

Leadership Talk Report

Speaker: Mr. Gautam Chakravarti

Date: 24th March 2024

Theme: *Organization Design and Structure*

The first-year students of the School of Human Resource Management, XIM University, were fortunate enough to attend a Leadership Talk on the theme – ***Organization Design and Structure on the 24th of March, 2024***, which was very immaculately delivered by Mr. Gautam Chakravarti, Former Executive Director of Blackstone India. Mr. Gautam Chakravarti is a distinguished academic and industry leader with a trailblazing career marked by excellence. With top ranks in Bachelor of Science, master's in economics, and a PGDM from IIM Ahmedabad, Sir Gautam has honed his expertise through executive development programs at institutions like Wharton and MIT. Since 2015, he's been actively engaged as an Independent Director, visiting faculty member, and HR consultant with leading firms. With notable tenures at Blackstone India, Bilcare Ltd., and Gokaldas Exports Ltd., Sir Gautam's strategic leadership has driven remarkable turnarounds. As a guest lecturer, his rich experience in management consulting and leadership development promises to inspire and empower audiences. While the theme was extremely relevant to the first-year students, the speaker made it a point to deliver his thoughts using real-time examples from his professional experience and personal experience as an expatriate, which made the session even more interesting and valuable.



Talk Summary:

The session, helmed by Mr. Gautam Chakravarti, Former Executive Director of Blackstone India, commenced with a spirited dialogue on the crux of an HR professional, i.e., *Why do you need to understand organizational structure at a young age?* The audience engaged in a

profound exploration of the topic, showcasing enthusiasm for the theme. The discourse helped us to understand where you fit in the organization.

Mr. Gautam Chakravarti, during a lecture, elaborated upon this insightful perspective; organizations are vibrant social structures that bring together individuals with a shared purpose, whether it be generating profits in corporations or creating social impact in nonprofit entities. The word "organon," from Greek origins, metaphorically reflects how organizations harmonize individual efforts to achieve unified goals.

Today, organizations take on various forms, such as companies, institutions, charities, and clubs. They are characterized by their goal-oriented nature, structured approach, interaction with the external environment, and diversity of types. Facing numerous challenges, including globalization, intense competition, ethical and social responsibility, responsiveness to rapidly changing technology and market dynamics, the digital workplace, and managing workforce diversity, organizations rely on adaptability, strategic thinking, innovation, and differentiation. Mr. Chakravarti highlighted these points, underscoring the contemporary hurdles faced by organizations.

To comprehend the design of organizations, it is essential to examine structural dimensions such as formalization, specialization, hierarchy of authority, centralization, professionalism, and personnel ratios. Moreover, contingency factors, including organizational size, technology, external environment, goals and strategy, and culture, shape organizational behavior and effectiveness. Mr. Chakravarti presented a comprehensive overview of organizational design, emphasizing these aspects during his lecture.

In conclusion, Mr. Gautam Chakravarti stressed that organizations are dynamic entities that continuously evolve to address changing demands. A deep understanding of their design dimensions and the challenges they face enables organizations to thrive in a constantly changing environment. It is crucial to recognize that an organization represents a coordinated effort towards achieving a harmonious goal, much like a symphony.

Furthermore Mr. Chakravarti explained functional structure, it is a type of organizational structure that groups employees according to their similar functions and areas of expertise. This structure presents several strengths, including the ability to achieve economies of scale within functional departments, thereby promoting specialization and efficiency. Additionally, it enables employees to focus on developing specialized skills and knowledge relevant to their specific functions, leading to a high level of expertise within each department. Furthermore, it streamlines processes and decision-making within each department, allowing them to concentrate on achieving their specific goals. It is noteworthy that it is most effective for organizations with a limited product line.

However, despite these strengths, the functional structure has its weaknesses. One is its slow response time to environmental changes, as communication and collaboration between departments can be slow. This can make it difficult for the organization to adapt to changes in the external environment. Additionally, decisions can get bogged down in functional hierarchical levels, leading to a hierarchy overload. Departments can become siloed, leading to a lack of communication and collaboration between them, which can make it difficult to coordinate cross-functional initiatives. Also, the focus on departmental efficiency can stifle innovation within a functional structure. Employees may be less likely to think creatively or

collaborate with colleagues from other departments, resulting in less innovation. Finally, employees in a functional structure may lose sight of the overall goals of the organization as they become focused solely on departmental objectives.

Key Takeaways:

- ✓ Understanding organizational structure helps HR professionals position themselves effectively within the company and contribute to achieving its goals.
- ✓ Organizations bring together individuals for a shared purpose, like generating profit or creating social impact.
- ✓ Organizations are goal-oriented, structured, interact with the external environment, and come in various forms (companies, charities, etc.).
- ✓ Organizations today face challenges like globalization, competition, ethical responsibility, rapid technological change, and managing a diverse workforce.
- ✓ Formalization, specialization, hierarchy, centralization, professionalism, and personnel ratios all influence how an organization functions.
- ✓ Size, technology, environment, goals, strategy, and culture all play a role in shaping an organization's design and effectiveness.
- ✓ Organizations that can adapt to changing demands are more likely to thrive.
- ✓ Groups employees by similar function, promoting specialization and efficiency within departments.
- ✓ Economies of scale, deep expertise within departments, streamlined departmental processes.
- ✓ Slow response to change, hierarchy overload, departmental silos, stifled innovation, limited view of overall goals.



Profile of the Speaker:

Mr. Gautam Chakravarti, Former Executive Director of Blackstone India



Mr. Gautam boasts an illustrious academic background, having secured the 4th rank in his Bachelor of Science program and the prestigious 1st rank during his Masters in Economics. Further enhancing his impressive academic portfolio, Mr. Gautam completed his Post Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM) from the esteemed Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, where he was not only a rank holder but also a gold medallist. His dedication to lifelong learning is further evidenced by his participation in executive development programs at globally recognized institutions such as the Wharton Business School in Philadelphia, MIT in Boston, and Unilever's International Management Training Centre in the UK.

Since June 2015, Mr. Gautam has embarked on a diverse and impactful journey. He has served as an Independent Director on the boards of two companies, contributed as a member of the Management Council for a renowned firm of architects, and dedicated his efforts as a Trustee and Honorary Treasurer to the Indian Cancer Society, a notable NGO. Furthermore, Mr. Gautam has shared his vast knowledge as a visiting faculty member at prestigious institutions including the ICFAI Business School in Mumbai and Pune, SCMHRD in Pune, IMT in Ghaziabad, and UPH in Jakarta, Indonesia. His expertise in leadership development and executive assessment has been recognized through his collaboration with leading HR

consulting firms such as SHL, Kincentric, Cerebrus Consultants, and E&Y's Human Capital Advisory practice. With a track record of acting as an assessor for over 90 Assessment Centers over the past eight years for leading corporations, Mr. Gautam's contributions have been integral to the development of leadership within numerous esteemed organizations.

Mr. Gautam's professional journey in the industry, spanning from 1982 to 2015, is marked by significant achievements and leadership roles. During his tenure at BLACKSTONE INDIA from 2008 to 2015, he initially served as an Executive Director, where he was responsible for overseeing the operations of portfolio companies and spearheading strategic, cost reduction, and productivity enhancement initiatives. Subsequently, as the Director & CEO of Gokaldas Exports Ltd., he led the company through a successful turnaround, establishing it as one of India's largest manufacturers and exporters of apparels. In his role as the Global Chief Operating Officer for BILCARE Ltd., Mr. Gautam managed operations in specialized packaging materials for the Pharma industry across over 20 countries. His contribution as the Chief of Commercial Operations at Reliance Communications Ltd. was pivotal from its inception and through its transition within the Anil Ambani Group. At MAHINDRA & MAHINDRA, Mr. Gautam served as the Executive Vice President of the Farm Equipment Division, leading finance, HR, IT, and change management functions. His foundational years at Hindustan Unilever Limited encompassed various leadership and operational roles over 18 years, culminating as the Managing Director for a joint venture with a Dutch MNC, among other significant positions.

Mr. Gautam's extensive experience has not only honed his leadership and strategic capabilities but also deeply ingrained a commitment to excellence and innovation in every endeavor he undertakes, making him a distinguished figure in his professional and academic pursuits.

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