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Context to the nugget

Vinita talks about how she evaluates Board opportunities that come her way and how they are a part of her Learning and Development plan. She also talks about her thoughts on the opportunities for Indian boards to get more effective in the way they are staffed and run.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): I am curious about the transitions for successful executives into boards, and I am curious about two things, one is you are on the few Indian Boards, in your experience what you see between great board members and good board members both in terms of what they bring to the table but also how they prepare and how they engage and so on and secondly a related question is successful executives what are the watch outs in terms of stuff they need to learn and unlearn as they transition to being a board member, any reflections on that?

Vinita Bali (VB): In my case I was fortunate enough to be on several boards even in my full time executive role in Britannia what I have done since then is, I took up two global boards primarily because what I was missing when I got back here was that huge global perspective that I had in my roles at the Coca Cola company and the two global boards that I joined were in very different domains, one was an agri products company and the other is a medical device company based out of the UK so for me board serves the purpose of a continuous learning and development plan for a non-exec. You learning about different domains how they look at opportunities and businesses and so on so certainly for me global board are critical and important because I do like a global perspective in fact I got of a lot of Indian boards and I wanted to restrict them really A only because there are so many boards you can do if you want to be a productive board member, so again I joined the board of Crystal which is very much an analytical company it does a bunch of other different things ratings is only part of their business it has again ability to interact with executives from SNP and McGraw-Hill who are on the board so in my case I have chosen boards that will expand my horizon both from a domain perspective as well as a geographic perspective, I do see a very big difference between a quality of conversation in my experience on the boards in India and the global boards that I have been on in general and I am generalizing a lot the contribution on board members is in a way more significant on global boards than on Indian boards I think people comes better prepared to board meetings, the board meeting run more effectively and more efficiently the quality of material that is distributed in advance is often times better the discussions themselves are discussions there is less presentation and more discussion I find that on the Indian board there's a lot more presentation and as Indians we also tend to be more verbose and so on theirs is a lot more engagement in between board meetings on the global boards than there is on Indian boards. On Indian boards you typically get together for the quarterly meetings and one strategy meeting that's it.

DJ: And that's engagement as a group or is it by lateral or is it?

VB: No, there are formal calls that we do so every four to six weeks you are in a board call so you are in a way more regularly connected with the board and the business of the company and these are not chat meetings, I mean these are significant meetings and these are done very well, using technology, so there are some differences and the other thing is every global board that I have been on has been a professional search process I think a lot of Indian boards are moving to that but a lot of board members on Indian boards if you look at the old boards it's the chairman picking up the phone and speaking to somebody or a few people in the group deciding who should come on to the board, every global board I have been on, I have been one among several candidates who have been interviewed by the board so you know that you are there because of your competency and it's very interesting if you look at the Indian boards and if you look at the number of people who are almost like the team that goes from one board to the next and I think that also partly comes in the way of productive conversations.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: It was interesting to hear Vinita talk about how she uses Learning opportunity as a frame to evaluate Board opportunities that make sense for her. To see Boards as part of an L&D plan is an interesting way of framing it. People often get into the mode of saying, here are the experiences I have and where can I deploy them and that leads to a very narrow set of options and limits the learning opportunity.

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End of nugget transcription

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Vinita Bali - Nuggets

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- 16.02 Vinita Bali - Early childhood wiring
- 16.03 Vinita Bali - Navigating the sea of career options
- 16.04 Vinita Bali - Consumer Goods (FMCG) as a career option
- 16.05 Vinita Bali - Transitioning roles in a large MNC
- 16.06 Vinita Bali - Navigating the first 3-6 months
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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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Podcast Transcript [16.09 Vinita Bali - Being an effective Board member](#)

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