

Going For Gold – Lenovo Annual Conference Discussion

Bangalore, May 4 2012.

Good Morning, Ladies and Gentlemen. It is my pleasure to be here with you this morning. Bangalore is my home town and my mother lives here, so it's a bonus for me to do this session. Raj and Shubhankar who worked with me before have asked me to do this session in the past and I've not been able to get the dates right. So, I'm happy that I can do it for them today. As a principle, I never refuse any of the people who've worked for me, when they want me to come and speak, it's my way of saying thank you to Raj and Shubhankar for their hard work when they worked for me.

I like your theme going for GOLD. I've tried to look at your theme from three angles, from the individual, from a team point and from a company point. Every employee looks for and seeks the vision and direction of a company, so that they can be inspired. That's correct and a basic delivery expected of a company.

However, I would turn the concept around and ask people, what's their vision for themselves or their family? In most cases, one gets general answers, be financially secure, take care of family, educate the kids etc. Going for Gold starts with you as an individual! Many of us are constantly waiting for someone to tell us what to do. We should stop that if we want to realize our full potential. Having personal goals, short term and long term is important if you want to go for GOLD.

Let's start looking at individuals who went for GOLD. What can we learn from them? The first is Sir Roger Bannister. What is he known for?

Roger Bannister was first man to run the mile in under 4 minutes!!

His story is interesting. He was a reserve for the 1948 Olympics, and didn't take part in the 1948 Olympics. He competed in the 1952 Olympics, had a semi-final in 1500 which exhausted him and hurt his chances in the finals. He finished 4th with a new British record, seven of the athletes who ran the race broke the record. At the end of the race, he wanted to quit athletics forever.

He changed his mind to come back and focused on breaking the 4 minute barrier. He tried about 10 times to break the 4 minute barrier. And finally, he did it on 6 May 1954. After that it was broken again in 15 days. No one remembers who that was.

What inspired Bannister to go for GOLD? The 4 minute mark which journalists said couldn't be done?

Let's look at the next person-Reinhold Messner, an Italian settled down in Germany. He has climbed all the mountains without oxygen. You could well ask, what drives someone like this to do it? Because he is pushing the limits, he is going for gold in a different way, a difficult way. He climbed all 14 peaks which are over 8000 meters, all without oxygen. In 1978, he climbed Mount Everest without Oxygen proving doctors and mountaineers wrong.

The next person is from IIM Calcutta and I met him last year at the IIMC Golden jubilee celebrations. He was awarded the distinguished alumnus award, one of 9 in the fifty year history of IIMC. His achievement- he climbed all the seven peaks in under 172 days, the fastest man to do so. So, what drives a boy from Andhra to dream and conquer the seven peaks? A drive and ambition to do something unique and extraordinary. 'Large goals are achieved if you strive for them consistently' - that is the message from Messner and Malli.

The next two are achievers in different ways and also very very different from each other. The first is Ivan Lendl, a mean machine on the tennis court. He was the first to think of diet and a gym routine in men's tennis. He introduced 'power tennis'. He was industrious, worked hard and was effective. Was he a joy to watch? Difficult to agree on that! He won many times - 8 Grand slams and 94 times on the circuit.

Let's look at the next man- John Mc Enroe. When you see this picture of Mc Enroe, what come to your mind? A Brat, his tantrums, his marriage to Tatum O Neill? I played Tennis for my university. Mc Enroe was a genius, one of the few to use a continental grip, a single hand backhand. He won seven grand slams. He was World No One 14 times in between 1980 and 1985. For all his fiery temper, he was a true patriot. His peers were playing exhibition matches to make money while Mc Enroe always played for his country in Davis Cup. He said that representing his country was a huge source of pride for him. There is a lesson for all of us here, your style can be different or on the edge, as long as people see the commitment to the larger cause or company.

Which Mc Enroe match do you remember the most ?

The 18-16 tie breaker in the fourth set at Wimbledon in 1979 is something he is most known for. The most famous tie breaker.

Big, memorable, dramatic moments in sport change not only the persona of the player but also those watching it. That tie breaker told the world that Mc Enroe was on his way, there was a way to play a tie breaker. As a tennis player watching it, it was magical.

The Tendulkar's, the Kamblis, the Azhars were all fired up after watching the 1983 India win at the world cup, that's what big

moments do, they create a new legion of players and fans. Your GOING FOR GOLD will do the same to your partners, your distributors etc. Please do not underestimate it.

So, what are the lessons we take from all these men who went for GOLD- Bannister, Messner, Malli, Lendl, Mc Enroe?

- 1. There is no formatted formula for success. What happens on the ground or arena is only a small fraction of the preparation before.**
- 2. The road to success is rarely straight. Losing should increase your hunger to win.**
- 3. If you are committed, hard-working, focused, passionate and courageous, you will win more than you lose.**
- 4. Success is a disciplined process and requires a winning mindset. As someone said, you rent success, you never own it.**

Having looked at individuals going for GOLD, let's look at teams and start with two member teams.

The first team is Tiger and Steve Williams. Tiger is American and Steve is Kiwi. They worked together for 12 years between 1999 and 2011. In golf, the glory is always with the golfer, never with the caddy. The caddy at best earns 10 pc of what the golfer earns as prize money. Steve Williams is the richest sportsman in New Zealand on his 10 pc!! But the caddy serves the golfer in the best possible way so that the golfer wins. I sometimes go to watch the British open Golf. And I follow Tiger on the course. A few years ago, I walked with Hank Haney, Tiger's coach. Hank mentioned that at every major, Steve would get up at 4 am and walk the course to see where the pin positions were and stand behind the pin and see the fairway from there. He would memorize that and help Woods on the course. Steve did this even though every golfer and caddy gets

the printed version of the pin positions in the morning. How many of us are waking up at 4 am to help make someone else look good, fully well knowing that there is little credit in it for us. That's team commitment. That's GOING FOR GOLD.

The next team is Mc Enroe and Peter Fleming. They won 50 doubles titles together. They won every Davis Cup match they played.

Fleming was humble, he was once asked who is the best doubles pair in tennis and his answer was " Mc Enroe and anybody" How many of us can accept a distinctly talented person at work. Are we threatened by that person or are we comfortable to acknowledge that person and work to succeed? Going for GOLD requires us to support talent and genius so that we can all win. Imagine flying at different altitudes! Someone will fly at 30k feet, someone will fly at 25 k feet, and both can be successful.

The next set is Indian, Leander and Bhupathy. They were the first team to reach the finals of all four Grand slam events in the same year; they were No 1 in 1999. They have the longest winning streak in Davis Cup, 23 wins.

Apart from the Woodies and O Briens, these guys had the best chance at glory. They played well and then separated. The world lost a great team and the two of them lost a great deal, they sadly realized it late. The lesson is - in two man or two person teams, one need to play the foil, and both cannot be superstars, that's the lesson as you go for GOLD.

The next is one of my favorites- the Beatles. The band was formed in Liverpool in 1960. As of 2012, they still have the highest number of hits in the top 100, a full 20! They started playing at the Cavern, went to Hamburg and landed in the US with nearly 12,300 live performances under their belt. Today, a successful band doesn't do

12000 live performances in a life time! They worked hard, trusted each other, improvised and collaborated on the best love songs ever written. They could never produce the creative magic or hysteria when each of them went alone. There's a lesson in it for us when we go for GOLD. Collectively, the Beatles scored more than 4, but individually they scored less than 2. The ability to see when a team is magical and accepting that in one's head is a significant step.

The next team is Manchester United and I am a Man Utd fan. Football is a game where the strategist pays for failure, that is the coach loses his job and not the players. A few years ago a consultancy firm studied successful football clubs; to unravel what made them win. Most people thought it was money. It wasn't money or star players; it was the number of passes made on the ground. Passing is sharing selflessly and that's what wins matches. Passing keeps the team engaged in the whole game .

In the last Champions league final, Barcelona beat Man Utd; Barca has more than 600 passes all between Messi, Iniesta and Javi. Man U had 330 passes, mostly between Vidic and the goal keeper and Ferdinand and the goal keeper and Vidic and Ferdinand. No wonder Man U lost.

Man U is also about Alex Ferguson, a man closely linked with the success of the club because he has always done what's right for the Club despite some big egos playing at man u like Eric Cnatona, Beckham, Ronaldo, Giggs, Ruud Nistlerooy etc. His story is a lesson for all of us on learning how to manage hi value talent in the context of the institution. GOING for GOLD requires high discipline irrespective of the talent you have in your team. And like in

football, if you want to win, SHARE, share liberally, especially information.

The next team is team Anna. Team Anna is about cleaning India of corruption. How many of us know of the composition of team Anna? It has some wonderful public servants. Kejriwal, Shanti Bhushan, Kiran bedi, Medha Patkar, Manish Sisodia, Santhosh hedge, Shivendra Singh and Kumar Vishwas. We are however distracted by a few in the team and their comments, posture.. The intent and goal is noble but will this team be a team without their leader? What is needed for this team to be a long term team? Going for Gold requires good followers as much as a good leader.

What are the lessons from the GOLD teams?

- 1. Working in teams needs you to manage your ego well.**
- 2. Teams and members must be flexible to achieve the larger goals.**
- 3. The leader of a team must always have a winning mentality.**
- 4. You rarely lose from a winning position and rarely win from a losing position. Stay on the winning path.**
- 5. A team has one leader.**

Let's now look at two companies, one a non- profit firm and the other a service oriented profit firm in a brutally competitive industry.

A non-profit organization is unique in that it serves a larger cause of humanity.

Let's look at the Red Cross. Started in 1863 by Jean Henri Dunant. He went to meet Napoleon 3 to discuss business interests in Algeria, then controlled by France. He went to the town of Solferino for the meeting and saw a massive fight where 40,000 soldiers died in a single day. He was shocked at the lack of medical care and forgot his business and got the villagers to help people without discrimination. He then went back to Geneva and started the Red Cross. He was awarded the first Nobel prize in 1901.

Getting volunteers to believe in the cause either to work, or to give time or to donate money is a big thing. The concept of volunteering is important. So as you go for GOLD, do you have employees or VOLUNTEERS for this cause?

I have put only one company here – Southwest Airlines. This is an airline that consistently makes money in a brutal industry. How do they do it? Clear strategy, fly between two places when someone has the option to take a car and drive as an alternative. They have mastered standardization in low cost. Their crew and people are recruited first for their attitude and personality and the next for the skills. They all double up and help each other; there is no 'this is not part of my job description' mentality here. They consistently GO FOR GOLD and win.

In summary, I would say:

- 1. The pursuit of excellence is not an EGO trip, it is about how far you can go and improve.**
- 2. The work culture needs to be constructive, positive and inclusive if you want to go for GOLD.**
- 3. Stay true to your path and don't be distracted.**

**4. Individual-Team and Company. What is important when?
Think that through please.**

Going for Gold is not a sprint, it is a marathon, I wish you the very best.

Thank you, it was a pleasure to chat with you this morning.

Shiv-Nokia