



Trainer Notes

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The authors include:

Nigel Ewington
David Trickey
Maria Jicheva
Caroline Beery

And many thanks for the contribution of Kai Bendix and his team

Trainer Notes

Introduction

For each scene we give simple learning objectives, references to relevant scenes from the slide pack plus possible answers indicated in the film to the questions asked in the learner materials.

Scene 1: Introductions

Learning Objective

- reflect on leaderships skills and cultural factors that impact on global leadership challenges

Task I – See slide 2 ppt

Task II Bii– see slide 4 ppt

Answers

a) Leadership skills/international competencies

- Spirit of adventure: Getting the chance to go to India was really the call of a lifetime
- Resilience & coping – anxieties, vibrant, tough’ ‘what are you doing here, will this ever work out?’
- Handling the unexpected – avalanche of issues
- Inner Purpose – tough and self-reliant
- Ability to reflect before acting/decision-making ‘Is this normal? Is this simply the way we have to deal with customs?’
- Sensitive to local perspectives – ‘just firing him and saying “that’s it” might have sent a signal to the rest of the team....’
- Awareness of oneself (reflected awareness) – ‘me being a foreigner, I honestly speaking didn’t have a clue’
- Understanding ambiguity – ‘trying to understand what is truth, and what is story’

b) Sensitivity to cultural factors

- how people respond to hierarchy & accountability 'I didn't want to send the wrong message'
- how people respond to rules and ethics
- how people communicate

Other situational factors

- a new team of only 25-30 people selected by Kai himself
- little history of working together or for him
- got off to a good start but now hit some problems
- Kai does not know what is 'normal' in how things get done locally

Scene 2: Drawing from the past

Learning Objective

- to reflect on a previous international experience as a source of inspiration for managing present realities.

Task III: Draw on slide 4 for initiating group reflection

Task IV: Draw on slide 5

Answers from film

a) Cultural tensions

- Takes time to build personal trust and open up, particularly with foreigners
- Hierarchy between team members (cf India)
- Avoiding eye contact, looking down, whispering
- Work behind closed doors – individualism? Or bad feeling in the company?
- A certain resentment of not being trusted to manage own affairs

b) Additional leadership competencies

- Welcoming strangers/rapport - Open and friendly/ positive first impression
- Inner Purpose - Learnt to be the lonesome decision-maker
- Active listening/rapport – one-to-one talks – learning about individual goals and targets
- Forcing interaction – building trust
- Model high performance
- Valuing differences/range of styles - Understood different groups and took a different approach with each
- Brinkmanship – calculated spirit of adventure that helps build a sense of identity and confidence. Creates a sense of ‘we are in charge’
- Soft and tough at the same time

c) To what extent transfer?

Aspects are transferable – needing to be the lonesome decision-maker, building personal trust with local staff, and the need to build motivation and loyalty in the way he take some risks in order to force through change.

However, in India he is building an organisation from zero and not so much about changing a culture as building one. Likely to be an issue of trust but less about Kai as a person, as he has recruited everyone, and more about the kind of organisational culture he is trying to build. Thus a danger of too much 'cut and paste'. 'Forcing interaction' may be necessary with the 'silo mentality' he has encountered but it may need to take a different style

Scene 3: The world as you find it

Learning objective

- To see how leadership issues look from a number of different personal and cultural perspectives, and what may factors may need to inform the decisions Kai makes

Task V: Drawing on Slide 6

Answers to Task V

The individual

Challenge

- Roshan acted in his own capacity, didn't take his immediate boss (Pam) into his confidence
- Danger of setting a precedent
- Value system of MNC or accept the rules of bribery
- To take a call, either take the Indian perspective or the kind of values we want to inculcate of BDF in India

Cultural perspectives

- Indian perspective of 'we know best'
- Speed money, a way to facilitate faster processing of your documents vs a bribe

Possible actions

1. To do nothing or just have a quiet word
2. Strong, clear and obvious warning seen by the team
3. Fire him

The distributor

Challenge

- Change from the traditionally distant kind of relationship with Western principals – leading to questioning each other's motives and value
- Traditional brand managed over the last 40 years across a large and complex country – from one location in Mumbai.. Clearly requires lots of local knowledge and a complex network of relationships
- Distributor reduced in status and prestige since Kai came into country – from running business to service provider. Leads to a high level of sensitivity. Particularly as the distributor is from a babu culture where it is used to 'calling all the shots' locally

Cultural perspectives

- Possible sense of threat from incompetent outsiders

Possible actions

1. Totally ignore this voice mail
2. Say you're wrong. This is just a made-up story
3. Do a fact-finding. Understand what is the real situation

The organisation

Challenge

- Hidden selfish agendas – secretive and back-biting culture
- Lack of focus on company agenda
- It was time in the development of the company to move from a focus on operational issues to more strategic issues about marrying global values with local ones
- Sensitivity as to how to execute the implementation of values in an Indian context

Cultural perspectives

- Indian psyche, after the British Raj, is very sensitive to anything that is imposed
- Danger of just getting lip service
- Joint family system manifest itself at an organisational level – help together by highly respected patriarch. Vertical rather than collaborative
- Collective – lots of interaction. But does it lead to meaningful results?

Possible actions

- How to approach integrating global values with local ones

Scene 4: The world as it finds you

Learning objective

- reflect on the personal side of leadership - what makes leaders unique as individuals, authentic in style, and influential for others.

Task VII:

This is an opportunity to draw on a literature on authenticity

For example, Cashman's 5 touchstones of authenticity

- *Touchstone One: Know Yourself Authentically.*
- *Touchstone Two: Listen Authentically.*
- *Touchstone Three: Express Authentically.*
- *Touchstone Four: Appreciate Authentically.*
- *Touchstone Five: Serve Authentically*

These qualities communicate a genuine understanding about yourself as well as a genuine orientation to others. Both are useful in global leadership – where there needs to be a balance between a consistency and flexibility in the way you act.

Task VIII: see slide 8

What do you pick up about Kai that strikes you as authentic, and may be critical for his decisions?

Kai seems to recognise the *cultural* source of his own values and their possible limitations 'while as Germans we see only one way'.

While seemingly confident in his own frame of reference, he sees with modesty the value of other ways of doing things 'I respect you have a different and better way of getting there, even though it's not my way'

He also sees where his own *individual* deep-lying motivations lie 'I like change' without aggrandising himself 'I have a very strong sense of adventure. That doesn't mean I'm a hero. But I like change'. And recognising that others may be different.

This ability to pick up how his decisions and style will be perceived by others is picked up by the consultant in the film in his description of an 'influential moment'

Scene 5: Taking action

Learning objective

- reflect not only what Kai did, but also how he did it to create 'influential moments', and then to return to the issue of authenticity.

Task IX: see slide 11

Answers connected to Task IX

The Individual

Kai takes the following 6 steps in the Roshan case:

- 1) Fact-finding tour - Checked story to ensure that Roshan is at fault
- 2) On confirming Roshan at fault, Kai and Pam meet together and decide to fire him
- 3) They deliver the message to Roshan together
- 4) The next day the two managers convened a special team meeting for all members of staff, and communicated the decision.
- 5) They made it clear that it was not Kai's decision or Pam's decision but a joint decision of two managers
- 6) Kai also made it clear that the reason they were firing Roshan was not that he made a decision. In fact Kai wants people to take decisions but *'in a very conscious and ethical way'*

Link to influential moments

Kai is faced with a dilemma:

Universal application of the law (suited to a Multi National Corporation) as a beacon of clarity for non-negotiable behaviours BUT negative impact on need to build initiative

Vs

Particularist interpretation of the law (suited to a local context) as a sign of support for initiative in getting things done BUT negative impact on global values

He quickly decides on the need to take a universalist interpretation of the law. But there is no point in following rules which underline ethics but which are dysfunctional in getting things done in a local context. What's the point of taking the moral high ground when the business is underwater?

His sensitivity to 'how' to make sense of his actions in an Indian context is clearly shown in steps 3-6:

Step 3: 'They deliver the message to Roshan together'- Danger in a high-power distance culture such as India of undermining Pam's position. Including Pam at all stages is critical for getting things done in the future, by ensuring that the business is not over-reliant on Kai making key decisions on staff

Step 4: Again two people deliver the message to the whole team – very important in a collectivist culture to make sure everybody gets the same message

Step 5: Ditto above

Step 6: Kai's thinking here is encapsulated in a quote that wasn't in the final film

"This guy had taken a decision on his own but the wrong decision. I was afraid that as a result of me firing him people will be scared to take any kind of decision in the future. So while saying that we will take very strong actions with anybody caught in this kind of act, I also stressed that they didn't need to fear taking decisions. What they needed to fear is acting against company rules. Even if their decision to not pay bribes has downsides, we will support them."

The distributor

Kai decides to respond to Krishna's email by playing this transparently with his management team. So at the next management meeting he explains the allegation he received from the main distribution partner, and declared that he wanted to hear their views, their side of the story. On being satisfied about their responses, he then demonstrated trust in his management team by delegating the fact-finding to them.

Link to influential moments

Again Kai is faced with a dilemma

Use the influence of local barons to understand what's happening and make things happen in a relationship-based market, but at a cost to your independence and to the interest of building Nivea's direct presence in India

Vs

Reduce the influence of local barons and build influence over the short term through your own means, but at the cost of making powerful enemies, losing local intelligence and needing to rely on your own team

Kai seems to be taking the second option but is careful to minimise the risks attached. His sensitivity to 'how' to manage the voice-mail and ongoing relationship with the distributors in an Indian context is shown in the following way:

- 1) The comments of Abhay, the Sales Director, seems to indicate that Kai built motivation and loyalty among the management team by demonstrating trust to them in this difficult situation. The work of

'trust thinkers' like Reinhard Sprenger suggests that trust can only be rebuilt by giving trust, at some risk to yourself. Kai's actions may be particularly significant in the Indian context where research indicates there is a low predisposition to trust (see 12 canons of Indianness in V Raghunathan's 'Games Indians Play')

In another comment made by Abhay, that didn't find its way into the final film, he makes it clear that this approach to trust is something that has remained consistent about Kai's leadership style:

"Even now we often have distributors who write direct mails to Kai's desk complaining about stocks that have been dumped without their knowledge, about employees who are not dealing with claims on time, about staff who are misbehaving in some way. And these mails are sent to Kai directly and not cced to us managers. And even today what Kai does is to reply to the gentleman, with a cc to the guy who was who was managing things , and with another cc to me or the relevant department head. Kai always writes to this gentleman thanking him for being open and wanting to contribute to our company – how Kai's people will respond the gentleman on this subject, and how Kai trusts his team to resolve their concerns."

- 2) Despite finding out that the fault is on the distributor's side, Kai is careful to deliver the message back to Krishna in a way that avoids him losing face. This attention to 'face' is seen by Vijay as a critical component of Indian culture. By giving attention to this, Kai seems to be safeguarding the risk of losing potentially valuable future intelligence, and minimising the danger of making enemies in a very relationship-orientated cultural context.

In his ongoing relationship with the distributors Kai then combines this focus on showing respect with the tough transparent negotiating style he had learnt from Bulgaria.

The organisation

Kai takes the following steps in build the organisational culture:

- 1) Coffee-table talks – all parts of the organisation, one-on-one, totally agenda free – asks questions – communicates respect and enables people to express their issues and ideas
- 2) Monthly team meetings for all staff where people get to understand their contribution to the organisation in India and globally
- 3) Weekly management meetings for all directors where issues get put on the table
- 4) Blue behaviours initiative to help build a more joined-up internal organisational culture, and integrate global values with local ones. This was developed in a three-day workshop, and has led to a Blue Behaviour for the Month

Link to influential moments

As he mentions in the third scene, in the more 'collectivist' context of India, Kai is faced with a different dilemma from Bulgaria – how to turn what looks like a team into a real team. Thus he needs to add elements of what worked in Bulgaria with some new initiatives. The Bulgaria-inspired coffee-table talks are used as good way to find out what may be really going on in people's minds (positive and negative) about the organisation. However, the Blue Behaviours take things a step further by grounding the BDF values in local behaviours. This is particularly important as they help to overcome the India suspicion of having things imposed from outside, as well as overcoming the danger of pure lip-service.

Scene 6: Results

Learning objective

- reflect on extra learning about global leadership

Task X: See slides 12& 13

Answers

10 key learning points drawn from the final scene.

A successful global leader needs to:

- 1) broker a symbiotic relationship between the organisation (s)he works for and the different countries it works in.
- 2) manage the distance between the Headquarters or Board and the local operation, so that HQ is well-informed. This demands investing time in methods of communication eg. a newsletter that paints the local picture in HQ
- 3) recognise the perceptions of local followers – in India people like to be led from the front and Kai lives up to these expectations
- 4) be able to take one step back from the local context where (s)he is working, and see the global picture
- 5) combine affability with toughness
- 6) walk the talk, and avoid the danger of lip-service
- 7) be careful about allowing too much of a gap between his or her own skills and those of the first line managers, including the links with the international parts of the operation. This can create a culture of dependency.
- 8) learn how to cool down a bit, remembering that change doesn't happen fast
- 9) remember that adapting back to one's home culture can be as tough as moving abroad.
- 10) remember that the background situation is changing, and the learning exercise is never-ending, so beware of copy-paste

Task XI: See slides 14