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QUEST FOR EXCELLENCE

Studied in London, UK. Started out in the restaurant business in London and moved into retail with 7-Eleven for Scandinavia. Moved to Sri Lanka as CEO for Oriflame and then did stints of 2-3 years in Vietnam, India, Indonesia and Thailand as CEO and and finally Head of Asia. Left Oriflame and started my own consulting business and then joined forces with a couple of friends starting a Pharma business, 5 years after we sold this business and I decided to re-join Oriflame. I had 1 demand, I wanted to be based in the most exciting country in the world - India.

UNIQUE LEADERSHIP PROPOSITION

Leadership is like life in general - common sense. Treat people the way you would like to be treated. I have always believed in being open - to listen to people, being direct and honest. You have to have a strong blend of guts, directness and empathy to be a good leader. Whenever you're in doubt on how to act - ask yourself; if this happened to me how would I like my boss to handle this with me? Do read books and listen to podcasts but ultimately - practice makes perfect for those who has the ability to self-reflect/ introspect. Those without this ability should stay out of the Leadership business altogether.

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LEVERAGING ACTIONS FOR STAYING IN THE GAME IN UNPRECEDENTED TIMES

Uncertainty comes and goes of course. To handle your leadership function calmly yet energetically is key. Never panic - this is just another challenge for you and team to handle. Changing times calls for changing attitudes and strategies, to some extent. Greater freedom to conduct work is expected to a much larger extent - accountability plays an even larger role now. You must continue to ensure profitability amid tougher times and you need to handle whatever needs to be handled to ensure this. A greater focus on mental fitness / wellbeing internally is a safe investment and also a culture generating initiative regardless of Industry. Tough times build character and successful companies (those that survive). Tough it out with positivity and enormous amount of actions.

CRISIS AS A CATALYST

Crisis often make or break a leader. I personally like a challenge (not a global pandemic of course) and it gives me energy and clarity of focus. A crisis oftentimes calls for innovation. This is where leaders have to have guts. Dare to do new things, test new avenues but also to seize opportunities of efficiencies and speed. Evaluate your revenue streams and understand that you can probably find other revenue streams that are a side effect of your normal business. Step up to the challenge head-on or step down. The choice is yours.

SHIFTING PRIORITIES

Happy and satisfied customers are always the number 1 priority so no real changes here.



BUILDING SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PAN ASIA

Employees and customers want the freedom to choose to a much greater extent pre-pandemic. This will be a major trend for anyone selling FMCG products and for employees over the next years. Companies will need to figure out how to facilitate this across the board.

NURTURING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND START-UPS

Nurturing start ups is a large responsibility of any government in any country, to have easy and clear laws, rules, tax systems etc. A strong Educational platform is equally important. How do we teach university graduates not only calculus, but relationship building, negotiations, Leadership and other useful lessons for life and business

SOURCE OF INSPIRATION

I am a big fan of Jack Welch as a business persona and Leader and have read his books several times. Good to Great (Jim Collins) and How to win friends and influence people (Dale Carnegie) are classics that all leaders should have read. I often use an app called Blinkist. This app gives you 100's of thousands of different titles of various books including leadership and business books etc... However the major points of each book is summarised in a 20 min read. Super useful to be able to digest a lot in a fast and convenient time.