

# “Developing People”



Weekly Learnings 10 / 2024

After I posted the developing people book summary, friends asked me to write about my own experience.

I have been colleagues with area sales managers, brand managers, cross function colleagues, management teams, CXOs and CEOs. More than 150 of my colleagues are CEOs and CXOs today.

My learnings:

0. Development is simply a process of adding value to your colleagues. You should choose your area of relevance and excellence, invariably a signature strength in you.

1. People are most receptive to development when they are young. There is no difference between men and women to being developed at this stage.

2. When people are young, they have more hunger to learn, they are more open and are willing to be challenged. They have a good job, want to make it better. My Questions like 'Is this your best?' or, 'What could you do better in the situation' are seen by young people as open and not judgemental. They also tend to follow more of the company rules.

3. Senior managers and CEOs are more difficult to coach and develop. Most CEOs fill the role, many don't fit the role and very few outgrow the role. Most senior managers and CEOs become insecure over time if they haven't invested enough time in learning and being relevant for the future, I hypothesize that they know they are going through an impostor syndrome. Their conversation examples are from the past, and ten years old.

4. Most CEOs need to be coached in time management, priority setting, building ecosystem partnerships and trying new experiments. Habit is the biggest enemy of senior managers. Having the right approach to holding people accountable is another area. CEOs tend to be either too demanding or too nice, they don't get the balance.

5. It's difficult to develop people when the company is in a crisis because individuals are more

worried about their own future and every conversation is seen as a threat. This is what happened in Nokia around 2012, most of my efforts in people development didn't work. And the insecurities of expats in Dubai led to more politics which the organization could ill afford. A healthy growing organisation is the best place for development.

6. It is impossible to develop people who have poor self-awareness, who talk more than they listen and whose world view is ' tomorrow will be a repeat of yesterday'.

7. In an era of reverse mentoring - A few bosses are open to be developed in areas they are short on by their colleagues and insecure bosses are consistently threatened by anyone good.

When you develop people, you also need to give them opportunities to speak and shine, you have to open doors in external forums, you have to open your network to them. And you have to do this without any expectation.

I've been part of many teams; the attached picture is of a brand management team I was privileged to be part of in 2000. This team had high credibility and all of them are successful CEOs.



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