



Desai Management Consulting - 4Q18 Newsletter

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[Happy Holidays and Best Wishes for the upcoming year!](#)

It seems impossible, but here we are once again at year end, looking forward to the holiday season, and a more relaxed pace with family and friends. Looking back on all that has happened in 2018, it is important to thank [our customers](#) for their trust in us to provide business value. I would also like to thank [our consultants](#) for their role in our success. We continue to grow, adding experience and skills in project and business process management and operational leadership.

This quarter I'd like to take the opportunity to share with you what I believe is one of the most fundamental skills one can use throughout life and that is "[Structured Decision Making](#)". Readers will find that all three segments of our newsletter discuss this from varying viewpoints and experiences. Let me begin by taking a moment to talk about two things of great personal importance to me - comfort zones and bucket lists. Comfort zones are those areas of my life that I have no desire to leave or alter, for a wide variety of reasons. Many of my passions can be found within my comfort zone - mentoring others, participating on a non-profit board of directors, watching comedy shows - all of these things are straightforward, and don't challenge me to expand my horizons. In stark contrast is my bucket list - those items I've always dreamed of trying, but have yet to attempt, for whatever reason.

Something happened recently that touched both of these things - comfort zones and bucket lists - and forced me to make a significant life decision. There was an item in my bucket list that I have wanted to do for some time, however it was not simple, and could even be dangerous. Imagine my surprise recently when my wife tackled this item ahead of me - skydiving! Suddenly instead of being a "someday" item on my list, there was this new urgency. Carefully judging the risks, and the relative value, as part of making a structured decision to undertake this task, was thrown out the window. Now I had a simple decision to make - do I let my wife stand alone as the family skydiver, or do I join her?

And so this is how I found myself stepping out of a perfectly good airplane at 12,000 feet altitude. Skydiving had been a personal ambition for a number of years, just not as comfortable as my couch!! In reality, the actual jump was exhilarating, and passed by far too quickly. The scenery, the rate of fall, the sensations as the parachute opened, and the slow drift to the ground all merit lengthy superlatives, which I won't bore you with. Suffice it to say the deed is done and I hope to do it again! Formal decision making stood ready to help me, but in the end I reacted to opportunity. So much for planning! As you read the other newsletter sections you will find other applications of structured decision making in very different circumstances, along with a somewhat surprising takeaway.



In closing, I believe we all should use this holiday time wisely - personally as a cherished time with friends and family and special events, and professionally as a time to recharge our batteries for the next year. Thank you all for the continued support to Desai, and for making Desai a trusted partner in your business success.

Oh, and if you ever want to try skydiving, call me...

Thank you!

Vijay Desai, Managing Partner

Business Solution: Structured Problem Solving

In our journey through life, we encounter many different challenges - financial, relational, educational, social, etc. - and each time a new one comes along we are inclined to "start from scratch", often overlooking past experiences, and certainly not thinking much about problem-solving methods. We've found that even if we are alone in attacking a problem, it's best to have a short, routine conversation with ourselves, that helps place almost any problem within a framework for solving.



Over the years, and through a wide variety of life situations and locations around the globe, it has become clear that having an organized approach to solving problems has great benefit, whether it be our own problem or that of others. Here's a few examples of that conversation with yourself:

- What exactly is the problem I'm trying to solve? Why?
- If it involves someone else, have I listened carefully enough to their description to ensure I understand, and am solving the right thing(s)?
- Have I taken all the right steps to make sure I'm not just mindlessly promoting a solution in search of a problem?
- Do I understand the metrics of success in solving this problem - how will I know when I am finished?

Using this or similar outline, one can learn equally from success and failure in problem-solving. The consequences are different, but learning is a cumulative process, so next time someone face this or a similar problem, some measure of repeatability can be the difference between success and failure.

Please [contact us](#) if you'd like to learn more about this or other, more detailed and structured approaches to repeatable problem solving.



Peter Sanschagrín Consultant of the Quarter

Desai is proud to announce its Consultant of the Quarter for 4Q18. This is a member of our team who illustrates through hard work, flexibility, values and strengths the Desai team is famous for. For 4Q, the honor goes to **Peter Sanschagrín**. Peter on-boarded with the customer project team and got to work immediately. As his customer describes him: "**Peter adds value in every conversation through well thought out suggestions, challenging questions and focused business interactions.**" Congratulations to Peter!

Latest News and Events

- The Desai team held their annual Holiday party on December 15th, at the [Ponds at Bolton Valley](#), with catering by the [Essex Resort](#). The highlight of the evening (besides Santa Clause) was everybody's introduction to Swing Dancing, thanks to [Vermont Swings!](#) Photography for the evening was professionally done by [Tyler Bradley](#)



- David Kearns and Jim Whitney are nominated in [PMI Champlain Valley Chapter](#) board for the year 2019.
- Vijay Desai invited to be a member of the [Guides to Professional Success \(GPS\) at YaleNUS College in Singapore](#). The GPS platform was established to provide an opportunity for Yale-NUS students to tap into the wealth of knowledge and experience of external mentors who are industry experts and established professionals.
- Desai in partnership with PMI Champlain Valley will be offering the next [PMI-PMP Certification Test Prep Bootcamp](#) on February 27-March 1, 2019.
- Desai in partnership with PMI Champlain Valley will be offering the next [PMI-ACP Certification Test Prep Bootcamp](#) on March 28-29, 2019.

Donations

Desai is active in both direct and in-kind donations to a wide variety of organizations. Here are organizations contributed to in 2018:

- [Mentor VT](#)
- [Technology for Tomorrow](#)
- [Everybody Wins](#)
- [VT Technology Alliance](#)
- [Shelburne Farms](#)
- [Vermont Public Radio](#)
- [Doctors Without Borders \(Medecins sans Frontieres\)](#)
- [Vermont Futures Project](#)
- [South Burlington Schools' Foundation](#)
- [Committee On Temporary Shelter](#)
- [Vermont Food Bank](#)
- [Diabetes Research Institute Foundation](#)
- [Seacoast Christian Community Church Incorporated](#)

Life Lessons From A Man Who Has Seen 12,000 Deaths (extracted from the Project Fuel Blog, by Deepak Ramola)

Our final look at structured decision making in this newsletter edition takes place amid a lengthy family struggle.

Rooted in the hearts of many Hindus is the belief that if you breathe your last in Kashi (Varanasi) you attain what is popularly known as 'Kashi Labh' or 'the fruit of Kashi'-moksh or "release from the cycle of rebirth impelled by the law of karma".

Kashi Labh Mukti Bhawan in Varanasi is one of the three guesthouses in the city where people check in to die. The other two are Mumukshu Bhawan and Ganga Labh Bhawan. Established in 1908, Mukti Bhawan is well-known within the city and outside.

Bhairav Nath Shukla has been the Manager of Mukti Bhawan for 44 years. He has seen the rich and the poor take refuge in the guesthouse in their final days as they await death and hope to find peace. Shukla hopes with and for them. He sits on the wooden bench in the courtyard, against the red brick wall and shares with me 12 recurring life lessons from the 12000 deaths he has witnessed in his experience as the manager of Mukti Bhawan. In today's Takeaway, we'd like to concentrate on his first life lesson. (This one was particularly visible to me as I prepared myself for skydiving - Vijay).

#1: Resolve All Conflict Before You Go

Shukla recounts the story of Shri Ram Sagar Mishr, a Sanskrit scholar of his times. Mishr was the eldest of six brothers and was closest to the youngest one. Years ago an ugly argument between the two brothers led to a wall to partition the house.

In his final days, Mishr walked to the guesthouse carrying his little paan case and asked to keep room no. 3 reserved for him. He was sure he will pass away on the 16th day from his arrival. On the 14th day he said, "Ask my estranged brother of 40 years to come see me. This bitterness makes my heart heavy. I am anxious to resolve every conflict."

A letter was sent out. On the 16th day when the youngest brother arrived, Mishr held his hand and asked to bring down the wall dividing the house. He asked his brother for forgiveness. Both brothers wept and mid sentence, Mishr stopped speaking. His face became calm. He was gone in a moment.

THE TAKEAWAY

Shukla has seen this story replay in many forms over the years. "People carry so much baggage, unnecessarily, all through their life only wanting to drop it at the very end of their journey. The trick lies not in not having conflicts but in resolving them as soon as one can," says Shukla. To do this, remember some of the problem solving maxims - know the problem you are solving, don't just promote a solution in search of a problem, know how to measure success and failure. And, as Shukla learned, don't wait until the end to solve your problem. Skydiving turned out to be a lot of fun!

"Ten percent of conflicts are due to difference in opinion; 90% are due to tone of voice." - unknown

Desai Management Consulting | 1-844-GO-DESAI | info@desaimgmt.com | www.desaimgmt.com

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