



# Journey of Excellence Needs **Continuous Transformation**

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Excellence, in today's world is a never ending multi-dimensional race where there are recognitions and rewards at new milestones in different directions. Many organizations get exhausted and tired of facing the challenges from the new enthusiasts and the old ones which are continuously revitalizing, and empowering themselves and are transforming their entire business and leading strategies. Corporations envisioning to excel in the long journey are distinguished with the characteristics of Total Stakeholder Centricity, Technology Driven Predictive Intelligence, Readiness for Next Digital Disruption, Accelerated Multi-dimensional Innovation, and 'Versatility and Reliability of Products'. Researches have proved that the companies which have survived in the journey of excellence for decades and centuries are the ones which went on inventing new strategies to challenge the environmental factors and competitors' innovative prowess in products and in the way of doing business.

If we look at the global business groups that have not only survived with sustained growth for centuries but also hold a strong promise for future viz; Colgate, J.P. Morgan Chase, Citi group and Otis Elevators etc and Indian conglomerates like Tata group, Godrej group, Century Textiles, Alembic Pharma and TVS group etc. all have been continuously transforming. But with threatening volatility in the external environment and complexity of the ruthless competitive forces, the need of continuous transformation has become serious and requires top consideration at the board level.

Further in today's business world almost all forward

looking companies are innovating and the ingredients of innovation have never been more accessible. As such the competition is now amongst innovating companies and innovation no more confines to products and services, it encompasses the entire game plan starting from innovative way of conceptualizing the business idea to analysis, interpretation and presentation of results. To enable the innovation to flourish and to maintain its competitive flow to influence all functions, there is an unavoidable need of having a culture of innovation that supports and nurtures all endeavours in their journey into more challenging future. In search of the most distinguishing characteristics of such companies, we find that continuous transformation is the leading characteristic which is an essential energy fluid to support and nurture the culture of innovation.

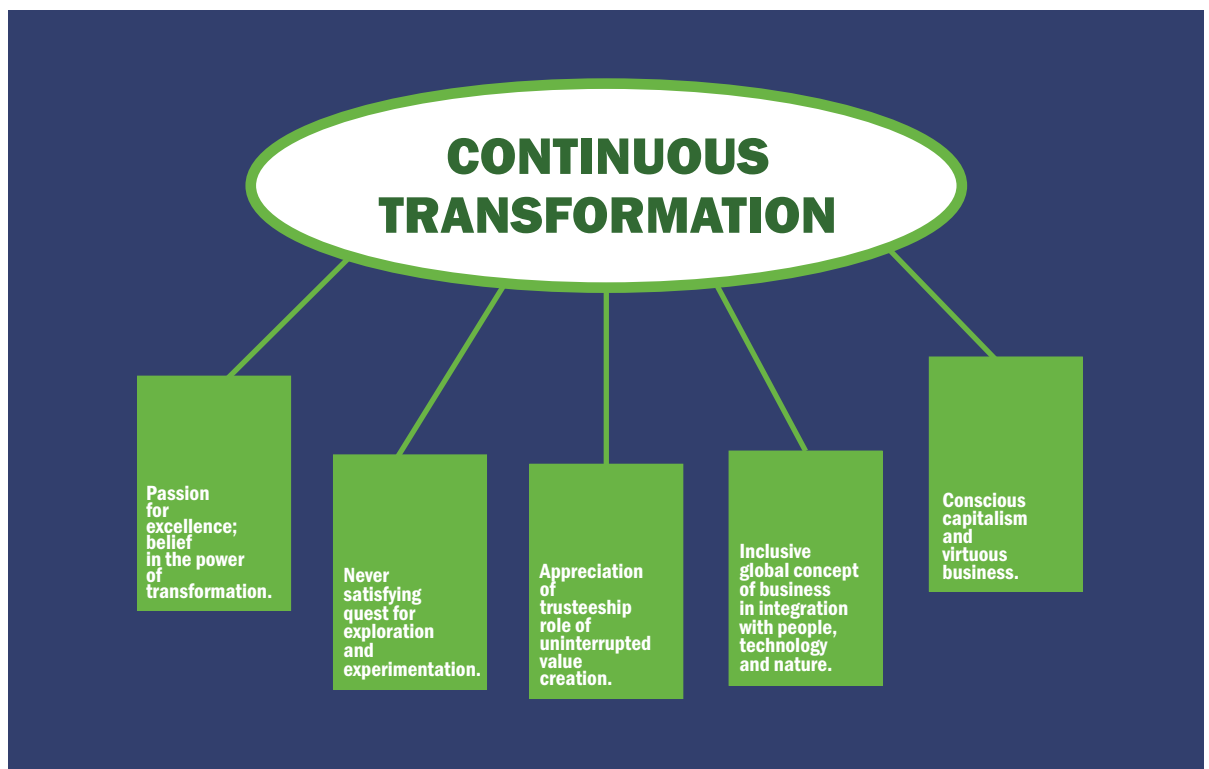
Today when the technology has dramatically changed the methods of observation, research conceptualization and development of products and services, the CEO and the top corporate leaders have to think and work in an inclusive manner where technology is thoughtfully integrated as an enabler and accelerator, right from environmental sensitivity to customers' and stakeholders' feed back.

Most of the aspiring companies are realizing that the vision and the business strategy need to be appreciated and internalized by all corporate chiefs like CEO, CIO, CHRO, CMO, Manufacturing Chief etc. Practically this is not happening and is sometimes causing frustration to the top team. A production head may plead for Baldrige criteria of quality, the CMO may emphasise on greater customer focus, the CHRO may

insist on more attractive career progression, superior compensation and reward system and the CIO may struggle to be the fore runner to absorb the latest technology. While all heads may be striving for excellence in their own way, the company as a whole may not transform to move faster in the direction of its strategic vision and may not experience sustainable growth. Many times, while all functional

leaders may not find any fault with their efforts, the organization ends up having rag-tag collection of discrete initiatives which appear to create some noise with some slogans, mantras and buzz words. Past several decades we have seen many companies which launched quality programmes and obtained certifications but could not continue as a leader in the race of excellence.

## CORE VALUES TO STEER CONTINUOUS TRANSFORMATION



### **Passion for Excellence; Belief in the power of transformation**

Many corporate leaders talk about excellence without a strong commitment and drive to excel. Some even confuse excellence with a pack of tricky moves to bring extra ordinary profit. Excellence is about making the soil fertile for all seasons and crops. It's a continuous *yajna* (activity with devotion and faith) which ensures continuous improvement (kaizen). For continuous transformation, CEO and the top leaders have to be passionate about always doing better than the best and about striving to drive the company from good to great.

There are many companies which are lead by learned and experienced people who preach about being willing to change, to innovate and to transform but they are neither willing to question the relevance of their learnings in the current and emerging context, nor are they keen to develop

a new belief system. Since the factors influencing the business environment, externally and internally are changing fast, organizational leaders need to appreciate that continuous transformation carries the most dependable promise for accelerated growth even in the VUCA environment because it helps in creating scope and space for building resilience and agility.

### **Never satisfying quest for exploration and experimentation**

In fact amazing inventions, innovations and discoveries, which have brought human evolution to this level, all have been possible through the questions and the never satisfying curiosity. Questions motivate us to gather relevant knowledge, think analytically and build new logic through curious interaction with growing human aspirations and immense potential of nature. It's high time, the corporate leaders at all levels develop more respect for

inquisitiveness, arouse personal curiosity and ask questions to see amazingly new paradigms of possibilities. Curious leaders will encourage their people to ask questions, shake the mental frames and explore a new world of opportunities.

Quest creates an urge to explore the potential of people, nature and technology with the experiments which open-up new prospects and create scope for further research and experimentation. The tremendous power of quest works like the engine of the vehicle of excellence.

**Appreciating trusteeship roles of uninterrupted value creation**

Companies which create examples of excellence, believe that the corporate leaders are custodians of the wealth of society, they carry the trust of all stakeholders for creating ever increasing value for them. Board of Directors has to, therefore be intelligent and vigilant enough to mitigate the risks and to foster the measures to create a promising future for them on a sustainable basis. Continuous value creation needs corporate wisdom which helps leaders invest their intellect, money and other resources for re-shaping the future for a greater tomorrow.

**Inclusive global concept of business in integration with people, technology and nature**

The role of corporate world is expanding and evolving to encompass almost all aspects of human life. Business leaders see several new paradigms of synergies of a number of core constituents and influencing factors of business growth. An inclusive concept is fast emerging as a greater promise for future. Today's business leaders are working ceaselessly to unleash the tremendous potential of the people who have to mobilize all resource, technology

and support systems to facilitate continuous transformation. Millennials, who constitute the major size of people power are keen to support organizational transformation with their own aspirational reservoirs.

Technology is no more a support system. It is providing new dimensions to human imagination and needs to be integrated with every thought and action right from idea generation itself. Lately companies have started appreciating that sustainable business can be envisioned only through careful nurturing of the natural capital.

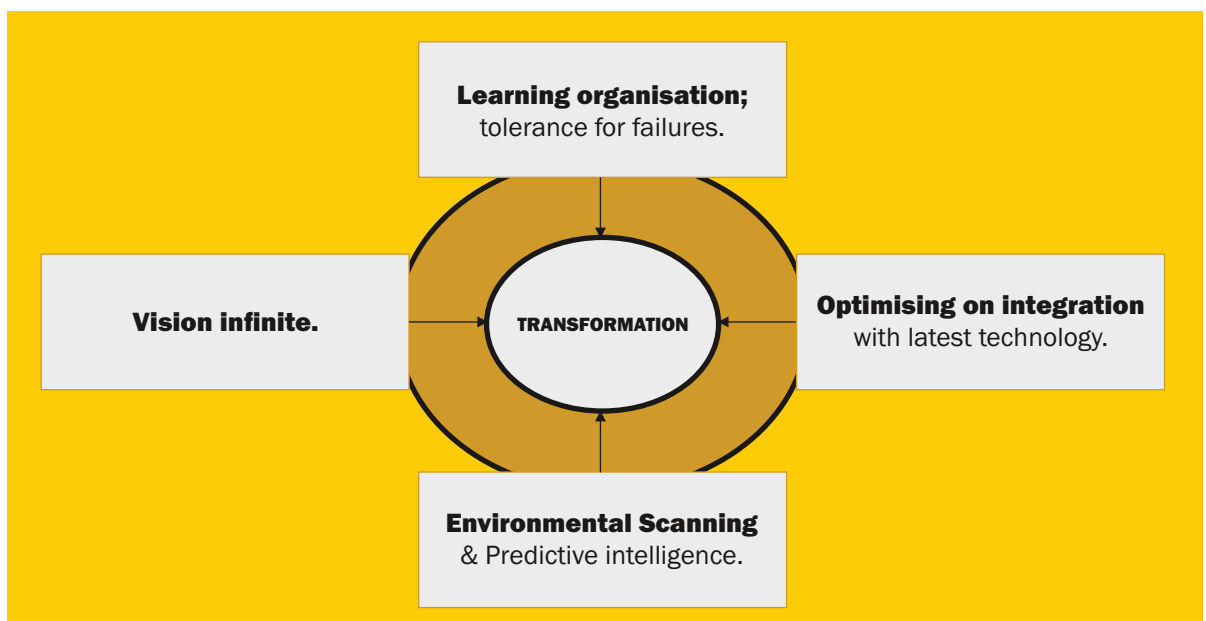
**Conscious Capitalism And Virtuous Business**

Conscious capitalism focuses on an integrated view of interests of various stakeholders and ensures that business targets are achieved through higher intelligence, integrity and commitment to organizational values. This is facilitated by having a holistic view of society, human life and the company's long term mission. This flows down from the Chairman to the CEO, then to the board and the management team.

Virtuous business takes up the role of bringing positive changes to human life. While leading in their respective sectors, companies create examples of rewarding interdependence amongst creatures and resources on the earth and their initiatives help in developing an ecosystem which makes human life more valuable and meaningful.

**Love model of transformation**

This article proposes a conceptually developed LOVE model of transformation which can work as a basic framework to support the uninterrupted movement of transformation.



### **Learning Organisation; Tolerance for Failures**

Willingness to research, re-invent, re-organise and review for finding out better ways of thinking and doing, is the key to open the treasure of prospects, that may be created through transformation. CEO and other top executives have to be learning leaders and they need to promote a culture of continuous learning at all levels. Learning requires an open atmosphere where the hidden strength of questions is valued, relevant data is gathered and analysed and experimentation is encouraged. Perceptions, assumptions and 'most people believe' type things need re-examination in the emerging context. This all necessitates frequent experimentation and a number of experiments may fail. Intolerance towards failures is a serious road block to transformation. We may recall that in the absence of learning culture, even highly learned directors on the boards failed to pre-empt the corporate scams because they did not question and were emotionally carried away by pre-conceived beliefs.

### **Optimising on integration with latest technology**

Technology is fast emerging as perhaps the greatest enabler and accelerator of transformation. The distinction of the companies that run faster in the race of excellence lies in their ability to integrate latest technological advancements with the business, at the stage of conceiving the business idea. Leaders of great companies endeavour to optimize on the prospects of creating new paradigms of global business and of achieving global standards locally with the support of technological innovation and new going on researches. It is being appreciated by corporate leaders that AI, Machine Learning, I.o.T. and Blockchain technology have tremendous latent potential to make a real difference to how the businesses operate, deliver value to stakeholders and move forward in their pursuit of promising transformation.

### **Vision Infinite**

Researches and deliberations on sustainability issues have made it ample clear that growth prospects in the emerging future of immense complexity, can be created through a conscious process of envisioning with a commitment to ensure continuous strengthening of natural capital.

Envisioning is the process of creating a robust vision out of dreams and self-esteem of the leaders, carefully aroused organizational aspirations of people and navigation through individual and collaborative prospects with a commitment to continuous objective transformation.

Vision has assumed great significance because it provides a system of looking into future through emerging symptoms, enhances environmental scanning abilities and helps in creating possibilities out of problems and formulates strategies in the crisis situation. For continuation of flow of excellence, vision has to break its

boundaries of business results. Corporate leaders would find wisdom in the envisioning the future of all stakeholders, society and nature because excellence is the dynamic confluence of high aspirational exploration and collaborative initiatives.

### **Environmental scanning and predictive intelligence**

Corporate leaders thrive on their forecasting and anticipating skills. For sustainable excellence and effective transformation efforts, it is necessary that environment is continuously scanned for various new symptoms which can change the future scenario and prospects. Fortunately a promising flow of global researches is available to help the companies see the symptoms. Most Indian companies have not explored the power of sponsored researches on various factors of business and environment. Since the flow of knowledge is unrestricted and scanning and research potential is huge, CEOs and boards can create a vibrant system of environmental scanning. Further Big Data Analytics offers a great promise to predictive intelligence with the help of analysis of simulated scenarios and contextual intelligence.

Author wishes to recommend that visionary companies should consider to create a top leadership role of

### **DIRECTOR - TRANSFORMATION or CHIEF - TRANSFORMATION.**

For large and well diversified companies this can be a separate board-level responsibility but in medium sized companies and MEMEs, the CEO should ideally wear this hat and function with a transformational mind set. In the family run firms, which occupy major share of business in India, the top most leaders must appreciate their role of savior of the firm from future shocks and explore the power of transformation and become a transformational leader.

### **Functions of Director-transformation**

#### **1. Facilitating all round learning culture**

Transformation is possible only when all functionaries from the CEO and board members to operators are keen learners. Learning needs unrestricted curiosity. The impulse and urge to seek knowledge and a desire to experiment and explore new possibilities and new ways of doing things, help the process of success of transformations.

#### **2. Envisioning**

Since the need of transformation has emerged from our objective of ensuring accelerated business growth in future, envisioning is the primary function of the organizational leader responsible for transformation. Envisioning is all about explorative future orientation. It is the basic personality trait of transformational leaders. Though past experiences help us in diagnosing and interpreting the current problems but since the context of environment and new competitive forces is changing fast, creating a robust vision which

helps the organization see the path ahead, is the primary function of the top management team and the Director-Transformation will be one of the key architects of the company's vision. He will also work to get the vision internalized by all members so that they whole heartedly strive to realize the vision.

### 3. Unleashing the power of people

People have tremendous power which can make or mar the transformation efforts. Director Transformation has to be a primal leader who ignites the passion and inspires the best in the people. People are drivers of transformation. The Director Transformation will have qualities of a resonant leader also and will be continuously renewing herself and maintaining a responsive connect with others through mindfulness and passion.

### 4. Design thinking

Design thinking can significantly enhance the prospects of success of transformation. It is about total consumer centricity and helps in solving complex problems in a highly user centric way. It is about being passionate to redesign the whole experience of the user. The success of the Director-Transformation will be greatly facilitated by design thinking.

### 5. Building agility

For long term sustainability with accelerated pace of growth in unpredictable future, the companies will have to carefully build agility and it will be a major role of the Director-Transformation. She will have to help the company build competitive intelligence. The Director Transformation will intelligently work on integrating Artificial Intelligence and Internet of Things to restructure and create a vibrant organisational mechanism to create and avail growth opportunities in this VUCA world.

### 6. Orchestrating data and relationships

There is tremendous potential in the big data about all stakeholders across the organizational value chain and about the other firms and factors of external environment. The Director-Transformation can benefit a lot by exploring this big source which has become easily accessible in the cloud computing environment. Transformation requires compelling reasons, motivations and valid endorsements and this need can be largely addressed through orchestrating various streams of data.

Relationship is a dynamic concept. It keeps on changing in terms of its potential and prospects. The Director-Transformation would like to leverage the relationship with internal and external stakeholders. She would facilitate all processes through which relationships are built and nurtured.

### 7. Educating, Explaining, Demonstrating & Training

Transformation happens when people see and appreciate a compelling purpose and urgency. The transformation leader would educate people about the future prospects, the transformation can create. She would reach out to peoples' thoughts and beliefs and would explain how transformation is not only possible but it is also going to be an exciting experience. Director-Transformation and her team would bring examples and success stories to demonstrate the rewards of transformation. Since business process reengineering would be an essential component of transformation process, it will require developmental interventions for attitudinal change and training for developing new skills, required to leverage new technologies.

### 8. Create an Urge to Innovate

Transformation without innovation does not create value and growth in organizations. Director Transformation will encourage the people to break the boxes which restrict them to question and innovate. Through motivation to aspire and to explore individual selves, the Director-Transformation will create an urge for experimentation. She will develop habits of inspirational learning from every failure so that the next experiments lead to innovation in the way of thinking, execution or any function of the organization.

### 9. Building rapport with all functional heads

Organizational transformation is not one person's task. Director-Transformation will work like coordinator and top organizational leader for transformation. Her efforts can bring the desired change only when all functional heads, directors and chief officers support the transformation process and contribute their best. The Director-Transformation will develop warm relationship and rapport with all functional leaders. They all need to appreciate that the objective of transformation is to orchestrate a dynamic system that creates growth on several fronts and continues to brighten prospects for the entire organization.

The above is an explorative work out of a synergy of several interrelated functions understood from the transformational endeavours of futuristic winning organizations. This can help organizations become better than the best and grow with excellence.

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