



Group HR

## MANAGEMENT BRIEF



Going the Extra Mile:  
Going Beyond the Call of Duty

**TATA** MANAGEMENT TRAINING CENTRE

**TMTC Management Brief MB/2009-02**

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# Going the Extra Mile: Going Beyond the Call of Duty

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*Binding the hearts and minds of men to the purposes of large organizations is a puzzle that has preoccupied thinkers since the time of Plato. Every corporate leader would want engaged and committed employees who are enthused to work for their employer, dedicated to the organization and willing to give the extra effort necessary to achieve the goals of the organization. The study explores why employees Go the Extra Mile (GEM) and how organizations can foster the GEM Behaviors.*

An organization's ability to bring out employee behavior which goes beyond the call of duty is a competitive advantage. This can be very difficult for its competitors to imitate. There are few key factors that make an organization stand out from the crowd. Topping this list are dedicated employees who go beyond what is formally required. These employees are willing to go the extra mile by orienting new employees, offering to help others accomplish tasks, taking on additional assignments, voluntarily assisting other people at work, keeping up with developments in their field or profession, following company rules even when no one is looking, promoting and protecting the organization and their work, voluntarily doing more than the job requires and keeping a positive attitude and tolerating inconveniences at work.<sup>1</sup> Leaders will vouch that these behaviors clearly contribute to organizational competitiveness and performance. We have examples of South West Airlines, or American Express where their success or impressive performance and competitive advantage is attributed to the willingness of their employees to go beyond the call of duty.<sup>2</sup> The quest to understand how to improve organizational performance and

effectiveness has led researchers to explore the "Going Extra Mile" (GEM) Behaviors. The verdict is that Going Extra Mile Behaviors improve work, group and organizational functioning in terms of overall performance, the quantity and quality of product output, overall effectiveness, team effectiveness, operating efficiency, and customer satisfaction.<sup>3</sup> How this can be achieved would be of immense interest to organizations and their leaders.

The Tata Management Training Center (TMTC) and National University of Singapore (NUS) collaborated to explore the relationship between GEM Behaviors and Organizations. The research objective of this collaboration was to better understand 'how' and 'why' employees working within teams make GEM Behaviors contributions, and how such contributions affect team performance. Why employees do make these contributions, and what factors might discourage employees from making them? These are important issues for organizations, as they pursue ways to encourage GEM Behaviors.

This research was conducted in one of the Tata Group companies. The study sample consisted of 35 project teams and included responses

from a total of 206 employees. Performance data of the participants was collected along with the Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) of the project teams. The Management brief discusses the findings of this research and the implication of the findings for the organization.

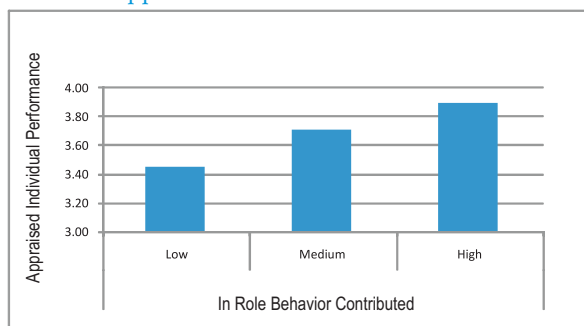
### GEM BEHAVIORS: CONTRIBUTED OR WITHHELD

It may appear that contributing and withholding GEM Behaviors are simply the opposite of each other. However, the study suggests that they seem to be governed by different motivational systems, and employees choose to contribute and/or withhold when it is in their best interests to do so.

### GEM Behaviors vis-a-vis Organizational Systems and Processes

A significant finding was that even though the organizations want to encourage the GEM Behaviors, their systems and processes often do not support this desire. Our study showed that employees receive more favorable performance appraisals when they perform the core duties of their jobs.

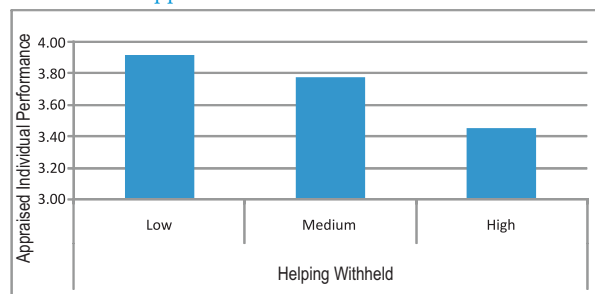
Fig.1. In- Role Behavior Contributed and Appraised Individual Performance



One more alarming finding that the study found was that while consciously helping others does

not win favorable appraisals, consciously choosing not to help others is sanctioned. These findings illustrate the gap between the organizational systems and processes and the organizational intentions.

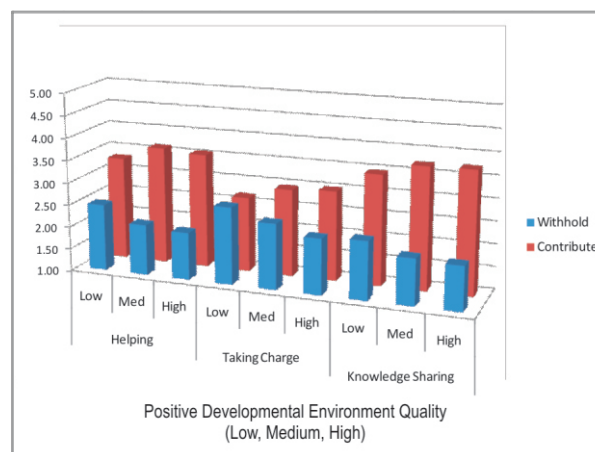
Fig.2. Helping Behavior Withheld and Appraised Individual Performance



### Role of Work Environment

The study illuminated the role of a positive, caring and developmental environment.

Fig.3. Role of Work Environment and Contribution of GEM Behaviors



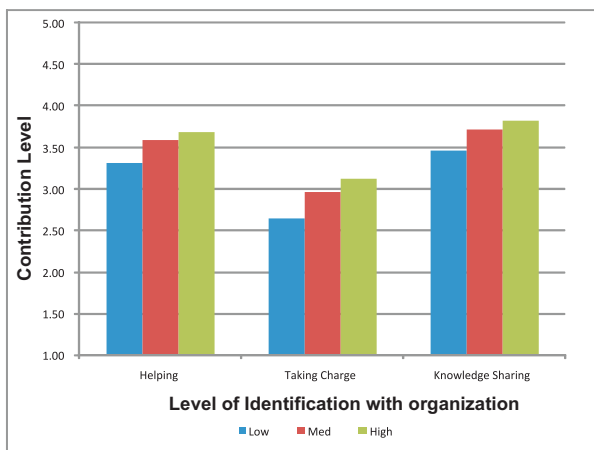
It is observed that employees contribute GEM Behavior more when they view the work environment as being caring and developmental.

Employees withhold GEM Behavior more when they view the work environment as not caring and developmental.

## Identify with Organization

Employees contribute GEM Behavior more when they “identify with organization”. When they “identify with organization” they feel that organization is an important part of who they are. Organizational identification elicits a sense of oneness with the organization and serves the employee's needs for belongingness, safety or self-enhancement. This makes the individual take the organization's perspective and goals as his or her own. This in turn strengthens work motivation and ultimately performance.<sup>4</sup>

Fig.4. Level of Identification with Organization and Contribution Level of GEM Behavior

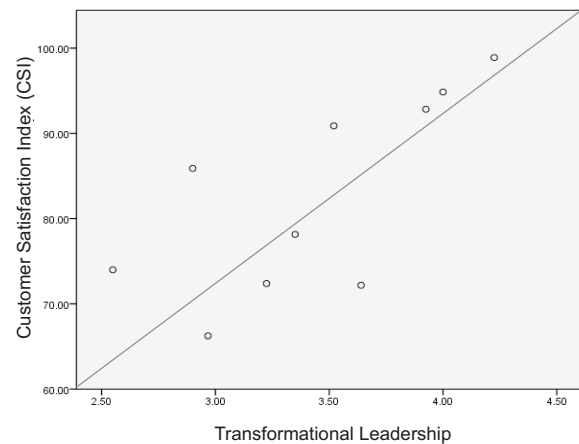


## Do Leaders encourage GEM Behaviors...

Leaders appear to be vital players, but for quite different reasons than we generally think. This study demonstrates an interesting aspect of role of leadership. Customer satisfaction with teams is greater when the teams are led by individuals appraised by their followers as having transformational qualities. The leaders with transformational qualities motivate through inspiration, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration. They have vision, and charisma. The leaders play an important role in managing expectations of the client group. Leaders need to be equipped with requisite interpersonal skills that are required to manage

these strategic relationships, and leaders described as transformational are likely to be better prepared for the task.

Fig.5. Transformational Leadership and Customer Satisfaction Index



## CAN ORGANIZATION FOSTER AND MANAGE GOING EXTRA MILE (GEM) BEHAVIORS

The vital question is whether organizations can develop GEM Behaviors. Can organizations create conditions where employees regularly exercise discretion and contribute what is needed, where it is needed and when it is needed?

This study seems to suggest that, yes, it is possible.

## Create a Sense of Identification with the Organization

One way is to create a sense of identification with the organization amongst the employees. Organizations should pay close attention to the mechanisms through which identification is achieved. These include the socialization processes and induction programmes in organizations. These programmes should aim at connecting and guiding new employees to build rapport with the team, access key information and receive guidance.

## **Integrate Performance Management Process and GEM Behavior**

At some point in our work lives, most of us have had the feeling that we are striving for the good of the organization in ways that go beyond the call of the duty. In return, often nothing is received. Not even a simple acknowledgement from the manager which more often is all that is necessary. Goal setting in the Performance Management Process should encourage the employees to Go Extra Mile for the organization. A positive feedback from the managers helps create a positive environment for GEM Behaviors.

## **Create a Positive, Developmental and Caring Environment**

There is a significant relationship between GEM Behavior and the extent to which employees believe that their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. For example, employees are likely to engage in GEM Behavior when they feel that their organization really considers their goals and values, cares about their opinions, seems to forgive honest mistakes on employee's part, and would be willing to help them if they needed a special favor. This means that organizations are also willing to go an extra mile for their employees. Thus to the extent that the employees feel supported and taken care of by their employers, they are likely to repay the organization by engaging in constructive behaviors not formally required by their jobs.

## **Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leaders are individuals with whom their subordinates identify emotionally. Such leaders create and communicate a vision

for the company that brings employees together to accomplish organizational goals by emphasizing the interests of the organization more than those of the individual. Transformational leaders not only "talk the talk" but "walk the walk" as well.<sup>5</sup> Employees are willing to go beyond the call of duty for their transformational managers. Employees are also willing to engage in relatively higher levels of GEM Behaviors when they work for managers with whom they have developed close, supportive relationships. Managers who demonstrate loyalty and show professional respect for their employees are also likely to elicit higher levels of GEM Behaviors.<sup>6</sup>

## **HRM Practices Encouraging GEM Behaviors**

Given our understanding of the importance of Going Extra Mile (GEM) Behaviors, what specific practices can organizations use to elicit GEM Behaviors from their employees? Based on the extant research, the organizational practices that can be deployed are summarized below.<sup>7</sup>

### *Recruitment and Selection*

- o Procedures that are predictive of employee GEM Behaviors.
- o Situational interviews to understand the willingness to engage in GEM Behaviors.

### *Training & Development*

- o Training programs that focus on teamwork, cooperation, taking initiative and exceeding one's formally prescribed job duties.
- o Programs designed to improve relationships among coworkers or between supervisors and subordinates.

## Performance Appraisal and Compensation & Benefits

- o Reward GEM Behaviors by focusing on the extent to which employees engage in such behavior in addition to their prescribed job duties.
- o Develop compensation systems linked to group or organizational-level outcomes that tend to encourage employees to Go Extra Mile.
- o Actively discourage employees who engage in competitive or non-cooperative behaviors that are inconsistent with the notion of GEM Behaviors.
- o Initiate flexible and family-friendly workplace benefits that show appreciation for employees and make it easier for them to go beyond the call of duty.

## Informal Systems Fostering GEM Behaviors

- o Develop a corporate culture that emphasizes going the extra mile for customers, colleagues, or the organization itself.
- o Place new employees, whenever possible, into work units or groups characterized by high levels of GEM Behavior.
- o Keep in mind that managers who expect their employees to go above and beyond the call of duty have to set an example by their willingness to do so themselves.
- o Recognize that organizations wanting loyalty and sacrifice from their employees should act in ways that make them deserving of such contributions.

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