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## Context to the nugget

Management Consulting often provides a whirl-wind exposure to multiple problems across industries and topics. However, one needs to significantly adapt the style while moving from a consulting environment to the Industry. Pramath talks about some of the adjustments consultants have to make when they enter the corporate world.

## Transcription

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**Deepak Jayaraman (DJ):** In terms of the incremental leadership muscle that people need to focus on when they move, do you have views on how people should think about themselves in terms of their development? What have been some of your observations in terms of your transitions and the transitions that you see people make effectively?

**Dr Pramath Sinha (PS):** I would say two things. One, is that given that you've lived the life of a consultant for such a long time, you kind of live in this belief that whatever you did had massive impact. It changed the way a client did things. You assume that whatever you thought up or whatever you came up with actually works in the real world. My belief is that most often, it doesn't. Firstly, when you go out into the real world, you don't have the time for that much thinking and consideration and reflection and analysis that goes into a typical consulting report. So, you're taking decisions with much shorter lead times with much less input and you have to decide and you've to move ahead. And a lot of times, things don't work. You have to do a lot more of try it, measure it, fix it, try it, measure it, fix it. You kind of do it that way rather than having a very deliberate strategy for anything. So, I think, recognizing that you instinctively have cognitive bias, you have decision-making paralysis, that your decisions that you're used to making and which may inform your quick judgment today are actually going to be, by definition, off the mark, because they don't factor in the implementation challenges. Just being aware that however smart you may be, don't assume that you know what it is to work in that environment or in the real world is very important.

I think, the second thing is then to really go with a mindset saying, listen, I have been living in an ivory tower for 10 years and this is like now taking on my first job. So, yes, I bring in great skills and that's a great starting point in a foundation, but, honestly, my gaps are really big gaps where I am actually at a zero. It's not like I have only got some partial information. I assume that I don't know this at all because of the protected environment I have been in and, therefore, being again very open to saying how do I learn. Giving yourself time to learn.

So, one of the mistakes I feel I made is that I was in too much of a hurry when I went and became the CEO of this company. I wasn't conscious of how important slowing down change is for an

organization. I came from a consulting mindset of transformation, PMO *banao*, launch new initiatives, people will change, they will be inspired, and I will inspire them.

**DJ: And there is a bias for pace...**

PS: Yes. And then suddenly, you realize that this is not a three-month project, this is not a six-month assignment, this is not a one-year PMO, where you have to actually show that you delivered the cost savings. You are playing a long-term game and there are people involved. Somebody who has worked in an organization for 30 years and you are saying this guy doesn't fit into my structure. You can't just get rid of that person, because tomorrow you will get rid of that person and your owners or your shareholders or promoters will feel, 'how did you just fire somebody who was such a loyalist? Do you know what I went through and how he stood by me? How can you just do that?' So, all kinds of other issues start to play up, which doesn't fit into the framework of an analytic approach.

That has been my biggest learning: to not be in hurry. Consulting, somehow, puts you into this treadmill of three-month, four-month projects. Everything has to be done yesterday; things have to be over delivered. To get off this clock and say, hey this is a long-term game I'm playing. If I'm going to be in this role for three years, let me take my time to listen, get to know people, build the credibility, and look at how I can build trust, all of those things. There's no hurry, it's OK. I can deliver the cost savings next year, but this year is really one year of induction, getting to know your people.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: To use consulting language here, I find that "settling into a new organization" is a project in itself with multiple work streams - While the details vary situation to situation, the common ones include a) coming up to speed on the industry b) Building relationships with key people in the organization c) Having mentors that give you a sense of the informal org structure and help you navigate d) Having a clear conversation with your boss on what good looks like and how that is communicated to the organization. This last piece is especially relevant when you are hired for your intrinsic and long term potential with no prior background in the industry. Michael Watkins - First 90 days is a great resource in this context. But treating integration as a project and allocating time and calendaring some of these help in settling in well into a new context. But to build on Pramath's point, the biggest shift is often in the mindset in terms of how you think about pace and your self-awareness around your capabilities.

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## End of nugget transcription

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## Dr. Pramath Sinha - Nuggets

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- 14.03 Dr. Pramath Sinha - Transitioning out of consulting (including views on entrepreneurship)
- 14.04 Dr. Pramath Sinha - Authentic leadership
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- 14.07 Dr. Pramath Sinha - Educating ourselves (and link with leadership of the future)
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## About Deepak Jayaraman

Deepak seeks to unlock human potential of senior executive's / leadership teams by working with them as an Executive Coach / Sounding Board / Transition Advisor. You can know more about his work [here](#).

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