

Sirajuddin Aziz, Banker Extraordinary



Sirajuddin Aziz's well-researched articles on "Management" have been compiled together in a must read book "Emerging Dynamics of Management" for bankers and non-bankers alike will be launched in Karachi on Sep 8, 2017. An honest, forthright, soft spoken and very seasoned banker Sirajuddin Aziz has an excellent understanding and grasp over his subject matter. Those with extensive experience in "hands on" management are seldom effective in translating that into written knowledge as well as Siraj has done. Having the rare gift of being an effective communicator. One was fortunate to be a colleague on the board of a major bank of this honest and thoroughly professional corporate giant for over a dozen years.

About "personal development", Sirajuddin Aziz writes that (1) nurturing good habits takes time to be emulated and (2) one must shun bad ones that are contagious and spread rapidly. Honesty if acquired as an infant it is long lasting, the reverse is that dishonesty can become a part of character. One must effectively tackle anger management. Managers must remain tranquil and howsoever effective social media is one must sift fact from fiction. Critical to better and



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enhanced productivity, a happy team produces far better products, services and results than a depressed and demotivated team. Talking about a "Manager's Tool

Box", Sirajuddin Aziz says, that every individual is blessed within divinity within that is an unimaginable force to deal with any challenge, quoting John-Roger, "Even

when confronted with adversity the classic warrior (or manager) holds fast to his values and principles.

To quote Amir Zia, "Few of the scores of champion leaders and gurus in Pakistan's corporate world share and transfer their experiences, management insights and career lessons in writing, let alone in the form of a book. Belonging to that minuscule minority, Sirajuddin Aziz book encompasses on a diverse range of issues, particularly about personal development and various facets of management challenges and their solutions.

Siraj says that noble objectives in the shape of vision and mission thereof can take you nowhere without good "human resource management", the quality defining the quality of the organization. You can hire competent and highly skilled individuals but not anyone with an obnoxious mind. He says attitude is important, stand fast and stoic against adversity, calm and cool when faced with challenges. Laid back, lazy or subordinate people can never be part of a team. Ability to innovate, strategize, make judgment calls, possess and demonstrate leadership and communication abilities. Vision is an attitude, mission is a skill. One must "hire for attitude and train for skill".

To quote Siraj about "Leadership", "one must have a dream or as it is said, "the vision thing". However illusion must be checked by reality. One person may dream, it requires many to implement, A those who have to implement it must believe in your dream, more importantly they must believe in you. Those thinking big must have the capacity to answer all challenges, boost profits, enrich job productivity, ensure employee satisfaction and give confidence to stakeholders. Only the insecure will not allow around them managers

who dare to dream, and even to think. Assertiveness is not a sign of arrogance, when you are sensitive and principled you can carry it by being firm and polite."

Alan Sillitoe's "Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner" can be equated with the loneliness of the CEO, Siraj says that the principled always stay lonely, on the summit they are even more lonely. Living in glass houses, they are jogging on very thin ice, being accountable for everything that happen or does not happen in the organization. Great mind discuss ideas, average minds discuss events and small minds discuss people, our political leadership is a singular example. Our Parliament never discusses ideas, sometimes they do discuss events but all the time they attack each other, by mostly malicious gossip a la Galaliar. One must remember that sycophants never disagree with their boss, they are always the one to backstab you. Bosses must watch out for the "Mean Men", with dual and triple personalities they ingratiate themselves to their superiors and are sadistic to their juniors. One must watch out for the band of "mercy men and women" inducted by the corrupt boss to do their corruption and dirty work for him. When management spends on itself rather than on the rank and file, you know something is wrong.

Communications is at the heart of all management techniques and principles according to Siraj. Neither talking nor writing is communication, communications means that the message must not only heard or read, it must be understood "in the language they understand." Clarity in communication is achieved through clarity of thought and in simple language. In a banker's daily life communication skills put to test in a crisis or conflict clear terms must be the order of the

day. Technology makes it easier to communicate but it has invaded the private space of individuals. Care has to be exercised in getting the right perspective into the medium of public knowledge, organizations must have well-developed and coherent communications strategy.

"Strategy and Organizational Structure" requires great effort, a lot of pre-planning and hard work is undertaken. Besides viability being assessed, the competition is scanned, the market explored for demand and continuity. A business plan needs an organization in place, the right human resource is critical. Managerial collapse comes from corporate arrogance or bad financial management. As for "Board Room Committee", each agenda item must be concluded with a decision. One must do not load the important ones to the last and put the ones not so important but time consuming at the top. Make sure the decisions are correctly recorded. A healthy debate without showing signs of any pre-disposed leaning is a must, moreover it must not be boring. Siraj quotes a speaker asking a boy to wake up someone who was asleep sitting next to him, the boy said, "wake him up yourself you put him to sleep". Are meetings really a two-way traffic, within the hierarchy upwards and cascading downwards?

One agrees with Dr Ishrat Hussain, Ex-Governor, SBP and Former Dean, Institute of Business Administration (IBA), about this banker extraordinary, "Sirajuddin Aziz is one of the few banking professionals who has always devoted time to reading, reflecting and writing, and using those insights and hope this volume is widely distributed as it is, in my view, a MUST reading not only for the business schools but also for those going through mid-career and executive education training". ♦

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