

# People matters

Leading People  
Building Organizations

Vol. 1, Issue 5, June 2010

Rs. 75

## SPACE TIME AND THE WORKPLACE

A relentless blaze of virtual collaboration technologies is re-defining our interaction with peers, colleagues and customers & the very idea of workplace and work time. How can businesses harness this power for efficiency, performance and branding?



### Talent Acquisition 2010 Special

**SUCCESS IN THE  
NEW NORMAL**

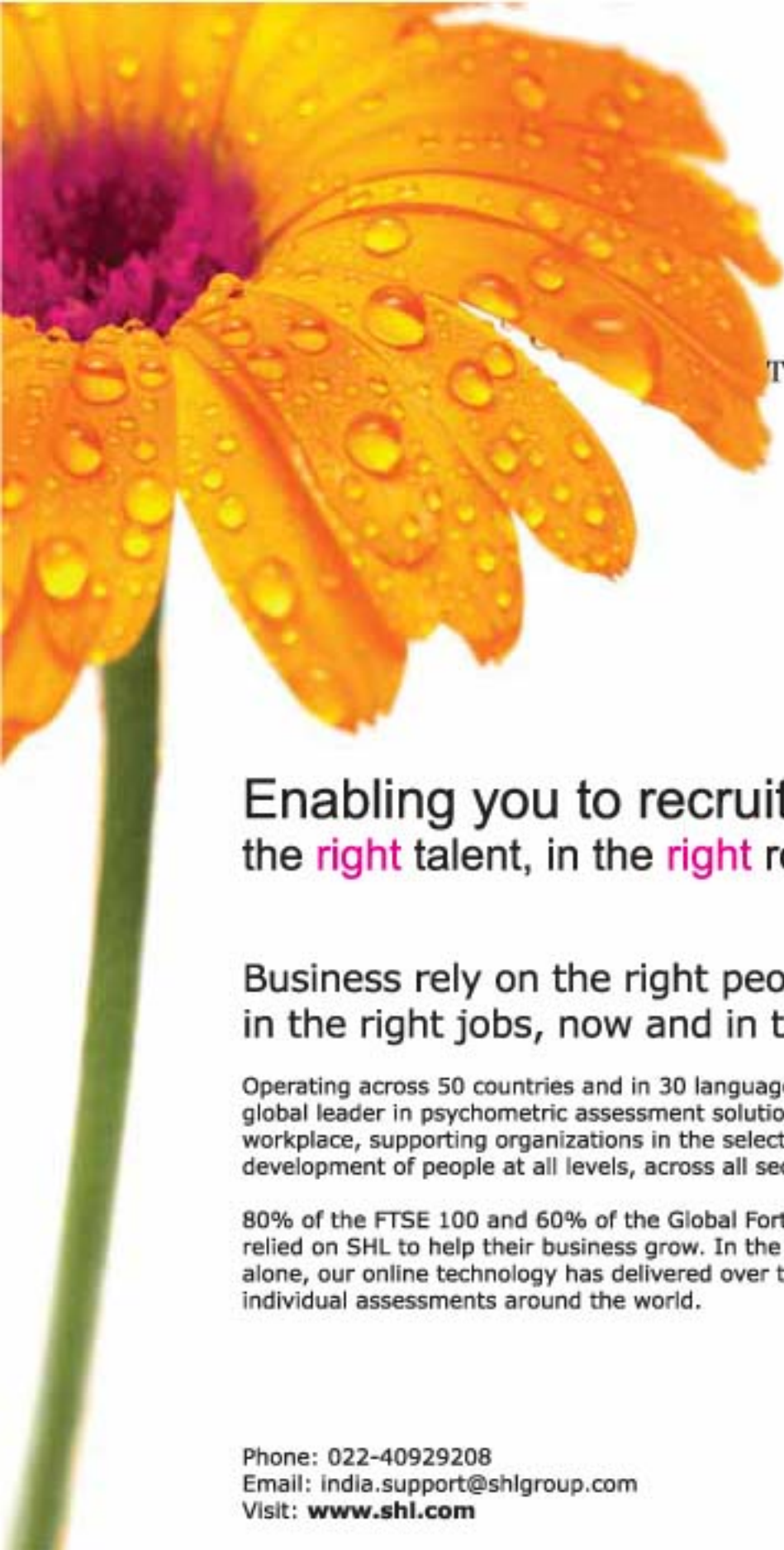
Deepak Mohla & Jim Tapper

**STAY  
CONVERSATIONS**

Ritesh Agrawal

**THE IMPERATIVE OF  
NEPOTISM**

Rajeshwar Upadhyaya



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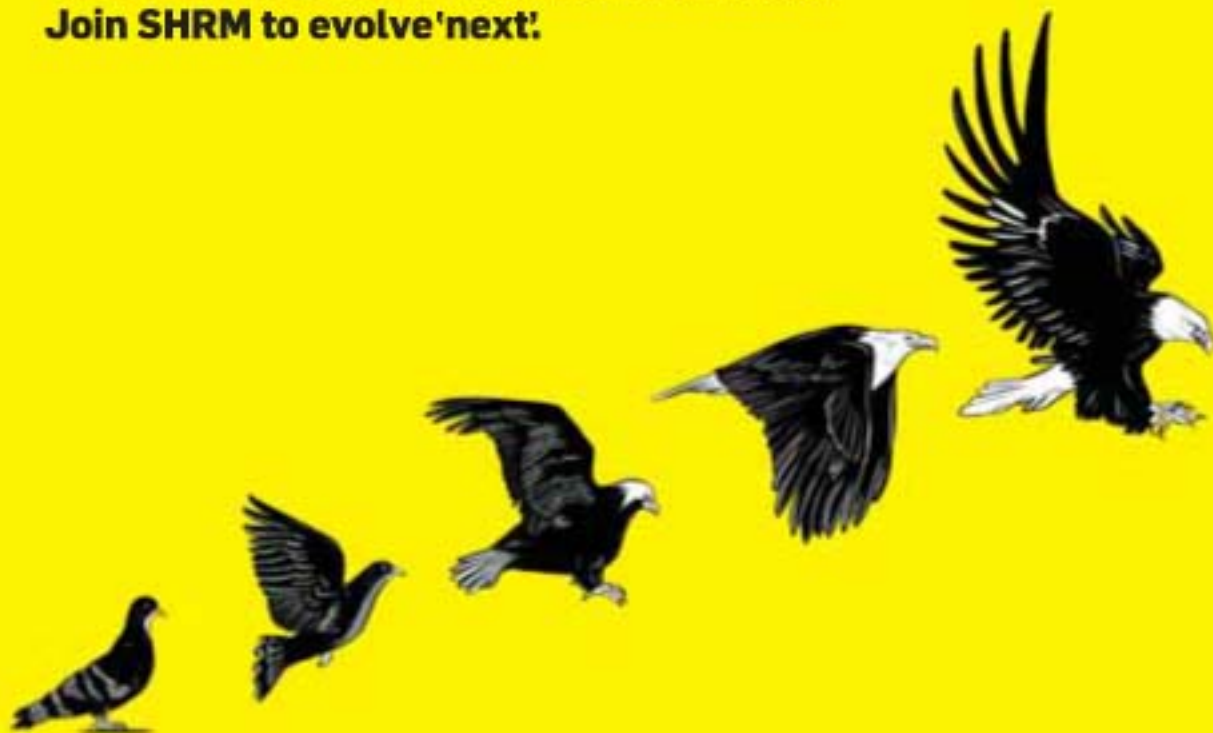
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## Good Times, Bad Times...



**A** new generation of collaboration technology is completely transforming the way we work, the way we organize ourselves into teams, the way we interact with and provide support to customers across the globe. In a time when most ideas come with a shelf-life marked “Bull market” or “Bear market”, disruptive technologies apply to good times and bad times alike. Their ability to help us work faster, better, smarter....and cheaper (is there any other such thing?!) was only reinforced during the downturn months.

The possibility of benefits of such developments can only be understood when one looks at precedent – like when we found that Cisco had saved a whopping 6% of bottom-line in 2008-09 alone by deploying their own conferencing technology or that, after a few successful ‘virtual conferences’, IBM is planning to conduct their annual general meeting on a virtual Second Life environment. Our cover story revolves around these possibilities and more – how self-regulating professional networks can become a mass platform for recruitment and on a broader note, how virtual networks can be harnessed for employer branding.

This issue also features a special on Talent Acquisition where we have collected views on executive search, RPO, recruitment technology, industry-wise outlook, staffing solutions, partnership models - from leading figures in the world of recruitment. From the point of practical utility for HR professionals, this is highly recommended reference.

On a completely tangential note, Rajeshwar Upadhyaya uses the metaphor of Dhritarashtra in the Mahabharata as a mirror to our acceptance of nepotism in our society. While nepotism is not unique to our culture alone, the alacrity with which it is promoted in the political world (and in businesses) is indeed alarming. In his distinctive style, Rajeshwar digs into the various levels of social complexity of this ugly phenomenon.

Happy Reading.

**Ester Martinez**

ester.martinez@peplematters.in



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This issue of *People Matters* contains 84 pages including cover.

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# Letters to the editor

## Commendation *People Matters*

I am an avid reader and enjoy reading. I regularly read various journals, but nothing could match yours. The format of the magazine makes it very reader-friendly and easy to navigate. I especially like the quality of content and the fact that you choose well-known experts to write detailed articles on different aspects of HR. It is a pleasure to read *People Matters*. I urge the team to keep up the good work.

*Bharat Wakhlu,*  
Resident Director – Tata Services Ltd.

## Industry Focus

The industry focus on Hospitality was a well researched section in the May issue. Your editorial team has done a great job of marrying business needs and people issues. The story has been able to highlight the new business reality of talent acquisition and retention in the sector; something that normally gets little attention, with senior management obsessed with real estate, valuations and financing. I congratulate the team for getting this unique viewpoint from leaders within in the industry. The hospitality sector is one of the large revenue generators for India and it contributes in a big way to the cash flow into the economy. I would suggest that Tourism as a whole be covered in the coming issues.

*Sukanya Rai, By email*

## Unique Style

I have been reading *People Matters* for some time now, and must compliment the team for both the quality of articles and the general look and feel of the publications. I found the may issue especially interesting for the quality of articles. *People Matters* has a very unique style and rich in content.

*Prabir Jha,*  
Senior VP & Global Head- HR &  
Corporate Communications,  
Dr. Reddy's Laboratories

## Platform for Debate

My compliments to the team for coming



out with this niche periodical which I am sure would go a long way in highlighting good organizational practices, besides serving as a platform for critical debates and discussions. As a former journalist having worked with TOI, Indian Express, The Pioneer, I am enthused at the quality of production, layout, and rich content. I am writing this letter to compliment you. Congratulations once again and keep up the good work.

*Navneet Anand, PhD*  
GreyMatters Communications & Advisory  
By email

## The Faustian Dilemma

Many thanks to the team, especially to Rajeshwar Upadhyaya for the wonderful article "The Faustian Dilemma – To have or to be" in the latest issue. Being an ardent follower of the works of Fritjof Capra and recently Peter Block, I thoroughly enjoyed your article. Your views quite resonate with their philosophy and work. Please continue to propagate the message of 'doing what matters' and the need to become rather than to have. It will be interesting to discuss how one can shift the mindset, in an organizational context and that too in a 8.5% growth economy, to become than to have.

*Sunil Kumar,*  
Sr. Manager, Talent & Organization  
Performance, Accenture

## Impractical Views

"The Faustian Dilemma – To have or to be" - I think it is an interesting topic to

debate. It is easier said than done, though. Only when you begin to implement these theories in your work life do you realize that these are not viable solutions. Wants are what drive us. It is our social desires that motivate us to keep on going. If money or compensation is not important, why work hard to manage the expenses? Cut expenses, kill desires and then analyze how much is our requirement. As a reader, I don't endorse these views. Impractical is what they are.

*Samved Pathak, on peoplematters.in*

## Women Overcoming Challenges

The article on rise of women leaders was a rather well written piece. There has always been a question about the success of women as leaders and how societies & organizations tread towards the inclusion of women in positions of authority. I second the fact that women have this undying urge complimented by the ability to encounter challenges more effectively & efficiently as compared to men in similar situations. It is rightly observed and stated that more than men, women adopt a positive managerial approach that trades on rewards rather than a negative approach that trades on chastising. I endorse these collective thoughts and congratulate the authors as well as the team on their effort.

*Ritumegha Mehta, Vice President -  
Training and Development, By email*

## Well Written & Designed

Thank you very much for another great issue of *People Matters*. The content has been well designed and written, particularly the cover story on Employer Branding and Talent Attraction, which are major challenges before the HR professional of today. Please keep up the good work. ■

*KK Sinha*  
Director Group HR,  
Jindal Steel & Power Ltd.

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# newScan

## European Crisis - An Opportunity for Indian Firms

**Indian organizations have matured considerably in the last 5 years in the process of overseas acquisitions**

The economic turmoil in Europe and a weakening Euro have offered Indian companies a chance to explore mergers and acquisitions. Indian IT companies, for example, are seeing outbound acquisitions as a strategic way to reduce their dependence on the US, from where they get nearly 60% of their revenues. This is a great opportunity for Indian tech companies to pursue inorganic growth and address the gaps in service/vertical portfolio after missing out on the same during 2008. Indian companies are looking at a strategic fit which will enhance their presence in Europe, get them access to large customers and provide with more domain competency.

But this timing is not only relevant for IT. The ongoing debt crisis could translate into lower valuations. With better buying power of an appreciating Rupee and recovery in emerging economies, it presents a second window of opportunity for Indian firms that

missed out on making major acquisitions in the US or Europe during the slowdown that started in 2008. The Euro has fallen by 13% against the Rupee over the course of 2010 (from 66.5 on 3<sup>rd</sup> Jan to 57.4 on 1<sup>st</sup> Jun).

Significant themes to Indian outbound M&A in 2010 are likely to include acquisition of distressed assets and niche technology/design centres, hunting strategic energy sources and acquisitions in newer emerging economies, says PWC. Sectors like energy, mining, metals, and capital goods will be the ones looking at outbound acquisitions.

Indian organizations have matured considerably in the last 5 years in the process of overseas acquisitions. The number of successful large acquisitions by Indian firms and conglomerates has created external confidence with western vendors and advisors. Indian companies have a relative positive track record in integrating overseas acquisitions and making the strategy work. ■

## Shortage of Talent Poses a Global Problem: Survey

According to its annual talent shortage survey by HR solutions firm Manpower, talent is hard to come by across the world. Close to one-third of employers worldwide find it difficult to fill key positions within their organizations. The Asia Pacific region has seen an increase of 9% in non-availability of desired skills this year, as compared to the previous year.

India, fortunately, faces a slightly less shortage of talent, with only 16% employers saying they find it difficult to access people

**The Asia Pacific region has seen an increase of 9% in non-availability of desired skills this year, as compared to the previous year**

with the appropriate skills. The survey covers about 1,700 employers in the country.

The survey also revealed that the top five hardest jobs to fill were skilled trades (electrical work, carpentry, masonry, plumbing and welding), sales representatives, technicians, engineers and accounting and finance staff. These are the same top jobs that employers have been struggling to fill for the past four years – thus demonstrating an ongoing global mismatch in these areas. The survey covers 35,000 employers across 36 countries. ■

# CII-HR Conclave 2010

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*"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit"* - Aristotle

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## More People Turning Entrepreneurs, Survey says

Organizations should empower employees and create an environment of innovation and ownership

The global economic downturn and its impact on India have forged a new generation of home-grown entrepreneurs, with approximately one-in-six respondents describing themselves as 'self-employed', and more than a third among the rest expressing a desire to work more independently, according to the latest survey from global workforce solutions leader Kelly Services.

In India, out of the 4,000 respondents of the survey, around 18 percent said that they are currently self-employed. Of this (18 percent), 26 percent fall in the category of baby boomers (age between 48-65 years), 20 percent Gen Y (18-29 years) and 14 percent are Gen X (30-47 years). Of those not currently working independently, 6 percent are 'extremely attracted', and 33 percent 'somewhat attracted' in doing so, the survey revealed.

The appeal of self-employment coincides with a trend toward the outsourcing of non-core functions, which has seen many organizations reduce their permanent workforce, creating new opportunities for freelancers, consultants and independent contractors. Industries with the greatest concentration of self-employed workers were Utilities, Government, Engineering and Manufacturing.

The implication for organizations, especially in times where hiring and retaining talent is gaining momentum again, is to focus on fostering this entrepreneurial spirit internally. Organizations should empower employees and create an environment of innovation and ownership. In terms of generational perspective, this will become increasingly more important as the younger workers have a stronger tendency towards flexible and entrepreneurial work arrangement. ■

## Women CEOs Salary Booming: Is the Glass Ceiling Breaking

The question that remains is why are these women not able to rise to a position on their boards?

Forbes recently published a list of '10 Best-Paying Jobs For Women.' Women CEOs topping the list include Carol Bartz of Yahoo and Irene Rosenfeld of Kraft Foods, with a \$47.2 million and \$26.3 million package respectively.

Sixteen women heading companies in the Standard & Poor's 500 Index averaged earnings of \$14.2 million in their latest fiscal years, 43% more than the male average, according to data compiled by a news agency from proxy filings. The women who were also CEOs in 2008 got a 19% raise in 2009 — while the men took a 5% cut.

But still the number of women representing companies at the board level is very low across the globe. In India only 11% of 240 large companies (Indian-owned as well as multinational, private as well as state-owned) have women CEOs, according to a study carried out by executive search firm EMA Partners. From those, 35% of the women CEOs are also promoters of their companies and the other 65% are professional CEOs.

The corresponding number of women CEOs for the Fortune 500 companies is only 3%. The study further goes on to show that there is no shortage of female talent as is indicated by numbers in UK, France and Germany where more than 30%, 35% and 25% (respectively) of executives are women.

According to a survey conducted by "Forum for Women in Leadership" (WILL Forum) in partnership with KPMG, on 'Creating Women Business Leaders: Differentiating Styles of Women Executives', there is also no shortage of arguments for benefits that women bring with their leadership style. According to the survey, women bring a unique approach to managing teams and client relationships, higher degree of persuasiveness in their willingness to take risks and high degree of effective crisis management. Women are also more risk-averse and also focus on long-term interests than do their male counterparts. The question that remains is why are these women not able to rise to a position on their boards? ■

## How much Employees from Hated Brands Suffer?

As of January 5, 2010 AIG topped 24/7 Wall St's list of "The 15 Most Hated Companies in America," which also included United Airlines, Level 3 Communications, Hertz and Citigroup among others. As per the survey, service companies and franchises suffer during bad economies, as their resources get stretched with the consequent impact on both employees and customer satisfaction.

In less than 6 months from the survey and as oil continues to pour into the waters of the Gulf of Mexico, it seems almost certain that BP has risen to the top of everybody's list of most hated companies. British Petroleum is an example of a brand gone bad and a possible red flag for employees and applicants concerned about their own good name. The direct damage to the environment will cost billions to repair, if it's even possible to do so. The indirect economic and emotional damage to communities depending on fishing and tourism is incalculable. One can only imagine what it must be like to work for BP.

**Your employer brand could affect your interactions with peers and family members today and also your chances of growth when looking at future roles.**

We have seen many organizations in the last few months undergoing external crisis like Goldman Sachs with its recent case with the Securities and Exchange Commission and car maker Toyota, which has been rattled by a series of recalls since earlier this year.

The impact of this external crisis on job seekers and on the level of engagement of current employees is difficult to measure. Increasingly, candidates & employees today are looking at what companies do, at their brand, their leadership authenticity as well as the long term sustainability of the organization to decide whether to get associated with a company.

The brand of the company you work for stays in your resume and it becomes part of one's professional business card not only while you are working for that organization but along a career. Your employer brand could affect interactions with peers and family members today and also chances of growth when looking at future roles. ■



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# SUCCESS IN THE NEW NORMAL

In an exclusive interaction with **Deepak Mohla**, MD, Inspire One Consultants and **Jim Tapper**, CEO, The Centre for High Performance Development, *People Matters* explores the new business dynamics ahead and how organizations can best equip themselves for success



DEEPAK MOHLA

## **In your opinion, how have Indian businesses been affected in the last 18 to 24 months by the global downturn?**

**Deepak:** The downturn did not impact all areas of Indian industry. There were parts of industry which were impacted more; some were impacted less and some got impacted only for a short period of time. The impact was felt mostly in those industries that were strongly integrated with the global economy and exposed to the effects of globalization. For instance, the IT and financial services sector were both heavily impacted. Overall, internal consumption in India is so strong that it can help negate the effect of globalization to a large degree.

The interesting aspect of this period was that organizations suddenly realized that something like this can actually happen. Most organizations took advantage of the situation to cut down excess built in the previous years. When you are on the growth path, you invest very strongly for growth; at that time, the cost of investing for growth is seen lower than the cost of losing opportunity. Despite knowing that I am investing much more than what I should be, one can convince themselves that growth will eventually take care of the spill overs. We have seen in India that even if companies were doing well, management took the opportunity to re-look at salary structures and while they were hiring in some parts of the organization, they were also downsizing in the other parts where it was not required. Because the environment was so strongly in favor of change, people

did not object to it. Organizations have emerged much healthier.

The second thing that gained focus was productivity. The mantra of productivity had got lost somewhere during the previous years. The bottom line gained importance suddenly and from revenue growth, the focus shifted to profitable revenue growth. The way people looked at businesses started changing. When you look at the productivity matrix, you think of how productivity can be increased. Technology is one angle but most of the times, the driver for productivity is people. Productivity through people can be achieved only by building on their capabilities.

### **What is the *New Normal* and what does it mean for organizations in India and other countries in the world?**

**Jim:** The New Normal is what is different today in the business environment from what it might have been three, five or eight years ago. This means different things for different regions of the world as each region has been affected differently and has different business imperatives. What is interesting is what is common to all in this New Normal: Firstly, globalization and its implication of much more inter-dependant economies than there were in the past; Secondly, the heightened competition that this globalization and inter-dependency involves; Thirdly, the pace of change becoming much faster; and finally, the importance of looking at the complexity that all the previous three points bring to the business environment and the associated need to cut through that complexity with simplicity and flexibility in the business models. These common elements cut across regions, countries and industries and are the new realities that businesses need to deal with. We have identified several implications of this new reality. The importance of these will be that leaders in today's New Normal need to understand the implications of the new realities and deal with them differently. Successful leaders and organizations will be those that adapt to this new environment and its requirements.

### **What is the different approach to leadership and talent management that organizations in India need to adopt to succeed in this "New Normal"?**

**Deepak:** Everyone is talking of change. Till a couple of years ago too, people were talking of change but not really intending to change because there was no need for any change then. This downturn has been a wakeup call for companies. One of the big things that is happening is that people are realizing, even at the top, that the business is

“**The new normal: global inter-dependence, heightened competition, faster pace of change, greater complexity**”

JIM TAPPER



# 7 Requirements

## Post Recession

**Need for business to change their strategy faster & more frequently:** Companies will need to revisit their strategies more often than ever before. In the West, this change was caused by the recessionary period where companies had to adapt to the new economic situation; in countries like India, the need to adopt was not so much due to recession but due to the changes in regulatory environment (specially in the banking sector).

**Need for leaders to concentrate on “focused” innovation:** When business environment was good, many companies were encouraging unbridled innovation as a means for growth. But in the post-recessionary environment, companies need to concentrate their efforts on those innovations that can be brought to the market quicker and at lower cost.

**Need for simplified business models:** This is the need of the hour; companies need to focus on simplifying structures and business models to remain agile. This is a very important challenge especially for Indian organizations, as they grow and become more global.

**Need to focus on doing more with less, while maintaining employee engagement:** In other parts of the world particularly where the recession has been much deeper, the way you demonstrate to people that they are important is by keeping them engaged, especially by investing time and money in their development. In the Indian context, the need for employee engagement and development comes from the great deal of competition for resources, typical, growing economy.

**Need to understand “new” definition of customer focus:** Either when companies are facing demand of a shrinking economy or are facing demand of high competition in a growing economy, they need to focus much more on their customers. Companies need to define who their customers are and create new channels to address their requirements.

**Need to focus on authenticity in leadership & brand:** The younger generation is demanding authenticity, both on leaders and brands. This generation expects leaders to be authentic and they take note on whether they do what they are saying they're going to do. This can be a challenge for many traditional leaders as the expectation from them have changed. This generation also expects authenticity of the organization and their brands; what does the brand stand for, how has the brand grown, is it sustainable, is it fair trade, etc.

**Need for understanding demographic changes & diversity:** Diversity can be ethnic, cultural, racial, gender, disability, etc. These factors are much more important today than what they might have been five years ago - differently in different parts of the world. In India, as companies expand abroad, they have to take into account the demographics of those different geographies where they are expanding, especially since the demographics of the workforce are different in the west. There is also an additional requirement of having diversity of thought around the table across companies. Some people in the financial services sector in Europe and in the US argue if companies would have had more diversity of thought in their Board rooms, for example by including more women, it could have made a difference in the level of downturn in that sector. ■



becoming so complex that to have a singular leadership is not in the best interest of the companies or their stake holders any more. Leadership hence is getting distributed. One may either call it collaborative, distributed or team leadership. But the reality of leadership getting shared is inevitable. When it starts at the top, it has also to percolate downwards, if the organization has to grow.

Hence there is a lot more focus on developing leadership capabilities. Till now, organizations were only talking about it. At best they would just do a programme or an intervention, without really knowing why they were doing it. It was very tactical in nature. But now, there is thinking behind it. Organizations are realizing that there is a need to define the type of talent needed, and to manage, develop and retain that talent.

Within the whole spectrum of companies in India, there are some which are at one end as early starters, while there are others which have traveled some path. The overall focus will be on creating the right frameworks to build on the talent management requirements for the future.

### Could you quote some examples?

**Deepak:** There has been a change in realizing what organizations need in the next phase of this economy.

Firstly, earlier companies would engage employees in general management, middle management or leadership programs without knowing why or even what was expected out of it. Today, organizations are identifying their business strategy and what behaviors will be required to achieve new business goals. Then only, they identify what programs will help employees develop those capabilities required and then take the development plans ahead.

Secondly, earlier the focus was only on functional capabilities; today, the focus is also on leadership capabilities. For instance, if we are going to get into newer markets, then a conventional thinking will not help us to get there. If an organization that has been working in urban markets only intends to get into the rural market, then they will need newer & different solutions to succeed in this new market. There is going to be a need for newer behavior, more innovation, newer and more creative thinking.

Thirdly, today there is also a change on structures and business models. People are not working today within rigid structures. They



are working in semi-flexible structures. They could be working on profit basis, in teams, on specific short term goals, etc. Team work is becoming more and more critical. These teams could also be virtual teams. People are using technology to work on four different locations at the same time even in India, not just overseas alone. A lot of social networks are emerging on those lines. So people have now learnt the language of social networks, which can and are already being used even in the professional network space. You can't disregard these changes, which are now becoming the realities. These are a part of the new normal. Every professional has to think on the lines of how I use these to my advantage, for the betterment of the business objectives.

### Jim, could you share your views?

**Jim:** It is important for companies generally to have a unified-approach to talent management. It all starts by having a capability framework that defines what 'good' looks like for the organization. It is not about training your managers. It's about training them for some specific traits that you want them to exhibit as leaders. With that comes a need

**Indian companies are very high on self confidence right now. That is one thing that characterizes them and differentiates them from foreign companies**

for assessing people to identify their levels in the defined capability framework. Depending on the result, you train them or develop them on that basis. That's only one element though; the other element is to build a pipeline for the future.

Talent management starts with recruitment and induction and continues with training and development. So the framework of 'what good looks like for my company' should be used to screen candidates and recruit them based on the behaviors organizations need to have in addition to the skills required. The people who are being hired at entry level may not demonstrate the skills or behaviors necessarily. But at least there should be a view of having the right potential and then build on that as they go through the development pipeline within the organization. So management development is not only about the people who are currently part of the organization but also

## In Indian companies, the decision making is much faster as they use individual capabilities to their advantage

about the pipeline of people who will be coming in to be a part of the organization. It is that unified approach that helps.

In many ways, Indian companies have the opportunity to leap-frog Western companies like the European or North American. In many ways, it has taken Western companies a long time to get to the approach to talent management that I am talking about. Indian organizations can learn from best in class processes and technologies to adopt these processes better and quicker. If implemented in a unified way, as opposed to a piece-meal approach, it can bear the desired fruits much faster and in a much better way.

### What is different in leadership, organizational and people management practices for Indian home grown companies and for Indian MNCs in this "new normal"?

**Deepak:** Indian companies are very high on self confidence right now. That is one thing



“ I believe that individualism vis-à-vis team work is the only challenge that surrounds Indian Companies ”

that characterizes them and differentiates them from foreign MNCs. The negative side of our companies is that team work is a deficiency; this is also in turn an opportunity as organizations are highly entrepreneurial and independent.

This independence can be used very positively in today's context. So companies, instead of focusing on the lack of team work, are focusing on the entrepreneurial aspect of their employees. Promoters of companies are giving freedom to the new generations to handle a business in their own fashion. Whether you take the Mahindras or the Tata Group, they all follow this style of working.

MNCs are characterized by very strong processes; this at times tends to be blocking innovation and growth. In Indian companies, the decision making is much faster as they use individual capabilities to their advantage, instead of getting bogged down by the lack of team work or by rigid processes. The challenge is to overcome the paradox of team work and individual brilliance effectively.

I believe that individualism vis-à-vis team work is the only challenge that surrounds Indian Companies. Making the transition at the right time and with the right spirit is what the younger leadership has to be sensitive to. ■

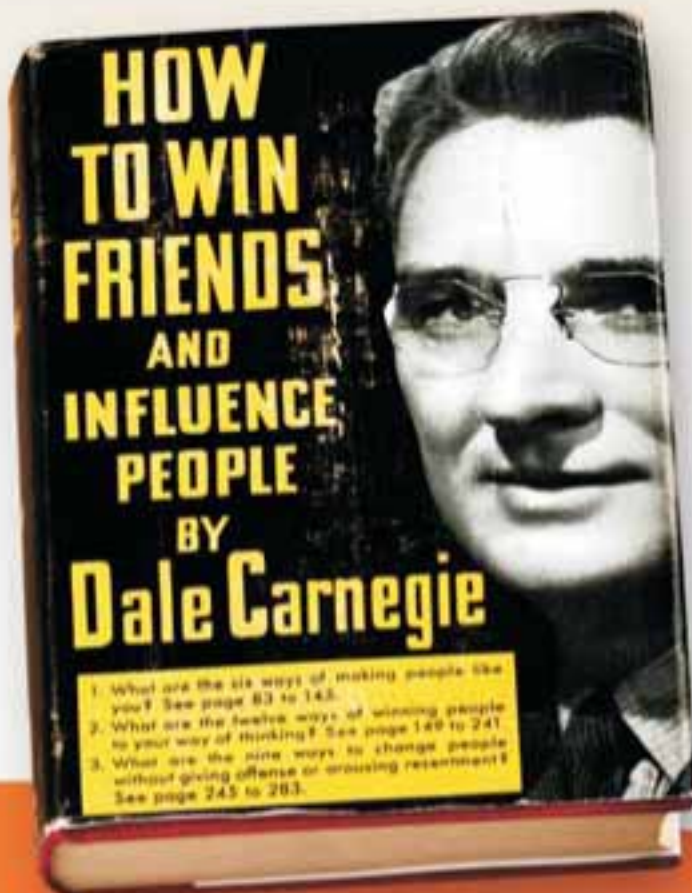
**Deepak Mohla** is Managing Director at Inspire One. Deepak has over three decades of professional experience that is a dynamic mix of corporate and consulting assignments across various industries. His multidimensional experience across Investment Banking, Management Consulting, Agriculture, Automobiles, Office Automation, Telecom and Industrial Entrepreneurship enables him to undertake the role of a Change Catalyst at the individual and organizational levels.

**Jim Tapper** is Managing Director at the Centre for High Performance Development. Jim has spent most of the last 25 years developing and leading consultancy practices in Europe and the United States with particular emphasis on major engineering and process industries. He has been advising companies on strategies and operational improvements to gain competitive advantage.



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Your Global Engagement Partner

# STAY CONVERSATIONS FAQs

Open ended conversations with key talent are an excellent way to help them feel connected and engaged. 'Stay Conversations' provide an opportunity for long-term relationship building with your team members

## QUICK VIEW

- The intent of a 'Stay Conversation' is more critical than its content
- Try to keep the conversation as informal as possible
- Open-ended conversations with key talent, especially in times of turbulence, are important to help them feel connected
- These are an attempt to pro-actively discover key people's problem before they reach tipping point

■ BY RITESH AGRAWAL

Stay Conversations are thoughtful dialogues intended to let key talent individuals know that the company appreciates and values them. They are particularly timely and effective during periods of organisational uncertainty and stress. They are a company's best means of retaining key talent without over-promising or over-paying. You should have stay conversations with all key talent individuals that have been identified as being crucially important to the future success of the organisation. Stay Conversations will help you to make key talent individuals feel connected, listened to, and supported during a time when they may be feeling unappreciated, vulnerable, or frustrated.

### How to initiate a stay conversation?

Keep it informal. Look for opportunities when you can suggest a cup of coffee, lunch, or an afternoon break together. Allow enough time to really listen to what the individual is trying to say. If you try to force a stay conversation into a five minute time-frame, you may end up actually doing more harm than good. At the same time, put a limit on how much time you want to spend to accomplish your goal... 30-45 minutes should be adequate.

### What should I actually say during a stay conversation?

Content is not critical; it's your intent that counts. Your goal is to connect and make this person feel valued and appreciated. You are paying them with your time and attention and this "soft currency" goes a long way in terms of talent retention.

Furthermore, having stay conversations help in preventing the departure of the talent by establishing "Push" factors that might be encouraging the person to leave. The whole purpose of stay conversations is to prevent the need for "exit interviews." Stay conversations are proactive attempts to discover the problems before a person's decision to leave moves past the tipping point.

**Ideas to start a conversation could be:** Like mentioned earlier, start conversations have to be informal in nature and there are various ways in which the conversation can be initiated like,

"I just wanted to catch-up and discuss how things are going. Tell me what's going on and what we might need to talk more about;" "I just wanted to spend a few minutes connecting on what's going on in your world. Fill me in on how you're doing;" "I realise things are not clear right now. How is that impacting you? Is there anything I could be doing differently that would make things easier for you?" Remember to keep questions open ended.

**Are stay conversations necessary if things are going ok? Why stir up trouble if people aren't expressing any concerns?**

Typically, key talent individuals aren't whiners and complainers. They simply keep quiet, until they hand you their resignation

**Stay conversations are thoughtful dialogues intended to let key talent individuals know that the company appreciates and values them**



and then it's usually too late to recover. So even if you think everything is fine, it's wise to double check during periods of turbulence and ambiguity. You may not like turning over rocks and looking for snakes, but if a snake is really there, better to know about it before it surprises you.

**Isn't there some risk that the person I'm conversing with will see this as an opportunity to make demands or to ask for things I can't deliver?**

Truthfully, this can happen anytime and not just during stay conversations. So that's no excuse not to have them. It's actually unusual for key talent individuals to take advantage of a stay conversation. To the contrary, they are usually flattered and appreciative that you've taken the time to check in with them and help them feel connected. However, you should be prepared to say no to unreasonable requests and refuse to take on unsolvable problems. It's your willingness to listen that makes a stay conversation work and not what you can promise.

**What kind of things can I say that will make people feel valued and appreciated, while still honouring the fact that I can't promise them what they really want, which is an end to the uncertainty and a promise of job security?**

You can say that you appreciate their patience, that you value their contributions, and that you hope they will feel comfortable coming to you with any problems they are experiencing. You can tell them that you genuinely

hope they will stick with the organisation through this period of uncertainty because you believe they will have many opportunities regardless of the outcome. You can tell them that you *wish* you could reduce their anxiety and that you *would like* to end the uncertainty. You can also tell them that you are experiencing some of the same anxiety and discomfort they are feeling (if that's the truth). Demonstrating a little vulnerability is a great way to connect with people on an emotional level. They aren't counting on you to have all the answers or to fix all the problems. They are simply counting on you to help them weather the storm.

**Aren't stay conversations just common sense, or good management?**

They're both, but not common *practice*. Many managers avoid their key talent individuals during periods of uncertainty because they don't want to know if they are at risk of losing them. Others take their key talent individuals for granted not realizing that even though they are performing well, and being low-maintenance, they may be accepting calls from professional search firms.

**Is one round of stay conversations enough?**

Stay conversations are a process and not an event. Although one time interaction may be enough, but it's more likely that you'll need to have several conversations to keep key talent individuals connected and motivated. You'll need to keep your ear to the ground and listen for faint signals of discontent. You'll also need to sense when announcements or changes stir up concern requiring additional stay conversations.

**How can I find time to have all these stay conversations?**

You can either find time to have them, or spend time figuring out how to make your organisation successful without these key talent individuals. Spending time retaining highly qualified and highly skilled individuals is the best investment of time you can make.

**Why not have stay conversations with everyone in my team?**

It's simply a matter of time and priorities. So identify the most critical individuals in your team and make sure you have con-

Employees are flattered that the manager has taken the time to check in with them and help them feel connected.

**It's your willingness to listen that makes a stay conversation work and not what you can promise**

“ Stay conversations are a process and not an event. Although one time interaction may be enough, but it's more likely that you'll need to have several conversations to keep key talent individuals connected and motivated ”



versations with them first. If you retain these high profile, well-respected team members, they will help model 'staying behaviour' for others to follow.

What if a stay conversation doesn't go well? What if the person admits that they are considering leaving or that they're in conversation with another company about an opportunity that looks attractive?

Perfect. The process is working. That's exactly what you were trying to discover. Sounds like there is still time to rescue this individual since he/she has not yet made up their mind to leave the organisation. This gives you a chance to explore their motives and see if you can meet some of their needs more effectively than the recruiter. Don't be afraid to probe into their interests and desires. And don't be afraid to surface their fears and frustrations with the current situation. You may not be able to resolve all their concerns, but the fact that you are willing to listen and address their needs is more powerful than an unknown recruiter's empty promises.

Isn't it being inauthentic if I encourage good people to stay with the organisation when they have opportunities with other companies that offer more security and less ambiguity? After all, I genuinely care about these people?

Caring is what good management is all about and authenticity is what stay conver-

## Caring is what good management is all about and authenticity is what stay conversations are all about.

It's not your job to persuade anyone to stay in a position that isn't in their own best interest

sations are all about. It's not your job to persuade anyone to stay in a position that isn't in their own best interest. But very often, during periods of organisational turbulence, people make bad career decisions just to resolve the uncertainty they're experiencing. They jump ship, even when that decision is not the best decision for their career. They accept a job they don't really want, just to ensure that they have a job. ■

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# SPACE TIME AND THE WORKPLACE

■ BY TEJASVI MOHANRAM & ESTER MARTINEZ

A relentless blaze of virtual collaboration and networking technologies is re-defining our interaction with peers, colleagues and customers. Conferencing tools and collaborative virtual environments blur the traditional boundaries of workplace and work time.

How can businesses harness this power for cost efficiency, employee productivity and employer branding?

**B**angalore, Monday 4:30am: Yash wakes up at this 'unearthly' hour and turns on his laptop. As he invites his Sydney-based client using GoToMeeting, he wonders if this is really worth all his efforts and whether this client would renew their customer support outsourcing contract. The next hour (expectedly) turns out to be one big nightmare as Ben, the VP Customer Support and his side-kick continue where they left off 5 days earlier – pricing issues. As spreadsheets, documents and presentations fly from both ends, it dawns on Yash that Ganesh's (his boss) communication with Ben on Friday was grossly inadequate. He schedules another meeting for 10am IST and closes his laptop.

The conferencing room on the office 3<sup>rd</sup> floor is one impressive facility. With four people face-to-face from either side thrashing out delivery, quality and pricing issues and the





boss not willing to yield, Yash can feel the deal slipping. After the meeting, Ganesh, with his usual “called-their-bluff” rah-rah, rushes out for another ‘important’ meeting.

Midday and a frustrated Yash tweets “Me in training for upper management. Come in, drink coffee, shoot the sh\*t, and disappear for the rest of the day!” And then comes the call...the Marketing Director wants to meet Yash regarding the Sydney client. “No way”, thinks Yash, “this could only mean bad news. Ganesh has left me holding the hot potato and I am in for a serious dressing down”.

He tries calling Ganesh and gets a message back “In a meeting at other end of town...may not be able to make it back today with all the traffic jams”. As he takes the elevator ride from the trenches to the 7<sup>th</sup> floor, Yash can’t but help turning on the “Interested in matching jobs” feature on his LinkedIn profile.

In October 2008, when Irving Wladawsky-Berger, Vice-Chairman Emeritus of the Academy of Technology, IBM, gave the suggestion to host a Virtual World Conference in a secure Second Life environment, little did he know that the event would be a watershed of sorts. A 6,100-member team was created to train second life users for the 3-day Virtual World Conference that boasted of over 200 members as participants from across the globe. The Second Life Technology enabled IBM to save a substantial amount of \$320,000 on traveling, venue, boarding and lodging, and other costs that would have been incurred had the conference been organized in the physical world. Such was the euphoria that IBM decided to hold its Annual General Meeting too in a virtual world.

# 4 Top Internet Trends For Organizations

- A new generation of conferencing software and equipment that cater to diverse needs and affordability have improved the level of communication between employees & with clients and have substantially reduced the need for commercial travel.
- Virtual environments like Second Life that allow for enhanced quality of group interaction in seminars, learning sessions, presentations and group interaction from the comfort of one's desktop, while reducing costs for training and development initiatives.
- Professional networking sites that provide for dynamic profiles and enable businesses to get in front and interact with passive candidates, in the backdrop of a connected global network that ensures lesser 'misrepresentation' in CVs.
- Social networking sites, where users increasingly share their personal judgments, aspirations and feelings, developing into media for corporate and employer branding.

The Internet is changing our lives at a pace unprecedented in modern history. The way we communicate, absorb news, search for information, share our lives with family and friends has changed dramatically over the last 10 years. And ever so surely, the Internet's enormous power of disruptive innovation is changing the face of our workplace and our workday in ways we could hardly have imagined a decade earlier.

## Honey, I shrunk the planet

Businesses, primarily technology companies in the US, have embraced collaboration technology in an endeavor to engage with their employees, channel partners and customers operating in different parts of the world. The instance of IBM hosting a Virtual World Conference is just one of the many examples where companies have adopted virtual environments to stay connected with employees and business associates.

Mass deployment of 'Collaboration Technology' – from conventional teleconferencing to video conferencing to information exchange and problem solving in virtual environment - will have a significant impact

on the workplaces of the future. For starters, companies can significantly slash their commercial travel expense, traditionally borne as a 'cost-of-doing-business'. The recession of 2008 has only alerted global companies to such possibilities and the extent of their cost-cutting power. Inder Sidhu, Senior Vice President Strategy & Planning at Cisco, elaborates on experience from within – "When the global recession hit us in 2008, we needed to reduce expenses quickly. By leveraging on our own collaboration technologies and advanced videoconferencing equipment, we reduced annual travel costs by \$423 million, while simultaneously increasing employee productivity. Because our employees were not stuck in transit, interactions with customers increased significantly and customer satisfaction improved year-over-year."

Even for a company of Cisco's size, that figure represents over 6% of 2008-09 annual profit after taxes!

Apart from reducing costs, collaboration technology also facilitates higher engagement during training, better collaboration between distributed networks and enhanced opportunities for peer-to-peer learning. While such virtual tools are immensely popular in the US and in Europe, the trend is fast spreading to Asia, Middle East, and

# Join the wave instead of fighting against it

**Sanjeev Bikhchandani**, CEO at Info Edge India

## How do you think social and professional networking sites and virtual work are transforming the way organizations manage their talent?

Networking sites are changing the way that organizations manage their talent in several ways: Firstly, organizations today are able to reach out prospective employees and communicating to them better easier while building their employer branding; Secondly, they are also able to create a linkage with their own employees, both because employees can connect and talk to each other helping in creating a linkage with each other and also because employers can communicate to them using these forums. Thirdly, networking sites have become channels to observe and listen what others are saying about the organization; finally, is also helping organizations to manage their alumni networks more efficiently.

## Will companies that are early adaptors of these new trends have an advantage over others in attracting and retaining talent? How?

It is still early days to know how these technologies are creating an advantage, some organizations are doing better than others in utilizing these new channels but we cannot tell as yet what will be the result of it. Most organizations are still figuring out how to use them. One thing that is interesting is that these sites are forcing organizations to be more transparent. What used to be classified as “gossip” before and have a potential reach of four people at a water cooler, can today reach 400 or 4000 people very easily. Employees and employers

need to accept this new paradigm. Especially employers should focus on participating, joining the wave and taking advantage by using these channels instead of fighting against them.

## Job portals like naukri.com brought about a revolution in the recruitment process. What is your view on how professional networking sites transforming the recruitment process?

The difference between a networking site and a job portal is fundamentally the following: Firstly, the intent for people to register to these sites is different from the intent to register in a job portal. A person that registers in a job portal is looking for a job versus a person that registers in a professional networking site might or might not be interested in changing jobs; secondly, because of policies of privacy and anti-spam the access to individual information is limited. Companies cannot access a mass audience in one go, limiting the scope of recruitment through professional networking sites. Thirdly, the pricing to access to individual information is also very different. The consequences of these differences are that the recruiter using professional networking sites has no control over who would or would not be interested to hear about a job opening. Productivity and control of the process is lower and it is more expensive. In my opinion, job portals and networking sites will co-exist and the usage of those channels will be complementary. For mass hiring, job portals will keep providing the easy access to candidates actively looking for a job. ■



# Efficiency and Quality: Drivers for Recruitment Market

**Hari Krishnan, Country Manager at LinkedIn India**

## How do you see the potential of professional networking in India?

LinkedIn has more than 5 million users today in India. Considering that the estimate of white collar professionals in India is somewhere between 40 to 80 million, taking the conservative figure we have around 10 to 15% of the white collar population today. There is a huge scope for growth. Since November 2009 we have almost doubled our number of users. We are optimistic of Indian professionals wanting to network professionally and our ability to service them. Our value proposition is attractive for all levels: developing one's professional brand. People from across age groups are coming to LinkedIn for professional networking, business insights and also recruitment.

## Can you elaborate on LinkedIn's plans in the area of recruitment in India?

Hiring solutions services is the fastest growing revenue source for us. Our current focus for Indian users is primarily to educate them about our suite of offerings. We have formed a full time team in India for the recruitment services vertical, and we recently appointed a Head Recruitment Sales for India. The type of companies that will be interested in our hiring solutions will be recruiters from within companies, executive search firms, and recruitment agencies. Our suite of products in the hiring solutions platform will be able to cater to the specific needs of each company from employer branding, to job board, to search functionality and referral checks.

Africa as well. Indian companies are fast beginning to realize the benefits of using collaborative technology to maximize efficiency. Says Siddharth Banerjee, Founder & CEO, Indusgeeks Solutions, "I think one of the main reasons India has lagged behind western economies in adopting new technologies has been the lack of infrastructure and finance. As broadband becomes pervasive and hardware becomes more affordable, we'll see these technologies go beyond the big companies to the SME and rural segments". Indusgeeks provides virtual office solutions for training, meeting and collaboration for companies which have virtual or distributed workforce – an environment where people can easily meet and train online within a browser in an easy to use virtual environment using their digital 'avatars'.

The list of visible, potential benefits from harnessing such collaboration technology reads like a virtual (*pun intended*) wish list – cost reduction, higher productivity with increased focus on core activities, tremendous opportunity for training & development initiatives, improved employee engagement and collaboration for problem solving. For a country like India, where scarce access to

education and skills-training presents a major economic and social challenge, the unforeseen benefits could far outnumber the (thus far) known ones.

## Talent hunting in virtual space

Talent management and recruitment is one domain where the Internet's power to connect, aggregate, classify and transact has brought in major innovation over the last decade. Most large-scale hiring today is facilitated by recruitment portals that match candidates looking for jobs with prospective employers.

Looking ahead, the growing popularity of professional networking sites has the potential to take this transformation in recruitment to the next level. Professional networking sites enable professionals to make connections with their colleagues, ex-colleagues, business associates, channel partners, vendors etc on a virtual platform. Given the wide array of connections of each user, these sites have the potential for recruiters and headhunters to establish contact with suitable candidates.

Yogesh Bansal, Founder & CEO, ApnaCircle.com points out two main



In India, the recruitment market is very fragmented. I think that for a period of time several mechanisms of recruitment will co-exist. Companies will eventually be focusing on those recruitment solutions that can offer both efficiency and quality. Service providers that can deal with company's requirements quicker, cheaper as well as ensuring quality of hire will survive.

**To what extent have Indian employers accepted professional networking with prospective employees? How much of this trend is visible in actual practice?**

Employers are increasingly seeing the benefit of tapping into the passive job seekers. Professionals come to LinkedIn for building their professional brand and to foster opportunities for career advancement. We have seen in our recent research that professionals who are not actively looking for jobs tend to be more honest about their profiles. Professionals might tend to exaggerate their qualification or job experience when they are actively looking for a job. LinkedIn provides the public forum to enhance transparency and trust in the information as the community concept itself regulates the accuracy of data to some extent. ■

reasons for such a potential shift in hiring means. Firstly, professional networking sites enable people to recommend their connections on seeing a job opening, thereby acting as a point of reference for the recruiter about the quality and credentials of the prospective candidate. And second, such sites are the only place where recruiters have access to an up-to-date profile of the professional. Adds Bansal, "People often use networking sites for maintaining connections but it eventually becomes their business card and therefore, they normally invest time and effort in ensuring that their profile is completely up to date."

Hari Krishnan, Country Manager, LinkedIn India explains the global outlook, "Today, hiring solutions is one of LinkedIn's three primary business lines, along with user subscriptions and advertising, each representing approximately 1/3 of our total revenue. Hiring solutions globally is a 60 billion dollar market and professional websites will capture a significant share of this pie in the time to come. Professional networking sites have created a disruptive innovation, in a similar form that online classifieds did with print classifieds; we will

see a similar movement. The two main reasons are that the best candidates are normally those that might not be looking for a job and secondly the networked platform provides the additional benefits of accuracy of information in the profile as the community itself acts to provide checks & balances to the information posted."

The jury is still out on whether recruitment using professional networking sites would go on to become as large a phenomenon as the usage of traditional recruitment portals. Sanjiv Bhikchandani, CEO of InfoEdge (naukri.com) believes that the

**Given the wide array of connections of each user, professional networking sites have the potential for recruiters and headhunters to establish contact with suitable candidates**



# Is Workplace **Obsolete?**

**Siddharth Banerjee**, Founder & CEO, Indusgeeks Solutions

## **How will the massive deployment of real-time collaboration technologies change the work-places of the future?**

The concept of a 'work – place' will slowly vanish. Places if any will be virtual spaces where people meet using their digital personas or avatars. The concept of work-time will become relevant. So these technologies will span vast virtual organizations with people working from anywhere and at anytime.

One of the major challenges in this new environment for organizations will be to maintain employer loyalty and peer to peer informal communications (water cooler talks). These virtual offices will need to replicate the look and feel of the organization and being used as virtual workforce to meet, attend trainings, collaborate, strategize and socialize.

## **In technology years, how far are we from practically deploying a feasible virtual office space?**

We are already there. It's a matter of unifying disparate communication channels in one single suite. We believe a virtual office is that solution. Where everything from document sharing, whiteboards, video conferencing to interactive training and collaboration can be enabled.

## **What is your view on how online collaboration will change employee-employer relationship, information security and quality monitoring?**

It's important that companies keep on top of this emerging virtual culture and suitably adapt. Else, they'll fail in retaining and maintaining their human capital. Important issues around information security will arise. I believe sensitive data like financial and strategic data will still require people to get into physical offices but a lot of other procedural work can be and should be virtualized. Quality monitoring can be easily carried out virtually and as such is already done by companies having geographically distributed teams. ■

intent with which one registers on a professional site vis-à-vis a recruitment portal underlines the differences between the two and when the dust finally settles, networking sites would complement the use of recruitment portals. “Any person who registers on a job portal is surely looking for a job, whereas if a person registers on a professional networking site may have a different intention as he may or may not be looking for a job. Secondly, because of policies of privacy and anti-spam, the access to individual information on professional networking sites is limited and companies cannot access a mass audience in one go. The consequences of these differences are that the recruiter using professional networking sites has no control over who would or not be interested to hear about a job opening; productivity and control of the process is hence lower and expensive. In my opinion, job portals and networking sites will co-exist and the usage of it will be complementary. For mass hiring, job portals will keep providing the easy access to candidates actively looking for a job,” he adds.

In the middle of all the innovation, hype and competition, employers stand to benefit immensely as the costs of hiring fall dramatically and the accuracy of finding the correct ‘fit’ for each role improves with each generation of online search tools. And again, like in the case of collaborative technologies, employers and consumers in volume-heavy markets like India stand to benefit the most from such disruptive innovation.

### The Virtual, the Ethical and the Legal

The information intensive Internet world brings with it hordes of legal and ethical issues regarding privacy, balance of power between employer and employee, authenticity of information, right to monitoring and surveillance. Foremost among these is the limits to which employees can express their judgment and opinion regarding employers on social forums.

In April, employees at Infosys, India’s second-largest IT services firm, took to blogs and networking sites like Facebook, Orkut and Twitter to showcase their displeasure on Infosys being awarded the Best Employer award by Business Today. Infosys, that employs approximately 1,14,000 people in India and across the world, had to face the wrath of its employees when the company launched its program ‘iRace’ to evaluate the technology

## India’s legislative and legal system has been notoriously slow in incorporating social changes brought about by the Internet

skills of its employees, which was not received in good taste by some employees. To prevent employees from posting on social networking sites, which are constantly under public scrutiny, the HR team at Infosys created an internal networking site on the company’s intranet and encouraged employees to post their opinion there. Although Infosys has received a negative backlash through this exercise as well, the company has claimed that the internal blogging site, named ‘Sparsh’ will remain open for further discussions regarding changes.

This recent instance has given rise to a very critical point regarding the legal aspect of such communication and how do new channels of communication change communication rights. India’s legislative and legal system has been notoriously slow in incorporating social changes brought about by the Internet. Michael Dias, an eminent lawyer and expert in this area clarifies, “Freedom of speech is a constitutional right regardless of the medium of communication used; the employee is free to express his/her opinion on professional, social or religious views. This freedom of



“ People often use networking sites for maintaining connections but it eventually becomes their business card and therefore, they normally invest time and effort in ensuring that their profile is completely up to date ”

YOGESH BANSAL  
Founder & CEO, ApnaCircle.com

# Free Speech is a Right... but Subject to Limits

**Michael Dias**, Lawyer & Secretary, The Employers' Association – Delhi

## How do new channels of communication change the communication rights and obligations from employees to employers?

Freedom of speech is a constitutional right, regardless of the medium of communication used; employees are free to express their opinions on professional, social or religious views. This freedom of speech is subject to limit of harming or impacting the organization

Recently, after the Mangalore Air India tragedy, some employees spoke to the media thereby denigrating the management of the airline. Either there is truth or merit in what the employees spoke against the company or they were falsehoods. In either case, the management would be within their rights to take appropriate action as such employees were not authorized by the management to speak to the media on the subject. Hence, while the fundamental freedom of speech is guaranteed by our Constitution and remains untouched, employees do not have the unbridled right to speak to the media and consequently bring bad reputation to the organization.

## Can employees use employee information posted on social/professional sites as part of recruitment/selection process or reference checks?

This process is subject to the principles of natural justice. An employer cannot take immediate action against an employee because he or she did not disclose a particular piece of information that is available on these online portals. The company will have to issue a show cause notice and the employee will need to have the opportunity to provide an explanation for the same. An employer can use employee information posted on such sites as part of the recruitment/selection process or reference checks but the same shall not be accepted as the whole truth particularly when there is a variance between what the employee stated at the time or even thereafter and what has been stated on the social professional site.



“Citizens need to be careful as to what they post on the electronic media as the same can always be used against them if found to be false or untrue”

## What are the grounds on which employers are allowed to deploy surveillance measures in respect of their employees?

The deployment of surveillance measures will be assessed under reasonable parameters. All information exchanged in chats, emails, videoconferencing or any other electronic means can be brought before the Court under the Evidence Act subject to its genuineness, relevance, context and applicability to the facts and circumstances of the issue at hand. Hence, citizens need to be careful as to what they post on the electronic media as the same can always be used against them if found to be false or untrue. In this regard, the basic principle is that while on the electronic media, their individual statements are addressed to the world at large. ■



speech is subject to limit of harming or impacting the organization. For example, if in one of these social or professional networking sites, the employee discloses where she works and who is her boss and she, for example, accuses him or her of illicit or fraudulent behavior then this communication will be subject to legal scrutiny and these can be taken as evidence against the employee in a court of law.

"The craze of social networking sites and the risks they could pose through indiscriminate posting by employees, have made a host of Indian companies sit up and introduce behavioral policies relating to usage of these sites. While companies like Microsoft, TCS, Max New York Life and Dr. Reddy's Lab have already come up with employee behavioral policies for social networking, others are keeping a close watch on the issue.

"Typically, the policies lay down a code of conduct which employees, sometimes even ex-employees, have to adhere to when they post on sites. In the broader sense, they cannot criticize employers and colleagues, discuss office policies, leak business secrets or create fora which could be construed as having been created by the organization."

Another raging issue, mostly in the US, is the increasing access an employer has to employees' private and virtual lives - How far can employers go in looking into the online lives of their employees and more importantly, judge their employees based on information collected from means outside of the 'workplace'? Cisco's Sidhu provides an uncomplicated viewpoint to this delicate issue, "You can't shield your virtual life from an employer or a service provider. Nor can you conceal your productivity, or lack thereof. But you can choose reputable and responsible companies with which to engage. The key takeaway is this: your employer will know more about you than ever before, and vice versa. The balance of power hasn't shifted so much as it has evolved. In exchange for less privacy, you gain greater freedom. That's the bargain of the new digital world. For those who can embrace this, there are truly wonderful possibilities ahead."

### Is your organization virtual-ready?

The beauty of the Internet lies in its unbiased access to just about everyone with a computer and a connection. Herein lies the opportunity for companies to differentiate

themselves as brands and employers of choice – just as the Internet can prove to be a slaughterhouse for carefully nurtured corporate reputations, so can it be used as an effective medium for participation, feedback and for communication.

Sanjiv Bikhchandani points out to the growing role of virtual networking and collaboration in forcing companies to be more transparent to the external world – "What used to be classified as gossip before and reaching four people at a water cooler, can today reach 400 or 4000 very easily. Employees and employers need to accept this new paradigm. Especially employers should focus on participating, joining the wave and taking advantage by using these channels instead of fighting against them."

Organizations that can harness the power of this virtual world - of social networks to amplify positive opinion, of professional networks to seek out and

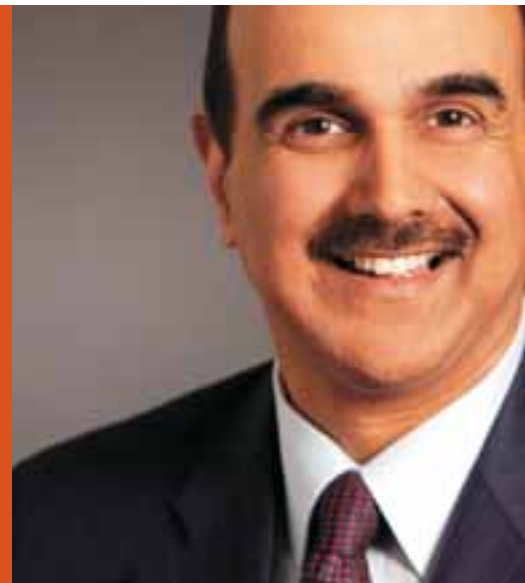
## Employers should focus on participating, joining the wave and taking advantage by using these channels instead of fighting against them

communicate clearly with prospective employees, of virtual environments to create knowledge networks and customer service groups – stand to build positive association in the minds of their customers, current and prospective employees. And importantly, like most things arising out of the Internet, such branding can be achieved at a fraction of the cost it would take using traditional media.

The underlying theme here is one of transparency, flexibility and openness – an ability on the part of companies to embrace new developments in virtual space and harness these developments to build stronger bonds with employees and customers. As numerous examples from the liberal world have demonstrated, fighting against the gush of information emanating from the Internet is pointless. Join in...Its free! ■

# There's no Going Back!

**Inder Sidhu**, Senior Vice President of Strategy & Planning at Cisco



## How will the massive deployment of conferencing technology change the workplaces of the future?

The massive deployment of collaboration technology will have a number of significant impacts.

For starters, it will reduce barriers that commonly divide people, making the world a more connected and inter-dependent place. With collaboration technology, time and distance are rendered meaningless, so people can work more flexible hours and with a greater than usual number of colleagues.

At Cisco, we routinely gather experts from three or more countries—including India—to solve customer problems in real time. Collaboration technology, thus, helps us better leverage our knowledge and capabilities, and deploy it where it is needed most. This increase in scalability is making Cisco a more agile and adept company—and not just internally. We're better able to communicate with our partners, suppliers and customers, too. In other words, collaboration has made us more competitive and receptive.

“More companies are allowing their employees to work from home. It's better for the environment and for an employer's bottom line”

To make the most from collaborative technology, we have adjusted our management structure. In addition to our traditional command-and-control model, we also have a complementary decentralized model that drives decision making deeper into the field. Together, they help us work smarter and faster than we ever imagined possible.

## How quickly do you see emerging economies like India adopting web conference components—simple remote meetings, virtual training classes, large events, and online technical assistance? Do you see bandwidth as a major constraint in the Indian context?

The simple answer is web conferencing is happening now—in Asia, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, South America and Africa, too.

The broader question is 'how widespread is adoption?' If you go to a major metropolitan area in Poland, India, Chile or South Africa, you'll find significant penetration of broadband networking technology. In many cases it's greater than 30 percent for consumers, and 70 percent for businesses and government offices. In Dubai, for example, connectivity is often faster and cheaper than it is in Los Angeles or London.

But in smaller towns and rural areas, connectivity remains a challenge. Fortunately, things are improving. Brazil, for example, has asked Cisco to help it increase broadband penetration to 750 regional hubs and smaller municipalities.

Adoption in emerging economies is happening in gradual waves, much as it did in more

developed countries. But the time between waves has been compressed, and in some cases the waves are coming simultaneously. Online technical assistance and simple remote meetings are already very common, especially in knowledge-based industries such as IT and financial services. In the future, virtual training classes and even virtual events will be available in emerging countries.

Unlike established countries, which relied on computers long before mobile devices, emerging economies are adopting collaboration technologies *first* on mobile platforms.

### Which sectors do you see adapting and utilizing such new technology the fastest?

Knowledge industries are traditionally the first adopters of technology. That includes information technology, financial services, media and entertainment and telecommunications. The next wave of adopters tend to be retailers and professionals service companies—industries that greatly benefit from technology adoption but whose fates are not completely tied to it.

Industries that are interesting to me are ones where network technology adoption can have the greatest impact. That includes education and healthcare. While the former can use technology to *change* lives, the latter can use it to *save* lives. That's tremendous.

### In technology years, how far are we from practically deploying a feasible virtual office space environment where individual physical location can be rendered immaterial?

Let me answer by turning the tables and asking a question of my own: What would be the greater imposition on you: the loss of your car, or the loss of your PC or mobile device? The answer reveals a lot about what you perceive to be a "feasible, virtual office space."

If you answered "your car," then chances are you rely on you face-to-face communications, physical presence and real-time interactions. Virtual interactions do not yet mimic those of the real world. My best guess as to when a "feasible, virtual" replacement for that is available? Three-to-five years.

Now suppose you answered my question with "your PC." Much of your life is probably already conducted virtually—your interactions, transactions and communications. If that is the case, then a feasible alternative to an office space exists today. Collaborative technologies already provide a semblance of the physical world in a virtual medium. They don't yet replace

chance encounters in the hallway, but they are already credible alternatives to targeted interactions such as meetings, conferences and discussions.

### Many technology gurus and strategists believe that business travel, paper products and commercial real estate will be the ultimate victims of a surge in online collaboration and real-time communication. What is your view on this?

No question that all of these will be impacted. The rate is the only thing in doubt.

As I mentioned previously, Cisco dramatically reduced its travel budget when the economy entered the recession—and with little impact to our competitiveness or responsiveness. After the eruption of the volcano in Iceland, interest in collaboration technology spiked—especially among business travelers who were trapped overseas for days on end.

“ Unlike established countries, which relied on computers long before mobile devices, emerging economies are adopting collaboration technologies first on mobile platforms ”

As for paper production, we clearly see the impact of digital technology in the U.S. In Cincinnati, Seattle and other cities, major newspapers have stopped printing and gone to online editions only. Innovations such as the Apple iPad and the Amazon Kindle will only accelerate this trend.

And as for real estate, thanks to email, instant messaging, video conferencing, application sharing and other collaboration technologies, more companies are allowing their employees to work from home than ever before. It's better for the environment and for an employer's bottom line. In the United States, one of our most promising air carriers, JetBlue, has embraced "homesourcing." Virtually all of its travel reservations agents work from their homes. Not all businesses, of course, can operate this way. But with each passing day, more and more of what was done in person now occurs in the virtual realm. The tide is turning virtual for many industries and, like it or not, there's no going back. ■

# The Next Generation of Online Psychometric Assessment

■ BY BEN HAWKES

Online assessment is a phenomenon that has become central to recruitment. Computer-based testing has existed for more than 20 years, but the ever-expanding Internet has pushed psychometric testing out of the interviewers' offices and into the candidates' homes.

The first generation of online testing consisted of paper-and-pencil tests such as verbal reasoning. This format of text-based tests was easy to implement at a time when broadband connectivity was limited to business and educational institutions.

The second generation witnessed the introduction of graphics into online testing, allowing for charts, tables and diagrams of numerical and logical reasoning tests to be displayed with fidelity very close to traditional printed tests.

These first two generations spanned from the late 1990s till as late as 2005. Now, well into a third generation, online testing is undergoing a rapid and dramatic transformation—one where tests don't have to look like tests and candidates take a much more active role in their own assessment.

So, how is this third generation of testing used in specific industries? We can take hospitality and tourism as an example. If we are recruiting house-keeping staff, one of the criteria we want to assess is memory. We want to know if they can remember the layout of a room's furniture so that they can return objects to their appropriate location. Figure 1 shows a way of testing this. The candidate must remember the location of 15 items after viewing them for 20 seconds. He/she must place the items in the appropriate place by dragging and dropping them. So now, instead of simply getting the answer right or wrong, we can measure how close or far the candidate was from the perfect answer. Not only does this reduce the chance that the candidate gets the answer right just by luck, it also allows for a much higher resolution of measurement, and therefore more differentiation between candidates.

In addition, test authors can now design the test interface from scratch instead of having to "shoehorn" new tests into old formats. This means that intuitive interfaces can be designed to reduce the risk of misinterpreting the instructions or looking at the wrong

## QUICK VIEW

- The latest generation of tools are designed to assess candidates' response to graphic situations
- Multimedia enhances 'Situational Judgement Tests' by removing language comprehension bias
- Virtual world 'Immersive Assessment' long used in military training can now be used for commercial assessment

screen location. In another example, candidates are shown a situation (one where a hair dryer has been put in a hotel bathroom sink full of water while still plugged in) and must choose from four possible options. A narrator also reads any text that appears on screen. When choosing the correct option, the candidate sees small animations of each of the possible actions. This has the effect of minimising the literacy level that the candidate must have to understand the instructions and complete the test.

That last point is significant. Through careful interface design, coupled with the use of animations and audio, we are now able to reliably assess candidates with lower levels of literacy. Many jobs will attract candidates with lower-than-average literacy, so this style of assessment may prove extremely useful.

The increasing use of multimedia is having a big impact on online Situational Judgement Tests (SJTs). An SJT consists of a number of questions that describe a hypothetical scenario and ask the candidate to indicate what he/she thinks would be the best resolution. The effectiveness of SJT performance predicting job performance has long been established. However, in their usual written format, candidates with lower-than-average literacy levels may perform poorly because their comprehension of the scenario, and of the possible responses, affects their results.

Research in the 1990s indicated that replacing text-based scenarios with video and audio scenarios had a positive effect on minimising some of these literacy effects. Of course, the cost of producing a video SJT far exceeded the cost of producing a text-based SJT, and so video SJTs have not been commonplace in the past.

However, as production costs have decreased, video and animated SJTs have started to become more common. With the advent of low-cost animation software, animated SJTs can be created even more economically than their video counterparts. Figure 2 is a screenshot of Kenexa SimSJT: Customer Service.

Finally, we can measure skills specific to certain roles (hospitality in our example) with a higher degree of accuracy, because we are not having to assume a certain level of literacy from the candidate. And because these tests are online, then we can put tens or tens of thousands of candidates through them with no additional work or effort on the part of recruiters.

So what is the next step for online testing? We are going to be seeing more 'im-



mersive assessments'. These are assessments that are set in a virtual world (similar to Second Life) when the user can walk around, observe, explore and interact in many of the same ways they can in real life. Immersive assessment has been used for many years in military training, for example. Now, it is a viable platform to assess in commercial settings. So expect to see more realistic simulations of situations such as customer service, sales, complaint handling and so on. In fact, any interaction which your employees may face in the real world can now be replicated – and their responses measured – on an immersive assessment platform. ■

**Ben Hawkes** is the Head of Simulation Development at Kenexa and specialises in the use of technology to deliver efficient and accurate assessment solutions. With more than 10 years of assessment experience in the U.S. and UK, Mr. Hawkes has designed and delivered assessments for organisations such as Merrill Lynch, HMRC, E.ON, Royal Mail, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. He also serves as a trainer for job analysis, competency modeling, interviewing, assessment centres, performance management and psychometric testing. Before joining Kenexa, Mr. Hawkes ran his own consultancy practice for six years, specialising in psychometric assessment, training and development and workplace surveys for telecom, banking, marketing, IT, manufacturing and public sector clients.



# Tweet or Meet?

When Stevie Wonder first sang “*I just called to say I love you,*” no one wondered whether he would have been better off tweeting his message instead of picking up the phone. Not so today!

■ BY STEW FRIEDMAN

## QUICK VIEW

- When it comes to social principles for harnessing technology, we are still in learning mode
- Conscious allocation of available means of communication is key to their effective use
- Experimenting with different ways to use media is key to this learning process

Recently, in my Wharton MBA course on leadership from the point of view of the whole person, we grappled with the challenge of how to choose among the various media options available today for connecting with important people in all the different parts of your life. We came up with 17 different media currently in use for interpersonal contact, including face-to-face (verbal and non-verbal), phone, email, snail mail, text and video messaging, blogs, podcasts, online forums, even music sharing and online gaming, among others. Quite a few of these did not even exist ten years ago, reminding us that we are all still very much in learning mode when it comes to the social and psychological principles and methods we need to take advantage of the incredibly powerful, and sometimes bewildering, array of choices we have.

Digital technology has added both relief and stress to our lives. These tools can make it easier to move rapidly from one part of life to

## While the promise of new media is freedom, choice, and control, the reality for most is crippling overload

another and give rapid access to the people who need you. And you can broadcast with them, making communication extremely efficient. Yet instead of realizing all the potential benefits, most people find themselves trapped by the demands imposed by the enormous amount of information surrounding them every hour of every day. A thought experiment: If I told you right now that you had to give up all your digital devices for the next day, how would you feel? Relieved? Terrified? We've become enormously dependent on these tools, and yet we've not spent nearly enough time thinking about how best to use them so that we gain the benefits while keeping them from reducing the quality of our lives.

People complain that using new technologies reduces social interaction and sense of community while others rant about being expected to be available for work 24/7 with zero response-time to urgent messages. While the promise of new media is freedom, choice, and control, the reality for most is crippling overload. On the employer side, many bosses wonder whether people are really working when they are connecting virtually. They also worry about how to foster team spirit when the "team" is invisible. Finally, when performance is measured the old-fashioned way (by time spent in an office) and not on the basis of results (no matter where and when they are produced), digital communications can seem to undermine productivity.

But what if you could use the media available to you to build trust and gain greater flexibility? And what if you could do this without being enslaved and constantly bombarded by your BlackBerry, iPhone, laptop, or whatever? You'd feel more whole, better able to integrate the diverse pieces of the social puzzle in your life.

You can learn to use new media to shift time and place in ways that work for all your key stakeholders, including yourself. But the intelligent use of the various media we now have isn't just a matter of doing more digital. Rather, it's a matter of more consciously allocating your use of different modes of communication: for example, making face-to-face communication a priority for those stakeholders with whom



## Exploiting Forms of Communication: Practical Tips

Here's one way to stimulate creative thinking about exploiting various forms of communication. Think about the media you use to communicate with the five most important people or groups at work, at home, and in your community. For each of these stakeholders, estimate the percentage of your interaction time that is conducted through each of the following forms of communication: face-to-face (F2F), virtual synchronous (shifting place but not time, such as phone, IM, and videoconferencing), and virtual asynchronous (shifting both time and place, such as voicemail and email) communication. For example, you might spend 50% in F2F with your boss, 20% with her on the phone, and 30% by email and voicemail. After you do this analysis, look for patterns. Consider how using different forms of communication affects your capacity to achieve your goals in each part of your life and to align them better by asking these questions:

- What opportunities are there for you to use different forms of communication more effectively?
- Are there stakeholders with whom you should be devoting more time F2F and others less?
- With whom would it be better to use virtual more regularly?

The real value in this analysis is to become more aware of media preferences (yours and theirs) and to learn more about how you can be more effective in meeting expectations by using a given medium. Look for opportunities to explain to your people why you have a preference for one medium over another for certain kinds of communications. For example, if you prefer email, and can justify it as the option of choice to a friend, your father, or a co-worker, that conversation about your preferences will probably make the entire process of communicating go more smoothly. The technology choice should be based on a mutual understanding about why, how, and when you're going to communicate.

## Intelligent use of media channels isn't just a matter of doing more digital, it's a matter of more consciously allocating the different modes available

it's needed, while using digital less. It all depends on what's going to work best for you and for them.

Studying your forms of interaction will help you generate ideas for how you might capitalize on the benefits of each communication mode (e.g., face-to-face is best when trust is on the line) while minimizing the liabilities (e.g., emails can miss nuances better conveyed on the phone or in person). This might mean shifting to more in-person time with certain stakeholders (such as your children or clients) and less with others (such as with your boss or the people who report to you) while taking advantage of the flexibility of virtual media as a means of staying connected with others.

Staying mindful of the preferences others have means looking for chances to talk about when, where, and how you use different media to stay connected, including when

you're available and when you're not. You might, for instance, discuss what it would be like to shut off the digital information stream for a specific period — even for just an hour or two — to focus your attention entirely on one thing.

With so many options, there are plenty of opportunities for you to experiment, even just for a week or so, with how you use media. Try something different, with the deliberate goal of performing more effectively in all the different parts of your life, and see what happens. ■

**Stew Friedman** is the founder and CEO of Total Leadership. He is an innovator in both the leadership development and work/life fields. A faculty member at the Wharton School since 1984, in 1991 he founded both the Wharton Leadership Programs and the Wharton Work/Life Integration Project





# Talent Acquisition

2010 Special

Numerous surveys and studies have shown an increased level of hiring activity since September 2009 and current trends indicate that India Inc's recruitment level is one of the highest globally. With business confidence improving and economic numbers confirming the worst is truly behind us, expectations of hiring activity are on a high.

In this special, *People Matters* talks to leaders from the recruitment world to share views on the present and future of Talent Acquisition in India across a breath of themes:

- Industry Forecast
- Recruitment & Staffing Solutions
- Executive Search
- Recruitment Process Outsourcing
- Recruitment Technology
- Partnership Models

# Science and Intuition

## Two sides of the same coin

Talent acquisition is in constant evolution; new technologies and ways of working will continue to bring innovation to this function, while the human angle will retain its core importance in the years to come, opines **E. Balaji**, CEO, Ma Foi Randstad

**You have a rich experience in the recruitment space. How have workforce planning and recruitment in Indian companies evolved over the years?**

In recent years, the recruitment function has become a progressively specialized function. In some cases, it has even become a separate function from the Human Resources Department and reports directly to the business. The main changes in this evolution have been the important role that technology has played and how organizations have found partners to effectively execute this function. The availability of recruitment partners in India is varied. The recruitment industry is dominated by international players, but many fragmented players that cater to different sizes and volumes of business also exist. According to me, there will be con-

solidation of players in this industry driven by specific requirements from client companies.

**What is the way forward for recruitment processes, techniques and tools?**

We have seen a rapid evolution of tools and processes used for recruitment in the last couple of years. The first wave was the emergence of first generation job portals followed by matching software technologies. Then the industry stood witness to RPO (recruitment process outsourcing) taking over the mantle. Now the trend has shifted towards using social networking to find and connect with potential candidates. It is difficult to say much about what is coming next as new techniques and tools will keep evolving. Over time, companies will have access to new technology,

**QUICK VIEW**

- Technology & partnership models have been key drivers for the maturity of the recruitment function in India
- Technology will continue to evolve and bring more tools and metrics, the human angle will remain extremely important in the overall recruitment process
- The next wave of tools will be those that utilize mobile devices and leverage on reach and connecting troughs to those technologies
- Companies are looking at building partnership models with service providers that include sharing of responsibility in process efficiency and effectiveness
- Attrition analysis of key talent, succession planning, competency mapping & development and recruitment strategy need to be integrated for a successful Talent Management Strategy

E. BALAJI

## Deploying technology reduces employee acquisition cost

and transaction time, which has a direct implication on the cost per hire

new sources of information and more metrics. And although all of these will help managers in the recruitment processes, they will not substitute the importance of the human angle to recruitment, which will continue to be important. The next wave of tools, from my opinion, will be those that utilize mobile phone and leverage on reach and connecting troughs to those technologies.

Having said that, there is a still lot of diversity in Indian organizations and they function with different levels of maturity in technology running in parallel. For example, there are many recruitment processes that still work on paper resumes. PSUs are some of the largest recruiters in India but their recruitment process is still paper based. Similarly, the most technology-intensive manufacturing companies may also follow a very traditional recruitment process based on calling candidates on a given day and taking walk-in interviews for certain roles, just like their PSU peers.

### How can companies make their recruitment process more effective? Can you share some best practices on how companies can identify potential savings opportunities?

Companies have identified multiple ways of saving costs and driving effectiveness in the recruitment process. One is of course the use of technology as we have discussed ear-

“ Companies that have traditionally invested in grooming internal talent and have a tradition of having their CEOs coming from the entry level positions have performed much better than their peers ”

lier. Deploying technology reduces the employee acquisition cost and the transaction time, which has a direct implication on the cost per hire. Secondly, companies are also looking at partnering with recruitment providers with arrangements like turnkey or linking payment to performance metrics. These new ways of working with service providers have led to some sharing of responsibility between the company and the recruiters and have made the overall process more effective. There are many measures to track effectiveness of these relationships like Hit Ratios, Offer to Joining Ratios, and Attrition of new joiners, et al. Finally, another trend that I have noticed emerging is of companies increasingly investing in employer branding to make the recruitment process more effective. If the brand has a positive recall, then the number of candidates interested in applying is higher and therefore the pool for choice is also larger, making it easier to find the right candidate.

### How should organizations map their attrition models with successful succession planning and manpower forecast? Any best practices you can share?

When looking at analyzing attrition data, one level of analysis is the macro data of attrition, which is the voluntary exit. The other level, which I think is more relevant, is the 'key talent attrition' data. What matters is not how many people are leaving the organization but how many of those leavers are in the 'key talent' category. The responsibility of retaining this key talent should be with the managers who should be given incentives to keep the performance of their team members tracked based on certain measures. Apart from focusing on retaining key talent, companies should, in conjunction, look at succession planning. Companies that have traditionally invested in grooming internal talent and have a tradition of having their CEOs coming from the entry level positions have performed much better than their peers. The main reasons behind this is that they are able to send the right signals to the market, to retain people in a better way and provide internal career growth. Finally, the overall base is to actually identify which competencies are vital for succeeding in a particular organization to move up the career ladder, and to create mechanism to help people obtain those competencies and grow with the company. I feel all these processes need to be integrated for a successful talent management strategy. ■

# GET CERTIFIED UNLOCK YOUR FUTURE



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DHRUV PRAKASH AND DEEPAK GUPTA

# All About Executive Search

From pre-to post-downturn, the executive search space in India has gone through a radical transformation with companies accepting the 'value-add' provided by International search firms, say **Deepak Gupta**, Country Head – MD and **Dhruv Prakash**, MD India - Leadership & Talent Consulting, Korn Ferry International

### What are the trends in the executive search space in India? What is unique in each industry vertical?

**Deepak:** The executive search industry in India has matured a lot in the last ten years. Back in the beginning of this decade, most recruitment at senior levels was done through informal & unstructured channels. Some of the international search firms had just begun operations in India in the last few years and they were still trying to get to their feet on the ground. The bulk of recruitment happening in India was through references or local recruitment agencies, resulting in a less structured process with a more contingent pricing model as opposed to being retained for a search. In the contingent model, the hiring company gets paid only if a candidate recommended by the recruitment firm ultimately joins the organization.

With the coming of international firms a greater rigor and formality in structured processes in mapping, assessment and due-diligence was brought in and thereby the fees are based on a retained exclusive model; wherein the company gets specific requirement exclusively to only one provider and the retained executive search firm gave a commitment to find the right person for that position. The initial years went into educating the market about the value proposition of retained executive search firms and trying to break the cost barrier by demonstrating value-add through better processes and better results.

Around 2005-06, the executive search business picked up pace with numerous international players coming in. The new players entered late, and hence, in order for them to gain market share, they often resorted to cutting prices and offering to work with companies on a contingent or semi-contingent basis consequently tainting the retained executive search model to some extent. However, due to their track record and credibility, the more established international retained executive search firms were able to hold their market share and in fact grew significantly during this period.

Then came the pre-downturn phase where markets were witnessing enormous growth wherein talent wasn't easily available and companies were hiring for growth. During this phase, companies were not that price sensitive and they did a lot of work with the international search firms. Markets were changing because companies were getting desperate. This phase saw the emergence of a new trend – from the employers having more leverage to the employees having significant leverage. This was the pre-downturn

## Quality of hiring includes attributes such as long term sustainability of the candidate in the organization and ability to move up in hierarchy based on performance

period wherein the candidates were calling all the shots.

In the first half of 2008, global economies started experiencing the first signs of a downturn with the global executive search industry losing 40-50% of its revenue. This was experienced around the world including in the Asia Pacific Region wherein retrenchment in the market, and search firms were no exception. It is only in the last few months that the markets have picked up and are now pulling out of that phase.

Overall, the industry has matured since the downturn; there is a lot more acceptance of international retained executive search firms and understanding of what these firms bring to the table. However some of the large conglomerates are still a bit hesitant to work with international retained executive search firms since they have the bench strength and can attract talent on their own except for very critical and key positions for which they work with such firms.

### How is India different from other Asia Pacific countries in the space of executive search? What is unique?

**Deepak:** In India, there is an interesting difference when it comes to the talent pool. Here, the pool is much larger but the challenge is to find the right person from this pool as there are many more nuances required for the right fit like cultural fit, location of the job, etc. On the contrary, the talent pool in other APAC countries is much smaller but more mobile and more adaptable to other countries within the region. In India, people are not willing to move from Mumbai to Delhi, leave alone around the APAC Region. There is not much regional hiring happening from India except in a few areas like finance for example. Talent from India relocates into the region mostly due to internal transfers. But when you see the rest of the countries

“ We are going to see more expatriates being hired for diversity and value addition, but certainly not because we lack competent leadership ”

## Hot Sectors: The Korn Ferry Views

**Industrial Markets:** Activity has picked up in most sectors during the last two quarters. Companies are focusing on both – hiring and retention to meet their growth plans.

Infrastructure, Energy and Basic Materials are also looking for talent for overseas needs.

**Life Sciences Markets:** There is a strong buzz in the pharma industry with MNC's acquiring Indian generic players. Talent acquisition and retention will therefore be the key as most companies are looking at aggressive growth plans.

There is also a large focus on rural penetration which will mean hiring in tier II and tier III geographies.

Sales and marketing talent is again in demand.

There is huge activity also on the R&D and CRO front. Private healthcare systems and healthcare services are expanding their operations.

**Financial Markets:** There has been a pick up in executive recruitment in Corporate Banking and Investment Banking. Hiring is expected to continue in the banking space with both existing banks expanding their operations and newly set up banks setting up their representative offices.

Hiring is also expected to pick up within the Private Equity domain later this year, and also in the DCM and ECM space – especially with MNC banks expanding their teams.

**Consumer Markets:** Overall there is buoyancy in the Indian Consumer Markets, led by Consumer Goods – both FMCG and Durables.

An interesting trend is that the total remit of jobs keeps getting narrower as companies try and squeeze productivity from their operations. Companies have started investing in their core businesses. Media companies are sticking to media (publications are increasing the number of editions, channels increasing their spread by launching more channels in different genres, etc).

The talent war in these segments is thereby a direct reflection as companies become more risk averse: they continue to prefer hiring talent that has done similar jobs in similar categories.

**Technology (Telecom/IT) Markets:** Telecom has been the front-runner for growth even during the downturn, with Cellular operators needing to continually re-invent themselves in the intensely competi-

in the region, talent tends to be a bit more mobile between China/Singapore/ASEAN for example.

### How can companies build a strong leadership pipeline by acquiring the right talent?

**Dhruv:** The first step in building a leadership pipeline is to hire right. The major shift that is happening today is that companies are hiring for quality as opposed to hiring for numbers alone at all levels. Companies are hiring for the organization and not just for the job. 'Quality' includes attributes such as long term sustainability of the candidate in the organization, ability to move across roles and levels, sustained performance, flexibility to adapt to the changes that the organization may go through, *et al.*

We help organizations get a perspective of how the prospective hire fits the role in terms of competencies, the organization's preferred leadership style and decision making styles, and whether their personal fundamental motivation weave with the nature of job and the organization through a proprietary assessment tool and interview methodology.

**In the period of pre-2008, companies were hiring in excess trying to cater to future demand; after the downturn, what do**

### you think companies have learnt and how are those learnings being incorporated in the Manpower Planning Strategy?

**Deepak:** Pre-downturn, I do not think companies were necessarily stocking up for the future. There was never an excess of employees. At times, companies hire employees much before they actually need them but I believe that there was a lot of "crisis hiring" going on.

The growth pre-downturn was significant. The learning in terms of manpower planning strategies derives from the experience of having gone through retrenchment, compensation dips; companies have learnt to tread very carefully & cautiously with respect to the talent that they acquire and thereby they are not going to hurried in their recruitment exercise. Hiring will be only at rational compensation structures. Candidates are also a lot more thoughtful about their moves; they are being much more reasonable about their expectations of compensation. These are the major learning's from the downturn and are certainly relevant to the present.

However, I feel that these learning's are short-lived and it won't be very long before some will be forgotten. Pre-downturn, it is not that companies didn't know what the right things to do were, but they were forced to take a lot of steps because of shortage of tal-



tive environment. With new paradigms like 'outsourced/managed services', 'optimized minute factories', and 'value-added-services' expected to be driven by higher speed bandwidth (3G, WiMax, BWA) availability, these operators are looking for different skill-sets - many of whom are seeking talent from global markets. Other Telecom ecosystem players like software and hardware companies are setting up shop/increasing presence in India (to help the operators build differentiated services), and increasingly India is now exporting talent to other markets who can learn from India's operating models.

Indian IT services firms (both outsourcing/off-shoring companies in software development/management and BPO/ITES) have started to renew their focus in global markets after the recession, and are looking at expanding their reach and relevance to the global ecosystem, both organically and inorganically - with targeted local hires in these overseas markets.

Many global Indian IT services firms are changing their talent mix to make it more diverse by looking at a larger global (non-Indian) talent pool in their senior leadership. Achieving gender diversity in key senior leadership roles is, however, still a challenge for these firms.

As large IT MNCs in India continue to grow their

business, they are faced with the peculiar challenge of not finding enough talent in India who have seen 'scale' and thereby, some are resorting to importing talent from global markets into India.

In general there is a lot more NRI talent in the Technology/IT sectors who want to return/relocate back to India.

**Professional Services Markets:** Professional Services and Consulting firms have seen a lot of hiring even during the downturn. The Satyam scandal kicked off a frenzy in corporate governance/risk management becoming top-priority in the minds of the Indian businesses. The recessionary times also led a lot of organizations to hire consultants to optimize and reduce their operational costs and become leaner. Both of these have led to greater focus/business for the Professional Services firms and thereby their need to expand their teams.

Discretionary spending on other types of strategy, process consulting and M&A transaction advisory had been cut down during the recession, but is seeing a come-back, with a lot of companies in India seeking advice from management consulting firms on how to differentiate and stay ahead of their competition, both in India and in global waters - leading to senior level hiring in these professional services firms.

ent and the growth opportunities, hence the leverage moved to the hands of the candidates. The similar situation occurring in the future is inevitable. But there is no denying that this time round, everyone is going to plan their processes using more robust methodologies ahead of time, with a more rational and sensible approach. The market just rapidly grew the last time, and caught the companies unawares. People are more prepared to handle these eventualities post the downturn.

### **What is your view on expatriate hiring in India? Do you think we are dependent on expatriates today for senior or specialized roles?**

**Dhruv:** I think India was never expatriate dependant in the way that China or several of the other Asian countries were. Some roles in specific industries needed them but the numbers were not large. Traditionally Indian companies have used global consultants to raise their competence and global competitiveness. Recently, however, as the regulations have eased and Indian companies have begun going global, they have begun hiring global talent to speed up their readiness for cross border forays as well as raise competence in the organization or even to simply hire the best talent available.

**Businesses in India are becoming more outward looking.** There will be more acquisitions of Indian talent abroad and more companies going out to set up bases

Businesses in India are changing rapidly and becoming more outward looking against the backdrop of more acquisitions by Indian companies abroad and more companies going out to set up bases. There is a change of balance between Asia and Europe and the US. Hence there is going to be demand for a different kind of manager - one who will be able to succeed in those regions. The Indian manager will need to be tuned to culture sensitivities and to manage people in a cross cultural scenario etc.

Overall thought, we are going to see more expatriates being hired for diversity and value addition, but certainly not because we lack competent leadership. ■



# The Other Supply Chain

Building a people supply chain for sales and customer service is a strategic differentiator for companies targeting India's domestic consumption

■ BY MANISH SABHARWAL | ASHISH PRASAD

Most people recognize that there is a huge difference between a list of ingredients and a recipe. While the list of possible ingredients that reduce a country's poverty is large, India and China seem to be adopting very different recipes. China decided in the 1980s – with huge but unacknowledged inspiration from the World Bank – that the best way to reduce poverty was by manufacturing goods for export. This decision not only led to a huge clustering of people (China has 174 cities with more than a million people) but also a huge clustering of skills in low-skill manufacturing (45% of its labour force works in manufacturing relative to India's 12%). While it's early to conclude that India's services and consumption model will lead to poverty reduction, it is clear that combining our economic model with a decentralized democracy will ensure that India's ge-

**QUICK VIEW**

- Domestic consumption companies from all industries will be fishing in the same pond for talent and need well-thought human capital strategies
- Building people supply chains in India is complicated owing to geographic size and uneven quality issues
- This article highlights the 7 prime components that go into building a people supply chain

ography of work and skills will be much less clustered than China. Staffing China's export engine benefited from the relatively small transition from working on a farm to low-skill manufacturing. But companies who want to serve to India's geographically dispersed consumers will have to struggle with huge people challenges in putting together geographically dispersed sales and services workforces. Businesses focused on domestic consumption in India will soon emerge as our biggest employers; BFSI, healthcare, consumer durables, consumer goods, pharmaceuticals, retail, telecom, education, engineering, and infrastructure.

We make the case that these domestic consumption companies, irrespective of industry, will be fishing in the same pond for talent and need to craft thoughtful and sustainable human capital strategies. An important speed limit on growth for these companies is their ability to build national sales and service organizations that balance the impossible trinity of cost, quality and scale. Many companies seem to accept the notion of no choice but lowering standards in the selection, training, and retention of their "sub-fifteen thousand rupees per month" employee base. This is not only dangerous – they risk outsourcing their destiny – but also wrong because many thoughtful domestic consumption companies are starting to create efficient, effective and sustainable solutions for staffing by taking a holistic view of the traditionally separate components of hiring, hygiene and productivity.

Companies that aim to build differentiated sales and service people supply chains will align their entire ecosystems to target employee productivity. But this is easier said than done; productivity is horribly difficult to measure. Companies with any real ambition to target India's domestic consumption will have to get feet-on-ground in over 800 cities and

## Companies that aim to build differentiated sales and service people supply chains will align their entire ecosystems to target employee productivity

towns. This is impossible to do solely with internal capabilities and requires working with partners. The current skill system in the public sector delivers uneven quality and it is hard – if not impossible – to sustain a completely employer paid training solution. The situation is further complicated by archaic labour laws and increasing divergence among states around minimum wages, shops and establishment acts, et al. So any people supply chain will have to deliver and align seven prime components: Assessment, sourcing strategies, training financing and delivering, temporary staffing, outsourcing and high importance of performance management processes.

Doing business in India requires companies to substitute for the state in many ways; generating power, providing transport and security, et al. Often this hardware has been a source of competitive advantage. But as the corporate landscape matures, companies realize that their true equity does not sit on their balance sheet but goes home every night. So, the sources of competitive advantage are shifting from hardware like machinery or distribution access – low hanging fruit that money can buy – to human capital. This creates an interesting challenge and opportunity for domestic consumption companies because India is too big and the million nego-

# 7 PRIME COMPONENTS: People Supply Chain

## Assessments

This implies effective binning of candidates and employees with identification of capabilities and potential. Traditional assessments have had the predictive efficacy of palm reading or astrology but many companies are making substantial investments in functional, industry and company assessment centers that find - or imply - better fits. Companies who win will also ensure that assessment is not episodic but a structured and formal process that continues through the employee lifecycle.

## Candidate Sourcing

Companies with effective sourcing strategies for national sales and service organizations answer the difficult "what" before the obvious "how." Difficult questions and trade-offs include fresher's vs. experienced, trained vs. non-trained, lineup vs. filtered, nice to have vs. must have skills, et al. The unevenness of hiring standards across line managers of the same company currently accepted in the name of "long rope" has to stop because many use this long rope to go bungee jumping. Companies need to recognize fully loaded hiring costs, diversify sources and ensure effective onboarding and induction.

## Training Financing

It is now clear that companies cannot afford the complete training of every candidate they hire. India's skill crisis means most candidates need some company, industry, or functional training. Finding creative ways to pay for this training – apprenticeships, tenure based reimbursements, government refinancing, credible certifications, et al – are important elements in finding non-traditional resources.

## Training Delivery

Domestic consumption companies have sales and service workforces that are too dispersed to get all employees to one location without being economically stupid. But delivering this training creatively – Para-skilled trainers, satellite delivery, e-learning, et al – is crucial to

cost-effectively meeting learning objectives at scale. Repair programs for new employees must be complemented by upgrade or certification programs for existing employees delivered over the same infrastructure.

## Employee Contracts

Employees – particularly those in the target group of sub-fifteen thousand salary - no longer view employment as a parent-child relationship that will last a lifetime but a taxicab relationship that is short and intimate. The ideal structure allows both sides to take each other a test drive. Companies never hire people to fire them but they obviously need a judicious mix of temporary staffing, permanent hiring, apprenticeships, consulting, outsourcing, et al, to balance flexibility with continuity.

## Salary, Benefits and Compliance Hygiene

Many domestic consumption firms outsource the plumbing of salary and benefits for their sales or service force to their dealers. But wage transmission losses, compliance, benefit deduction but no deposit, et al, are common and the most cited reasons for the high employee turnover. So putting hygiene like Service Level agreements, multi-modal self-service (call centre, email or web), SMS communication, et al are important infrastructure that complements the more glamorous components of the chain.

## Performance Management

Companies that do not hold their bad performers accountable and, on the contrary, punish their good performers are bound to lose on to good talent. Performance management systems like automated attendance, sales reporting, customer feedback, et al are often viewed as important inputs of fixed and variable compensation management. But their most important application lies in increasing the learning and self-healing abilities of supply chain components like assessment, training delivery and financing, and sourcing.

## Components of a People Supply Chain



**Manish Sabharwal & Ashish Prasad** are Chairman, Teamlease Services and CEO, IIJT Education respectively

tations of democracy too slow for them to wait for public policy to fix the people supply chain.

The productive capabilities of a country are not like oil - which will run out - but like wind power which is potentially infinite. Similarly, individual capabilities are not like shoe size or height - which are cannot be changed- but like muscles which can be developed by working out. This supply chain view of a country or individual capabilities is not only an optimistic view of life - a better way to live your life or build a company in our view - but also a happy congruence of doing well by doing good. In fact, the companies that win will be those that act decisively, swiftly and boldly about their staffing. If strategy is defined as the art of creating an unfair advantage - a gun in the knife fight - it is clear that companies, who creatively create, configure and catalyze their people supply chains in India will create an advantage that is hard to replicate. Any takers? ■

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KAMAL KARANTH

# It's time to look ahead

If nothing else, the economic downturn has made companies go back to basics when it comes to recruitment

In the last three quarters, we have seen an upward trend in the hiring levels across industries. Although the numbers have not reached the levels of those in 2006 but as compared to the second half 2008 and first half of 2009, there is surely a consistent upward trend, says **Kamal Karanth**, Managing Director at Kelly Services India

## The Kelly Services View

Organizations now want to hire for the long term and they are looking at creating internal capabilities by bringing on board the right talent. This has the following implications in the hiring process:

### Hiring cycle time has increased significantly

Processes that used to take around 4 weeks lead time, today take 6-8 weeks to close. The pattern is very clear-companies want to be sure that they are hiring the right candidate and they want the closest fit. Earlier they used to compromise to a 60% fit but today they are looking at '90% upwards' fit.

### Hiring for the organization and not for the role

Companies are looking at identifying roles that will have continuity in the organization in the long run. So they are looking at hiring people who will be able to grow in different roles as the organization evolves. Companies are not hiring anymore for a specific job but more for a required long term role in the company. Focus is on getting candidates to have a cultural fitment to the company than being suitable for a specific role.

### Employers are willing to invest more human time in the recruitment process

As a consequence of the above, companies are willing to dedicate more face to face time in the recruitment process. We have observed that there is more personal interaction with candidates and more accessibility to clients.

### Tremendous re-hiring taking place

Another interesting trend in the hiring process is that there is a lot of re-hiring happening. Companies that had to let go of employees during the downturn period are connecting with them again to bring them back to their roles.

### Temp work on the rise

Finally and also aligned to the first four points mentioned above, there is an increased usage of temporary work arrangements. This is really an interesting trend, as we have not seen these numbers before. Companies not only want to be sure they hire the right candidate (hence they use temporary work as means for de-risking in their choice), but also, they want to hire only for those roles that will have long term continuity in the organization.

### What have companies learnt from the previous boom of 2006 and 2007?

I think that we can describe the 'learning' of companies in just one word, and that would be 'caution'. Caution encompasses hiring what you need, taking time to ensure you are hiring the right candidates, et al. The biggest impact has been in creating solid processes that will ensure that the right candidate is hired. This has led to the creation of more levels in the recruitment process, more competency based hiring, more technology and tools being used and more complement from human interaction.

Companies have also come to realize the important role service providers play in this process. Companies have also become more cautious about which service providers they use for the hiring processes as they are now demanding higher share of responsibility from the service provider. They look at value

addition from service providers than just recruitment support.

### What challenges will companies face in 2010 and beyond in the sourcing space?

The challenge that lies ahead for both employees and employers is tough competition. While on one hand, employers are seeking a better fit and more quality candidates, candidates are being more interested in the organization's growth prospects and opportunities offered on the other hand.

The challenge for candidates is that they will need to upgrade their skills and constantly improve to compete for the positions they apply for, since the requirements of companies have become much more rigid. However, companies, at the same time, will also need to build on their employer branding and be the preferred employer as they need to attract and convince the best candidates to join

“During the boom times, companies were interested in filling the seats, today they are interested in branding their overall recruitment processes”



Candidates at all levels are demanding to know more about organization in terms of their **growth plans, business outlook, et al**

their organization. Candidates today are demanding to know more about organization in terms of their growth plans, business outlook, et al. These questions normally were asked by mid or senior level employees but today, even entry level employees want to know about these aspects in order to decide the attractiveness of the offer.

**Can you throw some light on the trends in industry in terms of recruiting across all levels (executive, mid and entry level) across sectors?**

Although at the entry level, there have not been any major changes, this is where the buzz is and where the intensity of hiring is happening. The numbers are at the entry level of industries like Banking, IT and FMCG.

However, interestingly, at the middle lev-

el, there is not much visibility in opening or hiring. But I would still maintain that hiring is happening and that too intensively. What is interesting is that companies are hiring but using unconventional ways to let candidates know they are hiring. What used to be pages and pages of job openings in newspapers have turned into the usage of networking techniques, social media, headhunters or intermediaries to reach out to candidates. The reason behind this could be that some of these companies had undergone retrenchment at those levels and today they want to use different means to let people know they are hiring. The sectors in which the middle level management hiring has picked up are telecom, real estate, infrastructure, pharma, healthcare, et al.

At senior level, the numbers have not picked up to the level of 2006-07. There is less demand and more people in the market. On the one hand, companies are cautious on hiring too many senior people in the organization and dealing with integration and management issues internally; and on the other hand, candidates are more cautious in making any shift in their career at this point of time.

**What according to you are the best practices that have emerged in talent acquisition space?**

The best practices that have emerged from this downturn are that both science and heart have returned to the hiring process. This is a very simple but powerful best practice using processes and ensuring you complement them with the human intuition. That has always been there but we had lost it during the boom times. Another emerging trend is the use of RPOs. Outsourcing recruitment process when the numbers are large was seen as a cost saving option; today it is a very powerful way to streamline processes and create accountability between the employer and the service provider. It also helps the company to focus time and effort on their core competencies. During the boom times, companies were interested in filling the seats, today they are interested in branding their overall recruitment processes. So they care as much for the candidates that are accepted as for those that are rejected and how it is communicated to them. Today the RPO model is moving to a partner model with share accountability and SLA. Finally, an interesting paradigm that we have observed is that companies are changing their sourcing channels to tap niche talent from outside of India. ■



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# Looking Inwards

**Sanjay Modi**, Managing Director, Monster India/SEA/Middle East, talks to *People Matters* on the learning from the downturn and the future of job portals in India

## From your opinion what has changed in the Talent Acquisition space after the downturn?

Talent attraction and acquisition strategy/approach has undergone a change in last 12-18 months. On the employers' side, organisations have become stringent in terms of their screening process and they are focusing on getting the right candidate. Testing and assessment mechanisms are also becoming a part of the screening process. In short, 'a round hole for a round peg'. Both from talent retention perspective as well as bridging the skill-gap challenge, organisations are looking at 'learning and development' as an important strategic tool. Some are focusing on strengthening their in-house capability and some are looking at combination of both internal and external partnerships.

**Today, businesses of all sizes have turned to online recruitment owing to benefits like reach, speed and cost to manage their objectives**

On the candidate side, job seekers are evaluating the organisation's credibility, stability, exposure to cutting edge technology/business processes and not just compensation. Employees today are looking at the right mix of all the above, even if they have to compromise on their compensation aspirations. The basic question that candidates are asking to potential employers is "What's in it for me?"

**Companies need to get used to the economic outlook changing over time. We will see more upturns and downturns, and experts claim that those will happen in shorter spans of time. In this situation, how can companies plan for their long term hiring requirements?**

Business downturns are cyclical phenomenon. Every 5-7 years businesses face a challenge one way or the other. This should be taken as an opportunity to look inward, to evaluate business models, assess business process and look at the inefficiencies. On the basis of learning gathered, one should evaluate business strategy and take corrective action as required.

The changes that I foresee in the recruitment space going forward are: Firstly, the importance of technology in the overall talent management and talent acquisition process. Secondly, HR will transition into a more strategic role/function. Today, the CEO/Head of the organization is more focused on



“On the candidate side, job seekers are evaluating the organisation’s credibility, stability, exposure to cutting edge technology/ business processes and not just compensation”

- SANJAY MODI

acquiring and nurturing the ‘people asset’. Going forward, the valuation of an organization, apart from the financials, will majorly depend upon the people that are part of the organization, and the tenure that they have served in the organization.

#### **How has the internet transformed the way recruitment happens?**

Monster pioneered e-recruitment globally in 1994 and we started operations in India in 2001. Prior to that, people were relying on two basic modes namely print and consultants/staffing companies. The year 2000 saw recruitment teams in India being given the task of recruiting hundreds of people in short periods of time. This kind of hiring phenomenon was unheard of. Thus emerged a need to remain in touch with job seekers on a real time basis. Speed as well as cost became critical components in the hiring process.

IT/ ITES Industry was an early adopter of online recruitment. Today, almost all industry sectors and businesses of all sizes have turned to online recruitment owing to benefits like reach, speed and cost to manage the recruitment objectives.

**Today, professional networking sites are also coming into the picture. How are these sites transforming the way that recruitment is done?**

We need to go back to the core definition of ‘networking’. Recruitment is a different domain altogether. Companies may use these networking sites to reach out to a particular talent/ candidate; they cannot depend on these sites for their overall hiring needs. Recruitment is a specialised vertical and there is a need for in-depth understanding of the recruitment process and challenges. Monster fully understands the needs of both employers and jobseekers and provides the value proposition addressing their requirements.

#### **How are companies using the internet, social and professional websites for their employer branding?**

Employer branding has been a serious topic in the west. In last couple of years, it has gained mindshare of the HR professionals in India. If organisations want to attract, retain and develop talent, then they need to be consistent in their communication strategy both with existing as well as prospective employees. They need to communicate the uniqueness of their offerings be it technology, compensation, cultural diversity or the HR policies. Employer branding helps in building loyalty amongst existing employees as well as attract the right talent. Positioning one’s organisation as “employer of choice” will become a necessity in times to come. ■

# RPO

RECRUITMENT PROCESS OUTSOURCING

## THE TIME HAS COME

### QUICK VIEW

- Global RPO market which stands at USD 1bn to grow to USD 3 bn by 2013
- There is enough evidence to demonstrate improved 'job fit' and cost savings by using the right RPO partner
- With advantages of predictability and variable costing, RPO is an idea whose time has come in a high-growth market like India

■ BY PANKAJ BANSAL | SUMIT JAIN

**R**ecruitment has been outsourced for many years now. With the changing landscape of the industry and growing importance of Human Capital of organizations, recruitment and selection can no longer be considered as just transactional activities. As employers face high rates of attrition and increased demand for skilled and quality work force, a number of recruitment models, both in-house and outsourced have emerged, which promise to be the panacea for hiring woes.

### Indian Recruitment Space vis-a-vis Mature Markets

The worldwide recruitment market is estimated to be in excess of \$420 billion. Many of the developed economies have a very mature and developed recruitment industry. In the USA alone, there are around 61 companies which are listed on exchange and publicly traded. However, in emerging economies like India, the recruitment industry is very fragmented and it is estimated that India has more than 18,000 small and large staffing firms.

If we take Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO) as a subset of the bigger recruitment industry, it is relatively nascent. The size of the worldwide RPO market in 2009 was estimated to be \$700 million to \$1 Billion, with most of the deals being signed in mature markets like the USA, UK and Australia. Growing markets like India are slowly emerging on the scene. A huge talent crunch and demand for 'right-fit hires' in such markets is creating a huge gap in the recruitment space due to the complexity and techniques involved. RPO is expected to fill this gap. The global RPO market is estimated to touch \$3.2 billion by 2013, with significant contributions from growing economies.

### Three Classic Recruitment Dilemmas for Indian Employers

An employer is faced with three classic dilemmas when it comes to recruitment. They are:

### Get your concepts clear: What is RPO?

RPO ensures true amalgamation of technology, process, outcome driven approach and Service Level Agreements (SLAs). Everest Research Institute defines Recruitment Process Outsourcing as 'Transfer of ownership of all or part of recruitment processes or activities on an ongoing basis'. The main differentiator is that the RPO provider assumes complete ownership of the design and management of the recruitment process and also takes on the responsibility for the results, which other providers don't.

**Just in time hiring:** Finding the right skill at the right time at the right cost.

**Predictability:** Even when employers are able to find people who are right for the job, 'no show' is a big challenge. Predictability is an important component for a successful hire.

**Fitment:** A large chunk of employees either leave within 3-6 months or they don't figure amongst the better performers. Can right fitment be only ensured through better assessment or do we also need to look at something else?

Employers and service providers have been trying to solve this riddle. Even though some improvements have been made in the time to hire, significant progress needs to be made in the other two areas.

The RPO model has been successfully adopted globally. Organizations in India are quickly following this trend. RPO ensures true amalgamation of technology, process, outcome driven approach and Service Level Agreements (SLAs).

The terminology RPO, however, is being used loosely by the recruitment industry even when an RPO provider and a staffing provider are at two ends of the spectrum. Everest Research Institute defines Recruitment Process Outsourcing as "Transfer of ownership of all or part of recruitment processes or activities on an ongoing basis." The main differentiator is that the RPO provider assumes complete ownership of the design and man-

**Talent crunch and demand for 'right-fit hires' is creating a gap in the recruitment space.**

RPO is expected to fill this gap

Anatomy of A TRUE RPO

Hiring Models: Comparison					
	In-House Hiring	Contingency Staffing	Contract Hiring	Executive Search	RPO
SLA's with reverse SLA's	○	○	○	○	●
Technology Usage	●	●	●	●	●
Line Manager Interface	●	○	○	●	●
Process Focussed	●	●	●	●	●
Outcome Linked terms	●	●	○	●	●
Exclusivity	○	○	○	●	●
Multi-year profit sharing	○	●	●	○	●
Variable pricing model	○	●	●	●	●

○ Low   ● High

agement of the recruitment process and also takes on responsibility for the results, which other model based providers don't.

A true RPO is a 'Talent Supply Chain' model which has two elements to it:

- a) Benchmarked and researched, accurate talent pool
- b) Evolved technology and process in the shared services recruitment center

While developing an RPO solution, the service provider has to really put himself into the shoes of the corporate hiring function and get his arms around everything from branding, developing a sourcing strategy to onboarding and even technology and process. The 'awesome foursome' of an ideal RPO are:

- Refined standardized processes: Organization context and measurable hiring process
- Contextual training: Converting an average recruiter to a strong recruiter
- Quality control mechanisms: SLA's with clients - on time, every time
- Strong Technology for Talent (TFT): Technology for talent to support clients' specialized needs and extended value chains. It goes well beyond just process automation.

**Underdogs of the Recruitment Anatomy: Design, Process and Technology**

**Design & Process**

In the recruitment value chain, about 70% activities are repetitive and transactional. HR departments of organizations end up spending a lot of time into these non-core activities (from database management to assessment process administration, to interview process coordination, feedback collation and post offer transactions) instead of concentrating on their strategic tasks (source generation, relationship management and offer management). The right process can help achieve tremendous amount of automation and efficiency within the recruitment system.

Organizations that have adopted the RPO approach have been able to crash the hiring steps from a 20 to 14 and the hiring time (from requisition to closure of position) from 30 days to 21 days. This is because of integration of multiple sourcing channels, managing and limiting the number of third party providers and usage of technology. Clearly, this results in better hires for the organization and direct and indirect dollar savings.

**Technology**

HR and business leaders are exploring newer ways to source people, reduce no-shows and increase the employees' stay in the organization. Employees, on the other hand, are keen to know where their career anchors lie. We need to figure the best way to converge on these two needs. Technology for Talent (TFT) will blend the new market reality and service the needs of the employer as well as the employee. TFT (which will tie in market reality of

**Organizations that have adopted RPO have reduced hiring time from an average of 30 to 21 days**

limited pool, hidden passive seekers, et al), Research (which will define the true fit for an organization), Talent Processes (defined by HR experts) and Web 2.0 type technologies, will use SaaS (software as a service) based platforms to integrate the two ends of the value chain - the job seekers and the job givers.

**Challenges of the RPO Model**

Many a times an outsourcing deal fails because the outsourcing organization does not have a clear strategy in place and the benefits that it wants to draw from the engagement are not clearly identified. RPO, like all other outsourcing models, has its share of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. The client must be clear and the vendor must be competent enough to realize the full potential of the partnership.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process and SLA Driven</li> <li>• Less time and low cost per hire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be a single point of failure</li> <li>• Expecting cost benefits too fast</li> </ul>
<i>Strength</i>	<i>Weakness</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High hiring numbers across industries</li> <li>• Relatively nascent service is growth markets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incompetent providers</li> <li>• Not having a partner relationship</li> <li>• Other recruitment models</li> </ul>
<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Threats</i>

The buying organization must also understand that all the benefits of RPO are not realized immediately. While some advantages are immediate, some show up in medium or long term.

- Immediate to short term benefits: Reduction in time required to fill, integration of channels, access to technology, improved quality of hire
- Medium to long term benefits: Reduction in total cost, continuous improvement to the process, enhanced brand image of the hiring organization, the client's focus only on its core business (and not on hiring)

**Why RPO Cannot be Denied Any Further?**

**Variable Cost Structure:** After the global economic meltdown, most companies want to keep the cost structure variable so that expenses can be lowered during lean periods. In

**Clarity from the client's side and competence on the vendor's part are required**

to realize the full potential of the relationship

RPO, the typical pricing model is 'cost per hire' and the only variable that defines the total recruitment cost is the total number of hires.

**Standardization and Predictability:** With the usage of streamlined processes and strong TFT, an RPO provider is able to bring in standardization to the entire talent acquisition function of the organization and at the same time is able build in a high degree of predictability in the system.

**Scale:** Let's take an example of a company which employs about 50,000 people. Assuming an attrition rate of 20% and an annual planned increase in manpower to be 10%, the company needs to hire about 25,000 for the particular year. A number of companies have been able to manage a large portion of their recruitments by hiring directly from campuses. Even if we assume campus hires to be 10,000, another 15,000 have to be lateral hires. Is a contingency staffing model or an in-house model good enough for such hiring numbers?

**ROI:** Correct implementation of RPO can ensure that there is a better fitment between the candidate and the organization, which leads to overall better retention. This proves to be a much greater ROI for the organization compared to the cost savings that the RPO process brings in.

Clearly, RPO is a compelling solution and a strategic choice. If we may put it, it is a business necessity in today's economic situation. RPO is like running a very effective sales function. It impacts both revenue as well as growth, however, takes very little time to mature. RPO, in fact, needs a 24x7 mindset!

*'Nobody can stop an idea whose time has come and this is the time for RPO.'* ■

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# Choosing your Success Profile

As organizations get more concerned on getting the right fit, they should focus not just on what the candidate “has done” or “can do” but also on that the candidate “will do” writes  
**Smita Affinwalla, Head of Consulting, DDI India**

**E**ver heard of Marco Evaristti? Possibly not. Mr. Evaristti, who is an iceberg artist, does the job that HR professionals and People Managers the world over do every working day of their lives. And like them, of the raw material available to him, he is only able to work with 20% to get his job done.

It is an established fact that the best of development efforts can only impact 20% of the ‘whole’ person and it is the whole person that does a job effectively or otherwise. The other 80% is what lies within a person and is very difficult to change at all. Thus, selecting the right person for the job is one of the most critical and strategic things an organisation does. Would you depend on your “gut” to make such a critical decision? Or would you rather have as much of the best possible data to enable you to make a well informed decision? Are you willing to take a chance? Or would you rather reduce the margin for error as much as you can?

There are four quadrants of a person that that the organisation needs to evaluate to ensure the best possible chance of success in a particular role – the whole often called a “Success Profile.” The four quadrants are:

- What one knows – Technical skills
- What one has done- Experience
- What one can do – Competencies
- Who one is – Personal attributes

Each of these needs to be evaluated carefully to ensure success on the job, and each of these plays out in a different way at different levels of the Leadership Pipeline and in different roles. The rule of thumb is that as you move higher up the organisation into more complex roles, you also depend more and more on the higher levels of the success profile.

Equally, as one moves through the quadrants respectively, each becomes more and more difficult to evaluate, and the data more difficult to interpret. In today’s economy, finding and hiring the right talent is more challenging than ever before. Some of the challenges that employers face today, include accurately defining selection criteria in a changing work environment, effectively retaining newly hired talent, supporting a de-centralized and geographically dispersed selection system, cost efficiency, logistical simplicity, time and effort efficiency, and Adequacy of appropriate internal skills amongst others.

There are several good practices that organisations can follow, which allow them to explore the four quadrants adequately while also taking into account the challenges they face. Some of these are discussed below.

## Focusing Not Just on “Can Do” but “Will Do”

A chief indicator of whether or not a new hire will excel in the organization is

### QUICK VIEW

- Most inherent individual traits are difficult to change, making right-fit extremely critical in recruitment
- Organizations need to evaluate candidates across a range of attributes, ranging from skills to personal attributes
- In this context, the author defines 4 quadrants for evaluation - What one knows, What one has done, What one can do and Who one is
- Organizations need to focus on motivational fit, accurate definition of targets, skilled recruiters and using the right evaluation tool for each 'quadrant'



how well he or she “fits” with the job, the organizational culture, and the geographical location of the job. Identifying motivational fit is the key to selecting the individuals who are likely to stick with the organization, as well as identifying those who project a high likelihood of leaving in the near future. For example, a large call center found that their six-month turnover rates decreased nearly 20% by using motivational fit as a part of its screening interview.

### Accurately Define Targets in a Changing Work Environment

As systems, products, and processes are changing faster now than ever before, a key challenge for organizations is ensuring that the targets required for success in various jobs keep up with these changes. In short, what made an individual successful in a job or role in the past may not be what makes the individual successful in the present—or in the future.

### Create a Decentralized Selection System

As the human resources function continues to evolve, some internal HR staffs are becoming leaner while outsourcing is growing more prevalent. Accordingly, ownership of the selection process is falling more to hiring managers and recruiters. HR departments, therefore, must continually try to balance control over the hiring system for reasons of consistency and legal defensibility, and distribution of selection tools to the end-users.

### Adequately Skill Recruiters

Ensure that all people participating in the selection process have adequate knowledge of the tools they will be using such as tests, inventories and interview techniques. Logistical challenges and cost considerations have driven many organizations to employ multiple training delivery methods for such skilling. Some options to consider would be whether the training is administered through web-based, self-study or classroom options.

### Use the right tools for the right result

Screening and testing tools help objectively evaluate large applicant pools, which helps the manager quickly and accurately identify the most qualified candidates for further consideration. Traditional tests such as psychometric tests and cognitive tests are now being replaced by more blended tests which encompass both personality as well as competency evaluations through a simple cost effective methodology yet provide a much wider evaluation. These tests may also be role specific for more accurate results. Examples of these are

Career Batteries. It is also at this stage that the less complex quadrants of the Success Profile such as technical skills and experience need to be evaluated.

Once this is done, they may be progressed to behaviourally-based, in-depth phases such as behavioural interviews, simulations and assessments. These may be applied differently for different roles depending on the criticality of the decision as well as the size of the role and other such parameters.

### The results speak for themselves

Below two different examples from a well known Talent Management Consulting firm that shows the direct bottom line impact of good talent acquisition practices:

One Fortune 500 Telecommunications Company increased their closing rates by 69% by shifting to sales roles to a more consultative approach. They realised they needed sales representatives who could sit down with customers, understand their Internet, cable, and

## Unique Challenges to identify Success Profile

- Accurately defining selection criteria in a changing work environment
- Effectively retaining newly hired talent
- Supporting a de-centralized and geographically dispersed selection system
- Cost efficiency, logistical simplicity, time and effort efficiency
- Adequacy of appropriate internal skills amongst others

phone needs, and then recommend customized service options to meet those needs. The company used a blended Competency and Personality test to support the hiring process. The research found that compared to those scoring low, high scorers: Had 69% higher close rates, made 21% more sales calls, performed 15-29% higher on sales goal achievement and attained 8% higher customer satisfaction ratings.

Another example, a company that became one of the largest national financial institutions thanks to its emphasis on making clients feel special, delivering value, and building strong relationships. They wanted to find call center agents with a commitment to satisfying their customers’ financial needs and who would be satisfied and stay in their jobs. The company used a specialised Customer Service Career Battery. The research found that high scorers were: 144% more likely to excel at customer focus, 216% more likely to effectively manage work, 177% more likely to have strong communication skills, 90% more likely to be highly satisfied with their jobs and 36% more likely to have a faster ramp-up speed. ■

# On Leadership, Employee Engagement & Business Performance

**Neisha Lobo**, Head - Leadership Development, Hewitt Associates India, explores the association between employee engagement and company performance & further, between effective leadership and employee engagement

**M**uch has been debated on the age-old question of what are the true traits of a good leader. One of the traits that often gets missed out is the ability of a good leader understand motivation drivers and drive high employee engagement levels.

## People Performance is a Key Business Agenda

After having experienced the recessionary dip, most organizations are now increasingly focusing on productivity, profitability, growth, and competitiveness.

As organizations move towards the road to recovery, given the limited resources (both money and time), they need solid evidence that their actions will make a difference in enhancing the organization's performance. While they intuitively sense that the combination of strong talent and their alignment and engagement with the business, can provide a powerful edge in the marketplace, they also need to know how to best enable this.

## The linkage between Employee Engagement and Business Results

Organizational leaders have long believed in the importance of listening to their employees and improving em-

ployee satisfaction. Satisfaction data had some gaps, though. For one, the value of taking action on the survey results was unclear. Employees might be more satisfied if their suggestions were heeded, but would they be more motivated to perform? Would they be more dedicated to the organization? Perhaps even more importantly, satisfaction data didn't provide enough information to guide organizations on which investments would have the highest impact on employee motivation and, ultimately, on business results.

In 1994, Hewitt Associates pioneered the shift from measuring employee satisfaction to measuring employee engagement. Since then, we have conducted studies with more than 2,000 companies. Engagement is the energy, passion, that employees have for their employer or, more specifically, with what their employer is trying to achieve in the market.

We observe three key behaviors in employees that indicate high levels of employee engagement.

**Stay.** They have an intense desire to be members of the organization, thus saving money by eliminating costly turnover.

**Say.** They are passionate advocates for their workplace and business. They

### QUICK VIEW

- Three key behaviours that indicate high levels of employee engagement - Stay, Say and Strive
- Overwhelming evidence for correlation between employee engagement and total shareholder return among Indian companies
- There is also a huge degree of association between effective leadership and employee engagement
- Organizations need to invest in and develop the scarce leadership talent in order to drive employee engagement

refer potential employees and customers, thus reducing cost of hire and sale.

**Strive.** They go beyond what is minimally required to produce extraordinary services and results for customers and colleagues, thus creating competitive advantage for the company.

Hewitt Associates' research suggests that while one out of every two employees is engaged at work, engagement levels vary enormously across organizations - from highs of nearly 100% to lows in the teens. The average engagement score among Indian companies is 67% (read on an average 67% employees are engaged or committed to their organizations), whereas at Best Employers, average engagement is 88%.

Most importantly, our findings show that employee engagement is highly correlated with critical business measures, including total shareholder return (TSR), sales growth, employee turnover and retention, and productivity. Our research also shows that extraordinary companies that have an engagement score of 60% or higher have an average five-year TSR of greater than 20%; companies whose engagement is between 40% and 60% have only a 5.6% average TSR, and those where engagement is below 40% having an average TSR of -9.6%.

In short, we have evidence to support that employee engagement does drive results. In fact, our data suggests that engagement levels need to be at least 60% or higher to drive superior business results.

### Leadership Impact on Employee Engagement

While there are a number of reasons why employees are engaged or disengaged, one of the key factors is leadership. Effective Leadership styles have a positive impact on employee engagement and performance. Our research shows that 69% of variance in engagement is accounted for by effective leadership and 39% of variance in superior business results is accounted for by the level of employee engagement.

So what can leaders do to enhance employee engagement and performance? Our 'Best Employers' and 'Top Companies for Leaders' studies, as well as our deep understanding of what drives employee engagement, has thrown up some interesting insights.

### Leaders at the Best Companies

**Maintain high levels of personal engagement:** Leaders need to be engaged for them to build engagement levels of their teams. At Hewitt Best Employers (hereafter referred to as *The Best*), the senior leadership engagement score is more than 95%.

**Provide a clear and compelling future direction:** Leaders need to provide clear direction and generate excitement for the future. 83% of employees at *The Best* believe that their leadership team provides a clear vision and creates excitement for changes as against 67% at *the Rest*.

**Set high performance standards:** Employees at Best Companies are more satisfied with their leaders, and it's not because leaders are easier on employees or demand less. 75% of employees at *The Best* believe that their leaders set aggressive goals and address issues of poor performance as against 42% at *the Rest*.

**Are open, honest, trustworthy, and deliver on promises:** Decisions made by leaders need to be consistent with the organization's mission and values. Leaders need to appropriately balance employee interests with those of the organization, and openly communicate decisions.

**Treat employees as the most valued asset and invest in their development:** The Board and leaders of *The Best* are significantly more engaged in and take ownership of talent and leadership issues. They take time out to assess and develop the next generation of leaders, to understand their personal goals and development. 92% of *The Best* assign a significant portion of their people managers rewards to their capability to develop people as compared to 59% of *The Rest*.

### The Case for Leadership Development

Given that leaders play such an important role in impacting employee engagement, it becomes critical for organizations to ensure quality of their leadership talent. However leadership talent is scarce - most organizations today are experiencing a talent shortage in leadership skills, a gap which cannot be easily filled from the market. So the only option is for organizations to invest in developing and building a leadership pipeline from within. ■

“Research shows that extraordinary companies that have an engagement score of 60% or higher have an average five-year Total Shareholder Return of greater than 20%”



NEISHA LOBO



# Coaching for Change

A case study on how Coaching with Compassion can transform organizations as opposed to the traditional approach of Coaching for Compliance

■ BY RICHARD E. BOYATZIS | MELVIN SMITH | ELLEN VAN OOSTEN



RICHARD E. BOYATZIS



MELVIN SMITH



ELLEN VAN OOSTEN

**A**lthough he was Vice President of information technology at a mid-sized company, James<sup>1</sup> was confused about his future. He was doing quite well. Or at least it appeared he was. Having grown up in a poor neighborhood in a Midwest city, he did much better than most of his friends—he lived. He went to college and was about to complete an Executive MBA Program. James loved his daughters and had a significant investment account ready to pay for their college. He was divorced, but on amiable terms with his ex-wife and had a girl friend. He was devout in his faith, contributed his time eagerly to church projects, and was an advocate for Promise Keepers (a movement to encourage Fathers to keep their promises to their families and their God). So what was wrong?

When James looked into his future, beyond a few months, it was a blank wall. It did not worry him, consciously. Like heartburn, he ignored his lack of an image for his future and hoped the discomfort would go away. His personal vision essay was devoted entirely to his family and his faith. His coach asked him, “James, you didn’t mention anything about work in your essay about your future. Do you have trust funds that you didn’t mention?” He laughed, “No, I just thought I’d keep doing what I have been doing.” Trying to invoke his passion about the future, his coach probed, “What would you love to do?”

After a long silence, he shrugged his shoulders. It seemed incongruous, a well-dressed, effective executive acting like a teenager who does not know what they want to have as a major in college. His coach pushed, “If you won the Lottery, say \$80 million dollars after tax, what would you do?” He told him that maybe he would drive a truck cross-country. This seemed more like an escape fantasy than a dream. A few minutes later, in response to a question as to what would make

him feel truly happy that he was fulfilling his purpose in life, he said, “Teaching high school kids, in the inner city, that computers can be their instruments to freedom.”

Possibilities then opened up for James. He shared his dream that he could teach workshops on Saturdays or Fridays at local high schools. He talked about setting up IT internships for high school students at local companies. It was as if a dam had opened and ideas flooded his consciousness. He leaned forward and was talking faster than I’d heard him talk in months. The excitement was contagious you could feel it. James had an epiphany. His image of his “work” in the future changed him from “been there, done that” to “Wow, I can’t wait to get started.” James now had a dream—a clear one he could work toward. Two years later, he was actively in pursuit of his dreams. He was running computer workshops and programs for teens while continuing his consulting firm. He got an offer to coordinate an IT program, work full time as an administrator/faculty at a local community college. So when his firm offered a buy-out package as part of their downsizing, he took it.

In these uncertain and fearful times, many people around the world, like James are avoiding looking to their future and just trying to get by in the present, or tolerating their situation. It is a dysfunctional response to having a future a person dreams about. Unfortunately, those of us in the helping professions, like teachers, trainers, and coaches, are often adding to this blocking of the future. Managers doing performance reviews and trying to motivate a person to change and improve in the future are often committing the same act of ‘visionocide’. We are contributing to killing off people’s dreams and inhibiting their progress toward a more effective future. The source of the misdirected effort and less than desirable consequences lay in misunderstanding how people change.

“Managers doing performance reviews and trying to motivate a person to improve often commit the same act of ‘visionocide’”

**The Positive and Negative Emotional Attractors**

In his Intentional Change Theory, Boyatzis<sup>2</sup> explained that in pursuit of change or adaptation or in response to change or threat, people and our human systems move toward a Positive Emotional Attractor (PEA) or a Negative Emotional Attractor (NEA). Arousal of the NEA pulls the person into a stress-aroused state by arousing the Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS). This results in decreased cognitive functioning, decreasing perceptual openness, a severe drop in immune system functioning, and susceptibility to illnesses—not to mention that you feel nervous, anxious, worried, and in general not good.

In contrast, arousal of the PEA helps a person function at their best. Research in neuroscience, endocrinology, and psychology has shown that arousing a person’s hope for the future stimulates the Parasympathetic Nervous System (PSNS). This is the state in which the human mind and body is at its cognitive best, can create new neural tissue which allows for learning, engages the immune system, and enables the person to be more open to new ideas, feelings, and other people.<sup>3</sup>

To summarize, arousal of the PEA helps a person prepare for and engage in sustained, desired change. Arousal of the NEA does the opposite. It facilitates a person closing down and avoiding anything that might induce more stress. It is a defensive posture and invokes diminished capacity for adaptation because it is following an instinctive physiological reaction to chronic or acute prolonged stress to protect the organism. But while this might have helped us survive 10,000 years ago, it does not help us survive or thrive today.

**Coaching for Compassion**

Coaching James involved arousing his Positive Emotional Attractor through eliciting

When most of us try to help someone, **we often get seduced** into focusing on the things that need to be fixed, like a person’s weaknesses

**COMMON TRAPS TO AVOID**

To minimize the likelihood of sliding into coaching for compliance, there are a few common traps or seductions to avoid.

**Efficiency is important.** This leads to wanting to do the coaching quickly. It typically leads to a short term fix and impatience with the process. It also puts pressure on the person being coached to get on with the changes, adding pressure and stress. It arouses the NEA and results in the person coping and then closing down.

**Work on the weaknesses.** The desire for fast action can easily evolve into a premature focus on the weaknesses. The belief is that by working on the weaknesses you will have the most impact on the person improving. But that actually arouses the NEA and stops the change process.

**Data Drive the Motivation to Change.** Whether the data come from an assessment center, 360-degree feedback, or

climate survey, the data become the sledge hammer and invoke defensiveness and arousal of the NEA. We are all socialized to look for our weaknesses in today’s world. By offering the data too early in the coaching process, you seduce the person into looking at their weaknesses. Like our fascination with the tabloids, we focus first on the things most likely to hurt or be wrong—the gaps. But again, this drives us into the NEA. If any ideas for “change” do emerge, they are often a response to change agenda that’s externally driven.

**I Know What They Need.** This creates a major Ought Self push in the coaching and again arouses the NEA. When the coach thinks, he/she knows how the other person should change, the other person picks it up. Now compliance is in full swing—and the contagion of emotions is mostly defensive and NEA.

his dreams about the future, about possibilities, and arousing his hope.<sup>4</sup> It was the beginning of a process of helping James to articulate his personal vision.<sup>5</sup> This is what we call coaching with compassion. When you coach someone to their PEA, you arouse their PSNS with all of the enhanced cognitive and emotional functioning and ability to learn that is part of it.

Because of the contagion of emotions<sup>6</sup>, coaching with compassion arouses compassion in the coach, as well as in the person being coached. The physiological and emotional renewal processes (the only non-pharmaceutical antidote to the ravages of chronic stress) then allow the person to consider possibilities of change- and allow him/her to be more open to the coach and other people around them. James had pondered these issues before, but it was the compassionate and caring relationship with the coach that allowed him to break through to a new level of insight about his dreams and future possibilities. But this does not always happen.

### Coaching for Compliance

When most of us try to help someone, we often get seduced into focusing on the things that need to be fixed, like a person's weaknesses. In the process, we invoke the NEA and the body's stress reaction. The person being coached often feels on the defensive, feeling a need to justify or prove himself/herself. Or, the person feels that he/she should go along with the coach's desire for them to change some aspect of their behavior. In other words, the person being coached is pushed to move toward the coach's image of how he/she should behave. In this manner, we often slip into coaching for compliance.

Instead of invoking the person's Ideal Self, their dreams of a possible and desired future, the coach, manager, trainer, or teacher invokes the person's Ought Self.<sup>7</sup> That is, they stimulate the image of the person he/she ought to become. When this Ought Self is imposed and is not consistent with the person's Ideal Self, it arouses the SNS and contributes to the person closing down their mind and willingness to change. This is the opposite of what we can arouse and how we can help another person when we coach them with compassion.

Coaches often utilize feedback data from an assessment center or a 360-degree feedback assessment, and then proceed to analyze the weaknesses and gaps in the person's data. The coach then tries to get the

## Coaching with compassion is coaching for results

and sustained desired change, focusing on the person's vision of self

person to identify what they can do to change. Although the opposite to the coach's intention (that of helping the other person), the coach has aroused the NEA and diminished the person's ability to make sustainable change.

### What Next?

Life seems more exciting when we consider the possibilities and pursue them. This positive, hopeful state reflects internal physiological and emotional processes. We are actually healthier, more open, more capable of learning, and better able to cognitively function at a higher plane, when in this state. Coaching others with compassion arouses this in the coach and the person being coached. It is opposite of the state typically aroused in coaching for compliance. Coaching with compassion is coaching for results and sustained desired change. ■

### Footnotes

- 1 James is a pseudonym for a real person who prefers not to be identified.
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**Melvin L. Smith, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor of Organizational Behavior, Faculty Director, Executive Education - Case Western Reserve University Weatherhead School of Management;

**Ellen B. Van Oosten**, Senior Director, Business Development-Case/Weatherhead School of Management.

This article is based on the authors' research and writing for *Coaching at Work Magazine*

## HR Jobs

### Early Jobs

#### AM - Corporate Comm.

**Experience:** 2-5 Years  
**Profile:** Manage Corporate Communication. Experience in the same required.  
**Location:** Mumbai  
**Shine Job ID:** 90793

#### Sr. Exec - HR - Corporate

**Experience:** 2-4 Years  
**Profile:** Key areas of work - Manage Payroll, Recruitment, Training, Administration.  
**Location:** Delhi-NCR  
**Shine Job ID:** 89295

#### Training Coordinator

**Experience:** 1-3 Years  
**Profile:** Coordination at each stage of Training, Calendar Implementation, Vendor Management etc.  
**Location:** Mumbai  
**Shine Job ID:** 93484

#### Manager - HR

**Experience:** 1-3 Years  
**Profile:** Recruitment, Staffing, Training, Performance Appraisal etc.  
**Location:** Bangalore  
**Shine Job ID:** 89574

#### Associate - Recruitment

**Experience:** 0-2 Years  
**Profile:** Provide end to end recruitment solutions by realizing client's needs.  
**Location:** Delhi-NCR  
**Shine Job ID:** 91719

#### Payroll Executive

**Experience:** 0-1 Years  
**Profile:** Assisting Principal consultant, follow up of clients, maintaining data, payroll etc.  
**Location:** Pune  
**Shine Job ID:** 85011

#### Executive-HR

**Experience:** 0-1 Years  
**Profile:** Dealing in Recruitment and Staffing process.  
**Location:** Delhi-NCR  
**Shine Job ID:** 91054

#### HR - Trainee

**Experience:** 0-2 Years  
**Profile:** Exposure to different verticals/functions of HR Department.  
**Location:** Bangalore  
**Shine Job ID:** 89553

### Mid Level Jobs

#### Sr. Mgr-Performance Mgmt

**Experience:** 7-12 Years  
**Profile:** Monitor and manage the performance of personnel.  
**Location:** Mumbai  
**Shine Job ID:** 92161

#### Senior Head - HR

**Experience:** 6-10 Years  
**Profile:** Handling Head office functions and all recruitment.  
**Location:** Delhi-NCR  
**Shine Job ID:** 94092

#### Employee Training Mgr

**Experience:** 5-10 Years  
**Profile:** Manager required for conducting and supervising training across all levels.  
**Location:** Top Metros  
**Shine Job ID:** 89931

#### Manager - Talent Mgmt.

**Experience:** 6-9 Years  
**Profile:** Manager required by a leading BPO to supervise talent management.  
**Location:** Mumbai  
**Shine Job ID:** 88309

#### HR - SAP / ABAP

**Experience:** 3-6 Years  
**Profile:** Requirement of a HR Manager to look after SAP/ABAP.  
**Location:** Bangalore, Kolkata  
**Shine Job ID:** 94280

#### Manager - Recruitment

**Experience:** 3-6 Years  
**Profile:** Need a dynamic person to manage all recruitment.  
**Location:** Bangalore  
**Shine Job ID:** 92156

#### Communication Mgr

**Experience:** 3-5 Years  
**Profile:** Prepare and disseminate information of organization thru all media; manage PR activities  
**Location:** Delhi-NCR  
**Shine Job ID:** 90055

#### Manager - HR

**Experience:** 3-11 Years  
**Profile:** HR Manager to look after administration and recruitment  
**Location:** Delhi-NCR  
**Shine Job ID:** 88137



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## Senior Jobs

### AVP - HR

**Experience:** 12-22 Years  
**Profile:** Responsibilities include forming HR Policies, PMS, Employee Management, Talent Acquisition.  
**Location:** Mumbai  
**Shine Job ID:** 92643

### AVP - HR

**Experience:** 11-21 Years  
**Profile:** Leading BPO looking for AVP - HR. Key responsibilities - HR, Talent Management, Career Planning  
**Location:** Pune  
**Shine Job ID:** 92631

### Head HR & IR

**Experience:** 10-15 Years  
**Profile:** Requirement of a professional with proven track record to Head HR & IR.  
**Location:** Pune  
**Shine Job ID:** 91631

### Head - Recruitment

**Experience:** 10-14 Years  
**Profile:** Looking for a dynamic person to Head the Recruitment Division  
**Location:** Delhi-NCR  
**Shine Job ID:** 87557

### HR Generalist

**Experience:** 10-14 Years  
**Profile:** Responsible for all HR processes and manpower planning.  
**Location:** Delhi-NCR  
**Shine Job ID:** 88477

### Head - HR

**Experience:** 8-13 Years  
**Profile:** Leading Telecom company looking for HR head for north india.  
**Location:** Delhi-NCR  
**Shine Job ID:** 88254

### AGM/Regional Mgr - HR

**Experience:** 10-16 Years  
**Profile:** Post Graduate Degree / Dip.(2yrs full time) in Personnel Mgmt / Social Work from a reputed Univ.  
**Location:** Delhi-NCR  
**Shine Job ID:** 88574

### Recruitment Mgr / Head

**Experience:** 10-13 Years  
**Profile:** Handling the entire recruitment process of the company.  
**Location:** Chennai  
**Shine Job ID:** 88212

## Top Management Jobs

### Keystone Group of Institutions



**Principal/Director/Dean**  
**Experience:** 15-25 Years  
**Profile:** Candidate with prior exp. of establishing/running an Engg./MBA institute is preferred  
**Location:** Other Rajasthan  
**Shine Job ID:** 79229

### International Quality Management System



**President - HR**  
**Experience:** 18-24 Years  
**Profile:** To head the HR function of a fortune 500 company.  
**Location:** Multiple Locations  
**Shine Job ID:** 79459

### Lighthouse Partners



**COO / VP - Operations**  
**Experience:** 15-20 Years  
**Profile:** Responsibilities include development of Sales & Distribution & Marketing Plan.  
**Location:** Top Metros  
**Shine Job ID:** 87934

### Aastra Systems India Pvt Ltd



**General Manager**  
**Experience:** 20-25 Years  
**Profile:** 20+ years of experience in Weldshop & maintainance activities for Thermal Power Plants.  
**Location:** Delhi-NCR  
**Shine Job ID:** 87142

### Maverick Consulting

#### Maverick Consulting

**CEO**  
**Experience:** 10-25 Years  
**Profile:** FMCG/F&B reputed firm requires a CEO to head the entire organization.  
**Location:** Top Metros  
**Shine Job ID:** 88346

### Matrix HR Solutions Ltd.

#### Matrix HR Solutions Ltd.

**Vice President - Marketing**  
**Experience:** 15-20 Years  
**Profile:** A Real Estate firm requires a VP to handle the marketing function of the organization  
**Location:** Delhi-NCR  
**Shine Job ID:** 90213



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**Sr. Manager Administration**

**Company:** Kumar Group of Industries  
**Qualification:** Diploma in Personal Management/ MBA HR.  
**Exp:** 10-15  
**Location:** Rudrapur  
**Email:** applyatkgi@gmail.com

**HR Director**

**Company:** Bhargav Associates  
**Qualification:** Management Graduate having experience in Hotel Industry.  
**Exp:** 10-20  
**Location:** Bengaluru/Bangalore  
**Email:** bhargassociates@gmail.com

**Head HR**

**Company:** Miles Software Solutions Pvt Ltd  
**Qualification:** MBA in HR.  
**Exp:** 12-14  
**Location:** Mumbai  
**Email:** hr@imilesoft.com

**HR Manager**

**Company:** Ramsol Pvt Ltd  
**Qualification:** Regular MBA/ MSW Graduate.  
**Exp:** 8-10  
**Location:** Chennai  
**Email:** kathir@ramsol.co.in

**Administrative Officer**

**Company:** Jindal Naturecure Institute  
**Qualification:** Any Graduate having experience in administration.  
**Exp:** 8-12  
**Location:** Bengaluru/Bangalore  
**Email:** hr@jindalaluminium.com

**Manager - Payroll**

**Company:** Shreya Life Sciences Pvt. Ltd.  
**Qualification:** Any Graduate having experience in the similar field of operations.  
**Exp:** 8-10  
**Location:** Mumbai  
**Email:** pravinshetty@shreya.co.in

**Sr Manager - HR**

**Company:** TTK Prestige  
**Qualification:** Masters in Social Work/ MBA/ PG in HR discipline with Law Degree.  
**Exp:** 15-20  
**Location:** Hosur  
**Email:** big@ttkprestige.com

**Administrator**

**Company:** bebo Technologies Pvt. Ltd.  
**Qualification:** Post Graduate having experience in educational setup.  
**Exp:** 10-15  
**Location:** Chandigarh  
**Email:** chdjobs@bebotechnologies.com

**Manager - HR**

**Company:** Clarks Inn Group Hotels  
**Qualification:** MBA Graduate having experience as Manager in the Hotel Industry.  
**Exp:** 10-12  
**Location:** Delhi  
**Email:** fincorp@clarksinn.in

**HR Head**

**Company:** Bandhan  
**Qualification:** Post Graduate with specialization in HR.  
**Exp:** 10-16  
**Location:** Kolkata  
**Email:** csghosh@bandhanmf.com

**Manager - Talent Acquisition**

**Company:** Karle Group Of Companies  
**Qualification:** PG Degree holder - MBA/ MSW.  
**Exp:** 8-10  
**Location:** Bengaluru/Bangalore  
**Email:** jobs@karlegroup.com

**Manager Administration**

**Company:** Spanco BPO Services Ltd  
**Qualification:** Graduate/ Management Graduate.  
**Exp:** 8-12  
**Location:** Coimbatore  
**Email:** gajendras@spancobpo.com

**Dy. General Manager - HR**

**Company:** Soma Enterprise Ltd  
**Qualification:** MBA or equivalent PG in HR having experience in the Construction Industry.  
**Exp:** 15-20  
**Location:** Gurgaon  
**Email:** career@soma.co.in

**Manager HR**

**Company:** Wockhardt Ltd  
**Qualification:** Any Graduate with MBA (HR)/ Diploma (HR)/ Diploma IRPM,MSW,MLW.  
**Exp:** 8-10  
**Location:** Aurangabad  
**Email:** hrdaman@wockhardt.in.com

**Sr. Manager - Admin**

**Company:** Nitco Ltd  
**Qualification:** Any Graduate or PG/ MBA.  
**Exp:** 10-20  
**Location:** Navi Mumbai  
**Email:** siddharthambiar@nitcotiles.com



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# HR Jobs



## Manager - HR

**Company:** Sudarshan Chemical Industries Ltd

**Qualification:** MBA/MPW/PGDHR

**Exp:** 8-10

**Location:** Pune

**Email:** careers@sudarshan.com

## Manager - HR

**Company:** Ornam Consultants Pvt. Ltd.

**Qualification:** Post Graduate with MBA Degree preferably in HR.

**Exp:** 9-14

**Location:** Delhi/NCR

**Email:** jobs@ornamconsultants.com

## General Manager - IR & Administration

**Company:** Marg Ltd

**Qualification:** Will be responsible for Personnel Management at site.

**Exp:** 15-20

**Location:** Karaikal

**Email:** neerajabose@marggroup.com

## Sr. Manager - IR

**Company:** Best & Crompton Engineering Ltd

**Qualification:** Will be responsible for heading the IR function of the Plant.

**Exp:** 10-15

**Location:** Chennai

**Email:** kanchana@beaconweir.co.in

## Asst. Manager - Talent Acquisition

**Company:** Sai Sudhir Infrastructures Ltd

**Qualification:** Should have experience in talent acquisition in infra sector.

**Exp:** 10-15

**Location:** Hyderabad/Secunderabad

**Email:** hr@saisudhirinfra.net

## General Manager HR

**Company:** Operational Energy Group India pvt Ltd.

**Qualification:** Should have experience in HR Generalist profile in a Power Industry.

**Exp:** 10-20

**Location:** Chennai

**Email:** damodaran@oegindia.com

## Asst General Manager - HR & IR

**Company:** Zen Network solutions

**Qualification:** Candidate must have experience in HR & IR.

**Exp:** 10-19

**Location:** Visakhapatnam

**Email:** gomthi.ks@gmail.com

## Manager HR

**Company:** Ashirbad Group Of Companies

**Qualification:** Experience in HR/ Admin/ IR / Personnel Management in Service Sector.

**Exp:** 10-12

**Location:** Delhi

**Email:** hrdmanager@ashirbadmail.com

## Factory Incharge

**Company:** Safechem Industries

**Qualification:** Ex-serviceman having experience of Factory administration.

**Exp:** 10-15

**Location:** Kolkata

**Email:** graham@safed-detergents.com

## TOP HR JOBS

### General Manager - Admin

**Company:** Paradigm India

**Qualification:** Any Graduate or PG having experience in handling Administration in Manufacturing Industries/ Plants.

**Exp:** 18-25

**Location:** Bhuj

**Email:** careers.paradigm@gmail.com

### Lady Welfare Officer

**Company:** Hyderabad Race Club

**Qualification:** Retired Teacher/ Retired Lady candidate should be a Graduate having HR background.

**Exp:** 20-30

**Location:** Hyderabad/Secunderabad

**Email:** secyhrc@yahoo.co.in

### General Manager HR

**Company:** Paradigm India

**Qualification:** MBA/MSW having exposure in handling Plants & Corporate HR desirable.

**Exp:** 16-20

**Location:** Dadra & Nagar Haveli/Silvassa

**Email:** careers.paradigm@gmail.com

### Asst. Vice President - HR

**Company:** Glodyne Technoserve Ltd

**Qualification:** Will be responsible for handling Business/Strategic & Operational HR function.

**Exp:** 15-20

**Location:** Mumbai

**Email:** piyush.thuain@glodyne.com

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# KNOWLEDGE & NETWORKING



## India Business Summit

The first annual U.S. – India Business Summit (UIBS) was held on May 10-11, 2010, at the Cobb Galleria Center, Atlanta. The summit was filled with a smorgasbord of conferences on technology, agribusiness, renewable energy sources, healthcare, infrastructure, finance and real estate. Compelling and thought provoking arguments were presented by a host of dignitaries and business leaders, with a mission of Growing Business and Promoting Entrepreneurship. In the course of its two-day event, UIBS programmed an awards banquet with His Excellency Consul General Sanjiv Aurora and the Honorable Ken

Stewart, Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Economic Development on May 10. Packed with business sessions, the summit also brought together passionate visionaries, trailblazing entrepreneurs, committed policymakers and ardent investors. “Person of The Year” and “Company of the Year” were also given away during the event. The winners for Person of the Year Award were Dr. A.K. Pradeep of NeuroFocus and Dr. Sudhir M. Parikh of Parikh Worldwide for their outstanding leadership and achievements in business. Company of the Year Award for promoting business between the USA and India was given to NCR Corporation.

## 3rd Business Responsibility Summit

All Indian Management Association (AIMA) presented the 3rd Business Responsibility Summit focusing on the theme “Creating a New Consciousness for Responsible Business: Insights for India Inc” on 14-15 May 2010 at Hotel Lalit, New Delhi. The Summit deliberated on the need, relevance and ways of creating a new consciousness for businesses to conduct themselves in a responsible manner. Mr Bharat Wakhlu, Resident Director, Tata Group lead this initiative as Summit Director. The two day programme featured best minds from the world of business and management education who deliberated some key issues that pose the greatest challenges for Business, Civil Society and Government in the current times. Over 200 professionals from across India participated in the Summit.

## The Leadership Festival

The Leadership Festival was organized by **Emmpower** in Bangalore on 22nd May 2010. The event saw participations from leadership teams of organizations, business unit managers, HR heads, HR professionals, training managers, people managers, management consultants and many more. The focus of the event was on Leadership in today’s scenario. There were brainstorming sessions on Leadership Concerns from the delegates and Possible Solutions and some value addition sessions on Handling Fear for today’s Leadership and Addressing Health and Fitness for today’s corporate lifestyles and performance.

## Workshop on Benchmarking of HR practices

The Confederation of Indian Industry organized a Workshop on Benchmarking of HR practices on 24 May 2010 in Gurgaon. The Workshop was conducted by Major General (Retd) N.K.Dhir and the participants included Senior Managers responsible for designing and implementing HR policies. It covered a lot of areas of benchmarking such as selection of subject for benchmarking,

defining the process of benchmarking including parameters to be compared, identifying data sources in the organizational processes, gaining ‘buy-in’ from the partners, determining the gaps and establishing process differences, how to present the findings, targeting future performance etc.

## Retaining Talent – Role of Leadership

National HRD Delhi Chapter organized its first Special Monthly Event titled “Retaining Talent – Role of Leadership” on 2nd June 2010 in New Delhi. To begin the re-strengthening of threads that bind talent to organizations, the first Special Event was designed to discuss the roles that leaders must play and adopt in maintaining and building their ‘talent’ and awaken to the importance of having skilled and engaged people delivering results. Some of the eminent speakers present at the program were Mr. Sunil Wadhwa, CEO & Executive Director, North Delhi Power Limited (NDPL), Ms. Jayantika Dave, Vice-President, Human Resources at Ingersoll Rand International (India) Ltd and Dr. Anup K Singh, Professor- Human Resource & Organizational Behaviour, International Management Institute.

## Programme on Integral Leadership

The Confederation of Indian Industry organized a Programme on ‘Integral Leadership’ on 4-5 June 2010 in Mumbai. The objective of the program was to learn to co-create creative, vibrant and open managerial behavior that enhances and unfolds the spirit of Innovation and Leadership in the day-to-day business connect. The event focused on a number of things which included creating the perpetual learner/doer – the leader as a learner, inspiring conversations: the arts of deep, creative, systemic listening; authentic speaking and unfolding questions – gateways to manifest organizational transformation, and it also touched upon mentoring and coaching as the ‘ruling lines’ of systemic leadership. ■

For more details on events and trainings please visit [www.peoplesmatters.in/events](http://www.peoplesmatters.in/events) or connect with Rekha Choudhary at [rekha.c@peoplesmatters.in](mailto:rekha.c@peoplesmatters.in)

# UPCOMING EVENTS

Events	Dates	Location	Offered By
First Public Sector Enterprises Summit	9 June 10	New Delhi	Confederation of Indian Industry
Bangalore HR Exchange: 2010 Leadership Forum	10 June 10	Bangalore	Kenexa
Leadership Challenges in an Era of Turbulence	10 June 10	New Delhi	All Indian Management Association
The Indian Human Resource Convention 2010	12 June 10	Bangalore	Tackyon
HR Next	14 - 16 June 10	Hyderabad	SHRM
An Appreciation of Culture based HR Strategy	25 June 10	Mumbai	National HRD
62nd SHRM Annual Conference & Exposition	27 - 30 June 10	San Diego, California	SHRM
HR Conclave 2010 "Towards Excellence in HR"	23 July 10	New Delhi	Confederation of Indian Industry
Building Excellence Through Leadership	23 July 10	Secunderabad	All Indian Management Association
HR Summit 2010	28 - 29 July 10	Chennai	NASSCOM

**Note:** Please note that this list is not exhaustive. We update this information on a regular basis. Please visit our website [www.peoplematters.in/](http://www.peoplematters.in/) events for more information on events. If you wish to share information about upcoming events, please email Rekha Choudhary at [rekha.c@peoplematters.in](mailto:rekha.c@peoplematters.in)

# TRAINING PROGRAMS

*People Matters* aim to bring updated information about training programme available in the areas of Leadership and People Management. This is not an exhaustive list and we are always on the look out for outstanding programs, please mail us at [editorial@peoplematters.in](mailto:editorial@peoplematters.in) to share more learning opportunities with the rest of the readers.

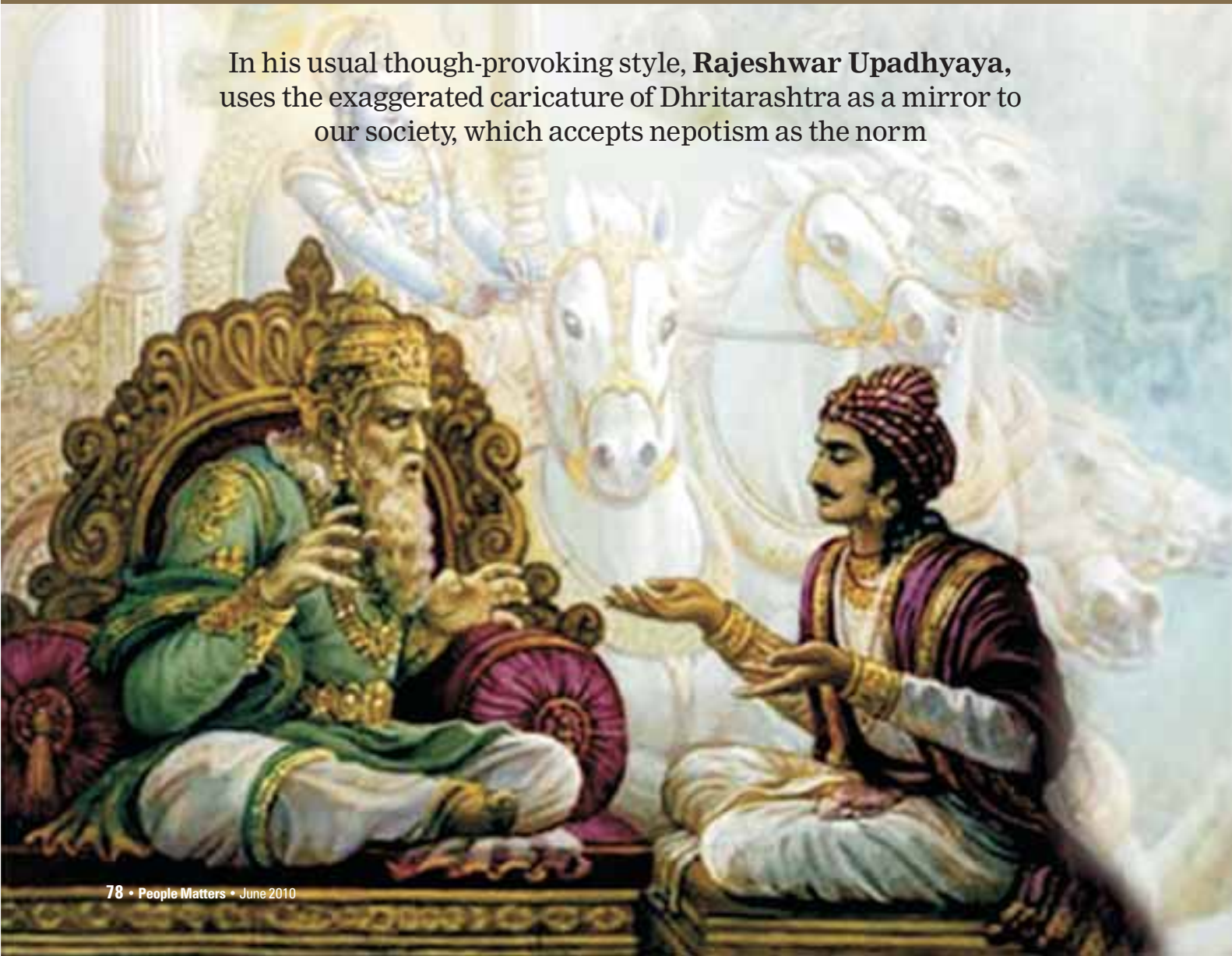
Training Program	Dates	Location	Offered By
Gen Next	10 - 12 June 10	Mumbai	Dale Carnegie
Workshop on Roadmap to Success	11 - 12 June 10	New Delhi	All Indian Management Association
Management Development Program on "Distinct Leadership"	11-12 June 10	Bangalore	Bangalore Management Academy
Workshop on HR Competency Framework	12 June 10	Chandigarh	National HRD
Benchmark Six Sigma Green Belt Training	16 - 19 June 10	Mumbai	Benchmark Six Sigma
Workshop on Enhancing Human Resource Development Through A Business Excellence Approach	18 - 19 June 10	Mumbai	Confederation of Indian Industry
Leadership Training for Managers	18 - 20 June 10	New Delhi	Dale Carnegie
Workshop on An Appreciation of Culture Based HR Strategy	25 June 10	Mumbai	National HRD
Workshop on Training the Trainers	30 June - 3 July	Goa	All Indian Management Association

Companies who wish to enlist their training programs or advertise with us may contact Rahul Singh at [rahul.singh@peoplematters.in](mailto:rahul.singh@peoplematters.in) or call +91 (0) 124 4304133

# The Self Destructive Imperative of Nepotism

Dhritarashtra, the Mahabharata and Cultural Failures

In his usual thought-provoking style, **Rajeshwar Upadhyaya**, uses the exaggerated caricature of Dhritarashtra as a mirror to our society, which accepts nepotism as the norm



In the Mahabharata, there is one person who had the power to prevent the inevitable catastrophe of the final battle at Kurukshetra. He never exercises this power. Contrary to popular belief, this person was not Krishna. The only person with a realistic chance of preventing war, at least almost until the bitter end, was the Kaurava king Dhritarashtra. His physical blindness has always been recognized as a metaphor of his willful emotional blindness, his complete unwillingness to either face reality or accept responsibility for the tragic events that continually unfolded during his reign. It was leadership derailment at a spectacular level and his only feeble justification was his love for his sons, but especially for the eldest Duryodhana. Knowing full well his sons were greedy, unprincipled and out of control he went along with their power grab, not because he was attached to his throne, but solely because they were his sons. He was fully cognizant that he was being unfair to his brother's children, the Pandavas. He agonized at length about the wickedness he was collaborating in, but he never put a stop to it. Nepotism always won out, and in the end he had the humiliating experience of surviving on the charity of those he had wronged.

It is absurd to note how many times he accepts guilt in the pages of the epic. Knowing full well he is doing wrong he nevertheless goes along. It is Duryodhana who articulates this remarkably self-aware sentiment – “Knowing the good I ignore it; knowing the bad I still follow it. My svabhava, inherent nature, is thus.”- but the lesson had been learnt from his father. When his sons were dying like flies before the justifiable wrath of Bheema, his self-pitying soliloquies no longer evoked any sympathy from his listeners. His confidant and factotum, Sanjaya brutally speaks truth to power in one of Ancient India's most extraordinary passages. “Why do you weep now? All your well wishers and advisors had asked you to reign in your headstrong and greedy son. You spoke harshly to them, ignoring Bheesma who is the wisest as well as your grandsire. You ignored Drona who is the greatest teacher in the land. You banished Vidura for a while, and he is both your brother as well as the greatest minister in all of the culture. Even I remonstrated with you and so did your wife

Gandhari. To all of us you made it clear that the only thing that matters to you is your son and his ambition. This catastrophe is solely your fault and if you think anybody will mourn for your loss, you are deluding yourself.” What is astonishing is that the blind king meekly accepts this rebuke, acknowledges its truth and goes back to rooting for his sons' improbable victory. He was incorrigible in his nepotism.

Here is a provocative thought. In India we profess admiration for the Pandavas, but in practice we follow the Kauravas. This may not be universally true, but it is substantially so. Nepotism was and remains a core cultural imperative. It is a default psychological setting, and the need to cater for it may account for the incomplete social project of modernization. As the depressing example of the epic shows, it is an ancient and enduring imperative. What is important is that nepotism is not regarded as a problem normally – not until it bars something you wish to access. The acceptance of ‘dynastic politics’ as a normal social phenomenon instead of as a bizarre aberration in what is nominally a democratic polity is a tribute to the enduring power of the nepotism imperative. Justifications and rationalizations that are offered up in defence of nepotism, “the India way” excuse seem not to take into account the immense social losses that occur in having to negotiate such institutional barriers. To put it bluntly, this is a mindset that is medieval; utilizing it as a paradigm for living in the modern world is to risk living in permanent schizophrenia. It is not impossible; it is merely adding burdens to an already difficult existence.

**The acceptance of ‘dynastic politics’ as a normal social phenomenon instead of as a bizarre aberration is a tribute to the enduring power of nepotism**

## Vidura was praised hugely for his wisdom and quietly ignored. He could have been living in contemporary times

The 'unfairness' aspect of nepotism does not seem to hold much water, for like Dhritarashtra everybody is perfectly happy if it is fair to my family! What is unacknowledged is the pervasive bitterness and resentment that seeps into the social sphere when such a value system is privileged. The acknowledgement that life can be unfair seems to have been internalized into a conviction that life has to be unfair. In such a scenario, any personal advantage that can be extracted trumps any social responsibility that may be vaguely felt. It is fundamentally a pessimistic approach to life, a lack of trust in social systems to provide adequately for one's aims in life. The subtext to nepotism is a sense of enmity between the self and society; it is a seeking of security, a mental regress into childish fears. Dhritarashtra knew full well that there was enough power and pelf for his children and their cousins but as Mohandas Gandhi correctly observed, "There is always enough for people's need, but never enough for their greed."

At yet another level, nepotism is the refusal to accept social responsibility until one's personal ambitions have been fulfilled. The blind king openly acknowledged that Yudhishtara would have been a better ruler than his son, both for the people and the kingdom, but in the end, society got the dirty end of the deal so long as his son was gratified. When Duryodhana was born he brayed like a donkey, an inauspicious omen and a disturbed Vidura articulates ancient India's vision as to what should be done with a social menace. "For the sake of a family an individual may be abandoned. For the sake of a village a family may be given up. For the sake of the district we can lose the village; for the country, the district and for the World an entire country. But for the sake of Dhar-

ma, the moral and ethical norms that sustain society, the very Earth indeed may be given up."

Vidura was praised hugely for his wisdom and quietly ignored. He could have been living in contemporary times.

This is therefore a more demanding challenge in our environment; the compulsions of a collective society where the family is the unit of trust and tolerance. Family owned organizations want to keep the actual reigns of control in the hands of family members. And it is not entirely rare that a 28 year old son of the promoter of a large Indian company immediately upon returning from an American university heads an organization and compels deference from the rest of the staff whose experience and professionalism exceed his own by far. His learning curve becomes the organization's bottleneck and personal likes and dislikes drive the restructuring imperative. This furthers mealy-mouthed deference and an inability to differ from the 'leadership'; or even offer an alternate perspective. Obedience and compliance kicks in irrational levels of fear and respect thus reinforcing the feudal ethos where loyalty is more important than performance.

Some organizations have struggled with the issue of professionalising themselves and have experienced varying levels of success. It is common argument that professionals do not truly have any real stake in the success of the business. They can be 'head' hunted and like salivating mercenaries they will join, lead and make successful the very organization he was competing with till yesterday. Whereas the truth in this can be debated, the sentiment is unwavering. This deepens the original need to 'interfere' and trust only kin. The promoters feel the need to ever so often step in and 'make' the right decisions on behalf of the professionals. Nepotism reinforced. Everyone knows the final controls lie elsewhere. And all future decisions must be made keeping that in mind. There is diminishing returns logic in the benefits of nepotism. Dhritarashtra is an exaggeration of that failure. The purpose of exaggeration is not falsification rather visibility.

To make visible what would otherwise escape notice. So that more optimal action may follow. And yet, the exceptions to the norm are numerous enough to render the norm redundant. ■

**Rajeshwar Upadhyaya**, Director, Par Excellence.  
He can be reached at [rajeshwar@parexcellence.org](mailto:rajeshwar@parexcellence.org)



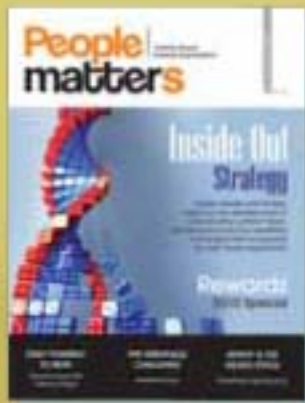
# Make Your Business Stand Out



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