



Leadership Lessons – Military to Corporate

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A large number of defence personnel having been seeking a second career in the corporate world, some after taking voluntary retirement and others after completing their contractual service. Corporates groups like Jai Prakash Associates, Tatas, Reliance, Hero group do have a large number of defence personnel on their rolls. The security companies like Group 4, Security and Intelligence Services and others of course are dominated by defence personnel at various levels. With the increase in FDI limit it is expected that the employment of defence personnel will go up in defence manufacturing sector.

The big question is what value addition do these personnel bring to the organization, we restrict ourselves to the leadership in this article. Defence personnel perhaps is the only breed which undergoes formal training on leadership during their pre induction training period as well as during the service. Let us see some of the aspects in which defence personnel add value to leadership in corporate world.

Decision Making

Leadership is all about making decisions. In defence services most personnel at various levels have been confronted with live situations where not taking decisions is not an option at all. And that habit of taking decisions continues when they come to corporate world. It does add value because one of the reasons for poor leadership in our country is our inability to take timely decisions.

Lead By Example

This is again a basic trait which the defence personnel inculcate during their service. Defence service is unique where a leader leads his subordinates into battle from which they may or may not come out alive. To expect such a supreme sacrifice from the subordinates there is no other way but to lead by example. Unfortunately this is not something which is prevalent in the



corporate world where the leader tends to take all the credit and puts the blame for failures on the subordinates. That is why the trait to lead by example is a welcome change in the corporate world and is widely appreciated at most places.

Organisation Development

A defence personnel lives with motto Service Before Self. The motto is imbibed by him during the induction training and continues with him throughout his service. When he comes to the corporate world he is always thinking of the organization before him. In an environment where people are under cutting each other to climb the promotion ladder, organization before self is a welcome change and it helps in organization development.

Motivation

In defence services motivation is the key to get the best out of the team under adverse circumstances. It is to the extent that a soldier can be motivated to die for the nation. Similar exercise in the corporate world helps defence personnel to get the best out of their teams. It comes very easily to them because they have been in the business of motivation in their entire military career.

Team Building and Management

Defence forces are perfect ground for breeding team building. No war big or small can be won with individual efforts, it is always team effort. Defence personnel have been brought up and spend their entire service in team building and team management. The same continues with them when they come to corporate world. It is something which gets recognized by their team and accepted by them. It also spreads to other members of the team who may not be from defence background. In the overall the organization benefits from this team building and management aspects.

Conclusion

In conclusion one can say that the defence personnel bring to the organization some unique attributes. These attributes help the defence personnel to get accepted in the corporate set up as also help the corporate set up in developing leadership in the organization. If properly utilized the defence personnel can be the game changer for the way leadership is evolved in corporate sector. However the big challenge is the defence personnel getting used to the corporate set up. They start a life where the routine and the systems are very different from the ones they are used to. The mismatch has the potential of ending up as failure in many cases.



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