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Context to the nugget conversation

Darleen speaks about how leaders and organizations have thought about apprenticeship in these times. Rohit Kale (who leads SpencerStuart in India) speaks about how peer mentoring has been impacted in these times but also goes on to speak about the silver lining here as this provides opportunities that didn't exist earlier for some colleagues to experience the "moment of truth".

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Lovely. Moving on Darlene, you know, some professions are based on apprenticeship including search that I was a part of and you are a part of a search firm and a leadership advisory firm and that often requires physical proximity. I was curious what are some of the trends you are seeing in terms of nurturing a culture of apprenticeship in these times?

Darleen DeRosa (Darleen): Yeah, absolutely. And again, we definitely can relate to this at Spencer Stuart. In our own data we had a power of place task force and I was on that as we were going through the last 16 months and that notion of apprenticeship definitely was something we saw very clearly in the feedback. And I think one of the things that we have started to do much more proactively again, it comes back to being planful and thoughtful is finding ways for people to have communities of practice. So, let's say I am in the healthcare practice, how am I having pods where I get to check-in with my colleagues and we can learn and we put people on projects together to really... even in a virtual setting you can have an apprenticeship model, you just have to be more thoughtful about it. So, we have seen some organizations do things like create culture buddies, where you can pair people up, it could be like peer mentoring but it could be someone who's highly tenured with someone coming newly into the organization and making sure that they feel like they have got that apprenticeship structure. There's been a lot more of a focus on leadership development and mentoring and a lot of organizations have pivoted and rethought their investments and training and I have been doing that virtually. So, again, this isn't new for many big companies but for some companies they didn't have these processes in place. So, I think, the other thing that we have been seeing is that companies have been much more focused on making sure their leaders have a coaching, the coaching skills to be effective in a virtual setting because we know that giving people feedback is one of the biggest items that drives employee engagement. So, a lot of our clients from a leadership development perspective are focused on helping their leaders build a coaching skill in an apprenticeship culture. So, again, there's not, it's not a simple fix but I do think there's a number of things that companies have done and are doing to really try to replicate that apprenticeship culture.

DJ: I also got a chance to speak with Rohit Kale (Rohit) who leads SpencerStuart in India. He spoke about the impact of the remote working situation on a profession like Executive Search where apprenticeship is a big part of the equation when it comes to development of colleagues.

Rohit: *"I think the apprenticeship and learning therefore has been impacted significantly. The fact is that if, in a professional services context where apprenticeship is key, being able to be part of every discussion, being able to be part of discussions that you are not even technically invited to, for example, somebody sitting next to you and watching what they are going through, or being able to bounce off ideas with others, is a huge part of the apprenticeship process. I do think that has suffered. On the other hand, I have also seen an impact where given that every client meeting is now an online meeting, we are seeing a lot more participation of a research team and are our team in every progress review, whereas earlier, many of these progress reviews would happen at client's site and as a result, would be only with the consultant and the client. And therefore, we are also seeing that the research group now has a lot more exposure to both business development meetings, as well as progress reviews. So in some hands, we can see that the exposure has increased and that has helped apprenticeship. On the other hand, the peer learning aspect of it has been significantly impacted."*

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: Remote working does provide interesting apprenticeship possibilities that possibly didn't exist earlier. In the context of the Leadership Advisory work I do, it is much easier for me to be a fly on the wall and share feedback with leaders in meetings they attend. For instance, I work as a Leadership Advisor with a Private Equity backed Start up in the Home Retailing space and I get to participate in a fortnightly leadership huddle. It gives me an opportunity to be a fly on the wall and observe different leaders engage with each other. Subsequently when I have one on ones with some of them, it gives us an opportunity to speak about how the leader conducted himself or herself in a certain context and build from there. This opportunity wouldn't have possibly existed in an offline world, where it would have been much harder for me to participate in these conversations.

Bringing it back to what Darlene says, I guess each one of us needs to find the silver lining in the context we are in and see how we can build the capabilities of the people around us. Some traditional apprenticeship opportunities might have evaporated but some new ones have emerged if we keep an open mind.

End of nugget transcription

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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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