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Context to the nugget conversation

Harsh speaks about how he looks for good talent where it is at an Executive Level or at a Board level. He speaks about the mix of passion, determination and perseverance that he looks for in the individuals he hires.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Let's talk about getting the right talent, right? I think even early years, apart... one is sort of looking for skills, competencies for the job but what are some of the let's say the soft elements which are must haves for you at different levels?

Harsh Mariwala (HM): Yes. So, at all levels there is one must have been that burning desire to succeed, you have to be self-motivated. I am not the kind of person who will nurture others, you know, okay, but that's not me. Okay, I want self-starters. I myself am a self-starter so don't expect too much of nurturing from me in your journey. You have to answer your own questions. And if you have that burning desire to succeed, you will develop that grit, which is a combination of passion combined with determination and perseverance. You want grit you don't want just passion because every person will have setbacks. If you have that grit you will try harder and overcome that setback. So, you need a person with a burning desire to succeed and a very high degree of grit; that cuts across any person within the organisation. Having said that, I think, at senior levels I probe a lot on leadership styles. What is the leadership style that person is bringing, how can that person influence others rather than a control person? I want person who can influence others, you know, and to what extent that person is getting that outside in. At senior level you need more and more outside in. What is happening around the world in each and every area whether it's digital or whether it's HR or new product opportunities or what's happening in geopolitically, you have to be aware of what's happening and how it is impacting the organisation. What can you do proactively to overcome that potential threat or make an opportunity out of it? For example, in our whole ecommerce journey it could be a threat of going to ecommerce sites like Amazon or it could be an opportunity if you manage it well. So, can you proactively look at discontinuities in the environment and encash on that in terms of new product launches or any of the trends which are happening in the area of technology so that you are not vulnerable in terms of it hitting you, but the likes or Nokia or Polaroid have happened because the top management has just been there so much of inside out and not outside in.

DJ: And on-board members any pieces around, you know, the distinction between being an effective executive and an effective board member, is there a nuance you look for?

HM: I think it is very important that the board retains independents. So, the board has to critique and don't have to get into the strategy side of the organisation. The strategy has to be developed by the internal team because the moment the board gets into strategy then you are taking monkey on your own back and you lose independence as a board member. So, it's very important to have that fine distance between independence and getting involved. And I think that's very important role of every board member.

DJ: I was looking for an attribute, you know, apart from the stuff you spoke about resilience, perseverance, is there anything else you look for at a board level in a board candidate?

HM: So, again how is board in terms of giving feedback, how mature are they in terms of because if you start looking down upon management, it will not cut ice with the management saying this board member thinks no end of themselves. Of course, you can challenge, you have to challenge internal team members. The board is, another thing board has to be very good judge of talent. So, because ultimately one of the most important roles of board is to have the right CEO on board and to make that CEO perform better, not only CEO, but CEO and CXOs. So, the board has to get involved in selection of CEO, CXO, if need be, mentor them, assess them, what kind of development they should be going through in terms of job rotation or any other experiences, training programmes, coaching. That's a very, very important role of the board and to that extent each board member should be very good in judging talent and helping talent perform better.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: If you like this topic, you might find the Playlist – Effective Hiring relevant.

End of nugget transcription

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Effective Hiring: Staffing up your leadership team thoughtfully is one of the key roles of a leader. However, the paradigm for hiring in the digital world is changing as we move towards a world where intrinsic are beginning to matter more and more. Leaders across domains share their insights on how one could hire effectively. You can access the playlist [here](#).

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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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