

# ICB on wings



February & March 2019

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 **Initiatives of Change**  
for Business

# Editorial

We were unable to publish the issues of ICB on Wings on time in February and March and therefore decided to produce a joint issue instead, for this time.

We wanted to share with you a little of what is being discussed at the ICB Working Group meetings; provide you some inputs on a talk that Folker Mittag gave to the management students of Symbiosis Institute of International Business (SIIB) and include you on an interesting writing on how power doesn't corrupt. It just exposes who leaders really are.

Our hope is that you will find each of these features informative and interesting.



# ICB Working Group Meeting

## A Report

A small team from ICB met at the lofC India apartment in Kumaram on Worli Seaface, Mumbai to consider various points that needed decisions. Coming together on February 3, 2019, Sarosh Ghandy who had arrived from Bangalore, greeted Folker Mittag from Germany, Luis Gomes from Goa and Charles Fernandes from Panchgani before taking up the Agenda.

*A Conclave planned for Chief Executives of business and industry between April 12 to 14, 2019 was discussed and a theme was considered.*

One of the first things that they considered was the theme for the upcoming CEO Conclave planned from April 12 to 14, 2019 at Panchgani. After deliberating on what is relevant and challenging to business persons, particularly from the medium and small enterprises, Sarosh then made a suggestion for the consideration of the two Co-Chairs of the Conclave.

Following this matter, the team then considered suitable dates for ICB's International conference which is generally held biennially at Panchgani. Since the previous one was held in early February 2018 (for this time of the year is usually preferred by most, whether from India or overseas); and since lofC India had decided to keep the month of February available for international gatherings, it

was decided that an International conference should be held from February 3 to 6, 2020. The theme is quite likely to build on the earlier ones that focused on sustainability.

It was also felt that an International CEO Conclave should precede the conference, as was successfully done in 2018. This thought was also agreed to, where the team decided to keep January 31 to February 2, 2020 as the dates. Names were proposed for co-Chairs of this Conclave and invitation letters were drafted.



Other points on the Agenda were also discussed before the meeting concluded with a note of thanks to Sarosh for not only steering the meeting but also treating the team to a sumptuous lunch.

# The Personal Side of Building Trust



On January 31 this year, Folker Mittag was addressing a batch of students at the Symbiosis Institute of International Business (SIIB) again. Listening to him were 290 post-graduate students, five faculty members and the Institute's Director, Dr (Mrs) Asmita Chitnis. The main subject of this interaction was trust building, or more accurately, regaining trust after it was lost.

Using some of his experiences during his business career, Folker was able to demonstrate the different areas where not only trust between people is important but between business organisations as well. It was not easy to break the initial silence during the time of interaction with the students.

Discussing the personal side of building trust in relationships helped get the students exchange ideas in a livelier manner. Students suddenly opened up and shared their own experiences with trust building after trust was lost. Finally, the interaction went on in a way Folker was expecting from the beginning. His hope that this kind of ICB

work can continue in future was bolstered. Folker said, 'This occasion showed me again that personal involvement and interaction with students should be used more by people working with ICB.' He was really grateful for the openness shown the Director, Dr Chitnis and the faculty of SIIB who were present.



# Power Doesn't Corrupt It just exposes who leaders really are

Another day, another leader seems to fall from a seat of power. The #MeToo movement has shown us devastating evidence of how male superiors have abused their power over female subordinates. The Catholic Church has offered demoralizing revelations of how priests have abused their power over nuns and children.

When leaders cross the line, we often blame power. As Lord Acton famously expressed it, "power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

But it's not entirely true.

Last year at the World Economic Forum in Davos, I wanted to understand the impact of power on people. I sat down with two dozen leaders, including the current or former CEOs of Microsoft, Google, General Motors, Goldman Sachs and the Gates Foundation. Over and over again, I heard that power doesn't change people as much as it accentuates their preexisting traits.

As Slack founder and CEO Stewart Butterfield quipped, "It doesn't make you an [expletive]. It just makes you more of who you already were."

That's actually a good summary of the new line of thinking in psychology: Power is like an amplifier. Whoever we were before just gets louder.

In one experiment, psychologists set up an annoying fan so that it would blow in people's faces. The participants' odds of moving it away, turning it off, or unplugging it spiked from 42 percent to 69 percent if they had just written about a time when they had power.

In other experiments, when people were reminded of feeling powerful, they were more likely to express their own opinions and ideas instead of conforming to others. And when they were assigned the role of manager rather than subordinate before a negotiation, they were more likely to bargain their own way instead of adapting to an opponent's style.

Power disinhibits us. It releases us from the shackles of social pressure. Gaining influence and authority frees us up to act on our real wishes and show our true colors. Few would argue that we need look any further than the current White House occupant to see the ultimate example of how power can magnify a person's personality.

For decades, psychologists were convinced instead that power corrupts. One of the key demonstrations was the classic Stanford prison simulation, where students were randomly assigned to play the role of prisoners or prison guards. The guards ended up taking away the prisoners' clothes and forcing them to sleep on concrete floors.

"In only a few days, our guards became sadistic," psychologist Philip Zimbardo said. The "power of a host of situational variables can dominate an individual's will to resist."

The results were so shocking that a critical detail was overlooked: the students who showed up had been recruited to participate in a "study of prison life." When psychologists ran an experiment to figure out what kinds of people are drawn to that kind of study, they found that volunteers for a prison study scored about 26 percent higher on aggression and belief in social dominance, 12 percent higher on narcissism and 10 percent higher on authoritarianism and Machiavellianism than people who signed up for psychological studies in general.

Power didn't corrupt ordinary people. It corrupted people who already



leaned toward corruption. And it wasn't the first time.

Back in the late 1930s, a man fresh out of law school was trying his first case when the judge threatened to disbar him: "I have serious doubts whether you have the ethical qualifications to practice law," the judge said.

The lawyer's name was Richard Nixon.

At the time, Nixon admitted to taking questionable actions without his client's authority. Power didn't corrupt him; he corrupted power. Being president revealed to the outside world who he was all along.

Consider another lawyer, who was running for Senate but withdrew from the election because he was afraid that if he ran, he would split the vote and cause a corrupt candidate to win. After he was later elected president, he used his authority a little differently. On a weekly basis, he held open office hours to hear the concerns of ordinary citizens, often for more than four hours a day.

That lawyer's name? Abraham Lincoln.

If you believe power corrupts, it's hard to explain Lincoln. Being president didn't just fail to bring out the worst in him; it brought out the best. As Lincoln's biographer Robert Green Ingersoll put it: "Nothing discloses real character like the use of power. ... If you wish to know what a man really is, give him power."

To predict how people will use power, you need to figure out what their motives, values and identities are before they have it. Are they generous givers or selfish takers?

In another experiment, psychologists assigned people a set of tasks and let them delegate some to a colleague. People who tend to be "givers" claimed the long, boring ones for themselves and gave away the short, interesting tasks. So did more selfish people — when they lacked power.

But when they were put in a position of influence, the selfish “takers” stopped being fakers. They hogged the quick, exciting work and dumped the long, dull responsibilities on a colleague. You can even get this effect by just letting selfish people sit in the large desk chair in an office instead of the guest chair: They abused their assumed power and kept the easy, interesting work for themselves.

That’s what happened to Nixon: Sitting in the ultimate seat of power amplified his unethical tendencies.

“Power doesn’t always corrupt,” author Robert Caro has said, reflecting on Lyndon B. Johnson. “Power always reveals. When you have enough power to do what you always wanted to do, then you see what the guy always wanted to do.”

When we claim that power corrupts, we let powerful people off the hook. How you use authority reveals your character: Selfish leaders hoard power for personal gain. Servant leaders share power for social good. And the ultimate test of character for people in power is how they treat people who lack it.

**Adam Grant**

*This writing appeared in the Washington Post on February 2, 2019.*

*Grant, an organizational psychologist at Wharton, is the author of “Originals” and the host of the TED podcast WorkLife. This op-ed is based on his Audible Original, “Power Moves.”*

# Asia Plateau Program Calendar

## April 2019

- 8 to 11            Effective Living & Leadership Program for Industries  
17 to 20           Heart of Effective Leadership Program for Industries

## May 2019

- 2 to 5             Effective Living & Leadership Program for Families  
15 to 18           Effective Living & Leadership Program for Industries  
22 to 25           Heart of Effective Leadership Program for Industries

## June 2019

- 12 to 15           Heart of Effective Leadership Program for Industries  
19 to 22           Effective Living & Leadership Program for Industries

*The design of the Effective Living and Leadership programs for industries is prepared for shop-floor workers; while that of the Heart of Ethical Leadership is for middle-level and senior managers. Lead for Change is for young professionals.*

Programs mentioned above are subject to change.  
For enquiries and confirmation, please write to [programs@in.iofc.org](mailto:programs@in.iofc.org)  
For more information, please visit [www.in.iofc.org](http://www.in.iofc.org)

# lofC India Archives

## Newsletter Subscription

Since September 2018, the Archives of lofC India has been publishing a monthly e-Newsletter titled, "ONCE more valuable". The several features in these issues cover various facets of lofC India's journey dating as far back as the 1950s when lofC first came to India.

Since many of you dear readers, both from India and overseas, have at some point or the other been to Asia Plateau, Panchgani or interacted with lofC's team members spread over 40 countries, we felt that you may be interested in taking a peek at the history of lofC. Should you be interested in this periodical and would like to receive them every month, you could write to: <[archives.in@iofc.org](mailto:archives.in@iofc.org)>. The team there would be happy to add you to their mailing list.



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