

people matters

VOL V / ISSUE 2 / FEBRUARY 2014

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Best Employers 2.0

Aon Hewitt's India 2013 Study

Aon Hewitt's Best Employers Study, in partnership with **People Matters**, provides insights on best practices in talent management



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The perfect team

The aim of the CEO and his HR team is inevitably linked. While the HR function touches every individual in the organization, the CEO is the one person responsible for keeping all the functions aligned and steering them in the right direction. HR is the channel that can make or break these vital connections between the CEO and the individuals. In my interactions with many HR leaders, I have come to realize that the quality of the work that HR does in an organization is a reflection of how a CEO sees his/her role as a leader of people and culture.

That perfect partnership is what you always see in best employers. The HR team works with the business (as opposed to “for the business”) to achieve its business results. It is responsible to execute the talent strategy and focus on results (as opposed to “intent”) and works with a purpose (as opposed to “programs and activities”). These CEOs know that talent is not only the starting point of growth and sustainability, but also the answer to competitiveness.

In this issue, we cover the winners of the Aon Hewitt’s Best Employers 2.0 – India 2013 Study. These companies are examples of how the CEO and the HR work as a perfect team with one aligned objective. This special issue highlights the best practices of the top 17 winning companies on how they look at employee engagement, build a compelling employer brand, focus on leadership and build a high performance culture.

This month is also a very special one for the HR community in India as we reveal the

Are You In The List 2013 Awards for emerging young HR leaders. For over seven months, more than 100 senior HR professionals across India have contributed with their time in selecting the top winners from a 1,400-candidate pool. A community effort that has become a movement and has brought together all generations in HR with just one purpose: To bring pride and energy to the HR function.

Another special feature we have is the Big Interview with D. Shivakumar, the Chairman & CEO – India Region of PepsiCo, who talked about leadership and followership, creating a culture of mentorship and his concept of culture. We also have an article on Global Thought Leader Dr Ram Charan’s thoughts on what it takes to be a leader in uncertain times. Entrepreneurship is a journey on its own and not many succeed in it. We have featured interviews with two different but successful entrepreneurs, Vinita Ananth of GitGrow and Annabelle Diamantino of Video Recruit, each talking about her experiences of growing a company.

We have also interviewed Sara Roberts, Head of Talent & Recruitment, Asia Pacific, Citi, who tells us why it is important that people managers have the right tools to deal with people issues. The art of HR decision making is actually a science. In order to explore this, *People Matters* in collaboration with Towers Watson had conducted a round table on Transformative HR. In this issue, we showcase the learnings from the same on how rigor and science can be brought into HR decision-making through evidence-based change.

We congratulate the winners of Aon Hewitt’s Best Employers - India 2013 Study and we thank the CEOs and the HR Heads for their time and continuous support.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue like the others. Comments and feedback are welcome and we would love to hear what you have to say about this issue.

Happy reading!

Esther Martinez Hernandez EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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AON HEWITT'S
BEST EMPLOYERS
RESEARCH, IN PART-
NERSHIP WITH PEOPLE
MATTERS, PROVIDES
INSIGHTS ON BEST
PRACTICES IN TALENT
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- BY **AJAY SONI** AND
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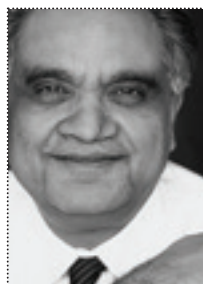


THE BIG INTERVIEW

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Great leaders are great followers

D. Shivakumar
Chairman & CEO - India Region,
PepsiCo



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Leadership in turbulent times

Dr Ram Charan
Global Thought Leader

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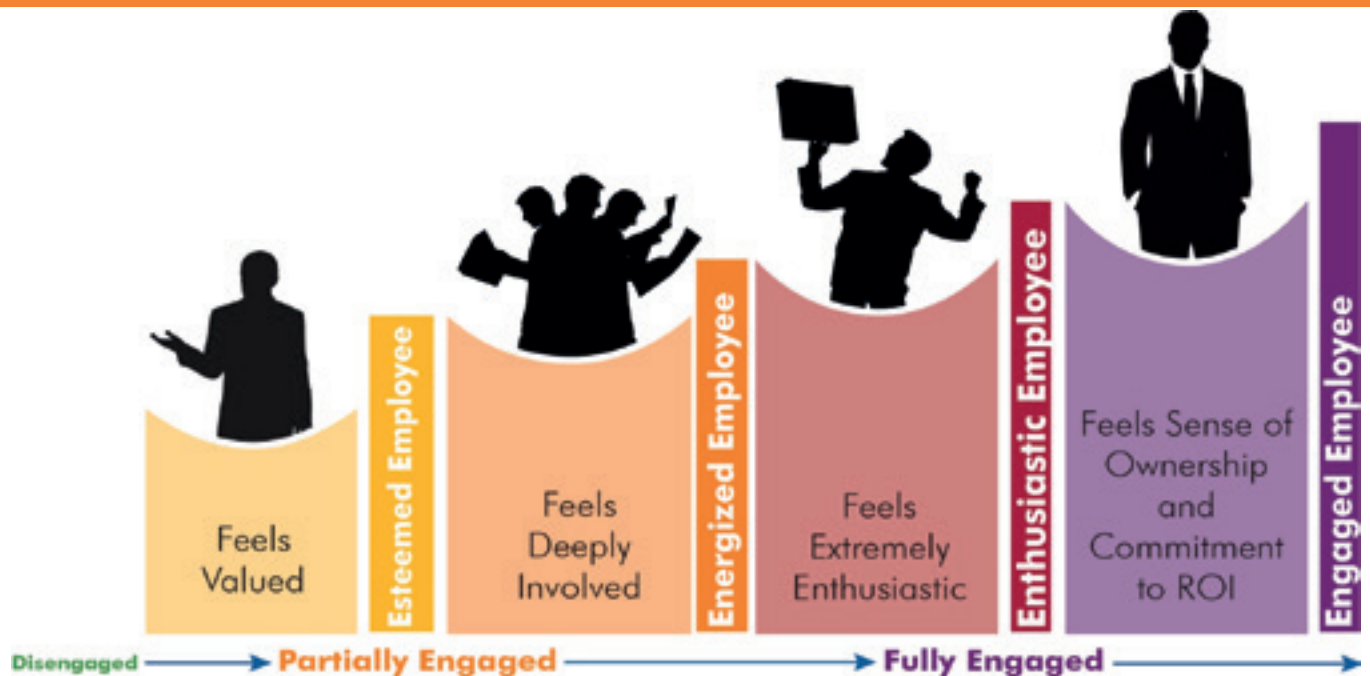
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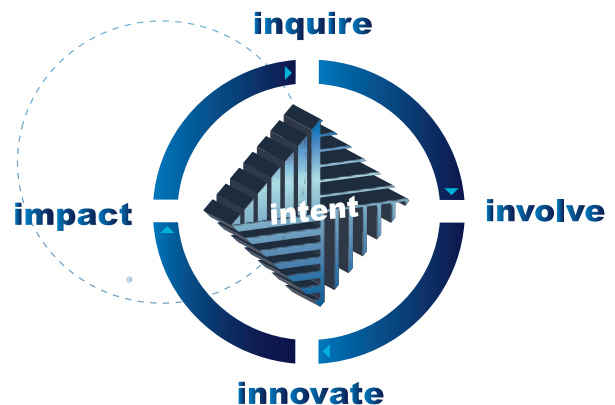


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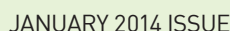


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Being the first cover story of 2014, this one is very relevant as we all try to figure out our own focus areas for the year ahead. While different organizations would have different agendas, this story covers almost everything from employee relations to talent, engagement to strategy and a futuristic approach to HR becoming a strategic partner to businesses. It has something to offer to each and every one!

- JAYANTI NATARAJAN

A really meaningful and interesting way of looking at the bundle of focus points for HR in 2014, as a single agenda cannot suffice. Dave Ulrich has a valid point in saying that it's not easy to pick up just one, instead it has to be a combination. Also, the 'outside in' approach is a completely new outlook, that with attention and execution would really help HR grow as a strategic partner to any business. Thanks for this interesting read!

-VIVEK CHOUDHURY

-VIVEK CHOUDHURY

Thanks for writing this... it's amazing. I liked all the five steps. I would recommend it as a must read to everyone. And yes this is the time we need to ponder over and plan for the next.

- ASHVIN

- ASHVIN

It is really not quite rewarding to be dutiful

- SARVNIK



Apropos “Engage the employee with the right rewards” (January 2014)
Rewarding top performer is not as easy as it appears.
 Rewards should have tangible and intangible components in good ratio as some prefer intangible over the tangible component. Identifying the need of each employee is the challenge for HR

- MOHIT KUMAR



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Columns by Ed Lawler and Dave Ulrich!

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others, walking your talk, being passionate
my take aways from it

Sunder Ramachandran @sundertrg
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[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E-XDdl6YUE4 ...](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E-XDdl6YUE4...)

Pankaj Bansal @PankajBansalPB
T90: 2013 has been great for #HR
#Entrepreneurship @PeopleMatters2
launched digital platform

Sudipa Sinha @Sudipasinha
An animated timeline of the history of HR.Very Interesting :) <http://bit.ly/Lp03Tu#>.
UrbaMVknI7E.twitter... via @PeopleMatters2

Kamal Karanth A @Kamalkaranth
The most cost-efficient way of #hiring
<http://bit.ly/LoZXez#.UqFRzAt4a0Q.twitter>
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#VideoInterview #areyouinthelist
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Rajesh Lele @rajeshlele
@PeopleMatters2.. Point well made.. Does L&D build a #culture of curiosity or culture of compliance? #enablelearning

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TURBULENT DAYS

Jet Airways CEO quits within six months



JET AIRWAYS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CEO) Gary Toomey quit with immediate effect mid-January, six months after taking charge of India's second largest domestic airline, Business Standard reported. The airline informed the stock exchanges Chief Finance Officer (CFO) Ravishankar Gopalakrishnan would be the acting CEO till the airline made a new appointment. Toomey, a former Qantas CFO, joined the airline two months after Etihad took 24 per cent stake Jet Airways.

An Australian, he was associated as a consultant with Etihad before taking up the top job at Jet. He replaced Nikos Kardassis, who left the airline after serving two terms as CEO between 1993 and 1999 and October 2009 and May 2013. Toomey's contract allowed him to work from Australia for two weeks after a month in India. "He wanted to spend time with his family, who did not want to come to India. A CEO has to be on the ground like a general with his troops. The airline business requires 24x7 attention," said a Jet Airways source. Another factor behind the resignation was his differences with Chairman Naresh Goyal. Speculation is rife Air Seychelles CEO Cramer Ball will be the new CEO. Ball, a former regional manager (Asia-Pacific) of Etihad, took over the top post at Air Seychelles after Etihad picked up a stake in the former. An Air Seychelles spokesperson said Ball was "very much the CEO of Air Seychelles".

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

EPFO raises interest rate to 8.75%

THE EMPLOYEES' PROVIDENT FUND ORGANIZATION (EPFO) proposed to raise the interest rate on the lifetime savings of nearly 50 million formal sector workers to 8.75 per cent from 8.5 per cent.

The central board of trustees, the apex decision making body of EPFO, said the higher interest rate will not be "beyond its means". EPFO's estimated income in the current fiscal is Rs 20,796.96 crore, which can cover the higher interest liability. Analysts said a higher interest rate will help appease organized workers ahead of the general elections due in April-May. EPFO also decided to increase the maximum benefit under the Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme to 1.56 lakh from 1.3 lakh, even as it has commissioned an "urgent" actuarial valuation of the scheme. Besides managing retirement funds, EPFO may also come out with a scheme to provide housing to its 5 crore subscribers on additional contribution of 10 per cent by them from their basic wages every month.



EXPENSIVE SACKING

Yahoo! CEO Mayer fires her first major hire

YAHOO! COO HENRIQUE DE CASTRO has left, effective January, according to Yahoo!. In an email to Yahoo! employees from CEO Marissa Mayer, she makes



Marissa Mayer

it clear that she's firing Castro. The key sentence from Mayer's email was: "During my own reflection, I made the difficult decision that our COO, Henrique de Castro, should leave the company. I appreciate Henrique's contributions and wish him the best in his future endeavors". De Castro was the first major hire by Mayer. He joined Yahoo! in October 2012, lured from Google with a four-year \$62 million pay package. He was at Yahoo! for only a little over a year, but as reported by the Business Insider, he's going to collect a big golden umbrella, including a \$20 million restricted stock



Henrique De Castro

bonus. That comes on top of \$39.2 million he earned in 2012, in cash and stock after he first joined the company, according to a filing with the SEC.

→ Bihar CM to axe 576 govt staff on corruption charges



THE BIHAR GOVERNMENT has decided to wage a war on corruption and 576 officers and employees are likely to be dismissed from service within two months over graft allegations, as reported by the Times of India. Chief minister Nitish Kumar reviewed the progress in the investigation of corruption cases against these officers and employees. Since departmental proceedings against 187 of the 576 government employees are in the final stages, it is expected that they would be dismissed within this month, chief secretary A K Sinha said after

a meeting with the CM. Nitish has asked the chief secretary to hold weekly meetings with the department heads and district magistrates (DMs) to review the progress in investigation of corruption cases.

→ 'FCI wage pact can't be revised midway'

WITH FOOD CORPORATION OF INDIA (FCI) employees threatening to go on strike again, Food Minister K. V. Thomas said it will not be possible to implement one of their key demands on enhancing fringe benefits for class III-IV categories by revising the existing wage pact midway, as reported by the Economic Times. On other demands for pension scheme and medical benefits, Thomas said the Food Ministry has moved a Cabinet note in this regard for inter-ministerial comments. Demanding higher perks and better retirement benefits, employees of state-run Food Corporation of India have been agitating for last two months after the working hours. Recently, two trade unions comprising about 15,000 employees went on a day-long strike forcing the agency to cancel its golden jubilee celebrations which were to be held on January 14. They then threatened to go on 2-day strike. Asked if the government is working on their demands, Thomas told, "Two months ago, we resolved the FCI workers issue. They have given a list of demands. We are looking into some of them seriously". Department Public Enterprises, which administers 40 Central public sector enterprises, has disfavoured amendment to the wage agreement midway.

→ Singapore will stick to labour policy after riot



SINGAPORE, UNSETTLED BY ITS FIRST RIOT in more than four decades that involved 400 foreign workers, will continue to tighten the influx of overseas labourers, said acting manpower minister Tan Chuan-Jin as reported by Live Mint. Discontent over the number of foreign workers, who make up about a third of the workforce, has risen after years of open immigration and led to the

worst election result for the ruling party since independence. The riot that broke out in the city's Little India district after a bus ran over and killed an Indian national has reignited the debate about Singapore's dependence on overseas manpower. "A survey conducted in 2011 by the government among work-permit holders showed 90 per cent were relatively happy to be in Singapore, 80 per cent wanted to stay and about 70 per cent were happy to recommend their friends and family to come to Singapore," Tan said.

→ SAIL wage revision soon

ANNUAL WAGE OUTGO OF SAIL will go up by at least by Rs 1,000 crore with the PSU set to sign a pact with its 85,000 non-executives for a 16 per cent hike in basic and dearness allowances and 6 per cent rise in perks, as reported by the Economic Times. Wage revision in SAIL, done every five years, is pending since January 2012 due to differences on the extent of hike between the company management and its unions' umbrella body, National Joint Committee for Steel (NJCS). At the last meeting, the management conveyed to the Union representatives that given the current scenario of the steel industry, it would not be able to shell out more than 16 per cent hike in basic and dearness allowances apart from a 6 per cent rise in perks and pensions each. Union representatives involved in wage talks were demanding between 17-18 per cent hike, the source said, adding the management has asked them to come back with a consensus in next meeting.

TRIVIU

Do you know how 'Casual Friday' was invented?

Yes! This is not a spoof... here is an interesting nugget on how Friday dressing came into being



AS GOES A LESS KNOWN LEGEND, a quarter of a century ago, Procter & Gamble faced a problem of stagnating sales and the only way out was through a deeper understanding of the target consumer and its specific needs. Furthermore, marketers needed to convince consumers to switch from dry cleaning to using powder for washing at home.

So, it was found that the profile of their target consumer was an office employee, working five days a week and forced to wear a business suit. They wore jeans and other casual during weekends. Of course, the jeans were washed at home while the expensive suits were sent out for dry cleaning.

Inspired by this discovery, Procter & Gamble, along with denim brand Levi's funded an objectively independent study that showed that people in a free work clothes environment are creative and enduring, while formal suits provoke stress.

Both companies soon introduced the concept of "casual Fridays" – a day of the week free from dress code in their staffing practices and promoted the same to the business community through media. As a result, today, 90 per cent of employers have a casual dress code for every Friday!

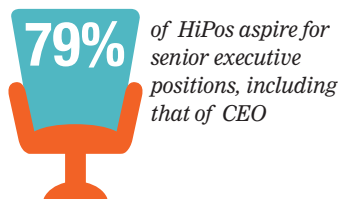


NEW STUDY

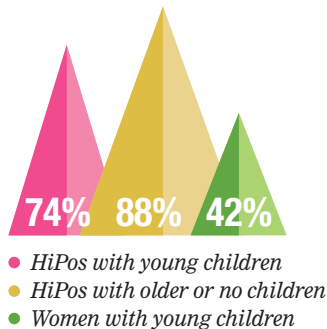
Women HiPos Under Pressure

HIGH-POTENTIAL WOMEN in India's thriving technology sector begin their careers as equals with men, with similar aspirations to the highest levels including that of CEO, according to a new Catalyst report. Despite this very promising start, a gender gap soon results in women earning less and receiving fewer opportunities that lead to advancement, conditions that contribute to fewer women in critical senior-level positions and a pay gap between women and men that expands over time. About 713 high-potential women and men working full-time in high-tech organizations and/or technology roles in India were surveyed. Here are the key findings from this report:

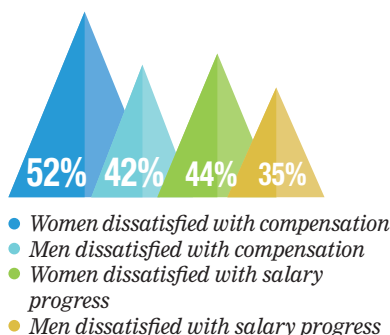
HIGH POTENTIALS ASPIRING FOR SENIOR POSITIONS



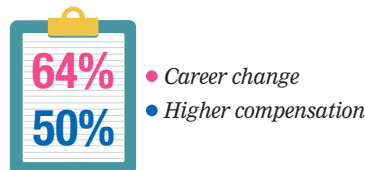
HIGH POTENTIALS WITH CHILDREN OR NO CHILDREN AIMING FOR SENIOR POSITIONS



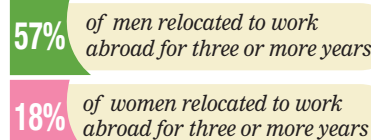
SALARY/GROWTH DISSATISFACTION - Of note, women in general are more dissatisfied with pay and salary growth over their careers



REASONS FOR JOB HOPPING



JOB IMPORTANCE/ TRAVEL AND RELOCATION - Women receive fewer on-the-job experiences that matter for pay/advancement such as mission-critical "line" jobs and long-duration international relocations

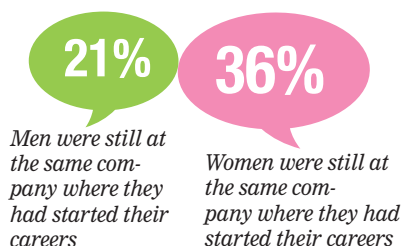


STABILITY - Women seek more stability than men do

% of women & men happy to spend the rest of their career with their company



JOB HOPPING TRENDS - Economic factors in India make "job-hopping" common, but women and men differ in their mobility patterns



BEAUTY BENEFITS

Why it makes sense to pay beautiful CEOs more?

"LOVE OF BEAUTY IS TASTE," said Ralph Waldo Emerson, a co-founder of the magazine 'The Atlantic'. His perspective would fit snugly in a modern corporate boardroom. A raft of new research suggests not only that good-looking CEOs are paid more handsomely, but also that they're actually better for their companies in surprising ways; as appeared on Quartz. Attractive CEOs have "a positive and significant impact on stock returns" when they first appear on television, according to a working paper by Joseph T. Halford and Hung-Chia Hsu at the University of Wisconsin. "Our findings suggest that more attractive CEOs have higher compensation because they create more value for shareholders through better negotiating prowess and visibility," they said. When better-looking execs appear on TV, their stock gets an exaggerated bump. Comely CEOs also snag better terms in mergers with other companies. Blame the boards for shallowness if you like. But if economic partners, like traders and executives, are going to be suckered by good looks anyway, you might as well pay extra for it.

DIVERSITY DILEMMA

Ever heard of a 'male CEO'?



NANDINI DIAS RESENTS BEING SLOTTED as a "woman" CEO as shared with the Times of India. She says women professionals run the risk of losing respect if they are seen as

being included rather than having earned their positions, especially now when a big gender diversity push unfolds across Indian companies. "These measures (for gender diversity) are not the best but they are surely the fastest," says Dias, who in October took charge at media agency Lodestar UM and who calls herself a trainee CEO. Prior to this, she was the COO of Lodestar — the country's third largest media agency after WPP's Mindshare and Sam Balsara's Madison. It's frustrating, she says, when people think women are where they are because of their gender and not because of their competency. "At times, I've wished I could leave early from work because I'm a woman and I have a family to attend to, but that has never happened," she says.



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NEWSMAKER OF THE MONTH

Multifaceted strategist – Varun Berry



WHEN VARUN BERRY WAS APPOINTED as the Chief Operating Officer of Britannia Industries Limited in January 2013, he was a man in a hurry. “I want the company to grow and make lots of money,” Berry told in an interview.

In November last year, Berry was elevated to the position of Executive Director with immediate effect, less than a year after he was roped into the company. By joining the 13-member Board, Berry had signalled that he was being set up for bigger responsibilities. It was the third elevation given to him in 11 months. After joining Britannia on January 7, 2013, Berry was designated Vice President and Chief Operating Officer with effect from February 1, with functions like marketing, sales and product development for Bread, Cake and Rusk. In January this year, he has been named as the Managing Director of the company replacing the long-serving Vinita Bali, who will now head Britannia's international operations. Bali will leave the company in March this year.

Berry, who has a rich industry experience of more than 27 years, is taking over the top job at a time when the company prepares to script a new growth strategy focusing on high-margin products and innovations amid stiff competition from ITC, Parle and Danone.

As soon as he joined, he started making key operational changes and strategic tweaks. The biscuit maker is endeavoring to increase its market share and improve margins, which had slumped over the past few years because of a sustained rise in material costs. From increasing market share to streamlining company's distribution channels and strategizing the dairy business, Berry took quick control over the multifaceted role.

Prior to this appointment, Berry was the CEO of PepsiCo Foods for South Asia. Previously, Varun has been the CEO of the International Dairy and Juice business based in the Middle-East, CEO of Beverages and Foods in the Philippines, COO PepsiCo-Vietnam and several sales operating roles in India. Before joining PepsiCo in India in 1993, Varun worked with Jumbo Electronics in the UAE and Hindustan Unilever in marketing and sales roles in India.

Sources: Economic Times, Business Standard, Live Mint, Britannia website



TOP LEVEL REJIG

Change of guard at PepsiCo

PEPSICO INDIA HAS MADE sweeping changes in its senior leadership structure, part of the beverage and snacks maker's push to become more aggressive in the market as it battles Coca-Cola in soft drinks and ITC and Parle in foods, the Economic Times reported. The new hierarchy clubs beverages and foods into an integrated entity, with functions of marketing, operations, HR, finance, legal, corporate affairs and R&D being brought together under common heads. Three chief operating officers heading foods, company-owned bottling and franchisee bottling, respectively, will report directly to D. Shivakumar, who took over as chairman and CEO in December last year. “The structure makes the organization more responsive, quicker on decision making and more competitive,” Shivakumar told ET. Internally, the structure is changing from a business unit based organization to an integrated “power of one” function - a strategy led by global chairman Indra Nooyi.

NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION

Amul chairman removed

VIPUL CHAUDHARY, CHAIRMAN OF Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF) that markets its products under the Amul brand, has been removed from the post, the *Live Mint* reported. In a letter, GCMMF managing director R.S. Sodhi said Chaudhary ceased to be chairman after the Gujarat high court upheld the no-confidence motion passed against him. An application by GCMMF for permission to carry into effect the resolution was allowed by the court in an order dated 6 January, with a direction to enforce it with effect from 11 January, according to the letter. An appeal filed by Chaudhary has been dismissed by the appellate bench of the court, the letter said. “In view of this you are informed that you have ceased to be chairman, GCMMF, with effect from 11 January.” Reacting to his ouster, Chaudhary told PTI: “There is no alternative other than cooperation in cooperative sector. This division will not help GCMMF. This is not a game of majority or minority. This is not a numbers' game.” Chaudhary pointed out that 50 per cent of GCMMF's business comes from Dudhsagar Dairy of Mehsana, whose chairmanship he continues to hold, and Banas Dairy. “Business should not take a backseat in this numbers' game,” he added.



SBI APPOINTS PRADEEP KUMAR AS MD CORPORATE BANKING

Country's biggest lender State Bank of India has appointed P. Pradeep Kumar as its Managing Director (Corporate Banking). Kumar, as one of the four managing directors, will look after the corporate banking portfolio of the bank.



TELENOR APPOINTS MORTEN SORBY AS UNINOR INDIA CEO

The Telenor Group has nominated Morten Karlsen Sorby as the new CEO of Uninor. Morten steps into the role just as Uninor reached cash flow break even at the end of 2013, on target after only four years of operation. He replaces Sigve Brekke who has served as interim CEO of Uninor since early November last year.



HDS APPOINTS MOHIT HIRA AS CEO

Hungama Digital Services (HDS), the digital and promotions marketing division of Hungama Digital Media Entertainment Pvt. Ltd, appointed Mohit Hira as chief executive officer. This is the first leadership change in the company after global advertising network JWT Specialized Communications Ltd, part of WPP Plc, acquired a majority stake in the digital services agency in May 2012.



MANJIT SINGH BECOMES PRESIDENT OF SONY PICTURES

Sony Pictures Home Entertainment (SPHE) has named Manjit Singh as the President. He will report to Michael Lynton, CEO, Sony Entertainment Inc, and Amy Pascal, Co-Chairman, Sony Pictures Entertainment. He was the CEO of Sony's operating company Multi Screen Media. Singh's focus will be reduction of overhead costs and growth of high margin businesses.



SANJAY JHA NEW CEO OF GLOBALFOUNDRIES

Chip manufacturing company Globalfoundries has appointed former Motorola chief Sanjay Jha as its new chief executive officer. Jha would succeed Ajit Manocha, who served as an adviser to the company's shareholders prior to being appointed CEO of the firm.



EX-BSE CEO VAISH TO BE MCX CHIEF

Former Bombay Stock Exchange CEO Manoj Vaish was identified as the new chief executive of MCX, the country's largest commodity futures exchange. Vaish will replace Shrikant Javlekar, while the board has cleared Vaish's appointment from the list of three shortlisted candidates. The appointment, however, needs to be cleared by the Forward Markets Commission, the regulator for commodities trading.



VARADARAJAN SRINIVASAN QUILTS TATA TELESERVICES TO HEAD HR IN TATA-SIA

Tata Teleservices' executive president of human resources, Varadarajan Srinivasan, has resigned. He will soon be joining the group's new airline joint venture (JV) with Singapore Airlines as the head of HR. Srinivasan is considered close to current managing director Srinath Narasimhan.



GAUTAM GHOSH IN A NEW ROLE

After a few months in Philips India team, Gautam Ghosh who was taking care of HR Strategy & Projects on social media, will be moving up to a new role. He would now be the Social Learning & Digital Tech Manager for Philips University & Group Business Transformation, Philips, and will be operating from Pune along with global content development team, which is being set up there.



MILESTONE CAPITAL APPOINTS ALOK AGGARWAL AS CEO

Milestone Capital Advisors has appointed Alok Aggarwal as Managing Partner and CEO of the company in a move to further strengthen its real estate private equity business. A graduate from IIT Delhi and MBA from ISB Hyderabad, Alok will oversee all funds in the real estate development, mezzanine & REIT like fund structures.

RAJ JAIN IS BHARTI RETAIL CEO, PANKAJ MADAN CFO

Three months after calling off its joint venture with the world's largest retailer Walmart, Bharti Retail, the multi-brand retail venture of Bharti Enterprises, has appointed former Walmart India head Raj Jain as CEO and former senior executive at Bharti-Walmart Pankaj Madan as CFO.



R. CHANDRASHEKHAR IS NASSCOM CHIEF

Former telecom secretary R. Chandrashekhhar, under whom a government IT department was set up for the first time, took over as president of Nasscom – a body representing the \$108 billion Indian IT-BPM industry. He succeeds Som Mittal, who served as the president of Nasscom from 2007-13.

BG SRINIVAS, PRAVIN RAO APPOINTED INFOSYS PRESIDENTS

Infosys has appointed B.G. Srinivas and U.B. Pravin Rao as presidents of the company reporting to the CEO S.D. Shibulal with immediate effect. BG Srinivas will focus on global markets, while Pravin Rao will look into global delivery and service innovation.



RIL APPOINTS ZAINULBHAI AS INDEPENDENT DIRECTOR

The board of directors of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) announced the appointment of Adil Zainulbhai as an independent director on the board with immediate effect. With this the board will expand to 14 members with eight members being independent directors.



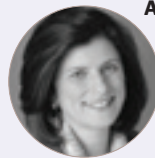
TECHM'S NEW WEALTH MANAGEMENT HEAD

Tech Mahindra has appointed John Hyslop as Head of Wealth Management within the company's Australian financial services business. Prior to joining Tech Mahindra, Hyslop was Head of Technology for National Australia Bank's (NAB) Wealth Group, the company said in a statement.



KIRAN MAZUMDAR-SHAW INDEPENDENT BOARD MEMBER AT INFOSYS

Infosys has inducted Biocon CMD Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw as an independent member of the Board.



ACCENTURE ANNOUNCES NEW CHRO

Accenture announced the appointment of Ellyn Shook as Chief Human Resources Officer, effective March 1, 2014. She succeeds Jill B. Smart, who will step down after serving as chief human resources officer for the past nine years. Smart will retire from Accenture on Aug. 31, 2014.

'Great leaders are great followers'

D. Shivakumar, Chairman & CEO - India Region, PepsiCo, talks to **Esther Martinez Hernandez** on mentorship, culture and work-life balance

Q You have worked across different companies in different industries. What makes a successful company and what are the ingredients of a successful CEO?

A The principles of business are very similar irrespective of the category you are in. The principles of profit, of innovation, of people management, of putting the customer first are all the same. During my tenure and experience in various companies in India, Middle East and African emerging markets, whenever I went into a company, I just looked at three things: One, Is the company gaining market share? If you are getting market share, then you are doing something better than competition and hence your productivity would be much better. The second thing that I look for is employee engagement and productivity. If employee engagement, productivity and the trust in the company is very high, then you get much better return on investment in people. Hence, that is one of the best ways to actually reduce costs. Most people look at reducing costs as a one-way act of cutting. I would like to recommend to HR managers to think of improving productivity instead of cutting costs. The third one is cash flow. You have to ensure that you are making enough money.

Q How would you relate that to the key ingredients of a successful CEO? How has your CEO journey been?

A I have been a CEO for 11 years now... that is about 40 per cent of my career. The CEO's job has changed significantly in the last 10 years. Delivering results and meeting targets are the day job, but a CEO's role has gone far beyond that. It has become a digital world, one with very young employees and high attrition. You are in a world where you are competing for talent. A typical CEO leads a team of about 8 to 12. If you don't know half the functions well and you can't add value to that, you won't get the respect of your own team.

So, grooming a future CEO and giving young general managers big breaks are very important for HR people. In the 80s, the early general

An organization cannot give you work-life balance. You have to give yourself that. Individuals have to think deeply and decide what matters to them

manager jobs were given by large multinationals like Hindustan Unilever. I was a general manager when I was 32 and it was a huge empowering job. The next wave came when companies like PepsiCo arrived. After that, it was the telecom sector. Since the sector was divided into circles, you had young general managers handling businesses of Rs 2,000-3,000 crore. To me, a big conglomerate or any other large company must think about how to give young people general manager exposure. That's the grooming, the start to ensure that we are producing great CEOs of the future.

Q What is the role of the coach or the mentor in the process when big responsibilities are being handed to young people? How does the coach or the mentor support the learning process to help the person grow?

A You can pick a coach, but you can't pick a mentor. A mentor has to pick the mentee. You can go to a coach to correct the obvious details like disciplines and the structural part of your job. On the other hand, mentorship is a completely different ball game. I have been extremely lucky that right through my career I've had wonderful mentors and I'm really grateful to them. People like Mr K. K. Sridhar, Mr Anand Bhatia, who was my managing



director when I was a brand manager, Dr Ganguly, Mr Balraman, Mr K.K. Dadi Seth, Mr Damodaran, the ex-SEBI chairman. There are a lot of people who just through interactions have played a role.

Q What have you learned from your mentors?

A One of the things that I have learnt from a lot of my mentors is that always put the institution first, the team second and the individual third. If the institution wins, you win. If the individual wins, the institution doesn't win. The other thing about mentorship is that they tell you what are life's good lessons and tough lessons. Life is like an airplane journey, say from Delhi to London. There will be a few pockets of turbulence but that doesn't mean that you jump out of the plane. You fasten the seat belt, you stay firm and have the confidence that you will land.

I believe that the whole concept of changing a culture through mentorship or investing in people down the line cannot happen with just the CEO. It also requires the top 10 per cent of the managers to do it

Q How do you create a culture of mentorship?

A I believe that the whole concept of changing a culture through mentorship or investing in people down the line cannot happen with just the CEO. It cannot happen with the CEO and his management team. It requires the top 10 per cent of the managers to do it. If you are serious about mentoring and development of people, you have to ensure that none of the operational stuff comes in the way. For example, if there is a training program scheduled for the sales team and they are not doing so well in terms of revenue, then you should have the guts to send the team for training and development despite all the challenges that you encounter.

Q You have handled more than 34 brands in your entire career. How does an organization build an employee value proposition and how does a mentorship culture play into that?

A A culture is a very important thing and I feel

that a number of people in India get the concept of culture wrong. Culture is the smell of the place. When you go to an office, you can figure out what kind of culture they have. You can't fake culture. Culture is actually the emotional alignment of the organization. It has to do with values that you would die for. It is really important if you want high quality talent working for you. How do you build a culture? It is being clear about what you do and what you won't do. Don't go beyond the point of symbols. For example, I may be wearing a tie and a suit, but I may be a very informal person. A good culture takes a long time to build and it just takes a few instances to become a bad one.

Q What keeps you awake at night?

A There are two reasons why companies fail: One is arrogant leadership. So the first thing for any CEO is that you must stay rooted all the time especially in a hierarchy structure like India. To remain grounded is one of the greatest things you can do to yourself as a CEO. The second reason why companies fail is the ability or the inability to learn or unlearn. So what keeps me awake at night is my ability to learn and unlearn, my ability to provide strategic direction to the people, my ability to connect with the rest of the organization. The definition of great leadership is the same, but the practice of it is very different.

Q You talked about time management. Is Shiv a 24*7 CEO or do you have a personal side where you enjoy doing some hobby?

A An organization cannot give you work-life balance. You have to give yourself that. The individual has to think deeply and decide what matters to them. To me my work matters, not in the sense of money but I want to do a good job. Indra (Nooyi) and Sanjeev Chandha have trusted me and want me to do this job. I shouldn't let them down. So when you think of leadership, I also want people to think of followership. Followership is about backing your boss, getting the details right, ensuring that the job is done, to ensure that the ship is in place. Great leaders are great followers. That's a very important aspect of the job. I will not be a great leader if I'll not be a great follower to Sanjiv and Indra. That's one aspect.

The second aspect of it is that I like to watch sport, read and I also like to teach. I need to balance my time, it's my call entirely. No company can dictate how I should spend my time and as a leader I can't dictate the choice to anyone who works for me. You will talk of work-life balance when you are not happy with your work. When your work is a hobby, it doesn't matter. But, if you are not happy with your job, then there's conflict. In this world of high attrition, never leave a company when you are unhappy because when you are unhappy, every choice outside looks good. You should always leave a company when you are very happy because the choice outside will be brilliant. **cm**

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Leadership in turbulent times



Global Thought Leader **Dr Ram Charan** on what it takes to be a leader during uncertain times

The business environment is changing so rapidly that we cannot predict anything. What we can do is to teach our people to deal with uncertainty

quiet and effective way". Dr Charan has spent the past 35 years consulting with many top companies, CEOs and Boards.

Dr Charan has a unique perspective on how great leaders differ from the rest. He breaks through the façade of leadership to explain the capabilities leaders must possess, how to build a leadership driven company, how to lead in economic uncertainty, how to develop your own leadership capability and finally, how to plan for smooth succession.

"In tune with the external change, the business environment is changing so rapidly that we cannot predict anything. What we can do is to teach our people to deal with uncertainty," Dr Ram Charan said.

He then pointed to history and talked about how certain companies managed to navigate through turbulent times and what enabled them to do so. He said that such companies had customers at their center-stage. They know what their customers wanted and were willing to adapt to those changes. They were also adept at anticipating changes that could affect their business model and took action on it. They adapted with agility and encouraged innovation, knowing fully well that some ideas will work, while others won't.

What creates turbulence for companies?

Dr. Charan, who started his career as a craftsman at a very young age to support his family, became Professor at Kellogg and Harvard before becoming Global Thought Leader and Top CEOs coach, shares that turbulence does not happen on its own. People create it. Leaders need to find those people who could create the turbulence. "You are seeing it, but it is not registering in you. Look at the human beings that are causing the change in

'The world is my home and I look at work as my dharma'

These were the opening thoughts by world-renowned business guru, Dr Ram Charan, at the Great Lakes Global Thought Series at Gurgaon in mid-January. Dr Charan was sharing his insights on "Leadership in Turbulent Times – Closing the Gap between Promise and Results" as part of the certified Leadership Development Program.

The Global Thought Leader Series (GTLS) is an initiative by Great Lakes towards leadership development in India by enabling the best Business Gurus, Thought Leaders and Global Experts to share their knowledge and insights with the decision makers and corporate leaders of India. Past GTLS Thought Leaders include Dr. Philip Kotler (Kellogg), Dr. Seenu Srinivasan (Stanford), Dr. Praveen Kumar (Houston), Dr. Srikant Datar (HBS) and Dr. Shyam Sunder (Yale).

Fortune magazine calls Dr Charan "the most influential consultant alive", with even Jack Welch saying "He has the rare ability to distill meaningful from meaningless and transfer it to others in a



(SCAN THE CODE TO CHECK OUT DR RAM CHARAN'S WEBSITE)

Dr Charan gave business leaders three tips to think differently: Meet people from other industries, make a quarterly plan and think about the second, third and fourth level of consequences of your decisions

the game.” There are many early warning signals around us that can tell us that our business is at risk. Even though they may be visible and clear, many of us miss them. Dr. Charan suggests that those signals are in our customers, in looking outside, looking at other players, their leaders and what they are trying to achieve.

One of the roadblocks in identifying these early warning signals is linear thinking. Dr. Charan shares three tools to help leaders think different about their business and expand their capacity to be able to identify early warning signals and take better decisions:

Invite people who think differently: People who could represent a customer segment or a leader from a different industry. These conversations create an opportunity to practice open thinking and gives you a break from day-to-day work. “Discuss about what is happening in other industries,” suggest Dr. Charan, “Its effect is more psychological. Since you are an outsider, you can look at it dispassionately. This exercise will help in sharpening the perception antennas.” Build a “social group” of the people from different industries that you meet regularly with the objective of identifying the happening in the world from a very diverse perspective. “These conversations expand your mental capacity,” shares Dr. Charan.

Annual cycles are passé. Business does not wait for your annual strategic cycle, “Do your planning quarterly, write it in one page. No buzzwords. Simple English.” Being the leading computer manufacturer does not mean much as opposed to “a computer on every desk”. If that is the objective, then in the rest of that page, focus on the building blocks: What do we need to do to make it happen.

Grab an idea and think about the 2nd, 3rd, 4th level of consequences. Take a situation, an instance and think about what could happen and what could be the second, third and fourth level of consequences if that were to happen. These exercises will help you and your team to push the brain,



include conversations that expand the thinking capacity. “Let there be a pause in your discussion,” says Dr. Charan. Nobody has a monopoly on perception. Nobody knows what the future holds. It is about discussing the future, what each one of us thinks and why. Interact with your new generation after they have been on the job for a year.

Try to figure out who have the potential to grow. Figure out ways and means on how to give them these opportunities.

These tools help leaders expand their personal capacity. Great leaders double their capability every three years. While reflecting on business leaders who have continually expanded their capability over their life span, Dr. Charan shares what they all have in common. These are leaders who develop their judgment and have the courage to get the right people into the right jobs. These are leaders who have insatiable appetite for big ideas and they are very good in catching them. They can sense them. Their antennas are tuned in. These are leaders who can think ahead of time, focus on growing themselves, so they can grow others and in turn their business. Everybody has to grow. These are “simple things to say, but they do not come without practice,” shares Dr. Charan.

So what is the way to lead during turbulent times? Practice, practice, and practice, according to Dr Charan. No athlete becomes a champion without practice! 🏆

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A skeleton in the closet

A recent Supreme Court ruling will force HR in organizations to alter their approach towards inclusiveness and diversity

By Vikram Choudhury

On December 11, 2013, the Supreme Court of India upheld Article 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) making lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) preferences and alliances illegal. The move overruled the Delhi High Court's 2009 decision to decriminalize LGBT alliances. After the Delhi High Court verdict, many companies expanded their diversity policies to include the interests of the LGBT community. These include creation of interest groups, awareness and inclusion events, and even the creation of transgender toilets within office premises. Organizations are now faced with a peculiar dilemma. Should they continue their inclusiveness initiatives for the LGBT community or will it constitute a criminal offence to support the interest of the group?

To stop or to continue is the key question

According to global human rights standards, the ruling serves as a deterrent to the basic right of privacy and non-discrimination. Early signals show that companies are in a "wait and watch" mode. While companies may consider a change in policy, they have to consider the impact of such changes on morale and productivity of employees. Some companies have taken landmark steps to demonstrate their support and solidarity for LGBT employees like the Gaygler group at Google, IGLU community at Infosys, and EAGLE reverse mentoring project at IBM. The future of many such projects that were launched across the spread of the Indian industry looms uncertain. Research from Stonewall, an organization working for equality and gender justice in the UK, indicates that concealing sexual orientation at work reduces productivity by as much as 30 per cent. The Supreme Court ruling may just propel organizations to put in place measures that discourage employees to reveal their sexual orientation. An independent research conducted by Google, IBM, Goldman Sachs, and Community Business in 2012 suggests that 5-10 per cent of India's workforce comprises the LGBT community. The enforcement of non-disclosure of sexual orientation translates into an impact, which is sizeable enough for companies to take notice. At this point, companies are faced with the very serious dilemma on if they should continue actively supporting the LGBT community or stall them altogether. Whatever path a company chooses, there are sizeable associated costs that human resources functions have to consider.






What are the alternatives?

Companies may not be permitted to actively support their LGBT initiatives under their employer branding and hence, attracting talent from this community may become more difficult. While it may make legal sense for a company to stop active support and show of solidarity toward LGBT groups, employer brands that have made a reputation as being inclusive and accommodative to the needs of the community may stand at an inherent advantage. Support groups and NGOs have already started planning to move to the Supreme Court





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to revoke the order. While the future of its status remains indefinite and uncertain, there are several steps that companies need to undertake to ensure that employee rights are protected and they can attract talent from the LGBT community.

There are many costs that organizations can eliminate by continuing their training and sensitization efforts. While it may be illegal for an LGBT community member to publicly proclaim one's sexual orientation in India, it is unquestionably legal in several other countries. Recent cases have shown that the lack of sensitization may cost a company significantly when business affairs are conducted at a global scale. Some cases were reported where companies have borne costs to the tune of \$10 million as a result of bullying or embarrassing an LGBT client or colleague outside India. HR functions in India thus have to manage the difficult proposition of continuing their sensitization efforts

time for companies to rethink and reword their anti-discrimination policies. As the legislation may encourage bullying and discrimination, the responsibility of HR to ensure that LGBT employees do not face discomfort or discrimination at work becomes even more significant. Tougher wording and communication of the company's anti-discrimination policy may be needed and the changes have to be reiterated to all employees.

It is also a good time for the organizational HR to track separate score sheets for LGBT employees and identify any red flags that may emerge. These red flags may be in the form of dip in productivity numbers, attendance or engagement scores. Ensuring that the morale and engagement of LGBT employees remain high may warrant the need for periodic personalized counselling sessions. Of course, the support of the senior business leadership through mentions in firm-



It may be a good time for HR to revisit their anti-discrimination policy and look at the possibility of rewording it

while making sure that they do not come across as promoters of LGBT preferences.

The equation may turn out to be a little simpler for the HR function of a multi-national organization. It is a good time for HR professionals in a multi-national organization to work closely with their global counterparts and integrate their India-specific initiatives under a global umbrella. This may also offer a legal recourse to justify the existence of such initiatives within the organization. HR in organizations, which do not have any global presence, may need to continue their LGBT initiatives at an informal level.

Need for stronger anti-discrimination policy

While any explicit changes to internal company policies may not be necessary, it may be a good

wide communications can constitute a great symbolic gesture to reiterate the firm's values of fairness and inclusiveness.

The move to uphold article 377 is being argued as regressive and detrimental by industry leaders and activists alike. Recent events have shown that while other economies are indicating greater intent to accept and uphold the rights of the LGBT community, the Supreme Court's ruling comes across as a move in the wrong direction. While the coming times will reveal more about how companies continue to accommodate and protect the interests of LGBT employees, it will be interesting to monitor proceedings of the Indian legislative bodies on how they approach the subject. Until then, the skeleton may have to remain inside the closet. 🏳️

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Best Employers 2.0

India 2013 Study

An Aon Hewitt Research

Aon Hewitt's Best Employers research, in partnership with People Matters, provides insights on best practices in talent management

By **Ajay Soni** and **Tarandeep Singh**

COVER STORY





Aon Hewitt's 12 years of Best Employers studies in Asia supports the striking evidence: Having a high level of Employee Engagement, a compelling Employer Brand, Effective Leadership and a High Performance Culture translates into a committed and productive workforce that delivers strong business results.

Defining a 'Best Employer'

Best Employer can be a fuzzy term unless defined clearly with measureable parameters. At Aon Hewitt, it is defined on four dimensions: ***Having a high level of Employee Engagement, a compelling Employer Brand, Effective Leadership and a High Performance Culture.*** Each dimension has a set of questions to employees. Additionally, the independent jury considers business alignment and HR effectiveness to identify an organization as a Best Employer.

BEST EMPLOYERS 2.0 - ASIA 2013 STUDY TOOLS

Employee Opinion Survey	CEO and HR Leader Connects	People Practices Inventory
Measures employee engagement and satisfaction	Gathers leadership views in the business and people perspective of the organisation	Provide details of company's human resources practices and program
74,100 employee responses; Represents 368,316 employees options	Incorporates Perspective of over 80 HR Leaders and CEOs	Best practices for 22 Industries

About the study

Best Employers 2.0 - India 2013 Study captured 74,100 employee responses, representing the opinions of over 360,000 employees in all, more than 80 HR and business leaders, across 22 industries. As a part of the study, we collected data from 3 distinct perspectives (employees, strategy and people practices): this data was then analyzed, and played back in a "masked" format to a jury. Alignment between employee opinion, CEO perception and HR viewpoint on the four study dimensions was used as a litmus test by the jury to identify the Best Employers.

Results Dashboard

Shackled by uncertainty and slow growth, organizations across the board struggled to sustain employee engagement in 2013 as only limited career opportunities were on offer to employees. In these times, employees feel a sense of pride in being part of a respected workplace. HR leaders have, therefore, invested in articulating their

employer brand. However, promises to employees are easier made than kept, as shown in the low credibility scores.

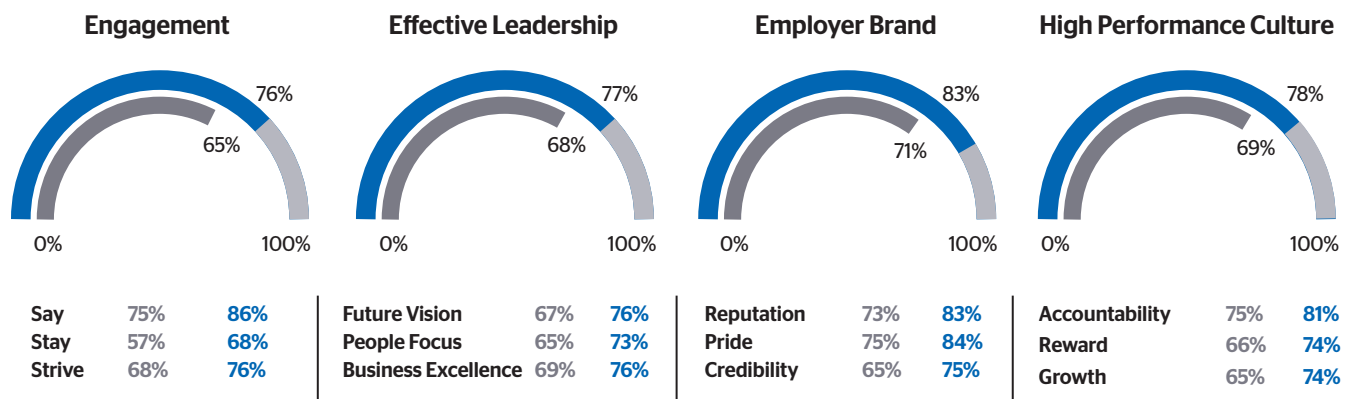
Today, organizations are working towards a turnaround: Effective Leadership and High Performance Culture will prove to be at the core of these efforts. With few opportunities for advancement, Best Employers are sharply differentiating rewards for top performers. More so, leaders in Best Employers are spending significant time to articulate a future vision and creating strategic traction in the organization.

Employee Engagement

Organizations in India have struggled to maintain employee engagement levels in trying economic times. Engagement scores across Indian organizations have remained at 65 per cent in 2013, same as in 2011.

Aon Hewitt's model measures employee engagement on three key behaviors - Say, Stay and Strive. Engaged employees speak well of the organization,

RESULTS DASHBOARD



Source: Aon Hewitt's Best Employers 2.0 - India 2013 Study

■ Best Employers

■ Participant Average

Best Employers have been able to unlock the mantra of business and HR alignment by distributing the responsibility of driving employee engagement between leaders, HR and people managers

within and outside; display a willingness and intention to stay with the company; and go the extra mile to help the organization achieve its objective and fulfill its vision.

The Best Employers 2.0 – India 2013 Study evaluated employee satisfaction on 21 engagement drivers, which directly impact employee engagement. Lowest satisfaction scores were observed for Recognition, Pay and Career Opportunities; indicating employees' continuous hunger for growth, which are also the areas where Best Employers scored much higher than the India average.

Highest scores were noticed on Health & Well-Being, CSR and Co-workers, representing employees' growing preference for work-life balance and participation in broader social initiatives. Interestingly, difference between Best and India average was lowest on these, which indicates while all organizations have caught up on "hygiene" factors, Best Employers continue to anticipate and respond faster to their employees' needs.

Employer Brand

Pride, Learning and Empowerment continue to be the most frequently used themes, which organizations are including in their employer brands.

A consistent and compelling employer brand is built on reputation, pride and credibility. Gone are the days when the employer brand was considered a good thing to have; today more than 80 per cent of organizations have a defined employer brand. However, organizations are failing to consistently deliver on their employer promise. A major reason for this is the lack of alignment between CEO and HR, with almost 80 per cent disagreeing on what constitutes the employee offer for their respective organizations.

Effective Leadership

High Potential identification emerges as a big priority for India Inc., with almost 90% of organizations having a formal identification process.

Best Employers effectively use leaders as a fulcrum to drive business alignment and boost employee engagement. A key to creating alignment beyond the boardroom is People Focus. Reaching out to employees helps leaders understand the key expectations and concerns in this economic scenario. It also reinforces the fact that employees remain the most valuable

asset, even though growth might have temporarily slowed down.

High Performance Culture

Managers in Best Employers have been able to inspire, enable and support teams to maximize performance far more effectively than other organizations.

High Performance Culture is the need of the hour, with pressure today both on revenue expansion and cost saving. Organizations hoping to turnaround business results will need to sharply focus on this aspect. The Best Employers research highlights that manager effectiveness is critical to driving a high performance culture.

What are the Best Employers doing differently?


Best Employers score at least 10 percentage points higher than the India average on the four study dimensions.

How do they achieve this? The answer lies in the priorities and choices of the organizations, and their HR leaders. Best Employers choose to prioritize certain performance parameters for themselves and then work on executing them well.

And the results show -

- HR defines metrics that measure business impact of HR programs
Best Employers – 82 per cent
Participant Average – 68 per cent
- Employees are confident that appropriate actions will be taken as a result of their inputs for the Best Employers study
Best Employers – 81 per cent
Participant Average – 73 per cent

And finally...

Over the last 12 years, action areas and employee priorities have changed. Yet, Best Employers through these years have been able to prioritize the action items effectively. Alignment of HR with business defines purpose. Only when organizations connect the dots, starting from alignment, to purpose, and finally to action, do they excel on all four themes, and get started on the journey to becoming a Best Employer. 

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

AJAY SONI, Partner, Leadership Practice Leader, Asia Pacific, Aon Hewitt

TARANDEEP SINGH, Partner, Engagement Practice Leader, India, Aon Hewitt

BEST EMPLOYERS 2.0

INDIA STUDY 2013

By Aon Hewitt

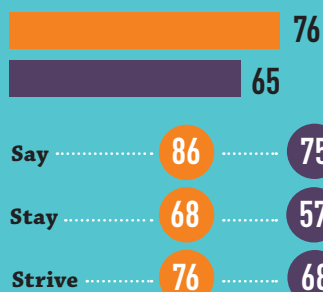
Over 74,000 employees across 22 industries provided their opinions. The data, collected from three distinct perspectives (employees, strategy and people practices), was analyzed and presented back to a credible jury to identify best employers.

WHAT IS A BEST EMPLOYER?

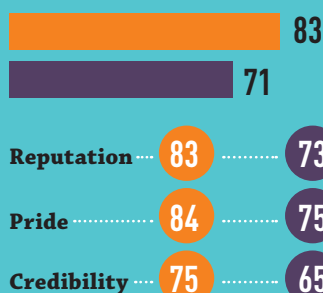
Aon Hewitt defines a best employer on four dimensions: Engagement, Effective Leadership, Employer brand and high performance culture.

BEST EMPLOYERS
PARTICIPANT AVERAGE
ALL FIGURES IN PERCENTAGE

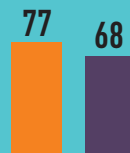
ENGAGEMENT



EMPLOYER BRAND



EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP



Future vision

76 67

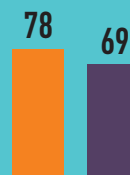
People focus

73 65

Business Excellence

76 69

HIGH PERFORMANCE CULTURE



Accountability

81 75

Reward

74 66

Growth

74 65

WHAT ARE THE BEST EMPLOYERS DOING DIFFERENTLY?

Best Employers score at least 10 percentage points higher than the India average on the four study dimensions. How do they achieve this? The answer lies in the priorities and choices of the organizations, and their HR leaders. Best Employers choose to prioritize certain performance parameters for themselves and then work on executing them well.

HR defines metrics that measure business impact of HR programs

Best Employers 82%

Participant Average 68%

Employees are confident that appropriate actions will be taken as a result of their inputs for the Best Employers study

Best Employers 81%

Participant Average 73%

TOPMOST PEOPLE CHALLENGES

- 1 Availability of critical skills
- 2 Lack of leadership availability and a leadership pipeline
- 3 Ability to attract and retain the right talent continues



Do your Corporate values exist only in writing?

Are they always consistently demonstrated by employees? This can impact the customers' experience and brand perception as well as have a detrimental effect on employee engagement. We help our clients to develop and deliver practical 'hands-on' activities that help people to understand how to demonstrate the values and behaviours consistently within their day to day roles.

R&R is an important factor in embedding values and behaviours. Both manager to employee, and peer-to-peer recognition plays an important role in encouraging repeated behaviours aligned to company values. Eventually proof of a great initiative is visible in the attitude, body language and mind set of employees.

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Aegis Global

Aegis Limited
Industry: IT & ITeS
Year of Incorporation
in India: 2004
Total number of
Employees: 24,553
HQ City: Mumbai



Aegis believes in a partnership model where an employee and the organization are jointly responsible for individual and enterprise success. Aegis is a young organization, given the fact that it was started only in 2004. With revenue of around \$1 billion, Aegis has over 55,000 employees with presence across 56 locations and 13 countries. The diversity of the company is characterized by its people spread across 92 countries, speaking 79 different languages. The diversity in India is also immense, with 23,000 employees spread across different locations in the country.

S M Gupta, Chief People Officer at Aegis says, "The company believes in three talent principles – speak, stay and stretch." In behaviors, employees consistently speak positively about Aegis to co-workers, potential employees and its customers. Additionally, the company believes that employees should feel a sense of belonging to the company

and feel like coming to work. Such a culture has to be augmented by an employee's desire to go beyond the call of duty.

Talent management at Aegis consequently focuses on four different areas – Employee value proposition, employee engagement, career progression and leadership development. Sandip Sen, Global CEO, says, "Aegis' employee value proposition - 'Get Set Go,' is meant to attract, retain and promote loyalty within the organization. The company hires more than 4,000 people and processes more than a million resumes each year." Across the employee lifecycle, the company believes in a partnership model where the organization and the employee jointly decide goals and development opportunities for the individual and for the organization. Being in the service industry, the partnership approach helps better management of people costs and serves as a key differentiator. 

Ajuba Solutions Pvt. Ltd.

Ajuba Solutions India Pvt Ltd
Industry: IT & ITeS
Year of Incorporation
in India: 2001
Total number of
Employees: 2,227
HQ City: Chennai

Ajuba forayed into healthcare billing in 2001 and is a pioneer in the healthcare services outsourcing industry in India. 'Great Workplace', 'Employee Engagement', 'Talent Attraction', 'Trust' are the cornerstones occupying a significant mindshare in Ajuba Culture which is committed in building a successful organization both on the inside as well as outside. "From recruitment, training to work-life balance and women's empowerment, we ensure that we take care of our employees very well," says Hema Parikh, Director-HR.

Recruiting a person at Ajuba is an oriented process to add a new member to Ajuba family who reflects the values, culture, excellence, and the best of practices of Ajuba. The company hires for

the right attitude and competencies, and trains for skills. This company is known to be a great learning ground, for technical and leadership skills. "Our first best practice is that we focus a lot on employee healthcare. We ensure that our employees go through regular medical check-up, give them tips on how to lead a healthy life. We also provide complimentary food and transport to our employees," Parikh said.

While the organization has the best in class domain/process related training programs for all employees, there are also immense developmental opportunities as Ajuba takes pride in home grown leaders who have displayed leadership par excellence, driven by their constant innovation. Ajuba Leadership program called 'LEAP' - where employ-

Bajaj Finance Limited

Bajaj Finance Limited, the lending arm of Bajaj Finserv group, is one of the most diversified NBFCs in the Indian market catering to more than 6 million customers across the country.

It is today amongst India's fastest growing, most profitable and highly diversified Non Bank Finance Companies, with branches in 110 cities and over 5500 distribution points. The company which was incorporated in 1987 has gone thru a transformation journey over the last six years. During this period the company has registered a CAGR of 104% in profits, 68% in loan deployments and the ROE has gone up from 3.2% to 24.3%. Bajaj Finance Limited prides itself for holding the highest credit rating of FAAA/Stable for any NBFC in the country today. Its financial indicators – NPA is only 0.2 per cent and Capital Adequacy ratio stands at 17.5 per cent – are healthy.


In order to improve profitability, HR follows a metrics-driven approach towards performance. It is based on the philosophy that things which can be measured can be improved. The performance of every employee is measured on a variety of parameters, each of which has measurable outputs. These metrics, including individual performance metrics, are published on a monthly basis to instill transparency in the system.

Another aspect of HR's strategy is 'Do More, Earn More', which rewards employees commensurately for the efforts they put into their work. The third element of the people strategy is 'Stretch is a way of life and challenge 'Status Quo'. The business requires employees who are willing to go beyond the call of duty to support its high growth rate. Hence, HR plans for annual action

HR rewards high performers to drive business and employers are provided with higher opportunities, incentives, and communication channels to reinforce the desired behavior


learning projects, in which cross functional teams are developed and are each allocated a business issue to work on. This is aimed at improving the company's operations, re-designing systems and processes to save time and cost, etc.

HR invests 2 per cent of total profits in building employee capability to enable them to deliver better business results. A learning academy is being set up for this. HR rewards high performers to drive business and employers are provided with higher opportunities, incentives, and communication channels to reinforce the desired behavior.

Pure Life is the company's health and wellness program, which has created the significant employee wow over the past two years. It contains multifaceted components which target employee awareness about wellbeing & health and also incentivizes employees to implement healthy living as part of their work life. The key sponsors for these initiatives are business leaders who lead specific initiatives across the board. The program offers an annual health check-up followed by medical diagnosis reports and supportive health advisories for employee to avail. 

Bajaj Finance Limited
Industry: Banks & Diversified Financials
Year of Incorporation in India: 1987
Total number of Employees: 2,200
HQ City: Pune

ees can nominate themselves for leadership grooming and development, after having met some performance criteria gifts them the opportunity to mould themselves as leaders. Ajuba rewards and recognizes their employees for their achievement through a grand event called "Annual Day". HR focuses a lot of succession planning and career development initiatives as well.

Every initiative in Ajuba is modeled after the nature of work at Ajuba along with the demographic, geographical and characteristic features of its multi-dimensional workforce. A lot of learning initiatives were launched like personal grooming or professional grooming for leadership skills. Every month, stress-busting activities, get-togethers and team-building activities are done in order to keep the employees engaged. At Ajuba, it is a practice to provide an environment where employees can learn, grow, relax and aspire. Emphasis is placed on Cultural Balance, Leisure Balance, Work-Life Balance and Work-Health Balance. The organization contributes towards the personal growth of the employees through various initiatives, keeping the employees engaged. 



**DHL Express
(India) Pvt. Ltd.**
Industry:
Transportation/Logistics
Year of Incorporation
in India: **1979**
Total number of
Employees: **1,773**
HQ City: **Mumbai**

DHL Express

Culture is one of the most defining characteristics of a good employer. Managing people respectfully with unwavering focus on results defines the company's culture very strongly.

Talking about leadership development, R.S. Subramanian, Country Manager, DHL Express India, said, "Leadership at all levels is an absolute critical factor. The focus is on frontline teams as they create the maximum value for the organization and are the building blocks of the company's culture. Focusing on developing their skills, giving them good career opportunities is our main priority. Since customers determine our business success, our customer servicing teams adapt an Insanely Customer Centric (ICC) culture."

Another programme to enhance leadership development is the Certified International Manager (CIM) program - designed to transform leadership thinking for the 21st Century. It is designed to create a team of DHL Express Managers who are inspired and capable of delivering 21st Century Leadership, driving the highest levels of performance and results across the business. Since its launch in December 2012, over 290 managers in India have been trained in CIM. "If I have to explain the leadership and management philosophy of DHL, I would state five guiding principles that we follow. First is teamwork and AS ONE we can make a strong team. We can produce greater results collectively than individually. Second is to produce great results without compromising on respect. Third is to focus on the bottom line and build a profitable network. Fourth is our FOCUS - motivated people, great quality service, loyal customers and finally focus on leadership development." 📱



Since customers determine our business success, our customer servicing teams adapt an Insanely Customer Centric (ICC) culture

- R.S. Subramanian, *Country Manager, DHL Express India*

Godrej Consumer Products Limited

**Godrej Consumer
Products Ltd.**
Industry: **FMCG**
Year of Incorporation
in India: **2001**
Total number of
Employees: **2,099**
HQ City: **Mumbai**

Godrej Consumer Products Limited is part of the 117-year-old Godrej Group. It is the largest homegrown home and personal care company in India, valued at over 3 billion USD, and ranks number 1 in hair colour, household insecticides and liquid detergents and number 2 in soaps.

"We have an overall 3-by-3 strategy, which is about focusing on three categories, Home Care, Hair Care And Personal Wash, in emerging markets in Asia, Africa and Latin America. We have the same approach towards our talent perspective as well. Our talent strategy is about having three

objectives ie: amazing careers, competitive rewards and a nurturing work environment, enabled by enduring values, tough love philosophy and our competency model. So basically, what we have done is create the 3-by-3 from the people practices perspective to actually back our 3-by-3 strategy with the ultimate objective of creating an inspiring place to work, where people feel excited to come to work every day," says Vivek Gambhir, Managing Director, GCPL.

The Tough Love philosophy aims at creating a high performance and meritocratic culture. The Love part of it focuses on offering a huge amount of support to our people in terms of their career, investment in their development and coaching. Along with the love, what has been communicated

Hindustan Unilever Ltd.


The company is a multinational, has a heritage of over 80 years in India, operates in the FMCG sector and has a big portfolio of products in India. The company has shown a net profit of Rs. 2,691 crores and Rs. 3,797 crores in India in 2011-12 and 2012-13 respectively. Sustainability of business and community is a key theme for the company in how it does its business and drives its growth agenda.

BP Biddappa, ED, HR, Hindustan Unilever, said, "One of the things that we focus on is the creation of great jobs that come with inculcating great responsibilities at a very early age. It also helps people develop the independence to transform their psyche. Secondly, having a great value system and a great performance culture could provide the hardware for the job but if it is not linked to the culture, then there will be a mismatch. You will be respected because of the professionalism you bring in and decisions are taken solely on merit."

"Thirdly, we have a set of agile work practices that recognizes that people work differently and we should be geared towards providing a better work environment and allows them to work to best of their ability be it having a crèche, debates in office or even changing the shape of the office," he added. "Through Career by Choice, women with more than two years of relevant prior work experience can work flexibly with the company, on live business projects ranging from six months to a year. The fourth thing is growth and capability building. Of course, through the normal course of being in an organization, you would be growing through promotion etc., but with our learning programs you would be able to develop the capability to sustain your performance."

One of the core areas of HUL's talent focus is the creation of great jobs and inculcating responsibilities at an early age

High performance culture – At HUL, the organization aims at providing clarity of goals and what is expected of each individual. Fair objectives, training, ratings and individual capability cards provide employees with a clear picture of where they stand on the basis of their performance and potential and they are provided with clear career progression paths. It advocates agile working – an approach to working with maximum flexibility and minimum constraints. Hence, all employees, are encouraged to work anytime or from anywhere as long as business needs are fully met and performance is determined by results, not 'time' or 'attendance'. The company has many initiatives that support fun, agility and work-life balance of employees, which helps employees form collaborative interest.


Culture is a very important dimension of the organization, a culture that is action-oriented and solution-oriented: A culture where people find solutions and don't blame each other and an escalation system that keeps all communication transparent. 

**Hindustan
Unilever Limited**
Industry: FMCG
Year of Incorporation
in India: 1933
Total number of
Employees: Over 16,000
HQ City: Mumbai



to Godrejites, is that the bar gets higher as people rise and expectations rise. Managers are expected to play a strong role in development and rotation of talent. The process of cascading goals and aligning them to the respective teams has been significantly improved. GCPL has also been differentiating in terms of rewards and compensation, as far as performance is concerned.

"We have also been clear that the best opportunities will be available to our best performers. In fact, our entire job rotation and stress on opportunities has been significantly enhanced over the last 12 months. We have also significantly tightened the process of career dialogues and performance dialogues. We have also been training to our team in terms of having career conversations and we are monitoring a lot of that," Gambhir says, explaining how the company's people processes have evolved over the past year.

HR plays a strategic role in these areas and like Gambhir says, it is as important as that of Sales or Marketing – First, laying out the guiding philosophy and defining the strategy is critical. Secondly, HR is a critical enabler to ensure that the philosophy is being executed and implemented. 



KEC International Limited
 Industry: **Infrastructure**
 Year of Incorporation in India: **1945**
 Total number of Employees: **5,048**
 HQ City: **Mumbai**

KEC International

Three overarching principles drive the way KEC International nurtures its diverse talent pool for multiple business verticals spread across geographies. First of all, the organization ensures that talent is grown internally through a varied customized mix of learning & development initiatives, like job rotations/enlargements and cross functional taskforces, focused towards exposing people to increased challenges. Added to that, the organization works toward constant recognition and celebration of performance which inspires people to perform and achieve global excellence. Lastly, the organization has been able to create a culture of empowerment & entrepreneurship to challenge status quo by providing independent responsibilities at early career phase. One such example is the concept of SMT.

It is important for the organization to retain top talent and through the above approach, KEC has seen above average retention of critical talent. According to Ramesh Chandak, MD & CEO of KEC, "By enhancing employee engagement through various physical and virtual initiatives, bringing transparency and robustness in PMS and delivering our EVP, we've been able to retain over 97% of critical talent within the organization"

Yugesh Goutam, Executive Director - HR at KEC, says, "We collectively brainstorm the business objectives and the ways to achieve them ensuring each manager is aligned to KEC's overall business goals. The key to our success is operational excellence, innovation and customer relationship. Through the goal-mean approach, this gets translated in the goals of the last mile employee and all efforts are made towards common objectives. Also, KEC's culture pillars are defined to support business growth imperatives. We have aggressively done education workshops using storytelling to explain to our people how to live this culture in their everyday actions. Gamification technique is extensively used to reinforce our culture. It is the culture and strong HR processes woven around it that have helped KEC build a strong brand value to evolve as an 'employer of choice' and a vibrant workplace." 

Marriott Hotels and Resorts

Marriott Hotels India Pvt. Ltd.
 Industry: **Hotels, Restaurants & Leisure**
 Year of Incorporation in India: **1998**
 Total number of Employees: **7,138**
 HQ City: **Mumbai**

Marriott is the fastest growing international hotel chain in the world with more than 3800 properties in 72 countries and territories. Marriott International began operations in India in December, 1999 with the opening of the 178 room Goa Marriott Resort. Today, the company has 23 hotels spread across eleven cities in India today. It is a relatively young chain of hotels whose first hotel in the country was established a little over a decade ago. Revenue has seen growth of 15 per cent in 2012 and 37 per cent in 2011. Additionally, Revpar for the company (Revenue per available room), a leading indicator of profitability in the hotel industry, has increased by 6 per cent in 2012 which is notewor-

thy as the average Revpar for the industry has reduced by 7 per cent during the same period. Going forward, the company's mission is to strengthen its presence in India by increasing its hotel base to 100 hotels and room availability to 15,000 rooms by 2015 (from 3,200 rooms as of 2012). In alignment with this, the company has been steadily adding five to six hotels to its company year on year and has plans to ramp up its expansion in the next year by adding 12 new hotels to its hotel pool in India (of a brand that has not been introduced in India yet) during the year.


HR is gearing up for the company's expansion plans through its Human Capital Planning process. It involves a long range plan which maps out the number of employees needed and level of

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation

The organization is one of the largest state-owned energy companies in India and part of the core companies created post-independence to assist in the task of nation building. The 34,000-employee strong organization, over the past five years, holds leadership position in several aspects of its business amongst international companies. Over the last three years, the group's turnover has been in excess of Rs 1 trillion. The company accounts for 65 per cent of India's production of oil and gas. Through its Perspective Plan-2030, ONGC is aspiring to become a major Global Energy Player, meaningfully integrated in the entire energy value-chain. Most HR processes are well defined and being run smoothly, and incremental initiatives are being undertaken to improve the processes further. HR in the Company has a wide canvas encompassing Employee Relations (ER), HRD, Training, CSR at the corporate level as well as all its work centres. HRD Group is involved manpower planning, recruitment and induction, performance appraisals, ER team looks after welfare, legal compliance, grievance redressal, Land Acquisition, Industrial Relations, etc. ONGC Academy looks into L&D needs and ensuring that the skills needed for tomorrow are in place, or there is a plan to build them. Sports, Infrastructure Development, Health & Wellness and Security & Fire Safety are also under the HR portfolio.

The HRD team analyses the long term work plan (set by the top leadership and under the guidance of the Administrative Ministry), separation trends (due to superannuation and voluntary exits), and determines the manpower induction plan, accordingly. As a strategic initiative, the

company supports premier campuses and helps in designing their curriculum, and ensures vibrant industry-academia-student interface to ensure that the supply of right skills is present as a key ingredient for the company's future growth.

Succession planning has become more structured through an in-house developed software tool called (Developing Inspired Successors for Higher Achievement- "DISHA"), which maps senior level job requirements to available competencies and expertise. The company has an established Learning Hub- ONGC Academy and Regional Training Institutes (RTIs) to develop the capability of its employees. Recently, new programs and capacities have been added to its on-going Management and Leadership development initiatives, such that every section of its employees get a fair chance for learning and development. 


Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited
Industry: Energy
Year of Incorporation in India: 1956
Total number of Employees: 34,000
HQ City: Dehradun



HR is gearing up for the company's expansion through a long range plan, which maps out the number of employees and level of expertise required for the number of hotels that have been planned

required expertise for the number of hotels that have been planned. In parallel, HR is working towards augmenting the workforce by sourcing employees from previously untapped regions (north-east India), developing its own hotel management schools, etc.

With one eye set on expansion, the company has the other set on improving productivity. HR aims to improve its productivity by 7 per cent by next year. It internally measures metrics of productivity and benchmarks these by location to ensure maximum return on investment.

HR also plays an important role in ensuring great customer service is delivered. HR works towards this by engaging employees at all levels and only then they would be able to deliver great customer service. It enables internal mobility (functionally and geographically) of employees and offers a multitude of development programs to them. 

Oil India Limited
 Industry: Energy
 Year of Incorporation
 in India: 1959
 Total number of
 Employees: 8,372
 HQ City: Duliajan

Oil India Ltd.

This company is the one of the largest Oil & Gas Public Sector companies engaged in the Production and Transportation of Crude Oil and Natural Gas. The company has now made a foray in to the renewable energy sector, which initially started as a project but has grown multifold. 2011 saw highest growth for this organization in terms of sales and revenues.

The organization has a pan India presence with balanced footprint in exploration and producing properties in many countries across the globe.

With over 8,000 employees in this company, the organizational structure has been designed as per the needs of the changing times and ensures achievement of the projected growth. In more than 50 years of its existence, this company has kept pace with the changing people needs and has moved from transactional to a more transformational role. Although HR policies are revisited only after a span of 5 years, the organization has managed to keep employees engaged through various L&D programs designed basis their needs. It has taken a step forward to send employees at their international plants to gain exposure and enhance knowledge application.

Oil India invests in L&D programs based on employee needs in addition to sending them to international plants for exposure and knowledge enhancement



It realizes the importance of management quotient for employees belonging to technical background, for which it has tied up with various B-Schools to impart administrative awareness and understanding. It has also instituted a steering committee to scrutinize all training needs and content in order to check for alignment with the organization strategies. HR believes that activities done on annual basis must support long term existence of the company.

The company has started the process of Organizational Transformation through team work and team learning and has named this initiative as Breakthrough Performance (BP). With the objective of aligning the individual vision with the organizational vision and work as a team towards being the fastest growing energy company with highest profitability, the company embarked on the strategic change initiative 'Breakthrough Performance' under the Centre of Reflection and Learning. 🌟

RBS Business Services Private Limited
 Industry: Banks and Diversified Financials
 Year of Incorporation
 in India: 2001
 Total number of
 Employees: 6,294
 HQ City: Mumbai

RBS Business Services Pvt. Ltd

At RBS, they believe very strongly in their Values - Serving Customers, Working Together, Doing the Right Thing and Thinking Long Term. Three key areas where RBS has been able to do very well are, clear articulation of roles, aligned people policies & practices and an engaged workforce. Values and operational processes are largely dependent on these three principles. RBS believes in developing well rounded professionals in such a way that they truly understand what it is to be a customer; and as part of its strong CSR program, the company provides ample opportunity to each employee to give back to the community.

During a conversation with any potential colleague, RBS makes it amply clear that it is

All talent management activities at the company are aimed at creating bankers for tomorrow based on the philosophy of "we care" for customers, the people and the community

Rural Electrification Corporation Ltd.


During the past few years business environment, business volume and project profile of REC has witnessed a sea change. To thrive in face of increased competition and respond to the new challenges, their business strategy was redesigned, thereby ensuring REC's strong presence into the entire electricity value chain leading to substantial improvement in its business volume. Implementation of this strategy required a professionally competent and motivated workforce. This was achieved through multiple measures including but not limited to overhauling and benchmarking of HR policies to attract and retain talent, revisiting employee compensation strategies including introduction of variable pay element linked to performance, comprehensive skill gap assessment and fulfillment, re-working of recruitment strategy, competency upgradation, development of a performance driven work and many more.

Rajeev Sharma, CMD, REC, said, "Organisational culture has a direct bearing on the fulfilment of business objectives. A positive culture is the primary requirement for the growth of an organization. At REC, we make all efforts to work towards building a healthy, happy work culture that is based on mutual trust and respect. This has led to better team work thereby resulting in improved performance for the Corporation."

A Public Sector Enterprise has to work within a set of principles laid down by the government. Attracting and retaining talent is critical in view of the increased competition being faced from the private players. The attraction of alternate employment with better terms does lure young

The company makes efforts towards building a healthy, happy work culture that is based on mutual trust and respect

professionals not only to the private sector but also other public sector companies. A public sector enterprise has to therefore devise suitable innovative strategies to retain its talent within the parameters as applicable. The corporation is working not only by improving its branding but also creating a better work ambience. In view of the regulated compensation management, the corporation works towards providing a better work content and a learning atmosphere where the employee works towards job enrichment and his personal growth. This helps in retaining and nurturing talent.

REC makes sincere efforts to adopt and in fact outdo the industry in terms of providing an environment, which nurtures productivity and promotes talent. The policy interventions adopted provide for adequate compensation benefits as also career progression. Meritorious performance is encouraged both monetarily and non-monetarily. The employees are encouraged to nurture a feeling of being an important partner in the growth story of the corporation. 

Rural Electrification Corporation Limited
Industry: Banks & Diversified Financials
Year of Incorporation in India: 1969
Total number of Employees: 678
HQ City: New Delhi

committed to investing in its people, and the organizations culture is one that invests in nurturing careers. The talent management team operates in driving the pride for the firm's values. Pankaj Phatarphod, Managing Director, RBS Business Services Private Ltd, India, says, "We are absolutely committed to make that investment in our people to help them think long term and build their careers with us. Our philosophy is based on "WeCare" - for our customers, our people and the community at large. As the feedback has shown, our people truly feel valued and treat RBS as home away from home!"

Raj Kaza, Head-HR, at RBS Business Services Private Ltd, India, says, "All talent management activities at the company are aimed at creating bankers for tomorrow and that describes the philosophy of everything that the company does." 



SAP Labs India
 Industry: IT Product
 Development
 Year of Incorporation
 in India: 1998
 Total number of
 Employees: 4,647
 HQ City: Bangalore



SAP Labs India

As market leader in enterprise application software, SAP helps companies of all sizes and industries run better. Positioned in high-tech centers around the globe, each location in the ever-expanding SAP Labs network has the flexibility of a small company.

“We take pride in our human resource policies, employer branding programs and innovation initiatives all leading to creating products that benefit our customers,” says Anirban Dey, Managing Director, SAP Labs India, adding “we believe that by taking care of the people, the processes and policies will take care of themselves.”

The management focuses on three things: Multi-disciplinary workforce, diversity (gender

and technical background) and mix of early talent and experienced talent. One of the things that the company focuses on is the right balance between early talent like graduates, or people with one or two years of experience and experienced talent who have been with the company for some time. Lately, the company has adopted the Design Thinking approach, which requires multi-disciplinary people to come together to understand a problem and solve it.

Bhuvaneshwar Naik, VP-HR, says, “Our people and organizational strategy is fitted clearly into our business strategy. With many innovative and industry leading HR initiatives like employee benevolent fund and game changing diversity and inclusion programs, we have firmly built an organization that cares for its people, is sustainable in its programs and passion to deliver value to our customers.” 

SCOPE International Pvt. Ltd.

Scope International Pvt. Ltd.
 Industry: IT & ITeS
 Year of Incorporation
 in India: 2001
 Total number of
 Employees: 9,451
 HQ City: Chennai

Scope International is the largest of the three captive hubs for Standard Chartered Bank. Amongst others, the key ones that have helped the company to be in the Best Employers' List continuously are

a) Creating and nurturing a High performance work culture – The performance management processes and reward and recognition programs are aligned to creating and sustaining high performance. They are transparent, fair and driven by a principle based approach. Empowerment of Line Managers in making performance and reward decisions within the organizational framework is a key enabler. ‘Pay for Performance’ (P4P), seeks to steer staff toward greater performance objectives and raise their bar on excellence.

Each business derives its Strategic People Agenda (SPA) at the beginning of the year, incorporating key people initiatives and interventions tied to achieving business goals

Starwood Hotels

Starwood believes in fostering innovation and creativity in its employees by giving them stretch roles and helping them succeed. The company follows a competency model called “Win with Talent.” Talent is among the top priorities for the CEO and the senior leadership of the company who invest a large part of their time on talent management and development. Any employee within the company can aspire and be considered for global opportunities. Dilip Puri, who is the Managing Director India and Regional Vice President South Asia at Starwood says, “I believe the battle for market share in the future will be fought over talent. When Starwood hires talent, it does not look for candidates who can fill up their needed position, but who have the potential to evolve and grow with Starwood to take on larger roles.”


Hiring for the right attitude and training for right behaviors which are consistent with the company’s culture and values is very important for the company. The empowering of employees to harness their creativity and innovation in dealing with real-life business situations and delivering a personalized and memorable guest experience is encouraged within the company culture. Associate engagement translates into enhanced service levels and improved guest satisfaction and directly translates into higher profitability for the company. One of the key performance indicators for the associates is guest satisfaction scores, which are real time.

The company invests in good leadership and developing leadership skills across all levels. Through all key initiatives, there is a strong focus on business and the ROI of each initiative tracked



Starwood Asia Pacific
Hotels & Resorts Pte. Ltd.
Industry: Hotels,
Restaurants and Leisure
Year of Incorporation
in India: 2006
Total number of
Employees: 4,316
HQ: Gurgaon/ NCR

Hiring for attitude and training for behavior constitutes the core of the company’s culture and value. Starwood looks for people who have the potential to grow and take up larger roles

to ensure optimizing of productivity. Starwood believes in investing in attracting, hiring and retaining the right talent and helping them reach their potential to evolve and grow with Starwood. 

b) Focus on continued Employee Engagement

– A structured approach to employee engagement with the Line Manager as the pivot and other enablers has helped us to create and sustain high levels of employee engagement


c) Career management – being a global organization helps us to provide our employees with diverse career opportunities. In all business units there is a structured approach to career management with tailor made development interventions.

d) Becoming a “Helping organization” – a holistic approach to employee well-being covering various aspects in the physical and emotional domain with a suite of programs viz. SHAPE (Scope Health Awareness Programme for Employees) – a customized health awareness initiative; Employee Assistance program (EAP), Healthcare, Alternate Workplace strategy (AWS).

Each business derives its Strategic People Agenda (SPA) at the beginning of the year. The SPA

incorporates key people initiatives and interventions tied to achieving business goals. As an example, the business goal of ‘Improving service levels and revenues by 15 per cent’ in the Global Customer care unit will lead to identifying key HR levers – attrition management, strategic hiring, learning and defining specific objectives with metrics which will in turn find its way into the SPA.

The process of framing the SPA is an inclusive exercise with inputs from all key stakeholder groups. The progress is tracked in the ‘People Forum’ which is a monthly activity with the senior leadership team in every business unit. The SPA remains the directional document for all people related matters and wherever significant changes occur during the course of the year due to internal reasons or external market conditions, the SPA is suitably modified.

The cascading of goals is a top down approach in Scope. 

TAFE

Tractors and Farm Equipment Limited
Industry: Manufacturing
Year of Incorporation in India: 1960
Total number of Employees: 2,056
HQ City: Chennai


Tractors and Farm Equipment (TAFE) is the third largest tractor manufacturer in the world, and the second largest in India by volumes. Discussing TAFE's areas of people focus, TAFE's Chairman and CEO Mallika Srinivasan said, "We have primarily focused on three areas – alignment, approach and leadership development. The entire TAFE team is clearly aligned to a common vision and direction. Our employees take ownership of adhering to our core values and strengths by articulating and institutionalizing it to further our value proposition. The transformation of our vision into reality is achieved by using a cross-functional approach to plan and implement all our major projects. We encourage and foster leadership development at all levels."

Muthu Kumar Thanu, Group CHRO, TAFE, said, "There are 150 cross-functional teams which involve over 1,000 employees. This team usually has about six to eight members from different functions with one member as the team leader. The cross-functional approach is a regular practice here and is not just limited to specific projects. Our vision is not just a set of mere words; it translates to how we project our business worth three years from now. With employee loyalty on the rise and high reten-



I enjoy working with the team as it is a very nice blend of experience and youth. We have strong loyalty and low attrition rate. About 70 per cent of our people are below 30

- Mallika Srinivasan, *CEO, TAFE*

tion rates, we are confident that we are headed in the right direction." "It is interesting to work with a team that has a fair balance of experience and youth," Chairman Mallika Srinivasan added. 


Wells Fargo India

Wells Fargo India Solutions Private Limited
Industry: IT & ITes
Year of Incorporation in India: 2006
Total number of Employees: 3,820
HQ City: Hyderabad

The organizational structure at Wells Fargo is that of a circle with employees and customers at the centre. The organization does not believe in hierarchies and therefore, everything that the organization does is focused on employees and customers. The company believe in "one Wells Fargo team member experience," and this translates into everything that an employee does. The organization continually endeavours to drive a philosophy called "People As Competitive Advantage" or PACA. As an organization, Wells Fargo takes an inordinate amount of effort in hiring the right kind of people. Once on board, the organization supports their development so that each individual contributes to growth of both the organization and the individual. The people connect philosophy serves as a conscience keeper for the HR team. This translates into behaviors for the organization, whether they are talking to candidates for a job or how a team member interacts within or outside the organization.

Wells Fargo believes that people are the competitive advantage for the company and everything about the company is centred on them. Shubh-ayu Sengupta, Senior Vice President, Human

Resources at Wells Fargo India Solutions, says, "While aiming to be a professionally run and high performing organization, the company is serious about having an open culture, which is not based on hierarchy, but grounded on relationship." Connect to the brand is a key component of the employment value proposition and the organization takes efforts to drive pride. Wells Fargo is not very different in India as it is in the US, except for a few operational changes customized to the market. Aavek Mukherjee, Managing Director, Wells Fargo India Solutions, says, "Our competitors can copy our products and systems, but they cannot copy our culture." When the company hires leaders from diverse places and at different hierarchies, driving a uniform culture comes across as a big challenge. They have a program based on the philosophy of Wells Fargo way of managing. Any new manager either hired or promoted undergoes a program called NEMO. A large emphasis of the program is the way of doing things at Wells Fargo. Values and visions are the core components of NEMO and all other subsequent programs that managers go through along the course of their careers.

Mukherjee adds, "We believe in grooming people into accepting failures. Unlike other employers we do not believe in the principle of 'one is as good as the last job'." The firm values loyalty and believes in judging people based on their contributions and credibility built over a period of time. 

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PRAKASH RAO

Reengineering Recruitment

It is time for HR managers to reengineer traditional models of hiring and devise a process to separate the art and the science of recruitment



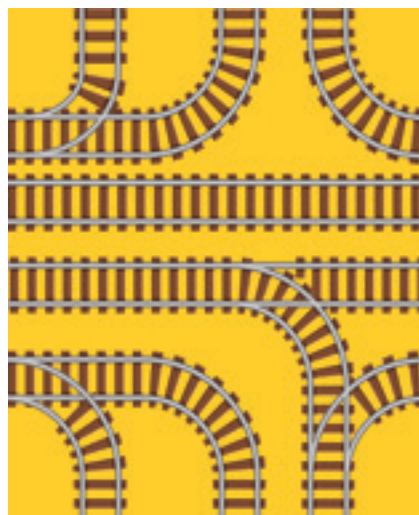
Nothing we do is more important than hiring and developing people. At the end of the day, you bet on people, not on strategies. Persistence and determination are not executed by the plan; they are executed by people. Effective recruitment of such people is critical to growing a prosperous business.

Traditionally, recruiters have taken pride in being able to identify the exact match from a big list of candidates. They are the sharp shooters who help identify and target the best from the talent pool. Then if the recruiters are adept and good at sourcing CVs of potential employees, why is filling up positions still such a challenge for most companies? That's because majority of recruiter's time (67 per cent) is spent in follow up and administrative transactions. We will have to move away from traditional models and towards building a more effective recruitment engine by segregating the art and science to get maximum output. The simple three steps are 1. Establish Sourcing COE, 2. Create Impression Center and 3. Leverage Technology.

First step is to establish a Sourcing COE, a center of excellence group with clear focus on identifying the exact source of the candidate. Dedicated focus should be on hiring through non-paid channels. Technology acts as enabler by integrating with social media. Online internal referral programme, social media integrated sourcing, crawlers on the net to flag matching candidates, help fish out the passive candidates. General Job boards are dying; we need to go niche to get what we want. We need to be visible everywhere online. Dive into mobile marketing (Mobile is not just a phone, its text, e-mail, video and web), get a corporate Facebook page (believe it or not, this is the best way to connect with people), start a LinkedIn group, be accessible


though instant messaging on your website, create free whitepapers, eBooks and PPTs, host an online video show on YouTube (talk about your employer branding), run referral programs online, build a better career site, use your company blog to drive talent, get on the micro blogs... especially twitter, automate your sourcing efforts through web crawlers, conduct virtual job fairs, stay active in specific industry online groups, host free webinars on hot topics.

The next step is to enhance optimal results from CV pool and enhance people experience in the process. Break down the process into various steps: CV shortlist, assessment, line interview, HR interview, reference check, documentation, offer and



An effective recruitment strategy is to plan and execute hiring with minimal input and maximum output

joining. Once the steps are identified, then establish the Turn Around Time (TAT) for each of these steps to get better results, post which technology enables us to create an Impression Center. Candidates and interviewers can connect on a helpline number (1800) for accessing information easily. Online assessment engine and video interviewing tool gives candidate easy access to complete interview rounds. Customer satisfaction, team hours saved through technology intervention and constant measurement of TAT at each process will lead to lean and controlled recruitment operations also enhancing the customer brand in the market. The endeavor is to reduce time spent on transaction-based activities on non-qualified candidates.

All the re-engineering & breaking down of process steps would not work without the backbone of technology. Applicant Tracking System (ATS) will help get all the different teams on the same platform and minimize transmission loss by automating the recruitment workflow. ATS also works as a connector with all the various technologies in the process. A cloud platform, which can easily integrate various sourcing tools, assessment engines and also seamlessly reach out to all stakeholders through social media, is the need of the hour. Now you are all set to move to version 2.0 of your recruitment process. Happy recruiting. 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

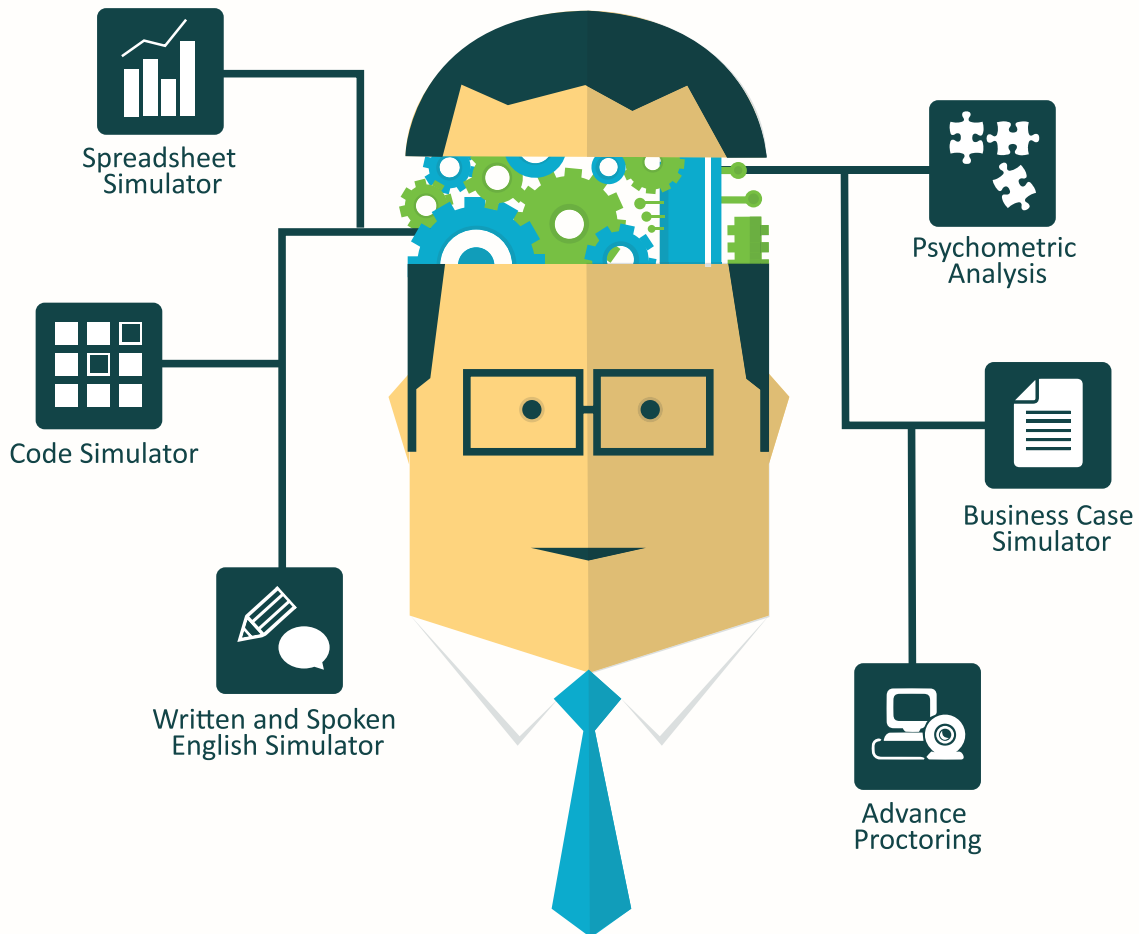
PRAKASH RAO is the Associate Vice President & Head of mpHRO (Multi-process HR Outsourcing) at PeopleStrong. With 15 years of experience, he is an expert in Shared Service Implementation and has led the implementation of HR shared services and recruitment shared services for clients across industries

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Q & A

People managers need to have the right tools

Sara Roberts, Head of Talent & Recruitment, Asia Pacific, Citi, talks about why it is important to retain talent, how communication is critical and Citi's value proposition to its employees

By Anu Babu Kurian



Q How important is retention of talent in the current scenario?

A It remains critically important. There will always be turnover and depending on the business model and requirements certain levels of turnover can be healthy. Ideally we want to manage turnover, as best we can, to retain talent and key skills that are critical to delivering the business strategy and plans. We keep track of where we are, what we think is an appropriate level of turnover against internal and external benchmarks and where we need to focus more attention.

At Citi we continuously review and refine what we are doing. For instance, one of the things that we launched recently was a toolkit for managers to support them with employee retention. We try and provide practical tools to our people managers to help them engage and retain employees. The reason we provided the toolkit was because even though there were a lot of best practices and tools around, there was no single source where people managers could access such tools. The toolkit was about not just about content but also providing single source, easy on-line access. Sometimes the best solutions aren't earth shattering and highly sophisticated, just practical and simple.

Whilst it may seem simplistic, a key success factor in talent retention is having people managers who are willing and able to engage and have quality conversations with individuals. Not just filling in a form or ticking a box, but having a discussion about their aspirations (rather than making assumptions) and how we can help them be productive and realize their full potential, which is very motivational from an employee's perspective.

We require our managers to spend quality time with all employees to help them keep track of their key priorities

Q A lot of companies are rationalizing the workforce these days. It is not just about getting the bottom 5 per cent out, it is also about whether you need so many people or not. What do you think is the right way to go about it?

A If you take a more holistic view then it's about ensuring that we have the right profile of workforce to meet our current and future needs. There isn't one single solution and it's not something you do as a one off, transformation these days is continuous. Our shareholders and stakeholders expect us to continue to evolve so that we right size and right place our workforce. As part of our business strategy planning we review and refine our workforce needs and this provides us with a sense of where we have gaps and opportunities. This helps us be more proactive in terms of hiring, deploying and training our workforce to meet the business needs.

In terms of right placement of resources, the recent trend for many organizations has been to move work to alternative locations. Asia has certainly been a beneficiary of this shift. Going back to the earlier point on workforce planning and being proactive, it is essential to do the best we can get ahead of the requirements to plan our hiring, onboarding and engagement activities. If you plan for what you can see then it's also easier to adjust to the unforeseen requirements that inevitably pop up, either because business priorities change or simply because opportunities arise.

Another component of workforce planning and profiling is the mix of permanent and contingent workforce, this can vary from country to country depending on local needs and regulations. As with many organizations, we have and will continue to ensure we have the right balance to provide stability and continuity on one hand and flexibility on the other.

Q What has Citi done to redefine the value proposition to its employees?

A We have to understand our employees, their aspirations and what they value. We have globally consistent expectations for our people managers. All people managers in Citi have a consistent goal in terms of our "Expectations of People Managers", this is in addition to our respective business/functional goals. So if you are a people manager in India, Mexico, Singapore, etc, we all have the same People Manager goals. These include the requirement to set clear goals for our employees and let them know what we expect of them in terms of what they do and how they achieve their goals. We require of our managers that they spend quality time engaging with all employees to help keep them on track with the key priorities and to understand and support their professional and career development needs and aspirations. We value and embrace diversity and inclusion. Whilst on the one hand we have clear and consistent expectations of our managers we support this with tools and training.

In terms of how we measure how we are doing in terms of delivering against our employee value proposition we have a regular employee feedback survey which helps us we measure and review trends, see what's valued the most, what we are doing well and where we need to continue to make improvements.

Q Why do you think employees need to escalate complaints to the top management? Is it because there is a general lack of confidence in the lower rung of HR leaders who are in touch with the employees?

A There are many influences in the way people respond to concerns and issues, escalation is one approach. The general "good practice" in organizations includes having: good communications, transparency, clear expectations and developing the right kind of culture and the environment that supports and encourages open communication. This has to be supported by people managers who are, as mentioned before, willing and able to engage and have the open conversations at all levels in the organization.

If the leader sets a tone of open communication and engagement, you will tend to see that filter down through the organization

I don't see this as an HR issue, of course we partner with our managers and employees to help create the right environment. At the end of the day, whilst it may seem simple, good communication is key, it helps to build trust and mitigate the need for escalation.

Q Do you think HR leaders have a problem with being straight or transparent?

A From my experience and perhaps it's the organizations I have worked for and with, the majority of my colleagues are open and transparent. Of course as with any of us, there are times when situations require discretion that may impact what can be shared and when, but again that's not an HR issue per se we all have to get the right balance. I find that generally people aim to communicate with openness and respect. Of course there will be times where the message can get lost in translation as it's cascaded down the organization. At Citi we use multiple communication channels to help us reach out to all employees and provide a clear and consistent message.


Q Do you think that this situation would come from the top leadership?

A Leaders do set the tone in organizations. In many organizations whenever there is a leadership change, there can be some degree of shift in priorities, culture, engagement etc.

If the leader sets a tone of open communication and engagement, you will tend to see that filter down through the organization.

Q What challenges do you foresee for India where youth is going to take over in the next 10 years?

A As with anything, it's certainly helpful to see the future trends and respond accordingly. It is important for organizations to factor in the impact of the millennial generation in terms of our employee value proposition and how we are going to attract and retain talent in future.

It also impacts leadership and organizational culture, the different generations have different needs, values and aspirations and this will inevitably reflect our culture as new generations of leaders come through. Citi like most organizations embrace change and regard the millennial trend as part of our diversity and inclusion opportunity. 

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ABHIJIT BHADURI

Building the workplace of our dreams

Before you start building the workplace of your dreams, you should start hiring the right kind of people

I was listening to my soon-to-be-ex-employee. He was determined to move and get going with his own start-up. He wanted to get the “exit interview formality” out of the way and leave the organization without burning his bridges. He tried to assure me, “I am not joining any other organization. I am starting something on my own. That has always been my dream.”

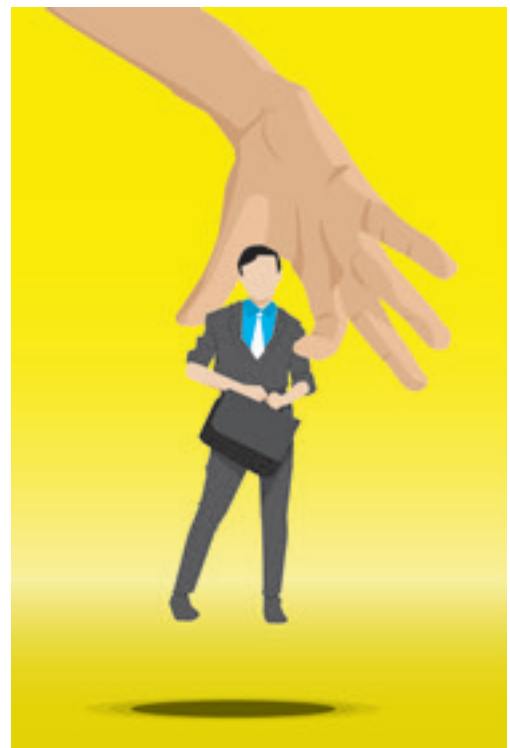
There is no denying the fact that the entrepreneurial dream tempts everyone on some days and some people every day. We have all read the story of some young man who was tucked away in a corner of a vast sloth-like organization, trying to focus on his day job. Then one day, there is a flash of inspiration that leaves the minion convinced that he has to follow in the footsteps of Steve Jobs.

The minion is temporarily blinded by his own passion. He looks up from his desk to look at the framed photo of Steve and then remembers reading somewhere, “Make a dent in the universe”. There is something to that line that inspires. We all forget one little factoid – even the biggest and clumsiest beast was once a quivering, whimpering and cute little baby. Every obese body was once a graceful trim entrepreneurial dream.

Organizations have a lot in common with humans. As long as they have only one employee ie the founder-cum-CEO-cum-coffee-machine, things go smoothly. There is no need to do performance appraisals and decide on who gets a bonus and who will be passed over for a promotion. This is the closest thing to Eden that an organization can ever experience.

The hard work pays off, business grows and soon becomes big enough to need office space, some employees and more people whose day job is to keep the leadership pipeline well-oiled. That is when the nimble start-up begins to look like a bloated wooly mammoth. The dream company begins to resemble the behemoth you ran away from.

Then when an employee sits in your office, hands you her resignation letter, you shudder at the feeling of *deja-vu*. She wants to quit working



Firms with highly engaged employees are 50% more likely to outperform firms with disengaged employees by a factor of 54% in employee retention and 89% in customer satisfaction

for your organization because she finds no meaning in her work. Wait. That is not how it is supposed to be. You left the corporate world to build the best workplace on earth. What went wrong?

Is there a business benefit that justifies our desire to build the best workplace on earth? Apparently there is. Highly engaged employees are on an average 50 per cent more likely to outperform firms with most disengaged folks – by 54 per cent in employee retention and by 89 per cent in customer satisfaction.

A recent Harvard Business Review article spoke about six characteristics of a dream organization:

1. You can be yourself
2. You're told what's really going on
3. Your strengths are magnified
4. The company stands for something meaningful
5. Your daily work is rewarding
6. No stupid rules

This then is like the proverbial horizon. Something that you know exists and you can see it but no matter how fast you run, it remains elusive. One man's rule book is another employee's bureaucracy. Who is to decide?

If you unpeel the six statements, they represent very basic human needs – to be valued, to grow, to do work, which is meaningful and not just busy-work, and experience a sense of autonomy. Isn't that what Daniel Pink had stated as his three factors that motivate people – autonomy, mastery and purpose. The ability to function autonomously translates to “you can be yourself” and “no stupid rules”. Mastery is all about “having your strengths magnified” and “being told what's really going on”. Purpose is the need we all have, to do “work that is rewarding” or to work for a company that “stands for something meaningful.”

There are many organizations that have experimented with providing their employees a higher than usual level of autonomy, mastery and purpose. When Netflix opened up its people philosophy to the world to see and gasp in disbelief, it generated a lot of speculation on whether it was something sustainable. Their core idea was that a great place to work is not about free sushi or free massages. It is about working with great people. So the approach to hiring can make a huge difference in building a dream workplace.

If you want to build a dream workplace and don't know where to start – I recommend that you start with hiring. That can be approached in two ways. If you need to run a factory where efficiency is the final goal, make sure everyone you hire conforms to a mold. That makes each employee replaceable with the other without impacting the final output. Such a workforce is managed by clear rules and ensuring compliance.

If you are in the business of ideas and innovation, then make sure your recruitment focus should be on hiring people who are diverse, highly skilled and share the same dream. Managing such people is also tougher. They have to be managed by the culture and not compliance. Every person hired into the team can make a difference to the quality



If you are in the business of ideas and innovation, then make sure your recruitment focus should be on hiring people who are diverse, highly skilled and share the same dream. Managing such people is also tougher

of the output and the culture of the organization. Dreams flourish in these workplaces.

Finally, the dream workplace needs to have strong feedback mechanisms to listen to customers and monitor the heartbeat of the employees. The organization has to make minute course corrections on a continuous basis. Organizations that are able to connect to the employees and customers will win in the marketplace. Dream organizations build deep emotional connections. The dream workplace finally exists in our heart. 🍷

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ABHIJIT BHADURI is Chief Learning Officer at Wipro Group

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Q & A

Failure is part of being an entrepreneur

INTERVIEW



Vinita Ananth, CEO and Founder of GitGrow, tells People Matters about her transition to entrepreneurship, the rewards and risks associated with it and her advice for those who dare to dream big

Q You started your career in the Silicon Valley and have worked for mid-sized, large-sized companies in the tech field for about 12 years. How did you transition from being a successful professional to an entrepreneur? Can you tell us a bit about the experience?

A When I came back to India after 12 years, I worked for HP as the Director of Software-as-a-Service, responsible for sales and delivery in Asia Pacific and Japan for two-and-a-half years. But, I wanted to start a company of my own. Soon, my ideas began to take shape in HP. When the timing seemed just right, I took the plunge to become an entrepreneur.

I established my first company, Social Hues Software, in 2010. We were among the pioneers of social media analytics in India. The vision was to develop software that could collect and index data points and provide inputs for appropriate action to

companies. The software did its job, but gradually we realized that human intervention was necessary to understand the context of the customer and his/her business. This required us to hire people who could do the additional analysis of the data, visualize and present it to the customer. Hence, our company started becoming more of a consultancy rather than just a software company.

Although it was a lucrative business, I wanted to focus on building the software rather than a consultancy. Somehow, things didn't materialize the way we wanted them to. Secondly, the number of competitors increased daily and it required us to be cutting edge in social media analytics or think of another white space that wasn't already captured.

We saw great initial success with some very interesting assignments. A lot of the top executives were wowed with the results that we were giving them. So, it was a hard decision to wrap up the consultancy and move on to building another software company in a related space. The next company we started was GitGrow, which simplifies web analytics. It looks at a variety of factors that understand



{SCAN THE CODE TO KNOW
MORE ABOUT GITGROW}

the growth of start-ups and can give indicators to various stakeholders that are interested in investing in start-ups.

Q Do you think this trend of leaving a successful job and becoming an entrepreneur is India-specific or a global trend? What are the rewards and risks of being an entrepreneur?

A Entrepreneurship is certainly a global trend. In the last 10 years or so, the number of technology entrepreneurs has gone up drastically. In the US, it is quite common to see young, ambitious graduates starting a company of their own. It is different from what we see in India where most graduates start to look at a corporate career before they think of entrepreneurship. The average age of entrepreneurs in India and the US is hugely different. Here, we see significant numbers of entrepreneurs who are in their mid 20s or 30s.

You become an entrepreneur because you have identified a problem and you are truly interested in solving that problem. That journey of identifying a problem, working towards a solution, seeing so many different ways of gratifying a customer and seeing success is the fun part. The risk is that the challenges come in many different ways. It is a very long journey; sometimes the reward to being an entrepreneur comes after a long struggle. So, one has to be prepared for that. The other part, which is a little tough to swallow, is that 99.9 per cent entrepreneurs fail globally. So, you have to ask yourself if you are comfortable with that thought. If you are, you are really going to enjoy being an entrepreneur. If not, the best way to pursue your career would be to join a corporate.

Q Why do entrepreneurs fail?

A Failure is more accepted in certain scenarios as compared to others. A large number of people that I talked to feel that they can't openly talk about their failures as it may impact their future. Hence, they only talk about the cases where they were able to overcome the failure. A lot of the learning can come from failures that led nowhere, which forced you to shut shop, start again, or move on.

There is lot of genome analysis that is being done on entrepreneurs. Not having the product-market fit, not understanding the customers, not managing costs etc. are some of the very common reasons why entrepreneurs fail. A lot of the times when there are writings on the wall, entrepreneurs don't want to read them.

In my case I said that I will do business in India because I wanted work-life balance. The space I was in i.e. social media saw a lot of money spent outside of India. I knew that focusing on a particular geogra-

phy will limit my growth. When I started, I thought that I would get the product market fit and that the market will grow.

I was hoping the tide would turn at a particular juncture but that didn't happen. So, there are many reasons why failure happens; the entrepreneur should be aware and should acknowledge that failure is a part of being an entrepreneur. The mantra that the West adopts very nicely is that it is ok to fail fast. They say: Experiment, try, observe, decide your next action, close if you think it is not going to materialize. That is really what an entrepreneur should be doing again and again.

You become an entrepreneur because you have identified a problem and you are truly interested in solving that problem. That journey of identifying a problem, working towards a solution, seeing so many different ways of gratifying a customer and seeing success is the fun part

Q In your corporate avatar, you grew up the ladder and you had a lot of experience in managing people. How difficult was the whole HR and leadership management business in your avatar as an entrepreneur?

A Very different. As a manager in a corporate, you give people certain amount of guarantee in terms of job, training, team support etc. As an entrepreneur, quite obviously, none of that could be promised to an employee.

In terms of talent management, it is a bit difficult until you get growth because the reward for people who come to a start-up type of environment is growth. You really need to ensure there is a lot of team building that happens when you get growth in your start-up. Until then, hiring and getting people in and finding the right motivators will be a challenge. Usually, compensation cannot be the most important factor because a start-up cannot compensate these people fairly. So, retention usually happens when the journey is good.

Q In your opinion, is there any difference between women or men entrepreneurs in the way they look at their business?

A I think there are some differences

that come up and it is mostly in terms of revenues. What I find is that women entrepreneurs do not necessarily look at short-term revenues as the most important factor while they are doing day-to-day decision making. For men, somehow the topline is big and bold. I would say that women leaders differ from men leaders in their prioritization of revenues, building the right talent, having the right product strategy in order to capture market. But regardless, in order to build a healthy business the top priority will be same; it is just the order of priorities that is different.

Q The market conditions are more conducive to make an idea fail even when an entrepreneur may do the right thing. Looking at the uncertainty of economy, what is your advice for entrepreneurs who are starting up?

A My belief as an entrepreneur is that if one has a really good idea and can execute well, it is going to see success regardless of whether it is a slow economy or booming economy. There are going to be some things that will be different in a slow economy, such as slower growth and unique challenges. If you are a really good entrepreneur, you will take on all of these uncertainties and still succeed.

As an entrepreneur I wouldn't even be too concerned about a slowing economy. From the topline point of view, money that one can make from a slowing economy will be slightly different from a booming economy. But if one is in the right space, and has got good products, it will get him success in the longer term. 🍷

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ELANGO R

Resolve, make them, here is how to keep them!

There are some simple ways to make resolutions stick like keeping a journal, leaving margin for error, defining milestones and finding a buddy



After reading my last column on New Year Resolutions for HR, many readers reached out to me and said that it was all well and fine to make resolutions but how do you stick to them? A few weeks into 2014, I am certain many of us are struggling to keep up with the resolution we made or are already racked with guilt after breaking our New Year resolution.

There is a lot of debate on whether these resolutions are worth the trouble. New Year is just another day – what is all the fuss about?? Our life doesn't change from the 31st to 1st, does it? (Except of course the hangover effect sets in if you had a rocking party!).

I personally feel the New Year brings with it a sense of hope: There is a spring in the step, a glimmer in the eyes and a desire to ensure that we work towards making the next 12 months better and bigger. My perspective on resolutions – they are good, a fresh start for a change. It is done with the understanding that something has to change and the first step towards that is being made at the beginning of

Think through before you make a resolution. Why are you making it? Your reasons for making it should be very clear

a New Year when there is a buzz, a newness that is inexplicable! It is a great feeling to start afresh, be it stopping something or starting something.

On the first day back to work in the New Year, as I walked around the office to wish colleagues and team members, I decided to quickly check on whether people made resolutions and if yes, what resolutions people had made. Here is a quick summary of what I heard...



(SCAN NOW TO TO READ ELANGO'S BLOG)

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- An overwhelming 52 per cent had weight loss or leading a more active lifestyle as a resolution. Running seemed to be everyone's favorite. A colleague said it well "this year is the year of more moving and less sitting".
- Another 20 per cent wanted to stop something like consuming alcohol, chocolates etc .
- Another 21 per cent had workplace goals like "I will work less, I will be on time for meetings, I will be a more nurturing leader, I will be very focused on professional goal improvement".
- The rest were too fragmented to categorize but I recall many did have a lot of "I would like to travel more" resolutions!

While we have heard many of the above before, what caught my attention was an interesting resolution: "This year I am going to stop saying Yes to everyone". Wow! That's a new one, I thought. Another colleague shared how she had actually done a quick survey with her team. The survey was quick – Two things to stop, start and continue! I believe she received some very valuable feedback.

Resolutions indeed make for interesting reading and conversation! But how many will stick to their resolutions? Going by experience, most will break it within the first week and the remaining by the end of the month. This brings us to the question: Is there a way to make the resolution stick?

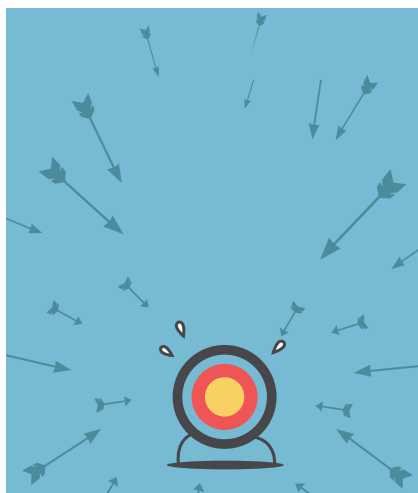
Yes, there are some simple ideas that can help us stay the course. I am sure there are many more tried and tested ideas out there, the below are based on personal experience and from what I have heard has worked for near and dear ones.

Idea 1: Define the WHY

Think through before you make the resolution, why are you making it? The WHY has to be clear, and it cannot be that everybody else is making one, so will I. For instance, the colleague who wanted to quit alcohol was having weight and wallet issues. His/Her why was very strong and clear.

Idea 2: Define success and milestones

'I want to do' statements are akin to 'I want to play football' without goal posts. Define success, for example a promotion by year Y, reduction in weight from X to Y and increase in savings to Z Rs are tangible goals. While these are end goals, please do also think through milestones that make you feel good. For example, before a promotion, a monthly award or an additional project could be a milestone to achieve. Likewise, 500gms loss in month 1 is a good enough milestone!



Many of us make resolutions but don't think through what changes we will have to make in the rest of our lives to stay the course

Idea 3: Find a buddy

It is a proven fact that gym goers who have a buddy tend to stay at it longer than people who go at it alone. The biggest strength and hurdle to keeping our resolutions are our friends. They will either always tempt you with "one bite of chocolate cake" or "oh! C'mon one drink" or say "what's this new avatar of yours, you were better off in the earlier one"! In such cases, turn a deaf ear, else you will fail. Be gentle, be firm and if need be find other company! Getting into a group that is trying the same is a sure fire way of staying the course. On the other hand, having a buddy who will call out when you slip helps. Can you trust somebody to tell you to your face that you are breaking your resolution? If yes, you have a greater chance at success and this is a buddy for keeps☺.

Idea 4: Keep a journal

Seems tedious and old school but writing that journal everyday really helps. The journal becomes your conscience, your record keeper and sounding board. Write about everything, what you feel, who said what, did you give in that just once! This is a great way to understand yourself better

and be honest while trying to keep the course.

Idea 5: Don't be too harsh on yourself, make room for an aberration or two

Despite the best intentions, we all will succumb and have that one drink, that one bite of cake, that one rude comment made etc. It's ok, feel bad about it, record it in your personal journal but get back on course. Don't let that one slip convince you that you can't do it. It is a mere aberration. Accept you made it, figure out why you did and move on!

Idea 6: What will you change?

Many of us make resolutions but don't think through what changes we will have to make in the rest of our lives to stay the course. It could be the company we keep, the time we get up, our commute to office etc. For example, the colleague who asked for feedback on what to change received advice that they were very curt in their dealings. Now, just resolving to be nice will not help. Understanding why they are curt and fixing the underlying reason is key to success. In this case, the person realized that they had a lot on their plate and hence did not have time to have nurturing conversations. This way he/she was focusing on the essential. Unless they decide to come in early or say no to some work, they will never be able to get out of this "curt" trap.

Idea 7: Establish a routine

Can the change become a part of your schedule? If you want to leave at 6pm everyday to spend time with your children, can you mark it on your calendar? If you want to go to the gym at 6am everyday, can you weave it around your daily schedule? You want to be seen as a nurturing leader, can you schedule ones with your team every month and make it happen?

Am certain, if you implement these seven ideas you will be thanking me by the end of this year☺.

Start with resolving to use one or two of the above ideas initially... You will be surprised with how making one small change happen invigorates you and sets you for success for even bigger things in life.

Like they say the road to hell is paved with noble intentions. Let this year be the year of converting intent to action, leading to results. Happy New Year and here's wishing you success with your resolutions. 🍀

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The power of self-selection

Hiring, training, motivating and rewarding are some of the key functions of management. However, when individuals can self-select into roles and responsibilities in organizations, these management processes are no longer necessary



A few years ago, my colleagues Oliver Alexy, Markus Reitzig and I became intrigued by new forms of organizing like Wikipedia and Linux. These involve thousands of voluntary contributors from around the world, often working without direct communication, producing a result that matches or exceeds the quality of products from traditional corporations like the Encyclopedia Britannica or Windows, respectively. How do they do it?

Our research led us to confront some of the most fundamental issues in organization theory, including what an organization really is. All organizations, from an ant colony to an IBM must have solutions to four universal problems in order to exist. These are: Dividing the goals of the organization into tasks; allocating these tasks to individuals; motivating these individuals and coordinating with them. The nature of the solutions to these universal problems, however, varies enormously across organizations. In the ant colony, natural selection writes them into genetic material, which produces inter-locking patterns of behavior. In IBM, senior managers exercise authority through a hierarchy to get large-scale collaboration.

Examples like Wikipedia and Linux point to the enormous variety and innovation that can exist even within human organizations. In particular, they diverge from traditional corporate hierarchies, most sharply in their reliance on task allocation through self-selection. In these organizations, no boss decides what employees should do – rather individuals choose when and how to contribute. They are motivated to do so because of intrinsic motivation, which also means there is less need for monetary incentives and monitoring to prevent shirking. Since by and large individuals enjoy the activities they excel at, staffing based on self-selection means




Corporations and even political parties have re-discovered the benefits of letting people choose how to contribute

that training becomes less necessary as well. Further, mutual suspicions of free riding or incompetence may also be less likely to arise because it is visible to all that others are also contributing through self-selection. The principle of self-selection into tasks thus economizes significantly on the costs of management.

Wikipedia and open source software projects like Linux are not alone in discovering these ideas of “frugal organizing”. Organizations as diverse as W.L. Gore and Valve (the maker of video games) have been successfully exploring the power of self-selection based task allocation. Most recently, the astounding electoral achievement of the Aam Admi Party in India pointed to an interesting example outside

the business world. As I researched the story behind their success, I learnt that the AAP was using the same sort of organizational techniques that have made Wikipedia and Linux successful – the creation of a system that attracts valuable but voluntary (i.e. free to the organization) contributions from a large number of people distributed in different locations, of the right kind and at the right time required. The critical point here is the variety of ways in which volunteers could choose to contribute, irrespective of their financial strength, skills, free time and even location. A clearly stated inspiring idea, combined with a smartly designed structure that allows volunteers to choose from a menu of ways in which to contribute, led to an extremely effective and cheap campaign.

What the AAP seems to have clearly understood is that when people choose how to contribute to an organization, then many of the traditional costs of organizing – selecting, monitoring, motivating, rewarding – disappear. But such systems cannot be counted on to arise spontaneously; a lot of thought has to go into the design of a structure that allows and attracts such contributions. One of my senior colleagues whose work I admire enormously is Prof. Carliss Baldwin (HBS), and along with her co-authors, she has coined a beautifully apt phrase - “architectures of participation” to describe such structures. Leaders in organizations based on the self-selection principle should probably be more architect than manager. 

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Video interviews help you easily determine unsuitable candidates

Annabelle Diamantino, CEO & Co-founder of Video Recruit, talks about why she decided to take up entrepreneurship and how her company is different from Hangouts/Skype



Q It has been three years since Video Recruit was formed. Tell us about your journey

A It basically began three years ago when I was looking for a career change. I was the Regional IT Director for Havas Worldwide in Prague when the co-founder of Video Recruit approached me with this idea of automated video interviewing. He was visiting his brother in the US who was running a chain of hotels and completely frustrated with the idea of having to sit through another interview. It was then he came up with the concept of automated video interviewing. The co-founder came back to Prague and then approached me. That's how it started. The journey has been absolutely amazing. Building a start-up is one of the most professionally satisfying things one can do. The experience of building every aspect of your business and your network is absolutely amazing.

Q In this social age, how important will video platforms become? Why should a recruiter opt for Video Recruit and not conduct the interview with other social media tools like Google hangouts or Skype?

A Google hangouts and Skype are great video tools. But they require both sides to schedule a date and time and commit half an hour to an hour of their time for the interview. Both those things are eliminated in automated video interviews. Google hangouts and Skype are perfect for the next round of interviews. Once you have the list of candidates whom you know are interesting, have an interactive interview over Skype or Google. To invest more than an hour on a candidate based on his/her CV alone is proving to be extremely inefficient. We position the video interview as a screening tool. In most cases, the CV is not that informative. Some candidates oversell

Combine the CV and the automated video interview so that you are able to verify the information on the CV. It is a screening tool

themselves, while some undersell. We combine the CV and the automated video interview so that you are able to verify the information on the CV. For example, if a person says that s/he has great communication skills, you can check for yourself if they do by asking them questions and see them reacting spontaneously during the video interview. It helps you eliminate people who don't fit the bill. It doesn't necessarily tell you whom to hire but definitely who is unsuitable. You are sure to end up with a 5-start shortlist.

Q Do you think video interviews will replace face-to-face interviews soon?

A Automated video interviews should never replace face-to-face interviews. We don't believe any company should use automated video interviewing as a selection tool but purely as a screening tool. The automated video interview gives you a lot of information about the candidate but before you hire them, the company should definitely invest time to meet the candidates face-to-face.

Q Video Recruit wants a slice of the 220 billion euros recruitment market. Yet you chose to target Europe by setting up your headquarters there instead of the US. Why? How do you see the India story developing?

A We know that one-third of the recruitment market belongs to the US, one third to Europe and one third to the rest of the world. By being in Prague, we can still tap two thirds of the market. The recruitment challenges in Europe, Asia and Africa are very different to those in the US. Since we are based right in the heart of Europe, we built the platform with 11 languages and we keep adding more. Our team is also multi-national. We believe that we are the right partner for this part of the world.

About the India story, we think it is a great and exciting opportunity. Just the geography of the country makes it difficult for the companies to have access to the talent pool. We remove that constraint and make them available at a very low cost, which is an attractive proposition for companies. Using Video Recruit, the companies can be assured of a better quality hire, which is actually the main value add that we provide.

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VIVEK PARANJPE

The Counsellor

Companies need to worry about organizational dynamics before making any move, even if it means calling back a founder or giving a pay rise

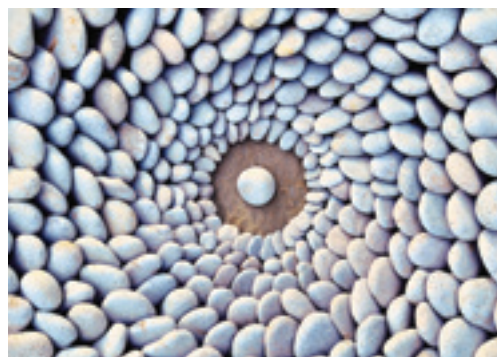
The tug of war over talent and pay

CASE 1: An IT major is going through a major reshuffle right now. Many of the senior leaders have quit and left for greener pastures. The tech major had been losing market share for a while now and warranted the stepping in of the founder. However, since the founder came back, senior executives have been leaving the company, with some taking up top-level positions in rival companies. On the other hand, an automotive company recently promoted its leaders across the board. At least 20 executives were given out-of-turn promotion according to news reports. The automotive company has also seen churn at the top level. What is the best way to handle leadership development, especially if a company is going through continuous churn and losing business?

These contrasting cases are clearly indicative that aspirations of the people have to be dealt with. Top talent is always achievement oriented with a need to grow. It is comparatively easier to hire great people, however, it is very difficult to retain them. Organizations have to not only invest in the development of talent, but also ensure opportunities for growth, adequate freedom and flexibility and provide space to perform.

We are dealing with knowledge workers who are well educated with huge aspirations and humongous potential. We can't curb their growth needs. Organizations that build internal cadres have to be extra sensitive to these factors, especially since the expectations for the internal growth are very high. Ideally, if a culture is set that there will be some infusion of external talent at all levels, while internal talent is taken care of, the problems are likely to be lesser.

Retired leaders getting back into the corporation for specific projects or as coaches and mentors is less likely to create an upheaval. Such moves to



Development and retention of top talent for leadership roles is an ongoing activity and can't be looked at in isolation or as a one-off event

help the organization navigate through difficult times may be seen as a welcome step. Before any critical move like what is stated in the first case above is made, careful consideration to the organizational dynamics is a must. Unfortunately, in most cases, emotional decisions are made and that can be counterproductive.

Now let us look at the case of 20 leaders being given out-of-turn promotions. First and the fore-



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VIVEK'S BLOG}

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

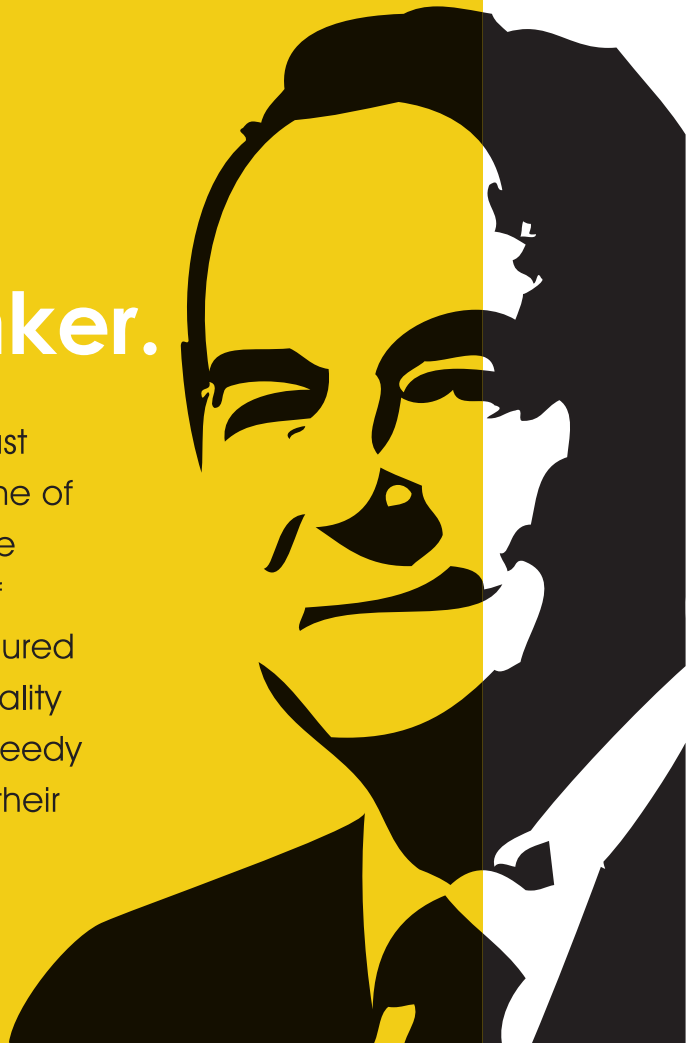
VIVEK is a Senior HR professional with over 35 years of experience, ranging several leadership positions, in India and abroad. He leads his consulting practice since 2003 and presently works as a Strategic HR Advisor to Reliance Industries, and is also an independent Director on the Board of Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd. Prior to this, he was based at Singapore for several years where he was Director HR - Operations at Hewlett Packard for the Asia Pacific Region.

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In a global capitalist economy of today, the Labor market for the top leadership talent as well as that of technocrats is no more confined to local or even national boundaries

most, we have to keep in mind that promotion is a method to fill a vacancy and not to accommodate the people. We have to build organizations around roles/structures and not around people. The person has to be ready to perform effectively on the role he/she is getting promoted to. If we promote people just to retain them without the commensurate role change and the associated capabilities to perform on the new role, we are likely to see a poor performance over time. This will also damage the cultural fabric and create wrong expectations. Such out of turn promotees are likely to use similar mechanism to retain their teams.

Development and retention of top talent for leadership roles is an ongoing activity and can't be looked at in isolation or as a one-off event. Identifying the right person for a role is crucial. Different capabilities are required at different times for the same role. During a downturn, we need different leadership capabilities and during the growth phase very different capabilities. The management has to ensure careful consideration is given to the job description as well as the current environment

and the situation before making promotion decisions. One should not hesitate to infuse external talent, even at the top if the internal right people are not available.

CASE 2: In January, the Swiss voted on whether to limit the salaries of top executives so they don't earn more in a month than the lowest paid workers earn in a year. This move could mean big pay cuts for business leaders who are earning millions. Calls to limit the pay of top executives are not restricted to Switzerland. In India too these issues have been raised time and again. But would such a move work here? Is such an exercise warranted in India?

Swiss voters have decisively rejected this proposal to cap "fat cat" pay as they call it, in a ground-breaking referendum on the issue. The measure was opposed by 65 per cent of the voters. Executive pay has been a hotly debated topic in Switzerland in recent months, to ban "golden hellos" and "golden goodbyes", amid popular and political outrage over revelations that Novartis planned to pay its outgoing chairman, Daniel Vasella, SFr72m (\$79.4m) as part of a non-compete agreement.

This kind of move is not new. In the good old days in the socialistic era, they used to say that the ratio of the top leader's pay to that of the lowest paid worker can't be more than 1:8. Socialist philosophies are always opposed to the high compensation levels of the top leaders. Calls to limit the pay of top executives are not restricted to Switzerland. Anger over huge payouts is reflected time and again in many societies. French President is pushing for a cap on pay at state-owned firms of 20 times that of the lowest paid employee. Spain's opposition Social Democrats have adopted the 1:12 ratio as part of its economic policy.

In a global capitalist economy of today, the Labor market for the top leadership talent as well as that of technocrats is no more confined to local or even national boundaries. The compensation structure for such talent therefore has to be global and not local. Any artificial barriers to the compensation levels will lead to the flight of talent, which corporations can't afford. The argument against the cap on the top executive compensation is due to the fear that competitiveness of the corporations / country to attract and retain talent will erode. In India too, in the periods from 60s to 90s, we witnessed "brain drain" or flight of the talent to the developed countries - partly due to the lack of opportunities and also partly due to attractive compensation leading to better life style outside India.

I believe that instead of creating artificial caps on the compensation, considerable debates and deliberations must focus on how to make the top leadership compensation reasonable and fair. 🙏

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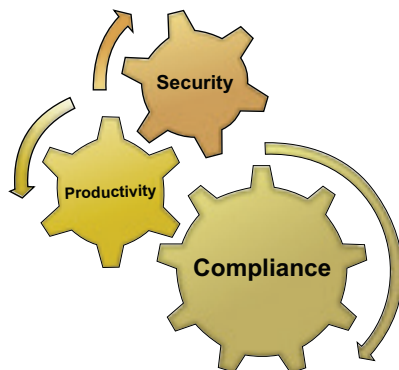


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ANKUR PODDAR

The recipe of handover

A well defined framework backed by seriousness of the concerned parties along with close supervision can be a powerful recipe

The recent movie 'Lunchbox' reminded me of some common intricacies of a typical handover process. I could empathize with the new employee who was struggling to get the mindshare of the current role-holder occupied with his daily deliverables.

By definition, handover means a formal transfer of job knowledge, role responsibilities and resources by the outgoing incumbent to the new role-holder and is considered to be a starting point of any role transition.

The Truth

After the movie, I was trying to explore what options a new role-holder would have if the handover was not happening properly due to non-seriousness of the outgoing member and the only one I could think of was that possibly he would approach the supervisor, share the concern and request his intervention. This in turn might aggravate the issue because in all probability the employee giving handover might take an offence to it.

The other dimension that came to my mind was the 'relative stake at hand'. For the new guy, who has to prove himself, the stakes are very high and he would try to get the most out of this handholding phase. For an outgoing employee who has lived the role and who may be joining a new organization or moving into some other function stakes are comparatively less. For him, it can become a last mile tick-mark formality towards completing the checklist given to him.

In the corporate scenario, I have rarely seen cases where 'poor handover' has been attributed as a reason for initial failure.

The Importance

The sanctity of handover becomes even more critical when we look at the direct correlation between degrees of effective handover and the duration of learning curve before the member gets fully functional for the new role. It is an integral

As an HR professional, I feel it is the moral obligation of the HR and the line to ensure that adequate time and ample resources have been devoted towards handover

part of the foundation that you are laying for your new member. Handover is not just the download of physical data, people information and functional knowledge. It also encompasses transition of a lot of softer aspects, which a new role-holder should know in order to succeed in the new environment.

The Recipe

The actual ingredients of a robust handover process still mystify me but I believe that a well defined framework backed by seriousness of the concerned parties along with close supervision can be a powerful recipe.

The manager who is overseeing it can make a difference by personally being involved during the entire exercise. He can design checkpoints to assess the progress and quality of knowledge transfer. It has to be designed in the most effective manner. For the newcomer, the handover can be a cumbersome theoretical download or can be an interesting experiential learning process depending on the way it has been designed.

The person giving the handover should have adequate bandwidth to be able to devote enough time for the new incumbent. It should not be that he is laden with existing responsibilities and is hard pressed for personal attention which handover re-



quires. There should be a robust feedback form which captures the actual experience during handover and throws up areas of improvement.

The Ownership

As an HR professional, I feel it is the moral obligation of the HR and line to ensure that adequate time and ample resources have been devoted towards it. The increasing business pressures and decreasing transition spans mandate that new resources should hit the floor quickly and become productive at the earliest. This business urgency is further denting the strength of the process. It is HR's obligation to step in and ensure that adequate time is devoted to the entire handover process and due justice is done with the assimilation of new resources depending on their role requirements. It is time we do a sanity check of our handover process! 🍽️

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ANKUR PODDAR is the Division HR Manager for Marico Limited

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As the noise about increasing the business impact of HR continues to grow, it is inevitable that the tools and intelligence that other business - impacting functions use have trickled into the HR function too. With a view towards growth and sustainability, the HR function is a key participant in enabling growth and profitability and CHROs in many companies have sizeable P&L accountability.

Ravin Jesuthasan, Managing Director and Global Practice Leader, Talent Management Practice, Towers Watson and co-Author of “Transformative HR: How Great Companies Use Evidence-Based Change for Sustainable Advantage” led a CHRO roundtable on how evidence-based change can help HR transform the way organiza-

The problem with the traditional HR function is that even if programs are world-class, they might not translate into fundamental changes in the way that business is executed

tions make decisions about their people and lead to sustainable business results.

“Evidence-based change is not a new concept, it has its roots in the evidence-based medicine movement and what it essentially means is that instead of data driving decision-making, one uses the logic of the business and hypothesis to drive decision-making, and additionally, it incorporates change management principles to make sure that those changes are sustainable,” Jesuthasan said.

CHROs from across industries listened to his views on how HR leaders can increase their influence and impact on the business by using analytics and systems thinking in their HR decisions.

Starts with a change in mindset

In these unpredictable and uncertain times, organizations cannot afford to invest in efforts that do not show results. The problem arises when the HR function focuses only on the excellence of HR programs and not on its business effectiveness or its execution. Describing the HR function of transformative organizations as “truly business-minded functions”, Jesuthasan said, “It is not about having the best compensation strategy; it is about having the “right” one for the business that reflects both the demands of the business model of the organization and integrates with other HR and business processes.”

The problem with the traditional HR function is that even if “individual programs are world-class,

they might not translate into fundamental changes in the way the business model is executed and value is delivered". This calls for a change in the way HR views its role and makes decisions. It will drive change in how it structures the function, in mindset, capabilities and skills and how it works with other functions in the organization."

Evidence-based decision-making does not focus on changing or transforming HR itself, rather it is about how HR transforms the way organizations (or business leaders) make decisions about people. That requires courageous and business-minded HR leaders who operate beyond the traditional boundaries of the function.

Sanjay Singh, Senior General Manager and Head HR, Tata Motors, said, "Eventually the HR leader needs to find what works to influence change and get the business buy-in. Different business managers behave differently and HR leaders need to have the maturity to assess how to present the HR case. It is about how one looks at the situation considering various variables and actors involved and keeping business results as a priority." Bijay Kumar Sahoo, President – HR & CPO, Reliance Retail, says, "The mindset of being successful in an organization with a customer-centric model is different than the one in an

organization with an efficiency model." Whatever the parameters of success, business-mindedness is about understanding how business can be successful by taking the right decisions about people.

The five principles

Here are the five HR principles from Jesuthasan's research of transformative companies that deliver sustainable results. "HR leaders can continue to try hard educating business leaders about HR terminology, or they can just adopt operations, sales & marketing and finance frameworks to use in their HR conversations". His take: Learn the language of the business instead of teaching your business colleagues the language of HR.

Logic-driven analytics: Starting with the logic of business to define the talent metrics and scorecards to measure impact of talent management investments on business results. For example, consider reframing talent management using the metaphor of the supply chain, which is familiar to business leaders, when looking at investment in succession planning, capability building etc.

Segmentation: Learning from marketing, work on a differentiated approach to different talent segments within the workforce. Use data to deeply understand

how different roles impact the execution of your strategy and your talent segments, going beyond just generations, gender, level etc. Segmentation enables organizations to understand the real needs of different talent pools and focus talent management tactics and processes to deliver optimal results.

"In the past, elderly people would dabble in securities so we had relationship managers who could cater to them. Now, younger people want to invest in the securities market as well, hence we are targeting tech-friendly people. This is a clear example of how talent segments within organizations keep shifting to keep up pace with changes in the market segment that we are targeting," said Vivek Jain, Senior Vice President – HR, Kotak Mahindra Bank.

Risk leverage: This principle enables HR departments to assess the human capital risks in a more nuanced way. Risk management for HR today is still about making sure "bad" things do not happen; this is of course important as human capital risks can be significant for an organization. However, HR leaders require a much more sophisticated approach to risk management, need to capitalize on "good" risks, identifying opportunities the company can leverage on and provide inputs to business.

Integration and synergy: In Jesuthasan's words, "Integration and synergy mean understanding how different HR solutions mesh with each other and other organizational processes to deliver a unique and compelling proposition to the organization and the workforce.

Optimization: Optimization is a logical consequence of the other four principles and is about investing where it makes the biggest difference and eliminating investments that don't.

These principles help HR breakdown its various objectives and focus on those efforts, that will produce maximum business impact. Analytics form the backbone of this approach. Ullhas Page, Head- Human Capital & Organization Development, ShareKhan Ltd, said, "Getting into advanced level analytics puts a lot of pressure on the competencies of HR professionals as they have to understand its multifunctional perspective and master the required competencies. The top management will also appreciate this approach of decision making. Insight building is an important competency without which it will become difficult to discern the data. It is essential to be able to influence a business decision." 



HR views risk management as being still about making sure "bad" things do not happen; but HR also needs to capitalize on "good" risks, identify opportunities and provide inputs to business

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OSCAR DE MELLO

Office 'socials' help work-life integration

Office socials bring positivity into the workplace. They uncover the human side of the leader and support work-life integration



In dim corners of the banquet hall, small groups of people huddle together. They're not from the same line of business and neither are they peers. They smile and chat, but theirs is not party banter – a strategy, maybe, some action steps! Yet brows are unwrinkled. Heads bob in agreement – okay, everyone's on the same page? Great! Some laughter later, a few people break away. Agenda covered, they move to another cluster, or the dance floor.

Most organizations have them – Office parties and socials. Big parties celebrate the closure of a successful year, a festival or a huge deal. Small socials celebrate birthdays and milestones. Attendance is usually good and everyone has a good time. Happily, the carefully designed org-structure and hierarchy gets effectively flattened specially for the event!

Encouraging the social element of business is always a good idea. It allows friendships – not just networks – to form. It adds positivity to the climate and infuses bonhomie into an otherwise cold, professional relationship. Socials influence people who don't give an inch in a meeting room discussion, to become more open and amenable. Even that ice-cold grouch of a boss actually seems human!

Within reason, periodic office socials – 'human' time during the workday – are a good idea and help a stress-free work environment! And they don't have to be expensive, or elaborate – or even compulsory to attend. If you have one, they will come!

Here are some ideas to get the creative juices flowing:

1. Post-six hysterics: A fifteen-minute session after 6pm. The team huddles together in a meeting room for a great laugh, sharing office stories. It is amazing how people find wild humor even in serious circumstances!



2. Sunshine Friday: A two hour no-disturbance slot, on any Friday of the month. Individuals can spend 'think time' researching or seeking answers to questions like: how are others doing my kind of work; can I call upon any existing wisdom; how have past failures been overcome?

3. Post-review coffee: Monthly reviews are exhausting! For those who are struggling to meet numbers, it can get depressing too. A one-hour coffee-session at the downstairs café can turn things around and clear any hard feelings.

4. Ad hoc R&R: Invite one person from another team. Maybe a linkage who has helped your teamwork faster, better and cheaper. Recognize and thank the person. Make her feel special and publically applaud her effort.

5. Celebrate birthdays: The easiest. Many confectionery shops deliver birthday cakes to offices. A 15-minute get-together to sing happy birthday, share some cake and have some great laughs!

But all good things need caveats:

a) *Office socials are budget events:* Annual events covering the larger employee

Encouraging the social element of business is always a good idea. It allows friendships – not just networks – to form

population tend to be elaborate. Socials, on the other hand, are for smaller workgroups using meeting rooms and neighborhood cafes. Avoid premium places!

- b) *Choose events* appropriate to the team's demographics and strength. One size doesn't always fit all. If in doubt, ask the team!
- c) *Communicate clearly:* It is important for people to understand what the event is about and how much time is allocated to it.
- d) *Attendance* should never be mandatory. Hopefully, the positivity of the event will attract people. Forcing people to attend, against their will, is always counter-productive. And never, ever, make it sound as if the event is a huge favor to the employee! People are sensitive! 'Office Social' is not an oxymoron – provided people's manners and budgets stay within the realm of reason. The commencement of a new year makes it an ideal time to evaluate and allocate some money towards this positive, employee-friendly initiative. 🍷



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From capability to learnability

ORGANIZED BY: People Matters, CIMA
EVENT THEME: Transforming the organization through the learning function

In the context of a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) business scenario, organizations need to anchor themselves to their purpose and culture to encourage innovation and agility in the organization. The learning function has the opportunity to champion this transformation from a reactive to a proactive organization, from capability to learnability, from short-term focus to purpose focus. The CIMA and People Matters discussion on 'Transforming the organization through the learning function' in Mumbai witnessed deliberations by more than 50 CHROs who talked about the need for culture transformation for business

sustenance in a VUCA world; L&D's role in creating an agile workforce to address the market complexity & uncertainty; opportunity for learning leaders to champion the required transformation; and methods to bring the required change & its expected challenges.

The evening began with a panel discussion that saw Bijay Sahoo, President-HR, Reliance Retail & Jio Infocomm; Dr. Anita Bandopadhyay, Director - Center for Excellence, Corporate HR, Raymond; and Vidyut Navelkar, Deputy Head -Global L&D, TCS, in a discussion to understand how learning professionals can play a critical role in leading the required transformation in business. The discussion was moderated by Esther Martinez Hernandez, Editor-in-Chief, People Matters Media. Bijay said, "Learning, as a process, has the most

important role in the organization transformation. Organization transformation begins with 'learning' about how the world around is changing in a VUCA world; and ends with the 'learning' how to keep transforming oneself to remain relevant and future-proof in terms of success and sustainability." To this Vidyut added, "L&D's role in any organization has always been one of enabling business strategy - what has changed over the years is the rate of change and uncertainty in the industry and business environments. L&D's success depends on how agile we are in adapting and aligning ourselves to the changing scenarios and demands. With learning becoming more social and ubiquitous, the onus is on us L&Dians to stay relevant."

This was followed by a presentation by Debasish Biswas, Chief Country Representative, CIMA, who shared the various CIMA certifications that can help prepare organizations better for the emerging financial roles.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. The VUCA world requires organizations to relook its systems and policies to create a more agile workplace
2. The learning function needs to equip itself to bring the required transformation in business
3. Focus on the L&D function's readiness to bring about the required transformation



(R to L): Dr. Anita Bandopadhyay, Director - Center for Excellence, Corporate HR, Raymond; Vidyut Navelkar, Deputy Head -Global L&D, TCS; Esther Martinez, Editor-in-Chief, People Matters Media and Bijay Sahoo, President-HR, Reliance Retail & Jio Infocomm

Focus on employee healthcare

ORGANIZED BY: People Matters & Vidal Health
EVENT THEME: Employee Wellness & Employee Value Proposition

The healthcare discussion in Bengaluru was moderated by Subash A. K. Rao, Director-HR at CISCO*, and Srivathsan Aparajithan, CEO, Vidal Healthcare Services, who stressed on the need for organizations to focus on employee healthcare and its repercussion on employee value proposition. Mr. Rao began the discussion by sharing the CISCO best practice in employee wellness and how the right approach can bring greater business

value. The 26 CHROs from across industries at the discussion shared best practices in employee healthcare along with their challenges and opportunities of embracing the right approach. The discussion emphasized on the meaning of 'wellness' in the context of different organizations and the benefits of having a wellness program. Along with success stories of how a well-rounded wellness program has increased economic value proposition, the discussion also emphasized on the related challenges in implementing a wellness program. Dr. Srivathsan shared that programs based on risk level alone will not result in behavior

change. Effective programs have to be based on the individual's readiness to change. Further he shared that for a wellness services provider to deliver such a value proposition requires continuous investment in multiple organizational capabilities.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1) Employee readiness to change is critical for an effective wellness program
- 2) Wellness programs must not be designed keeping only the risk level in mind
- 3) Need for continuous investment in multiple organizational capabilities to enable wellness programs to deliver the required value proposition

*As on 12 December, 2013. Subash A. K. Rao is currently EVP & CHRO at Symphony Teleca

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ORGANIZER: People Matters, ACCA

VENUE: The Leela, Gurgaon

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: CHROs, COOs, CFOs of Shared Services Companies

EVENT THEME: To discuss the changing paradigm of finance global delivery and creating talent pressures for such organizations

12th - 14th February

NASSCOM LEADERSHIP FORUM

ORGANIZER: NASSCOM

VENUE: Mumbai

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: Senior Business professionals, HR leaders

EVENT THEME: The VUCA World and what lies ahead; Crafting the digital enterprise; Technology - Driving the future IT economy

15th, 16th, 17th February

WORLD HRD CONGRESS

ORGANIZER: Fun & Joy at Work

VENUE: Taj Lands End, Mumbai

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: Recruitment Heads, HR Heads, L&D

professionals, Students & everyone having a keen interest in HR
EVENT THEME: Mining the human potential for creating great organizations

19th, 21st, 27th February

ACCELERATING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT - THREE CITIES, ONE CONVERSATION

ORGANIZER: People Matters, DDI

VENUE: Crowne Plaza Gurgaon, Sofitel Mumbai, Ritz Carlton Bangalore

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: CHROs, Heads of Learning

EVENT THEME: To discuss on several challenges like manager's support, sustainability, leveraging the power of technology and doing more with less and their possible solutions

27th February

ALIGNING CULTURES: ASPIRATIONS, CAPABILITIES AND ATTITUDES

ORGANIZER: People Matters, Mercuri Urval

VENUE: The Leela, Gurgaon

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: CEOs, Chief People Officers and Heads of Strategy

EVENT THEME: The role of culture transformation, intuitive leadership and preserving core values, ethics & relationships in times of change

28th February - 1st March

2ND NATIONAL SUMMIT ON 'WOMEN LEADERSHIP

ORGANIZER: NHRDN

VENUE: New Delhi

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: Business Leaders, HR professionals

EVENT THEME: Find solutions to the issues of gender inclusivity at workplace, how to create a conducive workplace culture and also imbibe women professionals by learning from the highly successful women leaders in the country

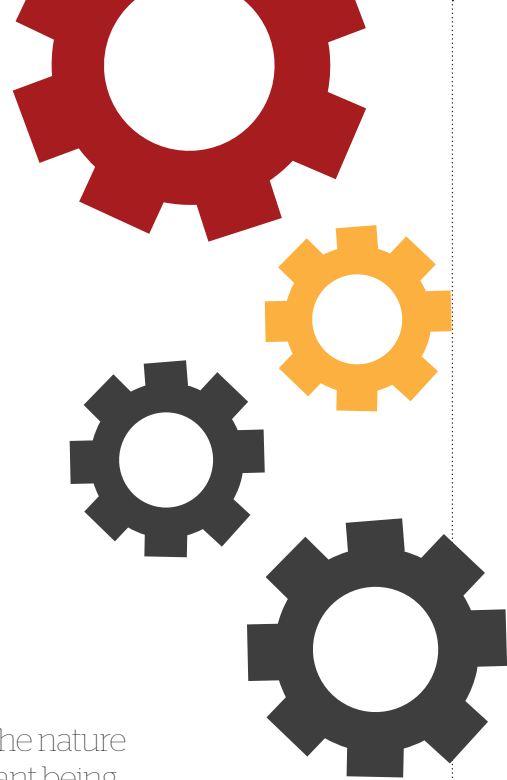


Learning & Development

The future of learning in the coming months will be described by several disruptive movements challenging traditional learning delivery methods. New technologies and expectations will bring forth mobile, experiential, gamified, simulated, and pervasive learning to the core of the L&D universe

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WE DON'T NEED NO EDUCATION



Several disruptive concepts will likely change the nature of learning and development, the most important being the end of conventional education

By **Vikram Choudhury**

One of the key questions which an organisation and an L&D leader faces every day is the question of impact. Impact is important because organisations are facing some very real challenges as a result of the current talent environment both externally, as well as within the organisation. Almost every business discussion seemingly hinges upon aspects of talent crunch, lack of skills, and the dearth of leaders. As the lines between business and talent continue to blur, com-

on classroom sessions, participation metrics, or diversity of learning channels. The idea of learning is transitioning to an integrated system of delivery mechanisms targeted to achieve very real outcomes, such as subject matter expertise, customer-oriented workforce, or growth leadership. Perhaps the biggest shift that will happen in the learning space will be the assessment of the overall portfolio and a readjustment of focus on the key areas of impact. The need from an external partner will also shift from a deliverer of service to a consultant, involved across the breadth of the learning process. While assessing an external partner, organisations will thus look to evaluate the depth and expertise that the external partner will be able to introduce in the organisation to raise its overall competency.

Experiential learning has become the buzzword, and organisations need to build an immersive learning ecosystem

panies have started to see talent management as one of the critical pieces of not just future growth but to a great extent, of survival and sustenance. Not surprisingly, L&D budgets are showing no signs of shrinking in the coming months, as companies look to build capabilities and competencies within the organisation that will become their source of competitive advantage.

Interesting developments in the learning space have propelled the emergence of methods and philosophies which will drive the learning function in the coming months. Learning budgets will cease to remain conversations about spend

Resurgence of the “Gurukula”

Almost every learning expert that we spoke to discloses that for far too long, the L&D function has been experimenting with tools and techniques which focus more on metrics than actual impact. A common example of such an L&D metric is the “extent of coverage of an e-learning module.” Evidence suggests that progressive L&D are shifting their focus toward learning delivery that trigger actual implementation, change of behaviours and attitudes, and have long-term recall. As a result of that, concepts of experiential learning are emerging and several terms such as ‘pervasive learning’ and ‘immersive learning’ are doing the rounds.

It has been empirically and statistically proven that experiential learning can impact desired outcomes much more deeply than traditional methods. Learning is, thus, moving away rapidly from a one-



Lesser reliance on management development programs and greater emphasis on mentorship will be seen in the coming months

way delivery of content to a class of bored participants to the more exciting concept of living in a knowledge environment. Organisations are working with service providers to create such learning environments either through intelligent facilitation or through the implementation of technology. This kind of a ubiquitous learning environment is similar to the ancient concept of “Gurukulas” where students were part of an ecosystem designed to offer learning opportunities all through the day and with every action.

Mobile learning investments to grow

The changing nature of work, the accessibility and improvement of technology, and the changing composition of the workforce has propelled a serious interest in mobile learning. Mobile learning has all the critical elements of pervasiveness, beside the fact that infrastructure and technology advancements have made it possible to enable mobile as a universal learning platform. Most organisations will be look-

ing at mobile as a key component of their instructional design as well as for learning technology decision making.

Up one level- gaming and simulation

Organisations have been flirting with the idea of gamification in the enterprise for a while, and it will be safe to assume that gaming has moved up one level of maturity. Gaming and simulation flows into the concept of immersive learning very well by way of their capability to replicate real-world experiences. Traditional gaming and simulation methods, such as leaderboarding and badges, however, prove ineffective in the long run. Gamified learning, thus, has to build an experience where the participant gets a holistic or complete experience of the learning process.


Gaming and simulation companies are creating learning games that cover the complete spectrum of the learning process including needs analysis, evaluation, design, delivery, and accelerated learning as part of the complete simulation exer-

cise. As a result, not only do the participants but the entire organisation across all levels get involved in the L&D process making the exercise not only simulative, but also immersive. A December 2013 research by “The Strategist” magazine argues that opposed to traditional classroom learning, network-based learning and gamification will pick up among Indian companies in the coming months. Four areas emerge as the most effective for gamification- induction training, soft skills training, technical training, and policy training.

The end of education

Formal classroom training sessions have not only proven to be ineffective, but also shown very low content recall value among participants. As a result, the reliance on an instructor-led content session or “lecture session” is gradually diminishing. The swelling of the next generation workforce in the enterprise, who come to a company with new set of expectations has also contributed to this trend. As the classroom gets gradually replaced by an immersive gamified environment, services and L&D design will evolve to accommodate this trend.

At the same time, it has also true that personalised touch in learning goes to a great extent in making learning effective. Mentoring, however, requires a planned approach and the role of the external consultant becomes important in designing of a mentorship program. Mentorship is proven to be a more effective tool in building the true leaders that Indian organisations are in need of at this hour. It is expected that in the coming months, progressive L&D organisations will discontinue lofty investments in Management Development Programs (MDPs) and divert those funds to strengthening their mentorship model.

Surveys across the industry among business heads all point toward the fact that retention of talent and building leadership capabilities will continue to remain top of the mind priorities for heads of businesses. L&D thus will need to evolve from a reactive function to a more proactive function, capable of sensing talent needs and devising solutions and enterprise capabilities of the future. While new methodologies continue to evolve, organisations should reduce their reliance on traditional channels if they want to make their L&D efforts successful. This is the age of mobile, experiential, and pervasive learning—a clear indication that employees are looking for experiences, not education. 

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SANJAY DUGAR

Looking to build integrated capabilities for L&D

The age of briefcase trainers is fading and L&D functions need to develop integrated capabilities to staying current and relevant

2014 is going to be an exciting and challenging year for HR, learning and talent professionals – a year where it is going to be increasingly difficult to attract, retain and develop talent. The success keys for developing talent are passion, innovation and engagement. Leadership will continue to be in short supply and L&D professionals will need to adapt and innovate.

According to Deloitte's global research – Human Capital Trends 2014 – leadership and retention are the top two challenges in the priority list of all L&D professionals. In a growing global economy, business is getting more competitive and hence leaders are looking to optimize resources by expecting “more for less”.

The new avatar of L&D is looking for an integrated capability development and blended learning approach to be able to deliver and live up to the expectations the business has of this function

It is now time for L&D to justify their existence and carve a space for themselves as a key contributor to the successful execution of a business strategy. The need is not only to equip people with desired skills, but also to help them retain these new skills and apply them suitably to get the desired results. Businesses are seeking clear returns on the money spent or invested in every area, and why should it be any different for this function? L&D is expected to be the backbone in the effective execution of the business strategy.

This journey has already begun, with some leading organizations developing a clear L&D strategy that is aligned to the overall business strategy, and the businesses are counting on them to get things ready for execution.

The increasing adoption of the KirkPatricks model to evaluate learning effectiveness at various levels is a key indicator to the seriousness with which the L&D function is considering measuring its contribution to the business.

We are seeing L&D today demanding high clarity in not only who is going to be trained, but also on the how. Training providers are given retention of learning strategies to comply with as an integral part of training delivery. The effective and creative use of action learning groups and also using technology platforms like mobile apps, chat groups, blogs and other such innovative media are some such strategies.



The erstwhile performance review is fading. Companies will redesign their performance management systems to adopt goal alignment, continuous development, executive coaching and mentoring with a clear focus on engaging people and helping them perform at extraordinary levels.

The L&D function is going to see adoption of new and creative styles of imparting learning. The demand on facilitative learning is going to rise exponentially. The Certified Professional Facilitator (CPF) qualification from the International Association of Facilitators (IAF) is soon going to be not just a desirable qualification, but a clear competency expected to be with all those trying to support the L&D function. We are already seeing some early adopters taking on these initiatives successfully.

It looks like the days of the “briefcase trainers” are numbered. Serious training providers will need to step up to these trends or run the risk of extinction. The L&D function is clearly seeking “partners” as they find this to be the most suitable way to be able to effectively deliver to expectations and measure their effectiveness.

The need to stretch beyond the classroom approach, to blended learning is clearly seen. Innovative methods that emphasize group and individual reinforcements, comic-book based training, mobile apps based refresher nuggets, eLearning modules, and various types of simulations, are going to be in vogue. These initiatives and strategies are also seen as being able to attracting the desired talent.

Bottom Line

The new avatar of L&D is looking for an integrated capability development, and blended learning approach to be able to deliver and live up to the expectations the business has of this function.  

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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DR. DEEP BALI

Make coaching partnerships truly work

Effective coaching partnerships require honest involvement of the external partner, depending on what stage of maturity the organization is in

The word leadership development for 'senior members' of organizations in this day and era is perhaps a misfit, as I look at it. Leadership through my lens is not a developmental piece, after a certain stage in ones' professional career it is more of an evolutionary piece. Leadership is not about motivating teams or tribes to drive results and pay the price with lack of peace, happiness and joy. Leadership at all levels is about evolving and doing something remarkable that will invariably lead to 'Superior opportunities' for others. I am drawing on the 'Theory of evolution' that states 'Evolution occurs when the 'Inherited characteristics' of an organism change.

Discussion is the starting point

For the sake of reader connect, I will use the word development as of now. Leadership development is an activity that requires a fair amount of thought, reflective learning and time investment

For an organization, which feels that there is disconnect between the top management and the rest of the organization, an L&D expert's intervention is critical

to identify the right development areas, ingredients needed to inflect the right outcomes and the shape and nature of training delivery. Systematic planning is an outcome of several steps that an organization needs to take before the implementation of a leadership development program.

Selling in and Contextualizing: In our experience of presenting development programs in organizations across several countries and at different levels, it has been fascinating to discover that many a times the audience is not aware of

the theme of the workshop and what to expect. We strongly recommend that they should involve a consultant in the 'Selling in' and 'Contextualizing' process, or as many organizations call it 'Buy in'. In cases where the consultant is involved in the 'selling in' of the intervention, the engagement of participants, ownership and manifestation of learning is astonishing.

Effective style of delivery: We advocate and it has been well validated that coaching style leadership development interventions that include 'Reflective inquiry' based on powerful questions that may look simple on the surface, yet reveal pieces for the respondent that mostly result in 'Transformations', are more effective than traditional fixed mode delivery.

Some examples could be:

- What attracted you initially to your area of work? Or field?
- Is that still what appeals to you about it? What else appeals to you now?
- How has your family background influenced the way you approach your work?


These discussions put a 'Spotlight' on the 'Felt need', Intent, Commitment, as well as the expected outcome from the intervention

It has been seen that great L&D leaders and 'Coaches' are well travelled and have a good global exposure. Awareness and understanding lessons from the past are critical in making leadership programs effective.

At what stage should an external expert intervene?

As a practice a consultant should discuss with clients 'thread bare' the role they will play and capture the same in a summary. It is always encouraged to bring in external partners at the time of setting the 'Vision' and 'Strategic Intent'.

Heart Felt: For an organization, which feels that there is disconnect between the top management and the high potentials of the organization, an L&D expert's intervention is critical. An external expert works with the top leaders to identify the critical elements that will create a 'Heart felt' few, which is enough to transform any organization.

It is almost an imperative that L&D consultants have an in depth understanding of powerful techniques based on neuroscience that enable leaders in decision-making and synthesizing the vision of the company. A good L&D consultant has partnerships leading global business schools and educational institutions that spearhead research and innovations. These external partnerships prove extremely useful in inculcating a progressive and global leadership culture within the organization. 

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AMIT GAUTAM

Invest in pervasive learning

With the proliferation of several avenues enabled mostly by technology, organizational learning methods are gradually shifting to “anywhere anytime” learning

Learning started as an informal process. And in the course of time, as man became an evolved species, there came a need to formalize learning. This came about in recognition of what the unstructured, the informal can deliver (and not deliver); and this is what prompted us to create opportunities and environments to facilitate and enable the ‘learning process’ to a widespread audience – by bringing together ideas, thoughts and experiences from all over the world and making it an intrinsic part of formal learning. This is precisely where the term ‘Pervasive Learning’ comes into picture.

According to Don Pontefract, “Pervasive Learning is learning at the speed of need through formal, informal and social learning modalities.” This suggests that learning can happen anywhere, anytime. Since we spend most of our time at two environments – home and work-place – these areas are considered to have the largest influence on our ‘learning’. It means we need to stimulate and enrich these environments with learning opportunities and harness every form and facet of our environment to provide these opportunities.

With the passage of time, learning has become fluid and dynamic, fuelled by the pervasive influence of technology and the opportunities it provides to access and experience knowledge. To embrace and use new technology, we have changed the form of learning materials, adopted and tweaked them to make them compatible, engaging and appropriate to the new mediums.

Significantly, the omnipresent Internet is the one technology that has the most ‘pervasive’ influence on our lives and is the font for all information. This kind of “pervasive” technology has given us the ability to explore and learn of places, people, natural phenomena and everything else. While the forms remain the same, “all pervasive” technology has changed almost every

way we access and acquire information. This has undoubtedly impacted our learning forever. The separation of learning and technology has narrowed to a point, where technology has become almost an extension of our senses.

While the business and communication aspects of work are virtually run by technology, the people and knowledge areas of talent development, knowledge retention, skills improvement, learning and training are still trying to make the best use of technology to deliver ‘learning’. eLearning has been a simplistic answer to using technology in training. And to manage its delivery, usage and effectiveness, LMS was born.

Today’s the world of mobile technology. The power of this medium is symbolized by its mobility, ease of access and our ability to react to our environment using this device as a first

Learning has become fluid and dynamic, fuelled by the pervasive influence of technology and the opportunities it provides

port of call to “learn”. The mobility of technology means we walk around with the ability to access and pull up information with the click of a mouse or swipe of a screen and thus by making learning contiguous, continuous and pervasive.

We know technology helps us access, understand and apply this learning but the keystone of success is ‘Us’. We need the motivation and the curiosity to engage with our environment, to absorb learning, to appreciate and leverage the power and richness of knowledge that is so easily available through the benefits of other people.

Our role and mission in learning must be as catalysts of learning, to create and build learning and also to be the tour guides to direct and guide because in doing so we ensure that we keep learning to keep learning.

And as you’re reading this, look around and chances are that you’ll be able to spot at least five different things to learn from. Call it what you will, the fact is that we ‘Keep Learning!’ 🧐

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

AMIT GAUTAM is the Founder & Director - Technology Solutions at Upside Learning Solutions Pvt. Ltd

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RAJIV JAYARAMAN

Co-authored by
Maheshwar Ramakrishnan

Immersive learning is the next big thing

Traditional learning methods will give way to more immersive learning based on the concepts of simulation and gaming

Ever wondered why an individual learns to drive a car by just not reading about it in a textbook but by actually doing it? If this pedagogy applies for driving skills, one needs to ask why the same is not pertinent with education that forms the foundation for all the skills required for life's decisions.

If we look back at the history of education and training, in the last 150-odd years, we have predominantly followed the "broadcast style" for imparting knowledge and skills to students and professionals alike.

There are, however, some serious issues with this "one-size-fits-all" solution to learning.

Learning effectiveness is sacrificed at the altar of efficiency

The current system of imparting knowledge results in college graduates who are woefully unemployable and in the corporate environment, professionals are not ready to take on the complexities of the Volatile-Uncertain-Chaotic-Ambiguous (VUCA) environment. The education system both in academic institutions and in corporate environments prepares professionals for jobs of yesterday, while the jobs of tomorrow don't exist today.

Poor engagement levels in classrooms and training rooms

Current learning methods fail to engage and inspire learners. We often cite declining attention spans as the primary reason for lack of engagement in classrooms and training rooms. Humans are simply not built to be passive in a chair for 8 hours.

Experiential learning provides professionals a safe learning environment where the gap between theory and practice are bridged; Experiential learning is the future of learning

Abysmal retention levels in traditional learning methods

Memory experiments conducted by Ebbinghaus show that in the traditional approach, learners forget approximately 50% of the content just in the first 40 minutes after learning. The figure shoots up to 70% within a day. We badly need a better way to make learning stick.

Learning effectiveness using experiential learning


There is hope in the form of experiential learning. In this methodology, learners take ownership of the learning process and learn by doing. Experiential learning of Newton's Laws, for instance, is when the learner is given a ball and asked to roll it and experience it coming to a halt due to friction. This approach is far more interesting, engaging and proven to exhibit higher retention levels over traditional means of reading a textbook.

As a result of trends in learning, it is pertinent for organizations to follow three design principles:

Immersive gamification: Traditional gamification concepts based on points, badges, and leaderboards become ineffective over time. It's a known fact that employees and young talent are constantly looking for excitement, and immersive gamification can provide them with the excitement and satiate that need by making them a part of entire learning process.

Anytime anywhere: Learners' need for pervasive content accessibility especially through mobile devices are increasing and design of learning programs have to keep pace with this development. Recently, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) have addressed the content accessibility gap but the methodology still lacks the experience element. Research has shown for managers to learn effectively, MOOCs like courses address only 10%, while 20% of learning comes from their managers and mentors and 70% from on-the-job.

Actionable analytics: New-age learning must be designed in such a way that such actionable insights are easily available so that the outcomes from a training intervention are easily measured and communicated which in turn will lead to better performances and behaviours.

In summary, Immersive learning is the present and future of learning and it is here to stay and flourish as it provides holistic approach to learning – be it ability to engage, retention and the accessibility it caters to every single need of a learner across functions and systems. The on-demand nature of technologies helps reduce costs for companies and are likely to see a major decline in Capex. Thus, learners need to be empowered with the steering wheel, the gear lever and the driver's seat so as to navigate through the chaos of the corporate world in the best possible manner. 

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- Surajeet Mishra, Cognizant

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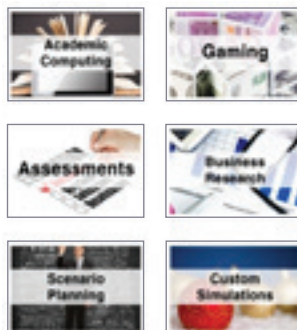
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PALLAVI JHA

New learning delivery modes to rise

As a result of technological advancements, skill needs and evolving nature of work, several L&D delivery methods will trend in the coming months

The skill deficit is a challenge that Indian companies across sectors are facing and will continue to face in the coming months. While the government's emphasis is on developing basic vocational skills to make the potential workforce employable, the employability of graduates and professionally trained candidates is also under question. Besides that, Indian companies are facing a leadership crisis at the middle management level. As a consequence of these trends, training and development budgets are expected to rise across all industries in the coming months.

Several opportunities exist for learning companies in the Indian market. As a result of the government's focus, the vocational skill development market will likely see a lot of activity. In the organized corporate sector, demand from organizations will likely rise in the following areas:

Companies will also focus greatly on "train the trainer" programs as newer skilling methods and modes get introduced into the market

Mid-management leadership development:

The middle management crisis has been noticed across the industry and companies will invest a sizeable amount of effort in training the middle management. People development skills, ability to provide feedback, performance appraisal, communication, strategic thinking and the ability to think beyond functional to organizational thinking will be the core areas of focus for companies.

Trainer development: Companies will also focus greatly on "train the trainer" programs as newer skilling methods and modes get introduced into the market.

Interactive learning: RoI has been cited as one of the top metrics that business leaders will be track-

ing against each individual learning initiative. Interactive learning has shown to offer a higher recall value among participants, thereby indicating greater RoI. Whatever mode of delivery an organization chooses, programs will be designed keeping the aspect of interactivity in mind.

Coaching-style delivery: Across the globe, instructor-led training is still the most popular because of greater chance of interactivity. While a small percentage of companies are experimenting with effective digital training methods, instructor-led training will still continue to rule the market. Within instructor-led training, companies are focusing more on coaching style delivery of content so that engagement with individual modes are higher and sessions are more effective.

Focus on HiPo development: More and more Indian companies are taking up the high potential development issue more seriously owing to the fact that the war for talent is intensifying and high potential development programs are a great tool for retaining talent. The coming months will see a number of private as well as public sector organizations investing in high potential training and development.

Communication and interpersonal skill development:

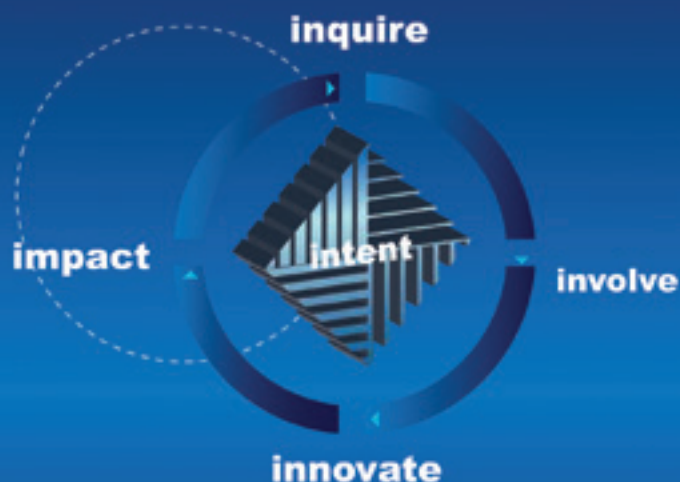
The investment in entry-level talent and frontline talent will increase across industries and investment in their soft skill development will likely increase. Customer orientation training and communication skills will constitute an essential part of the L&D plan in most companies.

Organizations are experimenting with several technological advancements to make their learning and development initiatives more effective. Among them, many companies are implementing the concept of gamification and simulation for their training initiatives. Simulation programs work best when there are several sessions of a module outlined across teams in multiple locations. Simulations replicate the real-world classroom environment, complete with white boards, chat capabilities and interactivity. Such highly interactive sessions have shown to provide greater RoI compared to traditional digital learning modules. The shape and nature of e-learning is thus likely to evolve in the coming months with the introduction of more interactive solutions.

Lastly, companies are keenly looking at ways to invest in training platforms for the highly mobile workforce. Mobile learning will become a very real alternative to traditional learning in the coming months. Some of the essential benefits of mobile learning is the capability for a participant to take it from anywhere and at any time, with very little infrastructure necessities. Well-designed mobile learning modules will, thus, be in high demand in the coming months.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

PALLAVI JHA is the Chairperson & Managing Director of Walchand People First Limited



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Jobs of the week



Intelenet Global Services Limited

Executive - Payroll

Location: Gurgaon

Job ID: 14525734

Description: Expert in being able to extract information from ERP system using relevant querying applications, interpret and analyse the output from Query & Analytical Tools and test analytical information within parameters.



DE Shaw India Software Private Limited

Specialist - Talent Acquisition

Location: Hyderabad

Job ID: 14442878

Description: The ideal candidate should have a Bachelor's degree with 2-3 years of work experience, a strong record of academic achievement and excellent communication skills.



Misys Software Solutions (I) Pvt. Ltd.

LMS Administrator

Location: Bengaluru

Job ID: 14170429

Description: B.Sc or MCA or Engineering or equivalent with experience between 2 to 5 years for junior roles and > 5 years for senior roles. Should be familiar with administrative activities pertaining to LMS (SUM Total).



Advent Global Solutions INC

US HR On-boarding

Location: Bengaluru

Job ID: 14445024

Description: Should have experience in on-boarding and documentation of the new hires including paperwork, background checks and drug test arrangements. Should have experience in E-Verify compliance for hourly contractors.



Progress Software

Contract Recruiter

Location: Hyderabad

Job ID: 14294910

Description: Seeking a Contract Recruiter with overall 2-3 yrs of experience in technical recruitment, preferably in the area of Product development companies with excellent communication skills and is a go getter.



Capgemini

HR Operations Manager

Location: Kolkata

Job ID: 13806211

Description: Bachelor's Degree with 7+ years of experience in HR Operations. Experience in Service Delivery, Process Improvement, Business Development and Project Management. Excellent Communication skills with Leadership ability.



Educomp Solutions Limited

HR Executive

Location: Gurgaon

Job ID: 14291946

Description: Excellent command over advance excel & PowerPoint-Good written & spoken communication skills in English-Ability to multi-task-Team Player-Experience in handling Biometric attendance system preferred.



Polaris Software Lab Limited

IT Recruiter

Location: Mumbai

Job ID: 14435879

Description: Graduate/post-graduate IT Recruiter with 3-10 years' experience. Prior experience in recruiting product organizations would be plus.



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Jobs of the week



FitnessOne Group India Limited
HR Executives
Location: Chennai
Job ID: 14479965
Description: Graduate having experience in Health Care and Fitness Industry are preferred. Candidates speaking in Tamil is an added advantage. Only Female candidates can apply.



MAXX Mobile Communications Limited
Contract Recruiter
Location: Mumbai
Job ID: 14323413
Description: Graduate with 3 - 5 years of experience in Recruitment.



Thakral One Solutions Private Limited
Sr. Technical Recruiter
Location: Hyderabad
Job ID: 14480775
Description: Looking for Sr. IT Recruiters with min 1 year experience into Contract Staffing Experience.



UnitedHealth Group
Claims Associate
Location: Noida
Job ID: 14508691
Description: BA, B.Com, B.Sc graduates with 0 to 2 years of experience in BPO industry. B.Tech, MCA, B.Pharm and regular MBAs are not eligible. Good keyboard skills with average typing speed of around 28-30 WPM.



Brinks Arya India
Manager HR & IR
Location: Bengaluru
Job ID: 14478607
Description: Looking for Professional who has 2 - 8 years of experience in entire recruitment lifecycle activities. Should have experience in dealing Unions.



Quintiles
Recruiter
Location: Bengaluru
Job ID: 14508693
Description: Bachelor's degree or educational equivalent and 1 year experience within a staffing function as a recruiter or combination of recruiter and specialist experience; or equivalent combination of education, training and experience.

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VISHAL THAKUR



What leaders can learn from parents

Leaders can learn a lot from how parents handle their children and use those lessons to handle the unpredictable GenY

GUEST COLUMN



Leadership and parenting have a lot in common. Both are very challenging and full of responsibilities. If leadership needs vision, parenting needs dreams; if leadership needs authenticity, parenting needs trust. Both need to be commanding yet flexible, direct yet collaborative and above all both require consistent two-way communication, emotional intelligence and positive attitude.

Leadership has been a topic of formal & scientific study and parenting is still unstructured as a subject. Therefore, it is always preferable to use a leadership technique at home rather than using a parenting technique at work.

With a lot of GenY people joining the workforce, managing them is a constant challenge considering their different behavioral characteristics and high expectations. It is time that they take lessons from the people who have been managing this generation for the last 25 years – their parents.

While parenting can be similar to many leadership scenarios, it has a striking similarity with succession planning. I suggest a six-stage model for succession planning, inspired from 'Good parenting practices*', as follows.

1. Acceptance: Your child is unique. Accept him/her with their strengths and weaknesses

Appreciate uniqueness of an individual as it adds a lot of optimism during unstable scenarios. Accepting a candidate as your successor is the first and the most important stage in succession planning. In parenting, we do not have that choice. We need to develop the same acceptance level before beginning the development of a successor.

*Good parenting is a vast subject and has a lot of relative interpretation, hence for the sake of standardization, Good parenting practices in this article are referred from the book, *The 10 Basic Principles of Good Parenting* by Dr. Laurence Steinberg, published in 2004.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

VISHAL THAKUR is presently working as Assistant Vice President-HR at Tata Capital Financial Services Ltd.

Once you have developed a leader in your successor, don't just vacate the chair by retiring. Carry on with them, not only as a stakeholder but as a follower too. Just like how it happens in families



Once the successor is identified with the key skill set to become a future leader, he should not be given up. 'Acceptance' will save a lot of energy & time and will keep the leader and the successor focused too. It will work as the bedrock for all other building blocks of leadership development.

2. Engagement: Take interest in their work and respond to their emotional needs

The connect between the leader and the successor is very important. This is very much like that language, which is never spoken, but is always the best tool to communicate between parents (leaders) & children (successors). In the long run, it will help them to speed up decision making, reduce wasteful procedures and help in handling conflicts and other challenges.

Here like modern parents, leaders have to take the first step and get children (successors) on the board. Leaders taking interest in successor's job and getting involved in their deliverables will connect them more and for business it will lead better results. Just like parents working with children on a science project will engage them more and would yield better results (in science project). While they are working together, leaders have a great opportunity to gauge the emotional needs of successor and also to plan a suitable fulfillment of the same.

3. Development: Children learn by watching; Keep pace with their development; Have patience

Development is the longest and most detailed stage of this journey. It has to have situational, organizational and a business context. It would not be appropriate to

prescribe much on this front but certainly 'good parenting practices'* would have something to inspire here too.

Like children, successors also learn a lot by watching. A leader's responsibility doubles up when he has a successor looking up to him just like once you become a parent you need to watch your words, your actions carefully in front of your kids. However unlike kids, successors are mature and mere pretending to do good in front of them will not work; you have to walk the talk.

4. Handling Conflicts: Adjust your parenting to their temperaments; Do not compete with them; Be firm but be fair.

Just like the conflicts between teenage children and parents, the leader-successor relationship goes through development conflicts. This is the stage where leaders need to balance adjustment and assertion. Leaders need to be flexible with their leadership style, just like parents change their parenting style by the time their children become teenagers. Also leaders must be careful of a common pitfall of "competing with their own successor". Like parents, leaders must feel comfortable and proud about their successor's success.

5. Independence: Learn their need for autonomy

"The five most effective components of delegation autonomy are: Picking the right battles; Pre-approving your child's (successor's) choices; Praising what your child (successor) chooses; Helping your child (successor) think through difficult decisions; Occasionally letting your child (successor) learn from bad decisions.

Beyond this, leaders need to allow successors their own psychological space. The key is to "Protect them when you must, but permit when you can."

6. Let them lead you: You have nurtured them. Letting them lead you is the best assertion on their leadership

Once you have developed a leader in your successor, don't just vacate the chair by retiring. Carry on with them, not only as a stakeholder but as a follower too. Just like how it happens in families where once the children grow up and start their own families, the parents let them lead the family.

It may sound like helplessness, but it is actually the highest commitment that a leader can make. It takes a lot of courage and humility to accept this stage, but it will certainly give positive results in the form of sustained and successful journey of the new leader, be it at the family or at corporate front.

The world of sports is full of such examples. Seldom has a captain retired from captaincy and the game together. For example, Saurav Ganguly played a successful innings as captain of the Indian cricket team. Eventually, he retired from captaincy, played under the leadership of a much younger captain and then retired from the game a few years later. Needless to say, he gifted the nation a better captain.

After all, "Leaders are those who create leaders and not merely followers" 🙏

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Studies show that productivity suffers in open office concepts, especially with younger workers

Your open office is killing your productivity

You know what's funny – everyone, who is anyone, wants to work in a new, cool, ultra modern open office concept! Organizations are spending billions creating these environments, and now studies are coming out and showing that productivity suffers in open concepts, especially with younger workers and those that love to multitask. From the New Yorker:

The open office was originally conceived by a team from Hamburg, Germany, in the nineteen-fifties, to facilitate communication and idea flow. But a growing body of evidence suggests that the open office undermines the very things that it was designed to achieve. In 2011, the organizational psychologist Matthew Davis reviewed more than a hundred studies about office environments. He found that, though open offices often fostered a symbolic sense of organizational mission, making employees feel like part of a more laid-back, innovative enterprise, they were damaging to the workers' attention spans, productivity, creative thinking, and satisfaction. Compared with standard offices, employees experienced more uncontrolled interactions, higher levels of stress, and lower levels of concentration and motivation. When David Craig surveyed some thirty-eight thousand workers, he found that interruptions by colleagues were detrimental to productivity, and that the more senior the employee, the worse s/he fared.

So, why do we continue to design our workplaces around this open office concept? Here's what I think:

1. Recruiting. Young talent likes to walk into the 'cool' office. Executives feel that this is a recruiting advantage and a marketing advantage when customers see a new, ultra-modern office environment.

2. We think we want our office, like we want our homes. Over the past 2 decades home builders have been asked to build open home plan designs. We then go to our office which is all cut up

Open office design was billed as the next best thing for creativity and collaboration. It was a theory. It was never really tested out

into small rooms and think 'Hey, wouldn't this be 'nicer' if this was all opened up?'

3. Collaboration. Open office design was billed as the next best thing for creativity and collaboration. It was a theory. It was never really tested out. Someone had an idea, 'you know what, if we break down these walls and have everyone in one big room, we'll be more collaborative, we'll be more creative'. Sounds good. Research is showing us that theory was just that, a theory.

I think for certain aspects the open concept still has merit. Sales offices for years have been using the open concept with success, in a bullpen environment. Hear your peers next to you on the phone, and your competitive nature takes over, you get on the phone. You can feel and hear a buzz in the air in a well run sales bullpen. I tend to think I'm creative, but having others around me, talking, doesn't help my creative process. I hear this from IT and Design professionals as well. Have you been in a big IT shop or Design house? Most of pros wear headphones, dim the lights, try and create an environment that the open concept isn't giving them.

Be careful my friends. I love the look of many of the new offices, but if it's hurting productivity and making my workers worse – I'll gladly give them back their offices! ☹️



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TIM SACKETT is the President at HRU Technical Resources – a \$40M IT and Engineering contract staffing firm and RPO. He is a 20-year HR/Recruiting Talent Pro with a Master's in HR and SPHR certification, currently residing in Lansing, MI.

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