

## Navkar Mantra: Through the Lens of Management Principles

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### Introduction

Jainism is a well-organized religion, with each member having a specific role to play, as evidenced by Tirthankar's samosaran arrangement, where individuals are positioned based on their soul's attributes. The Jain navkar mantra further exemplifies this structured approach through salutations to various spiritual beings, illustrating a hierarchical order determined by the gunas of one's soul. From management's perspective, we can interpret this as akin to analyzing a company's organizational chart, offering clarity on the chain of command to be followed. The navkar mantra, a central prayer in Jainism, encapsulates philosophical principles that extend beyond religious contexts. The navkar mantra offers valuable insights for management. By examining the traits associated with each spiritual entity in the navakara mantra hierarchy and drawing lessons from their order, management practitioners can enhance leadership effectiveness, organizational performance and cultivate a culture of collaboration and excellence.

### The Structure of the Navkar Mantra

In Navkar Mantra, one bows down with respect to -

- Arihant (Omniscient Beings: Tirthankar who has destroyed all ghati karmas)
- Siddh (liberated souls who has destroyed all ghati and aghati karmas; they possess anant chatushtya: anant gyan, anant darshan, anant virya, anant sukh)
- Acharya (heads of sadhus and sadhvis; spiritual leader with mastery of all agam; obtained higher level of spiritual excellence)
- Upadhyaya (acquired knowledge of agam and developed philosophical insight; teach agam to sadhus and sadhvis),
- Sadhu- Sadhvi (monks- nuns, who have voluntarily given up social, economical and family relationships to progress on spiritual path; take deeksha and practice five vows of non violence, non possession, truthfulness, celibacy, and non stealing).

Collectively, they are called Panch Parmeshthi (five supreme spiritual beings). The mantra enables us to worship the virtues of all the supreme spiritual beings instead of just worshipping one

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particular person. For this reason, the Navkar Mantra does not mention the names of any Tirthankaras, Siddhas, Acharyas, Upadhyayas, Sadhus, or Sadhvis. Each one in hierarchy has obtained more spiritual excellency as compared to others. In navkar mantra first arihant are worshiped though Siddha are liberated souls. Since Siddhas have attained ultimate liberation, we do not have access to them. However, Arihantas offer us spiritual guidance during their lifetime and establish four fold fords. In order to show our special reverence for their teachings, we bow to them first.

Arihants (tirthankaras), who have destroyed all ghati karmas.

They have conquered inner passions such as attachment, anger, pride and greed and serve as role models and spiritual guides, showing others the path to self-realization and liberation. In Management, effective leaders lead by example and outline the vision for their team. They outline the vision of the team and lead them against all obstacles and support them like Arihant to achieve their personal best. Arihants are known for overcoming negative qualities like anger, pride, greed, and attachment. Similarly, managers need to set aside personal biases and lead with honesty and fairness.

Siddhas, the liberated souls who have destroyed all ghati and aghati karmas; they possess anant chatushtaya: anant gyan, anant darshan, anant virya, anant such). Siddhas show the highest level of success, Leaders alike set benchmarks for management for excellence and sustainability. In management principles, leaders lay out the organisational plans for both present and the future and help teams to focus on meaningful goals, balancing doing good with making.

Acharyas, heads of sadhus and sadhvis; spiritual leader with mastery of all agam; obtained higher level of spiritual excellence. Leaders guide their teams by helping them grow their skills, achieve their goals, and stay aligned with the organization's objectives, similar to how Acharyas mentor others on their journey. They also emphasize lifelong learning and ethical decision-making, creating a culture of development, fairness, and accountability

Upadhyayas who have acquired knowledge of agam and developed philosophical insight; teach agam to sadhus and sadhvis. Upadhyayas have in-depth understanding about philosophical teachings and managers support dissemination of knowledge—a cornerstone of thriving organizations. Upadhyayas share knowledge, just like leaders who help their teams learn and share

ideas to work better together. They also encourage teamwork and understanding, helping teams solve problems and grow through empathy and good communication.

Sadhu- Sadhvi (monks- nuns, who have voluntarily given up social, economic and family relationships to progress on spiritual path and practice five vows of non-violence, non-possession, truthfulness, celibacy, and non-stealing). High-performing teams succeed through mutual respect, shared values, and teamwork, where everyone's efforts are recognized and valued. Sadhus teach us the power of working together with discipline and dedication, reminding organizations to practice inclusivity, respect, and simplicity while focusing on meaningful goals and sustainable practices.

According to Jain tradition, when the soul of an Arihant (one who has conquered the four vices) attains divinity, a Samavsaran is created. This divine gathering welcomes all beings, where each soul interprets the teachings of the enlightened one through its own perspective. The Panch Parmeshthi offers a complete guide to the modern principles of management. If applied scientifically these mantras can be integrated in the management domain to deal with issues of conflict management, employee retention, governance and ethics and so on. By following the teachings of the Navkar Mantra, organizations can build a culture of leadership, ethics, teamwork, and sustainability.

### **Conclusion**

These value systems play a pivotal role in organizations, helping them thrive by fostering a transparent, ethical, and productive culture. Empowering employees with this holistic system aligns strategic vision with focused outcomes, creating a resilient workforce.

Even though the Navkar Mantra is from ancient philosophy, its principles are akin to an organization's core values in the modern economy.