
“VUCA” IN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE – A STUDY**Dr. Ch. Rama Krishna**Assistant Professor, Government College, Mandapeta, E. G.

ABSTRACT

VUCA which is an acronym coined by the U.S. army in the nineties to describe the post-cold war world and which embraced by all types of leaders in all sectors of the society in describing the world in which they are in operation. There isn't any doubt; definitely we are in the VUCA environment.

While we are doing our business, we've got a very complicated landscape which is moving on us in many different directions. That's why we need to have an effective organisation that can move quickly." The CEOs and of the huge business organisations have to understand the challenges of VUCA environment. This paper studies how the CEOs as leaders of Indian companies are following the principles of VUCA, striving to get the skills of VUCA, and the role of them in creating, shaping and transforming their organization's culture as more dominant in the current era.

Keywords: VUCA, VUCA Skills, CEOs of India.

INTRODUCTION

VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity), is a term derived from the military vocabulary. It is nowadays used by many organisations to strategize their growth in the current economic slowdown. Though the term VUCA has been in vogue since the late 1990s. Goplakrishnan, The Director of Tata Sons believes that it has always been present in society since time immemorial and that VUCA has happened in the concurrent world of SPCC (Simple, Predication, Clear, Calm). Though the process of change of technological responses has kept pace with VUCA development, there remains a constant gap which calls for even more technical responses. However, Gopalakrishnan believes that it is the human nature which hasn't adapted fast enough to this change. Because of human behaviour which changes gradually, becomes important to focus on human addictiveness in today's VUCA world. On the volatility and instability around us, the current work structure is designed to make us control the environment around us. However, nature looks at not controlling turbulence, but leveraging it, which is far more effective in the long run and thus, companies should look at leveraging turbulence and not suppressing it.

It's important to learn from nature around us and that the corporate world has neglected to do that. Nowadays companies are looking at efficiency and getting the best bang for the buck, nature, on the other hand, highlights on effectiveness and not efficiency. Most of the companies look going down a straight path; nature shows us a spiral path. We have to believe that for institutions to successfully respond to the VUCA challenge, we need stare the world differently and that it is not a bad proposition for companies to go around in circles actually, restate that in today's VUCA world human adaptive ness is complex and a big challenge.

Once corporate values are enunciated and shared, the executives fortify them through personal example and by ensuring they surge throughout the organization. These Executives also understand they need others to frame and fortify the corporate culture. They manoeuvre the values to guide assumed decisions and process the personnel development and they ensure that all the organizational systems are regulate and synchronized to concretize the culture.

Among other values, prominent executives stressed empowerment, integrity and employee development at all levels. They also recognized that they could not shape the culture alone. "I can certainly set the tone, but then I need all the executives to do that exact same thing. They need accurate senses to find it, they need to model it and they need to embrace and nourish it." These CEOs did more than formally reinforcing the company's values; they were present throughout the organization to push and fortify the values. "You've got to be perceivable, particularly in a franchise business—franchisees have to know that the leadership is noticeable," . "So we are very open, obtainable and accessible." Today the passionate world is in a crazy spin. The leaders should cope us with this volatile, uncertain and constantly in the recent and new changing times.

INDIAN CEOS - VUCA SKILLS

Organisations whose executives have a high VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity) capability are 3.5 times more likely than those with a low VUCA capability to have a strong leadership bench. To the extent our Indian CEOs aware of this. When we look into the possession of VUCA skills....

This new VUCA environment is rigorous even the most able of leaders who found that their skills are becoming Exhaust in this new passionate world .To confront newer challenges which they have to face in this newer world, they should need to advance the new skills to handle their responsibilities efficiently.

The scarcity of skills which to days CEOs have to excel in the VUCA universe is:

SKILLS OF FORECASTING AND PREDICTABILITY

- 1) Forecasting and predictability Leaders with clear goals of where they want their companies to be in three to five years can better environment volatile environmental changes such as economically downtrends or new rivalries or competitors in their markets;
- 2) Rapid decision making it is the ability to spread across the organisation and move quickly to apply outcomes.

Coming to the point of that to the what extent our CEOs prepared and ready to face this VUCA World..

Indian leaders are predecessors in inexpensive innovation and have a flexible approach. When compared with other countries our Country is behind in, is infrastructure and technical alertness required to face the challenges of the VUCA world. And also, the changing political scenario will provide enough and more opportunities for the leaders to develop new skills required to grow in the VUCA world.

SKILLS OF PROMPTNESS

Developing the skills on Time To Time are very important in facing the challenges of VUCA. CEOs need to enhance to deal and keep in touch with arising societal, legislation and taxation trends. However, our CEOs lack in

- 1) Super cognitive skills for dealing with diverse employees, particularly in the digital world;
- 2) Leadership in turbulent times for navigating through complexity, chaos, and confusion with an ability to scan the business environment and
- 3) Skills for train the employees in motivating creativity and innovation.

We learnt lessons from high volatility swings in 1998-99 though we continue to face a VUCA world. Handling the global recession of 2007-2008 without effecting India's GDP growth of seven to eight per cent, was an ample proof that we learnt to keep risks at acceptable levels. The global business environment requires a dynamic strategy to steer out companies through the VUCA world.

SKILLS OF UPGRADATION

Most CEOs are unwilling to learn from mistakes. Also, they need deep competence and infectious enthusiasm to create the right leadership team with rock solid values and a culture of great execution.

Administration should take the lead to learn and remains optimistic, despite the large number of challenges in running a business in India. The ones who have the hunger to learn, the humility to listen to diverse stakeholders and the ability to inspire themselves and others are prepared to face VUCA challenges. The ones who allow the 'ego' to create fear lose out.

The dearth of skills in top leaders across all countries converge around internal capability. CEOs need to continuously upgrade their skills in order to maintain quality products, smart workers, and strong customer appeal and form lucrative collaborations. Remaining flexible and taking advantage of technology are of the paramount importance.

SKILLS OF ADOPTION

CEOs do not have a choice in this matter anymore. Leaders who have not judiciously changed business models, in accordance with the changing times, had to see their companies shut shop. We are living in a digitally connected nation where our mode of communication has changed dramatically. At the heart of everything are employees. Recruiting and retaining quality human capital are foremost concerns of all company leaders. How we build and nurture our employees can have a significant impact on all organisations.

The first skill which is most lacking is foresight the ability to look ahead, picture possible scenarios, evaluate options and consequences, and act promptly. The second skill in short supply is the ability to accept and objectively evaluate opinions, which are antithetical to their own beliefs. In a VUCA world, teams must pull together through every thick and thin.

SKILL OF UNDERSTANDING THE CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

All leaders acknowledge VUCA challenges, regardless of industry or geography, scale or spread but not all of them may be prepared. Those leaders who are reactive by nature are under-prepared; those who are proactive are prepared. In uncertain times, it is important to understand the discontinuities created by change and focus on the opportunities arising from the same.

To be VUCA-ready, organisations need to pay attention to volatilities and discontinuities.

VIEWS OF INDIAN EXECUTIVES ON VUCA IN INDIA

Welcome to the VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) world, where you will find more and more leaders doing things differently. In this age of rapid change – both external and internal – they can't afford to remain closeted in their corner offices. The leadership playbook of yesterday no longer works and new rules and skills have to be employed.

In view of VUCA, Sri R. Gopalakrishnan, Director of Tata Sons at ISA's Global CEO Conference - Navigating VUCA, organised by the Indian Society of Advertisers (ISA) in partnership with exchange4media stated that India being a complex and cosmopolitan country has always existed in a VUCA world and the success of Indian entrepreneurs could be attributed to the fact that Indians are wired for VUCA. The Tata Sons Director also emphasised on the importance of rediscovering intuition. He stated that intuition played a big role till the 16th century, when rationality took over. While rationality has its merits, intuition plays a big role in all critical decision making in life and business and ignoring this intuition will make the person/ company incapable of handling VUCA. Therefore, it will be "foolish to ignore" intuition. He also added that in the VUCA world, Indians were far more intuitive and likely to succeed. "Don't blame the environment, but look at your own focus," he concluded.

As per the Intention of Daizo Ito, President and regional head for India, Sth Asia Middle East of Africa, Panasonic India "Our leaders lack technical preparedness"

Manoj K Raut, CEO and Director, Institute of Directors commented on VUCA as "Change management skills will be the main predictor of a CEO's confidence"

Sanjeev Duggal, CEO and Director, Centum Learning Limited view on VUCA is "Leaders who did not judiciously change business models had to see their companies shut shop".

As per the words Arvind Thakur, CEO & Joint MD, NIIT Technologies.."Those leaders who are reactive by nature are under-prepared"

Anil Sachdev, founder and CEO, Grow Talent and School of Inspired Leadership (SOIL) opined That "CEOs hardly spend 30 to 50 per cent of their time on the people side of their business"

Dilip Puri, former Starwood India MD who is currently advisor to Marriott International, smiles disarmingly and says he is here because his market is here when asked for express his views on VUCA. A Leader, he is not the only one wading into the trenches. James Thomas, who leads the Indian business of Kronos, a workforce solutions company, is regularly studies and spending time with customers, partners and employees. "I find being in the trenches in real time on a regular basis very important and helpful. Then only we percept the heartbeat of customers and the market and its variations," says Thomas.

For Charulata Ravi Kumar, CEO Sapient Razor fish India, a big challenge is that 'leadership' itself has evolved to a new role "redefined not by leaders but rather by the influx of a whole new breed of young, dynamic, entrepreneurial and innovative start up minds that are breaking norms". She insists the importance of change of leadership style from direction to Guidance. "Leaders need to lead from the front, middle and all the sides. They have to mingle one with the teams and shed the notions of hierarchy."

SKILLS TO BE DEVELOPED BY OUR INDIAN LEADERS**DEALING WITH THE UNKNOWN**

When we Ask CEOs what their top challenges are and charting the unknown ranks high. "Secrets, Hidden, Unrevealed or Unknowns are emerging more rapidly every day," says Thomas.

"To lead today, one must know what to do when unknown what to do," says Santhosh Babu, managing director of OD Alternatives and a leadership coach.

For the Leaders, the other challenge, he says, is that organisations or Industry are no longer linear. "Today organisations are sustained, adapting, complex systems much like an ecosystem in a national park." This means leaders need to be adaptable and resilient.

KNOWING FROM PEERS

Hence how do the leaders cope with changing or current contexts and realities? A lot of them read extensively. Others hop on to knowledge hubs or forums. But Ravi Kumar says she has gained a lot more by “making in deep conversations with extra ordinary minds of performers and achievers than over-reading and participating in too many knowledge seminars”. Thomas of Kronos endorses this. “Leveraging peers or peer groups, networks and mentors help in gathering critical good counsel.” Also, as Ravi Kumar points out, “A leader need not be with a vast ocean of knowledge. In fact, it is an unreasonable task in today’s times when the information and pace of change overload is beyond grasping. Now What is critical is to seek out one who knows what to know or get and who can connect the dots across the many layers that this facts and change are creating.”

LEAD TOWARDS DUAL OR MULTI GOALS

Another big challenge for leaders today is facing their teams’ changing expectations. Today’s employees are highly individualistic and has personal and professional ambitions or goals. As Ravi Kumar says, “From the last couple of years, the need and ambition to reach one’s professional and personal goals simultaneously now require companies and leaders to look into both with equal zest.”

This is not saying that we are helping them to balance their lives, but it is about inspiration to achieve or enhance their potentiality, “ as leaders how we can push and support them to perform or achieve their goals or ambitions that differentiates among a boss, a manager, or a leader”. Although she insists the importance of guidance from mentors. She stresses that “Don’t neglect to be led or guide by our own inner self.” though, is reserved for Dilip Puri, who says to navigate through a time when disruption is the new normal, “ Make you must be a person always acquiring, developing and maintaining people who are smarter than you-People who praises your leadership”

CONCLUSION

It is vital to know about the customer, supplier, employee, so that organisational programmes can be improved and digitised. Sometimes, unlike in previous decades, there had been some compromises on the management of skills but with time, the processes and the frameworks on VUCA Skills management had evolved and definitely get improved. Most companies, had their own framework on compliances, corporate leaders’ corporate governance realised that if they did not get it right, the business would be negatively impacted in the long run.

From a regulatory perspective, India was quite well-regulated. On the conundrum of deteriorating asset quality of Indian Companies, we believed they didn’t fail in their assessment. “To say that organisations were not aware of the concern is insulting their intelligence”.

The organizational culture and the leadership at the top is the only central force which drives management and how companies succeed by coping with it”. As a country, we believe that the intent is there and there really has never faced the need of showing it to the outside world that we are doing it right. It is known and accepted. It was important to understand what had to be protected on the technology layer and what the weak points were, whether it be the entire network, the endpoints or anything else. There were several ‘unknown unknowns and hence this assessment should be left to the experts. Another critical factor for companies is that they needed to understand and identify costs versus risks involved.

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