

EFFECTIVE EXECUTION

FOREWORD

Effective Execution: A Preview

Raghav Nandyal has been actively and passionately involved in practicing Total Quality Management (TQM) and Lean Six Sigma for over 30 years. He has run through, as a part of his professional work, a large number of organizations—large, medium and small—and thus, has a huge data of ‘hands-on’ experience in this domain. He already has five books to his credit and his latest book is *Effective Execution*.

The focus of his latest book is:

How should an organization enable alignment of an individual’s work and indeed aspirations, with that of the organization, to achieve common business objectives? The individuals may have been drawn from vastly differing family, social, cultural and competency backgrounds which makes this challenge even more formidable.

Raghav also states that effective execution is all about people. For, at the heart of execution is a human being, whose soul’s work depends largely upon the following.

1. Great teamwork,
2. Clear communication,
3. Performing the defined standard work processes based on strong measurement, process evaluation and process improvement, in that sequence.
4. And above all, a very healthy, nurturing, empowering environment or eco-system within the organization, where the individual gives out his best through self-motivation.

Raghav, time and again, refers to his days (1992–1995) in Motorola India Electronics Pvt. Ltd (MIEL), where he found the above four factors in abundance, and that he gave out his best to MIEL and Motorola Corporation through strong self-motivation.

I had the privilege and pleasure to head MIEL for two years from January 1994 to February 1996 in Bangalore. The organization, which had already achieved world recognition by being the first

software entity to achieve CMM Level 5, (the equivalent of Six Sigma in software that only an organization of the stature of Motorola could conceive in its Software Six Sigma programme), grew in strength from 150 staff to over 400, during that period, while still maintaining itself as the CMM Level 5 entity.

While Raghav has enumerated his experiences as a practitioner and an executioner in MIEL, I thought, I would enumerate some of the best practices we, as the senior management of Operations, Human Resource (HR) and Finance, adopted to give a very homely nurturing environment to MIEL. This enabled the staff of 400 to perform their best through self-motivation. This is because, while the sustainability of Six Sigma status in a manufacturing organization is largely due to machine operations, in a software organization, this has to be achieved by each 'human being' through an environment of encouragement, empowerment and empathy. The other critical requirement that is needed to succeed with sustaining high-performance operations in any organization is the 'human or competency factor'. Nurturing the crucial need of improving the people's maturity in an organization is a constant endeavour, the mechanics of which are often left out. They are brought out in this book by Raghav, spread over five chapters dedicated to improving workforce effectiveness. Addressing 'how' to go about building such people capability was perhaps possible because of Raghav's expertise in the People CMM and his ability to connect some of its recommendations with what we did at MIEL.

Here we go:

1. Immediately after joining the organization, I initiated the process of meeting each and every individual (all of the 150 employees) over breakfast, in batches of five. This enabled me to understand each one of them, as individual human beings, their family background, hobbies, aspirations, etc. This was my way of paying tribute to their enormous contribution to creating the world's first CMM Level 5 organization. Incidentally, this is a common practice in the Navy, where an officer, after joining his new ship, is invited by the Captain to join him for breakfast, to understand his new shipmate as a person.
2. MIEL was growing fast, with new entrants coming from very diverse backgrounds who had very little knowledge or concept regarding software quality. It was, therefore, necessary to create a very elaborate Induction Training Programme (ITP) of a duration of six weeks, where all the cardinal principles and practices of a CMM Level 5 organization were inculcated into

them. I used to meet them on three occasions, on the very first day, on their passing out day and once in between. This was again to emphasize their key role in the organization which they would be required to play.

3. There were some key messages during this Induction Training Programme.
 - a. Motorola Global culture was emphasized with two strong messages of 'constant respect for people' and 'Total Customer Satisfaction (TCS)'. This was essential because at that time, Motorola was spread across 35 countries and had over 150,000 employees. What bonded this global group together with such diversity of ethnicity, religion, geographical distances, was the Motorola Corporate culture, which everyone from the top to the bottom, followed to the hilt.
 - b. All the Instructors for this ITP were from within the organization. They emphasized to the new entrants, that they were also like them but now are producing world-class quality software in diverse domains.
 - c. The 'key' to the success of the CMM process, was the 'peer review'. Here the new entrants learned to review the documents created by their peers, very professionally and dispassionately, ensuring that they were 'critiquing' the peer's document and not 'criticizing' it. This was easier said than done. It took at least one week for the new entrants to master the peer-review technique.
4. There were rigorous project reviews every month for every project that was attended by the entire project team as well as all the support functions representatives of HR, Finance, IT and Quality Assurance. This helped to resolve any bottlenecks/unresolved issues, expeditiously and over 90% of the projects were absolutely on track for execution, no mean achievement with ever-changing requirements. It also helped the junior members of the project team to see how their individual contribution was vital for the success of the project.
5. MIEL was, probably, the first one to introduce the concept of 'Outward Bound Management Development Programme' in August 1994 in the Indian Corporate world. A four-day 'Marine boot-camp' was conducted for 25 middle-level managers at the Rajmachi Fort near Lonavala, in the hills near Mumbai, in tented accommodation. The participants underwent various difficult obstacles/activities like rappelling, canoeing, etc. At the end of

the day, around the campfire, the participants were encouraged to voice their fears, insecurities, uncertainties in facing various exercises conducted during the day. The fact that they all did this, very enthusiastically, showed the trust everyone had in their 'peers' who, otherwise, would be perceived as a potential competitor in an organization. This was one amazing experience in strong bonding for each participant. This programme was repeated for each of the project team as well, to ensure strong bonds within project team members.

We had, every month, one Town Hall Session that was attended by all and where any individual was free to ask a question to the management. It was a great experience (and indeed a leveler, sometimes) for the senior management. This was the transparency of governance at its best. It helped everyone to understand the ground realities and also provided the senior management an opportunity to convey the larger goals of the organization, to bring everyone on the same page.

6. Since MIEL was the first entity in Motorola Global Corporation to achieve CMM Level 5, many senior managers of MIEL were given the opportunities to head a number of new software development organizations in places like Singapore, Sydney, Adelaide, Beijing, etc. This helped with the career path of these senior managers.
7. We made sincere efforts to get some senior domain experts of MIEL to be appointed as the members of the different world standards committees as the representatives of Motorola Corporation. And we did succeed in one case. This indeed raised the self-esteem of the entire MIEL.
8. Out of the total staff sanctioned for MIEL, 20% vacancies were reserved for the PhDs. This ensured that MIEL had strong domain experts on their staff, who helped and mentored the younger entrants. This was the initiative of Terrence Heng, the Corporate Software Head of Motorola Corporation.
9. In 1995, MIEL introduced, for the first time in India, the 'open, negotiated performance review' for its entire staff. It was indeed a major exercise because the Indian concept of 'Annual Confidential Review' was demolished to make way for an open review between the manager and his team member. It took two months of solid weekend training sessions, for the managers, to instill full confidence in them to face and handle their respective

team members for such an open review. Looking back, in 1995, it was a colossal task.

I guess I can go on and on. All I can say is that MIEL was full of people like Raghav who gave their best, and indeed were responsible to tell the entire world that India can produce world-class quality software, has a strong domain expertise and all this could be done at a very reasonable price point. In fact, MIEL established the status of India as a major hub of software design centres.

In this book on Effective Execution, Raghav writes about the importance of problem-solving maintaining a solid execution focus; and getting the job done effectively. What gets even better is that Raghav puts the relevance of the 64-enablers to test by offering a case study in Appendix B: 'Gap assessment of COVID-19 using SPRUM® enablers to the Indian context.' If they are relevant while addressing a pandemic of an unprecedented type we are currently living in, they should be equally relevant at other times. The most important contribution of this work is he clearly tells us 'the how-part' of doing it; what we normally see in maturity models or best practice guides is the 'what-part'. Within the toolkit of Systemic Process Review Using Measurements (SPRUM), he identifies 64-enablers and sets the book in a tone that conveys: 'The job is not done until you achieve and surpass all expectations, and until you get what you want.'

I enjoyed writing this preview for the book and I hope you will enjoy reading it as much!

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