

# Empowering TIMES



September 2011

## Editor's DESK

Dear Reader,

While watching television some days back I noticed that a single commercial break brings with it a plethora of advertisements urging you to buy products that solve problems from head to toe and products for use at various stages of a person's life-cycle. It made me think; wouldn't it be great if there could be such products for businesses as well? For e.g. if there is a problem in the HR department a dose of special vitamin would set it right, or an entrepreneurial venture could be vitalized with an energy drink! But alas, that is not true in real life and businesses depend on the skill of people who handle them. This assumes prime importance in case of businesses which are in the formative years as the future course of a business is defined by the foundation laid during inception. This prompted us to look at ' **Organisation Building**' in this month's issue of Empowering Times. I hope you find this issue interesting and informative, as for some of you it will be akin to re-visiting history, and for some, a way forward!

This month's **Thinking Aloud**, features Jay telling us about the exciting adventure of organisation building. How an individual takes an idea from within the mind to the real world in the form of a business proposition. Not all succeed at doing this, but the journey is worth all the efforts. Jay says that there is no set formula for success, but a willingness to learn is a crucial skill that can reduce the probability of failure.

On the **Podium** this month, Dr. Ferzaan Engineer, co-founder of CyteSpace and a representative of Quintiles Transnational Corporation (USA) on the board of Cenduit LLC, unravels the journey of Quintiles India from a garage

In this Issue:

**Thinking Aloud:** The exciting adventure of Organisation Building - **K. Jayshankar**

**Podium:** Interview with **Ferzaan Engineer**, PhD, co-founder of CyteSpace and representative of Quintiles Transnational Corporation (USA) on the board of Cenduit LLC

**Between the Lines:** The five most important questions you will ever ask about your organization - **Peter F. Drucker**

**Standing Ovation:** Foundation for Initiatives in Development and Education for All (IDEA)

**Figures of Speech**  
By Vikram Nandwani



to a large organization.

He tells us that one of the key mantras was to start small, measure success and then scale rapidly. He asserts that it is essential to have a core belief structure for an organisation and its 'reason to be'. He also shares with us key pointers that budding entrepreneurs should keep in mind in their pursuit of excellence!

In ***Between the Lines*** this month, we review the book 'The five most important questions you will ever ask about your organization' from the Leader to Leader Institute founded by Peter Drucker. The book provides an organisation with a framework for self-assessment which will help a business in clearly defining its goals and taking informed steps to attain that goal.

In ***Standing Ovation*** this month, we present the Foundation for Initiatives in Development and Education for All (IDEA), an NGO working for the underprivileged children, youth and women in Pune. IDEA aims to re-enroll school drop-outs and provide supportive interventions in various forms including but not limited to monetary, guidance and training support.

In ***Figures of Speech***, Vikram fuels the vehicals of organisation with passion.

As always, we value your opinion, so do let us know how you liked this issue. To visit our previous issues you can visit the Resources section on the website or simply [Click Here](#). You can also follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).



## The exciting adventure of Organisation Building: - K. Jayshankar

It begins with a dream, a notion that not just appeals to you but possesses you & develops into a compelling urge. An itch that continues to exacerbate, refusing to go away. Until finally you realize that this cannot be postponed any longer.

This is the inception. An idea has begun to germinate and then begins the harder task of bringing this to life and slowly, over years, to full bloom & fruition.

What makes an entrepreneur work on his dream project? It takes a certain degree of 'craziness' to become an entrepreneur - particularly in the challenging business environment in India. The good news is that since 24th July 1991, with the advent of liberalization, there have been many more people than before, from non-traditional segments of our society who have wished to actualize their entrepreneurial dreams and have taken the plunge.

While failure is never a pleasant thought, it is not an option that an exuberant & optimistic entrepreneur ever considers. He (and increasingly, 'she') gets started with gusto but not everyone is lucky to have favorable tailwind to continue the journey. The acid test is whether he can keep the faith when confronted by strong headwind and business gale.

For many technically oriented entrepreneurs, the first challenge is getting a better comprehension of the economics of the business. Strange as it may seem, it is not unusual to find new technocrats totally at sea when it comes to financial aspects, having

taken a simplistic view of costing. Clearly, amongst the early steps you need to do is to get good financial advice. Businesses are often lost because of the inability to understand financial principles of business rather than the merits of the business ideas per se.

Another crucial challenge is faced with the first tentative step that is taken when the business goes out of the classic 'garage' stage. Not having the right talent on your side delays scale & smart entrepreneurs understand that you need to quickly go beyond the 'F&F' (family & friends) circle. Spotting talent and dividing portfolios appropriately is never easy & rarely non-controversial but the ability to face conflict & negotiating your way through it is a valuable skill.

I truly believe that organisation building is an energizing journey. But developing ulcers in this process is not mandatory! Sure, there are no stock answers but the willingness to rapidly learn is a skill worth acquiring. Having a good mentor or a seasoned business coach alongside makes this process less painful as the availability of wise counsel is a comfort.

One of the least understood aspect is the value of investing in learning. There is nothing more short-sighted than not feeding your team (& also yourself) with intellectual vitamins as this is the ultimate growth nutrient. The medium, mode & content of learning may (and should) vary according to your organisational situation but the desire to instill a hunger for fresh inputs from external sources in the new organisation is part of the entrepreneur's tasks. A smart entrepreneur will understand that this is what will give the firm a platform for sustaining itself, failing which creates fertile ground for the 'not-invented-here' syndrome!

While today's entrepreneurs are more willing than before to part with stake as the firm grows – spread the goodness, as it were – the fact also is that you may not be able to hold on to all employees forever. Even those with a philosophy of 'Give, and get more in return', are taken aback at the turn of current events when faced with employees with an 'I-want-everything-now' mentality. Such transactional behavior is alarming to the entrepreneur and adds to the risk exposure for the business. To them I say, remember Dr. Sumantra Ghoshal's words that 'it's not enough to think of employees as assets. Perhaps we should think of them as volunteer investors, choosing to invest their talents in the organisations they have joined.'

Consequently, if the firm's leadership can create an attractive & vibrant climate inside the organisation, such 'volunteer investors' may choose to stay invested to participate in the growth, by hitching their wagon to the founder's dreams.

A rollercoaster ride this may well become but for those engaged in the excitement of organisation building, in the wise words of Yoda, 'always in motion is the future' and the force will be with them!

[back to top ^](#)



Empowering  
TIMES

**Ferzaan Engineer, PhD, is a co-founder of CyteSpace and also serves as a representative of Quintiles Transnational Corporation (USA) on the board of Cenduit LLC, a Quintiles-Thermo Fisher Scientific joint venture.**



Till recently, Ferzaan served as CEO of Quintiles Research (India) Private Limited and a member of the Asia-Pacific Management Board of Quintiles, responsible for managing India, SE Asia, China, ANZ and Japan. He has contributed to establishing and growing the Quintiles organisation in India, which along with 2 joint venture companies, employs over 3,000 professionals.

After obtaining his BPharm in 1985 from the LM College of Pharmacy in Ahmedabad, Ferzaan completed his PhD in Pharmaceutical Sciences in 1990, from the College of Pharmacy at the University of South Carolina, USA. He has attended management training programs at the Kenan-Flagler Business School (USA), IIMA (India) and at INSEAD (France). From 1990-92, Ferzaan worked as Assistant Professor of

Pharmaceutical Sciences in the United States, followed by an industry position as R&D Head for Core Healthcare Limited from 1993-97. After establishing Quintiles India in 1997, he focused on growing India's first international Clinical Research Organisation – CRO (Quintiles) and Contract Sales Organisation - CSO (now a joint venture called Pharmalink).

Ferzaan has been a member of professional bodies such as the AAPS and AACP. He received the AACP New Investigator's Award in 1990 and also received research grants from the National Institute of Health, USA. His research papers and abstracts have been published in leading international journals. He has lectured at several international conferences, Cambridge University, IIMA and Apollo Hospitals. He has served on the Advisory Board of the Indian Society for Clinical Research (ISCR). He is currently a member of the CII National Committee on Drugs and Pharmaceuticals and the FICCI Pharmaceuticals and Biotechnology Committee. He also serves on the Scientific Advisory Board of Cellworks, USA.

**ET: You built Quintiles in India from a start-up firm operating out of a small bungalow into a large multi-locational, multi-divisional industry leader in the Clinical Research space. Please share with us some of the key challenges that you faced & how you solved them.**

**FE:** Quintiles India is successful for many different reasons. Since inception, we were a market maker and had the opportunity to define our space. This was not without its challenges in the initial years, particularly in a highly regulated industry which was strongly rooted in the economies of the Western world. A highly customer-centric approach helped us start our core business, growing our client base as we demonstrated success. The idea was to start small, measure success and then scale rapidly. Initially started as a joint venture, the company leveraged local expertise and talent from the Indian partner and the domain leadership and global footprint of Quintiles. We introduced new businesses in the Technology space to leverage India's competitive advantages in this area. This also enabled the induction of talent from outside our parent industry to complement the home-grown team. The company's growth was also aided by an industry shift to the East and India's growing Health infrastructure. Although the core strategy was well founded from the beginning, the company grew through various opportunistic decisions that proved to be well timed. The initial team that started the company from humble beginnings grew rapidly in an empowering and entrepreneurial culture. It also became a crucible of learning where people could test new ideas and build businesses and functions with a strong sense of ownership. There was significant cross-pollination of talent across different verticals, functions and geographies. There has always been openness and trust and the willingness to learn from mistakes. The leadership that was spawned went on to lead various businesses and geographies within Quintiles worldwide and this momentum continues to this day.

**ET: At crucial junctures in the process did you ever feel that individual decision making scored over a team oriented process? Please share some experiences.**

**FE:** Different styles of management will suit an organisation at different stages of its growth. However, it is important to retain a

consistent set of core values which represent the company's 'reason to be'. In a truly entrepreneurial organisation, individual initiatives will be welcomed and teams are spontaneously formed around such initiatives to ensure execution. Ideally, individual decision-making and team-oriented processes should complement one another. This is hard to achieve unless there is a culture of trust and mutual respect within the organisation.

**ET: Of all the primary business functions such as Marketing, Operations, HR, Finance, etc., which 'one' function assumes the most strategic position in the process of organisation building? Why?**

**FE:** I do not believe that there is 'one' strategic function. An organisation is built through a culture of Leadership and Teamwork. Ofcourse, specific competencies in various domains are necessary, but they must serve to amplify the larger value proposition of the company. I generally do not favour highly functionalised organisations in our space.

**ET: Recently, there have been some high-profile leadership transitions in the Indian industry (e.g., Infosys, etc.). As someone who has created a successful business in India, in your view, what does it take to build a sustainable winning organization?**

**FE:** Clearly, leadership becomes the key in sustaining a winning organisation. Preferably a leadership culture should be pervasive across the company rather than be confined to the top. Many Indian companies have done an admirable job of scaling their businesses, going global and passing the baton to new leaders. There does not seem to be a fixed method. Different approaches will work for different companies depending upon their history, culture and business environment. In my view, optimising the mix between home-grown and external talent, finding the right local leadership in global markets and creating a culture that spawns new leaders are important.

**ET: What would be your word of advice to budding entrepreneurs or people who have just started on this path?**

**FE:** Here is some advice for budding entrepreneurs:

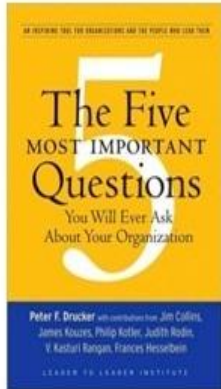
- Work to your passion. Selecting a business that you are passionate about is the key and everything else follows from there...
- Build a supportive ecosystem of friends and colleagues who you can trust and who can guide and help you at different levels, both personal and professional. Start thinking about a team and creating shared value from day one.
- Make sure that your business plan is strategically sound - that it addresses a potential market, is competitively positioned to deliver value and is adequately resourced to achieve critical milestones.
- Get your tactics right. Small businesses have a spectacularly high failure rate and a narrow window of opportunity to prove success. Hence, starting when there is an opportunity at hand (typically a potential customer) and optimizing the use of scant resources, while at the same time investing in growth, become critical. The world is littered with failed businesses which had big, bold ideas. Execution is the key to success.
- Start at a time when work-life balance is achievable and there is reasonable financial security. There is no point in running after professional success at the cost of family and personal wellbeing.
- Be flexible and adaptable (Darwin was right!). Often entrepreneurs get mesmerized by their Big Idea and fail to flex with the environment. Adaptability and patience are needed to move a customer from 'what he wants' to 'what he needs'.
- At the end of the day, do not follow anyone's advice! Entrepreneurs can be a quirky lot. Expect to be contrarian on several occasions...but hopefully with some of the caveats stated above!

[back to top ^](#)

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## The five most important questions you will ever ask about your organization - Peter F. Drucker



The Moses of Management, Peter Drucker, was known to raise fundamental principles when consulting with his clients. Those probing questions are legendary now and the Leader to Leader Institute has put together these 5 Commandments, as it were, in a concise book called, ‘ **The five most important questions you will ever ask about your organization**’ .

First, a word about the Institute - Formerly known as the Peter F. Drucker Foundation for Non-profit Management, The Leader to Leader Institute, was created in 1990, as Drucker reached out to strengthen the social sector by helping them examine their fundamentals with wider organisational principles. Frances Hesselebein, considered by Drucker to be the greatest leader in America in her role as CEO of the Girl Scouts of USA, was the founding President & got a team together that cut across organizational barriers for this purpose. The seminal work of the Institute has been made possible as she has brought together the best of leaders ranging from business to military to the social sector and has made the Institute a

prominent player in any leadership dialogue.

The book under review was earlier meant for the non-profit sector to help them focus on basic issues but the questions are relevant to others too. Hence, the self-assessment provided is a tool kit to enable any clear headed manager who is interested in stepping back from the hurly-burly of daily managerial chores and keen to see the bigger existential issues relating to the relevance of the corporation that they are creating – or serving.

The five magical questions are:

- What is our mission?
- Who is our customer?
- What does the customer value?
- What are our results?
- What is our plan?

Simplistic as it may seem, the deeper implications of these questions are more realised in their absence than in the presence. Take for instance, Drucker’ s pithy comment that ‘ a plan is a concise summation of the organization’ s purpose & future direction’ . Too often a firm agonizes over its yearly budgetary process and produces a document that no one believes in and which becomes the property of the finance department. With ownership diffused, the budget becomes a control tool rather than an enabling one & the exercise of creating it becomes a power struggle in negotiation rather than an exciting journey of bringing to life a road map for the future.

And, here’ s what the wise man has to remind us about us about goals: ‘ The most difficult challenge is to agree on the institution’ s goals – the fundamental long-range direction. Goals are overarching and should be few in number. If you have more than five goals, you have none. You are simply spreading yourself too thin. Goals make it absolutely clear where you will

concentrate resources for results - the mark of an organization serious about success' . Remember these words when as an operating manager you are inundated with conflicting tasks & challenged by the inability to prioritize.

The book' s distinctiveness lies in the additional inputs provided by other influential writers & researchers who have expanded on these key five questions. Be it Jim Collins, Phillip Kotler, James Kouzes, Judith Rodin or Kasturi Rangan, all acknowledge the inspiration drawn from Drucker' s questions & provide their interpretation of these basic tenets.

Keep in mind that the objective of the book is to provide a framework for organizational strategic self-assessment. For this purpose, I would recommend this book as there are enough pointers to make you question & reflect on the larger picture of your firm, something often forgotten in the daily grind of work when we can easily miss the wood for the trees.

[back to top ^](#)

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## Foundation for Initiatives in Development and Education for All (IDEA)



IDEA is a NGO working for the underprivileged children, youth and women in Pune district in Maharashtra. IDEA originated from a PhD study on the reasons of school drop-out among underprivileged children and the impact of the interventions taken by the Government and the Voluntary sector to address this problem. IDEA started its work in a slum in 2002 and currently works in 10 slums with population coverage of nearly 60,000 and reaching out to 4,500 children.

The objectives of IDEA are:-

- To identify ' out of school' children and to enroll them in a school & to provide need-based assistance to them.
- To minimize school drop-out through school and community level interventions.
- To support poor and needy children to complete their education.
- To provide vocational guidance and training for youth for enhancing their employability.

IDEA' s activities include the following:-

- Field studies in urban slums to identify ' out of school' children.
- Play and Learn centers & Study centers in slums to make the early stages of education interesting to retain the interest of newly enrolled children from poor families, and to inculcate a regular study habit in them.
- Sponsorship program to support needy and poor children.
- Skill Development programs for girls and women for a supplementary income.
- A facility for Vocational Training, especially drop-out youth to give them ' a second chance' .

IDEA is one of the recipients of the ' Outstanding Annual Report Awards-2010' , a national level competition organized by CSO Partners & Credibility Alliance every year.

For the exemplary work that IDEA does, it deserves a **Standing Ovation!**

If you want to get more information and support IDEA, visit its website [www.ideal.foundation.org.in](http://www.ideal.foundation.org.in) or look up their Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/IDEA-Foundation/143290109022739>). You can also contact Dr. Usha Pillai on +91 9890119732 or write a mail to [contact@ideal.foundation.org.in](mailto:contact@ideal.foundation.org.in).

[back to top ^](#)

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