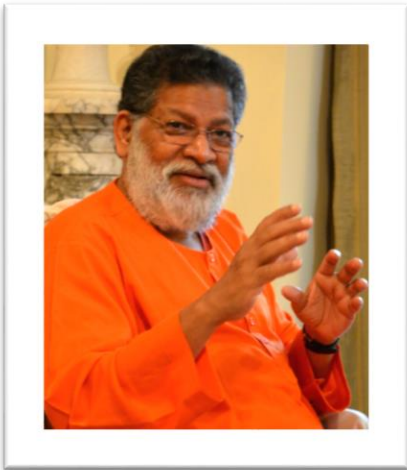


- Mahabharata and Management

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Swami Bodhananda explains the role of managers giving examples from Mahabharata:

Some of the memorable names from Mahabharata in the context of management are Bhishma, Dhritarashtra, Dharmaputra Yudhishthira, Karna, Abhimanyu, Draupadi and the inimitable Lord Krishna himself.

Bhishma is the perfect example of an upright manager caught in irreconcilable conflicts who was forced to take wrong decisions by forces beyond his control. With Bhishma, his vow of celibacy takes precedence over everything else, including the public will.

He is not bothered about the chaos that will occur in Hastinapur with no one to inherit the throne. His major concern is that his vow must remain intact. His motivation is highly complex!

Dhritarashtra's was an example of warped decisions caused by extreme attachment to his son Duryodhana. Yudhishthira is a shining example of managerial wisdom, though he also was compelled to deviate from his principled stand on practical considerations, faced with a ruthless enemy.

Krishna is the perfect example of a leader-manager who kept his eye on the ball till the desired outcome was achieved. And Draupadi is the classical model of a woman powerhouse who kept others motivated till the goal is achieved.

Abhimanyu, the son of Arjuna, is an example of a daredevil leader without a business-plan of escape. He fought his way into the chakravyuha, but failed to come out and was brutally cornered and killed by Drona and others.

Karna is a tragic example of a manager who fought his way up the ladder but could not keep up with the pressure and tensions and met a tragic end.

... Today there is intense competition within as well as between organisations. One lesson we learn from Mahabharata is that an all-out zero-sum battle ends with the destruction of all. The victors of the Mahabharata battle suffered equally as the losers, and what they got was a desolate land and a ravaged country.

If there is a single lesson from the Mahabharata, it is that competitors must try to find areas of collaboration wherever is possible, pool their resources for research and development and offer innovative solutions for customer's money (eg. the Airbus Company in Europe). Companies must also look into the social as well as environmental implications of their activities.

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