



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

- **Organized by** : Institute of Actuaries of India (IAI)
- **Venue** : Hotel Avion, Mumbai
- **Date** : 22nd and 23rd August 2014
- **Faculty** : Mr. Satish Kakri

Actuaries are known to demonstrate strong intellectual, mathematical and problem-solving skills. However, the issue of not being a strong leader and good communicator is often heard. This seminar was an effort from IAI to address this pressing issue and inculcate better communication and leadership skills in young actuarial professionals.

It was a two days seminar focusing on less emphasized aspects of leadership in actuarial professionals such as communication, interpersonal skills, public speaking, and empathy. The faculty Mr. Satish Kakri, a renowned name in soft skills training, had divided the whole program in two parts, first day to cover the essentials of good communication skills and second day to build up on earlier learnt techniques to become a strong leader.

There were 17 participants gathered for the betterment of their soft skills with a hope to ease their day to day work and to get an edge in climbing corporate ladder. The day started with the very



Satish Kakri & Participants during the session

essentials yet often ignored aspects of communication skills with exercises on Clarity and Pronunciation, Breath control, and speaking longer sentences. Participants were encouraged to address the gathering with something they are most comfortable with, their own selves. The session helped them to come out of their shell and interesting discussion started about various places in India and world. People came to know

about background of other participants, representing many parts of our country. It was an opportunity to meet people like Parsuram whose journey towards fellowship thrilled and motivated many of us.

Later on many exercises were carried out for agility of the organs of speech. Practicing of tongue twister paragraphs, the dialogues from Shakespeare's plays and other breathing and voice modulation exercises were well appreciated by participants.

Afternoon session started with a discussion about pitch and volume. Surprisingly many of us did not know about the thin line between pitch and volume and used them interchangeably. However the discussion and practices helped to understand the difference and effectiveness of raising pitch to convey a message without raising one's volume. The last activity for the day was a debate on Social Media – Boon or Bane. Participants were very enthusiastic to express their view.

The day concluded with setting up tone for next day, discussing the difference between a manager and a leader which can be rightly summarized by the quote of Management Guru Peter Drucker, **"Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right thing."**

Key learning for the first day was:

- Slow and clear speaking is a much better approach than to keep on repeating yourselves for other's understanding

About the Author



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- In a conversation words only count for 50% and a lot is expressed through Body Language. It is important to maintain a calm and poised attitude. Maintaining right degree of openness and giving personal space to others should not be avoided.
- Voice modulation by keeping a control on pace of speech, pauses, pitch, emphasis on key word and Tone enables the listeners to keep interested and understand the intended meaning
- Using all the organs and deep breathing while speaking gives the energy to complete sentences with proper pauses and emphasis.
- Listen to yourself while speaking.
- Consonants are very important and should not be omitted or slurred.

Few other essential tips to make communication more effective were:

- Avoiding unnecessary details. This might end up the other party disinterested.
- Importance of two way communication. The communication cannot be said successful till the time other party understands what was intended and hence their involvement is very important.
- Avoidance of strong political/religious view. It often ends up being personal arguments as people are very sensitive to these.
- Importance of smile; this helps put the other person at ease.
- Communication is a 50:50 process and without involvement of other person it will be more like lecture. Observing the listeners gesture

and giving them chance to speak will make the conversation more effective and fruitful.

- At times there could be difficulty in reaching a consensus; having an attitude to agree to disagree and respecting others belief could be a nice idea.
- Criticizing directly may offend the other person. Instead asking questions, which sow seeds of doubt in the mind of other person, is a better approach of criticizing.
- While preparing a slide for presentation the rule of 6X6 should be followed which says 6 bullet points in a slide having 6 words in a bullet point.

After the first day's fun filled learning sessions, all the participants were eagerly waiting for the next day to start. The day started with effective public speaking tips followed by a video of Adolf Hitler giving a speech to his folks; all could see the energy, the conviction with which he spoke and the body language which moved his audience to their edge. The speech was in German but the enthusiasm and effectiveness was felt by everyone. Learning went on reemphasizing and practicing the correct body language, tone, pitch and pause to make the audience glued with you. This followed by other videos of great leader Martin Luther King "I have a dream" and recent time leader Barak Obama's inaugural presidential speech. The tips given in the morning was well

observed in these speeches. Many of the participants practiced them also and demonstrated a good learning.

Next exercise was to write your own speech playing the role of the Prime Minister of India. It was cheerful to see the change in confidence of people just after a day of exercises. Many put a great show with nice content and delivered with a great delivery style.

Many key leadership qualities were discussed with examples. Honesty,



Satish Kakri & Participants in the session

commitment, ability to delegate, communication (speaking as well as listening skills), sense of humor, control on anger, creativity, positive attitude, following intuition, confidence, ability to inspire, negotiation skills and being impartial were learnt as essential traits of a strong leader.

Role play activities were carried out to understand these qualities in a better way and how it can be inculcated in day to day life of an Actuary. These activities were recorded and then played back to discuss and understand what could be improved. Important take away from second day were:

- Traits of a strong leader

- Importance of emotional intelligence and ways to develop them for leadership skills. Writing a daily diary, keeping calm, understanding your values, being accountable, keep reminding yourself about your goal and aspiration, praising others are some of the ways to inculcate emotional intelligence for enhancing leadership skills
- Relationship building by keeping up with people, building trust, networking, showing a genuine interest in others, working hard, focusing on giving, and emphasizing on quality than quantity

Seminar was concluded with a personal feedback to each of the participants from the faculty addressing their individual concerns and providing prescription on how to tackle them. Participants were really happy with the two days spent in seminar. For Smriti it lived up to each bit of her expectations, Akshada, Kushagra, Harshada, Bhalchandra, Swati and other participants nodded in one voice that it removed their stage fear. Opening your mouth and using all the speech organs while communicating is something all knew but the importance is understood now. Everyone was thankful to IAI for conducting such sessions.

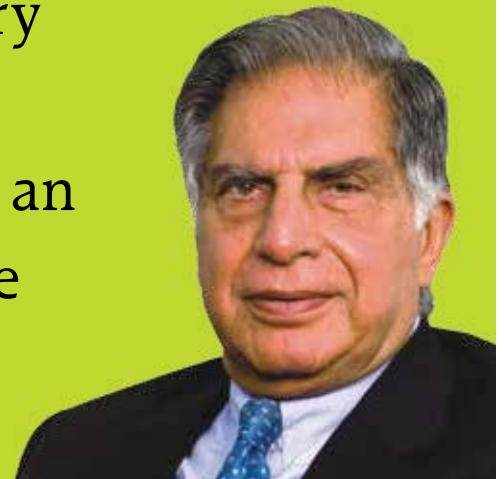
The Essence of the seminar can be summarized by the statement of James Humes:

"The art of communication is the language of leadership."



Ups and downs in life are very important to keep us going, because a straight line even in an E.C.G. means we are not alive

- Ratan Tata



Feedback of Leadership Development Programme

It was a good experience

It made me open up, talk in groups

It has given a different view to work on one of my negative (aspects): not a good communicator

Improved awareness on Self, Communication and Speech Fluency.

Good learning experience and a chance to develop.

The workshop has created a good comfort level among all the participants. It has helped in enhancing my confidence.

The training on speech was useful.

It was simply too good. I never thought that I could be that open.

Improved confidence in Public/Mass speaking.

This programme helped me how to talk or react all situations.

It was helpful. Made me think about importance of communication

It was a wonderful experience.

Very good and participative sessions.

Excellent effort to improve the communication of Actuaries, who are technically strong but lack communication skills.

The programme has helped me understand my limitation and way forward to improve on them.

One of the rare workshops where I was present physically and mentally too.

Good experience reminded me of school/college days. Scope for learning

This training programme is excellent in terms of learning experience. I got to know about the way we can prepare for (a) Speech/Presentation. It has helped to overcome stage fright to some extent, since it involves to speak on podium and in group discussions, debates etc. This programme has helped by showing videos of acts so that we observe our weaknesses and will help to work on these areas. Overall good interactive 2 day training sessions.

Well to tell you all about the experience here for 2 days, I can say now I breathe full and use my speech organs. Also, listen to myself. I will certainly try to implement modulation thought variance of pace, pitch, tone, emphasis of key words etc. I would like to make a note of a point that I have stage fear but this seminar has helped me to over come it a bit. I understand that we will need revise this, it doesn't end here. leadership qualities we have listed down, which will help us to apply in future.

Training was very well designed and executed. Our trainer and conductor is a highly experienced and skilled professional. He made us recognize and acknowledge the gaps in our current communication skills. He made us aware of the anatomy of speech and elements of public speaking. This helped a lot in better understanding communication. Certain exercises were built specifically for speech patterns and constructions of words. Also, exercises were conducted that boosted the individual's confidence and measurable changes were observed only after two days. Highly recommended!

Training give us a platform to develop our communication skills and knowledge about leadership skills. Good set of people and nice line up of activities. The trainer was very knowledgeable and friendly and he tried to bring the best out of us. The material was good but can be made better in terms of more individual exercises and a few more activities about leadership skills would prove more beneficial. All in all, a lot of good take aways from the training.

The training was an enjoyable experience. It helped in confidence building. The emphasis on details of speech was good. The different exercises & activities conducted helped in familiarizing with the group. Takeaways: Act, never react. Express your disapproval by speaking at a high pitch, with a low volume. Taking Pauses at appropriate places, to maintain the pace. A leader has to speak in a convincing way. For this, the speech has to have a well-prepared content and properly modulated.

My experience in the training workshop was amazing. It gave me a platform to meet my fellow actuaries, which would have been impossible without it. This workshop helped me get more confidence in speaking in front of a group of people. It helped me to communicate freely with almost unknown people. It helped me to learn (the) difference between pitch & volume.

This training was very good and made me understand how to speak and what to speak in particular situations. Also, this training make me to come over from my shyness. It provided me confidence and come over from Stage Fear. Still, I need to know more about leadership quality, something about personality development.

This training was very unique and this is the first time that I have attended a training like this. It was very useful and I am convinced that if i practise the techniques taught is the training I can be an effective leader.

I came a little late and that fact made me little uncomfortable. The acknowledgement of faculty - it's ok, take a seat, instantly shun away that discomfort. The ice breaking session was really good and involved everyone. The opening up of mouth and voice modulation exercise were helpful but the long breathing "tip" is going to be applied on daily basis. The reply of role play exercises made me realize that the time taken to find words are not too much and now the uneasiness brought because of this will be removed.

We have improved in our communication. We are using our speak organs.

I have enjoyed my 2 days at the seminar very much. It was fulfilled 2 days, learning. At office it is mostly number crunching and one to one conversations with colleagues with limited social interactions. I am actually a introvert and in general talk very less. So I supposed.

This a new begining for me to make, few changes in me - like getting over by inhibitions such as stage fright. I fell more confident that next time when i speak at public gatherings I will do better and now I know exactly where I lag and ways to improve upon them. Thank you Sir for this great session and thank you all for the great time.

I had a wonderful experience at the training. The best part of the training was it kept us engaged completely for 2 days. It is very tough to be present physically & mentally. But here I was present physically & mentally both. I learnt here how important communication is. I will use my speech organs more effectively now. I will try to control my pace and will not be shy to speak on stage. The material is also quite good. i appreciate the way training is conducted.

Good experience to improve speech. The practical approach taken has helped to open up from shell. The exercises for the sound (speech) organs were wonderful. On Day One, first public talk I was feeling nervous but later on with more practical exercises I got calm and able to speak normally. The emphasis on deep breath, pause and pace was key to improve communication. On managing fear front, keeping voice low and pitch was key takeaways.

I came with a lot of enthusiasm about learning more about communication and effective leadership skills. The workshop has lived up to every bit of the expectation. For me, the key learning areas have been - having control on pace, articulation and introduction to the concept of being a successful leader. The activities have been engaging and fun; the basic elements have been taken care of which is amazing.

The learning element has been immense in every session. I stepped out of my comfort zone. The communication is very essential which makes getting the right skills extremely important. Thank you so much for an enriching experience. It would be icing on the cake if I go back with an invididual feedback. Hope to communicate better and smarter.