

Chapter 7

Creating the Catapult Effect for the Talent in the Era of Digital Abundance

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ABSTRACT

Leading in the era of digital abundance is a contest terrain as leaders grapple with the challenges of leading and working with the millennial generation at business and society at large. The emerging digital ecosystems emit strong signals for a transformation in leadership models and styles. Drawing on empirical and theoretical work on the movement in the generations of people, especially the workforce in the economic and social world, it is evident that new leadership models need to be explored in alignment to the digital era. This chapter attempts to evolve a framework of leadership for the digital era. The framework has been used further as an illustration through an initiative designed and implemented for mid-level leaders. The chapter strongly recommends a revisit to leadership concepts and development in the era of digital abundance.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-4861-5.ch007

INTRODUCTION

The emerging world is characterized by complex changes in lifestyle, aspirations, business culture, and use of technology. These are creating discontinuities from the past to the present and to the future. Organizations refer to them as problems of a generation gap and failure of current policies amongst the new millennium workforce. Culture and practices are questioned for relevance and use, without providing alternatives to the future. Aligning people and influencing them, to achieve specific goals are becoming extremely difficult in the interactive, chaotic & complex world. Complexity is increasing because of information abundance. The increased availability of information is causing multiple interpretations of the reality. The speed at which the information is gathered, processed or analyzed does not really lead to a better understanding of the problem. Invariably it creates confusion leading to inaction. People take positions based on their beliefs and interests. There is blurring of right and wrongs. There is a lack of understanding in connecting thoughts to actions to reasons. The role of leadership needs to be renegotiated in the emerging era of abundance. This chapter argues that the emerging digital era is completely different from the experiences of the leaders in the past decades. Further it builds a framework based on three pillars. They are: (a) leadership thoughts, (b) influence and actions and (c) driving results in the digital era. The chapter is presented in three parts:

- The first part provides characteristics of the emerging digital era and compares with the pre-digital eras.
- In the second part we propose a leadership framework to define the leaders of the era of digital abundance.
- The third part provides an illustration of an organizational Initiative using the developed leadership framework to identify the drivers of leadership in the digital era.

Finally, the authors argue and advocate an integrated holistic Initiative towards leadership effort and effectiveness based on assessment and reflection.

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