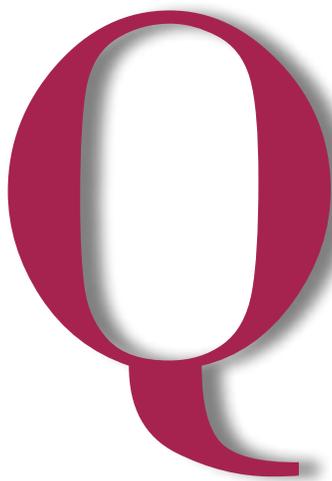




Roundtable Member,
Dharshini Casinathen,
Vice President of Strategic
Operations, TerrAscend,
shares strategies for
bringing teams together
and improving collective
performance.

Mentoring **MATTERS**



I've recently taken over a new division with an expanded mandate and a really big growth target. I've noticed that my new team members are slow to deliver results and members of my original team are starting to complain about their new colleagues. What can I do to bring them together and increase our collective performance?

Dharshini's Point of View

I recently was assigned to our Canadian operations where my responsibility was to turnaround the business as the Interim President. The business didn't have a clear strategy, lacked processes and within certain teams we didn't have the right people doing the right things at a senior management level.

My objective for the short term was to lead the management team to develop a cohesive focused strategy and create key capabilities/processes to deliver our topline targets. As I assessed the team and where we were as an organization it was clear there were two themes that we needed to address immediately in order bring the team together to increase their collective performance: 1) Create a collaborate working culture and 2) create a common goal.

Creating a Collaborative Working Culture

I fundamentally believe that cross-functional collaboration is critical for businesses to become successful. It requires each functional subject matter expert to be at the table to provide insight and perspective as we make decisions. I learnt quickly that this organization was not that collaborative, and cross-functional collaboration was not even a thought!

Within the first leadership team meeting after my appointment, I mandated that I would not be making decisions without necessary functional leaders. As the President of the organization, I required that each respective member who needed to be part of the decision had to be at the table for the final alignment. I told the team I am a generalist; I required all parties' perspective before aligning to the decision, and that they owned the subject matter expertise. This was the best way to get the teams to begin talking to each other, they had to work together.

We began making decisions collectively as a team, as a leader we are responsible to exhibiting behaviours/actions as a role model, so that your team can see what collaboration looks like in action. It's important to walk the walk, in order to drive the change, you want to see.

Creating a Common Goal

It's obvious, it's human nature to connect over commonalities. When I joined the team, it was clear there was no common mission or vision for the organization. We needed something to bring us all together, I facilitated for three weeks (every Monday from 10 a.m. to 12 noon) a strategy session where we put pen to paper on where we wanted to play and how we were going win.

Each management team member participated in this discussion to create a common goal. These sessions created the ability for the team to come together, share common ideas. Then I took all of their ideas and curated a strategy into a single page. This one page outlined what we wanted our products to represent to our consumer and what we needed do as an organization to deliver against these objectives. The team had found commonality through the development of the strategy and it belonged to each one of them.

I believe the most important ingredient to improving collective performance is that people just need to come together. To do that, there needs to be a space that enables teams to talk to each other, respect each other and build with each other. At the end of the day, it's people that drive companies. Finding commonalities to build together will be the success to any great business.

are always creative and entertaining ... and often have an element of friendly competition. When the teams are actually involved in the planning, there tends to be much more overall engagement by both the planners and the participants.



Dharshini Casinathen (Dharsh), Vice President of Strategic Operations, TerrAscend, has over 15 years of experience in global finance, accounting and strategy at KPMG and PepsiCo. In her +12 years at PepsiCo, Dharsh held a variety of finance roles providing strategic thought leadership to cross-functional teams globally. Most recently serving as the NA Senior Director of Finance for Ecommerce, where she built the internal financial infrastructure of a +\$1bn operation.

Dharsh is a results-oriented and data-centric executive with a passion for developing scalable infrastructure across an organization. She is a savvy strategist designing operational frameworks to accelerate business growth and transformation, creating new processes to deliver financial targets and coaching management teams. Dharsh has a passion for process & people – particularly about defining and advancing culture across organizations. She grew up in Toronto, Canada, has an Honours Business Administration degree from McMaster University (Hamilton, Ontario CA) and holds a Certified Professional Accounting designation.



Glain Roberts-McCabe is passionate about the art of leadership and supporting ambitious mid-career leaders. She created **The Roundtable** to provide emerging leaders with the navigational skills, tools and savvy needed to manage increases in scope, pressure and leadership complexity.