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At the outset, it may be noted that this introduction is more like a sequel to my preface. I have avoided repeating here (but for a few necessary references), what is already said in the preface. Hence, before embarking on the introduction, reading the preface is highly recommended.

We saw in the preface that the Geo-Socio-Political world-order is changing rapidly and the economic center of gravity is substantially shifting eastwards. We also took cognizance of how the mindset of the people, world over is shifting from that of a job-seeker to a job-creator and took note of the overwhelming number of startups mushrooming all around. This is clearly the era of startups and entrepreneurship.

Empowered by the new technologies and correspondingly evolving new business models, the business ecosystem is also evolving on daily basis. Virtually every Industry and profession is undergoing a metamorphosis that affects all of us. These revolutionary changes will alter forever, the way many organizations operate. People and products that cannot cope with these changes will fast become obsolete and eventually perish. The new entrepreneurs, new leaders and those already in leadership positions will have to bear this in mind and keep aligning with new situations constantly, for long-term sustained success.

As *Stephen Covey* puts it, this realignment needs to be made at all three layers of leadership – Meta, Macro and Micro. Meta leadership is about vision and stewardship. Macro leadership deals with strategic goals and how you organize

structure and systems and set up processes to meet those goals. Micro leadership deals with empowering people and ensuring effective business execution through them.

This book is neither on general leadership, nor does it claim to be exhaustive. It is rather confined to a more specific and practical part - success-orientation. Many leaders seem to have little or no focus on this part, which for many organizations, is the primary reason for not realizing their full potential or failing altogether.

THE CONCEPT OF EFFECTIVE SUCCESS-ORIENTED LEADERSHIP (ESOL)

When we talk of success, it is not about good money made in short term. Neither is it about just making good money consistently over long term. It is about building respectable organizations that have a robust culture of success-oriented execution, having enough flexibility to adapt to the everchanging ecosystem, while living by their own *Core Values* and *Principles*. Empowered by this robust culture and flexibility, when organizations create substantial intrinsic value for all stake-holders, including society in general, sustained over a long-term, that is what we mean by success here. At times, organizations switch ownership or have to totally wind up. Effectively switching ownership or winding up is also a part of success. But we will confine our focus to running an organization.

Now, that brings us to the terms ‘Success-Oriented’ and ‘Success-Oriented Execution’. Some might argue that “Any leader starts off with a dream or a vision to achieve something worthwhile. Any good strategy is always success-oriented. No leader ever has a vision that culminates in failure or draws up a strategy to fail, so

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‘success-orientation’ is inherent to any vision or strategy per se; and hence, just saying ‘Execution’ should suffice. Phrases like ‘Success-Oriented’, ‘Success-Oriented Execution’, ‘Effective Success-Oriented Leadership’ etc are a futile play of words.”

That however, is not the case. What is inherent is the ‘intent’ to succeed. Success-orientation takes a lot more than just intent, as the following paragraphs will reveal.

This book does discuss the three fundamental aspects of business execution, namely *People, Strategy and Operations*, but in addition, it also talks about building the right culture for *Success Orientation* and a few other vital considerations that have a substantial bearing on the three fundamental aspects. These considerations, if missed, can cause damage of catastrophic proportions.

For instance, business management books are full of pages after pages glorifying **SMART** (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic & **T**ime-Bound) goals, goal setting, goal prioritization etc. Leadership programs crammed into a few days, often commence with pushing their participants hard – sometimes even to exasperating levels - to setting and prioritizing their goals first. But they often miss something very vital - these goals must emanate from a profound understanding of the organization’s ‘*Worthwhile Zone*’ (We will discuss this concept in detail in the subsequent chapters). Before setting something as a goal, one must ask - “Is it ‘worthwhile’?”

To be clear, I in no way, intend to undermine the importance of Goal Setting and Prioritization, but what is seen over long years of my experience of working with CEOs and top business leaders, is that at times, leaders

find themselves heading nowhere when they realize that some of the so-called SMART goals they set earlier, were far from being worthwhile. Knowing the organization's *Worthwhile Zone* is most fundamental and absolutely vital, before a leader sets goals and commits resources. It is the job of the leaders at the helm of affairs to know, what as a goal is worthwhile and what is not. The term 'worthwhile' is of course subjective, but the concept of '*Worthwhile Zone*' has been adequately discussed and explained in subsequent chapters, substantially curtailing subjectivity to acceptable levels; making it amply clear, that any goal is worthwhile only if it emanates from the '*Worthwhile Zone*' of the organization. That is one place where the term 'Success-Orientation' begins to find its relevance.

The other vital consideration often missed, is best represented by a mantra – ***“Always be available.”*** Now this might sound to some, like an advocacy of being free or idle, but it is not that. We will soon see how.

Very few actually have a vision to foresee a forthcoming breakthrough, a once-in-a-life-time opportunity or a disruptive innovation (internal or externally imposed). Foreseeing such events and predicting their timing accurately enough is crucial, especially if you are into a technology driven business or a creative business, where one creative idea or a disruptive innovation can change the entire course of the business or even turn it upside down. It is every leader's job to foresee such probable events and be 'Available' at all times (in part at the least) to face them. A leader must consciously keep some flexibility in her own schedule, and keep some resources handy to enable her to take out time and resources as necessary, so as to grab an unexpected but

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worthwhile opportunity coming her way, or undertake some radical measures to safeguard against a potential disruption. The leader must understand that plans and schedules are her slaves, not her masters. With that understanding, it is possible to keep such flexibility and be better prepared.

Of course, keeping schedules a bit flexible, identifying and keeping people and resources ready to be spared as and when required etc would cost money. It is clearly a tradeoff – what you gain at this cost is the ability to effectively deal with an unforeseen opportunity or an adversity. ‘Success-Oriented’ is also about such conscious and effective tradeoffs, just to give another example of the vital considerations I am referring to.

Just to reiterate, apart from the leader’s role in the three fundamental aspects of business execution, this book also discusses other essentials of effective leadership, like building and sustaining the right cultural ambience and a few other enablers of **Success-Oriented**. And hence this name – **Effective Success-Oriented Leadership (ESOL)**.

We have seen in the preface, how rapidly and why the business ecosystems are changing and how the corresponding new business models are evolving at a breakneck speed. The need for more and more leaders who can adapt to this new ecosystem effectively and deliver results consistently, is growing. And it is no more about leadership just at the top; it is rather about leadership across all areas of operations and at all levels. The culture of all-level leadership empowers people and motivates them to be more creative and innovative; contributing to the organizations’ long-term sustained success.