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Context to the nugget

Roopa talks about how she had to adjust her leadership style when she moved from leading a team of 4000 plus people in CRISIL to Omidyar Network which had about 150 people globally and about 15-20 people in India. She discusses the power of listening, learning and tapping into the internal network to come upto speed and build credibility with the organization.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Talking about Omidyar, in what ways did you have adjusted your leadership style in this context 15-20 people versus 4000 people?

Roopa Kudva (RK): I think significantly, one of the biggest recalibrations I have to make, it was bare in mind that I had no understanding of the business, early stage investing is a very different ball game and I was also not exposed beyond the work that we have done in the Crisil foundation, not very exposed to the world of non-profits and so a lot of time was spent in understanding of the business I have also realized very quickly that we have a formidable team and again it was when we have such an understanding people you just have to make sure that you create an environment where everyone is motivated to come in and give their best to every single day and I don't need to do much more beyond that they are just fabulous so I think that realisation came pretty early I think also very helpful people so I would sit and ask stupid questions and everyone answers them patiently and help me up to get the learning curve. What I focus therefor on was building out the team so a lot of my personal time went in recruiting people and so we significantly augmented the team since I joined and we built a new office in Bangalore as well where I spent my time was with entrepreneurs, getting to know who these people are, in Crisil I used to work with entrepreneurs who have arrive and build corporations here I was talking to entrepreneurs who were just getting started so just understanding this community, it's a very different generation, it's a generation which knows no fear they have no fear of failure, they are everything to take the risks they want to do good they want to have an impact so it was good to get to understand the entrepreneurs, I also spent a lot of time thinking about the future of Omidyar Network in India and how we should really focus, we work in 6 or 7 sectors how do we approach our business in a way that makes the whole of what we do, greater than the sum of the path and what are some of the new things that we should be doing which are unique to India and may not necessarily be applicable globally whether it be things like judiciary whether it be things like public digital platforms leaning from our Aadhaar and India stack experience, whether it be working on scaling of non-profit, so these are some of the area that just finalize the strategy for India and I think it's been the culmination of my observations learnings and reflections in the two and half years that I have been here, I finally feel that we are at a place where we are able to fully capitalize on the environment for the kind of work that Omidyar network does, I think India's time is now on the one hand you have the eco system for

entrepreneurship in general, being very positive, much more positive than it has ever been before and on the other hand the drivers of the social impact whether it be the mobile phone penetration or the skilling policy or everything else are gathering greater momentum so I think we are in a really sweet spot and I just feel it's a very inspiring organization to be in simply because of the power of the work that the entrepreneurs are doing it truly an elevating and uplifting experience to do this job.

DJ: Back to the point you have mentioned, coming in with the no prior background either working with young entrepreneurs or working with investing or with social impact as a leaders how do you established respect and credibility when you come in from that sort of an orbit?

RK: So first of all it's a small team so we are not talking about hundreds of people, I think that I mentioned therefor this much more manageable the scale and we are talking about 150 people globally so again I think some of the same principles which have worked for me, one is communication and listening I think that makes a big difference to is not being afraid to ask the questions, not being shy not being embarrassed to say that I don't know and three is it's a global firm so again invested a lot of time we had global sector leads, where each of the areas that we work in invested a lot of time building relationship trust with each of them I think all of that helped in the beginning, I also feel that people who work at Omidyar network are truly driven by a mission to make a difference it's a very A typical organization where you don't have like I said people who are here because believe they believe in the work and they believe in the mission and I think it was not just me, equally the team made it their problem to make me succeed so that helped.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: Listening intently from all kinds of sources in the first 3-6 months of a new job is often the place where there is the greatest missed opportunity when leaders transition to a new context.

One of my earlier guests was Ravi Venkatesan (RV) who was ex Head of Cummins in India and moved onto Head Microsoft. He spoke about the power of listening to multiple stakeholders in the context of his Chairmanship at Bank of Baroda.

RV: *"so from this you begin to piece together first the situation and then out of that emerges a theory of change which is, what interventions are really going to Make a difference and who are going to be an important alliances if you don't listen and you start to imide you are coming with the point of view you starts jumping into action right away you going to make a lot of mistakes because you hadn't built this nuance and reasonably accurate picture of the landscape so I am very intentional about these things."*

DJ: Unless you have a nuanced view of the organizational context, you often don't have a clear sense of which levers to pull to drive the change you want. Listening is the secret sauce here however simple or clichéd it sounds.

Thank you for listening. If you are new to the podcast and want to get a sense of the nature of content that is covered, you might want to go to YouTube and type "PlaytoPotential Highlights from 2017". I have tried to capture the key takeaways from my various conversations last year with leaders across disciplines. If you want to listen offline say during a car ride home or during airplane travel, you could also access the Podcast on iTunes, Stitcher, Saavn and several other podcast apps. Google has recently launched an app for podcast listening on Android platforms too. If you went to playtopotential.com, you would also have the opportunity to listen to multiple voices curated by a

topic. Play lists topics include – Reinventing Self (which is about how people changed trajectories significantly), early formative years where leaders talk about how their childhood has influenced them profoundly, Insight on career paths (various professionals talk about the ups and downs of their career and how individuals should think about embarking on that path)

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End of nugget transcription

Nugget from Ravi Venkatesan that is referenced: [Listening intently during Transitions](#).

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Context based Leadership: You can access the playlist [here](#).

Reinventing self: “How do I stay relevant” is a question that all of us have to grapple with as we go through our respective journeys. Careers aren’t linear any more. Some of the leaders talk about how they managed to pivot during their journeys and significantly change trajectories. You can access the playlist [here](#).

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Roopa Kudva - Nuggets

- 29.00 Roopa Kudva - The Full Conversation
- 29.01 Roopa Kudva - Omidyar Network and innovating for next Half Billion
- 29.02 Roopa Kudva - Early formative years
- 29.03 Roopa Kudva - Growing through the ranks at CRISIL
- 29.04 Roopa Kudva - Transitioning to a General Management role
- 29.05 Roopa Kudva - Choosing career direction post CRISIL
- 29.06 Roopa Kudva - Flexing leadership style at Omidyar Network
- 29.07 Roopa Kudva - Developing a sense of judgment
- 29.08 Roopa Kudva - Women Leadership - The barrier that doesn't get spoken about as much
- 29.09 Roopa Kudva - Perspectives on Success
- 29.10 Roopa Kudva - What they don't teach you at IIMA but should
- 29.11 Roopa Kudva - In summary - Playing to Potential

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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