

GUIDELINES

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From the Chairman

Dear Readers,

Unlike common belief that 6-monthly reviews benefit companies the most, I would say, it gives an equal opportunity for the employee to adjust performance & make changes to achieve his / her goals. In fact, conducting mid-term reviews, is a cost head for companies, but there is a view to increase employee morale & motivation, which has encouraged companies to take up the process.

Companies are investing in having accurate work & process measurement technologies & methodologies to accurately measure employee performance, so that the true performers are rewarded. Senior Executives are particularly a target to scrutinize in great details where they have faltered.

It has to be commonly understood in the current uncertain environment, that managers have their pockets empty if their team as a whole does not perform. As managers are getting held on being responsible & accountable, they have no choice but to crack the whip when it comes to subordinates' performance. Subordinates' performance have to be justified & issues highlighted at the right time. If issues are subdued / ignored, rather than diminishing, they just become bigger over time, and extremely difficult to manage.

Companies are asking today – why is this employee hired with me? Is his / her contribution comensurate with the investment made by the company? If your employment with the company can safely answer this question, you are definitely in a stable career, & can look forward to long lasting growth prospects with the company!

- Dr. George Varghese



This edition covers an interview with Mr. Nitin Kulkarni – Head of Corporate Marketing for Instrumentation at Forbes Marshall. His career has unfolded into a plethora of rich experiences, overcoming the most daunting challenges and international exposure covering all aspects of the business.

Mr. Nitin's responses to our questions provide individuals guidance and a path to move from being a manager to a strategic leader. It will also encourage individuals who are facing career challenges, to overcome them, through his valuable inputs. If you would like to address any questions to Mr. Nitin Kirloskar, please feel free to write to us at news@vsolvegroup.com, and we will help gain his valuable

inputs & suggestions, so that you can get answers to the most difficult of questions.

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The 6-monthly review takes on more heat

“Checking the results of a decision against its expectations shows executives what their strengths are, where they need to improve, and where they lack knowledge or information.”

~ *Peter Drucker*



As the mid term reviews are about to begin, as usual, working professionals are going through a period of uncertainty & apprehension. This is natural, given the business environmental changes, and the rapidity of change that has shaped up like never before.

Consider this process as a reset mechanism, and a great way to find out if you are headed in the right direction. As business changes, goals change and so do the attached job expectations. Consider this as an opportunity to enhance your deliverables & an important step towards your career development.

Would'nt it be helpful to know areas where you have failed / not performed before the end of the year, so that remedial steps can be taken? Would'nt you like to know if your goals & expectations have changed in the light of organizational changes, well in advance, so that you are guided in the right direction. Your goals will now be aligned with organizational goals, and your contribution will increase multi-fold.

Companies are using this review to adjust past goals to accurately reflect current expectations. Individual & group accountability has assumed greater importance in order to achieve organizational goals & business sustainability. Several companies believe, that to keep employee morale & motivation up, setting attainable goals is essential. This process is dual thronged, as top performers will remain motivated & challenged, and non-performers will get the “needs significant improvement” label.

On whichever side you are, your performance & goals will be put into better perspective, and you will be given a fair chance to achieve your fullest potential with alignment towards organizational goals.

Interview & insights into the career of a strategic leader – Mr. Nitin Kirloskar



Introduction:

Mr. Nitin Kirloskar, who currently heads Strategic Marketing at Forbes Marshall for Instrumentation business, in an exclusive interview with V SOLVE shares his career challenges and achievements, and provides a roadmap for developing a better career, to aspiring individuals in his field.

Mr. Nitin Kirloskar started his journey with Forbes Marshall in the year 1989 as an R & D Engineer & since then he has evolved into a very fine leader who could easily be entered in the ‘Elite Managers’ list’ of India. His efforts & his hunger for knowledge and excellence, contributed significantly towards the growth of the company and to become one of India’s premier ‘Steam &

Water Engineering Equipment's providers in India & abroad.

In his years with the company he took the opportunity to head various functions for betterment of the processes & made sure that new ideas & inputs are heard & are thoroughly verified. One of his motto is "You gain better understanding of your own product through Feedback from others" & that's what he has tried to carry all these years. He took feedback from the clients, which he terms as very valuable in giving him motivation to improve and innovate on a continuous basis.

V SOLVE: Can you brief us regarding your career background, experience and current role as the head of corporate marketing?

Mr. Nitin:

Right from the start of my career, I have worked in the instrumentation sector. I started out with my career in R&D, and worked during my first job at Elektrameric Systems for 5 years. Subsequently, I left the job and moved to Forbes Marshall for better prospects. Now I have been with Forbes Marshall for 21 years.

At Forbes Marshall I started out my journey in R&D, and then I shifted to the engineering department & then to marketing. I helped design SWAS (Steam & Water Analysis System), which is a key component for the power industry. I was also responsible for design, manufacturing, engineering and marketing setup for SWAS.

SWAS became an international benchmark and caught enough of momentum wherein we could sell it to several companies. I also used to look after Vibration Monitoring system for which Forbes Marshall are today one of the leaders in the country. After my role in SWAS, I have now moved on to head the Corporate Marketing Department at Forbes Marshall.

V SOLVE: What are the necessary skill sets for someone in your position to be successful?

Mr. Nitin:

In simple words, a person has to be

- Innovative
- In touch with the market
- Should take continuous feedback from the clients
- Should have thorough knowledge of the business, as the business is highly technical in nature.

Several knowledge-sharing initiatives have been started for our clients, through which we are able to share new ideas and latest happenings within the industry, and, gain feedback and suggestions from our clients. PII (Process Instrumentation Ideas), is one such knowledge sharing initiative on our website. It gives different ideas in the field of instrumentation to our client that they can try out themselves to improve their processes, increase efficiency or enhance throughput. I am directly responsible to provide fortnightly updates through articles and insights, and engaging with clients.

Going a little deep, we have also initiated seminars for our customers present across 26 branches all over India. As a part of this initiative, industry experts give presentations on products, services, trends, challenges faced, and how the company can help the users. Prospective & current client representatives attend these seminars. Through these seminars, valuable feedback is received, which in turn help for the betterment of company's business process.

V SOLVE: Please share with us some of your key experiences, which acted as a major turning point in your career.

Mr. Nitin:

Approximately 15 years ago, I wanted to move from a role in R&D to a different role, wherein I could explore and enhance my skillset. I had a frank and direct chat with our director & convinced him that he change my department. The director asked me to prove myself by selling the same products that I developed in R&D. I faced the challenge of selling the product that I developed in the market & I have been true to that condition ever since. This helped open several opportunities for me in the company, as I moved into engineering, manufacturing and finally marketing.

Second such incident was with regards to my new promotion as the Head of Corporate Marketing. Although challenging, I was able to convince my directors about having a strong online presence by enhancing our website and SEO practices. They trusted in me, and, indeed after developing divisional microsites for the company website, we started receiving significant number of orders and branding for the company has grown multi-fold. A simple test that you can try is to search for SWAS (Steam & Water Analysis System) and Forbes Marshall turns up on the first page of Google. It turned out as an additional responsibility when our director Farhad Forbes spoke to me in one of our meeting that he would like me to look after Corporate Marketing function as he was happy about the way I developed marketing strategy & marketing tools for SWAS division in India & abroad. I merrily agreed, as this new assignment suited my interests. He announced it in the annual conference that year that I will be heading the department. And from there on I started my journey with Corporate Marketing. It has been two years now in the current role & I am glad that the opportunity came to me very naturally.

Recently we have enhanced our division micro sites & have conducted a very successful SEO (Search Engine Optimization) for Dubai Market of Forbes Marshall.

V SOLVE: What are the career challenges / career decisions that you faced and how timely Career Coaching / Executive Coaching has helped you?

Mr. Nitin:



After completing the first 5 years of my career with Forbes Marshall, I wanted to look outside for better opportunities and career development. It is only due to strong career coaching and mentoring that our company offers to us, I have been with this company for so long. My mentors acted as sounding boards, and were open enough to listen to me and provide suggestions. They were able to build trust and credibility, where I felt comfortable in sharing my issues, and exploring possible resolutions.

Timely executed coaching also helped me in my endeavors to develop business for the company. In the SWAS market, we faced tremendous competition from an American company, which had a monopoly at that time in the market. All the client companies including Government companies wanted a proven track record of the vendor companies for them to make equipments purchase. Even power consultants would not listen to us. Despite all these odds, through the right efforts and right guidance, we were able to overcome these barriers, and today are the largest providers of SWAS equipment to BHEL & NTPC. We enjoy lion's share in the SWAS requirements of BHEL & NTPC. Today Forbes Marshall is the largest Indian manufacturer of SWAS equipment

I also contributed significantly towards development of our international business for SWAS. After long efforts we bagged our first contract with a company in Indonesia. Followed by this we got a contract from Egypt. We had to

prove to them our technical competency, process oriented approach, quality of deliverables, capability and commitment to provide best products and services. We also had infrastructure issues, which was a hindrance and major challenge at that time. We spent days and nights to prove ourselves to our clients. After that there was no looking back.

V SOLVE: How important is it to have timely career coaching / executive coaching, and how frequent should this intervention be?

Mr. Nitin:



“Every change is guided by mentors”. We encourage mentorship within the company. My directors as well as seniors helped me develop my career to the stage I am at today. Whenever a new employee is recruited in the company, he is kept under mentorship of a senior person for at least 6 months. I myself am a mentor to 5 to 6 engineers in the company today.

Timely Career coaching can enhance the performance of the person to reach to the optimum levels, and increase contribution to the company. It can also shape up an individual’s career within the company. Career coaching & Executive coaching should happen at regular intervals, to enhance one’s skills and abilities, and to develop leadership. There can be formal & informal ways of doing this.

This reminds me of an incident where one of our director took the management team to a hotel in Mulshi for 2 days where they only focused on discussing a management book called ‘Good to Great’ which is oriented towards managerial skills & how to develop them. When asked about the purpose of doing this, director said that he always wanted his people to be updated with the latest management concepts and trends that are going on in the world & he wanted his managers to apply new & efficient techniques in the managerial role. He often trains his managers on Leadership & Strategic Management.

V SOLVE: What are the career & job trends within this career?

Mr. Nitin:

Keeping in mind all the above challenges Forbes Marshall believes in having succession planning from within the company. Most of the employees are given an opportunity to shift roles within the organization every 4-5 years, which results in career development of the employee, and increase in company productivity. There are also new inputs & ideas to the process after every change in the leadership. Most of the managers, barring a couple of them, are home-grown.

This is all done, to improve rather than to maintain, the quality of the products we provide.

The long-term goal should be into visionary and strategic thinking. I am now representing the company rather than just a division, which significantly changes the way people look at me, both internally & externally.

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