
Nexters – Movers and Shakers!

[We believe that all business, functional and departmental heads in organizations are potentially the next CxOs and hence we will call them 'nexters' in this article.]

Right now someone, somewhere, is walking to his manager to say, "I have a problem". The manager would hear it and is very likely to say, "I will take this up" and take it up he does, to be told by his manager "I would look into it". Later during the day (or in a few days) the problem makes its way up and a senior manager tells a nexter "There is a problem". A little pause, silence....

What the nexter does next, would become a defining moment. Not in a dramatic sense of altering the course of the organization but in a manner that defines the culture of how problems are dealt with, in organizations.

...Silence. The nexter says, "I will check with my manager and get back to you".

Deafening silence. Something has exploded. Right there, right then, the nexter has blown an opportunity to wear the ownership hat. He has fallen trap to seeing his role as a sophisticated and articulate messenger- (one of the many things that the role is not). He has diluted his power and become a weakling and a weak link. The problem travels further up.

Nexter - the mover & shaker

Organizations rely on CEOs to deliver business results who in turn rely on their immediate team of best men, the second in command- the nexters.

When nexters lose sight of this power and position they sign up to mediocrity. When they succumb to the trap of blames and excuses offered by others by endorsing them, they become figureheads and when they merely relay information up and down, they cease to be respected.

So how a nexter is viewed by the organizational eco system largely depends on how he or she chooses to behave. They need to recognize that the rest of the organization looks upon them and watches their every move. Like everyone else nexters have the option of looking out of a window (remember the window shows the world outside) and ascribe every loss or failure to external causes like poor resources, tough markets, wrong timing etc. They also have the option of looking into a mirror and ask a simple yet profound question- what could the person in the mirror do, to impact things?

Nexters would do well to draw blinds on windows and have more mirrors installed. A common fantasy that most mediocre nexters indulge in is to hope for an ideal organization, ideal market, ideal team and an ideal customer. A surgeon wishing for easy procedures is bad news for patients for there would be that tricky tumor, a pilot wanting clear skies is not great news for fliers for there would be turbulence and a nexter wishing for easy work is bad news for organizations, for they have tough work to do.

Nexters enjoy the intellectual stimulation of strategy meetings. They take pride in the fact that they are privy to information and decisions of the highest order. They enjoy the proximity to the corner office. They know that single handedly they can influence decisions that alter the course of organizations. Real nexters recognize that that they exist in the organization, also to deal with issues, uncertainties, and problems galvanizing individuals and teams into purposeful actions. They thrive in this duality- impacting up and impacting down.

Nexters are leaders with ice in their veins and fire in their hearts. They need to consume crises for breakfast. They need to be like explorers who welcome every twist and turn and enjoy it.

It is believed that Archimedes once said "Give me a lever long enough and a firm place to stand, I will move the earth". Use this in an organizational context; Nexters have powers strong enough and a great position from which they can move (and shake) the organization.