

## Leadership development in Indian companies evolving significantly

From a time when leadership development meant providing additional coaching for your senior executives to providing a blended learning experience for managers at all levels using the latest tools and technology, the leadership development process in Indian companies has come a long way.

While some of the bigger conglomerates have significantly increased the scope of offerings at their corporate universities or management development centres, others have strengthened and expanded their internal training processes.

For groups that have a presence across diverse industries, having a common centre can help reinforce certain core values and a common identity. Prince Augustin, EVP-HR, Mahindra & Mahindra, says, "The controlled environment of Mahindra Management Development Center gives a similar 'one Mahindra' brand experience to our employees. This creates an ecosystem specific to the Mahindra culture."

The actual training process has also evolved from purely classroom training to a blended approach where experiential learning and simulations play a big role. Companies have moved from functional and skill development to role based training. In fact, in certain companies, role based training is now in the past.

For instance, Cognizant has evolved to looking at the overall development of a manager at each stage of his career. Sriram Rajagopal, vice-president-HR, Cognizant says, "Our leaders play an important role in the training process and we train them on how to be coaches for their subordinates."

This approach is also visible at Hindustan Unilever where the senior management is closely involved in leadership development. BP Biddappa, executive director-HR, HUL, says that the company follows a 70:20:10 approach to training, which means that 70% of the learning happens on the job through the immediate manager, 20% through coaching and mentoring and the balance through formal learning.

Companies like GE have an additional advantage of being able to tap into the best practices globally through associations with the parent company, famed for its leadership development centre at Crotonville.

"While the basic curriculum is set by Crotonville, there is a Learning Leader in India who customises it to ensure that it is relevant to local needs," says David Lobo, head-HR, GE India. Eventually though, what matters is the learning process and not where it happens.

Aditya Birla group's Sanrupt Misra says, "Whether it's important to have a corporate university or not depends on your organisational viewpoint. If you have a critical mass and a vision to

customise the learning experience for your employees, then it makes sense. It's not a must-have and has to be done for strategic reasons."

There is a distinct advantage though for groups with diverse businesses. A Tata spokesperson explains, "The Tata Management & Training Centre functions as a glue. Tata employees shed their individual company identity and adopt the group identity during their time there."