may be hard to navigate; he needs to deal with organizational shifts, and is deeply impacted by the need for social upliftment in the country.

In balancing these often contradicting contexts, the next-generation leader in India needs to make peace with and/or resolve several paradoxes to be successful.

PARADOX I: SLOW DOWN TO CATCH UP

The Indian economy, which continues to grow at more than 7% per annum,¹⁰ hypercompetitive scenario in the market due to the entry of multiple large and small players in each segment, along with increased pressure from stakeholders to drive growth, often results in the leaders playing catch-up at all times. One of the interviewees explained, “We [India] are growing at really crazy rates as compared to the rest of the world, and even [the] India [of] 10–15 years ago, so we need to move very fast.” Living a fast-paced, high-pressure, 24x7 work life often takes its toll on leaders, who have much shorter tenures in organizations.

In dealing with corporate pressures and stresses, senior leaders who sit at the apex of the organization must manage and nourish “the self.” One of the leaders pointed out, “people are turning to spiritualism, maybe inner quietness.” Senior leaders often have a strong “core” characterized by positive personality, attitudes, and values. The self is fundamental and largely determines one’s behaviors and relationship with others in the workplace. Cultivating the self is about the ability to energize and to unlearn and relearn.

PARADOX II: ACCOMPLISH MORE BY DOING LESS

One of the most important shifts in mindset and approach for the next-generation Indian leader is from the “leader knows all” model to accomplishing work through the collective experience of others. An Indian C-suite leader highlighted, “Business is getting more complex and challenges the senior leaders face are getting more complicated.” Organizational challenges are far too complex for any one leader to successfully navigate.

Next-generation leaders in India must know how to galvanize individual efforts into collective performance that serves the organization. Making best use of resources available to the leaders is also a must-have skill

in the new world. Delegation, diversification, and being able to connect and influence are the new mantras for success for Indian leaders.

“As a leader traverses on her journey from being an individual contributor to the next passages of leadership, she has to distance herself from the intricacies of ‘how’ it gets done and focus on ‘why’ it’s needed and ‘what’s’ in it for all. However, the space to focus on the other pertinent questions can be created only if the leaders pause to hand over the baton of ‘how’ to others. However, letting go, is an important transition for any big change in life and career,” commented a senior leader.

PARADOX III: EMBRACE UNCERTAINTY TO ENSURE GROWTH

The most successful organizations will be those that have prepared next-generation leaders to be stewards of growth. Stewardship is safeguarding and shepherding organizational resources, and accepting the responsibility for managing and planning the use of those resources. Being a steward of organizational growth is about leading the entire organization.

To be successful stewards of growth, Indian leaders need to rise above, or rather embrace complexity of businesses. They need to be “comfortable with discomfort,” and be able to make decisions when all variables are perhaps not known, or be able to operate in an environment when all information is either not available or changing rapidly. In addition to embracing complexity, next-generation Indian leaders must be aware of the context within and outside of organizations, and must nurture networks and connections.

PARADOX IV: STRIVE FOR AGILITY BUT TAKE EVERYBODY ALONG

“We want to be in businesses which are addressing not only the bottom line of the company, but also triple bottom line,” commented one of the leaders. He added, “we are committed to making a profit out of the shared value that we create for our stakeholders, with special emphasis on communities we operate in.” While next-generation leaders will need to be nimble and agile in navigating through macroeconomic uncertainties, business complexities, and ever-increasing pressure to move businesses at

unprecedented rates, they will need to balance these needs with the compelling reality of India’s large population of economically underprivileged all over the country.

Current incumbent leaders in India believe successful next-generation leaders will align their personal and organizational values to the broader purpose of serving society. They will anchor themselves and the organization to achieve all-inclusive equitable growth.

PARADOX V: GO GLOBAL BUT REMAIN AUTHENTIC TO SELF

Indian leaders need to transcend geographical boundaries to build successful businesses. While traditionally, Indian leaders in Western multinational corporations have taken the global route, recent globalization trends by Indian organizations have fueled this need even in local Indian enterprises. Indian headquartered Fortune 500 companies doubled between 2004 and 2014,¹¹ and Indian firms’ overseas direct investment also doubled between 2009 (USD 17.2 b) and 2014 (USD 36.9 b).¹² Also, as one of Asia’s key markets, India has attracted foreign companies seeking growth and services in the last few decades. For instance, six out of the world’s top 10 outsourcing destinations are Indian cities (Bangalore leading the list).¹³

As the Indian leader ventures out of India to become a successful global leader, she needs to immerse herself in new cultures, but she also needs to remain authentic to self. She needs to retain her “Indian” values and beliefs, rather than “coloring” herself in the “color” of the new country. Remaining authentic and holding on to values and beliefs is critical as it is respected by peers, teams, and other stakeholders across different cultures.

To excel, the next-generation Indian leader needs to balance the five paradoxes and make peace with often conflicting priorities she needs to juggle.

III. Hats Next-Generation Indian Leaders Need to Wear

Indian organizations are struggling to find the “right” leadership talent. But what does right talent need to look like? The next-generation Indian leaders need to wear five “hats” to overcome challenges the context or environment presents. The five hats describe leadership capabilities needed to execute current strategies and drive future success.



Hats Next-Generation Indian Leaders Need to Wear

Cultivators of Self

Galvanizers of Individuals & Teams

Stewards of Organizational Growth

Builders of Society

Citizens of the World

CULTIVATORS OF SELF



Next-generation Indian leaders need to develop their ability to energize and to unlearn and relearn.

Energize

The Indian business environment is tough, and the global environment doesn't get any easier. Indians are no strangers to working hard, but that effort takes its toll. Being a senior leader means having the passion for work, people, and the organization. Next-generation Indian leaders will not only need to generate positive energy within themselves, they will also need to be "energy multipliers," generating positive energy in and among their colleagues, customers, and stakeholders.



Unlearn and Relearn

Simply put, effective leaders are effective learners. Even going back 10 years, dramatic changes in the macroenvironment has made much of what leaders learned about business irrelevant or obsolete. Next-generation Indian leaders will need to unlearn certain beliefs, skills, or knowledge that is no longer helpful. They will also need to relearn based on new information, emerging trends, and personal experiences. Relearning will require these leaders to demonstrate a willingness to take risks and move out of their comfort zone. Having and displaying confidence is a critical factor in the ability to unlearn and relearn. A senior Indian leader explained, "I think there will be a complete change in whatever learning that I have just gone through in the next 10 years, so I will have to unlearn and relearn again."

GALVANIZERS OF INDIVIDUALS AND TEAMS



In addition to cultivating self, next-generation Indian leaders must draw out talent in others by connecting effectively with stakeholders, delegating judiciously to teams, and developing their direct reports with intensity.

Connect and Influence

Connecting with others at an interpersonal level has always been important to leading others more effectively; however, what may be unique for next-generation leaders in India is how they need to connect. Current senior leaders believe building connections with others requires respect and humility. Leaders must have the humility to accept that all they accomplish is through others, and therefore be respectful of others' contributions. A current senior leader pointed out, "humility in leadership is very important." He added, "In a future leader, people handling capability and respect to individuals is of paramount importance over everything else."

Connecting with others through respect and humility allows leaders to influence in different ways. Instead of communicating influence through commands that produce compliance, influencing through connection produces inspiration and motivation. "The fine balance between humility, assertiveness, and fresh thinking is an important consideration. The balance among the three will test the leaders'

ability to appropriately gauge the situation, be self-aware, and select the right approach to solve the problem," added a senior leader. As organizational structures become more matrixed and less hierarchical, next-generation Indian leaders must learn how to influence without formal authority and leverage peer collaboration across functions and lines of business. According to an incumbent human resources leader, "more of them need to understand how to influence others within the company." He further explained, "a lot of them are pretty good at getting their own team and telling them what to do, but to really influence others, peers in different parts of the company, is an area they need to get better at."

"In a culture, where directive style has been the norm, and with an upcoming generation, where one can get things done only through influence, over the next two decades, the biggest challenge for any upcoming leader would be to be able to balance the directive versus the influencing style," added a senior incumbent leader.



Empower and Delegate

Most organizations talk about wanting to “empower” their employees, but what this means in reality is often not well understood. In very practical terms, empowerment is about willingness to delegate to others. Though it sounds simple enough, delegating is not just a practice, it is also a shift in mindset. Next-generation Indian leaders must be willing to relinquish some control to others, as well as tolerate a certain level of risk in the decisions and outcomes. The challenges are too complex not to empower and delegate to others. An incumbent leader explained, “because our business is so diversified, a leader’s existence in the immediate short term would be at risk if she doesn’t delegate strongly.”

Develop Diverse Talent

Next-generation Indian leaders must be effective developers of talent, both at the team and organizational level. In addition to what is widely expected of effective talent developers, such as identifying, developing, and selecting others, they must have the skills and mindset required to develop an increasingly diverse pool of talent. This is critical because they will increasingly deal with talent across geographies and generations. A next-generation leader who has worked across different geographies explained, “understanding the markets, how to build local talent, how to get them to believe in your product, and how they will be able to align with the core purpose of the organization, I think is a critical learning.” An incumbent human resource leader further elaborated, “critical people capability includes building an emotional connection with generation X, Y, Z.” Developing diverse pools of talent means next-generation Indian leaders will need to manage cultural and generational differences. Open-mindedness will become a critical competency for developing talent in the future.

STEWARDS OF ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH



Next-generation Indian leaders who will build successful organizations will need to see situations through different contexts, simplify complexity, and nurture connections and relationships.

Seeing Through Multiple Lenses

The business environment in India and around the globe is constantly changing. Next-generation leaders must decipher innumerable bits and bytes of data to determine what will be enduring trends versus short-term fads. This ability will require leaders to see the internal and external environment from multiple lenses and adopt inclusive “both/and” thinking as opposed to “either/or” thinking. The table on the following page describes multiple ways next-generation Indian leaders will need to see the world.

Simplify Complexity

Next-generation leaders must be able to simplify the complexity that exists inside and outside of the organization. Even when decisions are made by making sense of complex information, the explanation for how those decisions will work in practice must be made simple and actionable.

Leaders can simplify complexity by (a) taking ownership of the organization—shaping the strategy and thinking through the tradeoffs, (b) understanding how the organization operates and its key levers and, (c) anticipating future trends.

Nurture Networks

A connected world requires connected leaders. Building large networks, however, is not necessarily the same as nurturing networks. Next-generation leaders may struggle if they lack the skills and mindset necessary to build relationships with diverse individuals and groups that provide access to unique information and perspectives. These networks must span across functions, geographies, and partners. A senior incumbent leader elaborated, “managing external environment is getting very, very important. You have got to influence policy positively and practically. Senior leaders who are good at that will be the most successful. That includes building networks, for example, with the government agencies.”

Next-Generation Senior Leaders Must See . . .

<p>Not just the CURRENT customer, but the FUTURE customer.</p>	<p>“We need leaders who can understand people born after 1990.” NEXT-GENERATION LEADER</p>
<p>Not just the URBAN environment, but the RURAL environment.</p>	<p>“We need the person to have a rural mindset. He should understand rural India and local cultures.” HUMAN RESOURCE LEADER</p>
<p>Not just their FUNCTION, but the ENTERPRISE.</p>	<p>“We would like people to take a lot more of an enterprise perspective of things. If leaders are only great at only their own functions—IT, marketing, finance—they may fail to break out of their silos, and flounder when placed in another environment” NEXT-GENERATION LEADER</p>
<p>Not just the MARKET, but the NON-MARKET.</p>	<p>“Younger leadership is very good at their technology or in their trade. They may be very good in intercompany exchanges. But these leaders are also expected to work with outside elements, particularly the government.” NEXT-GENERATION LEADER</p>



BUILDERS OF SOCIETY

Incumbent leaders opine that successful next-generation Indian leaders will need to align their personal and organizational values to the broader purpose of serving the society. The leaders we interviewed described this “hat” of “builders of society” as more aspirational—a capability that will be better defined by the next generation. They explained that it will require a shift in seeing the business not only addressing the bottom line (financial results), but the triple bottom line (of people and planet). One incumbent leader elaborated, “our CEO’s dream really is that one day there will be no difference between hard core business and CSR [Corporate Social Responsibility]. The two are not distinct but the two are really one. This is what shared value actually is all about.”



CITIZENS OF THE WORLD

As Indian businesses transcend geographical boundaries, it is imperative that Indian next-generation leaders are capable of operating in global roles with responsibilities cutting across different countries and cultures. To lead and manage multicultural teams, or to operate successfully in a global environment, the Indian next-generation leader needs to be comfortable with discomfort, build meaningful relationships within and outside the organization, adapt authentically, and most critically, have the aspiration for global career paths.¹⁴ One of the leaders we interviewed explained, “next-generation leaders’ ability to transform from being an Indian to a global citizen is very important.”

He added, “the ability to understand cross-cultural sensitivity and to localize management style that is required for the particular situation or that particular country I think would really be important, and that may be a challenge for emerging leaders.” Another leader from an organization with global operations explained, “taking the business forward at a senior level is about a global perspective and being able to understand what is happening in Egypt and Yemen, what impact could it have in any of your elements of the value chain.”

While Indian leaders have a natural strength in dealing with uncertainty, are highly aspirational to be global leaders, are quick to adapt to different situations and environment, some—usually those with less global exposure—may have cultural inhibitions. For instance, there may be a culturally ingrained fear of disrespecting seniors in the hierarchy. There is also often a preference to not contradict but agree when engaging in overseas interactions.¹⁵

Next-Generation Senior Leader Profile
Jagat Indian Sanskrit/Hindi terms that explain the capabilities of the next-generation Indian leader

HINDI/SANSKRIT	ENGLISH	INTERPRETATION
Sva	Self	Focusing on the “core” and tapping into the individual’s own talent.
Samuh	Team	Drawing out the latent talent of people and teams.
Sangha	Organization	Growing the organization through dispersed and focused attention to business needs in multiple geographies.
Samaj	Society	Anchoring oneself and the organization in the larger purpose of serving society.
Loka	World	Acting with a belief that geographical boundaries are not limiting, and that everything is connected.

IV. Leadership Development Keys for Stakeholders

In defining the profile and critical capabilities needed by next-generation Indian leaders, the next logical question to ask is,

“How do we develop these leaders?”

And perhaps a more critical question given the changing business demands Indian organizations are facing is,

“How do we develop them faster?”

The 1990s model of Indian management development—joining a company, going through traditional management development programs, and staying with the company for the next 20 years—has changed. In the last 10 years, talent has more options, and they are asking themselves “where can I really accelerate my development?”

Individuals therefore must let go of the traditional Indian manager mindset—being uncomfortable with uncertainty, looking for the organization to provide a plan for the next role, predictable timelines for promotion—and take more responsibility for their own development. Organizations must create a culture and community of learning and empowerment.

We highlight leadership development keys for stakeholders—next-generation leaders, current senior leaders, and human resource leaders.



NEXT-GENERATION INDIAN LEADERS

Key 1: Develop across.

Incumbent and next-generation Indian leaders highlighted that some of their most impactful accelerating experiences were not when they moved “up” in the organization, but when they moved “across.” Lateral moves and cross-functional assignments are key experiences for learning about collaboration and influence. A senior incumbent leader explained, “One of the things which really helped me for [the role I’m in now] was my own movement from a sales and marketing area to spending two years in customer services; it really stood out in terms of understanding processes and working with partners.”

Key 2: Observe and reflect.

According to next-generation leaders, being exposed to and reflecting on the behaviors of others provides fundamental experiences on how to approach being a top leader. Many times exposure to even a “bad boss” provides lessons on how “not to” act and behave. A senior human resource leader explained the power of observing and reflection, “My very first assignment was as the executive assistant to a gentleman who was the CEO of a large infrastructure company. I learned a lot from him in terms of the importance of compassion; the importance of trying to make things as interesting, as exciting, and simple as possible; and, to see the value of relationships even in business and how ultimately business was about relationships and trust. When I’m dealing with people, I’m really dealing with people who are very similar to me and if I always remember that and treat people as human beings—in the long run that’s the only thing that works.”

Vertical Stall Points for Indian Leaders

Every organization that is investing in leadership talent needs to know what factors might prevent a leader from wanting to move up. Here are some insights shared by emerging Indian leaders.

WORK/LIFE ISSUES. Next-generation leaders see the impact of work demands on incumbent leaders. The impact of those demands on families is a primary concern. The importance of family and individual health may also be playing a role in the reluctance of younger talent to take on roles that require physically moving to a different region or country. Top roles require a different type of stamina to perform at a high level.

PERSONAL PREFERENCES. The other factor that might prevent a next-generation leader from wanting to move up is a potential misalignment between personal preferences and organizational values.

BEING BLOCKED. The third concern is around the possibility that the organization will not have a top role available quickly enough to keep a next-generation leader’s career moving.

Key 3: Embrace crucible roles.

According to incumbent senior leaders, crucible experiences such as nonobvious career moves, job rotations to another business unit or another geography, managing transition or company-wide change, or leading through mergers and acquisitions, are uncomfortable but critical experiences that will shape next-generation Indian leaders for bigger roles in the future. One leader suggested that crisis situations, while painful, can be a powerful “teacher” for leaders looking to accelerate their development.

Key 4: Build a diverse developmental network.

Senior incumbent leaders opine that next-generation leaders need to understand that they don’t have to develop alone. Research shows that talent develops faster when leaders have multiple developmental relationships, referred to as a “developmental network.” The leaders we interviewed described the numerous others they include in their developmental network. For instance, a senior and savvy human resource leader can be a valuable resource and partner as they are often aware of more formal developmental opportunities. A peer relationship, while competitive, can also be very collaborative and mutually beneficial for development. Also, building relationships outside of the organization provides opportunities for learning and development. Next-generation leaders should use conferences and executive forums to establish relationships with CEOs, managing directors, and other senior leaders, both within and outside of their industries. These relationships have the benefit of a shared experience at a particular level in the organization with a certain degree of confidentiality for sharing experiences. Tapping into the knowledge and expertise of consultants working for the organization, leveraging access to experts, and even family and friends, provides exposure to different ideas and approaches.

Key 5: Go global, early.

The next-generation Indian leader needs to have a global aspiration and the ability to operate across different countries and cultures. Senior leaders opine that exposure to multiple cultures is a must for developing a global mindset, and it is best done when leaders are young and more mobile as they have fewer personal constraints around family, aging parents, kids’ education, spouses’ careers, etc. Incumbent leaders also opine that rotating leaders at an early stage (to a new country) has fewer financial risks for the organization as failure to perform may not hurt the organization as gravely as compared to failure at a regional or a country head level.



CURRENT SENIOR LEADERS

Key 1: Increase tolerance for failure and balance that with developmental support.

One of the most important levers for accelerated development is an organization's tolerance for failure. Tolerance for failure should not be confused with complacency toward failure. It is about the organization's willingness to take risks on leaders, to challenge them in roles or assignments where the leaders are not completely ready, to encourage risk-taking on the part of those leaders, and to convert failures (or less than ideal outcomes) into lessons for success in the future. A senior incumbent leader however cautioned, "when you empower someone else to do things it will not be exactly the way you do it, or otherwise you would do it yourself, so you must be tolerant towards some variations when you empower someone."

All of the leaders we interviewed described how their managers allowed them to step into challenging roles for which they were not ready. The organization provided the support and resources such as training and coaching to be successful. An organization's tolerance for risk, when done correctly with appropriate support, is a self-serving strategy that produces a return on investment for development and for the bottom line. A next-generation leader we interviewed explained, "I have been fortunate having been in organizations which have enabled me to fail and yet not reprimanded me to stifle my growth."

Key 2: Bring forward developmental experiences and stretch roles.

The leaders we interviewed were very clear on their opinions when it came to developing talent earlier in their careers. The unanimous view was “don’t wait.” Traditional Indian organizations take a tenure-and-hierarchy-based approach to moving talent through the organization. Top or senior leadership roles and critical positions are filled based on a sometimes spoken, often unspoken, tenure formula of three years at different levels totaling 20 to 25 years of experience to reach senior leadership positions.

Research shows that most of a person’s learning about what it means to be a leader comes from experience. Incumbent leaders in progressive Indian organizations deliberately bring forward such experiences either through stretch roles or focused interventions. For instance, one of the organizations interviewed mandates that promising talent develop and mentor others. Promising talent is given the critical responsibility of developing younger leaders in the organization. By being deliberate in providing such experiences, the company is looking to give next-generation leaders practice to groom talent. A human resource leader that we interviewed elaborated, “mentoring is like a chain; you’ve got somebody who does it to them, and then they do it to somebody else, and then I think it really works best.”

Another organization, a global India headquartered conglomerate, has a unique practice of “shadow boards,” an opportunity for younger talent to have access to business strategies and data about a particular unit, and then to critique and make suggestions about those strategies. This experience serves the dual purpose of engaging younger talent while also generating business value from their suggestions and recommendations.

It is critical however that emerging next-generation leaders appreciate the purpose of stretch roles—whether the experience is an assignment, a job rotation, or a functional move. A next-generation Indian leader explained, “when we are rotated for the job, we are not told why, why we were there. We were taken and put there. If you succeed, you are fine. So why are you going there? What is it you are to learn in that new job? Why are we putting you there? It is critical to seek these answers.”

A senior leader highlighted the practice he instituted,—the “Role Plus” approach. He explained, “in order to ignite the inner drive and to stretch talent, we encouraged next-generation leaders to take on additional responsibilities that often did not align with their defined roles; these became ‘plusses’ to the role and encouraged them to think beyond their day-to-day responsibilities, at an organization level.”

Key 3: “Showcase” your best talent.

Senior managers in the organization need to have exposure to younger talent to accelerate development. One way organizations create exposure to younger talent is through talent boards, or what are sometimes called “talent review sessions.” These sessions are formal opportunities to discuss younger talent in the organization (their performance and ability to move up) and determine how to engage them more directly. Senior managers interacting directly and personally engaging with younger talent is critical. These interactions allow senior managers to assess younger talent and to understand how they are trending. According to a senior incumbent leader, “there is an expectation that as senior leaders we have a role to coach our junior people, and that expectation is well understood.”

Key 4: Practice the art of storytelling.

At an organization we interviewed, senior managers set aside time for informal communications—called “fireside chats”—with younger talent. These sessions allow younger talent to have exposure and visibility with senior leaders, and discussions often focus on career challenges. Topics may include for instance, how to take risks and manage failures as opposed to strategy and execution.

One of the senior leaders highlighted, “I realized during my career that one of the best ways to develop authentic next-generation leaders is to share personal stories about successes, setbacks, families, and life journey.”

Choose Buy Versus Build Approach Carefully

One of the perennial questions that incumbent leaders of growing organizations face is the choice between building next-generation leaders or buying them. While hiring the right talent may seem like an easier option, organizations realize that at best it works as a stop-gap arrangement.

There are specific opportunities, however, where a “buy” strategy, with some “build” support works well. These are situations where skills and talent required are extra ordinary, where there is a massive transformation mandate requiring a fresh perspective, where there is accelerated acquisition of specific talent and capability within the company. Even in such situations, however, it is critical that coaching and mentoring is provided to support the hired talent to assimilate into the company.

The balance between build and buy strategy for next-generation leaders depends on three key criteria—urgency to close the role, uniqueness of the skill that is being sought, and the organization’s situation or phase of growth.



Six Tips from Current Senior Leaders

MANAGERS NEED TO BE BETTER DEVELOPERS.


Given the importance of learning from others to accelerate development, there is a greater need for managers to be more effective people developers. Managers need to be able to have career conversations with their talent to help them self-direct their own unique career path. One of the challenges managers continue to struggle with is how to make time for developing others.

MINI-ASSIGNMENTS TO ENCOURAGE TALENT TO CHANGE GEOGRAPHIES.

The profile of a next-generation leader in India will require skill and competence working with different people in different regions and from different cultures. Moving to a new area can be a personal hardship on talent, so mini-assignments that are shorter in length, but provide critical experience, may be a needed practice in the future.

SUPPORT FOR SUSTAINING LEARNING FROM TRAINING EXPERIENCES.

One of the most common challenges for organizations using training to accelerate the development of their talent is how to make training “stick” once the person returns to the workplace. Looking to apply the principles of an experience-driven learning approach will be one of the ways organizations align training with work.





ALIGNING PERFORMANCE AND INCENTIVES WITH NEEDED CAPABILITIES.

There is tremendous value in aligning organizational strategy to leadership needs and development practices. The next level of alignment is to measure performance and incentivize leaders based on future strategic needs. For example, some of the organizations we studied are finding that putting too much weight on operational success as an early performance indicator leads to a lack of strategic ability in talent that is needed at the next level. Organizations may therefore need to incentivize and reward team behaviors over individual behaviors to promote needed capabilities at the senior level of leadership.

INSTITUTIONALIZE PROCESSES FOR ACCELERATING DEVELOPMENT.

As organizations and individuals scale pilot interventions, they will need to formalize processes and practices, and integrate those with the organization's overall approach to talent management. For instance, integrated succession management practices will become a necessity to ensure organizational continuity, sustainability, and growth.

PROVIDE ACCESS TO EXTERNAL COACHES.

In addition to helping senior leaders become better developers of others, organizations must consider the use of third party or external coaches to support leaders that are approaching "ready now" status. External coaches provide a different level of insight that is more tailored to the person and provides an additional level of confidentiality.

HUMAN RESOURCE LEADERS

Key 1: Identify and “celebrate” high potentials.

Be deliberate in defining and identifying high-potentials or HiPos—younger talent that has been identified as displaying both high performance and competence in getting results, and also seen as having the leadership ability and commitment to move up to more senior roles in the organization.

Human resource leaders need to work with business leaders to provide clarity around criteria to designate an individual as HiPo. Having a definition of high potential allows organizations to identify and engage talented individuals earlier in a person’s career by defining what type of leadership the organization values and needs, while also setting expectations for individuals about what it means to be a leader in this organization.

Key 2: Initiate formal and informal mentoring programs.

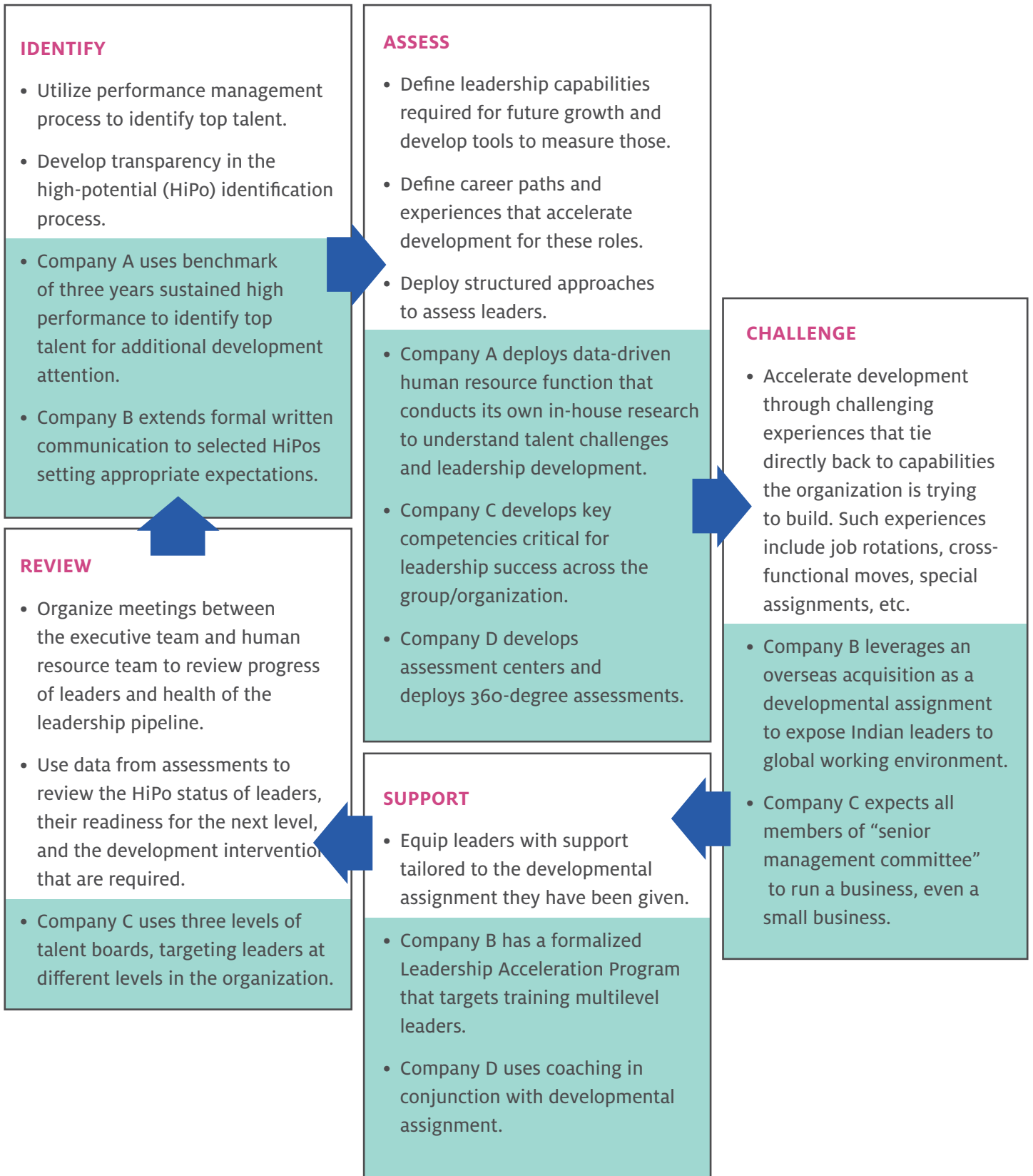
One of the most important developmental relationships identified by next-generation leaders we interviewed was with a more senior leader. For incumbent leaders in senior roles, the support they provide is not to tell next-generation leaders what to do—even the senior leaders need a sounding board. Once in a role, next-generation leaders will need someone to help them process their thoughts, experiences, and actions, and a more senior partner provides that developmental function. For instance, some interviewees even emphasized the need to get board members involved. They explained that as next-generation leaders prepare for future roles, access to members of the board of directors provides an insider view of the organization, as well as an external perspective.

The human resource department’s responsibility is not only to design and implement formal mentoring programs, but to engineer frequent interactions between emerging leaders and senior leadership teams hoping to kick-start informal mentoring relationships. They may do so by forming common interest groups, cross-geography, and cross-hierarchy enterprise-wide projects, etc.

Key 3: Focus on experiences driving learning.

Each of the organizations we studied shared similar leadership development systems and processes. The most important lesson to be learned from reviewing these systems is that they used an experience-driven learning approach that is a combination of developmental assignments (on the job learning), access to people who support their development (learning from others), and opportunities for classroom training that is aligned with the challenges as well as work that needs to be done. Human resource teams should focus on talent development fundamentals using a framework of identify-access-challenge-support-review-repeat.

Fundamental Development Framework for Leaders



Source: CCL Research

An Indian Approach to Developing Leaders: Organizational *Satsang* and Individual *Sādhanā*

Indian approaches to development emphasize the need for individual effort and a conducive climate to growth. We term these two factors **individual *sādhanā*** and **organizational *satsang***. The leadership development keys for next-generation leaders, current senior leaders, and human resource leaders that we have discussed, broadly fall into these two domains—actions for an individual to take and actions for an organization to take.

The Sanskrit word ***sādhanā*** literally translates into “a means of accomplishing something.” It refers to the attempt of the individual to accelerate his or her development as a leader. We view *sādhanā* as consisting of three practices:

1. ***Sharvana*** or “listening.” Every individual who seeks to accelerate his or her development must begin with an awareness of the surrounding context. This requires the leader to listen, observe, and gather insights about what is going on.
2. ***Manana*** or “reflecting.” Every aspiring leader needs to make sense of the vast amount of data gathered by listening. Leaders need to develop the ability to make sense of vast quantities of information and to synthesize the external knowledge internally in the leader’s own experience.
3. ***Nidhidhyāsana*** or “applied practice.” ***Nidhidhyāsana*** is the translation of thought into behavior. Leaders take it upon themselves to find opportunities to put their developed skills into practice.

The Sanskrit word ***satsang*** translates into “company or association (***sang***) of the good (***sat***)”. It is also used to refer to gathering of a group of devotees to either sing ***bhajans*** (hymns) or for ***pooja*** (ritual worship). A ***satsang*** or a gathering of devotees, has three features that an organization needs to replicate:

1. Every ***satsang*** has an overarching philosophy that forms the basis for the gathering, and members are reminded of the philosophy at regular occasions.
2. Every ***satsang*** attempts to attract young members and have a membership that is comprised of advanced practitioners and young aspirants.
3. Every ***satsang*** meets regularly and has a variety of activities to cater to the needs of its membership.

Organizations and individuals can reach their goal of accelerated development by a combination of individual ***sādhanā*** and organizational ***satsang***. The following table maps the keys to stakeholders to the concepts of **individual *sādhanā*** and **organizational *satsang***.

Practices for Accelerating Development

Individual Sādhanā		
Aspects of Sādhanā	Practices for Individuals	Keys for Development
Shravana—“listen”	Be open to opportunities for varied experiences	NGL Key 1: Develop across
Manana—“reflection”	Involve multiple people in your development by establishing a developmental network	NGL Key 2: Observe and reflect NGL Key 4: Build a diverse developmental network
Nidhidhyāsana—“applied practice”	Learn from multiple types of experience	NGL Key 3: Embrace crucible roles NGL Key 5: Go global, early

Organizational Satsang		
Aspects of Satsang	Practices for Organizations	Keys for Development
An overarching philosophy	Create an organizational culture of risk taking and empowerment	IL Key 1: Increase tolerance for failure and balance that with developmental support HR Key 1: Identify and “celebrate” high potentials
Enlists members early and has a mix of advanced practitioners and aspirants	Identify high potentials early; have senior leaders mentoring aspiring leaders.	IL Key 3: “Showcase” your best talent IL Key 4: Practice the art of storytelling HR Key 2: Initiate formal and informal mentoring programs
Has a variety of activities to cater to its members	Provide a variety of experiences for aspiring leaders	IL Key 2: Bring forward developmental experiences and stretch roles HR Key 3: Focus on experiences driving learning

Note: NGL = Next-Generation Leader; IL=Incumbent Top Leader; HR=HR Leader



Conclusion

Next-generation leader development is not the sole responsibility of the human resources department. The responsibility is co-owned by the leader herself, her manager or incumbent leader, and the human resources department, in that order.

The next-generation Indian leader needs to create opportunities such as cross-functional and cross-cultural experiences and stretch opportunities to sharpen her skills to excel in the complex and uncertain Indian and global business environment. To accelerate self-development, the leader must create a diverse network of peers and community, within and outside the organization. Most importantly, the leader needs to be connected to “self.” She needs to observe, reflect, and absorb learnings from the environment around her.

The current senior leader needs to play the role of a mentor to the next-generation leader, and create critical developmental opportunities—opportunities to take risks, embrace stretch roles, and connect with executive teams or board members of the organizations.

Human resource leaders, at best, play the role of a facilitator by creating processes to identify top talent, platforms and programs for mentoring, and high-impact interventions that drive learning.

Finally, the organization, for its part, must create a culture and community for learning and empowerment.

Appendix

Measuring the Impact of Development Efforts

Measuring the impact of development efforts remains one of the least understood aspects of talent management. It is difficult to quantify the return on investment for talent and leadership development. Many organizations have moved from measuring usage (for example how many employees have gone through training) to also measuring the health of the leadership pipeline. We share a sample of some of the metrics used by the organizations we studied.

The number of roles filled by internals versus externals. This is a commonly used metric that helps organizations determine whether they have the internal talent to fill critical leadership roles, or if they are investing in talent from outside of the organization. Promoting internal talent is a sign that development practices are being effective, and internal talent has the advantage of understanding the business and the culture of the organization and therefore is more likely to start performing faster. A few of the human resource leaders we interviewed shared that their rate of internal hires has increased over the last five to 10 years.

Number of successors identified for critical roles. Senior leadership positions are considered critical roles, and the organizations we studied are measuring the number of successors identified for those roles, as well as measuring the number of successors identified for the top three levels of the organization.

Number of “ready now” successors for critical roles. “Ready now” status indicates that an individual, or individuals, that have been identified as a successor have the experience and competence to move into a senior leader role as soon as it becomes available. A “ready now” successor is expected to perform at a high level in a very short period. Some of the organizations we interviewed measure the readiness status of successors to take on a critical role in the next six months.

High-potential performance. As organizations look to develop younger talent earlier in their careers, they are paying greater attention to the performance of high potentials. By continually measuring high-potential performance, organizations make sure that the label “high potential” is not static and will change depending on the performance of the individual over time. Organizations are looking for individuals to be high performing one year after entering a new role.

Retention of high-potential talent. Overall retention numbers are helpful, and targeted measures of retention for future senior leaders, identified successors, and high potentials is a way for organizations to measure how well they are engaging, developing, and moving their talent so that they are more likely to stay and remain committed to the organization.

Length of tenure/number of job rotations. The length of a leader’s tenure can be helpful for organizations to measure whether a person has been in a role for too long or too short a time. Some of the organizations we have studied have a set length of time that is considered too long in one role. In addition, organizations are looking at the number of job rotations and assignments a person has experienced. This metric allows organizations to better determine whether a person has the experience necessary to move into a senior role, or if more development is needed.

Engagement surveys and scores. Engagement surveys and the data they produce provide organizations with a snapshot of the extent to which employees are enjoying their work and their level of commitment to the organization. This data provides indicators to show where the organization is strong in supporting employees and provides warning signs about where they might be vulnerable.

Endnotes

- ¹ <http://www.androidcentral.com/4g-india-everything-you-need-know>
- ² http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2016-03-09/news/71346214_1_indian-ceos-annual-global-ceosurvey-pwc-india
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- ⁴ "What Airbnb, Uber, and Alibaba Have in Common," *Harvard Business Review*, 2014.
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- ¹² Reserve Bank of India
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About this Research

Six successful Indian organizations were selected for our study—Bharti Airtel, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, Infosys Ltd., JK Lakshmi Cement, Mahindra and Mahindra Financial Services Ltd., and Murugappa Group. These organizations are from the telecommunication, pharmaceutical, manufacturing, finance industries, technology services, and a conglomerate respectively. They also represent various stages of corporate development.

In each organization, we interviewed three types of leaders: next-generation (top) leaders, current senior leaders, and human resource leaders.

In total, 25 interviews were conducted face-to-face or via telephone, with two to seven leaders per organization. Interviews were semi-structured. An interview protocol was used consistently, but probing questions were asked when necessary to gather more detailed information.

The interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed to identify the themes featured in this report.

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