The Paradox of India
Rapid Growth but Fighting Hard to Win

Prevalent Bright and Dark Side Personality Attributes for Indian Leaders

For both bright and dark side personality attributes listed, Indian leaders exceed the global norm.
India’s Economic Outlook

India has emerged as the fastest-growing BRIC. Top-line growth is projected to remain high, driven by structural reform and revived foreign and local investment. However, while growth has accelerated, ease of doing business in India has not. For Indian-based companies, the elusive quest for sustained profitable growth will be shaped by four market factors:

+ Relentless competition, acute cost sensitivity, and market saturation, each of which drives margins ever lower.
+ As “Old India Economy” organizations struggle in the face of infrastructure and social challenges, “New India” companies are growing global fast—expanding in size, scale, and reach.
+ Education and career advancement are disproportionately available to select social/economic segments, yet these systems fail to produce sufficient talent for rapid expansion, particularly in the IT sector—the major engine for new economy growth.
+ A brutal war for scarce talent—particularly “digital leaders” who embrace e-technology and manufacturing automation—heightened by many young leaders who are poised to jump ship for elsewhere.

These trends create a burning platform for Indian companies to cultivate and retain precious talent. They also must build readiness for globalization while avoiding a catastrophic diaspora of talent outside India’s borders. Our assessment database illustrates the collective personality profile of Indian leaders—and whether their hard-wiring equips them to meet these business imperatives.

[EVIDENCE]

Bright Bright Side/Dark Dark Side—For Indian leaders, boldness is a dominant, overarching theme—they are more ambitious, analytically curious, and competitive than global peers. They are passionate and independent, with a low need for approval, attributes that fuel envisioning of new business possibilities. Alternately, these same attributes may manifest as interpersonal volatility and a propensity to be arrogant, aggressive, or impulsive.

Technology Sector Challenges—Many Indian IT firms aspire to fuel growth and differentiation through innovation-focused design thinking. Inherently high curiosity and learning orientation can incent ideation and experimentation; conversely, over-analysis and perfectionism may inhibit courageous entrepreneurialism.

Optimizing Relationships—Indian leaders must create more relationship-focused cultures where brilliance thrives and talent stays. Heightening trust, collaboration, and inclusion will foster the ownership and cross-boundary influence required to get things done. Challenging tendencies include volatility, low interpersonal sensitivity, and moodiness—risking dysfunctional consequences in the cross-cultural global arena.

Action

.01 Create the “brand” of New India (Global) Economy Leader—Promote the positive characteristics of new generation leaders, such as passion, curiosity, and resourcefulness.

.02 Simultaneously, ensure leadership development encourages deeper self-insight early in leadership careers. Increased self-awareness and self-management techniques will prepare India’s young business leaders to proactively manage derailers, helping reshape current “brand” perceptions of low interpersonal sensitivity, arrogance, aggressiveness and impulsivity.

.03 Optimize the triumvirate of development, recognition, and reward—Mitigate risk of losing competitive young professionals by maximizing growth opportunities (in both development and advancement) while attending to other valued factors like compensation and alignment to strong leaders/mentors. Employees leave their leaders as often as their organizations.

.04 Equip leaders to be catalysts for innovation. Creating a culture where innovation thrives will drive market differentiation and talent retention. Cultivate design thinking and other innovation levers, including risk taking and customer-driven curiosity.

.05 Help Indian leaders harness the power of diverse perspectives and relationships—essential ingredients for innovation and digital leadership across the globe. Accelerate skill development central to optimizing diversity, cultural sensitivity, and a global mindset, including foundational interpersonal skills training, which is robust and transferable across cultures.