

Know your mind-set to stay ahead in business

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MIND-SET determines growth. Often companies that are not doing too well attribute their misfortune to the external business environment. And in the process ignore that they are indeed victims of their own making. There are also cases of companies being caught in a 'feel good' syndrome, whereby they believe that incremental growth is good enough to stay ahead in business. Behavioural scientists say that companies belonging to both these categories need professional help to overcome their mental blocks. Manford Trust, a Delhi-based team of behavioural scientists and psychologists, has taken up the challenge of helping companies "undergo transformational change through experiential learning". Organisational behaviour is the cornerstone of their pioneering work.

Manford picks up client organisations that are doing fairly well. According to C Anand David, founder of the Trust, this approach is borne out of the belief that if the enterprising people can be galvanised to do better, that will spark off 'transformational change' in a vast multitude of professionals who come in contact with this 'target group'. Says he, "If Manford is able to touch 2,000 enterprising people, who in turn help another 100-150 persons each, that will lead to transformational change across the country."

In the normal course, most organisations tend to rest on the laurels of a 40-50 per cent annual growth. But, David makes these organisations believe that they can actually grow at 100-120 percent. "It's all in the mind," he says. He cites the case of the legendary athlete Roger Bannister, to substantiate this point. Medical experts had come to the conclusion that it was impossible for man to run a mile under four minutes. But, Bannister broke this 4-minute barrier. That's not all. That very year, six other athletes broke the barrier, proving to the world that the barrier was just in the mind.

David feels that companies need to get into an introspection mode and unearth their true potential. Manford employs psychological tools to aid these companies unravel their strengths. The Trust operates in the areas of organisation development, diagnosis, climate surveys, training need analysis, re-engineering, systems building, strategic planning, mission statements, role analysis, corporate search, education and training and development.

the organisation. Group discussions are held with the company on what they are really good at and what is troubling them. This way, we get a fair idea of what is wrong in the organisation. After this, we prepare a diagnosis paper. A 40-point questionnaire is circulated among the personnel on what they think is the strength of their organisation. From this emerges the difference in reality and perceived reality prevailing in the organisation. Thereafter, we work on making this reality and perceived reality a single factor."

Adds David: "Once the diagnosis report is ready, the workshops get started. The workshops are meant for the top management. After all, the character of an organisation is always the character of the top management. The bottleneck of a bottle is always at the top, never at the bottom."

The workshops help the client organisations evolve action plans. Says David, "Each programme is professionally designed and delivered as a part of an overall renewal and growth package as negotiated and agreed to with the clients."

Manford organises various kinds of workshops. There is a four-day workshop for the top and senior management on 'Corporate Breakthrough'. "The workshop uses the power of feedback, analysing roles and role sets, building strong teams, and creating visions for the organisation that go beyond perceived limitations. Through a series of experiences and role-plays, the participants are led into a thorough re-examination of the self as performers as well as critical contributions to organisational output."

A five-day workshop on 'Empowered Leadership Programme' deals with empowerment, delegation, building teams, conflict resolution, leadership, goal setting, achievement motivation, interpersonal skills, self esteem, managerial skills, decision making, communication and assertiveness etc.

There also a two-day workshop on 'Skills and Advanced Skills Workshop' that deals with leadership, locus of control, time management, assertiveness, communication, delegation, mentoring, role analysis, counselling, role design, appraisals, goal setting and decision making, marketing and selling skills etc.

Says David, "Depending upon the specific need of the clients, management consultancy services and follow-up sessions are organised, typically once a month to keep the learning alive and spirit ablaze. This apart, highly intensive facilitators programmes, normally spread over a minimum of 18 months, are administered to volunteers of

says that "the process involves realisation and introspection. It is like a laboratory where organisations learn about their mistakes through a series of experiential learning."

Says David, "We look at companies with Rs 200-crore business. That's a size we are comfortable with."

But, do companies take the OD exercises seriously? Says Poonam: "HR is no longer a fad. People are realising that HR is not a personnel section. It is an investment. Hence, training is not seen as a holiday any more."

Adds David: "Companies are also moving away from headhunting. Instead, they feel it is wiser to train and develop people who are already working with them. Hence, the demand for people like us."

Manford has grown remarkably since its inception some three years ago. Says David: "We started with zero rupees, but we have grown. Within three years we have become international, with clients like UN organisations. Manford is one among 55 bodies chosen as trainers for UNDP."

Says he, "Whatever we do has the scientific approval. All our models are published in the behavioural science journals. Moreover, we are all licensed to handle these assignments."

Manford services are truly in demand. Although industry was going through a recessionary period, the Trust recorded a remarkable three-fold increase in business. Perhaps, more and more companies are realising that OD is the pathway to progress.

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Explains David: "We begin with a diagnosis of

programmes, normally spread over a minimum of 18 months, are administered to volunteers of those organisations who desire development of organisational development (OD) expertise."

The learning methods include management games, lectures, discussions, role-play, group work and inquiry.

Poizhan Nijhawan, co-founder of Manford.