

# Leveraging the Leadership Leap

Leadership has always become a buzz word in both private and public circles. Management Digest carries at least one article on leadership in each issue. Let me focus on two articles in this issue which together offer a fine recipe for leveraging the leadership leap.

Individuals and institutions alike need leadership. It is the ability to influence people toward the attainment of organizational goals. Having a focused effort on leadership development pays off in the medium and long runs as better leaders will produce greater results. That is the “leap” that any progressive organization should have “leverage”. Two articles I mentioned earlier show how this is practically possible. Interestingly, both of these refer to research findings of a global scale.

The first one, written by Ginka Toegel and Jean-Louis Barsoux, both leading researchers in organizational behavior, speak of how to become a better leader. As they elaborate: “Good leaders make their work look easy. But the reality is that most have had to work hard on themselves — by managing or compensating for potentially career-limiting traits. To grow as an executive, you need to recognize and manage your strongest tendencies.” As they found out involving 2000 executives who attended global leadership programs, “leaders need to understand their natural inclinations in order to modify them or compensate for them.” This is to find your “flare”. In Sri Lankan scenario, I have come across many a manager who found such a flare and began to blossom in becoming better leaders.

The second article, based on research by Hike Bruch and Sumathra Ghoshal highlights two essential ingredients to become better leaders. They are focus and energy. Have we got the required focus with concentrated attention in executing a task? Have we got the energy in demonstrating efficiency and effectiveness? Purposefulness occurs when the fine blend of focus and energy is present. We are in need of it in taking Sri Lankan organizations to greater heights.

I see gems in both private and public sectors, who are purposeful, passionate and performing. They are in fact the true catalysts in making a better Sri Lanka. With the right blend of high levels of focus and energy, they know clearly what has to be done, and they do it committedly in producing results, as “better leaders”. Hence, the outlook with regard to the needed leadership potential is positive. What is required is to harness such talent towards national prosperity.

**Dr. Ajantha Dharmasiri**, Member, Editorial Board

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Publisher

Essence Publishers,  
66, Old Kesbewa Road, Nugegoda,  
Sri Lanka.  
Tel: +94 112 852 606,  
Mobile: +94 727 273 478  
E-mail: editor@managementdigest.lk

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