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Context to the nugget

Jay talks about some of the advice he has received that has helped him in his political career. This includes being cautious about taking people at face value and in watching what you say in a public domain. He also speaks at length about the importance of listening to the voter needs and not getting swayed just by the voices of the party workers.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Three pieces of advice that helped you to become a better politician?

Baijayant Jay Panda (JP): The advice that I have received that have been most useful are very basic one was to never take people at face value some of us who come from professional background tend to think if a person says something he or she means it or that it must be accurate in politics you learn to take everything with the pinch of salt unless you have other corroborating factors. The other bit of advice I received was to never speak your mind unless you are very sure that it was a right thing to do because unlike in many other professions speaking your mind can have detrimental effects and this is a bit of advice I have not been followed very much because I am known for being candid and speaking my mind and the third thing one advice that have been very useful to me is to always keep the people in mind in politics you come across many intermediaries, you come across your local party office bearers, you come across local leaders, who have their own interest, their own stakes which may or may not be aligned with voters, so one of the lessons I learnt early on is if you align your interest with voters interest, so one example for instance is we get to sanction. One example of aligning to the voters has to do with the MP LAD funds these are the MPs local area development funds and there is immense pressure from local party officials to sanction them for small projects that they themselves can bit for end and the bill and the process benefit from and you don't see many remaining effects of the expenditure whereas the better thing to do which I have done is to ask the population in general rather than local party leaders and so one of the examples is that they wanted drinking water facilities which a larger project, each of them about 28 to 30 lakhs of rupees instead of 2 -3 lakh of rupees, now this doesn't affect you party workers very much but it benefits the population a lot and this is one of the reasons that I believe that I have been able to build the branding as somebody who cares for the people's problems rather than political workers it's not easy to do because you need your political worker's support also to do your grassroots campaigning and mobilization but this is where technology helps I was explaining earlier that even without those physical networks today you can do your mobilization on the ground using technology so being aligned to voters and their true concerns rather than the concerns of party workers is another good advice.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: The point Jai makes about listening to the voters is a very interesting one. It is something that came up in a different context in my conversations with CEOs where they talk about the criticality of walking the street and connecting with the common people. Suresh Narayanan (SN) (MD of Nestle who was instrumental in orchestrating the Maggi turnaround) spoke about the criticality of having people connect across levels.

SN: *“Especially at senior management levels it is important to step back and observe, so what I used to do in all the new situations is, I always walk around. I don’t sit in my chair, I will walk around the office, I walk around to the sites, I walk around where talk to the common people, what are the kinds of things that interest you, what are the kinds of things that bothers you, what suggestion would you give to build this company better, I think there are ways in which you touch the lives of people, the minute you touched the lives of people you as a leader do not become unreachable anymore”*

DJ: Just like in the political world, I guess it is critical for the CEO to form an independent opinion on what’s happening on the ground and find his or her mechanisms to do that.

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End of nugget transcription

Nugget from Suresh Narayanan that is referenced: [Transitioning effectively to a new context](#).

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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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