# ENHANCEMENT OF RESPONSIVE LEADERSHIP
# IN MANAGEMENT — WAYS AND MEANS

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## ABSTRACT

*The world is undergoing a rapid change.  This ever changing world has made substinance difficult.  Only subject knowledge with a little application is no longer the only thing required for a professional to be successful.  An integrated and blended approach of subject know-how with soft-skills is the need of the hour.*
*An attempt has been made to suggest the ways and means to enhance responsive leadership which is one of the most important soft-skills to improve personal as well as career growth.*
*It is not just the people occupying various positions in the organization that matter, but their competencies would make all the difference. Responsive leadership is an essential skill to be developed because this in turn will provide a catalytic effect in the process of performance which will bring about a change locally as well as globally.*
*Today, we have to invest in our youth, for they are our future capital.  The youth should be trained and fine tuned to accept the signals emanating  from responsive leadership.  This will make our India shine.*

**Keywords**: *Soft-Skills, Responsive Leadership, Blended, Training*

## Introduction:

The fact that the world today is undergoing rapid changes cannot be denied. In these times, the challenge is to acquire a special identity and make ourselves particularly interesting to the potential employers.  In Jack Welch's words *"You can give life time employability by training people, by making them adaptable; making  them mobile to go to other places, to do other things.  But you can't guarantee life time employment."*  Here he refers to the acquisition of soft-skills. The barriers of culture, language and environment can only be crossed by being proficient in soft-skills. Organizations are increasingly realizing that besides educational qualifications, job seekers need to have certain soft-skills to fit into the organization's work culture. One should acquire certain skills, abilities, attributes and competencies which are essential requisites for personal growth and professional and social success.

## Conceptual Framework:

Leadership is a main trait at a work place.  It relates with the people being motivated to perform better than to increase profitability because it is the belief of the management philosophy that if the performance is improved, profitability improves automatically.  A few years back only skills related to a particular task was the only requirement.  But today the scenario has changed.  It requires not only the working skills but also requires the soft-skills to support it.  It is the soft skill that enable the leaders "to adjust their leadership behaviours to match each individual's needs rather than using the same pattern of leadership style with everyone" (Nicholls,2009).

The full potential of a staff is exposed only when it is under a  appropriate leaders.  Responsive leadership provides individualized approach to improve on-the-job performance.  The staff should have the feeling of inclusion.  This is the motivating factor that makes the employees more productive, perform better and develop other skills such as being innovative, team work group dynamics etc.  Every human being is gifted with talent.  This talent becomes prevalent only when a conducive atmosphere of encouragement is present.  This fine tunes the latent skills and competencies that are essential to perform the task effectively.  This vital knowledge helps in any task being performed, be it in organizing an event or to spearhead the team.

## Objectives:

1. To  have an insight into  responsive leadership.
2. To  demarcate  the  different  forms  of  responsive leadership.
3. To  analyze  the  need  for  developing  responsive leadership skills.

4.4. To understand the views and perceptions of the sample respondents on responsive    leadership as a soft skill.

5. To recommend some measures for inculcating responsive leadership abilities.

**Forms of Responsive Leadership:**

There are five important elements for Emotional Intelligence which helps them to drive their organization to high performance.  These elements are Analytical skills, Self-efficiency, Empathy, Self-awareness and Social Skills.

**Analytical Skills:**

Responsive managers, being active listeners, have the ability to identify needs, priorities and act upon them in a direct and consistent manner. They often are respected, trusted and perceived as reliable and useful by those in the higher levels of the hierarchy. This helps them pull things through when needed.

**Self Efficiency**:

Leadership self-efficacy is seen as an individual's perceived capability to perform the cognitive and behavioral functions necessary to regulate group process in relation to group achievement.  Self-efficacy is as a focal construct that affects the goals, leaders motivation, the development of functional leadership strategies etc. (McCormick ,2001)

**Empathy**:

Trust and empathy are far more important in achieving and sustaining successful    personal and business relationships. . Empathy and trust are essential to develop solutions, win and retain business, and avoiding or diffusing conflict. Empathy and trust are essential for handling complaints and retaining customers. Empathy and responsiveness are critical components of management success, and leadership by responsiveness is perhaps the best way for managers and supervisors to get things done for the benefit of all concerned.

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**Self-awareness**:

Self-awareness is being conscious of what we are good at while acknowledging what we still have yet to learn. This includes admitting when we don't have the answer and owning up to mistakes.

**Social skills**:

The responsive leader has a high degree of social skills. He can relate and be one with others. People often trust such leaders and respond to them in a positive manner. It is however important to be detached from petty issues and be responsive to the real issues that matter.

**The Rationale for Mounting Responsive-leadership Skills:**

The Volatile Economic Times have found the business leaders to face lots of challenges during organizational changes.  In modern business administration coercion, manipulation, rewards, famous rules and regulations neither enhance productivity nor employee engagement (Fleenor 2003)

The leader can elicit responsibility, creative, caring and commitment leading to good performance of the staff only by undertaking the capabilities of the people and encouraging them from time to time. Responsive leadership is an essential skill is to be developed because this in turn will help in the development of genuine communication, compassion and empathy.

This is the dearth of these characteristics due to the lack of responsive leadership.  Responsive leadership is essential not only for corporate but education programmes too.  It helps them to focus more in helping the students to develop their positive, optimistic attitude. The strategies may include workshops on soft-skills, training, and management games and by conducting competitions in the field of soft-skills.

In education there is a void of leadership characteristics. The presences of leadership qualities in some are not being exploited and hence it becomes ignorable.  There is an urgent need to develop responsive leadership among students.  Therefore the future is in their hand. Leadership qualities must be inculcated from the student level itself. This will have a tremendous impact on the corporate when the same students join these organizations.

**Statement of Research problem:**

Lack of Responsive leadership and employability skills is the major hurdles that come in the way of employment. Though most graduates are excellent in their academic knowledge, lack of soft skills puts them on the back seat in an interview. Hence this issue calls for an immediate academic scrutiny.

**Methodology**:

The study made use of both primary and secondary data in its analysis.  However, a large part of the analysis is based on the primary data. Primary data are collected from the sample respondents that include Faculty members, students, student leaders, corporate leaders in the managerial capacities. For the purpose of analysis , the data are gathered from 240 sample respondents representing    corporate leaders 25, student leaders 15, teaching faculty 10 and the student community in general 190

**Scope and limitations of the study**:

The present study included only the corporate leaders and the student community at large. In spite of this study, there

are still many areas which need to be covered. Secondly there may be further additions or modifications in the implementation of soft-skills in the years to come.

**Analysis of the perception of sample respondents:**

An attempt is made to gather opinions from the sample respondents as to what they mean by responsive leadership; how important it is as a soft skill in the current career context, given the chance, would they like to be a leader; what are the qualities that make a responsive leader, what strategies they prefer to nurture etc.

**Opinion of the student Respondent**:

It has been found that soft-skills is an important factor to be a responsive leaders. The survey data clearly shows that 89.72% of the students opined that leadership skill is the most significant factor in decision taking and discharging the assigned responsibility effectively. 86.84% of the students say that communication skills help the leaders to lead, guide and motivate the people to get good performance. The survey data shows that other skills like an effective communication and Inter-personal skills also plays a major role in moulding responsive leaders.

**Table 1: Opinion of the Student Respondents about Responsive leadership**

| Qualities | No. of respondents | Percentage of respondents (190) |
|---|---|---|
| Effective Communication | 160 | 84.21 |
| Decision making | 142 | 89.72 |
| Inter-personal relation | 97 | 51.05 |
| Prepare for change | 78 | 41.05 |
| Motivation | 120 | 63.16 |
| Leadership Skills | 165 | 86.84 |
| Work Ethics | 86 | 45.26 |
| Co-operation | 110 | 57.89 |
| Competency | 115 | 60.53 |

**Source:** Survey Data
**Note:** Percentages will not be equal to 100 due to multiple responses.

**Views of Corporate Leaders:**

An attempt is made to assess the views of the corporate leaders, who are exposed to various initiatives like Team Building, Group Dynamics, Stress interviews, On –the- job training, Workshops etc. The respondents are asked to indicate their perceived level of utility in respect of each of the initiatives exposed by using a four point scale. Very great extent, great extent, some extent and little extent. Weights of 4, 3, 2, 1 are assigned correspondingly to the above scale and total scores are summed up, which is ranging between 0-28 for a meaningful analysis. The total range of score is split into four categories as given below; reflecting the level of perceived utility: 0-7: little extent, 7-14: Some Extent, 14-21: Great Extent, 21-28: very great extent. This is shown in Table 2.0

**Table 2: Perception of Corporate Leaders on the Utility of Initiatives**

| Extent of Utility | Weights | No. of leaders | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Very great extent | 4 | 9 | 36 |
| Great extent | 3 | 12 | 48 |
| Some extent | 2 | 3 | 12 |
| Little extent | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| **Total** | **10** | **25** | **100** |

**Source: Survey Data**
Mean=3.16
The tabulated data shows that the corporate leaders are of the opinion that the extent of utility of soft-skills is very great extent.

**Association between Leadership role and Soft-skill Development:**

The researcher has made an attempt to test the independence of two attributes. i.e Leadership role and Soft-skill Development by applying Chi-Square Test for their relationship. The data has gathered from 240 sample respondents representing corporate leaders 25, student leaders 15, teaching faculty 10 and the student community in general 190.
**H0:** Leadership role and Soft-skill development are independent.
**H1:** Leadership role and Soft-skill development are not independent.
The survey data is tabulated and presented in the table 3.

**Table 3: Relationship between Leadership Role and Soft-Skill Development**

| Leadership Role | Soft skill development | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Very effective | Less effective | |
| Active | 160 (86.49%) | 30 (54.55%) | 190 (79.17%) |
| Less active | 25 (13.51%) | 25 (45.45%) | 50 (20.83%) |
| **Total** | **185 (100.00%)** | **55 (100.00%)** | **240 (100.00%)** |

**Source: Survey Data**
$\chi^2$ = 26.22

Degree of dependence is =68.427

The calculated value of 26.22> critical value of k=3.841 at 1 degree of freedom leading to the rejection of Null Hypothesis. The chi-square test works out to be significant. This indicates that Soft-skill Development and Leadership role are dependent on each other and there is a close association between Skill development and Leadership role.

**Suggestions:**

1. Soft-skills is a good result in improving profitability which is the main goal of the business in the larger run.
2. Corporate should incorporate a special time-table where these skills can be passed on to the unskilled employees.
3. Decision makers in corporate should make a study of the existing soft-skills and accordingly plan for the additional soft-skills for the betterment of the organization.
4. Industrialists should be included during the formation of curricula according to the need of the job market at higher educational level.
5. Academic internships must be introduced in all the education programmes that not only facilitate and foster academia-industry interaction but also make the students to learn the nuances of organisation culture and behaviour, needed to fine-tune responsive leadership skills.
6. Development of soft-skills should be started at a tender age. It can be made mandatory at the primary level itself.

**Conclusion:**

The need of the hour is "Responsive leadership" and not task masters. The development of responsive leadership must begin at an early stage and not till he/she finds a job. It is always best to sharpen the tools before hand rather than doing at the time of crisis.

Crisis management is an essential quality of the responsive leaders. They provide a catalytic effect in the process of performance improvement and are effective stress-reducers.

A clear demarcation should be drawn between the task leaders and responsive leaders. The youth should be trained and fine tuned to accept the signals emanating from responsive leadership. The college activities must be rephrased so as to develop the responsive leadership qualities. This will bring about a change locally as well as globally.

Today, we have to invest in our youth, for they are our future capital. This will make our "India Shine". This is the only thing that will help the youth to grow personally and in turn help the nation to grow.

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