

Thread Advisory

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT

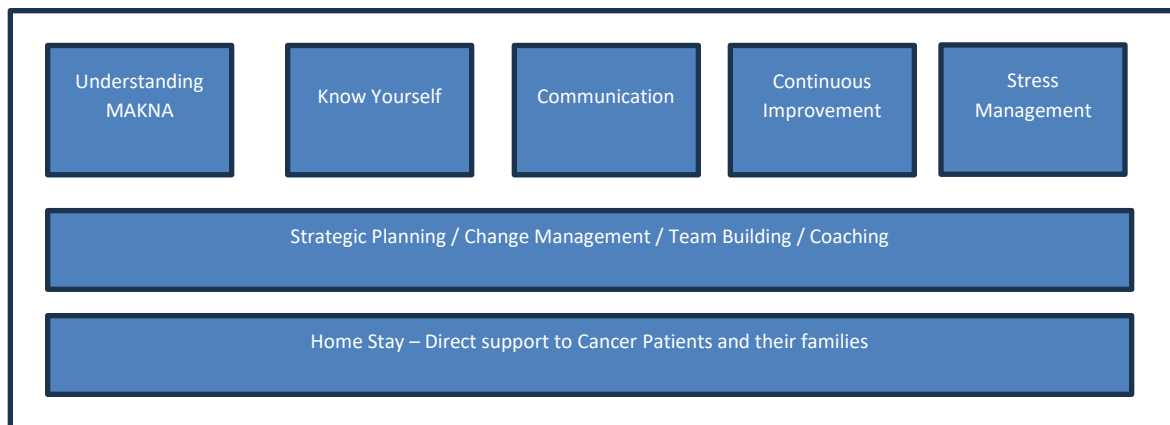
A few months ago, Ravi, one of MAKNA's Team Leaders facilitated a very lively session around the question "What is more important: People or Results?". We formed 2 teams. Each team was responsible for putting forward in a debate-style format their perspective on the topic.

Through the exercise we concluded that **if we build our people up with the right knowledge, skills and values, they will take care of managing the operations and achieving the expected results and organizational impact.**

It is no surprise that this people development philosophy has been adopted and practiced by the organization from as early as 2006. The Founder, Dato' Farid understood the importance of giving everyone the opportunity to learn complex leadership concepts in a simple and easy to understand way, to ensure that each employee could reach their maximum potential and contribute in the best way possible through their daily tasks.

Dato' Farid himself would research relevant topics, will prepare the presentation slides and will craft practical activities that will facilitate the understanding of the topic and how it relates to the daily activities of all MAKNA employees. He developed the building blocks of what will become the "MAKNA Continuous Education Series" the "MAKNA Leadership Development Series" and the "MAKNA Strategic Retreats".

These signature programmes are now embedded into MAKNA's yearly plans because of the visionary efforts of Puan Farah, MAKNA's General Manager. She understood the importance of institutionalizing them to ensure organizational sustainability and to build strong leadership succession. These programmes give the opportunity to all MAKNA employees to come together, amongst other things to learn, reflect, strengthen the team's dynamics and provide support / assistance to cancer patients and their families.



The Building Blocks of MAKNA's Leadership Development

So, what is the purpose of all this?

Leadership development is one of the most valuable experiences any organization can gift its employees. When conceptualized and deployed with discipline and intent, it will go beyond the obvious enhancement of individual or collective knowledge and skills and the improvement of organizational outputs and effectiveness. Leadership development plays an essential role in building a strong culture, sustaining employee motivation and engagement and enhancing organizational impact.

Leadership development does not happen by accident. It requires organizational commitment, discipline of implementation and continuous review to ensure it fulfils the organizational expectations and employees' needs.

The following are some of the most critical considerations which MAKNA takes into account towards institutionalizing leadership development and ensuring it is relevant and current:

1. **Building a Roadmap.** It is important to clearly articulate the way leadership development looks in practical terms. This will allow employees to visualize how the different activities / programmes support their growth and development.
2. **Emphasis on Ownership.** Leadership development should be undertaken as a partnership. The organization, Heads of Departments, Team Leaders and employees have a role to play. When each play their part, the outcomes and impact will become tangible and materialize more effectively.
3. **The 10, 20, 70 rule.** It is not just about attending training. It is about creating the right mix of interventions that will enable employees to acquire the required knowledge and skills (10%), put them into practice (20%) and learn from experiences (70%).
4. **Coaching for Self-Discovery.** No matter how experienced or successful anyone is, it is critical to make available opportunities that will enable employees to pause, reflect and strategize on the most appropriate way to travel their own leadership journey.
5. **Stock taking.** The external environment is constantly changing, imposing new demands and expectations on the way the organization operates and the way employees are expected to perform their roles. It is for this reason that it is critical to ensure regular reviews of the leadership development interventions is undertaken to ensure they remain relevant and fit for purpose.
6. **What is in it for me?** Employees are given many opportunities to learn, grow and contribute. Leadership development is not just about promotions, which may not come in plenty given the size of the organization. Leadership development provides employees with the opportunity to get involved in new projects, to take on additional responsibilities, to lead team members, to experiment and try new things. Employees are the drivers of their own development.



7. **Different strokes for different folks.** Different people are motivated by different things. In the same manner, leadership development means different things to different employees. MAKNA recognizes the importance of making available a variety of opportunities that will enable employees to choose the one that is most aligned to their own preferences.
8. **Continuous communication.** As new people join the organization, and existing employees become busy with their daily job, it is essential to ensure communication efforts are undertaken on a regular basis to remind employees about how leadership development is an integral part of their growth within MAKNA.
9. **A 360-degree perspective.** Understanding the perception of others supports our own growth, as it will allow us to ascertain the way our behaviour impacts others. MAKNA undertakes a yearly feedback exercise which intends to identify the strengths and areas for improvement of each employee, to build their self-awareness and drive their self-improvement efforts.
10. **A little external help.** Using an external advisor has given the organization the ability to use technical expertise to accelerate the institutionalization of the programmes and their different components. It has also provided the People Solutions (HR) team the opportunity to learn new skills and grow their knowledge along the way.

And what are some of the most tangible outcomes of institutionalizing leadership development at MAKNA?

1. A management team capable of leading the organization, instead of over-relying solely on the General Manager's capabilities.
2. Team Leaders who are not just operationally strong within their own areas, but who now understand the importance of working collaboratively with Team Leaders and members from other areas.
3. Common understanding on how to create lasting impact through the work that is done every day by MAKNA's leaders and employees.
4. Clear expectations around the behaviours which everyone should display whenever interacting with cancer patients, their families, the donors and any other stakeholder.
5. Higher quality services as teams work seamlessly towards a common objective: providing a helping hand to those in need.
6. Employees who are willing to get out of their comfort zone to learn, grow and contribute towards achieving the organization's objectives.
7. Improved levels of employee motivation as they are empowered to participate in programmes designed to support their professional growth and development.

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