**Munjal Speech [EZ Speech No. 16308]**

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Remarks by Mr. Pankaj Munjal before the 2017 annual conference of the Hero Cycles, Ltd., company.

ladies and gentlemen . . . distinguished guests . . . mr. prime minister [name] and mr. chief minister [name] . . . and all of hero’s staff, dealers, and partners who are with us here today at our 2017 annual conference. we are honored by the presence of each and every one of you.

i would like to begin with the briefest of all possible “state-of-the-company” reports, if i may, and here it is: We’re fine.

we’re doing well.

we’re financially sound and — thanks to the great efforts of thousands of dedicated workers and thousands of wonderful partners — we’re growing by leaps and bounds. by the end of the current fiscal year, we hope to [insert a high-order summary of your fiscal projections], and to rank no lower than number [no.] in the world ranking of cycle manufacturing.

now, some may say that this is a really lofty goal, even in the context of a global market for our products that’s expected to grow by [at least/more than/ nearly][no.] percent over the next 12 to 18 months.

but i feel perfectly confident in setting such an high target for our company because — first — i believe that both our workforce and our products are second to none in the [universe/world]; and — second — because from this day forward, I’m urging every employee, every supervisor, every manager, and every executive on the payroll of hero cycles, limited, to start paying a lot more attention than ever to a pair of crucial and inter-connected ideas that will be absolutely key to any success we might hope to achieve in the coming years. the first of these idea is that of *continuous improve-ment*, and the second is *teamwork*.

now, as to the first, it’s an irrevocable law of both business and nature that things change.

all By them-selves . . . AUTomatically . . . on their own.

Whether we like it or not, change is the one constant in the commercial marketplace: Customers change . . . their tastes change . . . their expectations and demographics and demands change. The competition changes, too, and Technology, needless to say, is changing constantly. Regulation change. *Everything* changes eventually — and, in the business world, it more often happens sooner than later.

this means that it doesn’t matter how “good” this process has been or that program is today. It’s a sure bet it won’t be *as* good tomorrow. And it’ll be even less good the day after tomorrow . . . and less good still the day after that, and so on and so forth — unless we keep “fixing” it along the way. Not because it’s “broke,” but because we know that — if we don’t keep fixing, tweaking, tampering, improving, and so on — we’ll soon be left behind by an evolving marketplace and by more respon-sive, flexible, and *adaptive* competitors who know how to listen to the voice of the customer better and respond to it more quickly.

Continuous improvement as an operating principle is simply that — in a highly competitive marketplace — our products, our services, our processes, *can never be good enough*, and so must be “fixed” — which is to say — improved all the time.

this is the “continuous-improvement mindset” that we must instill in all of our workers, at all levels of the company. the senior management team has now begun looking at various ways in which we might best imple-ment a formal continuous-improvement program here at hero cycles — things like an on-line suggestion box, educational and motivational workshops, an incentive-award, and so on. but whatever form our formal continuous improvement program ultimately takes, each and every one of us should, from this day forward, understand the following to be official company policy:

if it ain’t broke, fix it *anyway!*

if the first pillar of our future success is going to be a continuous-improvement mindset, then the second has got to be more effective teamwork.

the nineteenth century american writer and humorist, ambrose beirce, defined “*logic*” as that discipline of mind that can with equanimity accept the conclusion that, since one man can dig a posthole in 60 seconds, a team of 60 men can dig a posthole in one second!

this tortured logic notwithstanding, i would hope that I don’t have to persuade anyone in this audience — intel-lectually, at least — about the power of effective teamwork. i’m sure — or at least I hope — that you’ve all seen how the whole can be so much greater than the sum of its parts when individuals work well together as the proverbial “well-oiled machine.” you will find that the most successful companies in history are those which most creatively and most effectively exploited the enormous synergies inherent in effetive teamwork.

now as i said, it’s probably not difficult for anybody in this room to embrace the value of teamwork intellectu-ally. so the question is: why is hero cycles, limited, so far away from realizing the maximum possible benefits from effective teaming — or even from organizing its work-force maximally for the most effective use of teams?

i believe that there are two factors in particular that thwart effctive teamwork here at hero. The first — which I think is pretty common in industry generally — is ego; and the second — which is perhaps more peculiar to our situation here in india — is bias.

as to the first, if you’re a team’s leader who’s more interested in “turf” than in task . . . if you care more about “span of control” than “span of respect” . . . or if you’re someone who believes that “information is power” and therefore won’t share that information with anyone: that’s your ego getting in the way both of effective teamwork and the company’s overall goals.

but ego gets in the way on the “followers” side of the table, as well. if you feel you’re being taken advantage of in the division of your team’s labor . . . or if you think the task you’re assigned by the team is beneath you . . . or if feel you’re not getting the proper credit or recognition from the team: then that’s *your* ego getting in the way of effective teaming.

obviously, effective teamwork requires a subordination of ego on every member’s part; and it’s the team leader’s job to convince the team members why that sacrifice, that “demotion” of self — however temporary — is in both the company’s and their own best interests. on the other side of the coin, of course, there are the rewards of creative collaboration and the gratification of a job collectively well done.

the issue of bias as a barrier to effective teaming at hero is, i’m afraid, a toughter nut to crack. it’s a tougher nut to crack because it’s rooted in centuries, if not millenia, of practice and tradition. as with segre-gation in america, the caste system in india might have been officially abolished, but the racism, intolerance and hatred it bred remains entrenched in many parts of indian society to this very day.

this is truly a sad fact to me, but it’s one which, as a single man, i can do little about. however, as a single man who owns his own company, i can *certainly* do something about it *here*, inside the one domain i *do* control. therefore, i wish it to be known that, as official corporate policy, no form of discrimination, intoler-ance, or prejudiced behavior against any employee will be tolerated at hero. every employee will be given equal opportunity to compete for any open jobs throughout the company for which he or she is qualified. and bonuses and promotions will be based solely on competence and performance.

now i said early, that the ideas of continuous improvement and teamwork are intimately connected. Why is this?

because in the final analysis, virtually all the techniques, methods, approaches, avenues, and disciplines for doing continuous improvement involve, and indeed require, the work of teams. brain-storming sessions . . . failure-modes analyses . . .post-mortem analyses . . . cross-operational “site visits” — all of these incredibly effective techniques are team techniques. yes, it’s absolutely true that, now and then, a good idea for improvement can be conceived by a single individual. but in complex industrial organiza-tions, the best ideas are almost always the ones that some team or another has come up with, after (usually) considerable debate and analysis of options. for all intents and purposes, there can no effective continu-ous improvement without effective teamwork.

so while i believe that the future of our company is bright, if not positively luminous, i’m equally convinced that we shall not achieve that future if we don’t immediately establish a corporate culture that’s more supportive of continuous improvement, of effective teaming, and of the total and absolute elimination of racism and prejudice everywhere in the company. i sincerely hope that i can count on everyone at hero cycles, limited, to join me in this “heroic” path forward.

thank you.

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