



FUTURE-FLUENT NATION BUILDERS

STATE OF LEADERSHIP IN
PUBLIC SECTOR ENTERPRISES IN INDIA

Joint research study by Standing Conference of Public Enterprises
(SCOPE) and Center for Creative Leadership (CCL)



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“ A public sector leader is ingrained with a value system for nation building both by ensuring commercial success, building of strong institutions, as well as contribution to development of society at large. ”

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON, SCOPE

Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs) have made significant contribution to India's economy for nation building since the independence of the country. They have supplemented the growth of the Indian economy through transformational changes, and their sustained contribution over the decades in the shaping of a strong and dynamic India is undeniable.

PSEs have been the key players in the Indian corporate sector and, over the years, have garnered a significant presence in strategic sectors. The PSEs, since inception, have stood with the nation in overcoming all challenges and obstacles and remain committed for service to the nation.

With their prowess, performance and perseverance, shown through their resilient resolve during the challenging times of global recession, they have emerged stronger and more competitive. They have not only set new records of profitability, productivity and revenue, but also contributed immensely in the development of the social fabric of the country. With the world becoming a global village, PSEs have widened their horizons and are stepping across borders to etch an international footprint.

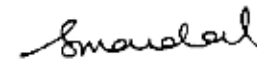
The PSE employees and senior management have been pivotal for the sustained evolution and development of capacities and capabilities in building the industrial as well as the socio-economic fabric of the nation. A public sector

leader is ingrained with a value system for nation building both by ensuring commercial success, building of strong institutions, as well as contribution to development of society at large.

To remain a strong backbone and partner in the efforts of the Government, it is imperative that we build competent, ethical and tenacious leaders for the future who will take forward the legacy and the spirit of PSEs in propelling change and enabling social and economic development of the country.

I am hopeful that this research – Future-fluent Nation Builders: State of Leadership in Public Sector Enterprises in India – conducted jointly by SCOPE, India and the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL), USA will help PSEs think creatively about their leadership capability, and how to prepare them to take on the future!

Warm Regards,



Soma Mondal

Chairperson, SCOPE & Chairman, SAIL

“ A comprehensive point-of-view on skill gaps and skill sets that potential leaders of the Indian Public Sector Enterprises must plug and adopt, experiences they must embrace, and mindsets they must develop. ”

Foreword

By SCOPE

SCOPE is delighted to present the *Future-fluent Nation Builders: State of Leadership in Public Sector Enterprises in India* research study. The study is a culmination of extensive research conducted jointly by SCOPE, India and the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL), USA. It is the first study of its kind ever conducted exclusively for the public sector, and presents a comprehensive point-of-view on skill gaps and skill sets that potential leaders of the Indian Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs also known State Owned Enterprises or SOEs in international parlance) must plug and adopt, experiences they must embrace, and mindsets they must develop in order to fulfil the objectives of the stakeholders to take PSEs to the next level in terms of their strategic leadership in the country.

Indian PSEs have played a vital role in embarking the country on a growth trajectory. They have been contributing significantly towards the nation's economy by balancing economic parameters of commercial prudence and welfare parameters of societal development. Through their journey, the leaders in PSEs have played an important role in taking challenges in their stride at the most difficult times and in steering the organizations to success even in the most adverse situations.

However, given the fast-changing times, the attributes of a leader in PSEs need to be further sharpened and aligned with the global benchmarks. With this perspective, SCOPE and CCL, USA have undertaken this important study to identify the skill sets of tomorrow and paving the way for grooming the future leaders. Business leaders who shared their experiences and survey respondents who participated in the joint *SCOPE-CCL PSE Leadership survey* are convinced that to ensure future success, future-fluent PSE leaders must move beyond understanding the current business and economic trends, and develop the right combination of values, mindsets and skill sets to thrive in constant flux.

We sincerely hope that the study will help PSEs and their leaders understand critical shifts in the business and talent scenario, and skills portfolio required to prepare for future challenges. SCOPE and CCL will make all efforts to follow up this research with a programmatic intervention and development journey to better prepare PSE leaders for the future.

We hope you find *Future-fluent Nation Builders: State of Leadership in Public Sector Enterprises in India* useful, as well as timely, as we prepare our next cadre of PSE leaders to embark on the future-fluency journey!

Warm Regards,



Atul Sobti, Director General, SCOPE

By CCL

Since our founding more than 50 years ago, conducting in-depth research and translating the findings into practical actions have been at the core of our mission at the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL®). This ground-breaking new study, done in partnership with SCOPE, follows in that tradition – and we believe it has the power to help take public sector leadership in India to the next level.

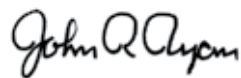
As someone who spent more than 30 years serving in the U.S. military, I'm a strong believer that government agencies and officials can be a powerful force for growth and change. That does not happen, however, without effective, principled leadership. And, as you'll see in this report, there is already much progress to build upon in India's public sector.

As this report notes, Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs) have contributed significantly to the nation's economy since India's independence, and they have continued to help the country advance in the modern era. Going forward, as India gradually emerges from the devastating impact of the global pandemic, PSEs have the opportunity to take on an even more strategic role and to adapt nimbly to emerging challenges. The country's government has set five objectives that PSEs can help drive: maximizing geo-strategic reach; minimizing import bill; integrating innovation and research; optimizing CSR funds; and defining a new development model.

Achieving those goals will depend heavily on the quality of the collective leadership throughout this sector and on individual leaders with a passion for benefiting society, influencing public policies, modeling self-sacrifice, and demonstrating responsibility and integrity.

"Future-fluent nation builders" – the kind of leaders this report has identified as critical to India's future – will act with decisiveness and sound judgment. They will take initiative. They will also excel at developing talent across teams and keeping the focus on innovation, managing change, and multi-dimensional sense-making. In order to prepare their organizations for the future, leaders themselves must be prepared for it. The research in this study provides the roadmap, and we hope it will be a valuable resource as India's public sector continues to evolve in service of this dynamic country.

Warm Regards,



John R. Ryan, President and CEO, Center for Creative Leadership

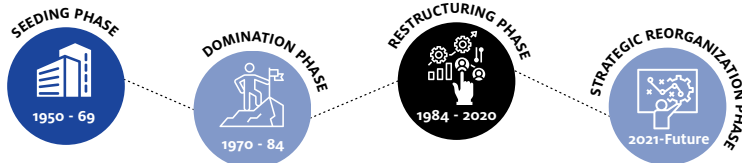
“As India gradually emerges from the devastating impact of the global pandemic, PSEs have the opportunity to take on an even more strategic role and to adapt nimbly to emerging challenges.”

FUTURE-FLUENT NATION BUILDERS

The Study in Seven Conclusions...

1 PUBLIC SECTOR ENTERPRISES ENTER A NEW ERA

- ✓ While Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs) have contributed significantly to the nation's economy since India's independence, generating profit and social benefit, in the new era, they must play a more strategic role and adapt to emerging challenges. "Incentives," "Imagination" and "Institution Building" are the three keys to success.
- ✓ The government has set five objectives for PSEs to fulfill: maximize geo-strategic reach; minimize import bill; integrate innovation and research; optimize CSR funds; and define a new development model.



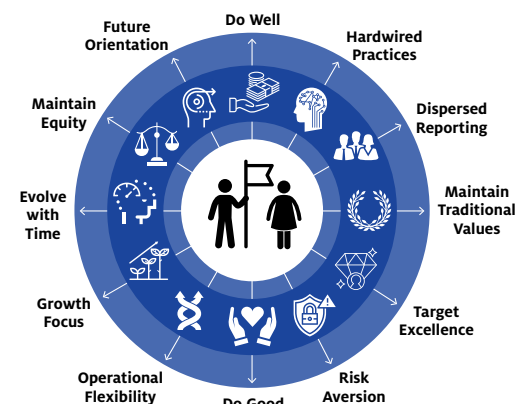
3 CORE VALUES ARE AT THE HEART OF A NATION BUILDER

- ✓ Leaders who do well in a PSE are motivated by a different set of values such as driving benefits to the society, influencing public policies, self-sacrifice, and greater responsibility and integrity.
- ✓ Future-fluent nation builders therefore must be driven by the value of "doing good" to the community.
- ✓ Typical postings and rotations in PSEs make leaders appreciate the impact of their jobs on underdeveloped segments of society. Such career moves also make them appreciate cultural diversity in the country.



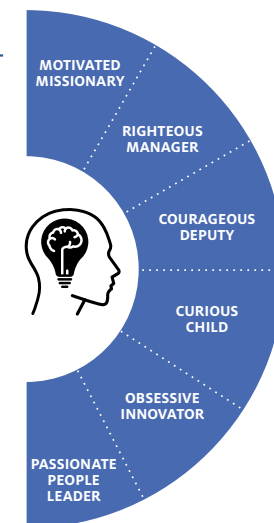
2 LEADERS CONTINUE TO FACE MULTIPLE DILEMMAS

- ✓ The changing context surrounding PSEs has led leaders to navigate six dilemmas: "doing well" and "doing good"; balancing "operational flexibility" with "hardwired practices"; "growth focus" while navigating "dispersed reporting"; "evolving with time" while upholding "traditional values"; "maintaining equity" as they push for "excellence"; and balancing "risk aversion" and "future orientation."
- ✓ Internally, there are challenges leaders face around people, policy, process and practice.
- ✓ Externally, leaders face challenges related to dispersed ownership, changing business context, and talent market shifts.



4 MINDSET SHIFTS AND BEHAVIORS MUST PRECEDE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

- ✓ Mindset shifts almost always must precede skill-set development and experiences PSE leaders must get under their belt. A future-ready nation builder must have the mindset of a "motivated missionary," "righteous manager," "courageous deputy," "curious child," "obsessive innovator" and "passionate people leader."
- ✓ Mindsets drive appropriate behaviors in leaders. Behaviors around "acting with integrity," "handling stakeholder pressure" and "coaching" are most visible in leaders.
- ✓ Leadership behaviors around team and talent development are the biggest gap areas. The top three behavioral gaps include "inspiring co-workers," "acting without biases" and "rewarding performance."



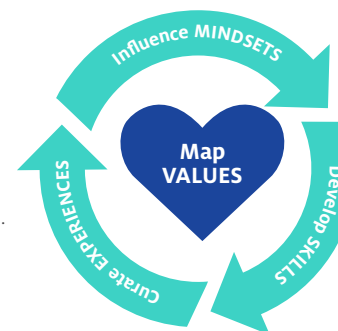
5 NATION BUILDERS MUST HONE SELF, TEAM, BUSINESS, FUTURE LEADERSHIP SKILLS

- ✓ Top ten must-have capabilities for future-fluent nation builders include decisiveness, sound judgment and taking initiative on self-leadership level.
- ✓ Developing talent is the one skill that unanimously emerged as a key gap on the team front.
- ✓ As leaders develop their businesses, they must focus on innovation, managing change and multi-dimensional sense-making.
- ✓ In order to prepare the organization for the future, leaders must develop a longterm view, have a strategic perspective and be able to anticipate the future.



7 A FOUR-STEP DEVELOPMENT CYCLE HELPS DRIVE LEADERSHIP PIPELINE

- ✓ There are four core elements in any future-fluent nation builder development journey – values, mindsets and behaviors, skills and experiences.
- ✓ Nation-centered values can be imparted through well-thought-out cultural immersion, role modelling by senior leaders and the implementation of selection criteria centered around testing for values.
- ✓ Mindsets can be developed via formal and informal feedback processes, coaching interventions and mentoring.
- ✓ Skills development must happen via classroom interactions/course work, online and hybrid modules and on-the-job learning.
- ✓ Finally, development must include curation of experiences through rotations, crucible roles and staffing leaders on special projects.



6 LESSONS OF EXPERIENCE MUST CENTER AROUND COMFORT WITH DISCOMFORT



*Potential Blind Spots.

- ✓ The top six experiences future-fluent nation builders must get under their belt include "new initiatives"; "increase in job scope"; "feedback and coaching"; "horizontal move"; "coursework and training"; and "turnaround/fix it." The practice of learning from bosses and superiors must continue.
- ✓ Matching specific individuals with the right experience requires rigor. Focus needs to be on honing new skills and perspectives, not simply making assignments based on leaders' past success.
- ✓ Going through an experience, however, doesn't guarantee a leader will learn from it. Organizations need to surround work development experiences with effective learning practices to help PSE leaders understand the ways in which to benefit from their experiences.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE SET

STUDY OBJECTIVES

The key objective of “Future-fluent Nation Builders: State of Leadership in Public Sector Enterprises in India,” conducted by Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) in partnership with Standing Conference of Public Enterprises (SCOPE), was to understand:

- (a) Critical capability gaps of leaders in the Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs) in India.
- (b) Competencies required to succeed in PSE leadership roles.
- (c) Critical must-have experiences to prepare for future PSE leadership roles.
- (d) Practices employed in exemplar PSEs to develop a robust pipeline of leaders.

RESEARCH APPROACH

This research initiative involved a quantitative and qualitative approach. First, a capability model for PSE leadership was crafted based on secondary research and leader conversations. The model was then converted into a research survey that was rolled out to senior leaders at over 20 PSEs in India. The survey identified critical current and future must-have skills in PSEs, and the current capabilities of incumbent leaders. The research team collected 732 valid responses to the survey.

CCL research team, in partnership with SCOPE representatives, subsequently interviewed 25 senior PSE leaders to learn from their experiences and to get their guidance on what a development journey for next-generation PSE leaders must look like.

SAMPLE SET

- In total, the research team collected 732 valid responses to the “Future-fluent Nation Builders” survey (between December 2020 and February 2021) from over 20 PSEs.
- Participating organizations were mainly from the energy, heavy industry, materials, transportation, chemicals, technology, utilities, capital goods and banking sectors.
- 33% of survey respondents were mid-level leaders; 50% were senior officers; and the remaining 17% were in executive roles.
- Survey respondents managed teams of varying sizes. 42% managed fewer than 10 full-time employees (FTEs); 32% managed between 11 and 50 FTEs; and 26% had more than 50 FTEs directly and indirectly reporting into them.
- In terms of PSE tenure, 13% of respondents had less than 10 years of service; another 16% had between 11 and 20 years of service; and the remaining 71% had more than 20 years of service in PSEs.
- The research team interviewed 25 senior leaders in PSEs. These were mainly CXOs with GM, Director and CMD titles. The interviewees belonged to a mix of industries such as heavy industry, materials, capital goods, utilities and technology.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS



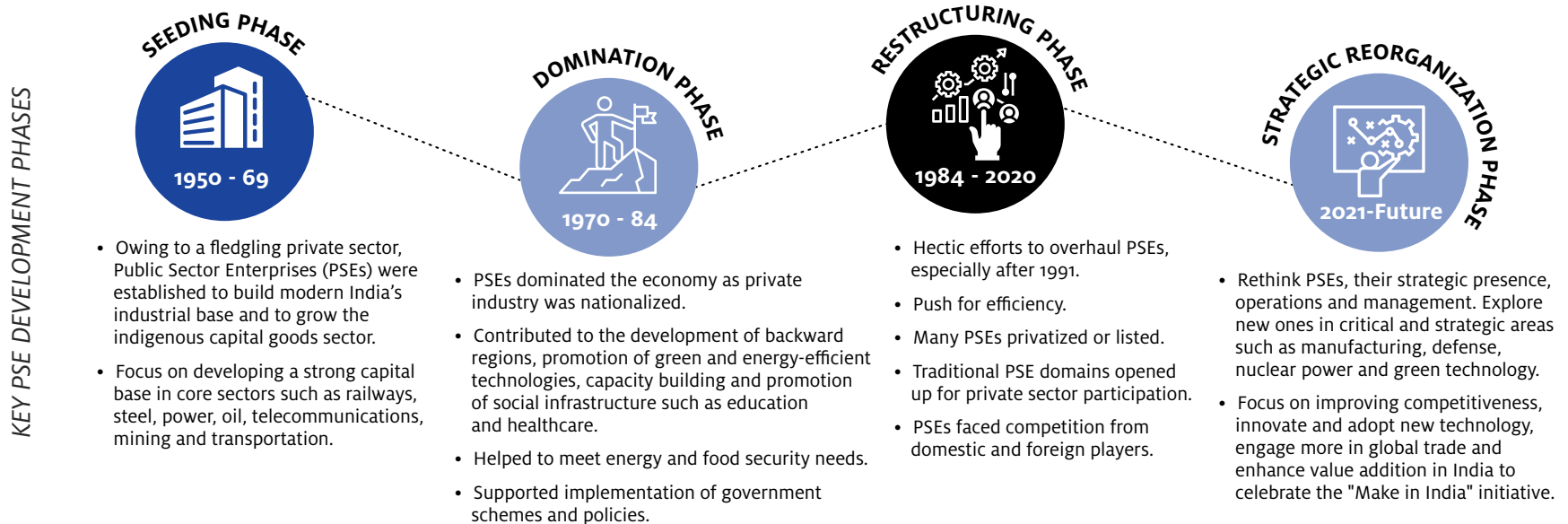


INTRODUCTION

“ Leaders should lead the team from the front and should set an example by working with dedication, honesty, sincerity and the ability to take team along with them. ”

EVOLUTION OF PUBLIC SECTOR ENTERPRISES (PSEs)

Backbone of the Indian Economy...



Source: "What India can learn from Singapore & China's successful PSU model," Malini Goyal, *The Economic Times*, 8 June 2014.

PSEs were set up post-independence to quickly build the country's industrial back bone. Key considerations for the setting up of PSEs were to accelerate the growth of core sectors of the economy, to serve the equipment needs of strategically important sectors and to generate employment and income. A large number of "sick units" were taken over from the private sector, and several banks were nationalized between 1969 and 1980. This government-led industrial policy, with corresponding restrictions on private enterprise, was the dominant pattern of Indian economic development until the economic crisis of 1991. Thereafter, the government began dis-investing its ownership in several PSEs in order to raise capital and privatise companies with poor

financial status. All along, PSEs have been the key vehicles for driving key economic and social objectives for the development of the country.

While PSEs have contributed significantly to the nation's economy since independence, generating profit and social benefit, the new era of PSEs must see them play a more strategic role and adapt to emerging challenges. According to the current government, "Incentives," "Imagination" and "Institution Building" are the three keys to success.

The government has set five objectives PSEs must work to fulfill: maximize their geo-strategic reach; minimize import bill; integrate innovation and research; optimally utilize CSR funds; and define a new development model for the country.

The Honorable Prime Minister has exhorted PSEs to help in shaping a "New India", through changes in technology and processes and to embrace the 5-P formula – Performance, Process, Persona, Procurement and Preparation.

While PSEs of the future must modernize, compete in a free market, link with similar organizations in other countries and develop a comprehensive strategy for overseas investment, they must also continue to earn profit and focus on social benefit generation.

Source: CCL Research 2021.

PSE CONTEXT: THEN AND NOW

A Different Era...

When PSEs were set up post-independence, in addition to creating an infrastructure backbone and generating income, there was a very strong social agenda around job creation, driving development across various parts of the country and creating a diverse workforce. Being the only engines of growth, there was very little competition such organizations faced from local and global private companies. These were also the employers of choice, and it was aspirational for youth to work for a PSE.

While social responsibility does indeed remain one of the objectives in the current times, context around such organizations has considerably shifted. Large local companies are active in the Indian market, competing with traditional PSE behemoths. The opening up of the Indian economy has also cleared the path for large global multi-national companies to compete for local and global business. “The business scenario is very dynamic and competitive, and product profiles are rapidly changing,” commented a C-suite leader. He added: “There was earlier a huge government support, but that has gradually shrunk, while expectations of stakeholders continue to

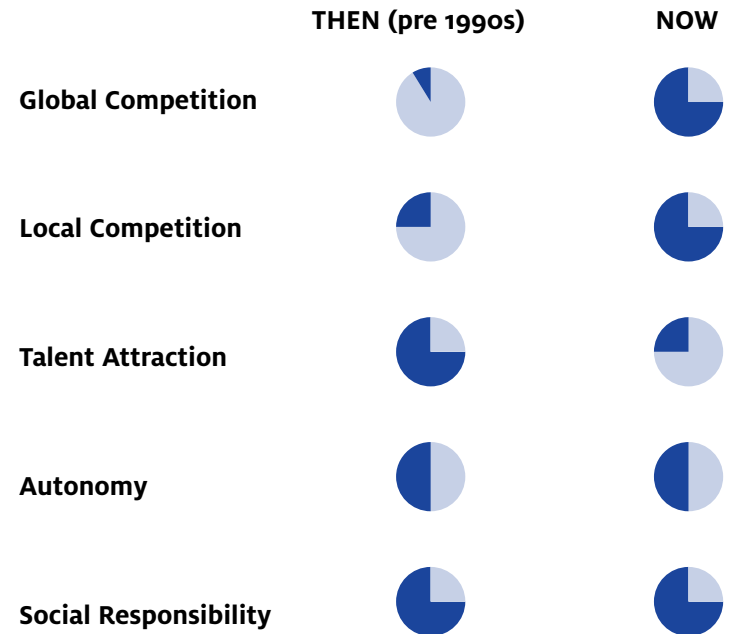
rise day by day.” Interviewee leaders shared that PSE officers must navigate policies and productivity constraints to serve the 3-Ps: planet, profit and people.

Talent attractiveness of PSEs has also largely diminished in the last few decades. While earlier, PSE jobs were aspirational, now these organizations have to compete with local private companies that can provide compelling career paths, large multi-national companies that can offer challenging global job profiles and even start-ups that often provide a very dynamic work environment. “When I graduated from college, public sector jobs were a dream for best performers,” reminisced a retired CEO of a large PSE. “All graduating students from IITs or other top educational institutes aspired for a PSE job. That has changed now; the younger lot wants to join MNCs and private sector,” he added.

These changing dynamics, both externally on business front and talent attractiveness, and internally in terms of ownership, processes and constraints, have put PSE leaders in a tight spot. PSE leaders need to show results just like a private sector employee, while operating amidst many constraints and policy guardrails.

Source: CCL Research 2021.

PSE CONTEXT CHANGE IN THE PAST 70 YEARS



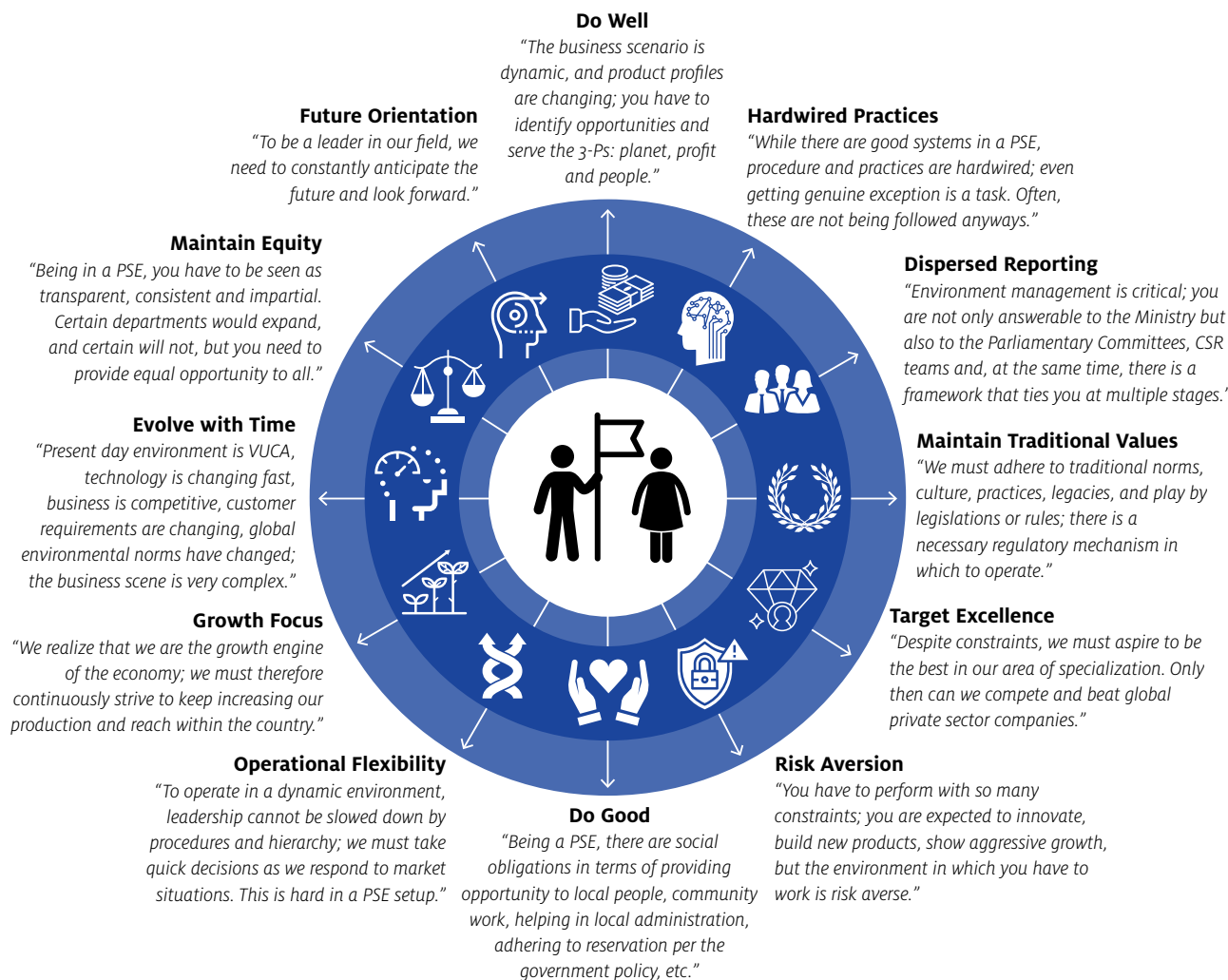
*Completeness of the circle indicates the extent of prevalence of the attribute.

“ After 1991, things have changed, mainly on competitiveness. A PSE leader is expected to live the values of service to the society, give results as in an MNC, follow the rules framed by the government and yet operate with rather limited autonomy. ”

DILEMMAS PSE LEADERS FACE

Life of Choices and Constraints...

PSE LEADER DILEMMA WHEEL



The changing context surrounding PSEs has put leaders in a tight spot. They need to constantly navigate dilemmas and walk a tight rope as they deliver their responsibilities. There are six paradoxes or dilemmas interviewee leaders shared.

One, PSE leaders are expected to lead a business that does well in financial aspects, as well as does good for the society. "While the social responsibility still forms a key element of any PSE's operation, there is a constant expectation of stakeholders to successfully compete and win in the commercial market," shared a leader.

Two, competing and winning in competitive market needs quick and nimble decision-making and operational and managerial flexibility. PSE leaders must balance these with hardwired practices typical of a large organization. "From a compliance standpoint, we need to be careful around what we are allowed and not allowed to do," commented an interviewee.

Three, while there is a push to focus on growth and to not get distracted by day-to-day internal happenings, it is also a reality that PSE leaders need to deal with multiple stakeholders. These could be local administration, Ministries, Parliamentary Committees, state governments, etc. It is a hard task to maintain unwavering focus, while being accountable to multiple stakeholders.

Four, while PSEs are expected to evolve with time in terms of policies, practices, technology, organizational structures, career pathing, etc., they also need to maintain traditional values of doing good for the society and a culture that may not promote the celebration of individual success.

Five, while the culture does not have a lot of room to reward high-potential talents or top performers in material terms, PSE leaders are expected to drive excellence in various aspects. Leaders therefore must create a tough balance of engagement and motivation resulting in excellence, while not having much flexibility to reward performance.

Six, while the future-fluent nation builders must anticipate, look into the future and be agile in terms of business direction, they must do this in an environment of risk aversion. "We like to maintain status quo," shared a leader. "We do what we have done in the past, rather than thinking about what needs to be done for the future," he added.

These six dilemmas create several challenges for future-fluent nation builders as they pursue excellence and aspire to take their organizations to a much higher elevation in the future.

CHALLENGES LEADERS FACE

Many Stakeholders and a Unique Context...

The paradoxes leaders must navigate as they are tasked with the onerous job of making their organizations future-ready, often result in multiple challenges.

Internally, there are challenges leaders face around people, policy, process and practice. On the people front, lack of a high-pressure performance culture often may result in employees being complacent and not pushing themselves, underperformance and a fixed mindset tuned away from growth and excellence.

On the policy front, the focus is on ensuring an equitable environment; therefore it is hard to incentivize top performers, which results in lack of performance pressure, and it may dissuade the best candidates in the talent market to join such organizations.

On the process front, time-bound promotions and slow decision-making processes may disengage high potentials especially when it involves multiple stakeholders, or such decisions may impact different departments that operate in silos. Also, several interviewees pointed that CMD tenures are just 2-4 years and, therefore, it is hard for the top executive to make any meaningful longterm directional shifts.

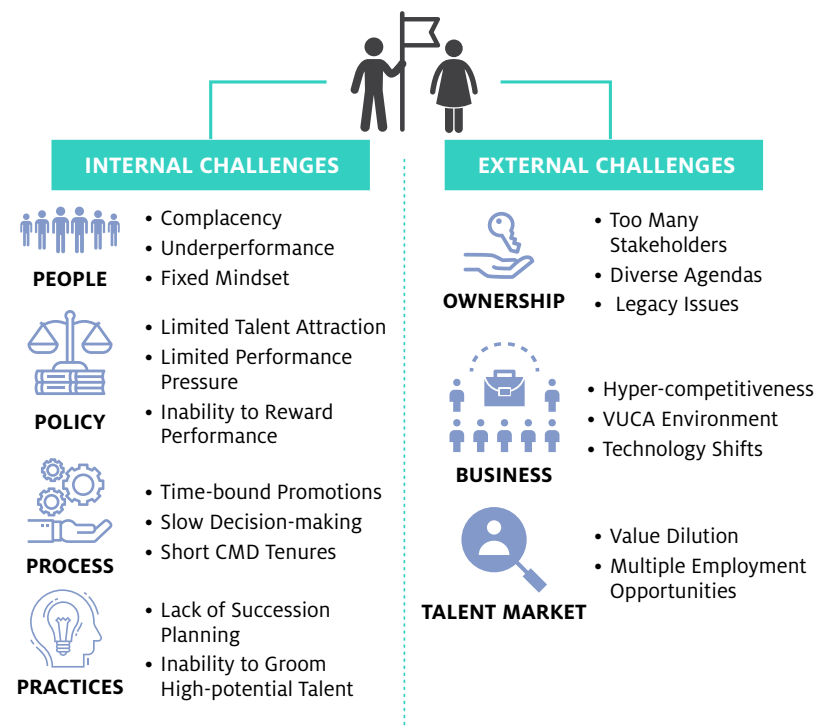
On the practices front, there is often a lack of succession planning. This may stem from people, process and policies at play around talent development. Lack of succession coupled with inability to groom high potential leaders, often may result in talent challenges in PSEs.

Externally, PSEs may face challenges related to ownership, business context and talent market shifts. Too many stakeholders, often with divergent agendas and legacy issues due to the inability to effectively implement headcount reduction, result in operational challenges for leaders.

The business context that is very dynamic, competitive, technology-driven, complex and ambiguous is hard to navigate.

Finally, a lack of compelling career paths has diminished the value attached to PSE jobs; therefore, attracting top talent is a challenge.

KEY CHALLENGES



"We have to work through rigid hierarchy and obsolete growth models. Even top performers have to pass through each stage of promotion and career growth; promotion tenures and pay hikes are the same for everyone."

"What made us stay is the value we attached to serving in a PSE, serving the nation, doing good for the society. We felt that whatever we were doing was a direct contribution to the society. That perspective does not exist anymore."

Schedule B PSEs: A Different Ballgame!

“Being a leader in ‘Schedule B’ PSE, the challenges are different; we do not have a team of professionals who can support us in various inputs and decision-making steps. In simple terms, I can say that a CMD of a Schedule B company is like an owner of an SME; he or she needs to know about everything in the company, almost a 360 degree understanding of HR, finance, operations, marketing.”

NATION BUILDER LEADERSHIP MODEL

Values, Mindsets, Skill Sets and Experiences...

With changing external and internal context, leaders must navigate multiple dilemmas, and a score of challenges means that future-fluent nation builders will need a defined set of experiences under their belt. They will also need specific skills to lead their teams, businesses and organizations into the future. Mindsets that are aligned with PSE growth must precede any skills development and experiences. And, finally, a successful PSE leader must be driven and energized by a different set of values.

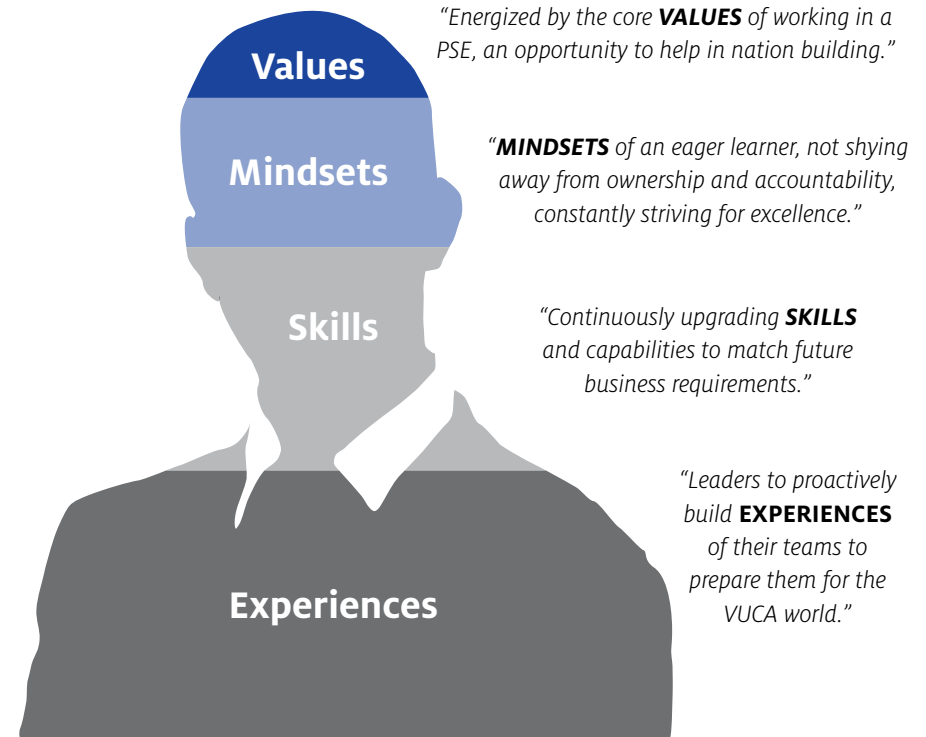
Leaders who work with PSEs often possess values around nation building; have a mindset of learning and talent development; have skills around developing self, teams, business and organizations; and are able to get appropriate cross-functional and digital experiences under their belt. Such leaders have the best chance of not only creating a successful career, but also leading their organization into the future.

The subsequent sections of the report build on each of these aspects – values, mindsets, skills and experiences. The report also highlights key learnings from the experiences of leaders who have had a successful career in PSEs, as well as advice for next-generation leaders.

Finally, the report highlights a model that PSEs may want to consider as they develop a strong pipeline of talent. Talent that can not only be successful in the short term, but also lead their enterprises into the future.

“A future-ready leader who can take PSEs forward needs to be driven by nation-building opportunity, must demonstrate right behaviors, and continuously upgrade his or her skills and knowledge.”

FUTURE-FLUENT NATION BUILDER LEADERSHIP MODEL





VALUES, MINDSETS & BEHAVIORS

“ Break the blinders, so that people can see themselves for who they are and recognize their true capabilities, limitations and strengths. People need to embrace and push for change, rather than ignoring it and waiting for it to come and hit them in the face. ”

“I found immediate value alignment, which gave self-enthusiasm, self-respect and self-motivation. I had a feeling that I have joined a good job and that whatever I do is towards serving the nation, doing good for the society and taking my country forward.”

THE HEART OF GOLD

Value System is at the Core of a Successful PSE Leader...

Leaders who do well in a PSE setup often have different DNA! They are driven by a different set of values. Existing research suggests that successful PSE leaders attribute greater value to work that benefits others and the society, want to be involved in important public policies, believe in self-sacrifice and thrive with greater responsibility and integrity. Such leaders often value their work and the social status of the job more than do employees in the private sector.

Several interviewees talked about how their postings across the country made them appreciate the impact that their jobs were having in underdeveloped parts of India. They also shared that such postings made them appreciate the cultural diversity in the country and the ways in which their organization was helping create jobs for the underprivileged segments of the society.

Some leaders equated their job at a PSE to a career in the armed forces. "My job is akin to working in the armed forces; while we are not defending the borders, we are helping build the nation from within," proudly shared a leader.

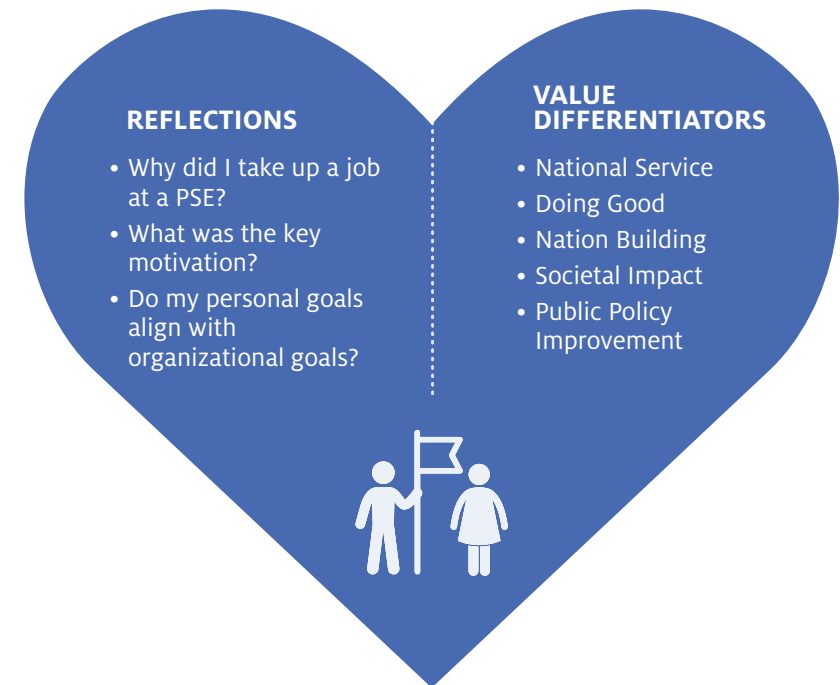
Some other leaders also pointed out that they felt that their job helped them influence public policy.

Most leaders encouraged next-generation youth and talent not only to introspect and reflect on what drives them, their aspirations and their motivations, but also to consider a role in PSEs only if national service is one of the values close to their heart. Interviewees, however, clarified that embracing the value of national service is not at the expense of (lower) compensation. They clarified that compensation, at least uptill the mid- to senior-level, especially in a "Navratna" PSE, is very competitive.

Future-fluent nation builders therefore must be driven by values of doing good for the community and having a much larger societal impact.

Source: CCL Research 2021.

VALUE DIFFERENTIATES NATION BUILDERS



Find Your Purpose

- Know what motivates you.
- Analyze your personal goals and find a company that supports them.
- Discover ways you can help make your company better.
- Assign personal performance metrics that really matter to you.
- Mentor, coach and help others.



MUST-HAVE MINDSETS

Magic 6!

Mindset shifts almost always precede skill-set development and experiences PSE leaders must get under their belt. Research suggests that, in order to have a long and successful career within a PSE, leaders must have six key mindsets. A future-ready nation builder must have the mindset of a "motivated missionary," "righteous manager," "courageous deputy," "curious child," "obsessive innovator" and "passionate people leader."

At the heart of being an impactful PSE leader is the drive to participate in national service. One of the interviewee C-suite leaders compared his PSE job with a stint in the armed forces. "Both careers need selfless service," he said. The common theme running among most interviewee leaders was their urge to fulfill a bigger purpose in life: "making a difference," "helping community," "influencing policy" or "doing good."

One leader, an ex-CEO of a multi-billion-dollar PSE, advised: "Always be fair to people; if not, then credibility is at risk." He shared that, when he took over as a CMD, the PSE was running into losses; rather than keeping silent and giving an impression that all was good,

Leaders must also always do the "right thing" and be seen as transparent and non-biased.

he went against the advice of his leadership team and sent a note to all staff across the country highlighting the true financial situation of the organization. "While I told them that we were in the red, I also gave them a message of hope that no problem is unsurmountable." "Since I was transparent, the entire organization stood by me, and we turned around the company in 3 years," he added.

"Have the conviction to speak your mind out," advised another leader. He added that, while being courageous and conveying your opinion may not make a leader popular, he/she will be respected in the longterm. One leader related how she took a chance on being courageous and giving direct feedback to the chairperson of her company. "In my fourth month in the organization, when I was picked up as one of the five trainees to have a

formal dinner with the chairman, I politely told him that the company was overpaying me to do a mundane job that anyone could do." While, at that point she thought she had committed a blunder, the feedback ultimately helped her get reassigned to another department in a role much more suited to her skill level. Another leader, who was invited by the CMD to join his team,

pushed back, saying that he was going through some personal crisis and it was perhaps not the best time for him to be in a very demanding role." "The CMD, my ex-boss, appreciated my directness and, while at that point he urged me to join his team at least for a year, over the longer term, it strengthened his trust in me." Another leader, narrated how, as a part of the delegation negotiating a contract in the Middle East, she was asked to leave the negotiating room by the potential partner due to her gender. "I stood my ground, and politely yet directly shared that I will leave only when the head of the delegation [her department head in India] allows her to leave."

Just like a curious child, leaders must also always be willing to learn new skills and take on newer responsibilities. "When you are posted to a different part of the country, do not complain, but rather take that opportunity to embrace new experiences, learn a new language, experience different parts of the country, and enjoy different cuisines," an interviewee commented.

"Due to rigid policies, solutions may not always be direct, but if you have a creative innovator's orientation, all problems have a solution."

Finally, leaders must have a people-first mindset. "A leader must ensure engagement and involvement of employees, and create ownership among them," commented a leader. He added: "My philosophy is that indifference by employees in any organization is a slow poison; an able leader must convert indifference to involvement."

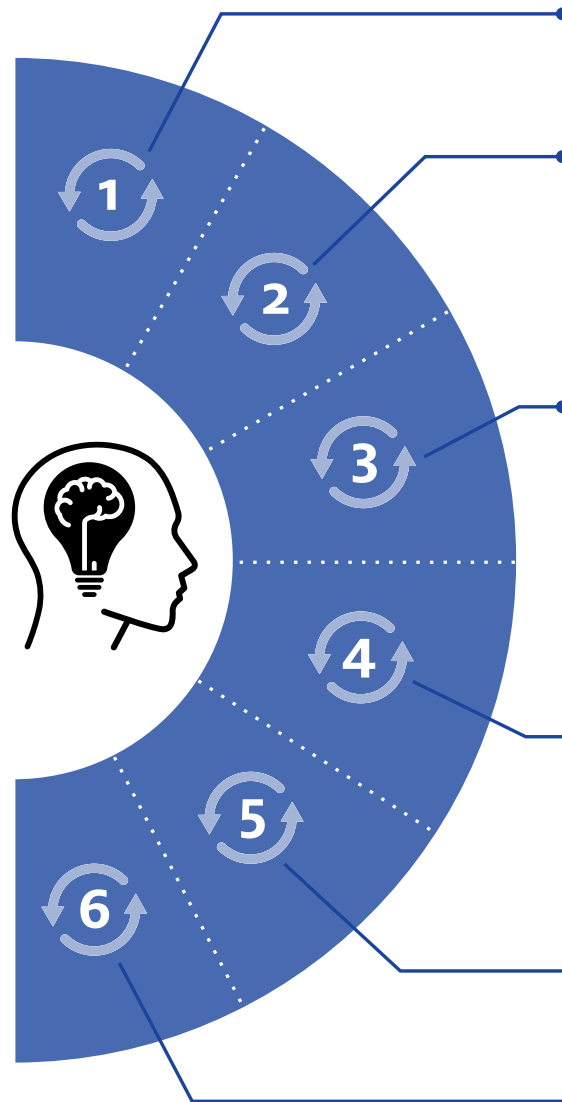
While a PSE role may come with a lot of constraints, an innovators' mindset can help leaders have a solution orientation.

Source: CCL Research 2021.





SIX MUST-HAVE MINDSETS



MOTIVATED MISSIONARY

"I relate my journey in the PSE to Army experience; it is a missionary approach. Everybody needs to think about the growth story of India. My journey started at a remote village in the North East of India, where I learned how to lead community activities, stakeholder development and relationship management."

RIGHTEOUS MANAGER

"As a leader, you are being watched all the time by your peers, your teams, your bosses. You can take decisions that are popular, or stand for decisions that are unbiased, transparent, honest. If you do the latter, you may not be liked by all, but you will never repent! Acting with integrity is a must in PSE."

COURAGEOUS DEPUTY

"Whenever you are in discussion with your bosses or your colleagues, convey your opinions frankly and openly without any fear or stakeholder pressure, because bosses are not always right! But, once a decision is taken, whether you like or not, follow that blindly."

CURIOUS CHILD

"Being open to learning is important. The moment you close yourself to learning, you are dead wood! Many times, leaders may feel that new things they are learning will not help in their careers, but it always does, directly or indirectly."

OBSESSIVE INNOVATOR

"In my career, I have had to think out of the box on multiple occasions to deal with guardrails set by PSE policies and frameworks, and yet bring new thinking, new ways of executing work, innovative project structuring, etc. Leaders need to be obsessive in their drive to innovate within a PSE setup."

PASSIONATE PEOPLE LEADER

"Leaders who do well have a team orientation and are passionate about getting the best out of their people, developing them, coaching them, inspiring and motivating them, taking pride in their teams' excellence."

Source: CCL Research 2021.

MINDSET SHAPES BEHAVIORS

Leaders Must Be Good People Managers...

Mindsets drive appropriate behaviors in leaders. Leadership behaviors around team and talent development are the biggest gap areas in PSE employees. The top three gap areas are "inspiring co-workers," "acting without biases" and "rewarding performance."

One leader described the reason that he joined the PSE organization when he had several job offers at hand after earning his engineering degree. "When I got the job offer, I went to see some of my college seniors, who were young officers in the organization, to get their advice. While I was waiting to meet my seniors, I saw the executive director (ED) come to the room and have an open discussion about the future of the company," he shared. He added: "I liked the involvement and ownership that people had, and how the ED was involving even the junior-most officer in thinking about the future, and therefore getting his ownership, commitment and buy-in in creating a bright future for the company." "At that point I decided I wanted to work there," he said.

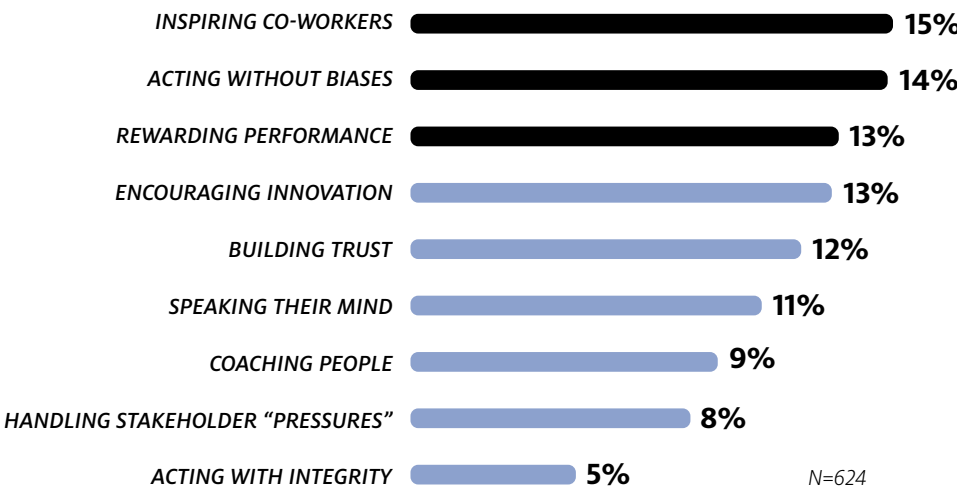
"Pats on shoulders can do things that regulations and rewards cannot," shared a leader. "You want ownership of people, a touching hand, and a pat on their back can do the magic." The leader shared that he used to address the entire plant employee population, often thousands of people, in open grounds, and subsequently used to get down from the podium to shake hands with everybody who was around. "That really connected me with my people, and I got instant commitment and ownership of those employees," he shared.

Team building, rewarding performance and taking people along are critical in any organization. While material rewards are hard to engineer within typical PSE policies and processes, there are other ways to encourage a leader.

Another leader narrated how, after a largescale exodus of highly trained employees in the organization as a result of restructuring, she had to work towards winning employee trust

back. "We were a monopoly; but, when the Indian economy opened up in 1991, we lost several hundred highly-skilled employees to private competitors as they were getting a compensation ten times what the PSE was paying them," she explained. "I had to go to the government and engineer a performance-linked incentive plan for the talent so that they could earn an equivalent amount within the PSE," she added. "It wasn't easy, but I had to do that to win their [employees'] trust back."

LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS THAT ARE THE BIGGEST GAP AREAS



BIGGEST GAP AREAS BY LEADER LEVEL (Respondents)

	Mid-level Leaders	Senior-level Leaders	Executive-level Leaders
I.	ACTING WITHOUT BIASES	INSPIRING CO-WORKERS	INSPIRING CO-WORKERS
II.	REWARDING PERFORMANCE	ACTING WITHOUT BIASES	ACTING WITHOUT BIASES
III.	INSPIRING CO-WORKERS	ENCOURAGING INNOVATION	ENCOURAGING INNOVATION
IV.	ENCOURAGING INNOVATION	REWARDING PERFORMANCE	REWARDING PERFORMANCE
V.	BUILDING TRUST	BUILDING TRUST	COACHING PEOPLE

N=624

A close-up photograph of a woman with dark hair and brown eyes, looking upwards and to the right with a thoughtful expression. The image is partially obscured by a teal triangle in the top right and a dark blue triangle in the bottom right.

MUST-HAVE CAPABILITIES

“ Leaders need coaching on how to think big at macro-level, technology adoption/upgrades at a faster pace, communication with all stakeholders, a strong and committed outlook, inquisitiveness to learn like a child. ”

KEY LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Multi-level Capabilities

As future-fluent nation builders, PSE leaders who will take their organizations into the future must demonstrate leadership at multiple levels – leading self, leading teams, leading business and leading the future.

PSE leaders must appreciate that, in today's volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) environment, becoming a top leader is much more than becoming an efficient manager or a better strategic thinker. Interviewees highlighted that, despite PSEs having good talent, only a few individuals reach their full potential—not because they lack technical capabilities, but due to lack of self-discovery, introspective thinking and investment in self-growth to develop themselves.

Leading teams is about how PSE leaders manage team dynamics to get the best from their people. Not by wielding a stick, but by motivating them, engaging them, developing them, coaching them and giving them a sense of ownership in taking their organization to the next level.

Leading business theme centers on how leaders strategically manage other components of the organizations such as department silos, teams, customers, partners, stakeholders, systems and processes. The objective for a successful PSE leader is to manage or navigate change and shape the organization to be more agile, while operating within the constraints of a typical PSE setup. Leaders must be able to build trust and confidence within their teams, as well as deal with change, associated anxiety and, at times, confusion.

Leading the future is about the capabilities that will enable PSE leaders to anticipate the future, innovate, be agile and make the organization successful in the future.

“In my career, other than people skills, I have always focused on hard work, passion and learning ability. These have always helped me through my career, from a graduate trainee to now a CMD.”

SKILLS PORTFOLIO OF A FUTURE-FLUENT NATION BUILDER



Increase personal effectiveness and performance.



Motivate people to get work done and deal effectively with team dynamics.



Anticipate the future, and prepare the organization for longterm success.



Transcend organizational silos, drive collaboration and manage change.

KEY LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Leading Self, Team, Business, Future

CAPABILITY SET FOR PSE LEADERS



- Self-awareness
- Courage
- Decisiveness
- Sound Judgement
- Taking Initiative



- Trust/Credibility
- Influence
- Empathy
- Communication
- Developing Talent
- Leading Teams



- Agility
- Resilience
- Ability to Learn
- Digital Savviness
- Longterm View
- Strategic Perspective
- Anticipation



- Collaboration
- Conflict Management
- Building Effective Relationships
- Multi-dimensional Sense-making
- Innovation
- Change Management
- Engaging with Stakeholders

Self-awareness: Has an accurate picture of strengths and weaknesses and is willing to improve.

Agility: Has the ability to renew, adapt, change quickly and succeed in a rapidly changing, ambiguous and turbulent environment.

Resilience: Has the capacity to recover under adversity.

Trust/credibility: Acts in accordance with stated values; follows through on promises; and uses ethical considerations to guide decisions and actions.

Ability to learn: Adopts attitudes and habits to become a continual learner; seeks out experiences that may change perspective or provide an opportunity to learn new things.

Courage: Ability to take appropriate action steps, even in the face of adversity and pressures.

Digital savviness: Has the ability to use technology and knowing when and how to align processes to create a compelling digital solution

Influence: Good at inspiring and promoting a vision; able to persuade and motivate others; skilled at influencing superiors; and delegates effectively.

Empathy: Shows genuine interest in others and sensitivity to employee needs.

Decisiveness: Prefers doing or acting over thinking about the situation.

Collaboration: Builds productive working relationships with co-workers and external parties.

Communication: Effectively communicates organization goals and is able to inspire through presentation of information.

Developing talent: Sizes up people well; tolerant of idiosyncrasies and patient with others; good counselor and mentor; brings out the best in people; and offers others appropriately challenging assignments and the opportunity to grow.

Leading teams/employees: Attracts and motivates employees and role-models appropriate behaviors.

Conflict management: Negotiates adeptly with individuals and groups and effectively manages conflict and confrontations skillfully.

Building effective relationships: Builds and maintains strong relationships with key contacts within and outside of the organization.

Multi-dimensional sense-making: Has the ability to see the same problem from different dimensions.

Change management: Uses effective strategies to facilitate organizational change initiatives and overcome resistance to change.

Sound judgement: Makes timely decisions; readily understands complex issues; and develops solutions that effectively address problems.

Longterm view: Develops long-term objectives and strategies, with an ability to translate vision into realistic business strategies.

Innovation: Seizes new opportunities and consistently generates new ideas; introduces and creates needed change; and acts as a visionary.

Strategic perspective: Understands the viewpoint of higher management and effectively analyzes complex problems; understands the perspectives of different functional areas in the organization; and has a firm grasp of external conditions affecting the organization.

Anticipation: Ability to understand and make sense of upcoming external changes in relation to internal capabilities and drivers.

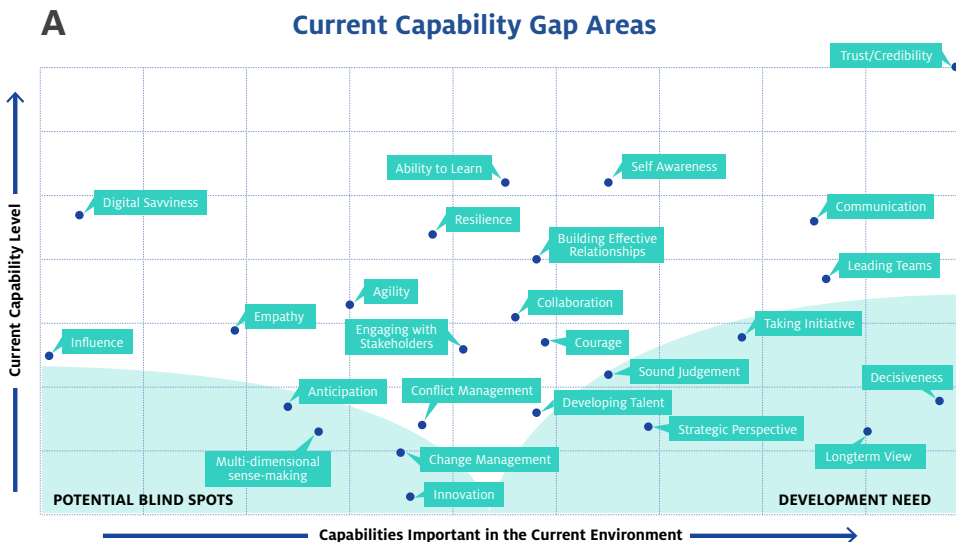
Engaging with stakeholders: Uses informal and formal communications continually to influence stakeholder opinions and priorities.

Taking initiative: Takes charge and capitalizes on opportunities.

CURRENT & FUTURE SKILLS GAPS

Development Needs and Potential Blind Spots

DEVELOPMENT AREAS AND POTENTIAL BLIND SPOTS



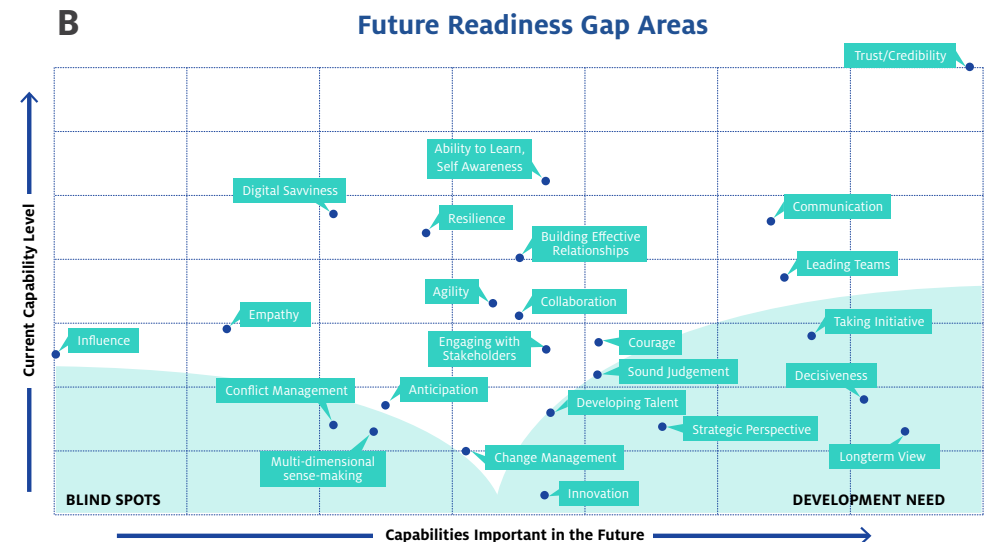
N=732 (Capabilities Important in the Current Environment); 676 (Current Capability Level)

“Be a credible activist; whatever you promise, before you promise, you evaluate; and, once you promise, you follow through. It helps build a trust account.”

There are several skill gaps future-fluent nation builders must plug if they want to succeed in the current environment and make their organizations successful in the future.

The two graphics (A and B) indicate capability gap areas that PSE leaders have today and gaps they will have in the future. The top-left of each chart indicates capabilities that PSE leaders may be over-investing in; the top-right indicates capabilities of which they have credible mastery and do not need to worry; the bottom-right indicates capabilities that are key development needs; and the bottom-left indicates potential blind spots, or capabilities that may be critical but are not even on the radar of PSE leaders.

Chart A is a plot between capabilities that are must-have in the current environment and the existing skills/capability level in the PSEs. In a way, it highlights the capability level of PSE leaders and where they should be today.



N=636 (Capabilities Important in the Future); 676 (Current Capability Level)

“With the changing times, a continuous up-skilling, especially in terms of digitization of work done conventionally, holistic outlook of issues, empathy, team building, resource management, should be nurtured.”

Chart B highlights current capabilities versus capabilities that will be critical in the future. Or, where PSE leaders are in terms of those capabilities, and where they will need to be in the future to make their respective organizations successful.

Capabilities such as longterm view, decisiveness, taking initiative, strategic perspective, etc., at the bottom-right of the charts indicates a gap area today and in the future. Capabilities at the bottom-left of the charts, such as anticipation and multi-dimensional sense-making, may be blind-spot skills that PSE leaders need, but perhaps do not realize.

Capabilities that show a horizontal movement in Chart B (as compared to Chart A) are the ones that may be more important (movement towards right; e.g., innovation, digital savviness), or less important (movement towards left; e.g., conflict management) in the future.

PSE LEADER SKILL GAPS

By Leader Level...

Trust/credibility, ability to learn and self-awareness appear as top three skills PSE leaders have today, irrespective of the levels. While "engaging with stakeholders" is a critical capability for mid-level leaders, it does not show up in the top ten for the senior-level and executive-level leaders. At the senior executive level, "collaboration" is a critical skill.

With regards to must-have capabilities today, while trust and decisiveness are the top two, courage shows up for mid-level leaders, while for senior and executive-level leaders, it is missing from the top ten. Perhaps, as leaders progress in their careers, only those with courage reach senior or executive-level positions, hence it is a given at those level.

Research data suggests that, while trust and longterm view are top-of-the-list skills for future success for mid- and senior-level leaders, at the executive-level, "taking initiative" is at the top of the list.

While the list indicates only top ten skills for different leader levels, there are some skills at the bottom of the list that may be "blind spots" for leaders. These are as critical since leaders may not even realize the importance of these skills, and hence not develop them due to short-term or myopic thinking.



**WHERE
WE ARE!**

CURRENT SKILL SITUATION BY LEADER LEVEL (Respondents)

	Mid-Level Leaders	Senior-Level Leaders	Executive-Level Leaders
I.	TRUST/CREDIBILITY	TRUST/CREDIBILITY	TRUST/CREDIBILITY
II.	ABILITY TO LEARN	SELF-AWARENESS	ABILITY TO LEARN
III.	DIGITAL SAVVINESS	COMMUNICATION	SELF-AWARENESS
IV.	RESILIENCE	ABILITY TO LEARN	LEADING TEAMS/EMPLOYEES
V.	SELF-AWARENESS	RESILIENCE	COMMUNICATION
VI.	BUILDING EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS	DIGITAL SAVVINESS	BUILDING EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS
VII.	COMMUNICATION	BUILDING EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS	DIGITAL SAVVINESS
VIII.	AGILITY	LEADING TEAMS/EMPLOYEES	RESILIENCE
IX.	EMPATHY	AGILITY	EMPATHY
X.	ENGAGING WITH STAKEHOLDERS	COLLABORATION	COLLABORATION

N=676



**WHERE
WE NEED
TO BE
TODAY!**

TOP MUST-HAVE CAPABILITIES FOR SUCCESS TODAY BY LEADER LEVEL (Respondents)

	Mid-Level Leaders	Senior-Level Leaders	Executive-Level Leaders
I.	TRUST/CREDIBILITY	TRUST/CREDIBILITY	TRUST/CREDIBILITY
II.	DECISIVENESS	DECISIVENESS	DECISIVENESS
III.	LONGTERM VIEW	LEADING TEAMS/EMPLOYEES	LONGTERM VIEW
IV.	COMMUNICATION	LONGTERM VIEW	TAKING INITIATIVE
V.	LEADING TEAMS/EMPLOYEES	COMMUNICATION	LEADING TEAMS/EMPLOYEES
VI.	TAKING INITIATIVE	TAKING INITIATIVE	COMMUNICATION
VII.	SOUND JUDGEMENT	STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE	SELF-AWARENESS
VIII.	STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE	SELF-AWARENESS	STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE
IX.	SELF-AWARENESS	SOUND JUDGEMENT	SOUND JUDGEMENT
X.	COURAGE	DEVELOPING TALENT	ABILITY TO LEARN

N=732



**WHERE
WE NEED
TO BE
IN THE
FUTURE!**

TOP MUST-HAVE CAPABILITIES FOR FUTURE SUCCESS BY LEADER LEVEL (Respondents)

	Mid-Level Leaders	Senior-Level Leaders	Executive-Level Leaders
I.	TRUST/CREDIBILITY	TRUST/CREDIBILITY	TAKING INITIATIVE
II.	LONGTERM VIEW	LONGTERM VIEW	DECISIVENESS
III.	DECISIVENESS	DECISIVENESS	LEADING TEAMS/EMPLOYEES
IV.	LEADING TEAMS/EMPLOYEES	TAKING INITIATIVE	LONGTERM VIEW
V.	TAKING INITIATIVE	COMMUNICATION	COMMUNICATION
VI.	COMMUNICATION	LEADING TEAMS/EMPLOYEES	TRUST/CREDIBILITY
VII.	STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE	STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE	STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE
VIII.	SELF-AWARENESS	DEVELOPING TALENT	SOUND JUDGEMENT
IX.	COURAGE	SOUND JUDGEMENT	COURAGE
X.	SOUND JUDGEMENT	ENGAGING WITH STAKEHOLDERS	COLLABORATION

N=636

MUST-HAVE SKILLS

Magic 10 to Focus on from a Development Standpoint

Based on the data and inputs from C-suite leaders, the top-ten must-have capabilities future-fluent nation builders must have include decisiveness, sound judgment and taking initiative at the self-leadership level. Several successful leaders took initiatives to guide their careers in the direction they desired. “If you do not manage your career, someone else will, and that’s never a good development,” highlighted a leader. Another leader shared how he navigated his career and made “non-obvious” career moves to emerge as a leader with well-rounded experience. “The turning point for my career was when I joined a multi-cadre setup, and moved from one department to another, and this helped in my career progression,” shared another leader. “I was in the engineering cadre, but then the work profile was same for many years, so I moved on a ex-cadre basis to another department which gave me opportunity to grow, and confidence to interact with other people within the organization; from engineering, I came to general administration and management,” he elaborated.

Developing talent is the one skill that unanimously emerged as a key gap on the team front. “In a PSE, there is a continuity,

and people stay in the same organization for long tenures, so we need leaders who can develop talent and lead them in the new direction,” elaborated a leader. “Leaders touch many lives around them, and they can have a phenomenal impact on young talent,” he added.

As leaders develop their business, they must focus on innovation, managing change and multi-dimensional sense-making. “We are so absorbed with technical and functional skills through our careers that we often find it very difficult when we have to balance multiple priorities and evaluate multiple angles of the problem; that capability is a must-have at the top, and is missing,” said a leader.

Finally, in order to prepare the organization for the future, leaders must develop a long-term view, have a strategic perspective and be able to anticipate the future. “What will the future look like, how will geopolitics change and impact my business, how is digital transformation changing business, what kind of organization structures will be prevalent in the future; we should be constantly anticipating these elements and must tweak our approach accordingly,” shared a senior leader.

CRITICAL GAP CAPABILITIES FOR NATION BUILDERS



- Decisiveness
- Sound Judgement
- Taking Initiative



- Developing Talent



- Longterm View
- Strategic Perspective
- Anticipation*



- Multi-dimensional sense-making*
- Innovation
- Change Management*

*Potential Blind Spots.



LESSONS OF EXPERIENCE

“Coaching, mentoring and leading in adverse conditions are the three most important elements that must be included in any leadership development journey.”

EVOLUTION OF EXPERIENCES

Key Leader Experiences

Learning from experience is the best way to develop talent. Yet most organizations aren't maximizing on-the-job opportunities that prepare leaders, develop employees and advance business goals. The key is to make experience-driven leadership development intentional.

HR leaders understand this and often follow the 70-20-10 approach towards development, based on a CCL research, which reflects the relative impact of 3 types of experiences on executive development:

- 70% of learning comes from on-the-job experiences and challenges.
- 20% of learning comes from other people.
- 10% of learning comes from courses and formal training.

The "70%" reflects the primary way development happens: through on-the-job experiences and challenges. But most organizations aren't maximizing on-the-job opportunities that prepare leaders, develop employees and advance business goals.

PSEs must make experience-led development an integral part of their culture. Experience-driven talent development is when experience — carefully designed and executed — becomes the core driver of learning in the organization. Working and learning are bound together, aligned with business strategy and shaped by talent strategy. When this kind of development is part of the organizational culture and embedded in talent management, the demonstrated culture includes senior leaders supporting stretch assignments, valued employees being routinely shared with other parts of the organization and development opportunities being considered when making decisions about how to staff key projects.

PSEs also must embed experience-driven development into their talent management efforts. Learning and development are often walled-off from, or only loosely tied to, the larger talent management system. But experience should be at the center of it all.

EXPERIENCES ALL LEADERS MUST HAVE

Personal Experience

You have emotion-laden memories of times in your life when you formed values, sorted out your approach to challenge or set out on a different direction.

Crisis

You experienced an unexpected, shocking event.

Difficult People

You worked with a boss, subordinates or peers who provoked conflict.

Feedback and Coaching

You have had job-related, formal or informal conversations concerning specific situations.

Career Setback

You experienced an unforeseen and unwanted block to your career progression.

Turnaround/Fix-it

You fixed or stabilized a failing or underperforming business unit or organization.

Stakeholder Engagement

You experienced high-level interactions, typically with people outside of your organization that called for reconciling competing points of view.



Bosses and Superiors

You experienced a leader as a positive or as a negative role model.

Coursework and Training

You attended a development-and-training class that advanced your learning.

Cultural Crossing

Coworkers whose values, motivations, language, life routines and social customs are different than yours.

Ethical Dilemma

You observed fraudulent, illegal or immoral behavior by a senior leader.

Horizontal Move

You transitioned or were rotated into another function, business unit, organization or industry sector.

Increase in Job Scope

You experienced a significant increase in budget, in the number of people you managed, in access to resources and in complexity of tasks.

Mistake

You experienced an error of judgment by a manager or by coworkers that resulted in a team or organizational failure to meet its goals.

New Initiative

You built something by leveraging an opportunity to develop or launch a new product or service, to adopt new technologies, to craft a new policy or process, etc.

EXPERIENCES THAT HAVE SHAPED LEADERS

Bosses and Superiors, New Initiatives, Increase in Job Scope

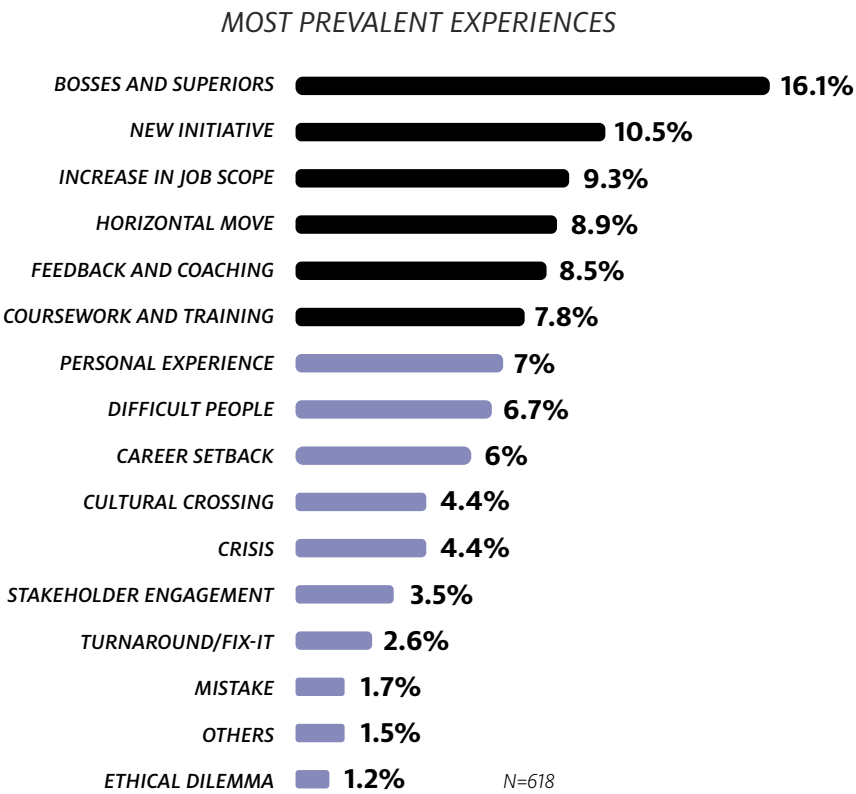
Learnings from bosses and superiors are the biggest and the most prevalent experiences that leaders have in PSEs. Especially as young talent joins the organizations, they learn functional, technical and, most importantly, managerial skills from their bosses and managers.

New initiatives that leaders get involved in are also "key teachers." Inter-departmental shifts and rotations, cross-country transfers, non-traditional career moves and owning and driving new projects and product lines push leaders to be comfortable with discomfort. Also, taking up new responsibilities and expanding roles and responsibilities, pushes leaders to learn at an accelerated pace.

Moving across departments, businesses and geographies in horizontal roles also exposes leaders to new environments and contexts that help them grow. "When I moved from Delhi to Hyderabad to Bangalore as a plant head, I was exposed to new cultures, new ways of working, and that shaped me well to take on the CMD role later in my career," shared a leader. "India is a diverse country, so when you operate in Northeast, North and South, etc., and engage with the local workforce, it gives tremendous learning and confidence," shared another leader.

Feedback and coaching, and coursework and training are the other experiences that are most prevalent for leaders in PSEs. "Coaching may not always be formal, it may just be an informal chat with a senior leader on how to deal with key challenges," shared a leader.

For young leaders, "personal experiences" and "dealing with difficult people," also show up as key experiences, while for tenured leaders with more than 20 years of experience, "horizontal move," "increase in job scope," and "coursework and training," are more prevalent.



TOP EXPERIENCES BY TENURE (Respondents)		
<10 Years of Experience	10 to 20 Years of Experience	>20 Years of Experience
I. BOSSES AND SUPERIORS	BOSSES AND SUPERIORS	BOSSES AND SUPERIORS
II. FEEDBACK AND COACHING	NEW INITIATIVE	NEW INITIATIVE
III. NEW INITIATIVE	FEEDBACK AND COACHING	HORIZONTAL MOVE
IV. PERSONAL EXPERIENCE	COURSEWORK AND TRAINING	INCREASE IN JOB SCOPE
V. DIFFICULT PEOPLE	INCREASE IN JOB SCOPE	COURSEWORK AND TRAINING

N=618

MOST DESIRED EXPERIENCES

New Initiatives are Most Valued

"Taking up new initiatives" emerged as the experience most desired by PSE leaders across all levels. New experiences put leaders in the zone of discomfort to teach them how to deal with adversity.

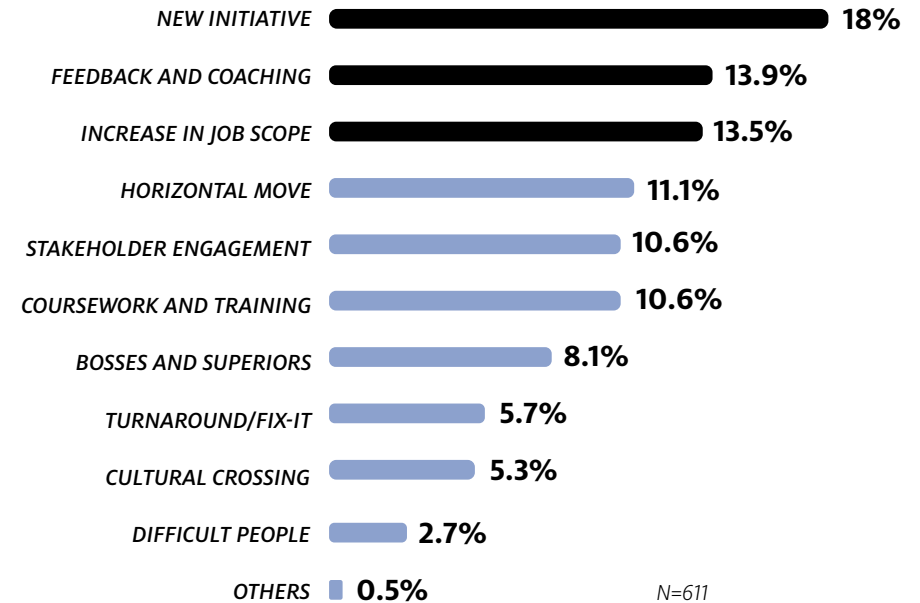
"Feedback and coaching" is the second most desired experience for PSE leaders. One leader shared how his boss informally coached him to take on much larger responsibilities. "He taught me how to manage projects, resources and sticking to timelines and, most importantly, integrity of character," shared the leader.

"Increase in job scope" and "horizontal career moves" are also valued by PSE leaders since such experiences help leaders learn new hard and soft skills. "As you move from one place to another, you learn different cultures and, over the years, learn about the entire country," shared a leader elaborating on transfers that a typical PSE job entails. He added: "The cultural integration takes place over a 10-15 year period; as you rise up the hierarchy, this journey of criss-crossing the country sets you up for a big role."

"Stakeholder engagement" is valuable in a PSE setup where there are multiple stakeholders to deal with, sometimes with conflicting priorities, and effective communication is one area that shows up as a gap consistently across levels. "Ability to deal with people, especially difficult people, without losing your cool, is something you need to learn as you rise up the career ladder in a PSE; because it is hard to get rid of people, you need to take everybody along, people who are good workers, and those who do not want to work," shared a leader. Another leader shared how a major part of his job was to manage stakeholders at the related ministry.

Finally, leaders also aspire for compelling coursework and training, especially specialized skills enhancement and leadership development programs.

MOST DESIRED EXPERIENCES



MOST DESIRED EXPERIENCES BY TENURE (Respondents)

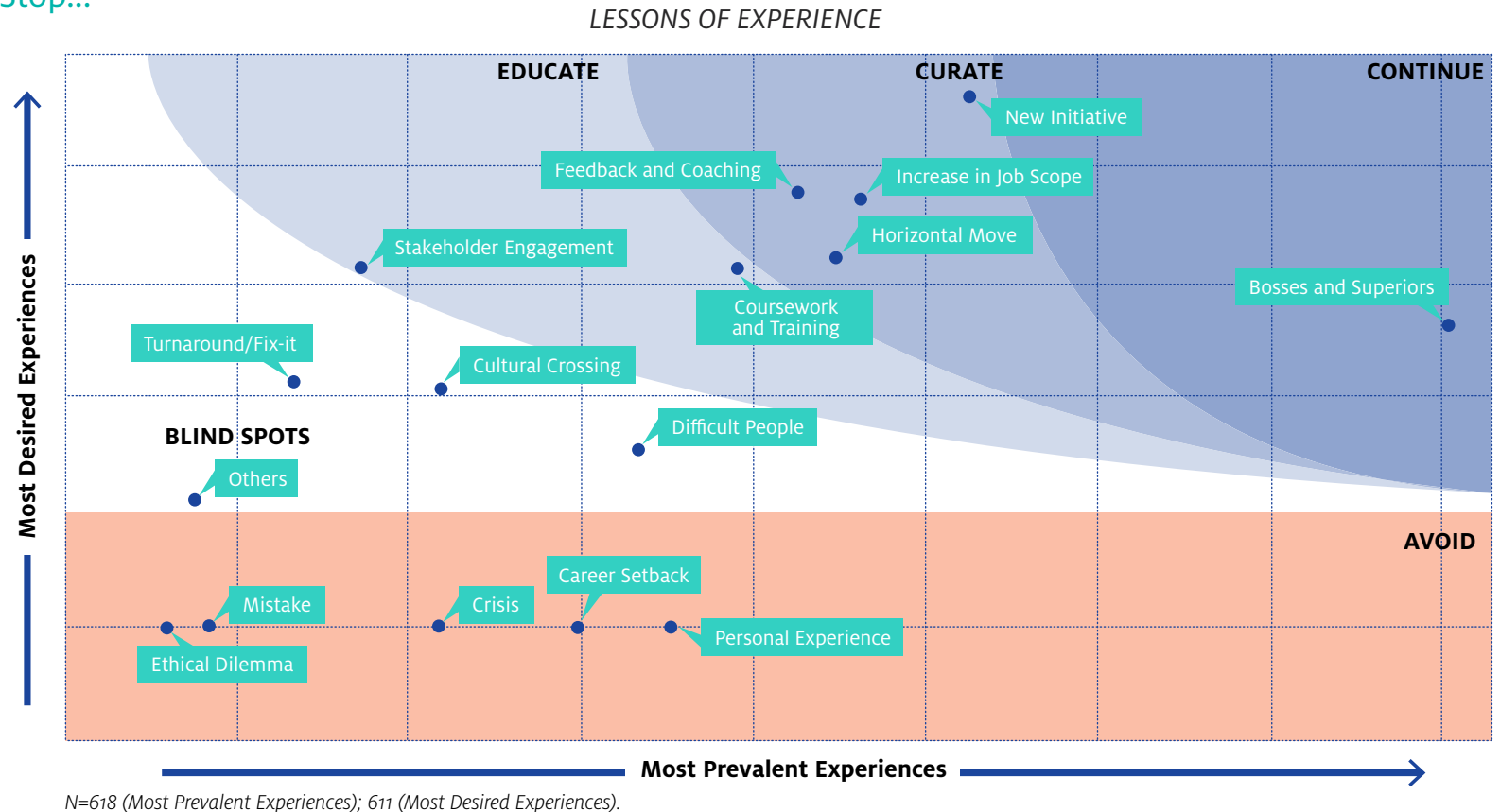
	<10 Years of Experience	10 to 20 Years of Experience	>20 Years of Experience
I.	NEW INITIATIVE	NEW INITIATIVE	NEW INITIATIVE
II.	FEEDBACK AND COACHING	FEEDBACK AND COACHING	INCREASE IN JOB SCOPE
III.	COURSEWORK AND TRAINING	INCREASE IN JOB SCOPE	FEEDBACK AND COACHING
IV.	INCREASE IN JOB SCOPE	COURSEWORK AND TRAINING	HORIZONTAL MOVE
V.	BOSSES AND SUPERIORS	HORIZONTAL MOVE	STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

N=611

LESSONS OF EXPERIENCE

What to Start and Stop...

“Relevant experience and mentoring are the two traits which must be included in a leadership development journey for preparing future-ready PSE leaders in India.”



If the most desired experiences and most prevalent ones are plotted, experiences that must continue, be curated and avoided are highlighted clearly. The chart shows that experiences such as "feedback and coaching," "new initiatives," "increase in job scope," "horizontal move" and "coursework and training" must be curated incrementally across levels.

On the other hand, experiences that are least desired—such as committing a mistake, or facing an ethical dilemma, etc.—while being great teachers, may be avoided. "During my tenure, I got to know how to work for a loss-making enterprise; we had huge orders from state corporations but the raw material was in short supply. I was out all the time meeting customers and pacifying agitated stakeholders," shared a leader about a crisis situation he went through in his career. "During that phase, I realized I had grown up

as a man; earlier I was a boy," he added, highlighting the critical need for crucible unpleasant experiences, even though they are not desired by PSE leaders. "I matured as a manager; had to manage MLAs, chief ministers, local government stakeholders, etc. But, in hindsight, it was a blessing in disguise," he added. Another leader highlighted how she was *gheraoed* at least 15 to 20 times in her office; even though these were nasty experiences, such instances were great learning opportunities for her.

There are also some experiences that are less prevalent, less desired, but may be critical "blind spots" for PSE leaders as they think about their development to make their teams, businesses, departments and organizations future-ready. The chart highlights a few such experiences, such as "turnaround/fix-it" opportunities, "cultural crossings," and "dealing with difficult people."

Source: CCL Research 2021.

MUST-HAVE EXPERIENCES

Seven Experiences Nation Builders Must Have

Organizations that successfully implement experience-driven development and leverage on-the-job learning, do these 5 things:

1. **Identify Stretch Assignments:** Some experiences are more developmental than others; consider the different experiences that help people learn to lead. The seven experiences highlighted in the graphic are must-have for future-fluent nation builders.
2. **Staff for Development, Not Just for Performance:** Matching specific individuals with the right experience requires rigor. The key with experience-driven development is to consider the need to hone new skills and perspectives, not simply allocate or staff assignments based on past success or current role.
3. **Create New Experiences:** This requires that enough of the right experiences exist to develop people in the needed ways. Creating new types of experiences to meet strategic needs of PSEs must include more cross-functional, cross-country, new market and new client-interaction opportunities, for example.

4. **Enhance Learning from Experience:** Going through an experience doesn't guarantee a person will learn from it. Support is essential. Organizations need to surround work development experiences with effective learning practices and help individuals understand how to use their experiences to fuel leadership development. This might include tools for reflecting on experience, access to relationships for learning (such as mentors, peer networks and communities of practice), coaches who challenge and support explicit learning goals and experience-driven development and formal coursework and online resources that provide just-in-time learning tailored to the challenges of specific stretch experiences.
5. **Promote an Experience-driven Development Culture:** When learning from experience is embedded in organizational culture, the gap between doing the work and developing people shrinks. Learning isn't added on— nor is coaching and aligning talent.

7 MUST-HAVE EXPERIENCES



*Potential Blind Spots.

ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENT EXPERIENCE-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT DO 5 THINGS



“ I had a boss who gave me total freedom in my work. He let me take decisions and owned all responsibility if I messed things up. That built a lot of confidence in me, and I could attain the capability of taking critical decisions, along with managing risks. ”

Source: <https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/develop-strong-leaders-with-on-the-job-learning/>

Source: CCL Research.

A man with a beard and glasses is shown in profile, looking out a window. The background is a blurred cityscape. The image is overlaid with a teal and blue geometric design in the top right corner.

ADVICE FROM THE TOP

“ Leaders should be able to take right decision at the right time in the interest of organization, without any influence and fear. ”

CAREER DERAILERS

What Can Sabotage PSE Leader Careers?

Research shows that even leaders with impressive track records have weaknesses or knowledge gaps that, if left unaddressed, can truly wreck their careers.

Many high-performing executives ignore their blind spots for as long as they continue to meet their business goals. Others rely heavily on a specific strength, but then find themselves lacking necessary leadership capabilities when their work environment changes or becomes more complex.

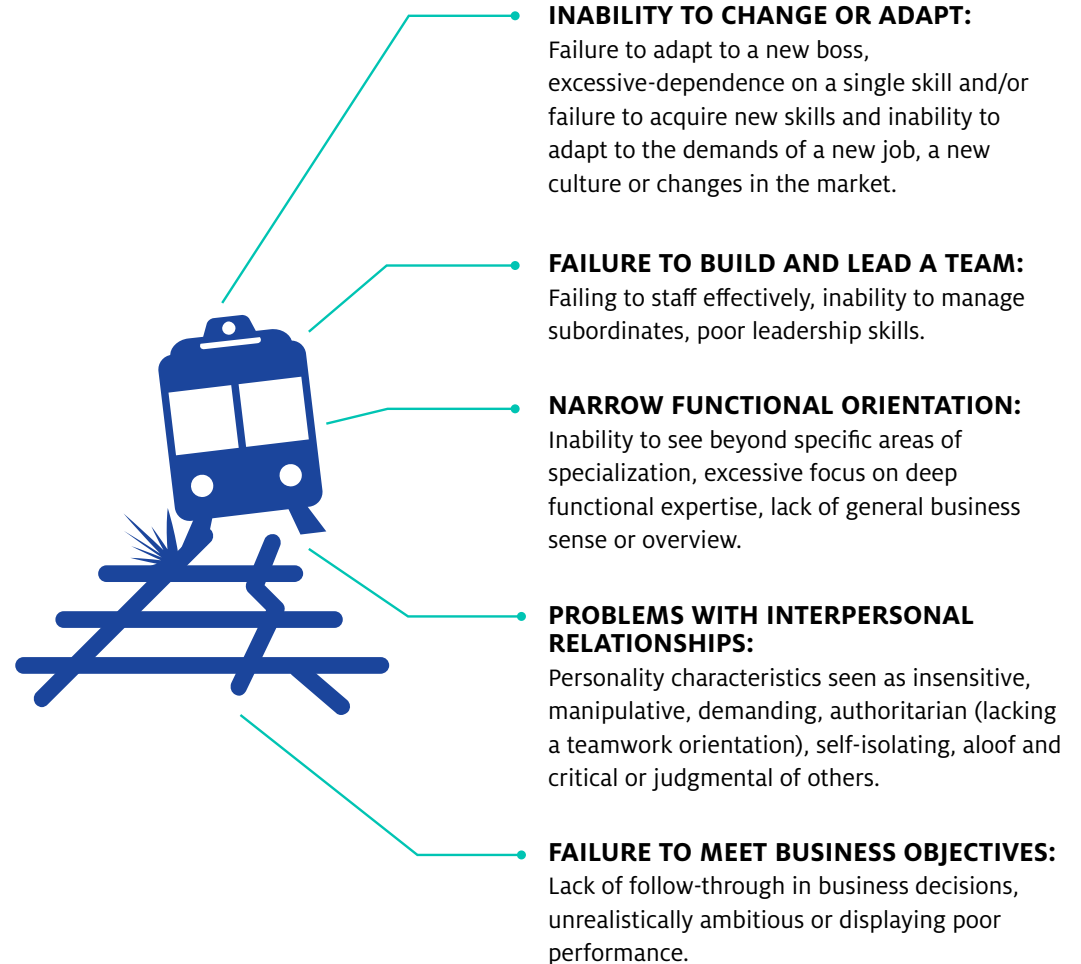
CCL's "Derailment Research" defines successful executives as those who've reached at least the general manager level and who, in the eyes of senior leaders in the organization, remain likely candidates for promotion. The research defines derailing executives as those who, after reaching the general manager level, are fired, demoted or held on a career plateau. Right up to the point of derailment, the superiors of the derailed executives saw them as having high potential for advancement, impressive track records and candidates for leadership positions.

There are several "derailers" such as lack of integrity, arrogance, inability to adapt to change and lack of focus, which have led to the failure of many talented leaders. These derailers also often lead to ineffective organizations. These, if not addressed, will stop leaders from advancing in their careers, and often cause them to fail.

Certain events in a leader's career often trigger these fatal flaws to surface. These include a change in boss, a radically different job, a reorganization/culture change, a performance problem handled ineptly, a clash with the boss, a trail of little problems/bruised people, an expatriate assignment, failure to learn from mistakes, overusing strengths or "going it alone."

“There are several "derailers" such as lack of integrity, arrogance, inability to adapt to change and lack of focus, which have led to the failure of many talented leaders.”

WHAT CAN DERAIL YOUR CAREER?



TOP DERAILERS

Derailers by Leader Level

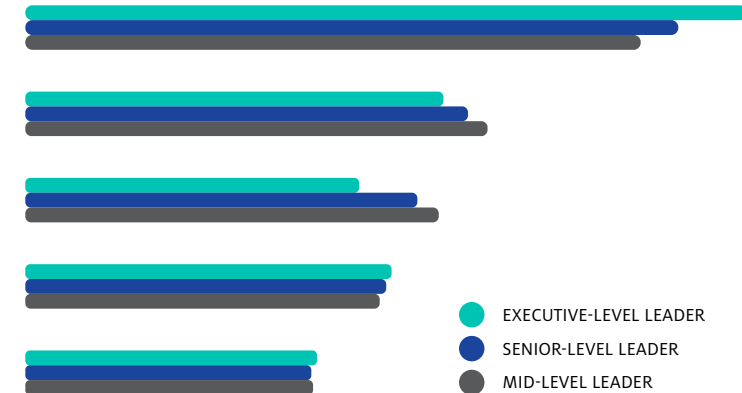
“ Leaders should be trained in adapting to change, building teams, and continuing to mentor them. All performers can't be leaders, they should be selected basis their ability to motivate their team to perform. ”

CAREER DERAILERS FOR PSE LEADERS



N=611

CAREER DERAILERS BY LEADER LEVEL



So what does a high-potential leader need to do? Preventing derailment starts with knowing what to watch out for. Here are 5 tips to keep a promising career on track.

Roll with changes: Because continuous change is an unavoidable part of any business today, organizations highly value adaptable, flexible leaders who can dependably adapt to and embrace change. Those who resist change are often seen as stuck in their ways and unaware of trends at play in the broader market. It's often easier for others at the organization to respond positively to change if change-resistant leaders are side-lined.

Build better teams: Managing teamwork is complicated. An effective team leader must select, develop, engage, and motivate groups of people to pursue a common goal — no easy task. A team leader is responsible not only for their own results, but others as well. Leaders who have difficulty building teams can fail to deliver the results they have promised. Their team members may feel undervalued, leading to dysfunction and, ultimately, departures from the team. Additionally, these leaders can develop a reputation as poor people managers, hindering their progress toward leading more senior-level teams.

Deliver results: Leaders who are results-driven are crucial to their organization's performance. An executive's ability to decisively accomplish key objectives dramatically

affects the way others view their performance — as well as their organization's bottom line. But the best of intentions can fall flat when leaders fail to meet performance expectations because of a lack of follow-through on promises or being overly ambitious. Failure to deliver results can create a breach of trust. Leaders in danger of derailing because they do not deliver what they promise may have exceeded their current level of competence, without realizing it. Even if someone is great with people and loved by superiors, peers and direct reports, if they fail to drive results toward business objectives, they're still in jeopardy of falling off the career ladder.

Develop a strategic orientation: Strategic orientation can be described as simply "having your head in the game." This means understanding the day-to-day demands of a leadership role and the strategic context surrounding the job and team. Those who keep their career on track can think beyond the needs of their department and understand the big picture, recognizing and accepting the realities of their organization and how all of its parts work together.

Work on interpersonal skills: Intelligence, acumen and insight will take a leader pretty far. But, without a keen sense of how to make and keep productive relationships, a promising career could still go off track.

BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL CAREER

What We Can Learn from Executives?

There are several lessons future-fluent nation builders can learn from the C-suite leaders, as their careers are evaluated right from joining the organization, all the way to a CMD or director-level role.

Cultural immersions: As a part of the onboarding, leaders may be asked to spend time at various plants or offices across the country. Leaders must use this opportunity to understand and appreciate cultural nuances within and outside the organization.

Early leadership opportunities: These could range from arranging the annual function of the organization to taking the responsibility to celebrate a colleague's birthday, etc. "There are always big and small opportunities to lead, even in your year-one of the organization; you just need to lean forward and grab those opportunities," commented a leader.

Learning and upgrading: Using any and all opportunities to continuously upgrade knowledge and skills, either through formal courses or volunteering for projects.

Mentoring relationships: All interviewees spoke very passionately about early managers or bosses who played the mentor role formally or informally. Most of these relationships were not set up by the HR department, but emerged organically.

Super specialization: Most leaders highlighted the need to be "known" for something early in the career. A lot of successful leaders were known for their functional and technical skills early in their career.

Cross-functional roles: Understanding different aspects of work in the organization is very critical as leaders aspire to step into senior or executive roles. "Work across disciplines, be cross-functional, and try to learn about different businesses. Learn to embrace technology, and be ready to leverage the opportunities coming your way," advised a leader.

General management: Most leaders, in their mid-careers, stepped into general management roles. In a lot of instances, they had to toil hard, endure hardships or take up transfers to get general management experience under their belt. "I took up an administration role, which was quite a move from the technical role I held for the first decade of my career in the PSE. The role gave me critical managerial skills, networking ability, social skills, and prepared me for an executive role a few years later," shared a leader.

Define new-age culture: C-suite leaders shared that, once they took the senior-most job in their organization, they worked hard to define the culture of the company so that it was ready to succeed in the future.

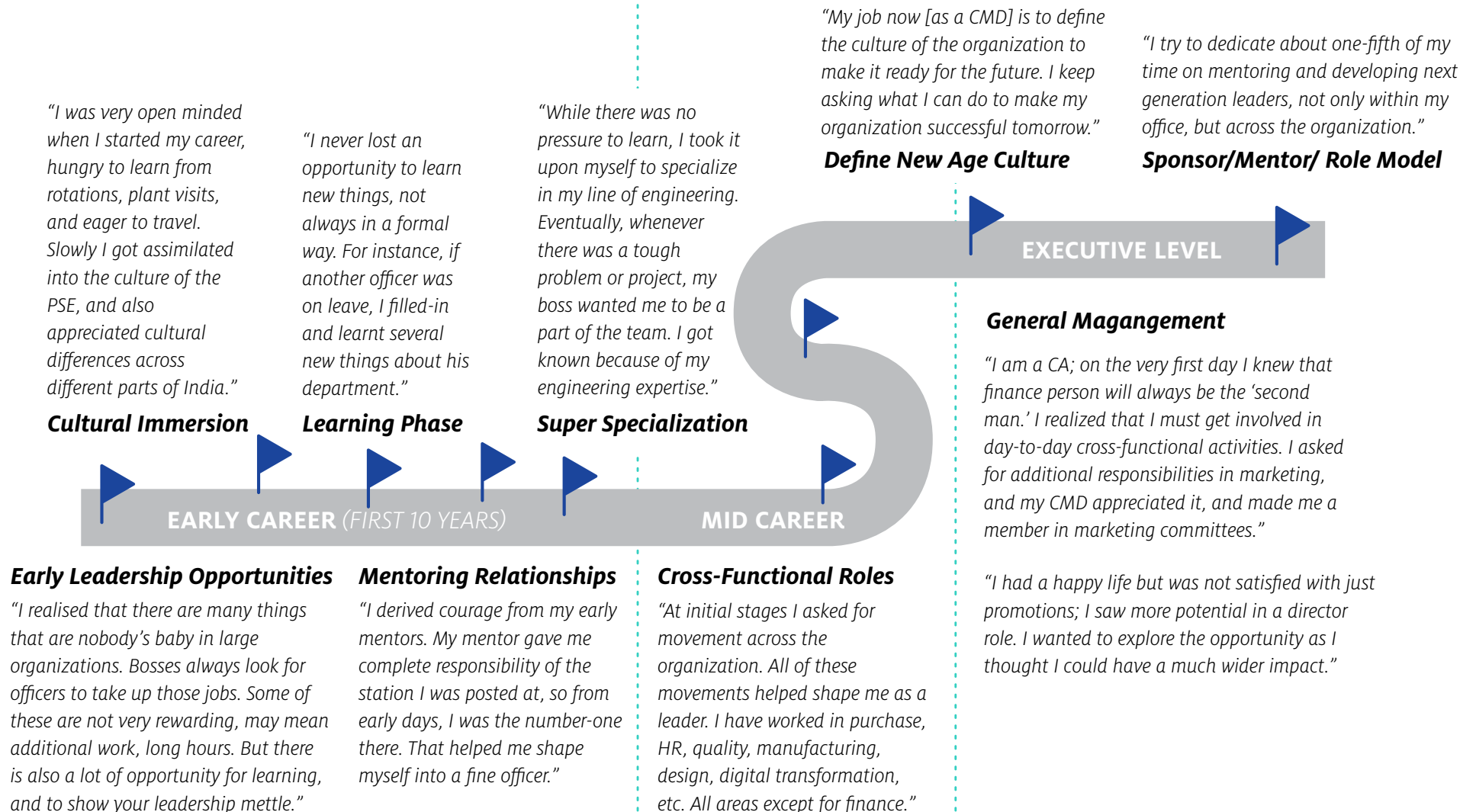
Sponsor/mentor/role-model: As senior executives, leaders must find time to mentor, coach and groom the next-generation PSE leaders.

Source: CCL Research 2021.



BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL CAREER

EXECUTIVE LEADER CAREER PATH



KEY PIECES OF ADVICE

What We Can Learn from Executives?

There are several pieces of advice that interviewee C-suite leaders had for future-fluent nation builders.

One, to have a high level of self-awareness. One leader shared that he was quite impulsive when he was a young officer, but wanted to rein in that shortcoming. He reflected and, after talking to some of his mentors, got a handle on that. "My mentor advised: Don't overreact; whenever there is something that happens in your life, chew and digest the situation before you respond," he shared the advice he got.

Two, be an agile learner. "Look for the new opportunities for learning. Never say – this is not my work; if there are too many things being thrown at you, your efficiency will improve and you keep learning," shared a leader. "Results will always come, maybe a little later, or quickly, but keep learning."

Three, find opportunities to lead. "If we want to contribute positively, no one will stop you from doing a good job," encouraged a leader.

Four, have a solution orientation. A leader shared how, as a young officer, he was tasked with setting up a plant in 12 months, an almost impossible task. He had to innovate, tweak processes, and think out-of-the-box to execute the project. And, all along, he had to report updates to the union minister on a monthly basis.

Five, aspire for the top. Most C-suite interviewees highlighted that they came from humble backgrounds and understood the value of hard work. While they always wanted to reach the top, they never took their eyes off the tasks at hand.

Six, network tirelessly. All leaders pointed out that, in a PSE setup, a lot of tasks are executed through contacts within and outside the department, hence the value of knowing more people can never be overstated.

ADVICE FROM THE TOP



BE SELF-AWARE, INTROSPECTIVE, REFLECTIVE

"A regular introspection is very important; getting your own feedback is good. Assess your strengths and be aware and constantly work on your development areas."

BE LEARNING AGILE; YOU HAVE NO CHOICE

"Keep learning, always. In the next generation, things will move at the speed of light, so reaction time will have to be very fast. Being learning agile will need to be in the DNA of future leaders."



FIND OPPORTUNITIES TO LEAD; THERE ARE MANY

"Many people may not know it but, in PSEs, you get a lot of opportunity to do good work and lead. Even if you are in a small team, you are in a leadership position. And you have to lead your team and manage stakeholders at the same time."

PROBLEMS ARE PLENTY; HAVE A SOLUTION ORIENTATION

"Have an attitude of embracing problems. If you are in police station, you will only be called when there are problems; if you are afraid of solving problems, then you can never be good at your job. You should love to wrestle and solve problems; every problem has a solution."



ASPIRE FOR THE TOP, FOCUS ON THE PRESENT

"As a manager, I always aspired to be a CMD, but I kept my eye on excelling at whatever job was given to me. Be dedicated, diligent, hardworking, and positions will come to you automatically. Always prepare for the next position."

NETWORK, NETWORK, NETWORK

"Your internal and external networks are very important. PSEs are very connected; 60-70% of the things will be done by networking. Make friends in other companies, and be in touch with them."



SCALING UP LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Guidance to Human Resources

Leaders had several pieces of guidance on scaling up leadership pipelines. Most of this advice centered around rotations, crucible roles, diversity of experiences and motivating talent with non-material rewards...

DEVELOP ALL-ROUNDERS

"You need to have a large pool of officers who can be rotated for different jobs. Most jobs today need all-rounders. So, we have a clear policy of job rotations. Training policy needs to be very strong – on an annual basis, completing various milestones before stepping into certain jobs or roles."

FIND AND DEVELOP HIGH-POTENTIALS

"We identify roles where you are looking to place leaders. We then find HIPOs through some tools, assessment, development centers, psychometric tests. Once they are identified, they are groomed through job rotation and training. Essentially, we meet the difference between the role needs and the current competencies leaders have."

FOCUS ON LESSONS OF EXPERIENCE

"First, we have identified critical positions, and then we have identified officers who can fit into these positions. With this set, I don't believe in classroom teaching. I trust job rotations and challenging assignments. Leaders learn from their mistakes."



INTANGIBLES MATTER A LOT

"Pats on the back can do wonders; much more than incremental monetary rewards. I am a big fan of 'positive kicks.' When I got a gold medal in MBA [I took a study leave during my tenure], my chairman and my immediate boss came for the convocation. Post-MBA, I got many offers from the private sector, but I was so much in awe of my organization because of their gesture, that I could not even think of leaving."

ASSIGN EARLY-CAREER MENTORS

"We have introduced a formal mentoring system. When new officers join, we assign them a mentor, 8-10 years their senior. Once the onboarding is over, the officer is assigned a location, where he or she undergoes a divisional induction module to understand the practical aspects of business. All throughout, the mentors take care of the new officers' personal needs and track their progress."

CONSTANTLY CHURN TALENT

"To bring out the best in an individual, you got to identify and put square pegs in square holes. I study people and understand what is it that gives them a kick. If I find that they have an aptitude, I push them to certain assignments. I keep rotating people. If someone doesn't have an aptitude, we don't kill their career, we just move them."

DEPLOY ONLINE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

"When we realized our middle management was not strong, we started online performance management modules. We tried to find key deficiency areas from reporting officers. Then, post-reporting, reviewing and commenting, we identified the training need requirements in a structured way to pin-point officers' development needs."

DRIVE PRE-PROMOTION MENTORING SESSIONS

"At times of every promotion, 6 months in advance, we have a mentoring session with all CXOs and directors. Leaders can ask questions about organization, new responsibilities, etc. This helps leaders be better prepared for their next roles."



DEVELOP LEADERS HOLISTICALLY

"We have a 'Leadership Altitude' program, where we help leaders with a 50,000-, 5,000- and 50-feet view on their organization and industry. Leaders are able to not only understand policy change, context, geopolitics, but also (at a 50-feet view) appreciate how all of this impacts their organization and their department. The 5-feet view is about yourself, your learning needs and personal change agenda."

REWARD AND MOTIVATE PEOPLE

"We have an outreach program where we are connecting with people in remote places. We also have a reward scheme where any executive director can on-the-spot reward 5% people under him or her. We have made several such reward schemes to motivate people."

KEY TAKEAWAYS

“Leadership development programs should include character-building of individuals, in addition to the skill sets required to run an organization.”

LEADERSHIP MODEL

Future-fluent Nation Builders...

Future-fluent nation builders need to have the right set of values, mindsets, skills and experiences.

One, leaders must understand the core values around serving the nation, PSE history, what such organizations stand for and the key expectations from any employee working in the PSE sector. Interviewees pointed out that PSE leaders must have a deep sense of responsibility towards nation-building.

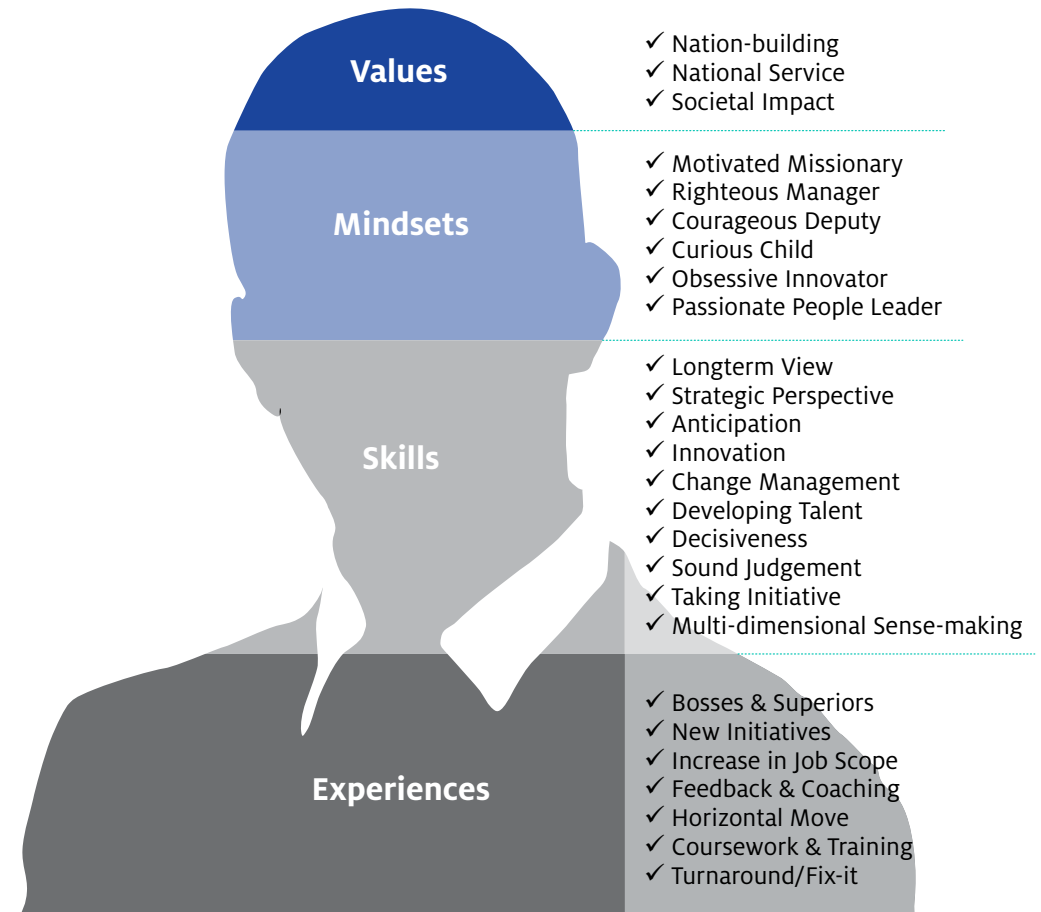
Two, focus on the mindsets and behaviors that will help leaders face challenges within and outside the PSEs, as they execute their responsibilities.

Three, skills and capabilities around building self, team management, managing functions and business and, finally, looking out into the future and preparing the organizational capabilities accordingly.

Finally, leaders must embrace appropriate experiences to ready themselves for the future.

“Proper job/functional orientation, strategic planning and decision-making are the key elements in shaping future-ready PSE leaders. Leaders also must get adequate exposure to respective areas and awareness of environment impacting business.”

FUTURE-FLUENT NATION BUILDER MODEL



DEVELOPMENT CYCLE

Developing a Pipeline of Future-fluent Nation Builders...

Research suggests four core elements in any future-fluent nation builder development journey.

Nation-centered values that are must-have can be built through cultural immersion of young leaders as they join the organization. Role-modeling by senior leaders goes a long way towards building the appropriate value set for young leaders. Finally, selection criteria centered around testing the values that drive potential employees are another way to ensure that the majority of the leaders who join PSEs have alignment in values set.

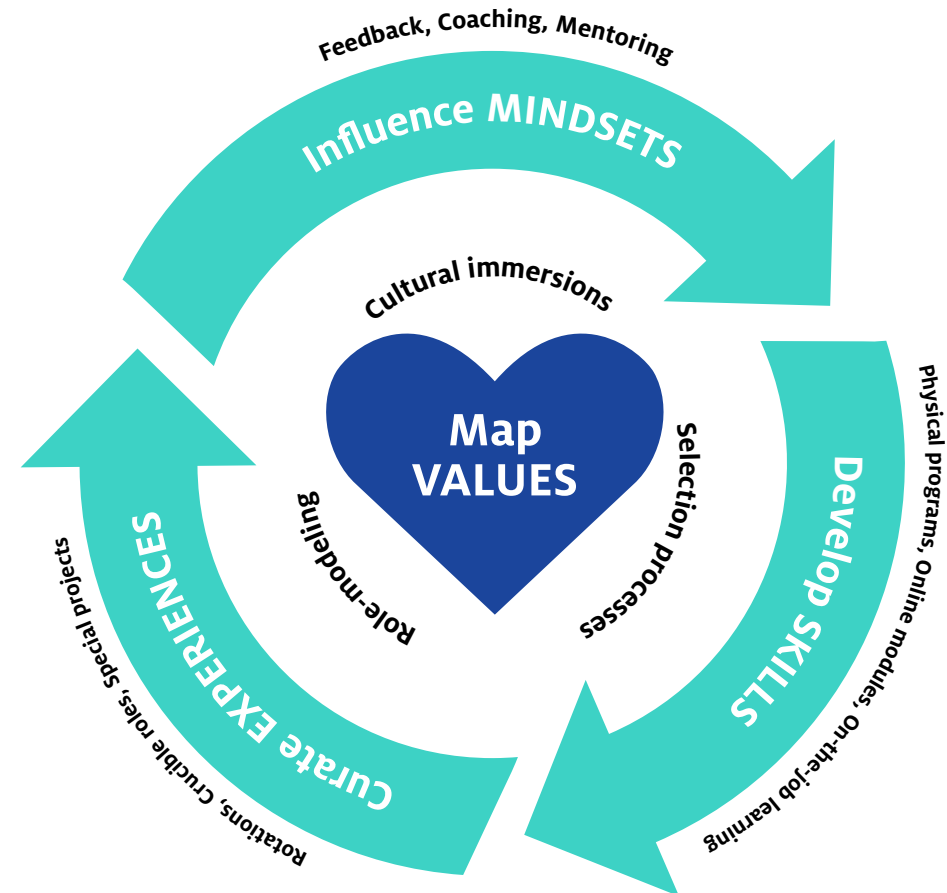
Mindsets can be developed via formal and informal feedback processes, coaching interventions and mentoring. It is critical that mindsets are altered before skills are developed and experiences are curated.

Leaders must focus on developing key skills via classroom interactions/course work, online and hybrid modules and on-the-job learning experiences.

Finally, curating experiences through rotations, crucible roles and staffing leaders on special projects. Experiences, both developmental and hardships, are great teachers, and they are often more valuable than classroom-based skills and capability development.

“ If you want to develop as a leader, then there are enough and more opportunities to do so within the PSE setup. The system will not push you to develop, but will offer enough opportunities. Leadership development is both an organizational and individual responsibility. ”

FUTURE-FLUENT NATION BUILDER DEVELOPMENT CYCLE



NEXT STEPS

Build a Pipeline of Future-fluent Nation Builders...

The key objective of CCL and SCOPE to jointly conduct the "Future-fluent Nation Builder" research is not only to create compelling thought leadership, but also to solve the lack of a robust next-generation, future-ready leadership pipeline in PSEs in India.

PSEs may choose to use this research to create positive action steps to build a future-ready leadership pipeline.

First, the organization may want to engage with the CCL-SCOPE team to roll out the key findings of the study, to know more about nuances that are critical to understand and leadership development practices that have worked in other PSEs.

Organizations may subsequently seek the CCL-SCOPE team's help in understanding how their leadership compares with the study sample set, comprised of data from over twenty other PSEs. This will help the organization understand areas to

focus on. For instance, values that are dear in the organization, mindsets that are prevalent, skills that need to be enhanced and experiences that can have maximum returns on development efforts.

Organizations may subsequently plan the best approaches to plug mindset, skill-set and experience gaps in their talent to make them future-ready. They can either choose to nominate their leaders in the "CCL-SCOPE Future-fluent Nation Builder Program" or work with the CCL-SCOPE team to co-create a custom leadership development journey for their mid- to senior-level talent.

To maximize benefit from the research, PSEs may want to embark on a four-step journey – engage, benchmark, discover and develop – in partnership with the CCL-SCOPE team, which is committed to improving the future fluency of the next generation of nation builders in PSEs in India.

BRINGING RESEARCH TO LIFE

STEP-I:

Engage with the CCL-SCOPE team to understand the key findings of the research, as well as how it may apply to your organization.



ENGAGE

STEP-II:

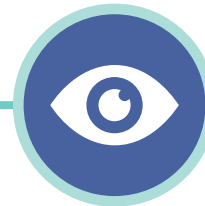
Seek CCL-SCOPE help to benchmark your organization's leadership mindset, skills and experiences.



BENCHMARK

STEP-III:

Identify mindset and capability gaps the organization needs to plug for effective leadership to happen.



DISCOVER

STEP-IV:

Create developmental journeys. Nominate leaders to CCL-SCOPE "Future-fluent Nation Builder Program." Or, co-create a custom program.



DEVELOP

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) thanks the 732 mid- to executive-level leaders across PSEs for participating in the survey and 25 CXOs (listed below) for graciously sharing their stories, insights and thoughts during research interviews. The Center is also indebted to its research partner, Standing Conference of Public Enterprises (SCOPE), for contributing to the thought leadership and for co-designing and executing the research. Also, a special thanks to the SCOPE HR Committee (Dr. Sanjay Kumar, Ms. Usha Singh, Mr. S.K. Bose, and Ms. Kamakshi Raman) for guiding the research team and endorsing the key findings of the study.

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