Context to the nugget

In his book Digital Tsunami, Abhijit contrasts the erstwhile analogue world with today's digital world. How has this shift to the digital realm impacted companies and their cultures? What is the main difference between these two and how has that influenced leadership. Confused about why a company like Google is competing with Ford and GM? Hear more about all this and more in this nugget.

Transcription

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Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): A good place to start is the book. Give us a sense of what you mean by 'Digital Tsunami' and why you wrote this book?

Abhijit Bhaduri (AB): I initially thought that the book would be called 'The Digital Mindset'. I thought so because I find that a lot of companies actually invested a lot of time and energy in the technology part of it. So, they will invest in the right kind of software, the right kind of stuff to make the company's business model at par with the digital requirements. But I also noticed that a lot of companies do not actually do enough to change the culture inside the organization. Because the digital world is going to require very, very fundamental shifts, many of which are polar opposites of how we have been used to working. So, what happens is that the organizations automatically assume that they are going to move into a model which is going to be very efficient, but people take a long time to change. Think about how hard it is for us to keep up to New Year resolutions and here, we expect that the entire organization is going to take a New Year resolution one day and from the next day onwards, never falter. That's actually probably not very accurate. So, I wanted to draw attention to that aspect.

DJ: And what are some of the dimensions of polarities, to use your term?

AB: For example, if you think about the analogue world; the digital world is what I've contrasted it with. So, the analogue world is a lot more silted, whereas the digital world is boundary-less. If you think about how software today is written by some of the big five in the digital world which is typically your Facebook, Amazon, Apple, Netflix, Google kind of businesses they actually have cross-disciplinary teams. So, you will have an anthropologist, you will have a behavioural scientist, you will have a coder, all of whom will come together and design the website. Or creating a product, you will have people of all kinds, very diverse teams. So, trans disciplinary and border-lessens is a very fundamental principle that explains why companies the ones that I've mentioned it's very hard for us to figure out what business they are in. So, what business is Google in and why on earth is Google competing with Ford and General Motors at one level and maybe a completely different biotech company at another level, working with contact lenses and diabetes and medical devices and all of

that. This boundarylessness is the essence of the digital world. So, this is hard for analogue companies to manage.

DJ: Just sticking with the theme, what's the 'therefore' for leadership? For a minute, if we reflect, what does it mean, from the mindset shift, to use your language, what are some of the themes that come up?

AB: The first thing is leadership. One of the most important differentiations is that in the analogue world, the leaders were not very accessible. So, they would be accessible to a few people, and they would show up for, let's say, some large public event kind of thing, public event or employee event, whichever way you define it, and they would pretty much come to the balcony, wave for the crowd and then go back. I mean this is pretty much the model, symbolically speaking. Whereas in the digital world, the expectation is that leaders actually engage in real time with people and that also means that the leaders are far less curated and polished. Their leadership image is a lot less of that; it's a lot more about authenticity, real time, and this is very hard for people who've grown up with the older mindset, because they need to be seen as perfect when they come in front of the audience. So, this doesn't work anymore. If I have a problem with the airlines I am flying, then I would like the CEO to respond, because that may be the only name I know. If I were flying Virgin Airlines I would expect now, whether that is responded to by Richard Branson or not is really not the point but somebody who reads that should be able to respond back. I think that's the image you see, that one is talking about, authenticity and all that.

DJ: It reminds me of a lovely YouTube video of a guy whose guitar was broken…

AB: United!

DJ: …'United broke my guitar,' it's a wonderful song. The stock went down 11%.

AB: Exactly! This is the power of the individual in the world that digital is creating. Everyone is really broadcasting. So, you don't have to wait for BBC to do a story on your company to be able to either take up the stock or take down the stock. An individual employee or individual consumer can do that.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: Leading people in a digital world will require a very different skill-set and mindset where there are so many pieces which are outside of the realm of understanding of the CEO. It is going to require a lot more of "Let's figure out what is possible and co-create the future" and a lot less of "Let me show you how it's done". And this might be a profound shift for a lot of leaders who might still be operating in an Analogy Paradigm. Thank you for listening. For more please visit playtopotential.com.

End of nugget transcription

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Abhijit Bhaduri - Nuggets

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About Deepak Jayaraman

Deepak seeks to unlock human potential of senior executive's / leadership teams by working with them as an Executive Coach / Sounding Board / Transition Advisor. You can know more about his work [here](#).

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