

Prologue

“If you jump into a lake, you may or may not learn to swim. But you cannot help getting wet.”

- Ancient wisdom

I have often wondered why individuals and organizations embark on any journey. Some do it because they want to explore new avenues, some do it because they want to accompany another person, some do it to ensure that they are not left behind, and yet some do it because they really want to make the journey. Obviously, the last is the most compelling reason. If a horse is thirsty, making the horse drink is not an issue. If you point the horse to the water, it will drink on its own.

The most important question for any organization planning to begin the PCMM journey is: “Do we have a problem looking for a solution or do we have a solution like PCMM looking for a problem?” If it is the second question, I would urge them to look deeper within themselves before looking outward. Because, as the author emphasizes in the book, PCMM is not about getting a certification or an external seal of approval or keeping up with the Jones. It is about looking at yourself more clearly. PCMM is like a lighted mirror that shows your reflection. What you change depends on what you want to and how much you want to.

Motivation precedes perception. Think about the thirsty horse. And motivation is provided by goals that are synchronous and congruent with organizational Vision. If the organizational Vision depends on people competencies, processes and participation, then PCMM has valuable insights to offer.

PCMM is not the responsibility of the Human Resources function alone. Everyone has a role to play in it - the sponsor, the manager and every employee. The Human Resources Development function can help in building competencies and offer specialized knowledge on PCMM. But it has to be leadership driven, supported by managers and experienced by the employees if it has to be pervasively institutionalised.

The good news about this book is that it has something for everyone.

For leaders and managers, it provides an overview about the PCMM model. More important, it helps them to define what their expectations should be from the process.

For the experts and those who want to know more about PCMM, it offers interpretation and clarity on a variety of issues. For instance, how a Process Area

looks when it is at a level below or a level above, helps in making a final call while arriving at the PCMM level. The element of interpretation in PCMM becomes a lot more systematic and easy because of the guidance provided in this book.

For an absolute novice or student, this book provides a fairly comprehensive understanding of the PCMM model.

At a personal level, my journey with PCMM began way back in 1999, when I attended the first Introduction program by Dr. Bill Curtis. I was amazed by what I heard because it seemed to offer so many insights to what we were grappling with. I was then Corporate General Manager – Human Resources at Wipro and we were grappling with three important questions a) How to set a direction for Human Resources and how to measure where we have reached? b) How to make our people processes world class? c) How to ensure that all our people processes are integrated on common criteria, so that the basis for recruitment, selection, performance management, promotion, compensation and development d) How do we develop and retain our leaders? I found that the PCMM model had many insights to offer. I then went on to develop my PCMM knowledge through the Lead Assessors' Course. At Wipro, I evangelised the PCMM model and also participated as a Assessment Team Member for both the PCMM Level 5 assessments. (We had an external Lead Assessor for both these assessments). I finally became a SEI Certified Lead Assessor last year.

At an organizational level, once we began the journey, what really amazed us about PCMM is that we could see how the entire paradigm actual moves as we moved from one level to the other, I guess this is natural when you implement PCMM in all sincerity. In the book, "The Road Less Travelled", the author Scott Peck describes how the natural force of entropy creates disorder from order. It is the force of evolution, which counteracts this, moves in an opposite direction to create a higher order. I consider PCMM as a force, like the evolutionary force, that helps organizations to become more ordered, harmonious and mature. PCMM can therefore be utilized as a very important change management model.

I have no doubt that this book by Raghav Nandyal, who has added to my own understanding of PCMM in a significant way, will be useful to you. I wish that a book like this was available when I began my own PCMM journey. Whether your organization pursues PCMM till the assessment at the highest level or not, it will certainly make you wet and evoke an abiding interest in PCMM and more importantly, the spirit behind it.

Success with PCMM, like in anything else, depends on at least four important dimensions according to our sages:

- a) The quality of understanding provided by the author or the guru

- b) The motivation and dedication of the receiver of knowledge
- c) The contact and interaction with similar others pursuing the same goal
- d) The alchemy of time

By this book, the author has taken the first step. The next two steps depend on the reader. And finally, it takes time for the concept to sink in, for the processes to stabilize and for the benefits to be come tangible and visible.

The greatest part of the entire journey is that the process will transform you as much as the result. There is really no destination when you get off. At PCMM Level 5, all you achieve is the capability for continuous improvement. And the only problem is that this continues forever.

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