

## **5 Things We Should Learn From Hugo Barra**

By – Sakshi Suryanarayan

Hugo Barra has just announced his resignation as Vice President, Xiaomi Global and the media has already begun dissecting what this will mean for Xiaomi and predicting what his next steps will be.

At the time of his arrival, Xiaomi was limited to Greater China. Under his leadership, it expanded across Asia and beyond reaching over 20 countries. Mr. Barra is an individual who is well-liked and respected across the industry thanks to his time at Xiaomi and at Google. While not everyone wants to foray into this industry, many want to be like him.

In looking through Mr. Barra's achievements, it was possible to find some transferable traits, ideas and attitudes that any business owner can embrace, even if they don't have his one-in-a-billion eye for design or his mercurial personality.

### **1) Having a healthy work-life balance**

With Mr. Barra's recent decision to step down from his role at Xiaomi, he wrote to all his Mi fans saying;

*“What I've realized is that the last few years of living in such a singular environment have taken a huge toll on my life and started affecting my health”*

It becomes clear that a healthy work-life balance is essential, no matter who you are, or what your position in a company is.

It is imperative to take a step back from the challenges of work to ensure that your personal life does not suffer. Always make time for family and friends and remember to take a break to avoid any chances of a burnout.

### **2) Thinking before you act**

In Feb 2016, Hugo Barra revealed that Xiaomi had “spent two years designing the Mi5”, as they battled against the “compromises” and “trade-offs” which are generally seen in phones.

What this brings to the fore is that Mr. Barra is a man of impeccable planning and a long can be learned from this quality.

In today's fast-paced world where do before you think has become the norm, the importance of strategy becomes that much more important. If you do not take the time to think, plan, and strategize, there is a very good chance you will end up taking the wrong decision.

### **3) Moving out of your comfort zone**

*"I embarked on what has been the greatest and most challenging adventure of my life. I moved to Beijing, 6,500 miles out of my comfort zone in Silicon Valley, to build from scratch a startup team within a bigger startup."*

When Mr. Barra decided in 2014 to join up with Xiaomi, he made an extremely brave decision to move out of his comfort zone. As a VP at Google, he could just as easily have stayed back in Silicon Valley.

But he decided to take a leap of faith, and ended up being an integral part of making Xiaomi one of the biggest smartphone companies in today's ultra-competitive market.

There are abundant opportunities waiting if you have the courage to take that chance when it comes your way.

#### **4) Being open to feedback**

At the 2014 WSJD live conference in Laguna Beach, Barra explained one of Xiaomi's secrets to success - their fans. That's what Xiaomi calls its client base.

At that point, they had a user forum in China with about 30 million users with 400,000 posts per day.

These posts spoke about topics ranging from product feedback to bug reports, with *"20 percent of those posts have to do with feature discussions."*

It is easy to see from this how Mr. Barra has had such success when it comes to building Xiaomi into one of the smartphone giants of the world: by simply, listening to what customers want.

When your customer base is telling you something, you should most definitely open your ears and listen instead of deciding you know what's best. It is an added bonus if you take an active role in your customer communities.

The world's most successful companies are built on the principle of customer satisfaction for a reason.

#### **5) Being a great leader**

Hugo Barra has been a leading figure in two extremely prominent companies with Google and Xiaomi. The incredible success he has experienced has a lot to do with one very important factor - great leadership.

Both as a star on Google's Android division and Xiaomi's Global division, Mr. Barra has shown incredible insight to get the best out of the people working with him. Taking on the responsibility in times of difficulty and giving your team credit in times of success are hallmarks of a great leader - and his twin VP positions at Google and Xiaomi reveals - this is something he did gladly.

Also, he did mention that CEO Lei Jun has *"been very supportive of my transition and has asked me to remain an advisor to Xiaomi indefinitely."*

This shows everyone on his team that even though he may be leaving for personal reasons, he is and will always be there to guide his team. This is one of the marks of a true leader. It leaves people with a sense of security.

The incredible success of Hugo Barra has lessons for every walk of life and these are just five of the most important in your professional life. It is not easy to be successful, but with the right attitude and equipped with the knowledge of what is required in order to be successful, anyone can reach the dizzying heights of Mr. Barra.