

## Team Leaders collectively reflect at the Advanced Programme for Leaders (APL) 2021

Team Leaders of the Business Excellence Assessments came together at the virtual Advanced Programme for Leaders (APL2021) facilitated by Tata Business Excellence Group (TBExG) over three days on February 17-19, 2021. The APL is an annual collaboration platform to discuss the learnings of the BE Assessment cycle gone by and expectations for the upcoming year. This year, the programme was attended by over 100 participants from across the globe. The 3-day programme with 3.5 hours on each day, was designed in a manner to reflect on Day 1, get insights on Day 2 and co-create the next cycle on Day 3.

On Day 1, Sanjeev Singh, AVP, TBExG, started the APL2021 with an Opening Address, in which he stressed on how the Tata ecosystem, especially the Team Leaders, had shown resilience in a tough year and helped complete 18 BE Assessment feedbacks, including 2 Enterprise + Business Units Assessments. He mentioned that the year saw multiple experimentations to achieve the objective of customisation and collaboration to add value to the Tata companies. Subhrajit Basu, DGM, TBExG, then took a session on Reflections and Change, during which he threw light on the factors taken into consideration for preparing for the BE Assessment and reflected on the key enablers of the year that outshined during a challenging year. Mr. Basu also presented the quantitative and qualitative outcomes for the 2020 BE Assessment cycle.

Sunil Bhaskaran, CEO & MD, AirAsia India, then provided a Mentor's Perspective to the BE Assessment cycle of 2020. He underlined the need for BE Assessment teams to be detailed in their approach, considering that the Mentor's input is the direct outcome of conversations with the team. Mr. Bhaskaran also reiterated that presentations to the Board need to be more focused and that a support mechanism to enable this is essential.

Panneer Selvam, Head – Operational Excellence, Titan, took a session on the topic of Leveraging Understanding (Schedule A) calls before the Site Visit. Explaining that the team split the site visit into Schedule A and Schedule B calls, Mr. Selvam mentioned that Schedule A calls were a company-led process for the assessment team to understand the company's business, whereas Schedule B calls were specifically for the assessors to clarify queries with the assessing company. This split resulted in various advantages for the team as well as the company.

Dr. Richard Lobo, Head Innovation, R&D and CQH, Tata Chemicals, then spoke on Engaging the Assessment Team in Virtual Assessments. He mentioned that as a Team Leader, he ensured that actions were taken to delight the company as well as the team members by appreciating the soul of the company. Instances Mr. Lobo provided for this were practicing 'assess at home', planning in advance for virtual assessment, scheduling flexibility in the process, and more.

Shaun Thomas, Head of Quality Assurance Management, Tata Steel Europe, shared the Assessor's perspective from the Tata Power BE Assessment of 2020. Considering that it was a very complex assessment of Tata Power along with its 4 Business Units, Mr. Thomas threw light on how the team scheduled the process to manage complexities across the simultaneous assessments.

Day 2 began with the MD & CEO of Tata Capital, Rajiv Sabharwal, providing the CEO's Perspective for the BE Assessments. Mentioning that the process has a unique format wherein professionals with different expertise in diverse areas come together to provide feedback, Mr. Sabharwal said that this year's feedback is granular, and the output has been very useful for the company. Uttam Soni, Head – Business Excellence, Tata Capital, also took participants through how the company planned for the assessment, application writing and detailed the internal preparation for the BE Assessment.

In the next sessions, two BE Heads of Tata companies - Jaya Singh Panda from Tata Steel and Ratul Neogi from Trent, shared their expectations from Assessment 2021. While Ms Panda highlighted expectations including company-specific assessment approach, free-flowing narrative for application and team composition, Mr. Neogi detailed expectations like a hybrid site visit plan, assessors with industry experience, role of internal assessors, and industry briefings with COVID-19 impact.

Sambasivam Subramaniam, Managing Partner - Consulting and Service Integration, TCS, took a session on the topic of Assessing Digital Transformation Initiatives, in which he highlighted the four pillars of digital transformation, namely strategy & vision, people & culture, technology & capabilities, and process & governance. Gautam Gondil, AVP, TBExG, then shared his learnings from Virtual Safety Assessments, wherein he

took some examples to explain the concepts of familiarisation/visualisation and identifying key hazards in businesses.

At the end of Day 2, Deepak Deshpande, AVP, TBExG, along with Mr. Singh, Mr. Gondil and Mr. Basu, took a Beyond Business session during which 3 beloved Team Leaders, Deborah Vick (Tata Steel Europe), Behram Sabawala (Tata Unistore) and Priyadarshan Kshirsagar (Tata Motors) were felicitated as this was their last APL before they superannuate.

Day 3 started with an interesting talk on Inspirational Leadership through Emotional Intelligence by Arun Wakhlu, Executive Director, Pragati Leadership. During his address, Mr. Wakhlu talked about the context of leadership in the current scenario, in which emotional intelligence plays a key role. He also provided some tips and tools through which leaders can engage with people in their organisation in this virtual world.

It was then time for the recommendations from breakout sessions that had taken place before the APL 2021. Sonie Saran, Head – Business Excellence, TCS, along with NK Sharan, VP, TBExG and Naman Gupta, Consultant, TBExG, presented the report out of the breakout session on the topic of Strengthening Enterprise and BU Assessment Process. TV Srinivas Shenoy, Chief - New Materials Business, Tata Steel, along with Vinod Kumar, AVP, TBExG, Alok Shahapurkar, Sr. Manager, TBExG, presented the recommendations on Assessing Business / Strategy in the Year of the Pandemic.

APL 2021 closed with an interesting Open House with S Padmanabhan, Executive Chairman, TBExG. The APL2021 was moderated by Sayantan Roy, DGM, TBExG and has received encouraging feedback.

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