

Leadership Succession: Leaving a Lasting Legacy

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ABSTRACT

A selflessly motivated leader has an attribute of passing the baton to his successors leaving a perpetual legacy without any self aggrandizement. His competence, his integrity, his commitment and his camaraderie permeates the successors to carry on with the ethos. Surprisingly the successful sustenance of organizations owe their reputation to the long trajectory of meritable leaders. Long live the leader and long live the leadership for giving us this beautiful today.

1. Introduction

Succession in a family means, when the family members automatically inherit property from their ancestors. But in an organization-be it political or business, the same is based on the ability of individuals to promote and manage their company. In business organizations succession depends on the skill of the individuals to bring new ventures in consonance with modernization or prevalent time. The senior officials in companies and leaders in political parties observe and assess the behavior and ability of other individuals as to how do they manage the affairs of the workers, followers and masses. This is how they follow Leadership Succession which is the need of the hour. No party or organization can sustain without finding a suitable successor.

In the times of turmoil, he dauntlessly steers the ship through; in the face of turbulence, he offers you his mighty hand; when your faith is shattered and shaken, he rises on the crest as an epitome of truth and when chaos, disarray and bedlam are saturating to the tune of asphyxiation, he towers as a colossal of hope and optimism to give you a sigh of relief. And out of all such situations and stories there emerges a towering, robust, intrepid heroic figure who we call a 'Leader' with potent Leadership qualities. There is no such phase of history when such personalities didn't emerge on the scene ushering epoch making eras and their rich legacies of succession move on in the form of a trajectory where their followers never lose track of their golden footsteps and as such whenever any dark clouds appear with a thunder, the silver lining never takes long to exhilarate and stimulate the consumptive. Look at the way Martin Luther King, Lincoln, Winston Churchill, Nelson Mandela, Fidel Castro, Joan of Arc, Gandhi, Napoleon and King Ashoka; never go blurred deep down our memory lane rather live almost immortal lives in the annals of history, leaving a lasting legacy. In the recent shape of events Barack Obama is that stellar of a leader who changed the course of American history rather world history to get elected in a nation which once was hand in glove with apartheid and an American could dream of anything except a Black ruling The United States of America. His courage of conviction when he happened to firmly take stand on many issues, like on a UN resolution on Israel - Palestinian conflict all around the masses believed that he has had a valid point and he is not doing it for any vested interest. He rose up with

grit and guts with his logistics knowing his job so well in influencing people and other leaders impinging upon his point of view. Obama became synonymous with the word change. Each one smelt the transformation and revolution with change in and around. His lasting legacy will keep on gaining in height with a passage of time and will be repeated and read in the due course of time.

We must ponder over the facts with gravity and reasoning that how out of a herd mentality; these so called leaders build up their contours, stay on the minds of the masses leaving indelible prints of succession and live on the pages for endless period of time. Imagine a frail persona called Mahatma Gandhi without any metrics of hypocrisy or any gimmicks or funds behind him has given such a rich legacy of succession to the world called NON - VIOLENCE. In this milieu of gun- toting, mayhem, carnage and pogrom, his philosophy outrightly refuses to die and his aura or euphoria goes on to grow taller and taller. He unflinchingly exuded the traits and behaviour of a charismatic leader who in reality was polite but firm; defiant, resistant, daring and provocative at times but maintaining a calm, caring and humble posture.

I quote Weber "charismatic leaders are more likely to emerge in crisis situations." When India was reeling under the atrocities of the British rule for decades with no light behind the dark long tunnel, Gandhi romped home a vision called 'independent India' leading varied movements head on. Look at his amazing unconventional methods how he fought the British using the means of truth, non- violence, non-cooperation, peaceful resistance rather than rioting or violent means. At the top of that he drew vast admiration due to his noble intentions, high moral values and ethics. His collective belief, it was that worked to fuel the determination of his followers leading to the hard road of freedom. In this present day scenario of the farmers' protest, if we look at it from a larger spectrum, somewhere or the other that illustrious legacy of Gandhi is substantially being perpetuated adhering so far tenaciously to the realms of non- violence seeking a peaceful solution. On the contrary if we compare the violent scenarios anywhere in the world, those all till date have been repressive measures simmering deep within waiting to erupt as a volcano. Thus, a massive leadership efficacy has to grow in succession setting an example of its forbearance and fortitude when the unbearable storms were rising. A leader with mere rhetoric or sugar coated dialogues entraps the impressionable mind but

gets exposed sooner or later, also causing unforeseen damage in succession.

2. Leadership Succession

We deem it as a vertical scenario within an organization, nation or community where a process or method for churning out new leaders who can replace old leaders when they are exhausted or relinquish or die. This way the good ideologies can be perpetuated for the growth of the organization. There are innumerable such organizations which set their ball rolling on the same ethos, practices and morals of their leaders and never allow their basic principles to die. We have been seeing how in dictatorship a chaotic struggle is prevented with a well planned succession planning and in monarchy, it is settled by the order of succession. In the best of the business houses, this succession planning is used as a process to ensure that employees are recruited and developed to fill each key role within the company. As such the organization ensures to hone and develop the skills and abilities of their key employees for more challenging roles. Top companies like General Electric, IBM, Marriott, Microsoft, Pepsi, Procter and Gamble are well known for their succession plans and executive- talent development practices. Their assessment is a key practice in effective succession planning. Having its multiple advantages, it definitely cuts the costs of recruitment in - house. Gradually while working it provides a way to identify key roles, people with right kind of attitude and aptitude. Imagine if all such points are not kept ignited in the mind and failing to create an orderly succession plan, the company might go for a toss in the absence of a good leader. Since a statesman or a leader owes an accomplished sense of responsibility and commitment; his each action will have further reactions. His succession will be his legacy which will go further and farther and as his elongated shadow for generations to come, as such he must have some outstanding traits to serve as an epitome and here some of those need to be enumerated :-

1. Courage of Conviction

It is but natural that each individual has to go by his views or convictions and it is not mandatory to follow the leader. Generally the mob is frenzied following the convictions of a good leader, yet some with vested interest and some critics tend not to follow the leader and some stay up in the arm against the leader owing to the partisan interests. In the face of all such odds and evens, a good leader must never lose his courage of conviction but must be farsighted and prudent not to unnecessarily stick to his guns for the sake of ego or status. When he takes pride in his courage of conviction, he ought to have the flexibility to distinguish between the right and the wrong.

References

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2. Motivational Prowess

Motivational prowess is the be all and end all of a leader. History is replete with examples where the leaders were able to motivate the masses to surmount the most insurmountable. The objective of an inspirational speech is to illicit or cause an emotional state within audience. Leaders of substance could move the mountains resulting into a total win win situation. Contributions of inspirational leaders like Churchill, Mandela ,Napoleon Bonaparte, Alexander The Great or Roosevelt keep moving on from generation to generation to set the paradigm of their leadership attributes.

3. Firm and Resolute

Firmness of personality, firmness of purpose and firmness of decision segregate leaders from an ordinary plethora of people. Such leaders are determined to tread their path resolutely in the face of all odds- be it prison walls or blemishes or criticism but they stand like a rock to set an example for their followers.

4. Power of Oratory

Words or language are the most powerful tools of any great leader. Their jugglery of words, their emotional tossing of sentences and their awareness of striking the iron when it is hot makes them superior to the commoners. Any and every good leader enters the human hearts exclusively through his words and thereafter his actions. Thus oratory is one of the be alls and end alls in a leader. " Friends, Romans and countrymen " by Antony in Julius Caesar "My fellow Americans" is the frequent opening of a Presidential speech from Roosevelt to Kennedy to Regan and beyond modern Presidents - all have risen with their mark of oratory. Martin Luther King's oratory is still influential even decades later.

3. Conclusion

To sum up I would like to quote Warren Bennis here "A business short on capital can borrow money and one with poor location can move but a business short on leadership has little chance of survival." A leader is a catalyst who not only joins all the dots but also ensures that his team is never left behind. If we look back, what we are living today is the legacy of our leaders who ensured the unity of India; who worked on to establish these deep rooted democratic practices; who incorporated the strength of secularism; who toiled on our freedom of speech; who gave us the right to education, right to freedom of speech and who blessed us with the right to franchise.

Hail you the leaders; Hail your succession and Hail thy rich LEGACY.