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Context to the nugget

Sanjeev speaks about the three rhythms with which organizations often need to operate – growth, efficiency and foundation. He mentions that the first comes naturally to entrepreneurs and what differentiates the great founders from the average ones is their ability to walk that three-dimensional tight rope. He also goes on to speak about the power of complementarity in the leadership team that can enable these three rhythms.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): I think it was about the walking the tightrope between convictions and being amenable to critique / input, right? How do some of these individuals strike that balance? That was the question.

Sanjeev Aggarwal (SA): Yeah, I think these first principle thinkers one thing that they demonstrate is that they are very agile learners and building a business actually comes naturally to them. You basically need to work with them on how to have more disciplined growth, but once you debate with them and you engage them and you expose them to some alternative thinking, I think the advantage of backing these first principle thinkers is that they are very learning agile and they pick up new context very quickly. My personal belief is that in company building you really need three rhythms: growth, efficiency and foundation and any entrepreneur has a bias towards growth. But what separates men from boys are the ones who also focus on efficiency and foundation, which happens in a very, very early stage in their thought process of building a company. So, I think young or old the ones that are learning agile are very good at actually absorbing these multiple contexts.

DJ: And when you say efficiency, could you expand on that, Sanjeev?

SA: Yes, doing things without any waste you can also call it how to do a profitable growth. So, you know, being very frugal in your costs, being very good at investing where one should invest. So, you have X number of resources, how best you can utilize them and the biggest resource being capital and talent. So, that is the aspect of efficiency. So, how do you make sure that your growth is profitable and your growth is not unprofitable? So, if you have good efficiency orientation and sometimes if that is not your DNA you have a very able CFO who is driving that rhythm in the company. And then foundation is do you have a good security architecture? Do you have good ethics across the organization? Is there a strong value system that is embedded deep in the company? So, I think playing to these three rhythms really helps create built to last companies.

DJ: And you briefly alluded to this Sanjeev, you know, maybe different people might provide oversight on each of these three rhythms. Any... do you see these rolling up to... not in a formal way

but from a heavy lifting perspective do they naturally lend themselves to certain roles these rhythms?

SA: Yes, actually one very simple way to think about this is that I will simplify it further to say that there is one role of growth and other role of say efficiency and foundation or you can say there is a role of vision and forward-looking and then there is a role of minding the store day in and day out. And in our book we talk about this rhythm of Brahma and Vishnu that entrepreneurs are very good at envisioning a future and if they can surround themselves with a Vishnu who excels in day-to-day execution then magic happens and, you know, if you look at all great entrepreneurs in the country like Mukesh Ambani, for example, he has Mr. Modi who plays that role of getting it done or if you have Sanjeev Bikhchandani at Naukri, he has Hitesh Oberoi as his ally in making sure that there is world-class execution. So, founders can think of themselves as more the visionaries because that is a very intrinsic capability that is hard to inculcate and then surround themselves with an execution person. So, a CEO / COO combination can do wonders to disciplined growth.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: If this is a topic of interest, you might like some of the nuggets of my conversation with Nandan Nilekani where he shares his perspectives on what founders should look for while getting co-founders on board.

End of nugget transcription

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Sanjeev Aggarwal and TN Hari - Nuggets

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- 71.01 Sanjeev Aggarwal and TN Hari - Journey and transitions till date
- 71.02 Sanjeev Aggarwal and TN Hari - Three rhythms of a scale up
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About Deepak Jayaraman

Deepak seeks to unlock the 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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