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**Yashwant Mahadik, Head Global HR, Lupin, in an Industry Story**

# Know-it-all bosses make way for 'learning' leaders

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**Mumbai:** 'Learning to learn' has been a key behaviour that helped Procter & Gamble's (P&G'S) COO Shailesh Jejurikar grow as a leader. This trait, he said, will be a discriminating factor for leaders of the future. "Future leaders will be learning leaders, not knowing leaders," Jejurikar told TOI in a recent interview.



With technological advances such as robots, AI and AR/VR increasingly becoming part of the work ecosystem, industry experts reckon all future leaders will have to learn not only continuously but also rapidly. Leaders as coaches will also have to be more skilled at coaching their people as compared to tasking them.

Given that P&G promotes from within, Jejurikar said there's a lot of investment that has gone into his development

as a leader. "I have been blessed to have a lot of mentors who encouraged the ability to have that curiosity and to be able to learn to learn. A learning mindset versus a knowing mindset has been an important factor and I think it is true for many leaders," said Jejurikar.

Reflecting on his career trajectory, Jejurikar said the times during which he learnt the most was when he stepped out of his comfort zone. "The company investing in me and giving me assignments where I was untested has been an area where I've seen myself grow dramatically," he said.

According to Lupin president - global HR, Yashwant Mahadik, in addition to being a rapid and continuous learner, some of the qualities that will set leaders apart in the future will include a higher level of emotional intelligence. "It's going to be crucial for leaders to have

## MUST COACH TEAMS, NOT TASK THEM

> Cos are seeing rapid tech advances such as robots, AI & AR/VR that become end up in the workplace

> Top execs say it's these new tools that make it imperative leaders **not only learn but also coach** their teams, rather than just task them

> They add leaders must **also have empathy as a competency** in addition to the vital learning agility

> Other requirements include having people who raise fundamental questions and readiness **to learn from even those who are less experienced**



a higher degree of empathy and the ability to understand the latent needs of their people. In an increasingly virtual and diverse world of work, the ability to connect and align the hands, hearts and minds of people with the purpose of the organisation will require leaders who are more compassionate and inspiring," he said.

L'Oreal, which has certain recruitment criteria based on which the company assesses external leadership candidates, has introduced empathy as

a competency in addition to learning agility. L'Oreal's global VP of talent acquisition, Michael Kienle, said, "Covid has shown that there are some skills and competencies that have become important, like the level of resilience, empathy and listening skills. Today, a leader needs to show the way and be close to the team while, at the same time, be empathetic. The leader needs to be a coach to help grow the people. The leadership role has become much more complex as well as much

more human," said Kienle.

Leaders thus need to be more skilled. "Leaders will have to be in the water with the people, coaching them how to swim better as compared to a 'sink or swim' attitude," said Mahadik. He added, "When it comes to talent development and engagement, future leaders will have to put more skin in the game and role model all capabilities and competencies of leadership themselves."

What that requires is growth mindset, something which Jejurikar said he has built over time. Challenging the paradigm — what P&G calls constructive disruption at a strategy level — helped his career. "It helps many leaders to have people who raise fundamental questions and challenge some basic beliefs and paradigms," said Jejurikar.

Given the pace of change today, Mahadik said leaders will have to learn from all available learning sources.