

Creating Leaders of Tomorrow

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- BY **SUDAKSHINA BHATTACHARYA**

“**T**o lead is a natural ability" is a concept that originated in India thousands of years ago. It has been reflected in mythology that the one who rises to the occasion and takes charge is the one who possesses the inherent capability to lead. Some of the greatest Indian warriors in the ancient as well as the modern times have in fact taken this concept forward. In line with the

above concept, and with the passage of time, came the automatic need to incubate and nurture individuals with such demonstrated potentials, and bring about the leader in them. The list of such exemplary Indian leaders is endless.

Future kings were chosen from among the royal siblings, and after identifying the potential, one amongst them was given the reins of the

Kingdom. All the royal siblings were given Vidya or education through a disciplined process at an institution called the Gurukul or a residential school. Gurukuls have remained as the places where future leaders were carved out of their raw royal instincts. Under the watchful nurturing and aegis of the Guru or teacher, this place functioned as an incubator for the royal siblings. The emphasis was on the



overall growth of the student, and the objective assessment of the perfect leader amongst them. The modern world has given it the term "creating future leaders". Apart from theory or the gyanam of vedas, but practical concepts of warfare, politics and policy creation formed an integral aspect of the curriculum of these Gurukuls.

The IFIN Academy, with a philosophy very similar to the Gurukuls - which is to provide relevant and the best in class development opportunities for each employee, has an annual calendar in place. The Academy institutionalizes wholesome learning through a dedicated annual calendar. Further, the programmes are developed keeping in mind the functional and behavioural needs of the employees.

The genesis of credible future leaders

It would be a fair assumption that among many things that were taught, the principal aspects could be the dominance of functional knowledge coupled with exceptional behavioural competencies. Gurukul shiksha was imparted in the form of nitishastra or functional training, and vyavhara or behavioural training to ensure the overall development of the shishyas. Today, an employee spends one thirds of his or her time at the office, and hence, the professional wellbeing of the employee becomes the responsibility of the organization.

Kshamata or the competency of each student at the Gurukul, decided the degree of complexity of the



are maintained.

In the same way, the IFIN Academy has been instrumental in assessing the competencies of its future leaders through the systematic and judicious use of psychometric evaluations for objective assessment of the

of those competencies in which the individual is lacking. The Academy has conducted programmes such as 'I-Lead' with the above methodology. Through the I-Lead (competency assessment and development) initiative, competencies in future leaders are identified, and through the individual development plan (IDP) the gaps in competencies are bridged. This initiative helps IFIN to match internal opportunities to individual capabilities, thereby ensuring that the diverse talent is tapped to fill critical leadership roles.

Collaborating With The Best

As was the Pratha or practice at Gurukul to invite Vishishtha Pradhyapak or exceptional faculty, the IFIN Academy collaborates with the best in class and moves with time. The future leaders are becoming more inclined to the phenomenon of social learning. To fulfil this need, the academy collaborated with best in class institutes globally to bring state of the art learning

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learning methodology and subject. The system believed that those skills in which the student is falling short must be taken to the next level, and ensured that the skills with high proficiency

competency footprint of each employee. This footprint is further mapped to the competency footprint of the role, and programmes are identified, to increase the proficiency



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opportunities along with interventions encouraging co-learning. INSPIRE is a series launched to formally induct social learning at IFIN.

Gurukuls were famous for their practical training methods, simulations of situations to impart learning on situation leadership and deciphering the right decision making. A range of training methodologies have been used by the IFIN Academy to ensure that the employees sharpen their skills and acquire situational leadership. Experiential learning has proven to be an effective method of learning retention.

Through the "Business Simulation Programme", future leaders at IFIN are groomed by way of a systematic exposure to business critical situations through a simulation based programme conducted annually. This programme gives them the opportunity to assay the role of a business leader in a captive environment and stipulated timeline, thereby demonstrating the deftness of various business skills. This is followed by a plan to hone them further based on the degree of deftness demonstrated. The pre and post training evaluations display a

remarkable change in the way these future leaders look at everyday business.

The Creation Of Self Awareness

The IFIN Academy has developed institutionalized programmes namely "step-up for excellence" to provide specific learning inputs to employees who are offered higher order roles and/or assigned additional responsibilities. This cohort is further supported with a customized yearly learning plan, comprising of periodic evaluation and development of competencies for these roles.

"Passion for excellence" is another intervention for individual leadership that helps the future leaders to generate self-awareness, and helps in shifting focus from the clock to compass. By identifying their social image and correlating it with their self-introspection, they gather the knowledge of reality. The emphasis is on preparing oneself to perform a higher order role.

"Managing High Potential" is a programme for leaders, educating them on their role as firm builders and enhancing credibility to be able to

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influence better in their roles. This programme helps in building networking skills to acquire enhanced business acumen, while building customer centricity for improved interpersonal and business transactions.

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business requirement of creating successors, gave birth to the initiative I-Coach, this programme is developed on the concept of "shadowing". Selected seniors, to help transfer the business critical leadership qualities, both functional and behavioural, coach the identified future leaders. This programme has one clear motive, to provide a coaching platform to employees, where the employees can seek professional or personal coaching and acquire the direction to succeed.

In the Gurukul, the emphasis is on the mental premise of the Shishyas for self-awareness through reflection. "Decoding Organizational Behaviour" was initiated taking a leaf of learning from this very concept with the objective being to help individuals understand themselves better in the organizational context with proven scientific mind tools.

The IFIN Academy recognizes the needs of future leaders - Digitalization. FY'17 for the Academy opens the digital chapter to garner the millennial flavour of future leaders, who will be on the lookout for MOOCs, mobile learning and other online learning resources. An integrated learning management system co-opted with

leading names in the digital learning space is the cornerstone of the IFIN Academy for this year.

A large part of the growth of IFIN in the last decade can be attributed to the leadership with vintage, and their ability to create leaders for the future and groom them to the culture of IFIN - Nurture future leaders. The legacy of kings was carried forward through Gurus and their able Shishyas, an inspiration for IFIN, to take business to newer heights through IFIN Leaders 2.0.

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