

Project Pratham: Transforming Digital Leadership with the Pratham Digital Academy

Pieter Oosthuizen | Chief Digital & Information Officer, Vedanta Zinc International
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"...It is not about the technology, but about the transformation..."

The pandemic is forcing us to step out of our comfort zones. Historically, pandemics have had a unique characteristic to catalyse innovation. As we step into the digital age with unprecedented momentum, it is becoming increasingly important to realise the true potential of the digital age. Digital know-how is one aspect, but it needs a visionary to imagine and lead us into the future. Technology needs to be led by visionaries who can guide humanity and all its dreams in the right direction.



While we knew this even before the pandemic, this has only strengthened our quest to find the right digital leaders for our organisation. At Vedanta, as we move ahead with times, we value innovation, risk-takers, and visionary leaders. To this end, we are dedicated to transforming our **digital leadership with the Pratham Digital Academy**. Digital leadership is a discipline of navigating an organisation towards, through, and post-digital transformation to stay competitive and relevant in the ever-changing global environment.

Increasingly companies are striving to develop new digital capabilities, and many are making significant changes to their organisation's culture, thinking strategically, and reimagining the way they manage talent. These changes raise important questions about what it means to lead a digital business.

Many **organisational and leadership lessons** were learnt by early adopters of digitalisation and many of these proved expensive. Over time, we have learnt how to navigate this space better. Some of these lessons are included below:

- Digital transformation starts with an **articulated and focused strategy**. It is important to **lead from the front**. The CEO and leadership team must champion change.
- **Strong governance** is of utmost importance.

- Cross-functional **collaboration** is a must.
- Place **change-makers** and **digital influencers** throughout the organisation.
- Encourage a **company culture** that nurtures **innovation and entrepreneurship**.
- The transformation may be digital, but **it is not about technology**.
- Test and challenge the **organisational structure and business processes**.
- **Adoption does not happen overnight** – it is a continuous journey.
- Accept that **transformation is an ongoing process**.

This leads us to the question of what we at Vedanta are doing to develop our leaders and staff to become the best in class when it comes to digital transformation. To develop our leaders, we first need to understand **the exact role of a digital leader** and the **characteristics** of the leadership we want to implement, develop, and embed.

A **digital leader is someone who can set a clear vision and be cognizant of the changes within and outside the organisation. Such a leader should be able to** influence and encourage executives and stakeholders (at all levels). It is also important to form sustainable digital initiatives and programs, develop internal talent, and hire A-players. A digital leader must be able to define processes for digital maturity, track value realisation, and enhance and improve continually. An **effective digital leader** is someone who can lead, motivate, educate, enable, empower, fosters partnerships, and can be held accountable. It is a task for someone who can understand life, and hence a business, on a deeper level.

We at Vedanta understand that developing a leader of such calibre can take time and raw talent needs to be cultivated and nurtured to suit and fit into a role like this. So apart from headhunting for the best global talent, we are actively investing in our in-house talent to foster leaders of the future. We as an organisation believe in the wholesome growth of our employees and Pratham Digital Academy is just a small step in that direction.

At the Pratham Digital Academy, we are driving the following, via various programmes and interventions such as upskilling and reskilling of our **leaders** to become A-players at the digital game. We are focusing on the development of **specialised digital talent** through an Advanced Digital Academy and embracing and embedding digital into the DNA of our business, and into the skills, competencies, and behaviours of our **managers, and employees**.