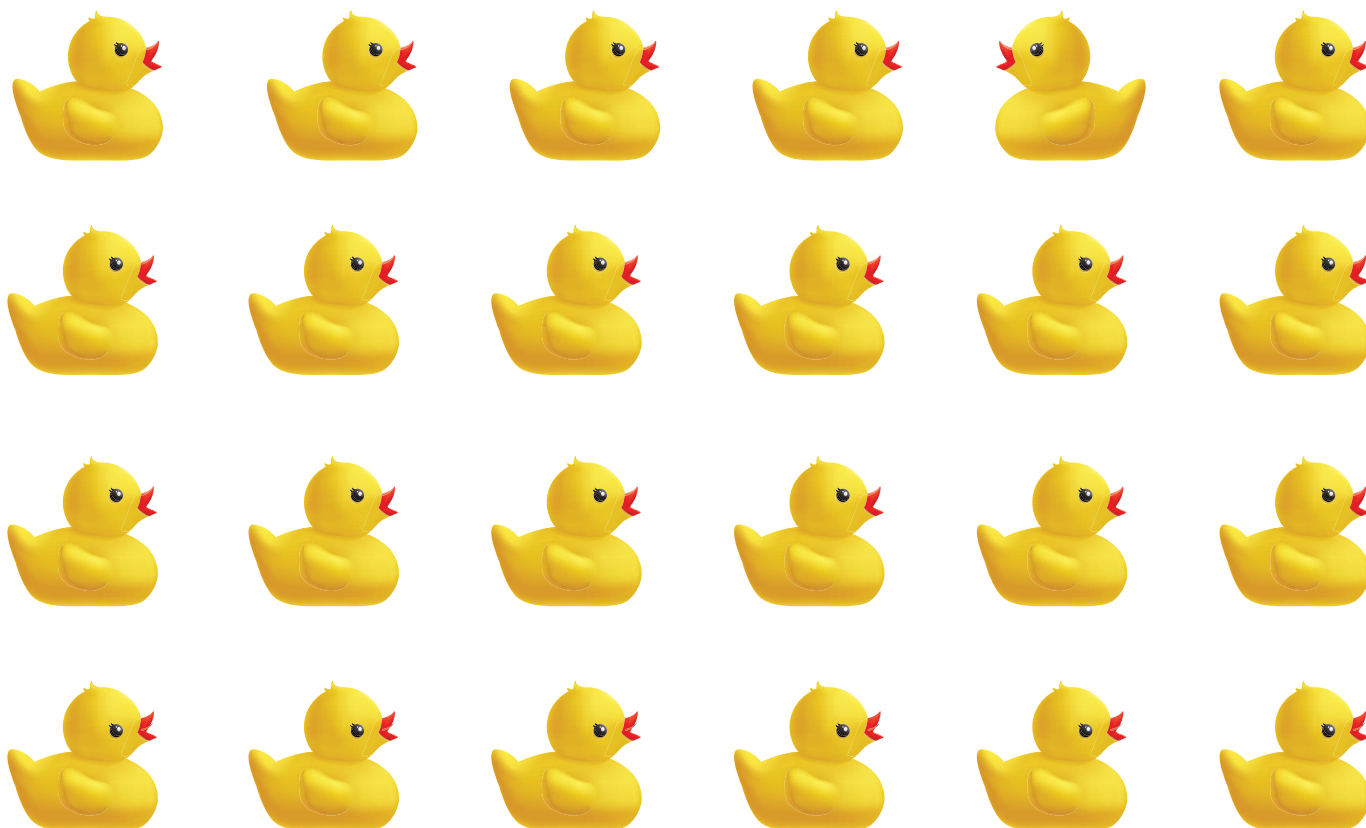


people matters

VOL VII / ISSUE 11 / NOVEMBER 2016

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ALIGNED?

IT IS NOT **CAPITAL**, NOT **TECHNOLOGY**, NOT **STRATEGY**. IT IS AN **ALIGNED TEAM** THAT BRINGS THE STRONGEST COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE ANY COMPANY CAN HAVE

FUTURE OF WORK

Adapting to the
new needs of the
ecosystem

RESEARCH

L&D Trends Study 2016
Setting the building
blocks right

BIG INTERVIEW

Sue Campbell
MD, Asia
Korn Ferry Futurestep

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In his book, he identifies the causes of dysfunction, which are — Absence of trust – the fear of being vulnerable with team members prevents the building of trust within the team; Fear of conflict – the desire to preserve artificial harmony stifles the occurrence of productive ideological conflict; Lack of commitment – the lack of clarity or buy-in prevents team members from making decisions they will stick to; Avoidance of accountability – the need to avoid interpersonal discomfort prevents team members from holding one another accountable; and Inattention to results – the pursuit of individual goals

and personal status erodes the focus on collective success. However, the teams that are willing to address these can become high performing and cohesive.

Along the same lines, our cover story this time pivots on the importance of alignment in the top teams, on how conflicts and mistrust abrade alignment and how accountability, results and commitment allow progress. The Cover Story presents the views of the top leaders who share their insights into why top team alignment is paramount and what makes their top teams aligned – from stating what the organization is doing to why it is doing it, establishing omnidirectional communication channels, creating synergies across the spectrum, implementing deep levels of democracy in decision-making, developing capabilities or defining the rhythm that forms the soul of an organization.

For the Big Interview this time, we have Sue Campbell, Managing Director, Asia at Korn Ferry Futurestep who shares her perspectives on the quality of hire, innovation in Talent Acquisition space, Brexit and its impact on APAC and the competitive business landscape of India.

This issue also features L&D Trends Study 2016 undertaken by People Matters with BITS Pilani that presents some of the most pertinent trends in the L&D domain. The study surveyed 122 respondents across industries to gauge their perceptions on the elements that drive the L&D function, its role in the organization and how learning and development is being executed on the ground. In addition to the readiness levels and investment areas, the focus was also to understand how strategic the L&D function is and its ways of execution in the whole organizational set-up.

As always, we would be happy to hear your views, comments and suggestions regarding our stories.

Happy Reading!

Esther Martinez Hernandez EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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THE COVER STORY (BEHIND THE SCENE)



duckies! but what about them? i want more options



ya, kinda cool



hmm. i think duckies is nice but not with duckies



okay, i think lets just go with the duckies!



Phew



Management Development Programme | November 2016 - March 2017

IIM INDORE, INDORE CAMPUS

Title of the Programme	Programme Co-ordinator	Date
Public Private Partnerships – An Introduction	Swapnil Garg	Nov 07- 09, 2016
Leadership Development Program for First Time Managers	Kajari Mukherjee	Nov 16 -18, 2016
Rediscovering Publicness of Public Sectors	G. Venkat Raman	Nov 18 - 20, 2016
Negotiation Skills	Kamal Kishore Jain	Nov 21 - 23, 2016
Building and Implementing a Balanced Scorecard	Vijay Kumar Gupta	Nov 21 - 23, 2016
Global Sourcing	Bhavin Shah	Nov 28 - Dec 01, 2016
Supply Chain Management	Hasmukh Gajjar	Dec 05 - 08, 2016
Train the Trainer	Amitabh Deo Kodwani	Dec 05 - 07, 2016
Communication Skills for Managerial Success	Abha Chatterjee	Dec 07 - 09, 2016
Strategic Cost Management	Keyur Thaker	Dec 21 - 24, 2016
Financial Statement Analysis	Keyur Thaker	Jan 03 - 06, 2017
Managing Change and Conflict at the Workplace	Ranjeet Nambudiri	Jan 4 - 6, 2017
Managerial Effectiveness: Indian Insight	Pawan Kumar Singh	Jan 9 - 13, 2017
Leader as Communicator	Swatantra	Jan 09 - 11, 2017
Communication, Presentation Skills and Report Writing	Shweta Kushal	Jan 09 - 11, 2017
Breakthrough Solutions using Theory of Constraints (TOC)	Harshal Lowalekar	Jan 10 - 13, 2017
Brand Management	Ashish Sadh	Jan 16 - 18, 2017
Managing Managerial Performance	Vijay Kumar Gupta	Jan 16 - 18, 2017
A Middle-Path Approach to Industrial Relations: Defining Principles that Make or Break Organizations	Patturaja Selvaraj Srinath Jagannathan	Jan 19 - 21, 2017
Leadership Communication	Madhusri Shrivastava	Jan 23 - 25, 2017
Lean Manufacturing	Sanjay Choudhari	Jan 23 - 25, 2017

Title of the Programme	Programme Co-ordinator	Date
Corporate Performance Management	Keyur Thaker	Jan 31-3 Feb, 2017
Persuasion: Science and Art	Swatantra	Feb 01 - 03, 2017
Leadership Development and Social Capital	Nobin Thomas	Feb 01 - 03, 2017
High Impact Leadership	Patturaja Selvaraj Ranjeet Nambudiri	Feb 06 - 08, 2017
Interpersonal Effectiveness and Team Building	Sushanta Kumar Mishra	Feb 13 - 15, 2017
Strategic Communication	Shweta Kushal	Feb 20 - 22, 2017
Customer Behaviour and Marketing Strategy	Sabita Mahapatra	Feb 27-Mar 01, 2017
Building and Leading Teams	Sushanta Kumar Mishra	Mar 2 - 4, 2017
Learning to Read Behavioural Evidence: HR Analytics for Organizational Excellence	Patturaja Selvaraj Srinath Jagannathan	Mar 06 - 08, 2017

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Strategic Communication	Shweta Kushal	Nov 09 - 11, 2016
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Approaching and Assessing Campaign Creativity	Amrita Joshi	Nov 16 - 18, 2016
Measuring and Controlling Asset Employed: Managing Responsibility Centers	Keyur Thaker	Dec 07 - 09, 2016
Global Sourcing	Bhavin Shah	Dec 19 - 22, 2016
Budgeting and Beyond	Keyur Thaker	Jan 18 - 20, 2017
A Middle-Path Approach to Industrial Relations: Defining Principles that Make or Break Organizations	Patturaja Selvaraj Srinath Jagannathan	Feb 01 - 03, 2017
Breakthrough Solutions using Theory of Constraints (TOC)	Harshal Lowalekar	Feb 07 - 10, 2017
Supply Chain Management	Hasmukh Gajjar	Feb 13 - 16, 2017



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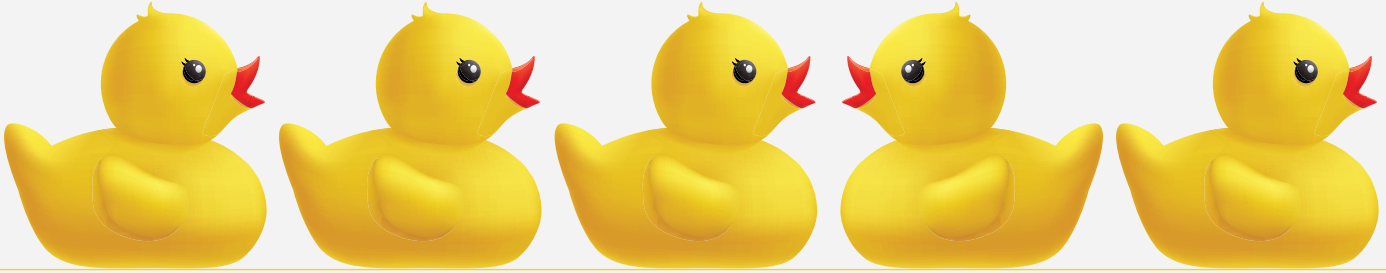
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Management Development Programmes

November 07, 2016 to February. 24, 2017



Title of the Programme	Programme Coordinator(s)	Dates	Venue	Title of the Programme	Programme Coordinator(s)	Dates	Venue
		2016					
Influencing Through the Power of Communication	Sunil Sarangi	Nov. 7 - 10, 2016	XLRI	Creativity, Problem Solving & Decision Making	Tamonas Gangopadhyay	Jan. 16 - 20, 2017	XLRI
Human Resource Development	M Srimannarayana & I S F Irudayaraj	Nov. 14 - 18, 2016	XLRI	Powering Executive Leadership with Ethics and Morals	Fr. Ozzie Mascarenhas SJ and Sr. Doris D'Souza AC	Jan. 16 - 20, 2017	XLRI
Basic Leadership Skills	Fr.S George, S.J & Sunil Sarangi	Nov. 14 - 18, 2016	XLRI	Finance for Non-Finance Executives	Santosh Sangem	Jan. 16 - 20, 2017	XLRI
Leadership Competency for Star Performance	M G Jomon	Nov. 16 - 19, 2016	XLRI	Negotiations Skills Clinic	Jerome Joseph	Jan. 19 - 21, 2017	Mumbai
Interpersonal Effectiveness through Communication Skills	Manish Singhal	Nov. 21 - 24, 2016	XLRI	Financial Statement Analysis	A Kanagaraj	Jan. 23 - 25, 2017	Mumbai
Project Management	Rajiv Misra	Nov. 21 - 25, 2016	XLRI	Get, Set, Go : Winning at New Products	K. Rajeshwari	Jan. 23 - 25, 2017	Chennai
Transforming and Managing Family Business	Atul Arun Pathak, Saroj Kumar Pani	Nov. 23 - 26, 2016	XLRI	Leading and Managing Organizational Change	Rahul Sheel	Jan. 30 - Feb. 1, 2017	Bangalore
Certification Programme on The Art and Science of Competency Based Interviewing	R K Premarajan	Nov. 24 - 25, 2016	Bangalore	HR Audit-Leading to Internal Auditor Certification	M G Jomon	Jan. 31 - Feb. 3, 2017	XLRI
Financial Inclusion, Social Banking & Micro Finance	Prabal K Sen	Nov. 28 - Dec 1, 2016	XLRI	Leading Mindfully	E S Srinivas & Satya Chaitanya	Feb. 1 - 3, 2017	Bangalore
Team Building and Conflict Management	I S F Irudayaraj	Dec. 5 - 9, 2016	XLRI	Lean Thinking & Management	Ajith Kumar J	Feb. 2 - 4, 2017	XLRI
Data Analytics and Visualization	S K De	Dec. 5 - 9, 2016	XLRI	THE AMAZING MARKET MAKERS OF INDIA: Insights and Inspirations	Sharad Sarin	Feb. 6 - 8, 2017	Mumbai
Transformational Leadership	E S Srinivas & J Singh	Dec. 6 - 9, 2016	XLRI	Leadership Excellence through Self-Discovery	Manish Singhal	Feb. 6 - 9, 2017	XLRI
Out-think! - How to use game theory to outsmart competition	Sumit Sarkar	Dec. 12- 13, 2016	Bangalore	HRM for Line Managers	M Srimannarayana	Feb. 6 - 10, 2017	XLRI
Managing Diversity in Workplace	Anita Sarkar	Dec. 12- 16, 2016	XLRI	Basic Leadership Skills	Fr.S George, S.J & Sunil Sarangi	Feb. 6 - 10, 2017	XLRI
Mentoring, Coaching & Counselling for Personal and Managerial Effectiveness	I S F Irudayaraj	Dec. 12- 16, 2016	XLRI	Advanced Corporate Finance	A Kanagaraj	Feb. 13 - 15, 2017	Mumbai
		2017		Effective Performance Management	Pranabesh Ray	Feb. 20 - 24, 2017	XLRI
Beyond Coping: thriving under stress in the workplace	Manish Singhal	Jan. 16 - 18, 2017	Bangalore	Supply Chain Analytics	T A S Vijayaraghavan	Feb. 20 - 24, 2017	XLRI
Empowerment & Leadership for Women Executives	Anita Sarkar	Jan. 16 - 20, 2017	XLRI	Assessor Certification Program on Assessment Centre Approach to Competency Mapping	R K Premarajan	Feb. 20 - 24, 2017	New Delhi

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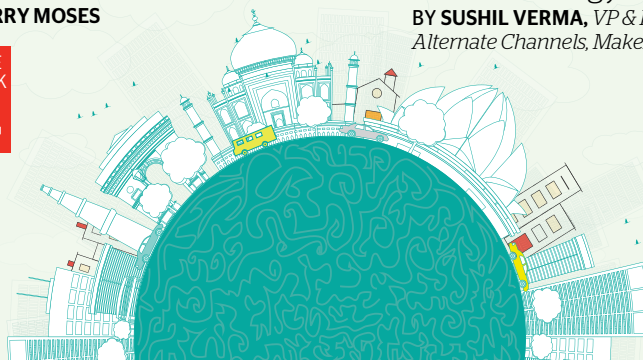
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Train The Trainer
11th | 12th | 13th

Step Up to Leadership
19th | 20th

High Impact Presentations
30th | 31st

FEBRUARY 2017

**How to Win Friends and
Influence People in Business**
9th | 10th

HR Masterclass
15th | 16th | 17th

Train The Trainer
27th | 28th (Feb) | 1st (March)

MARCH 2017

**How to Use Influence as a
Leadership Tool**
9th | 10th

**Build Influence with
Enhanced Communication
and People Skills**
15th | 16th | 17th

High Impact Presentations
23rd | 24th



DELHI

JANUARY 2017

People Centered Leadership
16th | 17th | 18th

**Developing A Self Confident,
Assertive Attitude**
23rd | 24th

Train The Trainer Masterclass
31st (Jan) | 1st | 2nd | 3rd
| 4th (Feb)

FEBRUARY 2017

High Impact Presentations
13th | 14th

**Leadership Training for
Managers**
20th | 21st | 22nd

MARCH 2017

**Build Influence with
Enhanced Communication
and People Skills**
6th | 7th | 8th

Step Up to Leadership
20th | 21st

Train The Trainer
27th | 28th | 28th



BANGALORE

JANUARY 2017

**High Impact
Presentations**
5th | 6th

Step Up to Leadership
9th | 10th

Train The Trainer
18th | 19th | 20th

FEBRUARY 2017

People Centered Leadership
6th | 7th | 8th

**Leadership Training for
Managers**
15th | 16th | 17th
(Chennai)

Train The Trainer
23rd | 24th | 25th

MARCH 2017

**Build Influence with
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and People Skills**
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Letters of the month



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OCTOBER 2016 ISSUE

Cover Story: The Human-Machine Dilemma

A lot of people tend to compare the first and second industrial revolution with the current fourth industrial revolution whenever an argument around jobs sparks. I feel it is a wrong juxtaposition, simply because during the first and second industrial revolution, all the machines needed human support to operate, as opposed to the fourth industrial revolution where machines have cognitive abilities of humans to an extent, and can even work independently without human intervention (take the example of self-driving vehicles). Having said that, I too, don't feel that automation will replace humans entirely in the near future; however, we can see its impact in restraining job-creation.

- AMAN JAIN

Big Interview: Gerry Crispin

Apparently, there has been a lot of discussion about the many similarities between customers and candidates but I feel that, it is not such straight-forward comparison. Before correlating the two, employers need to realize that candidates do not have the same power as customers. For instance, in the recruitment procedure, candidates don't usually have the luxury of selecting a particular job with a preferred employer. Also, they have to go through a rigorous hiring process starting from the first interview to the final assessment. On the other hand, when it comes to customers purchasing any product or availing services, such

impediments are absent. In hindsight, this actually makes giving a great candidate experience even more difficult than a great customer experience.

- GEETA CHAUDHRY

Rewarding the vacant chair

Whether the Maternity Benefits Act 1961 will be used by companies to give necessary benefits to strengthen their women workforce or will it become a financial burden, is something we will have to wait and watch. Organizations will surely have a tough task ahead & will have to be smart about building some string strategies to budget for the 26-week period to minimize any losses – finding contractual workers or freelancers during that time may be a good ploy.

- RITU BHATIA



HR preparedness for 2020

In order to stay relevant to the business, HR should be double-hatting and take the responsibility not only for the talent agenda but also for the strategic business agenda. There is a huge scope for HR to play a strategic role in driving organization productivity, growth, revenue and profit. HR will need to adapt to the changing dynamics of the business environment.

- AJAY GOEL

twitter

Pankaj @aindswift

Need of today's learners.

RT: People Matters. What are successful organizations doing differently? Simple yet tricky question! Let's find out. Read: <http://bit.ly/2dkpylQ> #GetSetLearn

Meenakshi Iyengar @Meenakshi29

This gets written so often yet the change is so slow.

RT: People Matters. Women are still regularly paid lesser than their male counterparts in the same professions and positions. <http://bit.ly/2eTRgYf>

Mohamed Atef @elmeleegy

Design thinking as a tool for HR transformation <http://bit.ly/2eFtT86> @PeopleMatters2 #HR

Gunjan Ramchandani @Gunjan_R1

Giving individuals responsibility for their own learning & development should lead to a smarter work force

RT: People Matters. what are the most common challenges in implementing individual learning? Read now! <http://bit.ly/2f6mf8q> #GetSetLearn

Employee Research @emp_research

How to convert an organisation into a great place to work <http://clikhe.re/bnkbn> via @PeopleMatters2 #EmployeeEngagement #CompanyCulture

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CORRIGENDUM

In the Cover Story of the September 2016 edition, it was inadvertently published that K.J. Somaiya Institute of Management Studies and Research (SIMSR) is accredited with AACSB certification. It is only a member of AACSB and has registered for this accreditation. We regret the error.

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JOBS

Digital finance to create 21mn jobs in India by 2025



Digital finance, that is financial services delivered through digital means such as mobile and Internet, will boost gross domestic product by \$700 billion and will be instrumental in creating 21 million new jobs by 2025 in India. This finding came in the report, titled 'Digital finance for all: Powering Inclusive Growth in Emerging Economies', September 2016 given by McKinsey Global Institute. This report is first to quantify the full economic impact of digital finance over all emerging economies. For India, the report emphasized that nearly two-thirds of the rise in GDP is obtained from improved productivity of businesses due to digital payments and one-third is derived from the additional investments made by micro, small and medium-sized businesses.

BENEFITS

Pitney Bowes' new maternity leave policy 'Mayeri'

Pitney Bowes has introduced a new policy 'Mayeri' which provides a six-month long maternity leave for women employees in India. With 20 percent of Pitney Bowes employees in India being women, this plan emanates as a result of the large number of women employees (42%) making up the Pitney Bowes India senior management team. The policy covers cases of adoption and surrogacy, and provides six weeks of leave for women who have suffered a miscarriage. For women with two or more children, the new policy promises 12 weeks of paid maternity leave. 'Mayeri' also includes free sessions with nutritionists for new parents, baby care with crèche tie-ups, care providers, a designated 'buddy' to update new mothers on work-related matters & to help them smoothly transition post their maternity break.

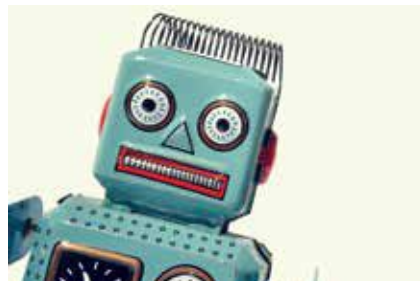


Vedanta doles out new Parental Leave Policy

Vedanta, a leading diversified natural resources company and the Indian subsidiary of Vedanta Resources Plc, a London-listed company, has announced a new parental leave policy for its employees. The company has extended the maternity leave to 26 weeks and has also introduced an adoption leave of 12 weeks for the new moms. The company has also introduced one week of paternity leave. In a statement, Mr. Suresh Bose, Head - Group HR, Vedanta stated that "Vedanta's new and enhanced parental leave policy secures an inclusive and productive work environment for our employees, who are our most valuable asset. We take pride in having a diverse workforce and our evolved people practices make us one of the most desired companies to work for."

Tata Steel to hire 5,500 women employees by 2020

Tata Steel, one of the pioneering steel companies, is set to hire around 5,500 women employees by 2020. As per media reports, most of the positions will be replacement hiring, and a few new positions will be created for new women joiners. Out of 5,500 positions, the company will offer 1,400 managerial positions, which currently is held by only 660 woman managers. At present, Tata Steel has about 2,000 women staff, which is less than 6% of its total count i.e. 35,000.



Automation to pose a major threat to jobs: World Bank research

Automation is bound to threaten around 69 percent of the jobs in India, 77 percent in China, and as high as 85 percent in Ethiopia according to a World Bank research, revealed by the World Bank President Jim Yong Kim in his speech "The World Bank Group's Mission: To End Extreme Poverty". The rapid automation of business processes is bound to impact developing countries the most. Kim urged that if technology is leading to fundamental transformations in the kind of jobs available in developing countries, the focus needs to be on investing in people. And thus, governments need to re-think their strategies for providing new jobs to the millions joining the workforce every year.

Aegis set to hire 5000 in India by the end of 2016

With a new centre being planned to open in Gwalior, Essar Group's BPO arm Aegis is set to hire about 5000 people for its India operations by the end of 2016. Aegis has more than 40,000 employees globally, and the company registered double-digit growth in revenues.



HR INDUSTRY

Careerbuilder acquires Workterra

CareerBuilder, a company best known for its online job boards, has acquired California-based benefits administration and talent management software company Workterra. Although primarily thought of as a job recruitment site, Chicago-based CareerBuilder has recently expanded its scope to include an entire suite of human resources products, including pre-hiring services, job distribution, sourcing workflow, and analytics. Matt Ferguson, CEO of CareerBuilder, stated, "This acquisition is a defining moment because it enables us to step beyond recruitment & become an end-to-end human capital management firm."

HR analytics startup inFeedo raises funds

inFeedo, an employee engagement HR analytics platform has raised an undisclosed amount of funding. The round was led by Dheeraj Jain, partner of UK-based hedge fund Redcliffe Capital and former Google India Operations Head, and Palash Jain. The company plans to use the funds for international expansion, invest in technology and human resources. Dheeraj, Managing Partner at Redcliffe Capital,



said, "We have heard stellar feedback from their (inFeedo's) clients on how they have arrested attrition and helped boost employee productivity. It's efficient SaaS (software as a service) model will enable them to manage culture in organizations across the globe."

Professional development startup Everwise raises \$16 million

Everwise, a startup aiming to make professional development scalable, has raised \$16 million in Series B funding, which was led by Sequoia Capital. With an objective to connect professionals

with people and resources, Everwise is catering to corporates such as Oracle Systems, Twilio, Lyft, Genentech and Zendesk. It is the first talent development solution firm that moves beyond content to incorporate social and experiential learning at scale & focuses on providing employee development experience through connecting employees with the mentors, coaches, peers, and community members.

Mykindofjob raises \$1 million angel funding

Mumbai-based mykindofjob.com, an online portal has secured funding for \$1million in angel investment from brothers Mayank Shah and Shreyans Shah, making it the second flexi-jobs site to have raised money in the past 12 months. According to the Economic Times, the flexible employment market is attracting investors as more and more people are opting to set their own timings and work from outside the office. Mykindofjob.com has 100,000 registered users, 800 companies on board, and offers interactive web platform where registered users can communicate with each other and prospective employers. The registered users comprise students looking at internships to retired professionals who are seeking short-duration projects.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Number of women on boards in India doubled in 6 years: Credit Suisse Report

According to the Credit Suisse Gender 3000 (CSG 3000) report, women on boards in India have doubled from 5.5 percent in 2010 to 11.2 percent in 2016 over the past 6 years. The global average rests at 14.7 percent. However, on managing diversity, India has moved a few decimal points lower which came down to 7.2 percent in 2016 from 7.8 percent in 2014. The report slammed the myth of the Queen Bee syndrome, which argues that women in the senior posts actively seek to exclude other women from promotions into top management. As per



the report, female CEOs globally are more likely to surround themselves with other women in senior roles. Female CEOs are 50% more likely than male CEOs to have female CFOs and 55% more likely to have women running business units.

Companies with the best D&I initiatives revealed

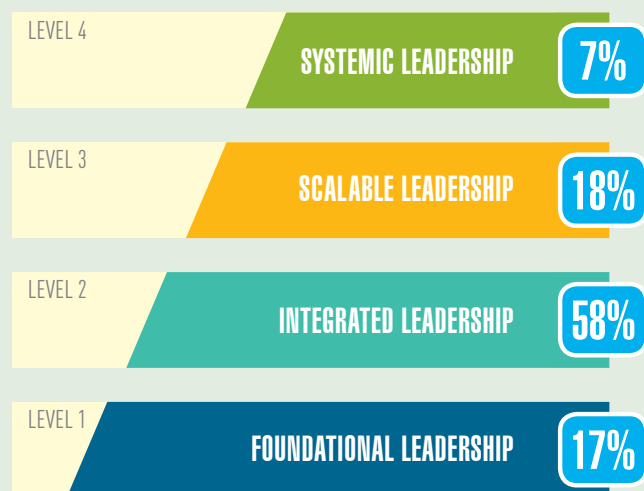
Thomson Reuters, a global source of news and information for professional markets, launched its new Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Index which ranks the top 100 publicly traded companies globally with the most diverse and inclusive workplaces. Companies like Michelin, Novartis AG and Johnson & Johnson found themselves at the top five of the list with the index putting Roche Holding AG as the company with the highest score across the four pillars of assessment – Diversity, Inclusion, People Development and News and Controversies.

THE NEXT GENERATION LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

It is essential for today's leaders to have a thorough understanding of the issues and situations their organizations encounter, and ways to respond effectively. Bersin by Deloitte's research, "High-Impact Leadership: The New Leadership Development Model" surveyed more than 2,000 global HR and business leaders to establish leadership development maturity and highlights the need for organizations to reform how they develop their leaders.



THE LEADERSHIP MATURITY MODEL



MOVING UP TO THE NEXT MATURITY LEVEL

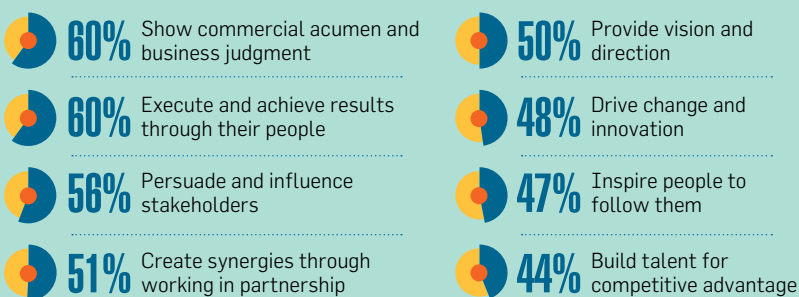
Companies utilizing their organizational context for leadership growth have a competitive advantage over organizations using formal leadership development programs. They have/are:

- 37%** more revenue by employee
- 5x** more likely to anticipate and respond effectively to change
- 10x** more likely to be effective at identifying and developing leaders
- 11x** more likely to have a high number of leaders who build talent



LEADERSHIP CAPABILITY IN ORGANIZATIONS

The research shows that the overall success by organizations to grow leaders remains dismal



Only 25 percent of the surveyed companies are utilizing their organizational context to drive leadership development

Source: High-Impact Leadership: The New Leadership Development Model, Bersin by Deloitte / Andrea Dertler, PhD, 2016



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NEWSMAKER OF THE MONTH

Cyrus Mistry – the mysterious sacking of an industrialist

In 2012, Cyrus Mistry was chosen to lead one of the largest global conglomerates, the TATA group, and take it to greater heights. Four years down the line, his mysterious exit has the entire nation speculating



Under Mistry's leadership, the revenue of the group grew from \$100.09 billion in 2011-12 when he had taken over to \$103 billion in 2015-16

This is the corporate show of the year. Cyrus Pallonji Mistry, an unassuming man within Tata was pushed into the limelight when he was chosen to succeed Ratan Tata who retired in 2012 as the chairman of one of the country's oldest business empires. And in a dramatic development, Mistry, has been ousted as the chairman of Tata Sons by the Tata Sons Board. But it is not only the unprecedented & unexplained exit of the chairman of India's oldest business empires that makes him the lead story of newspapers or magazines; it is the nature of the exit that is startling. Dismissal of the chairman of a leading conglomerate with a century legacy "without explanation and affording him an opportunity to defend himself" as mentioned by Mistry in his letter to the board, is startling.

Being the only second non-Tata in the history of the conglomerate to take charge of the group after Nowroji Saklatvala in 1932, Cyrus Mistry had caught the attention of the Board of Tata Sons — the promoter of the major operating Tata companies, at the age of 44. Given a gargantuan task to begin with, Cyrus Mistry, the son of Pallonji Mistry, the Irish-Indian construction tycoon and chairman of Shapoorji Pallonji Group, was entrusted with the responsibility of bringing in a young touch across the organization under the purview of Tata. However, Mistry has had to face multiple challenges in both domestic and global markets as many of the group companies faced several workforce and legal bottlenecks. Tata Steel Europe is one significant example, which apparently is believed to be one of the key reasons of his departure. However, under his leadership, the revenue of the group

grew from \$100.09 billion in 2011-12 to \$103 billion in 2015-16.

Ratan Tata has been reinstated as the interim chairman of Tata Sons, and the selection committee consisting of Ratan Tata, Venu Srinivasan, Amit Chandra, Ronen Sen and Lord Kumar Bhattacharyya are tasked with the job of finding and appointing the next Tata Chairman within the period of four months. It has also been reported that Ratan Tata is looking for a partner to buy Mistry's stake. The Mistry family currently holds around 16-18 percent stake in Tata Sons and is also the largest individual, non-Tata in the Tata holding company. The Shapoorji Pallonji Group had secured management control over the Tata group after Cyrus Mistry became the chairman of Tata Sons. It is now to be seen how the Pallonji Group reacts to this and what the future holds for the Tata Group. 

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APPOINTMENTS



MOHIT KAMPANI APPOINTED AS THE CEO OF ADITYA BIRLA RETAIL

Aditya Birla Retail Limited has appointed Mohit Kampani as its Chief Executive Officer. He will be heading the food and grocery retail business of the \$41 billion multinational conglomerate. Prior to this appointment, Kampani was the Managing Director at Spencer's Retail.



AMBATI VENU APPOINTED AS MD BY ABBOTT INDIA

Abbott India has appointed Ambati Venu as its Managing Director and General Manager. Venu joins the healthcare company from GlaxoSmith-Kline where he was the Regional Vice President and General Manager - Asia, GSK Consumer.



SHALINI RAGHAVAN APPOINTED AS CMO BY L'ORÉAL INDIA

Shalini Raghavan has joined L'Oreal India as its Chief Marketing Officer for its Consumer Products Division. She was previously with HUL where she held leadership positions in marketing and business development.



JACQUELINE WHITE APPOINTED AS CHIEF CUSTOMER OFFICER BY PERSISTENT SYSTEMS

Persistent Systems announced the appointment of Jacqueline White as its first Chief Customer Officer. She joins Persistent Systems from SAP where she served as the SVP of Global Financial Services Consulting.



PRIYANSHU SINGH APPOINTED AS COUNTRY MANAGER BY ADECCO INDIA

Adecco Group, an HR services provider has appointed Priyanshu Singh as the Country Manager. Prior to this role, Singh was the Country Manager for Honeywell Building Solutions.



MUSTAFA FAIZANI APPOINTED AS THE CEO BY MERCER FOR IMETA REGION

Mercer has appointed Mustafa Faizani as its market leader and CEO for the IMETA region (comprising India, the Middle East, Turkey and Africa). Mustafa is a Mercer veteran and has served as the CFO for Mercer's Growth Markets Region prior to this move.



ARUNKUMAR JADHAV APPOINTED BY HACKER-RANK AS VP-ENGINEERING

HackerRank has appointed Arunkumar Jadhav as the Vice President of Engineering. Jadhav has over 11 years of experience in software development and prior to this appointment, he was the AVP-Engineering at FreeCharge and has held multiple positions at Amazon.



ASHWANI DAHIYA APPOINTED AS THE CHIEF TALENT OFFICER BY CIPLA

Cipla has appointed Ashwani Dahiya as the company's Chief Talent Officer. Dahiya joins Cipla from Reliance Industries where he was the SVP & Group Head (Performance, Reward & Organization Development).



KATE SELJEFLOT APPOINTED BY COSTA COFFEE AS ITS GROUP HR DIRECTOR

Kate Seljeflot joins Costa Coffee in the capacity of group HR Director. She joins from Diageo where she was the Global Talent Director. In her new role, she will lead the global HR Team and oversee international expansion of Costa.



CIPLA APPOINTS ABHAY SRIVASTAVA AS HEAD HR - TECHOPS

Cipla, the pharmaceutical major, appointed Abhay Srivastava as the Head HR - TechOps. In his new role, he will lead HR for manufacturing and quality. He joins Cipla from Piramal where he was Senior VP and Global HR Head.



MALA SINGH APPOINTED AS CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER OF ELECTRONIC ARTS

Mala Singh has been appointed by Electronic Arts as its Chief People Officer. Singh was with the American video game company between 2008 and 2013 post which she joined Minted and worked there for almost three years as the Chief People Officer.



DEEPAYAN SENSARMA APPOINTED AS DIRECTOR HR BY JLT

Jardine Lloyd Thompson Group, a British multinational that provides insurance, reinsurance, employment related advice and brokerage services, has appointed Deepayan Sensharma as the company's Director - HR (India, Middle East and Africa). Prior to this, Sensharma held the position of Vice President - HR (Global Competency Architecture) for Accenture.



MARGARET MURPHY APPOINTED AS GROUP CHRO BY QBE GROUP

Margaret Murphy has been appointed as the Group CHRO by QBE Insurance Group Limited. Prior to this, she worked as the Chief of Staff to the Group HR Director at Barclays plc and holds extensive HR experience in a number of business sectors.



DAVID GUISE APPOINTED AS GROUP HR DIRECTOR BY MARKS & SPENCER

David Guise has been appointed as the Group HR Director by Marks & Spencer. David comes from the grocery giant Woolworths where he was the HR Director.

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Probing the white collar crimes

To counter corporate fraud and other threats, the demand for forensic talent & investment in forensic data analytics is surging

By Suparna Chawla Bhasin




More than two-thirds of organizations in India have been the target of frauds of various types, according to a report released last year by Kroll, a corporate investigations and risk consulting firm. With India ranking 76th on the Corruption Perceptions Index 2015 by Transparency International, it doesn't come as a surprise that the cases of fraud and other white collar crimes have caught the attention of organizations that are now aggressively approaching consulting firms for their forensic operations to tackle such incidents.

Corroborating the state of affairs, EY in its white paper 'The changing dynamics of white-collar crime in India' reveals that over the past 10 years, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has prepared 6,533 corruption cases, of which 517 have come up in the past two years and about 1,593 online frauds have been detected in India over the last three years. Although the case with India has got better with the number of businesses engaging in fraud lowering from 68 percent in 2014 to 58 percent in 2016, it does signal to the changes that the anti-fraud/forensic talent is making, along with a future need of more of such talent. Cyber-crime cases in the country escalated by nearly 300% between 2011 and 2014,

The Big Four audit & accounting firms are likely to expand their teams by 25 percent by 2017 to deal with threats pertaining to frauds and cyber-crimes

which shows the prevailing risks to the organizations.

Amidst all this, the EY Global Forensic Data Analytics Survey 2016 reveals that the emphasis on significant Forensic Data Analytics deployments is increasing along with the investment on advanced tools and proactive surveillance monitoring of larger volumes of data. The report states that "the demand for FDA investment has never been higher, and FDA deployments are maturing." As the future of cyber-crime and interrogation becomes more complicated and intricate in a complex regulatory business environment, firms are scaling up for forensic talent. It is indicated that the Big Four audit & accounting firms Ernst and Young, KPMG, PricewaterhouseCoopers and Deloitte are likely to expand their teams by 25 percent by 2017 to deal with threats pertaining to cyber-crimes and frauds. These organizations are set to expand their forensic data analytics capabilities beyond the conventional anti-fraud and compliance functions into areas such as legal, information governance and cyber security. As a result, there has been a growing demand for subject matter experts in this domain in the last couple of years as regulatory scrutiny on fraud risk management practices have seen a rise with a simultaneous increase in corporate fraud. However, forensic talent is hard to find and thus firms are tapping into talent from various other domains such as CAs, lawyers, financial consultants, lawyers, IT professionals, retired bureaucrats, law enforcement professionals, data scientists, psychologists etc. As rapidly evolving technologies pose new threats and risks for companies, managing and mitigating such risks is becoming more challenging day-by-day. Thus, it becomes crucial for organizations to employ tools and talent that can assuage such threats. 

References: Global Forensic Data Analytics Survey 2016
Assocham-PwC Study

Why invest in forensic data analytics?

Forensic data analytics is a growing priority for organizations today as cybercrimes and insider threats pose as the major

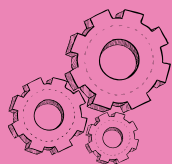
> Response to growing cybercrime risks	53%
> Increased regulatory scrutiny	43%
> Increased risk of fraud in emerging markets	32%
> Pressure from the board and management team	31%
> Seeking greater cost efficiency in fraud risk management process	30%
> Recent fraud risk assessment findings in the organization	26%
> Need for more robust third-party due diligence	25%
> Increasing mergers and acquisitions activities	13%
> Increased calls to your "whistle-blower line"	9%
> Other main reasons	4%

Source: Global Forensic Data Analytics Survey 2016

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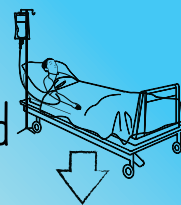
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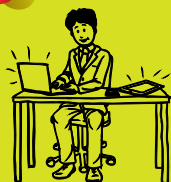
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illness



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1. National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion - Oct 2013, <http://www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/businesscase/benefits/> accessed on 28/03/2016.

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The new social for the 'Workplace'

Facebook, the social networking giant recently announced the launch of 'Workplace' – a dedicated secure space for companies to connect, collaborate and communicate

By Vani Vyas

The popular social networking site, Facebook, has rekindled the way employees connect. It recently launched 'Workplace', a dedicated secure networking space for companies that is a standalone version of the existing personal Facebook account, and can be accessed only within the internal IT systems of companies.

This newfangled platform comes with some unique features such as a dashboard with analytics and integrations. Along with single sign-on and identity providers that allow companies to easily integrate workplace with their existing IT systems, it has traditional Facebook features and includes news feed, trending posts, groups, messages, Facebook live etc. and can create and share those in groups or via chat. This is set to enable employees around the globe to chat, host virtual brainstorming sessions or share presentations. The starkest

attribute of Workplace is that it is mobile and suited for employees who do not have access to traditional workplace tools such as retail workers, ship crews, baristas etc. and can host multi-company groups that allows for external collaboration and enables multiple organizations to work together.

Although 'Workplace' is starting in an already crowded market where its formidable opponents already exist and have been doing well, it seems to be causing a stir. Up till now, leading in the game was 'Slack' with 4 million daily active users that basically translated into \$100 million in annualized revenue. Accord-

More than 1000 organizations including large multinational companies around the world are already using 'Workplace by Facebook'

ing to a source¹, Slack still reports 33,000 paid "teams" currently, compared to the 1,000 companies that Facebook says has been using Workplace in closed testing. Other strong competitors in the field of streamlining business communications are Microsoft's Yammer/SharePoint, Cisco Spark, Salesforce's Chatter, Flowdock and Jive. However, as of the second quarter of 2016, Facebook had a daily active user base of over 1.1 billion and a monthly active user base of over 1.7 billion and that can be considered as strong competition for any other product in the market.

As per the latest Facebook announcement, more than 1000 organizations including large multinational companies around the world (except for Antarctica) are using 'workplace' today and more than 100,000 groups are already in use. Companies such as Starbucks, Booking.com, Danone, international non-profits such as Oxfam, and companies such as YES Bank in India are known to have embraced 'workplace'. The top five countries that are actively using workplace include India, UK, US, Norway, and France. Royal Bank of Scotland is an interesting case study for Facebook as it was the first bank in the world to adopt 'Facebook at Work' and has recorded 90 percent adoption rate during its beta testing phase. It announced a ground-breaking partnership with Facebook encouraging around 100,000 staff across the bank to collaborate and effectively communicate.

However, Workplace seems to be critiqued for its prominent focus on internal collaboration and communication as it is inaccessible by other stakeholders who are external to a company's main corporate domain. But leveraging technology is no longer a matter of choice in today's digital world of disruption. It is inevitable and unavoidable for company's growth. But choosing a right platform for promoting enterprise collaboration is definitely a matter of choice. Let's wait and watch to see what contribution 'Workplace by Facebook' can bring in to the corporate world. 

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<http://newsroom.fb.com/news/2016/10/introducing-workplace-by-facebook/>





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VISTY BANAJI



The Golden Lotus Under India's Software Deities

Our software powerhouses amputate the engineering capabilities of the majority of their recruits to make them fit for non-technical programming tasks. What does this do to their commitment and contribution?

THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED

Among the most heart-rending things I learned in school was the Chinese practice of foot-binding for women of the upper classes. It resulted in severely stunted feet, euphemistically called 'Golden Lotuses' which could never be used normally. I could vividly imagine the feet of those young girls being subjected to such severe constriction that they could scarcely walk, leave aside run or aspire to athletic prowess.

And one of the most distressing things I witnessed in my career was the Indian practice of herding tens of thousands of highly qualified graduate and post-graduate engineers into software coding roles where most of their dearly acquired education was wasted. I became privy to some of their tales of frustration about the routine to which they were bound in place of their bright-eyed dreams of designing snazzy sports cars or space rockets.

A 'Procrustean Bed' for Programmers

There was a time when the bulk of the programming for computers was done in assembly language. Understanding the intricacies and limitations of the hardware made all the difference. Such programming demanded people with master's degrees in computer engineering. As more and more programming work began to be carried out in higher languages and hardware interfaces became more standardized, programmers no longer needed to be master's or even bachelor's degree holders in computer engineering. From then on, the move to put logically thinking, meticulous and ingenious 'freshers' into the majority of programming roles should have been a no-brainer. Of course, there were then, and

there continue to be today, a small proportion of programming roles that require a fundamental understanding of engineering. But our software industry didn't limit engineering graduate sourcing for just these. With the heady margins, the initial days of inter-country arbitrage yielded, the logic followed was, "What's the highest qualification that can be attracted by the salary we can pay?" rather than "What qualification will best fit and be most satisfied by the work we have to offer?"

Procrustes, in Greek mythology, invited unsuspecting guests to lie in his bed and stretched or amputated their limbs till they fitted the dimensions of the bed perfectly. For general coding tasks, our software powerhouses amputate the engineer-

ing capabilities of the majority of their recruits to make them fit for the non-technical programming tasks which form the bulk of their work. They reserve the fatal stretching for awarding managerial roles to technically proficient but managerially wanting professionals. But that's a story for another day.

Many of the misutilized engineers just leave when faced with such work. This explains the horrendous early attrition IT majors suffer. But there are many, who even if they find routine coding distasteful, are unable to shake off the golden chains which the lure of foreign postings and glamorized offices create. Those who remain bound by these shackles, grow increasingly frustrated with the nature of the work they continue to plough through because they cannot bring themselves to face the uncertainty and the batch-parity-loss they will suffer if they pull out and start again. If someone had to prescribe a way to maximize discontent and minimize commitment, they would be hard put to find a more efficacious method.

The Revenge of the Clones

Whether disillusioned engineers leave or remain in their disengaged state (bar a few who genuinely begin to enjoy coding), the employing firm is not much better off.



A more diversified recruitment policy by the software sector would permit the manufacturing sector to acquire the talent it needs to achieve international competitive advantage in the years to come

Forcing relatively routine and repetitive tasks on engineers who were educated for far more demanding technical challenges is at the root of the motivational morass in which these companies are floundering. Salubrious campuses, free food and HR people masquerading as event managers can mitigate the problem for a while but never cure it.

There is another consequence, which has even more serious consequences for organizational innovation and agility. Most recruits into the software majors are educational clones of each other. Diversity of educational background, which is so vital for breaking a from stereotypical thinking and for the cross-fertilization of ideas, is almost entirely missing. Could this monoculture have something to do with India's software companies punching well below their class when it comes to product innovation or finding it so difficult to leap substantially up the value chain or failing to successfully navigate blue ocean business models?

Some of the software companies have started experimenting with a trickle of non-engineering recruits. It remains to be seen whether they will persist in the face of the resistance the alternative sources of manpower are reportedly facing.

Destructive Edu-footprint

Perhaps the worst damage the heedless recruitment of engineers for programming has caused is to the system of engineering education in India.

The IT sector diverted huge quantities of talent from the most resource-intensive part of the country's college framework and then proceeded to use less than 5% of what those engineers had spent 4-5 years learning. Surely the hundreds of thousands of scarce teaching-hours could have been better utilized. Because the *raison d'être* of engineering education is its practical application, when most of it becomes *muda* it cannot be justified by its character and perspective building consequences as is claimed by the proponents of education in the liberal arts.

Moreover, by signaling a massively increasing demand for engineers, IT prompted the creation up of institutions to churn out more and more engineers. Since their engineering capability was never needed on the job, there was even less incentive for the new crop of colleges to deliver industry-ready engineers. In short, not only did this sector pick the choicest fruit of India's college education and then use little except the peel, it prompted a huge increase in new educational plantations to be dedicated to the same crop and cropping pattern.



Forcing relatively routine and repetitive tasks on engineers who were educated for far more demanding technical challenges is at the root of the motivational morass in which software companies are floundering

The future demand for engineers by the IT sector might not grow at the same rate and might even decline for a variety of reasons. The impact on the additional capacity that has been set up based on the scale-up signals and on the bright students who have enrolled therein, can well be imagined. The sunrise industries take great pride in their Carbon footprints being much smaller than traditional manufacturing's. It's time their Edu-footprints were measured to evaluate the impact they have on the educational eco-system of the country.

Taking From 'Make in India'

It might be argued that the way parents push all bright kids into engineering (whether they have an aptitude for it or not), recruiting engineers is simply the software industry's way of sourcing smart young men and women. The ones with a true bent for engineering can still opt for design, manufacturing and other genuine engineering placements. This argument is fallacious. By offering overseas assignments, more cushy working conditions and other such lollipops, software company recruiters divert candidates with genuine aptitude and interest in engineering to themselves. Consequently, in some elite campuses, it becomes *infra dig* to seek a

hard-core manufacturing job. The sad part is that this wasteful onslaught is aimed at the one qualification that is indispensable for India to achieve the position it wishes to occupy as a manufacturing and engineering-service hub. A more diversified recruitment policy by the software sector would permit the manufacturing sector to acquire the talent it needs to achieve international competitive advantage in the years to come.

Leave it to A Smith

The IT sector can rightly say that ensuring quality manpower for the engineering and manufacturing industries is not its responsibility. In agreement, I paraphrase Adam Smith: "It is not from the benevolence of the brewer or the baker or the software-maker that we expect fulfillment". My plea to the software majors is that it is for their own sakes (to create cultures of commitment and innovation), for the sake of the thousands they recruit and for the educational system that has yielded them so much benefit, that they must reform the manner in which they recruit in the future. 🍷

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

VISTY BANAJI, Founder and CEO, Banner Global Consulting (BGC)

Q & A

QUALITY OF HIRE IS INCREDIBLY SUBJECTIVE

SUE CAMPBELL, Managing Director, Asia at Korn Ferry Futurestep on quality of hire, innovation in the Talent Acquisition space, Brexit and its impact on APAC, and the competitive business landscape of India

By People Matters Editorial Team

Sue Campbell is the Managing Director Asia at Korn Ferry Futurestep and in her current role she is responsible for RPO, Projects & Talent Acquisition Consulting across the region. Prior to joining Futurestep, she was Client Services Director at AMS, based in London, and was responsible for a portfolio of RPO client solutions covering clients across a range of industry sectors including financial & professional services, technology and consumer. Sue has extensive international experience in resourcing and talent management and is an active Board Member of the Asia Pacific Chapter of the HROA.

Q The definition of quality of hire has evolved over the years. What is your perspective on it, considering this whole dilemma about the quality of hire?

A It started as the measure of the hiring process – measuring and ranking the experience of the candidate and the hiring manager. I think that is valid as it is a part of candidate's experience of joining the organization and is also a part of measuring the effectiveness of talent acquisition services. Real “quality of hire” is actually about the output and impact that the individual is able to deliver to the organization in terms of contributing towards their strategy. So the first evolution was measuring attrition, which does not necessarily measure quality of hire, but the outcome or effectiveness of the hiring process. The second evolution was measuring the ‘fit’ of the person. Their fit against their KPI's or their speed of progression in the following years, and that's like the Holy Grail of the quality of hire. I don't think that many organizations integrate recruitment and HR data sufficiently to report on this – maybe because you need system integration, without which the data does not easily flow from one system to another. “Quality of hire” is also incredibly subjective and therefore, that makes it harder to measure. Some of the things that we are discussing with our clients includes developing a more objective measure of the high performing people and competency profile through a combination of cognitive and personality tests to build a high performance profile and use it to evaluate potential new hires.

Q When you speak to the customers, especially the recruitment and business leaders, what do you think are the things that keep them awake at night?

A Attrition is definitely one of the things that keeps most leaders awake at night. I have spoken to companies (in the retail sector) who say that they have over 100 percent staff attrition. That is a horrendous thing from a business perspective; it undermines culture and any training efforts. Other things are the pressure on salaries and workforce planning in order to meet business strategy. In the engineering sector, one of the common things that we hear about is the demographics of the workforce. Young people apparently aren't interested in becoming aircraft

engineers. The demographics of the workforce are changing to the point that the industry has too many people retiring and not enough apprentices or trainees coming through.

Q What are the innovations that are coming up that are helping organizations like yours and your clients with respect to such challenges?

A Technology and social media is influencing the way people recruit, the way candidates get engaged with potential employers. It should be influencing the way companies engage with their internal employees too. What I mean is that it is not common in Asia for talent acquisition to have the responsibility of both internal and external talent. This is not logical because if you think about the whole organization, you would typically say that the talent available is a mixture of both. One of the things that we are trying to introduce to our clients is using technology to drive internal mobility by understanding the skills and experience of their people, and empowering them to move within the organization rather than solely focusing effort on external talent. But this is still not a common practice. The second thing is around Social Media. Everyone uses Social Media and Asia has very high penetration, however,

For having an ongoing engagement strategy, you need to keep the talent community interested

Social Media is still underutilized for the purpose of recruitment. India has been an early adopter of technology, yet I still think that Indian companies could do a better job of using Social Media for the purpose of talent acquisition. Most organizations are using social media for marketing purposes but are not extending this as effectively into recruitment or other HR practices.

Q There are organizations that have been leveraging social media for recruitment. What do you think they are doing differently? What is it that we can learn from them?

Such organizations are projecting the personality of the organization through everything that they do. They are engaging with candidates from an experiential point of view. On their career websites, they have videos of people talking about their experiences. It is also culture specific; if you are an American company and you want to attract people in Asian countries, you need to have something that people can identify with. You should have your people in India, if you are in India, your people in China, if you are in China. It is more about the experience for the candidate and then it becomes something they can relate to.

Q Is that similar to the approach of building communities?

A To some extent. Most talent communities work where high volume of similar type of talent needs to be recruited. Some companies, because of their workforce, lend themselves to the effective use of talent communities more than others. We build talent communities for some of our large clients because they have planned hiring schedules. Then we project manage to the deadlines and drive the activities to create the volume of candidates in order to meet their requirements. We could start working on a hiring plan that is 6 to 9 months before the candidates are due to start. That is, building a community of interested candidates ahead of requirements. However, most companies do not have enough visibility of their future requirements. They might know that they have to recruit 300 people a year but they do not know when and where exactly. When data drives so many decisions in the modern organization, it is amazing that a company could not even know what kind of people they want to hire, it comes down to workforce planning.

I don't think that many organizations integrate recruitment data and their HR data sufficiently

Q What are the ingredients for building a successful talent community?

A Being targeted about what skills you actually want, what you have to sell in terms of opportunity - your proposition, why should somebody join your organization? - these are the ingredients for building a successful talent community. Also for having an ongoing engagement strategy, you need to keep the talent community interested for that particular period of time. You need to have content to do that. You need someone actively managing the communication and content, and sending organizational messages. It is about managing the infrastructure, making sure that you have things planned. It also depends on what the segment is and how you are best to communicate with them. It's also about hiring managers working in collaboration with the talent community, because people do want to hear stories from the employees about what's going on in the organization.

Q What are the cutting-edge things in hiring and RPO in the Indian context?

A Digitization in India is accelerating at a very fast pace, and that creates opportunities for individuals; it also creates a lot of churn in the employment market. Large organizations, in the past, have created significant internal talent acquisition functions. This is both good and bad because

if you have peaks and troughs of hiring, and it becomes difficult to manage your team with the right level of resourcing. More and more organizations in India have started considering outsourcing as it gives flexibility along with the ability to gain access to external best practices and greater adoption of technology in the recruitment process. More global companies are incorporating India into outsourced global talent acquisition solutions.

Q What will be the impact of Brexit on APAC job market? How do you see the job market evolving in India?

A The impact of Brexit will not be as much as it will be elsewhere. I have seen the effect on a couple of companies - recently I was talking to a Japanese company that has exposure to European infrastructure projects; they are also going through a significant business transformation & changing their whole business mix. However, as soon as Brexit happened, all of the plans that they had were put on hold because they were trying to understand the impact, some of their key infrastructure projects were postponed. This is the only client that I have spoken to who directly referred Brexit as the reason for them to hold on their plans. Everywhere else in Asia, life just goes on as usual since domestic demand is the main driver.

I think India can benefit from a slowdown in developed markets. Clients often come to us when they are setting up shared service and R&D centers in India. India has sophisticated IT development and BPO capability - increasingly complex tasks are being pushed, as global companies need to be more creative to maintain their profitability and competitive edge. Many large organizations have a significant proportion of their workforce in India and I don't see that changing.

Q What is the vision for your India team? How is your strategy related to the competitive landscape of India?

A The focus is on international business and/or professional niche skills as opposed to high volume and lower paid roles. With respect to this, we need to be really conscious of where we position ourselves in the market place; high value professional specialists, typically, high skill professional outsourcing is the focus. India is somewhat like other larger economies with three groups of competitors: the International Recruitment Outsourcing companies, Domestic Recruitment Outsourcing companies, and then you have Contingent Recruiters. My personal view is that the contingent recruitment business model will continue to diminish with respect to the limited value that they can provide to customers. Our competitors primarily are international outsourcing companies and increasingly so domestic outsourcing companies are at the lower paid end of the spectrum. Where we can work effectively is in providing a consolidated and consistent service globally, and there is demand for that. **em**

DO YOU LEAD WITH **CHARISMA**?
DO YOU KNOW YOUR "**BRAND QUOTIENT**"?
IS YOUR "**PERCEIVED BRAND**" IN ALIGNMENT
TO YOUR "**ASPIRATIONAL BRAND**"?
DO YOU **LEAD OR LEAVE A LEGACY**?

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SUMAN SETHI

Systemic approach to cultural transformation

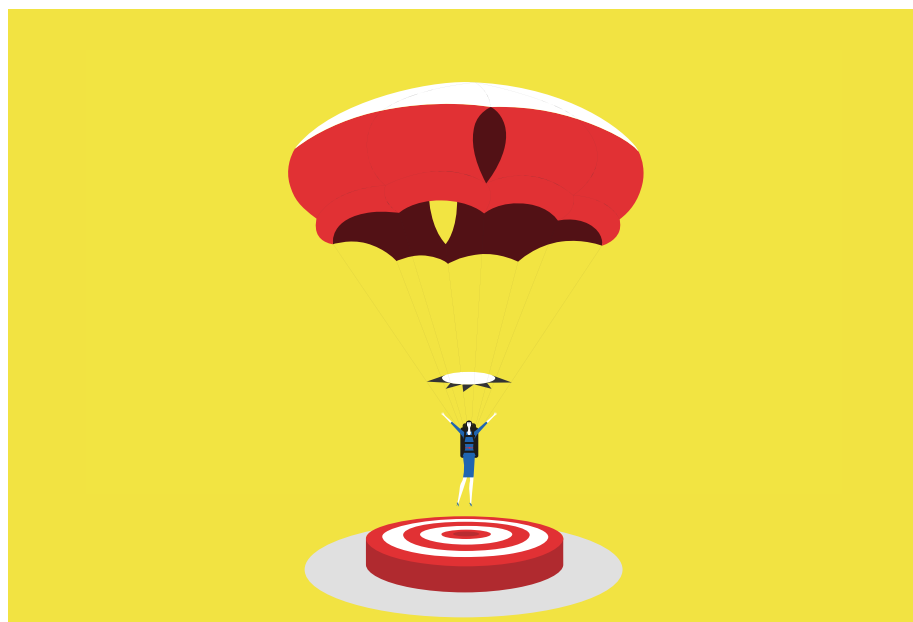
This article attempts to demystify cultural transformation, and the 'systemic' approach that organizations adopt to transform their cultures

A systemic approach to cultural transformation inherently holds the promise of sustainable results. It is like stating the obvious. Why then, is it almost as mythical as a unicorn for most organizations? Why then, do most culture-related studies report depressing rates of success for major culture change initiatives globally?

The good news is that along with the dreary statistics of failed cultural transformations, there are also success stories that indicate light at the end of the tunnel and offer an assurance that successful cultural transformation is in the realm of possibility! All that is then required is to intensely observe what these organizations have done and then contextualize those best practices to our environment. At the outset, one common element that stands out in successful cultural transformation stories is the systemic approach that organizations adopt to transform their cultures. Let's therefore attempt to demystify "cultural transformation" and "systemic" approach.

The first and probably the most critical observation is that the need for cultural transformation should always stem from a clear business imperative. Once the business context is clearly articulated and the measures it is expected to impact are compelling, it moves into the radar of the leadership team, which then ensures that some of the building blocks of a systemic approach are in place. The leadership team then drives this as a key priority; it gets called out as a "must do" as against "a good to do" strategic initiative and finally it is communicated as an inherent part of everyone's day job and not something that must be done in addition to the day job.

In this article, we look at answers to some of the key questions that arise during cultural transformation and a four-step guide to bring cultural transformation.



There is no one sure shot prescribed approach to how culture change can be successfully implemented in any organization

1 What situations or business reasons merit an initiative as momentous as culturally transforming an entire organization?

This one is an easy one to answer — any transformation that is triggered by goals of survival, staying relevant or growth. These could be driven by any of the following scenarios:

- A growing gap between the promised customer value proposition and the actual customer experience.
- Changing customer expectations because of the competitive landscape, customer demographic, regulatory and technological changes etc.

These may then lead to the following scenarios:

- Established brands shedding legacy to meet the changing customer profiles and expectations
- Mergers and acquisitions
- Matrix structures and integration at regional or global levels
- Organizations aligning their product and service delivery to customer expectations
- Rearticulating and redeploying the vision ensures relevance and growth

Being alert to customer preferences and then responding to them with alacrity

are essential to remaining relevant and to grow. Organizations that are able to constantly curate or transform their cultures in line with the customers' needs and the customer value proposition have survived and flourished over time.

Once the business imperative for a cultural transformation is established, the next question to be answered is:

2 Why is a systemic approach to culture transformation required?

Aristotle said, "We are what we repeatedly do." And this can be extrapolated to organizations too. An organization's culture is consistent, observable patterns of behavior in organizations "the way things are done in the organization". Most organizations while looking to grow or to transform tend to consider and deploy "quick fix" solutions, which may not address "the way things are done" in the organization. The normal recourse is to implement a change strategy that emphasizes restructuring or revamping systems or inducting resources. However, research and our experience indicate that these initiatives are unsustainable if not supported by core changes in the culture – "the way things are done in the organization".

These core changes have to be led by leaders with an unflinching intent to drive the transformation and leaders who are able to create an aligned ecosystem and are able to inspire people to commit to the change with their "hearts and minds".

"Culture transformation solutions have to involve the alignment of the desired state to the strategy, leadership behaviors and signals, hearts and minds of people, and the structures and systems."

Finally, the question to be addressed is:

3 How should organizations strategize for systemic cultural transformation?

There is no cookie cutter approach to cultural transformation. The word "culture" means that each organization will have multiple and unique nuances. Therefore, applying best practices without making them relevant to the specific cultural nuances is like performing the same medical procedure for different ailments just because it was successful for some ailment.

4 How can one ensure successful and sustainable impact?

A THREE-STEP GUIDELINE

The below three-step guideline should be considered by any organization or change leader(s) to bring about change.



Organizations that are able to constantly curate or transform their cultures in line with the customers' needs and the customer value proposition have survived and flourished over time

1 Clearly communicate the change imperative or "why" the change is required in the entire organization.

What is the business imperative that is driving this change? How it will impact the business & how will the organization know that it has successfully changed? Establishing the *raison d'être* of the impending change is the most critical step. Unless there are clear answers to these questions, the answers to 'what needs to change organizationally' will not be clear and people will not know "what they have to change" and the consequence of not changing will be blurred as well.

Elucidating by an example – the mandate for a multinational pharmaceutical organization was to "integrate the Indian operations with the global way of working" that was based on the business need to create globally relevant and standardized quality of products. Hitherto, India like other markets had operated in the limited space of producing in India for India. Now the mandate was to create a Global Supply Chain for the global market. This required transforming the "way things were done" in the India plants. The first step therefore entailed clearly articulating and communicating answers to questions such as – 'Why is this required?', 'What will we achieve?',

'What will be the business impact?' The global, regional and local leaders needed to communicate these answers together to the entire workforce in India. The effort to get them to communicate these answers ensured that all the relevant stakeholders got involved, put their stakes in the ground, agreed on the measures to be impacted and therefore also committed their time to the process of change – which most would agree, is the first sign of success.

2 Leadership Readiness: Are the business leaders equipped and committed to drive that change?

Let there be no doubt, business leaders are responsible for cultural transformation. HR and OD leaders provide change expertise but change has to be driven by business leaders. Leaders, at the minimum, have to perform the following to successfully lead cultural transformation:

- Ensure that the measures of success and the review dashboards reflect the desired change.
- Clearly articulate and communicate what they will be doing differently to bring about the culture transformation. Some critical leadership behaviors have to change to signal the credibility of the initiative.

DRIVING CULTURAL CHANGE

Some change vehicles that can be deployed in each phase of cultural change



PHASE 1

- Leadership intervention to define and articulate all aspects and contours of change along with the review mechanisms.
- Identification and definition of leadership behaviors that will drive the change.
- An internal communication and reward and recognition strategy that will achieve all the objectives of phase 1.
- Identification and enablement of change champions to be the evangelists and on ground resources of the change.
- Enablement of managers to drive the change in their teams.



PHASE 2

- Leaders consistently behaving according to the agreed rules of engagement.
- The Review system and dashboard to be operationalized.
- Aligning the key performance measures at all levels to the desired change (if required).
- The Change Champions and Managers to deploy the required changes in their areas of influence.
- Implementation of identified projects around structure and systems to assimilate the change.
- Capability building in alignment with the new order of things across levels.
- Internal communication to continue.

One common element that stands out in successful cultural transformation stories is the systemic approach that organizations have adopted to transform their cultures

- Role model the desired behaviors at all times.
- Create an ecosystem of communication and formal and informal rewards and recognition that encourage the display of desired behaviors and manage consequences when not displayed.

If there is even the slightest hesitation or ambiguity in committing to any of these, it may not be a good time to implement change. It may be better to maintain status quo, than to do it inconsistently or tactically and cause more damage.

3 The 'culture change' implementation strategy

There is no one sure shot prescribed approach to how culture change can be successfully implemented in any organization. This is because the elements and drivers in each culture are different and hence what works in every organization is unique to that organization.

A few factors that may, however, help decide the course of action include the details of leadership style, things that have worked in the past, ways of working, drivers of change and helping and hindering factors. All of these and more can be established through qualitative diagnostics study that includes leadership interviews, FGDs across the organization, observations, mystery audits et al. These results would help design the change strategy

that is completely contextualized to the organization.

PHASES OF CULTURAL CHANGE

Deploying change culturally has two major phases with distinct objectives:

1. The initial phase

In this phase, the objective is to build:

- Clarity about what has to change, how it will be done, and the role everyone in the organization has to play.
- Inspiration, energy and momentum required to engage the larger audience with the change and commit to it.
- Credibility and seriousness of intent of the initiative through strong visible leadership signals.

2. The "this is the way of life" phase

In this phase, the objective is to build:

- Integrate the new order of things as the way of life.
- To ensure that the entire ecosystem of signals, skills, behaviors, structure and systems is aligned to the desired change.

Read about the change tools/vehicles you can use for each phase in illustration 1

What is critical is to work towards a systemic & a customized plan to increase the chances of acceptance, adaptation and successful implementation of change towards business impact. The implication of basing the strategy on a diagnostics is

the tools, methods and strategies that will be put in place will also be unique. So, for instance in some cases a successful strategy may involve a high energy organization wide communication whirlwind led by hugely inspirational leaders; however, in an organization where the leaders are intrinsically not so inspirational, this may not work and deploying other best practices like linking the required change to the way people will grow in the company may work better. In some organizations, empowering and equipping all the managers to be the flag bearers and enablers of change will work, while in some others identifying change champions across levels will work better. And in some others, just changing the way "good performance is defined and measured" at organizational, team and individual levels may create the desired change.

CONCLUSION

The formula to successful culture transformation lies in organizations being able to do four things. First, have clarity on why the transformation is necessary – the business imperative and measures. Second, the leaders have to own the role of driving the change by aligning their behaviors to the change and creating the ecosystem conducive to people engaging with the culture change. Third, the approach has to be systemic, and it has to impact "the way things are done" i.e. incorporate all elements of the culture. And fourth, it must be contextualized to the organization through a deeply insightful diagnostics across all cultural elements. 📌

*2013 Strategy&/Katzenbach Center survey of global senior executives on culture and change management

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THE ALTERNATIVE WORKPLACE

ADAPTING TO THE NEW NEEDS OF THE ECOSYSTEM


In this special feature, we spoke to employers who are at different stages of enabling remote working opportunities in their organizations

By J Jerry Moses

FUTURE OF WORK

I am
on my
way!

Let's
Skype

The background of the page features a stylized illustration of a city street. On the left, there is a mosque with a minaret and a car. A large, leafy tree is in the center. The street is lined with buildings, and a yellow car is visible. The overall style is a simple line drawing with a teal and orange color palette. There are also several small birds flying in the sky.

Today's workplace is undergoing dynamic changes that have encouraged employees to take charge of their own career paths and professional development. Such changing dynamics of the workplace is also creating challenges and possibilities that companies can only tackle if they extend some flexibility.

According to a recent PwC Study on the future of work and workplace, 63 percent of employees believed that the 8-hour workday will be obsolete and 68 percent said that work will be done remotely, instead of the traditional office space. And of late, there has been a trend that has been observed among the Indian employees that signals their preference towards working remotely. To understand how employers are tackling this change, we spoke to representatives of three companies - Sheroes, MakeMyTrip and Bajaj Capital, each of whom is at different stages of enabling remote work.

The opportunity

Over the years, with the growth of a variety of social media tools, there has been a qualitative shift in technology-enabled integration. This has led organizations to tap into talent pools outside their city. It has also enabled companies to save costs related to infrastructure, travel, and allied expenditure.

One of the top reasons why companies we spoke to explored remote work is to retain their top talent. It made business sense since all of them had to deal with a significant loss each time a top performer left the company. For Sheroes, a company that runs a job portal for women and has almost 50 percent of its work done by remote employees, the need was a philosophical one too. "If we wanted to connect every woman with her career then remote work was a key differentiator" states Sairee Chahal, the Founder and CEO of Sheroes said.

Hi!

I am not well, working from home today

Employee lifecycle

"Freshers, right out of college are difficult to work with since most of them haven't seen a workplace," said Sairee, "So they require a lot of training" she adds. For Bajaj Capital, it is this gap that has led them to start a remote 'pre-work experience' program called "Webpreneurs" which aims to get college students in the final year to engage in activities related to business development. The company has also successfully implemented a pilot program to enable its top performers to continue working with them. It plans to institutionalize and expand the program in the upcoming months.

There are a few similarities in the talent profiles that companies have access to. Most employees working remotely are women, middle-aged and have had the opportunity to work in a conventional office set-up. The key reason that this is the largest pool is related to the fact that women are more prone to leaving their jobs due to household responsibilities, marriage, child care or attaining better work-life balance. Binaifer Khanna, Senior Vice President – Human

demand for holiday experts, and the company manages anywhere between 700 to 1200 employees at any given time.


Most employees come through referrals, job boards, and company websites. "We don't expect anyone to deliver anything in the first fifteen days," says Sairee "We just want them to know us better, know the people, their job and get comfortable". At MakeMyTrip, there is an offline week-long induction program, which is followed by mock calling sessions and on-the-job training, before the employees take live calls.

Motivation is a concern for most employers. But for their remote working employees, it assumes top priority. "Remote work is manager-less, it is result oriented and it's not institutionalized, so it is the opposite of a traditional approach to work," says Sairee. Sunaina believes that employees need to be "entrepreneurial" in their drive to manage work. Sushil Verma, the Vice-President, Alternate Channels at MakeMyTrip notes that the long-term success of remote work requires the "discipline and passion on the employee's part". And so the company engages employees in a variety of ways, right from encouraging hobbies such as chocolate making, celebrating career milestones and birthdays and providing special benefits or discounts.

Role of culture

From an employer's standpoint, apart from re-thinking management behavior and business design, companies must pay attention to the cultural shift to make 'remote work' work. Apart from doing away with hierarchies, there is a need to create an environment where people communicate and collaborate with ease. "The fundamental challenge is to unlearn what we have learned," Sairee said

Providing adequate support is another necessity. When employees are unaware of the goals and aspirations of the company, they are unlikely to make a successful impact. MakeMyTrip employs a team of 60-70 full-time employees who manage and support the work of remote working employees. The company classifies its support into training and development, relationship management and technical spocs - who tackle all issues - right from client engagement to communications. Apart from work related support, another crucial support factor is the individual's partner and family.

The columns document the experiences of Sheroes, MakeMyTrip and Bajaj Capital. 

63 percent of employees believed that the 8-hour workday will be obsolete and 68 percent said that work will be done remotely, instead of the traditional office space - PwC Study

Resources, Eureka Forbes Limited points out that the growing opportunities in remote working opportunities are empowering women and also making them economically independent as most of the remote work jobs relate to Sales, Business Development, HR and Administration, Design and Content Writing. Apart from the above cohort, companies also have access to differently-abled talent along with talent that is niche and high skilled.

While at Sheroes, employees who work remotely contribute to at least 50 percent of the company's work and play an instrumental role in different functions of the company, at Bajaj Capital, opportunities are centered on the company's tele investment services. "The business model was such that the women would be entrepreneurs for the company, and they could earn anywhere between 40 -50 percent of the revenue that they generate for the company," says Sunaina Khanna, Chief Human Resource Officer at Bajaj Capital. At MakeMyTrip jobs are focused on a seasonal



MAKING READY

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REMOTE WORK IS A KEY DIFFERENTIATOR

At Sheroes, at least half of the work is done by employees working from remote locations. Sairee Chahal speaks about the factors that make it work



SAIREE CHAHAL
Founder & CEO, SHEROES

Sheroes is a career platform for women and our goal is to enable women in their careers. And thus, limiting to just metro cities would have restricted our opportunities. If we really want to clear the access to corporate jobs for women, remote work is a key differentiator. We believe in that philosophy and so in our own company, about 50 per cent of our work is done by employees working remotely.

Remote work has a lot to do with organizational culture. There is a difference between how work is done traditionally and how work is done remotely. The change in dynamics has to do with a paradigm shift in the style of working. Remote work requires employees to consciously engage for collaboration, and as there is little room for hierarchy, there is a need to be at ease with the communication channels. There is a need, therefore, to also unlearn some of the management behaviors as well as business designs. There are hardly any large organizations that build remote work projects because they are institutional, and

if an organization is highly institutional, it is difficult to integrate remote work. What we're seeing however, is that companies are giving their current employees an opportunity to work from home as and when required. But that does not change anything institutionally. There are some companies that are more amiable to work remotely, they are founder-led companies, companies with flat structures and low hierarchy, and companies that are not customer facing and are product-led.

In our own organization, we're detail-oriented and remote work is well integrated into the core functions. We have a simple protocol and that is to do with communication - real-time communication and real-time response. It is an extremely useful tool to align people, especially when they have never seen each other. Some of our employees who work remotely are in-charge of integral functions. Since different people have different expectations, we talk about what success looks like at each level. In order for people to acclimatize themselves to the organizational structure, we ensure that they start with an easy function. Then they rise up in the organization because they adapt, collaborate and communicate.

Then there are also employees who want to do remote work because they want a manageable work-life balance. In that case, their work is designed in such a way that it is harmonious with the employee's priorities and organizations goals that we can measure.

The principal talent pools have been women at middle-level positions across administration. It is very difficult to find people with high technology skills. When one enters an organization, there is still an opportunity to learn, there are people who can help you with your problems and you learn from others. But when you work remotely, you fall short of that kind of exposure. That's why the market is ripe for experienced professionals as opposed to fresh talent.

It is important to note that there will be a failure rate. At some point there will be an alignment change. And it is our job to ensure that those who are aligned continue to do so and those that aren't need to step out.

There is a growing interest among employers although most organizations do not have the bandwidth to invest in remote work. At some point, we see ourselves plugging that gap. And that gap is cultural not technological. 🌱

Remote work requires employees to consciously engage for collaboration



TAPPING INTO THE POOL OF LATENT TALENT

Bajaj Capital explored the model of remote work to retain its top talent. Sunaina Khanna talks about how the project fared and their future plans to expand the program



SUNAINA MATTOO KHANNA
CPO and Head -
Transformation, Bajaj Capital

Bajaj Capital provides financial services to clients and its USP is the knowledge or advice that is shared with the clients. When the business was first set-up, people would come to us, now they expect us to be at their door step. In the recent past, clients have been more open to taking calls due to paucity of time. This has worked well for us as every transaction or information is passed on recorded lines and so there is very little room for ambiguity and misinterpretation. This has further enhanced the relationship with clients because the follow-ups are stronger and they can also revisit it online at any point of time.


Remote work was a model that was explored because the organization was losing some of the top talent. Over the years, there were many employees who left the organization, especially

talented female employees who left for personal reasons such as marriage or starting a family. It was also observed that they were also not joining other financial institutions or banks. And so to tap into this talent, a pilot project was set-up to manage remote work. Around this time, the company also started a new vertical called telephone investment service, which involved working on financial assessment over the phone without ever having to meet the client face to face. And all communication was done via recorded lines or via e-mails. This seemed like the right opportunity to tap into some of the lost talent. For the pilot, high potential women were chosen – women who exhibited skills in fostering client relationships and who were also familiar with financial markets.

An entrepreneurial business model was designed such that the women would get 40 - 50 per cent of the revenue they generated for the company. While full-time employees get salaries and added incentives based on the targets set, individuals involved in remote work do not have any specific targets. The only costs that were incurred were related to support, which was not a big issue since the organization already had support systems in place. Remote work did not change the dynamics of the work significantly in our context, but it has added more individuals.

Cultural fit was not an issue because the selected individuals by virtue of being former employees were already familiar with ethics and code of conduct. They also knew the values that the organization emphasized in building relationships with a client.

From a support perspective, the team leader handles all issues (that may arise in the course of the work) and is also responsible to scout for more talent. From a technology standpoint, a 360 degree financial assessment technology tool has been deployed that captures the goals of the clients and also creates a portfolio, keeping in mind the long-term and short-term requirements along with asset allocation.

Another talent pool of talent that we're engaging with remotely is students in the final year of their MBA program. Our 'webpreneur' program involves 50 students, who undergo knowledge and psychometric tests and will be trained to spread awareness and in getting new clients in locations where our visibility is low. 

The remote work business model allows women employees to receive 40 - 50 per cent of the revenue they generate for the company



REMOTE WORK IS A BLUE OCEAN STRATEGY FOR TALENT

MakeMyTrip approached the remote working model to tackle seasonal demand & save on infrastructure costs. Sushil Verma shares key insights about how the company manages this model



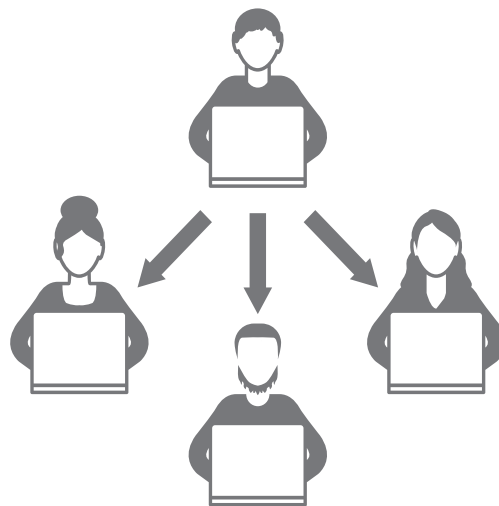
SUSHIL VERMA
VP & Head - Alternate Channels at MakeMyTrip.com

MakeMyTrip's journey to remote work started four years ago, when the company saw a surge in customer queries for holiday packages. The company also dealt with a churn among its female employees on account of marriage, maternity and managing their home. To tackle this churn, the company had to either increase the bench strength at the call center or explore ways to retain employees. It was decided that a hybrid solution would be the best bet, whereby women employees leaving for personal reasons could be given opportunities to work remotely. The solution allowed the company to not only tackle seasonal demand but also save on infrastructure costs.

A work from home model although appears easy to build, it needs to account for a number of factors. There is a need for routine quality monitoring and overall performance management. Businesses should also ensure that data is secure and that enough support is provided to the employees. The long-term success of such initiatives also requires discipline and passion on the employee's part.

In order to ensure cultural fit, the company focused on identifying the right employee profiles. In MakeMyTrip's case, it was mostly women in the age group of 25-45 years, who had great relationship building skills and were at ease with using social media tools like WhatsApp and Facebook. The company also looked for prior experience in sales or in the service industry. And the primary means by which employees were recruited was through referrals, job boards and the MakeMyTrip website. Once selected, candidates go through a seven day long on-boarding program where they are familiarized with their job, process and receive industry orientation. After a round of mock calls and on-the-job training, they are live on the platform.

At MakeMyTrip, the emphasis is on support – we have a team of 60-70 people who are capable



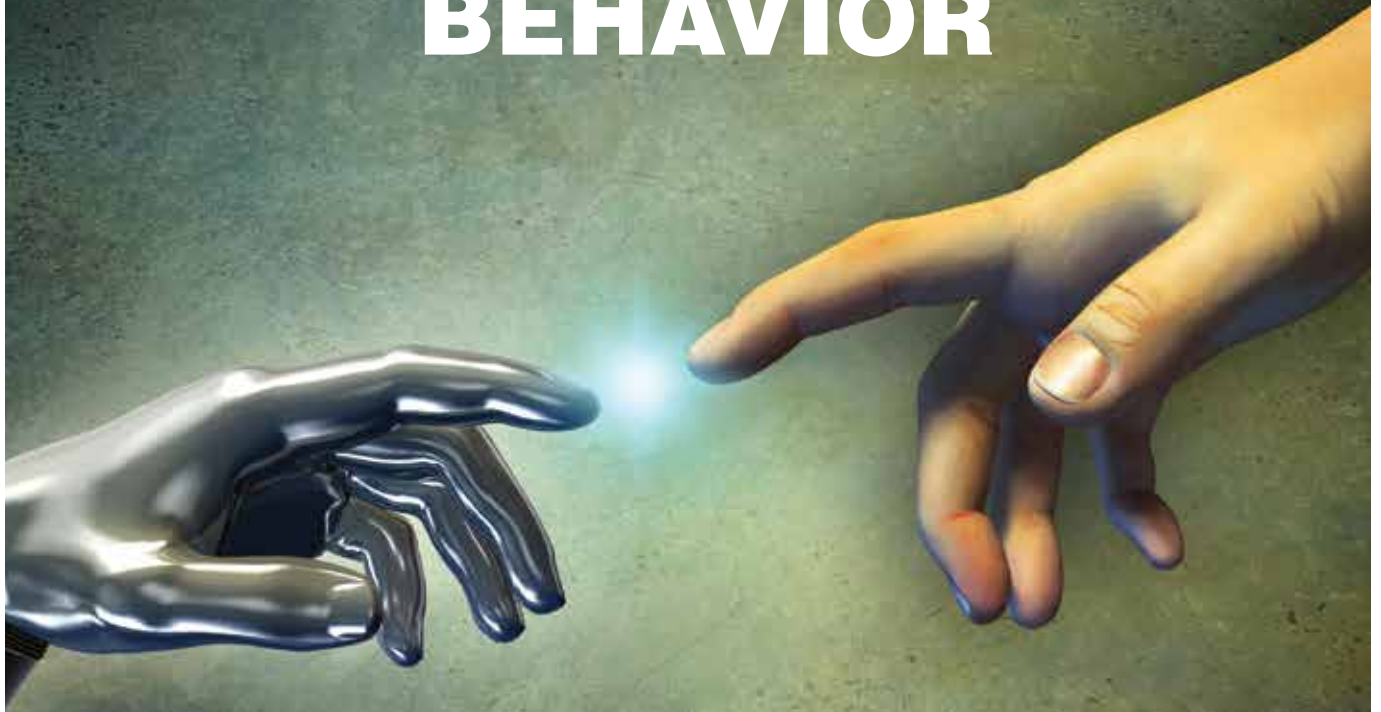
of managing 1100 holiday experts. The current strength of holiday experts working remotely is 700. Out of the team managing these employees, they are further classified based on the kind of support they provide. One team takes care of training and development and are responsible for onboarding and for keeping employees engaged. There are relationship managers, who manage 80-100 holiday experts and are responsible for mitigating issues that the experts may have with the platform. Then there are technical spocs, who are responsible to help the employees plan itinerary and helping in customer conversion. A customer experience team then follows up with the customer to brief them about their travel packages.

Employees are expected to work 7-8 hours a day, with defined tasks and variable pay. But the emphasis is on the output in terms of business deliverables rather than the actual number of working hours. To ensure that employees stay motivated, we ensure that we celebrate small and big moments of a remote team member, whether it is a career milestone or a birthday. Members are also provided with reward and recognition along with small promos and offers.

Remote work is a blue ocean strategy for hiring talent. Employer can leverage this talent pool and it helps them save infrastructure cost with lesser liability and an increased emphasis on pure performance based work. If it is structured well, it can help organizations scale up and down as and when required.

A 'work from home' model needs to account for a number of factors including routine quality monitoring and overall performance management

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Graduating from metrics to effective dashboards

Measurement dashboards that organizations use to drive regular decision-making present a frustrating experience – they offer 100-odd measures, but seldom lend any meaningful insights

By Pinaki Chakladar & Vineet Jain

There are moments in your life when you are stumped by a situation and grapple for answers. Worse, you are embarrassed and made to look downright silly. A friend of ours had one such moment when he boarded a swanky new Airline, settled down in his seat and started fiddling with the plush entertainment control buttons on his armrest. When the bright, in-flight entertainment panel came alive in front of him, throwing some 100 menu controls, he was stumped. A few

minutes later, when he realized it wasn't getting anywhere, he finally spoke to his co-passenger – a seasoned traveler – and few minutes and dozen explanations later, he was able to figure out the basics. He quickly realized that half of the menu controls were of no use to him.

Measurement dashboards that organizations use to drive regular decision-making present you with a similar, frustrating experience – they offer you 100-odd measures, but seldom lend any meaningful insights. Plus, it is easy to lose out the primary measures amidst a crowd of measures that are mostly inconsequential.

To understand why this happens, let us revisit the premise of these performance measures (or KPI's as they are often called). These are typically designed to indicate an organization's progress toward a set of strategic, desired outcomes. When they are truly strategic in nature, they yield the outcomes they are designed for, highlighting the gaps between actual and targeted performance, indicating the levels

of organization effectiveness and operational efficiency.

Sadly, that's not what happens in many organizations, it's exactly the opposite – people spend endless hours generating reports from inconsequential metrics that are nice to chart out and gratifying to look at in busy boardrooms, but rarely dig out the essential insights the organization seeks – in short, they lead to a whole lot of noise.

Worse, we get so fixated with our routine, narrow perspective that it leads to an eventual dilution of the outside-in view, a critical aspect the leadership loves to review. While we are theoretically aware of putting up comprehensive scorecards, seldom do we end up generating them – contributing to the mindless noise.

If we do not manage to distinguish insights from noise, it will only send us wrong signals and eventually throws us off-track in our pursuit of tracking strategic objectives.

So, what is it that makes us fumble and stumble when it comes to zeroing in on the right measurement parameters?

In order to understand this malaise, let us look at the two most important set of measures that all organizations love to track – People (Human Resources) and Financial – to understand where the organizations fundamentally go wrong with the whole performance measurement business.

People (HR) Measures: Any company worth its salt would be concerned about its People measures, since these are about managing its most valuable asset – People. These measures typically enable the company to achieve its primary business goals – that of pursuing and hiring the right talent; skilling them and managing their performances; and promoting and rewarding them in the right manner. Importantly, they also need the right measures to ensure that the entire talent management process is consistent, optimal and being executed effectively.



- **Time to hire:** This measure tracks the average amount of time needed to fill an open position. Now, imagine filling a critical position that has a large business impact. Is it not farcical to merely measure how many days it takes to fill such a position – wouldn't the important/critical positions take more time to fill than the ones that aren't? Wouldn't this lead to the hiring personnel cutting corners (reducing interview time and/or the # of interviews) to meet this KPI? This is what happens when we persist with narrow, operational measures, which focus on the process, not the outcomes.
- **Training days per employee:** This measure tracks the average number of person days of training completed per full time employee. On the face of it, this sounds good – tracking the learning investment into your workforce indicates how serious you are in making them more skilled and competent. But here's the curve ball – does it tell you what kind of trainings and how has it impacted your productivity?
- **Employee turnover percentage:** Tracks the attrition numbers of an organization, but what it doesn't tell HR decision makers is whether the people who are leaving are top performers or not. It also doesn't tell them whether the reasons for leaving are because of low compensation or are they related to employee disenchantment.

As an example, general ledger balances are often presented as key financial statements, but they completely miss the adjustments that are required to be made, unless these are drawn during account closing, which accounts for provisions and adjustments. Needless to say, financial accounts must consider normalization in order to highlight the correct status of business performance.



Technology is the driving force of efficiency and has made dashboards interactive, with functionality such as drill-up, drill-down and drill-through

- **Days Sales Outstanding (DSO):** ‘Cash is King,’ goes the popular saying. This lends DSO some halo, given the increasing emphasis on shorter cash cycles – lack of it is even deemed a risk. However, does this mean DSO presents a complete story? Consider the Outsourcing business as an example - every contract in this business is arrived at on unique terms. Therefore, would mere operational calculation & reporting of DSOs (in isolation) be a wise thing to do? While a low DSO presents a rosy picture on an operational report, what if better payments terms came at the cost of pricing terms? What if profitability and margins were compromised by way of higher discounts? Shouldn’t DSO be, therefore, presented together with pricing margins to lend a complete perspective?
- **Profit and Loss measures:** These measures are considered to be the holy grail of financial reporting, given that they form the basis for both the top and bottom lines of an organization. While this is all good, the question to ask

- **Risk Measures:** We have learned enough from the financial crisis that shook the globe in 2008 – specifically, due to non-consideration of all kinds of risk. What is surprising, though, is that organizations still do not track Risk-related items adequately as part of their measures. As an example, bank guarantees feature prominently in the terms and conditions of most financial contracts; yet, they are rarely tracked in CXO dashboards.
- **Product & Service Pricing:** Every organization's Top line is anchored on product/service pricing. Yet, most of the financial reporting revolves around accounting measures, such as profit & loss, balance sheet and cash flows. Pricing measures on Product & Service are rarely captured. This, despite the fact that product pricing is one of the key drivers, along with market and competitor intelligence.

What is the right way to go about it then?

1. **Align measures with strategic objectives:** First things first, we need to understand and appreciate the fact that unless the measures are tagged to key strategic business objectives, they are unlikely to yield much value. This is because HR does not work in isolation – it works to accomplish the organization's defined goals. Therefore, we need to define a causality chain (a chain of cause-and-effect relationships) that ensures what we measure are linked to the targeted outcomes.
2. **Context setting:** The thing to ponder about is whether there is a context to the KPIs to be tracked. Essentially, KPIs need to have a comparable target. 'Number of quality hires' is a good KPI, but has it been base-lined against a benchmarked number - 20? 30? 50? – for a similar-sized, leading company in the same industry?
3. **Measures vs. attributes:** The reason we end up with such a huge number of progress towards those objectives and identify the gaps. However, nothing consequential is going to result unless you start doing taking actions to close those gaps. It is imperative, therefore, to define an action plan to the measures you have defined. As an example - if you are measuring hiring conversion ratio, what is your action plan to improve it?
5. **Track only controllable KPIs:** This is common sense, really. Does it make any sense to track factors as KPIs that cannot be controlled or influenced? In a manufacturing industry, 'Raw Material', a crucial driver, is generally tracked as a KPI. However, say the pricing of some 'Raw Material' types is regulated by the government. In such a regulated scenario, the costs of such Raw Material types should not be tracked as KPIs.
6. **Focus on leading indicators:** In the whole maze of measures, which go up to 100+ sometimes, it becomes difficult for an organization to sift the key ones

8. **Technology is inevitable** - No corporate function, whether accounting, finance, or HR can accomplish its goals without the intervention of technology. Technology is the driving force of efficiency even as measurements are concerned – however, the Spreadsheets and PowerPoints of yesterday have been supplanted today by specialized and sophisticated dashboard tools and software. Technology has made dashboards interactive, with functionality such as Drill-up, drill-down and drill-through. A quick example - if the CEO wanted to draw some insights from the Sales dashboard, he/she could drill down from country to state to city – imagine how many man-hours of work would have gone into the preparation of such views. The latest technology tool can accomplish these drill-downs in real time merely by a couple of mouse clicks.

Think all these come at a huge cost? Yes, and no – while these tools could be expensive, there are 'Could-based' solutions that could present the same functionality over Internet at a fraction of the cost. What's more, these dashboard software are attuned to cater to note merely laptops and PCs, but over Mobile Apps as well. It, therefore, makes sense to harness these technological tools to save the organization enormous man-hours and costs.

Conclusion

To accurately analyze business performance, organizations need to adopt a calibrated approach to design a performance dashboard that track and measures strategic business objectives, thereby separating insights from background noise. Needless to say, the business performance dashboard should track the business outcomes and not the underlying operations. Technology intervention is indispensable in attaining efficient dashboards, generating distinguished insights to empower organization leaders in taking corrective actions, and making organizations future ready. 

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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To accurately analyze business performance, organizations need to adopt a calibrated approach to design a performance dashboard that tracks and measures strategic business objectives

KPIs is because we confuse measures with attributes, and end up defining attributes as measures. The right way would be to cluster a group of attributes under a related measure. For example, consider the Hiring Conversion Ratio that indicates the number of people hired to the total number shortlisted. Now, the attributes (Gender, Source, Location, etc.) could be easily specified as drill downs for this key measure – that way, this measure becomes meaningful, and allows users to drill down or filter across multiple attributes, such as by Gender or location. This approach could tell the Hiring Manager, for example, that it's easier to convert women applicants to hires in Europe, as opposed to, say South Asia.

4. **Define an action plan:** If you have a set of measures defined against the specific business outcomes, it means that you know the strategic business objectives that are important for you to track, and you can also track

from the rest – this is where Leading indicators come to the rescue. Leading indicators are typically input-oriented, hard to measure and easy to influence, while Lagging indicators are typically "output" oriented, easy to measure but hard to improve or influence. As an example, although customer satisfaction is typically a lag indicator for past services/product sold, it can be repurposed as a leading indicator as well, linked to 'market share.' A falling customer satisfaction could indicate loss in market share or a stiff pricing competition in the upcoming period.

7. **Evaluate consistently and modified when required:** Finally, measurements and KPIs are not cast in stone – they need to be relooked at in light of changing business environments and modified accordingly – this is especially true for industries that are highly susceptible to rapid changes in technology – such as Information Technology and Pharmaceutical.



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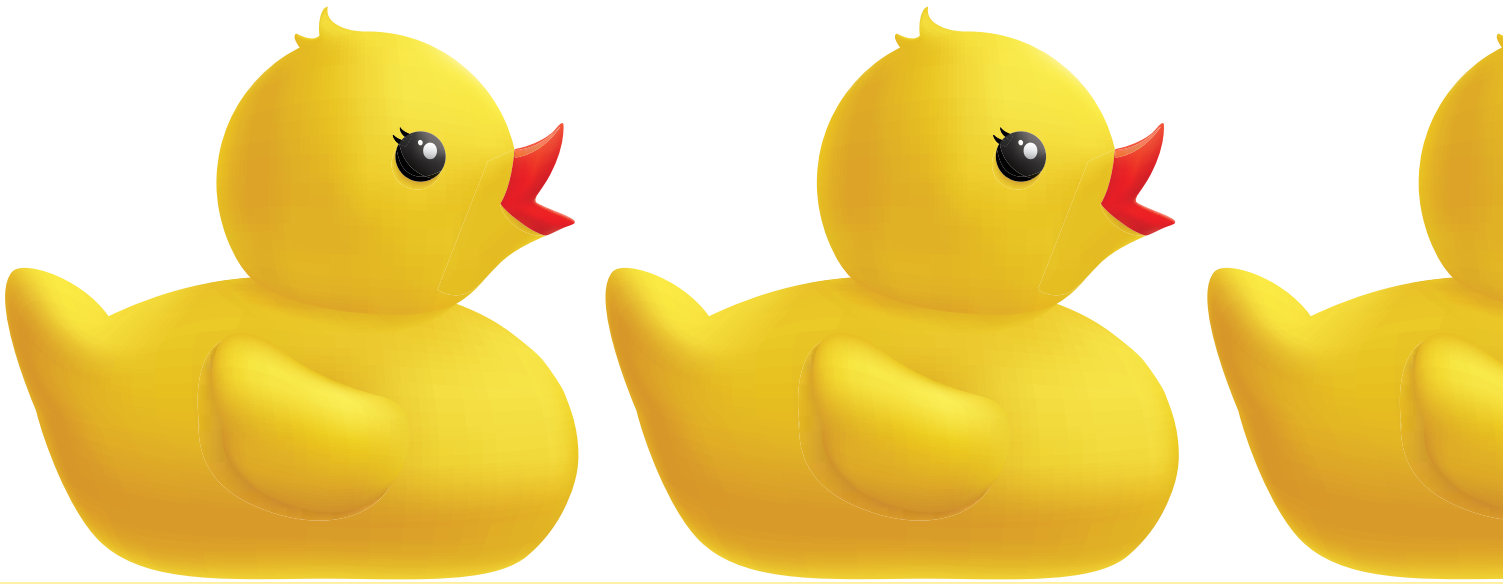
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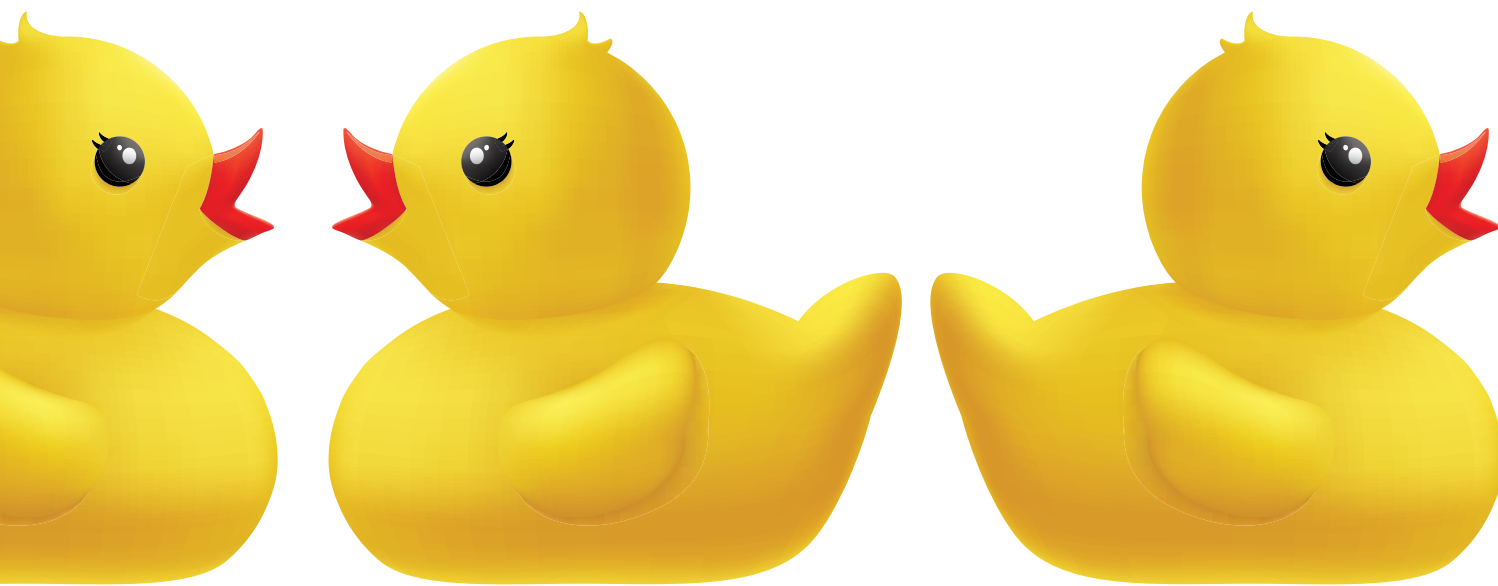


IT IS NOT CAPITAL, NOT TECHNOLOGY, NOT STRATEGY. IT IS AN ALIGNED TEAM THAT BRINGS THE STRONGEST COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE ANY COMPANY CAN HAVE

ALIGNED?

Alignment is something that a team has or it doesn't. It is a multi-faceted concept. So how do organizations construct uniform teams that are strategically and operationally synchronized & coherent about goals and accountabilities?

By Suparna Chawla Bhasin



Heroic leadership is a passé! It is time for non-positional leadership that aims to impact, influence and inspire through broader engagement and ownership. And for achieving this, having an aligned top team is paramount — every leader needs a *real* team for support and validation in decision-making and in strategic execution of those decisions — a real team that is a combination of the right people, a compelling direction and collaboration. It is indisputable that top teams are critical to an organization's success; yet, only a few top teams get it right!

It is generally observed that the CEO, senior leadership and the tier of next-level functional heads usually excel as independent individual runners of their own business units or functions; however, it is not always, that they are impeccably collaborative and aligned to lead the organization to high performance.


For any organization, its top team needs to be in sync, interdependent, decision-making, consultative and stable. Where a lack of team alignment at the top breeds silos, competing agendas, turf wars, doubt and uncertainty; alignment in the top teams ensures organization's sustained & consistent performance, and success. This alignment manifests itself through the critical responsibilities that are shared by the leadership team on established business goals and agreements. Moreover, "there are different kinds of alignment that are needed to be built — around trust, processes, values, strategy, goals, priorities. The top team alignment is not just a feel good factor, but more of a granular alignment around specifics, trust, processes, values, strategy, goals, priorities, methods of execution, resource allocation" as Dr. Santrupt B. Misra, Director –

Group HR & CEO – Carbon Black Business, Aditya Birla Group, aptly states it.

However, alignment is something that a team has or it doesn't. It is a multi-faceted concept. And the insidious challenges arise in the form of conflicting agendas, personal motivations and behaviors. Most often "People find it difficult to breakdown the silos and reconcile with conflicting agendas when it comes to their departments and the business as a whole" as Arvind Pandit, Founder and MD at Ishwa Consulting puts it.

Every leader needs a real team for support and validation – a real team that is a combination of the right people, a compelling direction, and collaboration

But how do organizations construct uniform teams that are strategically and operationally synchronized, coherent about goals and accountabilities, address issues or challenges prescribed by the conventional rules of propriety, and join together to work transparently?

From stating what the organization is doing to why it is doing it, establishing omnidirectional communication channels, creating synergies across the spectrum, implementing deep levels of democracy in decision-making, developing capabilities or defining the rhythm that forms the soul of an organization — this Cover Story presents the views of the top leaders who share their insights into why top team alignment is paramount and what makes their top teams aligned. 



CONSISTENCY IN PEOPLE'S PRIORITIES DETERMINES ALIGNMENT

The issue of alignment is significant and exists more in large organizations, rapidly changing contexts, and in situations where there is a leadership change

By **Dr. Santrupt Misra**, Director - Group Human Resources and CEO - Carbon Black Business, Aditya Birla Group

One needs to be very clear on the circumstances and the context related to the issue of alignment or the lack of it. Once you are aware of the context, then you know where alignment is needed. There are times when you also have to build alignment about alignment. However, most of the times, consistency in people's priorities determines if there is alignment or not. Alignment is needed to understand each other's perspectives and to provide support at the right time — it serves as the lubricant to make the business run faster, better.

There are different kinds of alignment that are needed to be built. I think top team alignment is not just a feel good factor, but more of a granular alignment around specifics, trust, processes, values, strategy, goals, priorities, methods of execution, resource allocation, etc. One needs to prioritize and decide which alignment is the most critical and the work on building that.

What the top team is, in itself, is a very different concept. There can be different top teams. And the same individual can be part of different top teams where each team can have a different need of alignment because the individuals, tasks at hand, and contexts are also different. Therefore, how you build alignment in different top teams is very

gives him the framework, meaning and the lenses through which he perceives the world. The second source of challenge for alignment is strategy. Sometimes, if the players are new or if the strategy is new, it becomes another source of challenge to alignment. The third source, perhaps, is that people believe there is alignment, but the alignment is superficial and not deep. Because the superficiality of it is neither comprehended nor understood, people move forward, only to realize later that the alignment they believed in was apparently never there.

The rapidity at which alignment is expected to be built is itself a challenge to building alignment as the context of the customer expectation and the expectation of the outside world evolves swiftly.

Alignment building, thus, can be an individual process or a team process. It can happen through coaching, mentoring, organizational confrontation, debate, discussion, exchange of information and insights. Depending on what you want alignment on, you need to use a tool, a methodology or a process to get a sense of it. If you are a leader who is connecting and sensitive, you are always able to pick up when the alignment is deep, strong and effective. People behavior in your absence also shows alignment. But if you aren't sure about it, there are other interventions. Surveys, questionnaires, focus groups, discussions, there are many data points from where you can pick up whether there is alignment or not.

The issue of alignment is significant and exists more in large organizations, rapidly changing contexts, and in situations where there is a leadership change. Sometimes what we call alignment is nothing but a submission to the position of a very powerful leader — but that necessarily may not be alignment. Alignment is an insightful understanding that creates an emotional connect; it requires an understanding and a degree of buy-in. 🐣

Top team alignment is not just a feel good factor, but more of a granular alignment around specifics, trust, processes, values, strategy, goals, priorities etc.

different. If you are restructuring the business, there is a different need. If you are changing the long-term strategy of the company, it is a different need. If you acquire a company, and bringing together two sets of leadership together, then a different kind of alignment is needed.

I have seen that some of the core challenges related to team alignment come from 3 fundamental sources — first is the background of the individuals in the team. An individual's background makes one big challenge for alignment because what a person has learnt in his life,



TOP TEAM ALIGNMENT IS FUEL FOR A FIT TEAM

Leadership needs to develop the kind of team that represents the collective expertise and responsibility of the workforce than the board room executives

By **Amarjit Singh Batra**, CEO, OLX India



A top level aligned team is not much different from a football team. Every champion team has a common vision with clear goals, which players are committed to, just like a management team. There is clarity on each other's roles and responsibilities and success is clearly defined.

The first step to aligning the dream team is to start by recognizing the purpose and true source of the team's value. Leadership needs to develop the kind of team which represents the collective expertise and responsibility of the workforce than the board room executives. A McKinsey & Company survey¹ with over 600 large MNCs revealed that on an average, only 10 percent top executives were confident of effectively aligning their top teams.

The key issue many top teams fail to address is to perform as cross-functional teams and break the silos in which they often end up working to achieve their own functional objectives, instead of the common organization goal. On the other hand, aligned top teams are different, they see the bigger picture, understand the common purpose and are aware that they are a part of the larger group, which is playing together to win the league.

I believe that the people who lead the organizations are the ones who define the overall culture and founding values of the organization. Culture is at the heart of the organization's strategy and it is the role of a CEO to align the top team with the culture. When all team members are thinking in the same direction and there is mutual understanding among the team members, then a shared culture is established across the group. A passionate top level team can also bring in infectious optimism to the group through envisioning, empathy, and empowerment to the bottom line. All of these skills with consistent communication of values help in greater alignment throughout the organization.

To build a completely aligned workforce that plays as a team, some of the practices which we adopted were:

An inspiring purpose: Having a common, inspiring purpose is important to motivate the top level team. The purpose should be a reflection of the group's motto; it is an important practice for the leadership team to evaluate how the purpose is aligned with the end goal, which the team is striving to achieve. At OLX, our common purpose is to improve people's lives by bringing them together for win-win exchanges.

Defining values: Values that are consistent with what leaders believe in and that also connect with your business needs are crucial. An interesting exercise we did internally was to ask each OLX regional team to come up with its own set of values, which were then put together to decide on the core values of the OLX group. This led us to come up with six values that we believe are fundamentally right for the future of our brand and teams. These values are 'Be fast', 'Be innovative', 'Be empowered', 'Live-It', 'Be Open', and 'Be Curious'. All leaders across OLX countries are aligned to these values.

It is an important practice for the leadership team to evaluate how the purpose is aligned with the end goal that the team is striving to achieve

Focused strategy: Drawing a focused strategy with the top team helps in better alignment of the overall organizational goals. Most of the times, organizations fail due to fickleness in their approach to setting the right strategy. It is imperative to adhere to the core strategy and empower functional leaders to drive their teams to the common vision.

Clear expectations: Defining clear expectations from each top leader on what is expected out of them is a crucial task for a CEO. Leaders have to understand that one they need to be able to excel in their domain and support their counterparts too.

Candid assessment: At OLX, we believe in sharing constant feedback through continuous communication. The assessment does not only restrict to the performance of one's own function, but also on how each functional head collaborates with one another to win together.

Top team alignment is not an easy task to accomplish. It requires adhering to a basic principle of owning a decision, which every captain needs to be aware of. At times, the captain has to fill in the role of a coach to build the capabilities of each player, and align them to work for each other's success. The day when all the players are doing that, your team becomes a champion. 🏆

¹ <http://bit.ly/2dHJMGR>



CROSS PURPOSE SERVES NO PURPOSE

Leadership is a contact sport and the top team needs to be thoughtful about human relations



SANDEEP CHAUDHARY

CEO, Aon Hewitt India Consulting



Strong leadership is more than a competitive advantage and it separates the world-class companies from the rest, whether in situations of crisis or opportunity. Today, the role of leadership is to steer companies towards extraordinary levels of growth. However, no steering and acceleration will work if there is no alignment at the top.

In the VUCA environment, an unrelenting focus on talent and leadership is how top companies stay on top. At Aon Hewitt, we strongly believe that top team alignment is both about developing capability of individuals within their own specific leadership roles, and helping the leadership team to be effective as a cohesive unit, who are aware of themselves, conscious of their strong impact on others and have a shared vision and sense of excitement for the organization's future. Aon Hewitt Top Companies for Leaders build cultures that embody the comprehensive and consistent leadership practices required in today's (and tomorrow's) VUCA environment. They get the key practices right to instill and inspire alignment in their top teams. Here are a few principles that are followed:

Visible CEO and Board of Directors' involvement

They have a passion for leadership development and invest in face time, coaching, and mentoring. In top companies, when new senior leaders join from outside, incumbents are held accountable to ensure performance and retention of the new leaders.

Business strategy clearly aligned to talent strategy

HR and leadership practices intentionally support the execution of the business strategy. In top companies, overall organizational outcomes hold a weightage of 50 percent on a leader's performance; higher than the leader's own function or business unit.

Comprehensiveness and depth of leadership and talent programs

Programs are varied and build with the active involvement of senior managers. GE uses an 'Integrated Learning' approach to leadership development using programs that infuse logic and linear thinking. Their goal is to build adaptive leadership capable of navigating uncertainty through a process of mindfulness and reflection. This comprehensive approach elevates and honors the human dimensions of the leadership journey like learning styles, personality traits, and passions to help participants connect with who they are to how they lead.

Leadership mindset matches today's complex environment


Leaders are adaptable, innovative, resilient, entrepreneurial, and employee-centric. Leadership value proposition of IBM focuses on encouraging employees to be leaders, innovators, work in the company of experts, build a career of choice and help invent a new IBM.

Leading with purpose

Sustained results are bigger than the efforts of any one individual. The team, organization, and communities are top of mind in day-to-day work. At Mahindra Group, 'Rise' is not just a slogan but the touchstone with which they align thinking, strategy & implementation. For example, in the leadership context, at the recruiting stage, they look for people who fit their values and display the 'Rise' competencies of innovation, out-of-the-box thinking and in-depth engagement.

Engaging leaders step up, by opting to proactively own solutions, and energize others, by keeping people focused on purpose and vision

The first step to make a change is for leaders to remove their ego and collectively align themselves. In this context, it is important to be "self-aware". This is the capacity for introspection and a clear perception of the personality, strengths, weaknesses, thoughts, beliefs, motivation and emotions. Firms that achieve both top quartile engagement levels and better business results than their peers have one thing in common — the presence of an Engaging Leader, who's core belief is about the importance of personal connection. Engaging leaders step up, by opting to proactively own solutions; energize others, by keeping people focused on purpose and vision with contagious positivity; connect and stabilize groups by listening & unifying people; serve and grow by empowering, enabling, and developing others; and stay grounded, open, candid, and authentic in their communication and behavior.

Leadership is a contact sport and the top team needs to be thoughtful about human relations. The buck stops with the top teams in making or breaking the alignment. 



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AN ALIGNED TOP TEAM MAKES THE LEADER'S VISION A REALITY

Building a transparent outcome-based work culture where everyone can come together as partners or co-owners in making decisions enables the organization to grow

By **Krishna GV Giri**, Chairman & CEO, Adrenalin eSystems Limited


Building a cohesive leadership team is the first critical step that an organization must take if it is to have the best chance at success.” These lines by Patrick Lencioni accurately put across that alignment within the top team is critical for an organization to win in the marketplace.

True leaders can actually understand when the team is not really aligned or when team alignment begins to decline. If a leader has to achieve what he wants, he needs to have a fully aligned team and the team needs to understand the whys, whats and hows of their contribution to the overall organizational objectives. However, the vital questions that a leader can ask to assess how well the team is in alignment are — “Does the team understand the top priorities of the organization?”; “Do they have the right talent for the right job?”; “Do they collaborate and at the same time challenge each other?”; “Do they share a common commitment and accountability?”; “Are their behavior patterns understood?”

Particularly during transformational exercises, resistance and reluctance to do away with old ways of working, ego battles, and personality clashes tend to crop up. A capable leader needs to continue with good work that happened in the past and discontinue the work that has not yielded

accept the differences that exist. It is imperative to acknowledge that every individual is entitled to his own thought process. And thus, it becomes integral for the leader to clearly communicate goals, be transparent and build an organization where everyone can come together and work towards the common goal. If the leadership team understands the purpose and vision, they will clearly communicate it down the line and work towards in making the leader's vision a reality. Transparency, clarity, direction and purpose automatically inspire and give way to optional alignment.

If business performance has to improve, cross-functional collaboration is a must. Strong leadership sets clear objectives and communicates explicitly the objectives that the team needs to achieve in a consistent manner. It is also important for the leader to pay attention to his intuition and rely on data points to make any judgments. Conflicting agendas do not arise when the leader has utmost clarity in what he wants. It just takes commitment and ownership from the key team members to implement the strategy. And this should be non-negotiable. Such messages have to be cascaded down the line in order to align everyone in the organization to the most important objectives.

In any organization, the single most important thing to do is to breakdown silos by reorganizing structures that can facilitate a more collaborative way of working. Building a transparent outcome-based work culture where everyone can come together as partners or co-owners in taking decisions together, enables the organization to grow. And that's the only way to grow. We should also let go of the past ways of working if we need to grow exponentially. I see this working tremendously well and in our case, Adrenalin has recorded double digit growth in the first 6 months with profitability. What we set out to achieve in one year has been achieved in 6 months, and our focus is to reduce it to 4 months 2 months and eventually to 1 month. When the intent and purpose is well defined, the team will align themselves to the larger goal of the organization. Inspiring leadership is important as the team needs to feel if the success is possible and the leader takes the role of setting the tone for the organization. 

True leaders can actually understand when the team is not really aligned or when team alignment begins to decline

results for the organization. A leader needs to adopt different styles of operations for different scenarios as neither autocratic nor democratic ways work in all circumstances. And the only way to improve this is to build transparency and have a continuous dialogue with the team. There will be cross-functional resistance but it is still important to bring everyone together on the same page to achieve success.

For building a cohesive team, the elements of transparency, clarity and purpose are critical; and for maintaining cohesion within the leadership team, it is highly recommended that there is trust and accountability, members are constructive and



ALIGNMENT IS ABOUT SHARED PURPOSE

Without a top team that is aligned, any organizational strategy, however good it may be, may not see the light of the day

By **AG Rao**, Group Managing Director, ManpowerGroup India



One of the biggest challenges that CEO's face today is successful execution of strategies. And the reason strategies fail to get executed is because the leadership team is not aligned to the 'whys' and 'ho-ws' of the strategy. Also, a lot of senior level leadership teams are not able to gel as a team and get aligned to each other. This becomes a major stumbling block in organizational success. For any strategy to see the light of the day, the teams at the top needs to buy-into the strategy, and agree on the first steps in order to execute it. They need to have a shared purpose and each member of the team needs to be aware of their own strengths and areas of developments. Also, appreciation of the strengths of others in the team and respect for each-other are critical and these aspects make for the cornerstones for individuals to align as a team. Without a top team that is aligned, any organizational strategy, however good it may be, may not see the light of the day. For execution to happen, top team alignment is critical.

The best way to measure alignment is to first remove the 'subjective element' of alignment. The first step is to define alignment objectively. Hence, it is best to define the aspects around understanding of the larger purpose (the vision) and what will lead to it, for example customer experience, process, people etc. The next step then is to see how individual leaders in the team view the various elements. The degree of convergence and divergence is a great measure of alignment in the team. Our Talent Management brand, Right Management uses a great tool – "Workforce Navigator" (WFN) to measure team alignment. It captures the views of the team members on two scales of various organizational elements – "The degree of importance" and the "degree of satisfaction". The analysis gives a very strong indication on how aligned the entire team is on each of the elements. Alongside this, we need to remember that leadership behavior is best measured on the ground. Hence, the amount of conflicts and time for decision-making is a good indicator of the alignment a team has.


The cornerstone for any team alignment is appreciation and respect for others. Hence, understanding each-other's personality and appreciating their strengths is extremely important. Each leader needs to understand and appreciate the interdependencies individuals have with each other in the team. We have always found that facilitated discussions in Leadership Alignment sessions also work

very well. You need to bring in data from tools like WFN and Psychometric tools into the discussion. Creating a platform for continuous discussions between team members (not review discussions) ensure that alignment is sustained.

Our group company, Right Management does substantial work in this area. A case-in-point is the recent work they did for a large retail company which is undergoing a transformation journey as part of their 2020 vision. The board and CEO were facing the challenge that the speed of execution on the ground was not what it needed to be. Also, there were a lot of conflicts in the team (CEO's and functional heads) resulting in delayed decision and lack of required support to each other. The diagnostic conversation and tools gave an indication that the leaders had not completely bought into the vision. There was misalignment (and in some cases lack of trust) between the old guards and some new leaders who had been hired from other organizations. The situation also became complex because of the working style of some individual leaders due to their personality style.

The degree of convergence and divergence is a great measure of alignment in the team

We spent two days with the entire leadership team to get them to appreciate their vision, the building block to it. The team reflected on the speed of execution and how leadership behavior was impacting it. They were able to share and discuss feedback with each other in a non-threatening environment. The entire team felt a different level of energy and ownership towards making the vision happen and also helping each other in doing so.

Alignment to the larger vision and to each other's strengths, and an appreciation of interdependencies is what is required for increasing internal cohesion. Yes, there can be conflict of interest but everyone comes with their unique strengths — a great team always ensures a great balance. Organizations can ensure that there is no conformity bias but still optimal alignment by creating a non-threatening environment. If people feel they will be judged, they will seek to display the "right" or "appropriate" behavior. 



ALIGNMENT IS A BYPRODUCT OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

The core team of an organization needs to be aware of what the organization is doing and why it is doing it; thus, effective communication is paramount



ANKUR WARIKOO

Founder & CEO,
nearbuy (formerly
Groupon India)



When it comes to the biggest reason why all organizations fail to deliver, it all boils down to one thing, and that is — communication. It is scientifically proven that the product an organization makes is a direct reflection of the communication architecture that the organization has. If there are communication channels that are free flowing and regular, whether up-to-down or down-to-up, and there is transparency in communication, alignment is a natural byproduct. People are more than willing to rally against something if they don't agree with it and if that is the only decisive way that it is being done. It only falters when people think that there is no way out.

The onus of establishing the communication architecture lies only with the founder and the founder should be the one who sets the culture of effective communication. There are several ways to do it. What we do at nearbuy, for instance, is start with “All hands” where everyone gets together and discusses things. This serves a lot of purposes — it acknowledges people, we realign on the existing focus of the company and have an open Q&A. Another crucial aspect is that the management of the company should not hide anything. At nearbuy, we share data freely. Every fortnight, we have a leadership huddle and this is an extended group of 25 people who get to see the actual financial numbers, costs and P&L of the company. Leaders should communicate effectively with employees on a regular basis. I personally send emails to the entire company on a weekly basis and these are random ramblings – discussing anything and everything.

It is fundamental and imperative for everyone to share ideas. There should be no hierarchy and structures should be built that allow effective communication to happen. nearbuy is structured that way. We are four founders and all of us speak regularly every day. And there doesn't need to be any agenda, but such a communication channel helps everyday – it dilutes any kind of misalignment between all of us. We also have an extended group of 25 people consisting of business heads, P&L owners, team leaders and we meet every fortnight to discuss things. They report to the founders and have one-on-ones with them — through such measures we are able to establish communication channels and effective alignment throughout.


However, sharing alone cannot ensure alignment. A lot of CEOs do what we do, share information and carry out periodic meetings, but this doesn't ensure

alignment in teams. Most communication interventions are unidirectional — the minute you do not allow feedback or ‘actual’ conversations to take place, you are not communicating. Making a decision and then communicating is not communication. It needs to be more of a workshop where you discuss things, exchange ideas and have dialogues. People should have the right to challenge the things and express their points of views, irrespective of whether they feel aligned or not.

It is often perceived that alignment is there; however, there is never a point when everyone is aligned. At nearbuy, we take anonymous feedback very seriously and with utmost honesty. So the number of times we ask people for their feedback is high and regular. For example, if we are taking some important decision about the company strategy, we have a discussion with the senior-most people and we plan it out; then we reach out to stakeholders and ask them about their opinion. Such a measure or a tool informs us whether we are aligned, or need to regroup the team and ensure that all concerns are addressed etc.

Most communication interventions are unidirectional – the minute you do not allow feedback or ‘actual’ conversations to take place, you are not communicating

Cross-functional alignment starts with ensuring that there is representation of all the functions in decisions or conversations irrespective of seniority and decision-making capacity. In our experience, we have seen that when you have more people in discussions, they take back a lot more than when they are communicated with in a secondary fashion. People who need to be a 100 percent aligned with you are no more than 10 percent of the entire company — and once this core team is aware of what they are doing and why they are doing it, the rest of the business unit just needs to be told about it.

At the end, what matters are results; and alignment causes results to come through. 

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ALIGNING TOP TEAMS – LEARNINGS & CONSIDERATIONS

Companies are increasingly recognizing top team alignment as an area of focus and concrete action as a wide variety of contextual, personality and interpersonal nuances are visible in the top teams



BIMAL RATH
Founder & MD, Think
Talent Services



Aligning top teams is really a critical part of the top wo/man's job. This by itself can provide the single most significant leverage towards building a sustainable successful organization.

We are often called in with a wide variety of briefs and scope of work with respect to aligning top teams. Very often the issues expressed by the clients appear the same on the surface. But as you dig deeper through a formal or informal diagnosis, a wide variety of contextual, personality and interpersonal nuances are visible, differing from each top team to the other.

Looking at the data over the last 6 years, broadly there are three kinds of interventions which are asked for and are also found useful.

Type 1 interventions are relatively more cognitive in nature and closer to strategy work than team work. For purposes of this piece of writing, the consideration set is 14 companies where we have been involved in top team alignment work over the last 12 months or so. These companies range from about 250 million USD to about 3500 million USD, spanning across industries such as biotech, pharma and healthcare, IT/ITES, Chemical, Financial Services, Hi-Technology and Infrastructure, and across Asia and Middle East.

While there is an element of people (including those in the room) that comes in, the work in this space is more about the organization, with the top team being viewed as 'trustees'. Typically, this kind of work involves alignment around four key elements:

- Vision, purpose and goals
- Common values to help drive the organization
- Roadblocks and limitations
- Execution planning, including capability maps and metrics

The key findings for us in these interventions have been as below. For limited purposes of this article, areas where significant gaps were visible in the top team focus and functioning are only mentioned. Areas of strength are not specifically mentioned here.

- Almost all organizations have a stated vision/mission, but less than 50 percent are happy with the cascading of these into goals down the line, and consequent execution. The top team expresses inability, lack of focus and time limitations as key challenges in this regard.
- Less than 30 percent of the top teams rated 'the vision connects to and makes

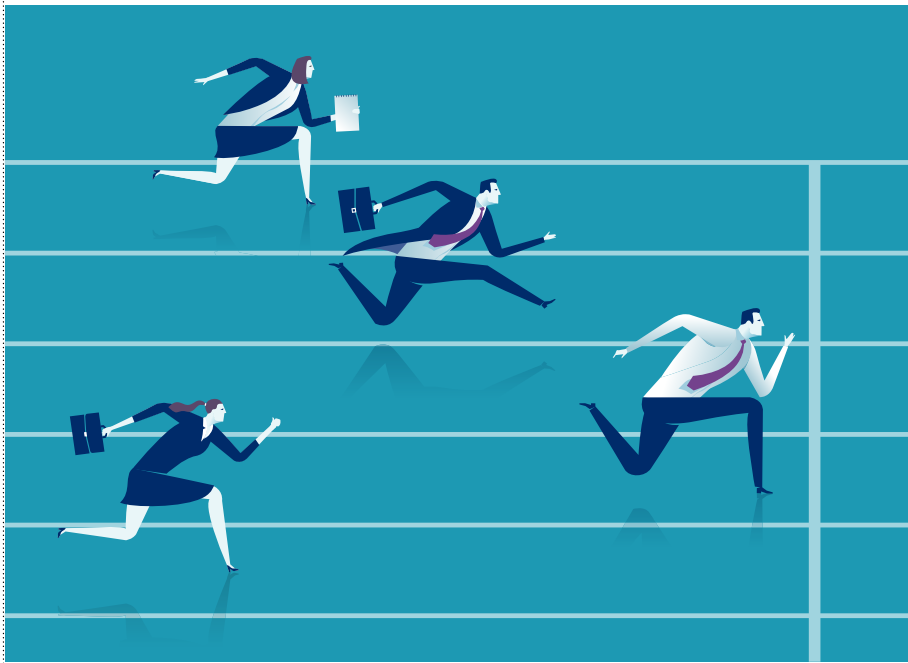
meaningful the day to day work for our employees' high.

- There were clearly articulated values for all except one organization in this set. However, a clearly laid out set of behaviors aligned to values was missing in 50 percent of the set, leading to a lack of clarity on guidelines on code of conduct, rewards and punishment.
- There was very little exploration of the individual values of the top team in relation to the stated organizational values, and how these played out. There was an assumption that there automatically would be value alignment if the individual is part of the top team. Only in two of the 14 organizations, there was specific and explicit work to examine values of top team members, look at potential conflicts with organization values, and actions planned.
- In 8 of the 14 organizations, when looking at limitations and roadblocks, the working together of the top team came up as an issue for discussion or resolution.
- In most organizations, the top team saw themselves as a part of driving the link between vision, goals and execution. However, detailed execution plans were apparently left to the next line. Except in 4 cases, the missing piece was the mechanism, format and governance mechanism of collective monitoring (as a top team-all members together, as against monitoring as individual BU leaders/functional heads). As a

Conflict management is a capability issue that is ignored as a high priority item for top teams

consequence, while each function or BU seemed to hit their goals, collective and strategic organizational goals were very often not met.

- Members of the top teams wore the functional or BU hats much more effectively than the hat of the 'member of leadership team' and integrator across boundaries. This came up as a roadblock to executing plans in 8 of the 14 organizations.
- In terms of execution and skill gaps, capability maps at an overall



There is a strong possibility of top managers seeing competing as a way of succeeding

organizational level were not on the radar of the top team in 6 of the cases. Top team members were very knowledgeable and insightful about talent in their 'own patch' but had limited understanding of the overall talent map of the company, especially from the futuristic perspectives.

Type 2 interventions are mostly about working together as a team. These require a much deeper work on the personalities, styles and behaviors of individuals on the team. This kind of intervention also requires (almost as a starting point) appreciation from the sponsor and team members around elements of emotional intelligence, interpersonal chemistry etc., and how these can play a supportive role in helping build a high performing team.

For purposes of this article, the consideration set is 10 companies we worked with over last 24 months across 5 industry sectors, all industry leaders in their space.

The three key observations, apart from issues around personalities and individual capability revolve around the following:

- Conflict management is a capability issue that is ignored as a high priority item for top teams. All companies in the sample acknowledged it as an issue which hampered better alignment and eight of the ten responded that there was no or limited concrete action around this issue.
- Teams spent a fair amount of time on the targets, strategies etc., but seven of the top teams admitted that there was almost no time spent on personal

development of the individuals in the team or on collective team working. For six of the teams, the experience with us was their first experience in the last 24 months where they were coming together to discuss items beyond targets and deliverables.

- There was almost no formal assessment of the top team members on a regular basis. It was assumed that those who had reached the top would be automatically effective. Only in two of the ten cases was there a formal method of regular assessment on individual capability and value creation role as part of the team.


Type 3 interventions are around providing the infrastructure to help individuals in a top team perform better. These interventions work around HR processes and policies exclusively applicable to the top team.

In our work with a wide variety of companies in this space, there are four key observations¹:

1. Incentives for individuals are largely tied to individual goals than collective goals, hampering collaboration and broader vision.
2. Selection processes are geared to a role-fit rather than a team-fit, with assumptions that a role-fit would automatically ensure a top team fit.
3. Appraisal processes are geared for short-term goals as against long-term goals, and in some ways forcing individuals to be more self-centered than collaborative. The process of appraisal is also largely anchored

in an individual chairman or owner as against peer evaluation. Peer evaluation appears to be used more for development than for rewards.

4. There is a strong possibility of top managers looking at competing as a way of succeeding, as against collaboration. Most HR systems are tuned to that philosophy. This is also played out in silo-centered behaviors of top leaders which have come up in every single diagnosis when looking at processes which could enable.

In our work with top teams, these have been some of the key learnings. With several corporations, to our delight, we have been able to move from a diagnosis stage to a 'let's work together to find a solution' stage. Companies are increasingly recognizing top team alignment as an area of focus and concrete action. 

¹ Specific data is available but not referred to because of issues of overlaps and certain contradictions



BRIDGING THE 'EXECUTION GAP'

'Execution Gap' as a result of a lack of top team alignment is one of the biggest challenges that an organization can face today

By **Lavleen Raheja**, Chairman & CEO, FranklinCovey, India & South Asia



As the famous saying goes, "it is the frontline that produces the bottom line in any company, and it is the top team that leads the frontline of any company" — alignment of the top team is crucial to the profits and growth of any organization. If the top team is focused and aligned, it can lead the other teams well without confusion. But, this is easier said than done. It is seen that experience, knowledge and diversity sometimes become the biggest impediments to alignment and result in ego clashes.

Top team alignment is one of the biggest challenges that an organization can face today. With organizations facing the most frustrating challenges of consistently delivering on the results and dealing with the 'Execution Gap', an effectively aligned top team can help bridge the divide. In the fall of 2002, FranklinCovey teamed with Harris Interactive to administer an xQ™ Assessment to over 11,000 respondents representing executives, managers, and front line workers in 10 functional areas in 10 major industries. Representing the "Execution Quotient" of organizational performance, the xQ™ Assessment is a set of 30 questions that measure the extent to which people – (1) understand the organization's highest priorities; (2) know what they are supposed to do to achieve them; (3) are passionate about those objectives; (4) stay focused on them; and (5) work collaboratively

The results of the xQ™ Assessment identified eight overarching reasons why managers and work groups do not achieve their organization's most important priorities:

1. **Lack of clarity** - work groups do not always understand top corporate goals
2. **Insufficient commitment** - work groups do not always agree with top corporate goals
3. **Poor translation** - work groups may not be translating corporate goals into how they spend departmental time and resources
4. **Insufficient discipline** - work groups do not always stay on track in an environment in which internal and marketplace distractions abound
5. **Insufficient enabling structures** - work groups may lack the necessary systems and structures to help them achieve top goals
6. **Insufficient collaboration** - work groups may not have a broad enough perspective to identify opportunities to collaborate or the motivation to collaborate with others
7. **Low trust** - the organization may not have the culture of trust required to share information and foster collaborative efforts against a shared set of goals
8. **Low accountability** - the organization may not have a culture that holds employees accountable, both top-down, bottom-up, and peer-to-peer

These reasons can also be seen as the factors that lead to misaligned top teams, and hence, it becomes imperative for the CEO to understand and create an environment that helps in creating a more collaborative environment. Although none of these eight execution gaps are "burning insights" to any executive or manager who has thought deeply on the subject; however, armed with their enterprise's unique xQ™ data, leaders of all organizational descriptions can narrow in and focus on their organization's biggest execution gaps that especially lie at the top.

Top teams too need leaders to lead them and hence, there has to be someone at the helm of affairs who is trusted and well respected. People need to be empowered and a meritorious leader at the top, who operates more from moral authority than formal authority, can help in doing so. Synergy is the only option when it comes to building long-term sustainable and superior growth. 🐤

Synergy is the only option when it comes to building long-term sustainable and superior growth

and creatively together to accomplish them. In summary, the xQ™ Assessment analyzes what the experts call the "execution gap," the difference between what organizations commit to do and what they actually accomplish.

The results of the initial national assessment were depressing and encouraging — depressing because they were so uniformly and concretely poor; and encouraging because they identified achievable solutions to this pervasive problem. The overall results of the study showed that only 21 percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "My organization consistently achieves its most important goals."



AN ALIGNED TOP TEAM COMPLEMENTS THE CEO

A real team aids effective leadership and is a mechanism for the CEO to run the business

By **Arvind Pandit**, Founder and Managing Director, Ishwa Consulting



For any organization or a CEO, top team alignment is the most critical aspect that aids effective leadership. However, it is also the most difficult to achieve.

Leadership at different levels is different from aggregate leadership and this is where the difference lies. There is a difference between reporting groups and real teams — reporting groups can be a set of people who report to the same leader, whereas a real team is a mechanism for a CEO to run the business — it is an extension of the CEO and functions collectively to take decisions that a CEO would take. Almost everyone in the top teams have two jobs — their functional jobs (as a department/function head) and their job as the members of the top team. Being a part of the top team is where an individual puts on the business hat and collectively take decisions. But this is where the difficulty occurs. People find it difficult to breakdown the silos and reconcile with conflicting agendas when it comes to their departments and the business as a whole. At times, individuals are unable to make that shift or transition from being a functional leader to a business leader.

For making sure that there is seamless transition between these responsibilities, selecting the right people is critical — you need people who are empathetic, active listeners, integrous, honest and who think about the larger picture. You need people who can drive healthy conflict as conflict is productive and pushes people forward. However, it is not just about people, but also about the way organizational structures and systems are built. I think most of the times, organizations structurally fail — we expect certain behaviors but we don't back them with systems. What's there for me should be in there in reality and not just a concept. If you have a top team, you need to establish rules of engagement along with the structures around which the team is built, and there should be no mismatch between the two.

Organizations that are successful and have outstanding teams have a metric for incentivizing its people — they build interdependence in the participants of the top team and structurally incentivize them to work together.

It is also pivotal to be strategically aligned — everybody should be chasing the same strategic goal and move forward in the same direction. Clarity within the top team on what the most critical goal is, is essential because then they are pulling


in the same direction. Thus, strategic alignment is key. Financial alignment, looking at synergies across business and the systems around measurements, processes, measurement is also important.

When it comes to execution, at times, not everyone is looking at the same picture. In this case, the leader needs to be inspiring enough for everyone to believe in the vision — the leader needs to translate the vision and passion to the team as the goals need to be achieved through them. It is paramount for the CEO to involve the team in the execution plan and everyone collectively should own the plan that is to be achieved. One example of an organization where this was done effectively is IBM — Louis V. Gerstner Jr. transformed IBM from a hardware company to a service-oriented

Organizations that are successful and have outstanding teams have a metric for incentivizing its people - they build interdependence in the participants of the top team and structurally incentivize them to work together

company and he made it nimble through translating his vision to his team effectively. CEOs need to articulate key top priorities and ask their top teams to articulate their priorities and link both to see how they support each other.

Leadership is a lot about perception. Your intention could be to do “A” but people perceive it as “B” — the key is to build awareness and this comes from feedback. A leader needs to be open about the feedback from subordinates about his leadership styles and how people view him/her. What leaders need to understand is that perception is reality and actions get framed in that reality.

Cross-functional alignment is about long-term vision, identifying the initiatives and key projects that are essential to achieve the vision. A CEO needs to create an environment where conflict is raised and considered a good thing. It is not about working individually but collectively as a team. The overall goal should be of shared accountability and individuals need to function within that. 

(Ishwa Consulting is a boutique leadership advisory firm)





CREATING ALIGNED & EMPOWERED LEADERSHIP TEAMS

While alignment is needed for any organization, it is much more crucial when you are a part of an entrepreneurial venture

By **Pankaj Bansal**, Co-Founder and CEO, PeopleStrong




“One piece of log creates a small fire, adequate to warm you up, add just a few more pieces to blast an immense”.¹ These lines truly capture the power of a close knit top team. While alignment is needed for any organization, it is much more crucial when you are a part of an entrepreneurial venture. It is like being in a rowing competition where your success depends on each paddle working at its best. We at PeopleStrong have been fortunate in this aspect. With a 9-member executive team, who have been part of the company since its inception and a 50-member team of function heads who practically run the company; we have a group which co-creates success stories for the company. In a world where talent keeps hopping from one company to the other, it is a herculean task and it is difficult to create a playbook which could work for everyone. But here are the three levels of alignment that worked for us:

1. Alignment of the purpose: When you are creating your team of leaders, it's important to start right. It is important that the person being hired is not only aligned to the company's goals but also to its culture and values. Though it is difficult to get a perfect match every time, there are some models which help you achieve significant levels of accuracy. We at PeopleStrong have used HOGAN so that we not only know the skills and capabilities of a person, but also his/her personality. Along with this, each and every member of the team undergoes a personal goal sheet exercise, which helps in understanding their personal and professional goals, which results in alignment. And everyone involved in the recruitment process is trained on these models. We started this process sometime back and our attrition has always been in single digits and has dropped considerably in the last 3-4 years. The company too has been growing at CAGR of 60% in the last 10 years.

2. Alignment of thoughts and speech: Once you have the right team, it is important to keep them aligned to the company's vision and mission. And the only way to do that is through communication. When it comes to communicating with your leadership team, it is advisable to always err on higher side. We have rigorously followed this rule. Be it weekly meetings, monthly open-house or biannual off-sites; we make sure that our leaders know everything about the direction the company is taking and are part of the journey. It has worked for us and in the past decade of our existence we have had 20 off-sites personally crafted by the executive team along with the HR team. This had been a hallmark of our journey. Along with this, the leadership team distributed across geographies is connected digitally. It is this level of 'connect' that has helped us in implementing deep level of democracy in our decision making without compromising the speed of decision making.

3. Alignment of actions: A common leadership issue prominent in most organizations is that most leaders are not performing the roles they are supposed to perform. While in some cases it is a capability issue, in most cases it is the fault in a company's decision structures which leads to this inefficiency. Since there is no clear demarcation of responsibilities and decision making, leaders are not empowered to take their decisions, resulting in unnecessary delays, which impact organizational performance. We solved this problem by implementing models like systems thinking and devolution of power. Now across levels, decision making is defined with necessary levels of ring-fencing to support the leaders. Another thing that has helped us is Wealth Sharing and ESOPs. Currently, a little less than 1/4th of the equity is shared with the leadership team. This has helped in increasing the level of ownership and has definitely helped in creating the most valued HR company in India.

Warren Bennis, in one of his books, stated that “managing leaders is like herding cats”. They of course won't be herded, and we don't claim to have done that either. But so far we have been able to keep them together. Though these steps are not all inclusive and different organizations may have some other situations, there is no doubt that these steps can make a good start. 

¹ Quote by Master Jin Kwon

It is the level of 'connect' that helps in implementing deep level of democracy in decision-making without compromising the speed with which decisions are made

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ALIGNMENT- A JOURNEY FROM REMOTE ISLANDS TO A COMMON SHORE

As Cactus grew into a mid-sized enterprise, the struggle was to find unified success across functions as misalignment among the top leadership had crept in



ABHISHEK GOEL
Co-founder and Chief Customer Officer, Cactus Communications



YASMIN CHERAKKAPARAMBIL
AVP - Delivery Academia, Cactus Communications

In the 14 years since its birth, Cactus Communications, known to researchers and scientists globally as Editage, has been supporting academics in their endeavor to publish research. We improve scientific articles for publication and play our part in furthering human development through scientific and technological progress.

As CACTUS grew into a mid-sized enterprise, we struggled to find unified success across functions. At the heart of this disharmony was misalignment among the top leadership that had crept in through role, portfolio, and leadership changes in preceding years. We were grappling with the problem of each department speaking its own language, which caused dissonance and mistrust in the top team. We had differing priorities and didn't understand one another. The wide geographic spread of our offices and the cultural divergence it brought reinforced the silos. At the same time, perceived roles of decision makers overlapped, making us excessively collaborative. This diluted the ownership and speed of execution of high-impact projects. We spent precious time debating how to execute tasks rather than how to achieve our goals. We always knew that we had great potential for growth, but this wasn't coming through in our performance. We began to use external factors as excuses for not meeting our goals, and Editage's sales saw downward mid-year forecasts. Moreover, our annual planning cycle limited checks on progress against goals during the year.

An overarching goal

We realized the hard way that our business goals were unachieved because of internal conflict rather than external factors. Everyone in the top team agreed that we weren't happy with our speed of execution and pace of growth, and we began to understand that the solution would be in truly aligning all departments to an overarching goal, so that everyone spoke the same business language. Also, to reduce misalignment caused by the global spread of our offices, we ensured that all our international offices were represented in the top team.

Organizational goals before individual goals

We peeled off the layers of departmental priorities to answer some obvious questions and get to the heart of the matter — our common organizational goal. Many of our KPIs changed to align to the common goal. We disintegrated old structures and groups to create

new structures that supported the organizational goal. We had to work beyond egos when making these changes, and this wasn't easy. Today, the success of the top team is measured against the overarching common goal. This can be tricky, but having understood and accepted that superlative individual performance is not enough if we lose sight of the organization goal, we now measure each individual's success in terms of business impact. This works as a self-correction mechanism, where everyone is working to be successful. And naturally, when we fixed internal misalignment, we started seeing a positive business impact.

Disentangled decision-making

Since our top team wasn't on the same page about business decisions, we created a pseudo-hierarchy among top decision makers. We resolved that when in conflict, we'd rely on the pseudo-hierarchy to move forward on goals. Marketing, for example, leads other departments in achieving our primary goal. It's important to note that this hierarchy is dynamic. We establish such decision-making structures for specific periods and if one department is at the top of the hierarchy for this vision period, it is because our contemporary vision links most directly to that department. Our vision is evolutionary, and so is this structure. This structure has helped us significantly in recovering from the sluggish growth trajectory of preceding years.

Perceived roles of decision makers can overlap & dilute the ownership and speed of execution of high-impact projects

Shorter planning cycles

Once we were aligned on our goal, we moved on to change the frequency of our planning and reviews. We now set annual goals but don't make annual plans; instead, our planning and review follow a quarterly cycle. This format ensures continual top-team alignment to organizational priorities and agile goal achievement.

Collaboration and accountability

Today, we're okay with not having consensus on all matters. Decisions are left entirely to the leader accountable for



a goal. Our aim is to enable empowerment through organizational restructuring, whereby our decision makers are completely accountable for their goals and the outcomes of their plans, and others extend full support even if in disagreement with the approach.

Surfacing and resolving conflicts


To ensure that leaders are in sync with each other, we've set up regular meeting structures (daily operational, weekly tactical, and monthly strategic) to boost alignment and execution. We now regularly discuss both strategy and brass tacks. This works as a system of checks and balances, where leaders share updates on progress against their goals and others in the group comment on progress or changes to preset plans. We've enabled sufficient interaction to allow undercurrents to surface so that they are resolved instantly in the presence of the group, not in one-to-one conversations behind closed doors. We've moved away from the awkwardness of stealing glances during presentations to forthright questions and productive arguments. An environment that encourages open discussions is critical to conflict resolution—everyone should feel safe to protest or show their discontent about something. Members of the team don't have to carry baggage with them outside meetings; they don't have to worry that they'll be judged for disagreeing,

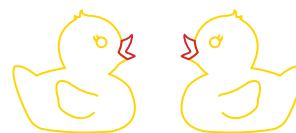
Superlative individual performance is not enough if we lose sight of the organization goal

or that they won't receive support on their projects. This open environment encourages leaders to trust each other but not with blind faith.

In sum, our method for achieving alignment has been multi-faceted. We improved alignment at the strategic, execution, and personal (values and leadership style) levels. It's much easier to get buy-in across departments now that we believe in and are working towards a common goal. We didn't rush the process because we knew that even though it took time, our approach was striking at the root of our troubles and would have long-lasting effects. Conflict management was part and parcel of the process of achieving top-team alignment.

This process became smoother when we leveraged each other's strengths to achieve goals; for instance, if someone on the team was good at something that someone else found challenging, the two paired up to move ahead faster. This went a long way

in building trust and mutual respect. While the alignment we've achieved today is good, only a conscious effort will help us continue on this path. To cement this approach within our structure, we're now extending the "softer" alignment we've achieved through structural and goal changes to KPIs and objectives. The next step for us is to have this alignment percolate throughout the organization, because when that happens, growth becomes truly exponential. 



5 TESTS FOR IDENTIFYING A HIGHLY ALIGNED TOP TEAM

Senior leadership alignment has a far reaching impact on employee engagement, organizational performance and ultimately the success of the organization



RAJIV JAYARAMAN
Founder & CEO,
KNOLSKAPE



MADAN PANATHULA
Director, Learning
Solutions, KNOLSKAPE

Nothing does more damage to an organization than a lack of alignment in the senior leadership team. When alignment does not exist at senior levels, the entire organization feels it. The interesting thing about alignment is that it is a binary concept. It either exists or it doesn't. Think about the wheels of a car — "almost aligned" is not good enough. Misalignment results in a bumpy ride not just for the driver, but also for all the passengers on board. However, unlike in a car, in an organization, misalignment gets amplified exponentially as you move further down the organization.

According to a recent AON Hewitt Global Best Employer Research Report 'Engagement is derived from the way a senior leader connects with other senior leaders in the organization and how effective and accountable they are as a unit.'

Senior leadership alignment has a far reaching impact on employee engagement, organizational performance and ultimately the success of the organization in the market place. Organizations where senior leadership teams are aligned experience the following:

1. Fewer meetings and faster decision making cycles
2. Less duplication of effort and wastage of time, effort and money
3. Greater interdependence leading to lesser politics and turf wars
4. Rapid business results
5. Great employee satisfaction

Is your team aligned?

No one can deny the importance of alignment but how can you actually tell if the organization is aligned? Here are a few tests that can help.

The Common Purpose Test

Nothing binds an organization more than shared vision and common purpose. Often in organizations, there is no clear understanding of the vision, mission and the raison d'être of the organization. As Simon Sinek aptly points out, the "Why" of the organization is a compelling force that aligns the organization and helps marshal energies of team members towards a common goal.

The interesting thing about alignment is that it is a binary concept – it either exists or it doesn't

Test Question 1: Can the top team in your organization clearly spell out the vision, mission and the "Why" of the organization in one voice?

The Big Picture Understanding Test

Going beyond the "Why" of the organization, it is imperative that the top team has a common understanding of the business realities. How does the organization create, deliver and capture value? What is the core value proposition to the customer?

Test Question 2: Can the top team members draw up a business model canvas independently and arrive at a perfect match on their big picture understanding?

The Goals and Accountabilities Test

Once alignment at the strategy and business model levels is established, it is time to look at goals and accountabilities. Every executive in an organization will have his/her own view of the strategy and hence may work on different opportunities and priorities. If clear goals and accountabilities are not established at the top, chaos and turf wars ensue.

Test Question 3: Can all the top team members achieve 100% match when they independently write down the Top 3 priorities of the organization for the year/quarter? Furthermore, they should be able to break it down to actionable sub-goals and identify people who are accountable for results.

The Sacred Cows and No-No Test

It is one thing to have a good understanding of the big picture and the goals of the organization and quite another to be aligned on the "how". This is where culture comes in. What are some things that organizations always do and what are some things that the organizations would never do?

Test Question 4: Can the top team members accurately write down the "sacred cow" values and the strict "No-No" values of the organization?

The Cascading Test

It is important for important messages to cascade down the different levels of the organization. A key metric one can track is the trickle-down time. This metric may be defined as the time taken for the awareness about a new idea to trickle down from the board room to the team, without losing its original form. An aligned top team passes



down the message quickly and without distortions. If there is feedback on the message, that works its way to the top quickly as well.

Test Question 5: How does the rank and file do on tests 1 through 4? This shows how well cascading has worked. If the top team is aligned and has cascaded the message, we will find a well aligned response across the organization.

How to create a cohesive and aligned team?

The lack of alignment is often wrongly treated as a behavioral or people related issue, but it is a combination of multiple factors:

1. Structure: Creating organization structures that naturally promote alignment and interdependence
2. Decision rights: Allocating decision rights to the right person removes turf wars and unnecessary politics
3. Culture enablers: Constant reinforcement of the “sacred cows” and “No-Nos”
4. Process orientation: What culture envisages process ensures
5. Incentives: Nothing kills alignment more than misplaced incentives

How do we do it at KNOLSKAPE?

As a dynamic organization that is changing the contours of learning, alignment is a critical success factor for us. No one

The “Why” of the organization is a compelling force that aligns the organization and helps marshal energies of team members towards a common goal

wants to run a long distance and then find out that it was the wrong track. We ensure that Knollies (as we call ourselves) are aligned by addressing all levels from mindset to methodologies.

Being a Knolly: One of our core values is “Make Others Successful”. By defining it as an integral feature of being a Knolly, we are able to recruit or assess behaviors. Every executive knows that he is expected to make others successful which includes all stakeholders, and this ensure collaboration.

Strategy Meet: At KNOLSKAPE nothing is decided in silos. The top team gets together frequently and locks itself in a room for a couple of days to brainstorm on the strategy. No idea is too trivial in this forum. The team of executives, pitch, debate and fight but when they come out, they emerge with a common understanding of the way ahead for the next year. Then they go back to their teams and come up with the 1st 100-day plan for the year.

100-day plan reviews: Well begun is only half done, so the top teams meet every

month to discuss the progress of their 100 day plans. They present the achievements, challenges and opportunities to every other team. Together, they spot any misalignment and adopt a course correction.

Stand Up: Our Monthly Stand Up meetings are a two-way feedback forum where we ensure that the ideas reach everyone in the organization. It also serves to check the percolation levels. Such open house meetings are essential to create transparency and team spirit. Here teams open up, bond and feel proud about being a Knolly. 🐥





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GURUCHARAN SINGH GANDHI



Alignment – An alternative narrative

Leadership alignment is actually a part of the larger issue of alignment in not only all constituents of the organization but also at all levels of the organization

Softer aspects of leadership have always attracted multiple narratives – most of those narratives have been based on the western worldview and have originated from those cradles of thought. I am sure there is great value in any narrative but when we start reposing our faith in only one of them, almost ignoring and hence rejecting the possibility of the relevance of alternative narratives, is when we allow our pursuit of inquiry to become singular and hence incomplete.

Thankfully things are changing. Leadership alignment is actually a part of the larger issue of alignment in not only all constituents of the organization but also at all levels of the organization. The reason I use these two frames separately is because the task of creating aligned workforce is distinct in its nature and prescriptions at the top and at the bottom – and between the top and the bottom of organizations. The dysfunctionalities causing disarray at the top emerge from insecuri-

ties and ego, while the dysfunctionalities between the top and the bottom emerge from the loss of credibility of the top.

The chaos at the top leading to lack of alignment has many hues – it begins with the struggle for primacy between the functional heads; so the CFO makes the financial goals as the primary goal, or the Sales Head making the sales goals as the primary goal or the HR Head making Peoples goal as the primary goal. The fissures that get created when these goals vie for primacy soon become fault lines – that get formed at the top but soon trickle down the slope. The task of holding all these goals together into the crucible of a broad spectrum performance mindset is a rather tall ask. The exact opposite risk to this is ‘too much friendship’ at the top – a state where no one challenges each other’s comfort and status quo. Kabeer writes at one instance about all of us being passengers on a boat – a metaphor that the top of organizations must take inspiration from if they would prefer to have alignment in its truest sense amongst themselves.

*Kabeer hamara koi naahi, hum kahoo ke nahi,
Paar pahunche naav jyon, milke bichure jahi.*

(No one is ours and we are no one to others;

Like passengers on a boat, we shall go our own ways (if we reach our destination)

Everyone shall reach the destination if the boat reaches the destination – no one reaches anywhere if the boat does not reach ashore. The alignment at the top must heed to this wisdom. A fractured top is not only deeply damaging but also hopelessly visible to the rank and file.

The greatest alignment emerges when there is no difference between the leader and the led – they become one voice





The second kind of disarray is between the top and the bottom – irrespective of the function. This usually happens after a prolonged corrosion of credibility. Over a period of time, the patterns of leadership behavior like partiality, inconsistency, self-preservation, blame fixing, credit mongering, oscillating and sometimes downright incompetence so on and so forth leads to the bottom of the pyramid completely disillusioned. This lack of alignment is perhaps not even visible to the leadership who remain baffled as to why all strategic initiatives remain non-starters. This is like the wheels of the chariot start questioning the intent of the horses who they are supposed to follow – only in this case, the wheels have a mind of their own.

Finally, great alignment emerges from authenticity. In organizations we must always remind ourselves of the difference between ‘Enrolment’ and ‘Conscription’ – the former is voluntary while the latter is by force. True alignment is voluntary while we only resist conscription of any kind. There is a greater probability of widespread enrolment if the person espousing the cause is perceived as being genuine and authentic. Unfortunately, it is difficult to learn authenticity. The popular narrative of management literature dumbs down all attributes of leadership by presenting it as a ‘ten step guide’ – and consumers of leadership literature start to believe that it can be ‘read and implemented’ in the manner of other capabilities. It is the surest way of killing authenticity in the leader. The rank and file ‘feels like following a leader’ when they

In organizations, we must always remind ourselves of the difference between ‘Enrolment’ and ‘Conscription’ – the former is voluntary while the latter is by force

know that they are getting what they are seeing. The followership and the alignment to the cause is then intuitive and deeply felt. The greatest alignment emerges when there is no difference between the leader and the led. They become one voice. As Kabeer says of the state of complete alignment –

*Mai Laaga us ek so, ek bhaya sab mahi
Sab mera main saban ka, tahan doosra nahi*

(As I become one with the larger purpose,
I become the whole and the whole becomes me) 🙏

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

GURUCHARAN SINGH GANDHI is the author of national bestseller ‘Kabeer in Korporates’ and the Head of Learning & Development with a leading conglomerate



Q & A

Leveraging AI to contextually connect companies & employees into an #Enterpriseof1

Saurabh Jain, CEO of Spire Technologies & Solutions Pvt. Ltd. talks about the power of context and the future of talent management

By Ester Martinez & Jerry Moses

In this interview he talks about how the future of work in enterprises is transforming through contextual analytics, the importance of creating pools of talent through ecosystems and the need to be ready for the future.

Q How did you arrive at the business problem that SpireTalentSHIP is trying to solve?

A It all began with an observation. Most organizations use only 10-20 percent of the organizational data. And it kept bothering me that despite the availability of analytics related software, most

management did not rely on taking intelligent decisions based on this data. I conducted a research with professors across three universities and we realized that what was missing was context.

Most software systems were one-size-fit-all; they had fixed input fields, fixed processes and were able to give defined set of outcomes. There was no flexibility in terms of how these input parameters could be handled. So, when people started analyzing data, they did not have the tools that allowed them to feed the context of the organization to get intelligence. And so the extended research focused on two points:

1. The ability of the system to deal with unstructured data and the expectation of structuring it.
2. The ability of the system to define the context of the organization into the software.

During this time, there was a parallel thread of innovation that we were thinking about – today we have stock exchanges for companies, but we thought

what if we have stock exchanges for people? Why should people not be time-traded? So the Idea was rooted in what we called the '#Enterpriseof1'. The goal was to empower individuals so that they would very soon be an enterprise themselves and to empower companies as well. We started developing concepts around the '#Enterpriseof1' – if we assume that multiple companies engage with an individual, a company can actually bid for a person's time, say the next nine months. Another company can then bid more for the same time. So, we wanted to build this platform that would eventually create the '#Enterpriseof1'. We are already on our way to apply this concept with some of the biggest global companies as clients - who are working towards managing a liquid workforce. So we took the original concept of allowing people to use unstructured data and defining a context and built it further to enable the vision of '#Enterpriseof1'

Q What were your first steps in making these ideas into a product?

A The first step was to create a technological tool that could understand unstructured text. We started work in the year 2008 and by early 2009, some technology infrastructure and high-level code that could sift through unstructured text was ready. We started applying this code to the talent domain in 2010. With over 7 years of research and focus on algorithms by one of the most advanced technology team, Spire is today arguably the premier and most advanced Contextual Artificial Intelligence technology product out there. Initially, we focused on talent acquisition and we now have solutions that cover social recruiting, social CRM deployment and development. Today, global companies with large, multi-locational workforce use our tools. We also help them with gap analysis, learning and content design solutions.

Q How far are we from the 'Enterpriseof1'? What are the ingredients that you need to put into the recipe to accelerate that vision?

A In the last one year, companies have been more open to creating contextual ecosystems. There is a rush to create talent ecosystems because the war for talent has extended to passive candidates. Companies are turning to these tools not only to optimize their talent acquisition but to build talent ecosystems that are enough for them for the next 5-10 years. The customers that we work with have a million applicants per annum and over the next three to five years, the ecosystem would be about 3-5 million per company. Eventually, these ecosystems will enable both external and internal talent marketplaces.

Q What is the impact if I'm a professional and I am on this platform? Will I be engaged in many communities? What is the paradigm shift?

A If you are a professional, what we provide with SpireTalentSHIP is a parallel B2C platform. Professionals can extend themselves to other communities thereby increasing the share-ability of talent across communities. That is the central platform that SpireTalentSHIP will be providing in the upcoming years. As the number increases, we will be able to co-create a shareable ecosystem. That's where our entire vision is coming to play. We are going to provide unprecedented power to the candidates.

Q When we look at technology, disruption is the order of the day. What will be the tipping point to have enough critical mass to take on giants such as SAP, Microsoft and Oracle?

A Our objective is not to take on these big guys. We're in fact partnering with HR suites. We're not offering to replace

content delivery. Take the example of learning programs, apart from making content personalized from an individual's perspective, it is also helpful to assess the content viz. a viz. the learning gap that the individual has. So when an individual wants to move from one job to another, the system can identify these gaps which are relevant for business by automatic intelligent content delivery. It is a solution that we are in the process of launching.

Q 2009 was probably too early in terms of the readiness of the market for a product like yours. So how did you manage to convince the stakeholders and investors?

A We faced significant challenges. People would call me esoteric. I kept pushing this vision to a lot of people. The good thing was that I got the support of some really visionary leaders who were in large companies, some of whom had left the corporate world. They helped me understand what talent is about, what kind of problems the function was grappling with and how to architect the solution.

There is a rush to create talent ecosystems because the war for talent has extended to passive candidates

anyone and we're not saying that HRMS systems will go away. But whether ATS will continue to remain is a question that companies are already asking.

What we're saying is that the base systems will take care of the process and compliance part of HR. But once you've had your processes and compliance set up in the base systems, the day-to-day operations are fairly contextual. The question, therefore, is whether we can use analytics to power operations, which will be a layer on top of the existing processes?


A number of existing systems have their own evolution processes, but a decade from now, when we look at these organizations as part of the '#Enterpriseof1' – some of these systems will become redundant and I'm not sure how organizations are preparing for that kind of a disruption.

Q Apart from resource allocation and time trading, what are the other cases for building operational excellence using contextual analytics?

A There are a number of applications — one can work on organizational re-design, succession planning and personalized

I did find a lot of takers in the market who could believe in this twenty-year vision. I was also able to raise a million dollars from friends and family to fund this mission. Therefore, some of the early customers who have worked with us over a period of 4-5 years have given the company almost a million dollars of revenue. After the first five years, that's when we got an investor who really trusted the capability and vision and gave us a huge round of funding to enable us to be where we need to be. But the first five years was incredibly difficult.

Q If you look at the future - what are the roadblocks that you see in creating this 'Enterpriseof1'?

A The key challenge is to do with market readiness – it has to do with the continued adoption of companies to create a personalized ecosystem. Most companies are still focused on optimizing their operations. Of the ten companies we talk to, only three or four are talking about ecosystems. So we need to increase that pool of organizations that are not only worried about the present but also preparing for the future. 

Charting a route to a bold new HR

EVENT NAME: 5th SHRM India Annual Conference and Exposition 2016
EVENT THEME: DARE – A Bold New HR
ORGANIZER: SHRM India

The India chapter of Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) recently held its 5th Annual conference & exposition in New Delhi on the 29th and 30th of September. The two-day conference and exposition, themed on 'DARE – A Bold New HR' sought to tackle some of the core issues within the ambit of HR and highlighted the rapidly evolving HR practices that would reshape people management practices in the coming years. The event had a presence of over 1000+ delegates, including HR professionals, corporate leaders and sessions with over 90 speakers and acclaimed thought leaders from all over the world.

Day 1

The first day of the event started with the welcome address by Achal Khanna, CEO, SHRM India, and a performance by the Children of Salaam Baalak Trust. This ended with a glittering HR award ceremony along with performance by 'Alive Indians' and Bangalore based NGO 'Unsung Heroes'.

The key note address by Genpact's Founder Pramod Bhasin, pioneer of the business process management in India, showcased how daring to dream and believing are the cornerstones of innovation and necessary ingredients to achieving something big. This was followed by Jim P. Keane President & CEO, Steelcase Inc sharing his views on employee engagement and some key findings of the Global Work Place Report. The first day witnessed some other interesting sessions like, Busting the myth of the open organization; The bold new HR: Courageous and business savvy; Shifting gears: The talent acquisition & metrics story; Performance cycle and the bell curve; the final verdict; A salute to the spirit of Daring!

Day 2

The second day included sessions by keynote speakers and other panelists, who shared key insights and experiences



Panel Discussion 'Artificial Intelligence for Autonomous Talent Management'. From Left to Right – Dr. Aquil Busrai, Advisory Board, SHRM India; Ruchita Bansal Sharma, Head of Talent India, Fidelity International; Unmesh Pawar, Global MD TA, Accenture

while discussing key HR trends currently dominating the industry across the globe. Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog in a session shared his insights on the various activities and campaigns that NITI Aayog has undertaken to enable the great demographic dividend that India has today. He stressed that it is important for people engaging in people management to play the crucial role of enablers to help organizations, and by the virtue of jobs creation, the country itself to grow. The other sessions on the second day covered a range of topics like employee engagement, the impact of digital journeys that companies undertake and the future talent trends in the 21st century.

The 5th SHRM conference and Exposition 2016 concluded with a closing keynote address from Mr. Gavin Freeman, a well-known business and sports psychologist on how to develop an Olympic mindset. The keynote explored deep insights into performing under pressure with a strong message on how an individual can develop a resilient, focused, disciplined and motivated approach to life and work.

Some of the other eminent speakers who attended and spoke at the conference included Sanjay Jog, CHRO; Reliance Jio;

Karl Heinz Oehler, Managing Director–Denison Consulting, Anuranjita Kumar, Managing Director, CHRO - Citi South Asia; Abhijit Bhaduri, Ex CLO, Wipro.; Glenn Ditttrich Director Smarter Workforce, IBM Asia Pacific; Vicky Roy Photographer, Forbes 30 under 30 2016; Deep Kalra; CEO, Make My Trip; Gavin Freeman, Sports and Business Psychologist & Author; and Ritu Anand, Dy. Head Global HR & Talent Management, TCS.

Book and study launches

The event was also adorned by the launches of several research studies. The first one to be launched was a collaborative study by SHRM India and Career Builder on "Talent Acquisition & Automation" that focuses on the hiring metrics, their usage, impact and the level of technology usage within the hiring function. The second launch was "Talent Assessment Tools in India, 2016", a collaborative study between SHRM India and MeritTrac which focuses on the various aspects of assessments such as usage, tracking, integration with other tools, obstacles in usage and the future focus. Other attraction at the conference was the launch of 'The Digital Tsunami' book by Abhijit Bhaduri, ex-CLO, Wipro. 

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Harsh Mariwala, Marico

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Decoding organizational diagnostics


EVENT NAME: Riding the Helicopter – “Integral Model for Organizational Diagnostics”

ORGANIZED BY: PEOPLE MATTERS

PARTNERS: C2C Organizational Development

Managing businesses today requires the formation of various data driven strategies that are synthesized by collecting and analyzing all relevant facts and data points that an organization collects. One such strategy that has helped organizations improve their internal functioning has been organizational diagnostics, which involves “diagnosing,” or assessing an organization’s current level of functioning in order to design appropriate change interventions. Organizational diagnostics is an effective way of determining gaps between current and desired performances and then identifying the steps that need to be taken to bridge the gap and achieve the goal. Organizational diagnostics plays a vital role as it helps organizations in identifying strengths and weaknesses and while creating a greater need to reinforcing the right strategies, structures and processes for improving an organization’s effectiveness.

In order to understand organizational

diagnostic models in a more nuanced manner, People Matters in association with C2C-Organizational Development organized a roundtable discussion exploring the “Integral Model for Organizational Diagnostics.” Held in Mumbai on 28th September 2016, the roundtable discussion was led by Sanjay Dugar, Director- Client Engagement, C2C-OD. The discussion kicked off with a session that helped in understanding the multiplicity of views when it comes to figuring out the meaning of organizational diagnostics. The session helped in identifying key bottlenecks like leadership crisis and overall ambiguity that hinders organizational diagnostics. Post this session, Sanjay took the audience through the Integral Model of Diagnostics. It helped HR professionals to understand the influence of factors like culture and behavior on both, an individual and an organizational level, to perform a suitable organizational diagnostic and help propel business productivity. Using multiple interactive sessions Sanjay was able to establish the need and modality of performing organization diagnostics. The event was attended by several senior HR professionals from the industry. 

Upcoming Events

7th-8th November

EVENT NAME: FICCI HR Conference

EVENT THEME: Making organizations meaningful & future ready

ORGANIZER: FICCI

VENUE: FICCI, Federation House, 1 Tansen Marg, New Delhi 110001

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: HR Professionals, Government officials, Industry, Academia, Professional Colleges- Students & faculties, Business Leaders, HR Consultants/Experts/Practitioners, and HR service providers.

12th November

EVENT NAME: HR Symposium 2016

EVENT THEME: New age competencies for HR professionals: Are we ready?

ORGANIZER: NMIMS

VENUE: Bangalore

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: HR Professionals, Academicians, Professors and Students.

8th-9th December

EVENT NAME: NHRDN 20th National Conference

EVENT THEME: Spirit of Entrepreneurship

ORGANIZER: NHRDN


VENUE: Grand Castle, Palace Grounds, Bellary Road, Bangalore

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: HR leaders, Senior HR Professionals, Government officials, Industry, Academia, Business Leaders, HR Consultants/Experts/Practitioners.

L&D as a strategic lever for business

In today’s business ecosystem, employers need to ensure that their learning and development (L&D) strategies are aligned with the mission of the organization. Although L&D professionals understand their crucial role in supporting business growth, not being to link learning programs to business impact hinders the effectiveness of most such programs. It is important for organizations to have a clear vision of how their L&D function will support the business. L&D is an important strategic function that focuses on company’s short-term results, as well as the long-term direction. Organizations should emphasize on fabricating the desired culture, fostering new ways of thinking and learning practices and driving strategic opportunities to meet company goals. Talking about L&D as a strategic lever for the business, People Matters organized a tweetchat which witnessed the sharing of new and interesting thoughts and ideas on the various aspects within the learning function.

Following are some of the best answers to the various questions that covered such different aspects.


 **In today’s scenario what does the business demand from the learning function?**

UnmeshPawar @UPIAM

Energizing and Empowering the learner to take ownership of their learning investments.

Dr. AquilBusrai @aquilbusrai

Skill enhancement sharply relevant to business. No frills. Learning function must align with business needs.

 **What is that one challenge that you are trying to solve in the learning function?**

KanishaRaina @KanishaRaina

One of the prime challenges is evolving it and making it supremely customized and keeping it skill based.

Pramod @PramodDrSolanki

To quickly design a contextual intervention that enhances business value and at the same time, engages all the stakeholders


 **What are favorable L&D tactics for successful business buy-in?**

Katarina Karalic @KatarinaKaralic

We should not look at tactics to sell L&D initiatives. It should be a joint business planning and shared ownership.

UnmeshPawar @UPIAM

Listening for business needs and delivering solutions that will show direct business outcomes.


 **How can we ensure sustainability of an initiative in a scalable/ dynamic/ VUCA organization?**

SushilBaveja @sushilbaveja

Sustainability has a strong linkage to leadership that is contemporary in thought process and has an outside-in perspective.

Ankur Gupta @ankurgupta27


Organisations need to be adaptive, agile and ambidextrous to ensure the sustainability of an initiative.

 **What are the favorable learning styles that are always successful in ever changing L&D outlook?**

Katarina Karalic @KatarinaKaralic

Learning styles will remain diverse; L&D needs to know how to build the environment inclusive of all types of learners.

SushilBaveja @sushilbaveja

Action learning is there is to stay; leveraging technology in design and delivery can make learning interesting. 

Strengthening bonds of business by focusing on HR

EVENT: NATCON 2016

ORGANIZED BY: NIPM

PARTNERS: ONGC, Indian Oil, Coal India Limited, NALCO, Bharat Petroleum, Bharat Petroleum, IFFCO, Mahindra, GAIL (India) Limited

Due to the increasing diversity in the market, corporates today are facing tumultuous challenges to sustain themselves. It is crucial for HR to play a significant role in sustaining organizational growth in the current scenario. Also, an additional task for HR is to represent itself as a dependable stakeholder in the upward journey of the business. Addressing these complexities, the National Institute of Personnel Management (NIPM) organized its 35th Annual National Conference & Exhibition on September 23-24, 2016 at CIDCO Exhibition Centre, Vashi, Navi Mumbai, on the theme of - 'Powering ahead - Strengthening Bonds of Business by focusing HR'.

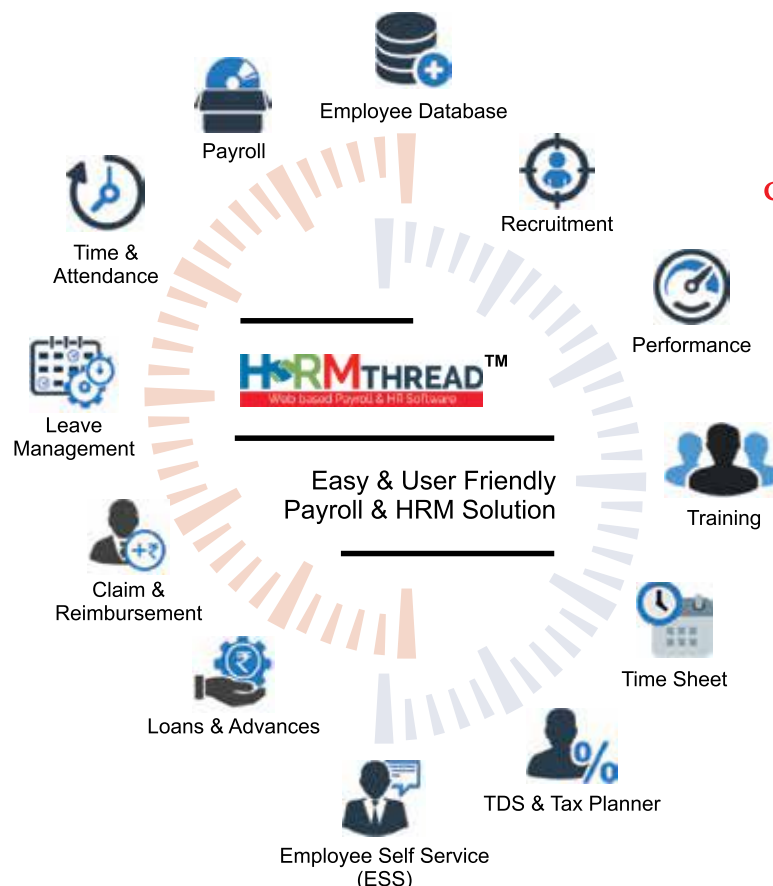
The event kicked off with the inaugural address delivered by Subhash Desai, Hon.



Minister of Industries, Govt. of Maharashtra where he spoke about the government's new initiative 'Maitri' that focuses on developing Human Resources into skilled manpower. He further added that 'Maitri' is a group of people representing 18 different government departments like Industry, labor, energy, and environment etc. who sit on one platform and listen to the needs of the industries and try to resolve issues. Some of the other key sessions were around topics such as, 'CSR - Key initiative

for business sustenance' where speakers explained the role of HR in promotion and adoption of corporate social responsibility in companies. Other sessions were on 'Skilling India - a creative calling' that discussed the adoption of holistic approach in developing skill-sets amongst employees; and 'Management through passion' that focused on the role of HR in resolving growing passion deficit in companies.

Somesh Dasgupta, National President-NIPM and President-Corporate Affairs & Administration, India Power Corporation stated that HR professionals must anticipate new developments in the competitive world. They have to make strategic plans as per the needs of the organization and implement the same with proper utilization of human resources. Around 900 HR & IR professionals throughout the country and global attended the mega event to update their knowledge on latest HR Trends. In all, NATCON-2016 provided a learning experience to professionals and conveyed a strong message that HR professionals need to act as catalysts for individual and organization's growth. 🌟



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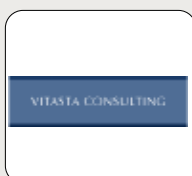
Jobs of the week



Husys Consulting Limited
HR-Operations Lead
Location: Hyderabad / Secunderabad,
Job ID: 19485562
Description: To deliver Client business priorities through HR Initiatives and support the CEO/Decision Makers.



Golden Opportunities Private Limited
Induction/orientation Lead
Location: Kolkata
Job ID: 19483385
Description: Looking for candidates with 7+ years of experience in Induction and orientation with excellent communication skills for a Induction Lead role with one of the reputed BPO client.



Vitasta Consulting Private Limited
Manager / Asst. Manager HR
Location: Navi Mumbai
Job ID: 19474663
Description: Employee Life Cycle Management, Talent Acquisition and Induction Leverage employee referrals and job-sites to minimize costs.



New Era India Consultancy Private Ltd
Manager - HR
Location: Delhi
Job ID: 19471184
Description: Minimum 7 years of experience in a Domestic/International BPO.



Xoriant Solutions Private Limited
Senior Executive HR
Location: pune
Job ID: 19491030
Description: Experience in Induction Training and Organization Development activities.



Piramal Enterprises
AGM / DGM - HR
Location: Hyderabad / Secunderabad
Job ID: 19456408
Description: Aligning HR strategies and practices in line with business goals and targets.



Power It Services Private Limited
Senior Recruitment Consultant
Location: Bengaluru / Bangalore, Chennai
Job ID: 19467119
Description: 4+ Years of Experience in Handling Accounts in IT Recruitment atleast 2+ years experience in handling clients End to End delivery process.



Minacs Limited
HR Manager
Location: Pune
Job ID: 19413172
Description: Opportunity for HR Manager , having Experience 4 - 12 years in Pune location.



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Jobs of the week



Eaton Technologies Private Limited

Talent Acquisition Consultant

Location: Pune

Job ID: 19465305

Description: Proactively identify, source, and recruit candidates utilizing a variety of sources including, but not limited to, internet postings and search, direct sourcing etc.



Thermo Fisher Scientific

Human Resources Generalist

Location: Bengaluru / Bangalore

Job ID: 19480255

Description: Develop deep understanding of business objective & HR practices.



Talent Corner Hr Services Private Limited

HR & Admin Manager

Location: Mumbai

Job ID: 19486011

Description: Recruitment, Training & Development, Performance Management, Statutory Compliances, On Roll & Off Roll Staff Management.



Sampoorna Computer People HR

Location: Hyderabad / Secunderabad

Job ID: 19465417

Description: Understanding the skill gaps in the organization, creating Job Description for the same.



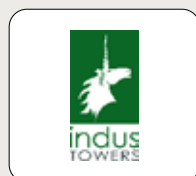
Continental Mercantile Corporation Limited

Recruitment - Head

Location: Bengaluru / Bangalore, Cochin / Kochi / Ernakulam

Job ID: 19482912

Description: Opportunity for Recruitment - Head/ Mgr, having Experience 10 - 15 years in cochin location.



Indus Towers

HR Manager

Location: Noida

Job ID: 19479789

Description: Adherence to Indus HR policies & procedures at circle level- Should demonstrate 'Conscious keeper' role.

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Learning & Development Trends Study 2016

SETTING THE BUILDING BLOCKS RIGHT

As the L&D function identifies building capabilities for tomorrow as its top priority, the focus will need to shift to business metrics while bridging the perception gap and evolving ways of reaching out to the learners - People Matters-BITS Pilani L&D Trends Study 2016

By Megha Agarwal

With the workplace revolutionizing and the aspirations of the workforce changing, the way people learn in an organizational set-up is also evolving, presenting unseen challenges to the L&D professionals. The L&D function today is evolving as a “growth partner” that focuses not just on the current performance improvement but also forms an integral part of long-term strategic capability building. Therefore, forward-thinking L&D teams are those that are striving to stay on top of the domain trends in this volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) environment.

To help the L&D leaders make meaningful decisions, the *People Matters-BITS Pilani L&D Trends Study 2016* presents some of the most pertinent trends in the L&D domain. The study surveyed 122

respondents across industries to gauge their perceptions on the elements that drive the L&D function, its role in the organization and how learning and development is being executed on the ground. In addition to the readiness levels and investment areas, the focus was to understand how strategic the L&D function is and its ways of execution in the whole organizational set-up. The study also covers a segment on higher education programs as they are a crucial aspect of enabling continuous learning in organizations. The starkest fact that the research revealed was that building capabilities for tomorrow is the biggest priority for the L&D function in next three years and organizations have already started working in this direction – to set the building blocks right!



WHILE ORGANIZATIONS HAVE A HIGH LEVEL OF LEADERSHIP BUY-IN, BUILDING A LEARNING CULTURE AND ENHANCING CAPABILITIES OF THE L&D TEAMS NEED TO BE FOCUSED UPON

Corporate learning has been smartly making ways through the busy slides of an organization's business agenda. And today, it lies at the center of any organization's success. In the wake of the changing workforce demographics, the challenges for the L&D function in any organization have grown manifold. It is not only trying to adapt itself to the new learning patterns but also delivering results that impact the business. Hence, to be better prepared for a successful delivery, the L&D function today needs to stay on top of the trends in the domain and capture them in their personal agendas.

The core role of the L&D function is to strengthen the organizational capabilities that help further the business. The research reveals that the L&D leaders have set the building blocks right by identifying the right priorities and areas of investment. As respondents identify building organizational capabilities for tomorrow (58 percent), aligning L&D strategy to business (51 percent) and developing cadre of future leaders (42 percent) as the top three priorities for the next three years, they agree to have high level of leadership buy-in to convert these into action. The investments are headed towards enhancing the readiness levels of the L&D team and the organization culture. The research also reveals that measuring the success of L&D needs a clear shift from the current metrics like training feedback and learning hours to business metrics like productivity, revenue and customer satisfaction.

The other key finding of the report suggests that there exists a perception gap in the value that L&D brings to the organizations between the leadership (C-suite and board) and middle-level managers. And as L&D endeavors to bridge this gap, the ways of reaching out to learners are also evolving with technology playing a major role and skill-based certifications emerging as the most preferred higher education program.

Organizations are getting ready to bring the priorities into action

To be able to convert the priorities into action, it is important to identify one's readiness levels and areas of investments prudently. Interestingly, the study reveals that there is a high level of synergy between the priorities, organization readiness levels, future areas of investments and the expectations from these investments by the L&D function.

While organizations have a high level of leadership buy-in for these priorities, building a learning culture and enhancing capabilities of L&D team need to be focused upon. And as organizations prepare to invest their budgets in this direction, adopting innovative learning methodologies, building the learning culture and creating new content was rated as the top areas of investments. Delving deeper into the kind of expectations that are sought out of these investments, this research presents an interesting validation to the priorities as 70 percent respondents state building capabilities and 57 percent state enhanced business productivity as the top expected outcomes. As organizations work towards these priorities, some of the key findings of the study are presented below.

Traditional learning metrics will be replaced with business metrics

Looking at the metrics that organizations are using to define their success currently and those that they think should define the success of achieving the priorities – the research yields fascinating insights. None of the top 3 metrics that the L&D professionals are tracking today appear to be in the top 3 metrics that they should be looking at in the next three years. While training feedback (78 percent), learning hours (76 percent) and amount of trainings delivered (75 percent) are the top three metrics being tracked currently, the respondents agree that the focus should be on productivity metrics (53 percent), revenue growth (43 percent) and customer satisfaction (38 percent) – these indicate the direct business impact.

Current Metrics	Training feedback, learning hours, amount of trainings delivered
Future Metrics	Productivity metrics, revenue growth, customer satisfaction

Perception gap needs to be bridged for L&D to emerge as “growth partners”

There exists a wide difference between how L&D function is perceived by the leadership (C-suite

and board) and the mid-level managers. While leadership (C-suite and board) views the function as absolutely central to the organization, the mid-level managers view it as only a tactical support to the business. Interestingly, only 4 percent respondents feel that the leadership sees the function as a protocol, relative to 31 percent of the mid-level managers.

As the L&D function evolves from “cost savers” to “value creators” to “growth partners”, it has started focusing on strategic activities than tactical ones with a combination of 30 percent time on strategic activities and 70 percent time on tactical activities emerging as the top combination.

While the L&D function today is spending most of its time on training, followed by Leadership Development and Organization Development (OD), there exists a clear need to shift the focus on OD and Leadership Development, with the least time spent on training.

Ways of reaching out to the learners are evolving

Delivery media - On-the-job learning emerges as the top learning delivery channel for the technical roles (67 percent), class-room training for non-technical (61 percent) roles and mentoring programs emerge as the leading channel for the leadership learning (63 percent). While these appear more like offline modes of delivery, the research yields that these are not untouched by digitization. Organizations are leveraging technology in a big way with virtual class-room based trainings ruling the charts as 48 percent respondents state using it.

Outsourcing - The function continues to heavily outsource training delivery and content development across all kinds of roles. Digging deeper into the content development practices, while 62 percent respondents prefer in-house subject matter experts for technical roles, custom content development companies are the most preferred developers for the non-technical (56 percent) and leadership roles (70 percent).

Technology implementation - With 82 percent respondents stating that less than 50 percent of the L&D activities are technology enabled, almost one at three respondents report that they have some L&D technologies built in-house and some procured from vendors.

NONE OF THE TOP 3 METRICS THAT THE L&D PROFESSIONALS ARE TRACKING TODAY APPEAR TO BE IN THE TOP 3 METRICS THAT THEY SHOULD BE LOOKING AT IN THE NEXT THREE YEARS

Skill-based certifications are the most preferred higher education program

Organizations today are out in full support of continuous learning through higher education for their employees with more than 80 percent of respondents sponsoring their employees for higher education in some way or the other. While respondents are aware of Management Development Programs (92 percent) and skill-based certifications (89 percent), 72 percent of those who sponsor such programs state that their employees prefer the skill-based certifications. The short duration of such certifications and direct relevance make these more attractive to both the employees and the organization.

Respondents state that they either provide part sponsorship with the employee bearing the rest (25 percent) or provide 100 percent sponsorship to only HIPO employees as part of their development plans (22 percent).

Expert View




Dr. G. Sundar,
Director - Off-Campus Programs
and Industry Engagement,
BITS-Pilani

The Learning and Development function has been, and remains critical to an organization's success. Along with a deep understanding of the business strategy and an appreciation of individual aspirations, an awareness of the relative merits and strengths of various offerings, and the ability to customize these are vital in creating a plan that ensures measurable delivery of the requisite outcomes.

In the wake of rapid changes in business needs, workforce demographics, technology, lifestyle, and information technologies, the challenges for the L&D function have grown manifold. To change constantly yet remain predictable, being agile yet showing long term benefits, customize yet standardize – these are some of the demands that are placed in front of the L&D function.

To be better prepared for a successful delivery, the L&D professional today needs to stay on top of the trends in the domain. The L&D Trends Study, 2016, is an effort to uncover some of these trends to help the function to take decisions based on informed insight, translate these into specific actions leading to measurable results.

The core role of the L&D function is to support and accelerate learning that endows an organization with the knowledge and skills necessary to execute its business strategy in an agile and responsive manner. The study reveals that L&D leaders have set the building blocks right by identifying the right priorities and areas of investment. The report also shares key findings on the metrics organizations should be tracking, how they could bridge the gap in perceived value between leadership and middle-level managers, and ways of reaching out to learners.

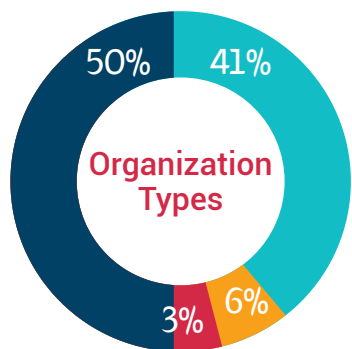
Work Integrated Learning has been a core element of our educational philosophy, and it is our firm belief that life-long learning is key to achieving professional success and personal development. Hence we believe that organizations should provide opportunities to employed professionals across industries to enhance their academic qualification while gaining significant professional experience at their respective employing organizations. Supporting this thought process, the research also suggest that more than 80 percent of respondents sponsor their employees for higher education in some way or the other. While respondents are aware of Management Development Programs (92 percent) and skill-based certifications (89 percent), a little over 60 percent respondents are aware of the technical courses (either online or those delivered at company premises). 72 percent of respondents who sponsor such programs state that their employees prefer the skill-based certifications. 

Who Participated?

Demographic profile of Respondents

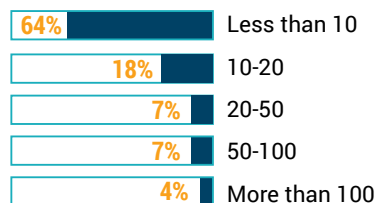


The survey was rolled out in the month of September & saw the participation of 122 HR and L&D heads



- Multinational Companies
- Indian Companies
- Small & Medium-sized Businesses
- Public Sector Units

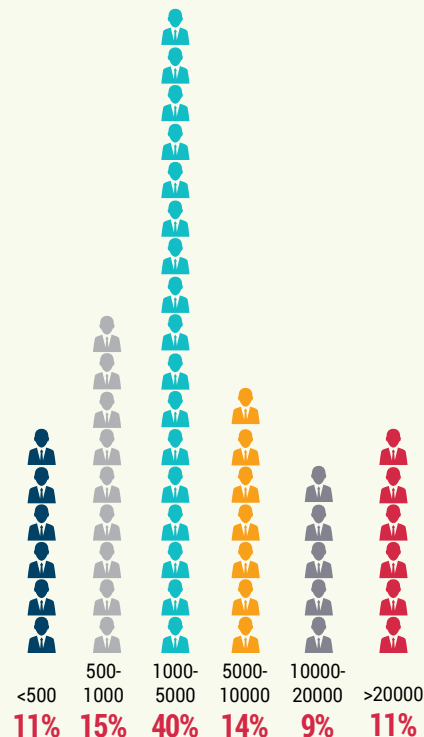
L&D Team Size



Industry Type



Employee Strength



WHILE MOST RESPONDENTS ARE AWARE OF MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND SKILL-BASED CERTIFICATIONS, 72 PERCENT OF THOSE WHO SPONSOR SUCH PROGRAMS STATE THAT THEIR EMPLOYEES PREFER THE SKILL-BASED CERTIFICATIONS

Staying ahead!

As the L&D function looks at charting new courses in the next three years, this report provides key trends that leaders need to incorporate in their agendas for a successful future run. The top priority of the L&D function for the next three years is building organizational capabilities for tomorrow. And while the leadership buy-in exists to convert the priorities into action, enhancing the readiness levels of the L&D team and organization

culture is the focus of investments. In light of the priorities identified, there needs to be a clear shift from the traditional metrics to the business metrics while tracking the success of L&D function. As organizations set on this course, a key differentiator would be articulating the value of L&D through the verticals of the organization, as 50 percent respondents stated that leadership (C-suite and board) view L&D as central to the organization but 49 percent also stated that middle-level managers view it as a tactical support to the business.

Ways of reaching out to the learners is evolving due to technology in L&D activities with the top channels of learning delivery being revolutionized. Supporting continuous learning, organizations are also sponsoring employees for higher education programs in some or the other way, with 72 percent of those who sponsor such programs stating that their employees prefer skill-based certifications.

Read the report for more on these key findings and hear the experts share their L&D agendas!



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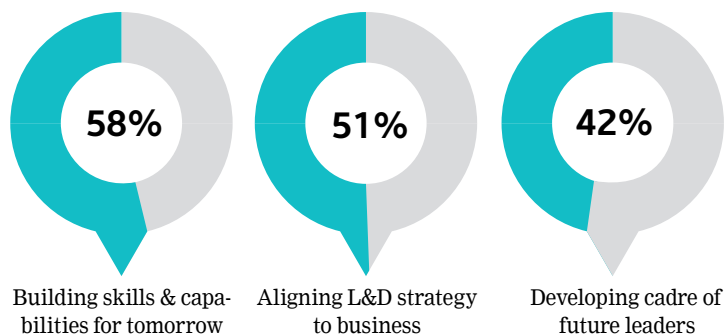
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Unveiling the L&D landscape in India

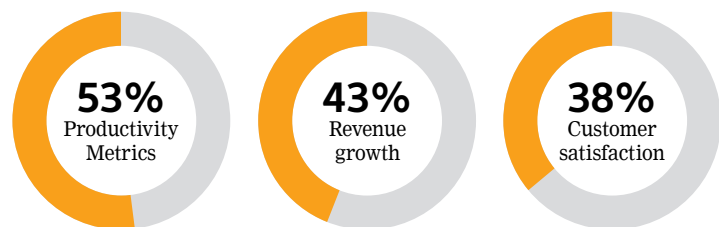
The People Matters - BITS Pilani L&D Trends Study 2016 presents the prevailing state of the Learning and Development in the Indian corporate set-up. With 122 respondents across industries, the report identifies the trends, readiness levels and priorities of L&D and HR leaders, and reveals that building capabilities for tomorrow is the biggest priority for the L&D function in next three years. In addition, it also uncovers the metrics measuring L&D success along with the perception gap between leadership and mid-level managers on the value that L&D brings.

KEY FINDINGS

TOP 3 PRIORITIES



KEY FUTURE METRICS

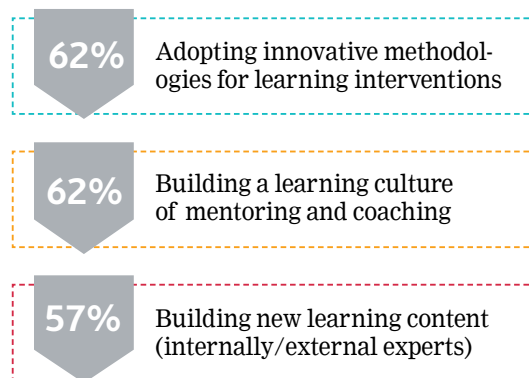


PERCEPTION GAP

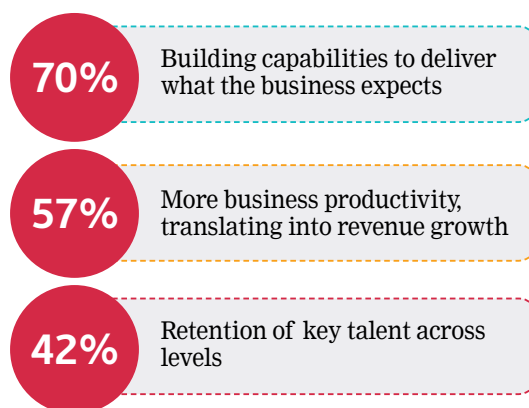


HOW ORGANIZATIONS ARE MANAGING PRIORITIES

TOP 3 AREAS OF INVESTMENTS IN NEXT 12-15 MONTHS

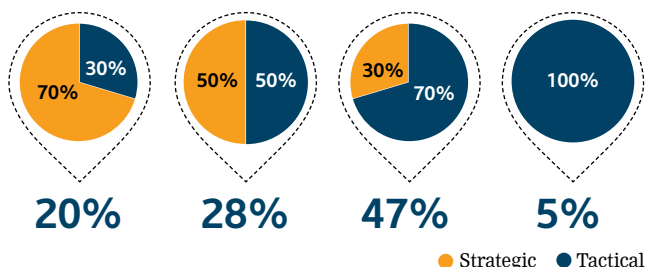


TOP 3 EXPECTED BUSINESS OUTCOMES FROM THESE INVESTMENTS



FOCUS ON STRATEGIC ASPECTS TO BRIDGE THE PERCEPTION GAP

CURRENT STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL MIX OF L&D ACTIVITIES

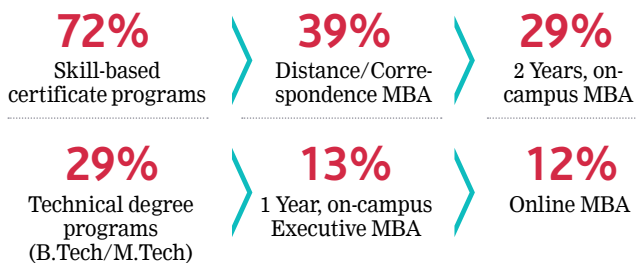


KEY FOCUS AREAS FOR L&D

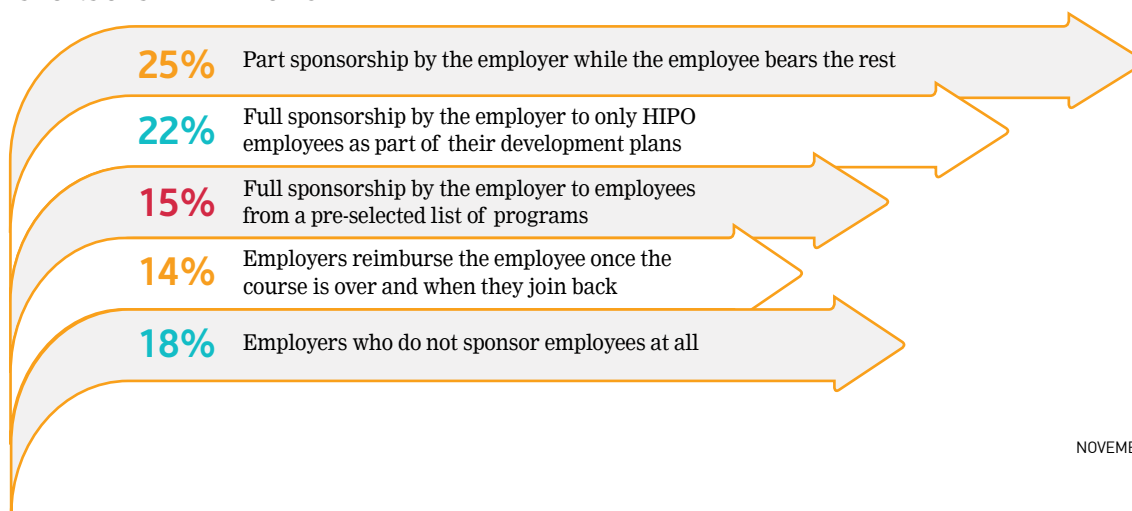
	Current order	Desired future order
Training		
Leadership Development		
Organization Development		

ENABLING CONTINUOUS LEARNING

PREFERRED HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

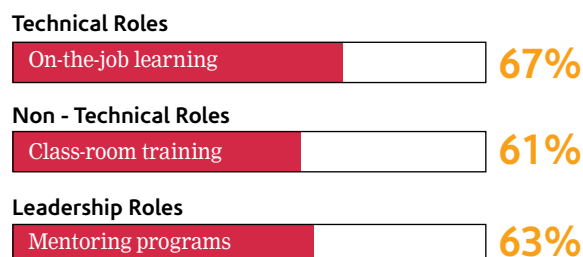


SPONSORSHIP APPROACH

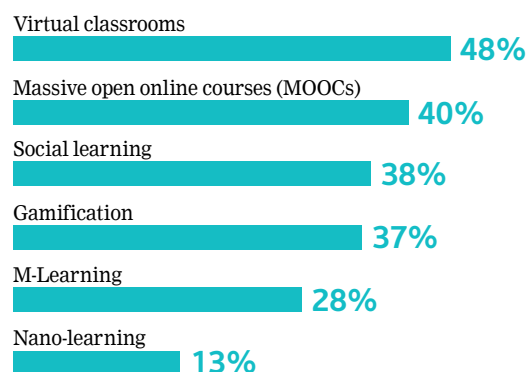


CONNECT WITH THE LEARNERS

TOP LEARNING DELIVERY CHANNELS ACROSS ROLES



TOP TECHNOLOGIES FOR DELIVERING LEARNING CONTENT



MAJOR ACTIVITIES THAT ARE OUTSOURCED ACROSS ALL ROLES:

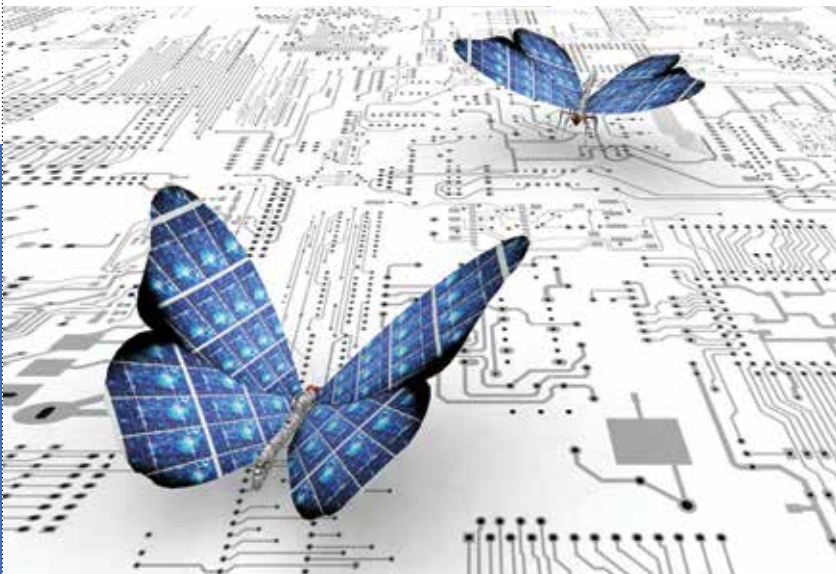
CONTENT DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING DELIVERY

82% respondents state that less than 50 percent of the L&D activities are technology-enabled



Achieving organizational effectiveness for the 21st Century

Here is an integrative model for achieving sustainable business excellence and progressive business growth



Innovation has become a necessary element of the genetic makeup within progressive organizations and 'human factor' is steadily being marginalized in favor of automated 'user-friendly' technologies

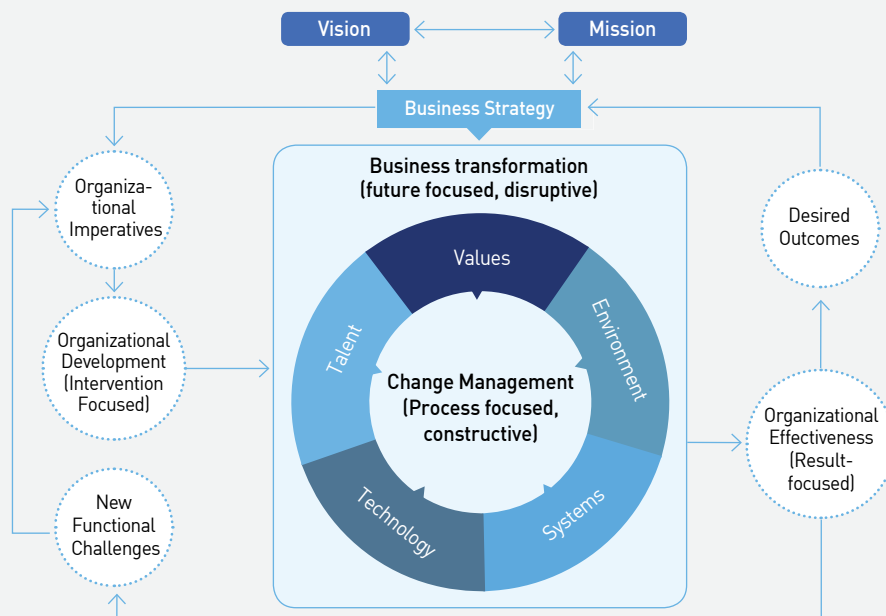
Professional fields are often strewn with terminologies that confound the uninitiated and rally peers/colleagues around a common language. However, this can also lead to multiple interpretations and divergence of viewpoints that can dilute the core purpose of effective application of key concepts. Consequently, success is often measured in terms of avoiding failures, rather than learning from missteps and consolidating gains on a long-term basis. This conventionalizes risk aversion as senior management gets increasingly addicted to quarterly results to placate impatient shareholders who are hooked on quicker positive returns within a highly sensitized market hinging on precarious economic outlooks.

Another key factor in the respective context is the profound advancement of technology that is fueling the need for supremely efficient operations and lowering the threshold for tolerating failure. Innovation has become a necessary element of the genetic makeup within progressive organizations and 'human factor' is steadily being marginalized in favor of automated 'user-friendly' technologies.

The respective trend is expected to grow exponentially in the future as Artificial Intelligence (AI)/ Super-Advanced Robotics/Hybrid Lifeforms take control of various functions that are/were considered the exclusive realms of human ingenuity. Consequently, staying relevant in such transformative times requires an organization to be astutely agile in congruence with its business strategies under the umbrella of a Sagacious Vision and an enlightened Mission.

The following model is being presented as a sustainable solution for successfully navigating through the labyrinth of weighty terminologies, and ensure long-term relevance of a progressive organization in rapidly evolving markets across the world.

The respective model is primarily driven by a galvanizing Vision and a robust Mission germinating in a conducive Business Strategy based upon the dynamics of the influential internal and external factors. This leads to the formulation of the Organizational Imperatives that are translated into Organizational Development initiatives to commence timely and focused interventions in an efficient and effective manner. The scope, scale and approach of



Note: The aforementioned model assumes honest, judicious, astute & incisive application in a progressive organization without fear or favor.

Conceived, created & developed by Murad Salman Mirza

the respective interventions is determined by the following two key pathways:

1. Process Focused, Constructive (Change Management)
2. Future Focused, Disruptive (Business Transformation)


Any methodology (normative, customized) can be applied to achieve desired results once the broader parameters of choosing the desired pathway are defined, debated and finalized with focus areas gravitating towards the following five key pillars:

1. **Values:** Concentrating on everything associated with aspects pertaining to Organizational Culture
2. **Talent:** Concentrating on everything associated with aspects pertaining to Talent Management
3. **Environment:** Concentrating on everything associated with aspects pertaining to Employee Wellness & Wellbeing and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)
4. **Technology:** Concentrating on everything associated with aspects pertaining to Technological Innovations
5. **Systems:** Concentrating on everything associated with interactive elements pertaining to Management Systems, e.g., Operational Strategies, Tactical Plans, Methodologies, Processes, Policies, Procedures, Rules, Regulations, etc.

The quality of change/transformation is assured by timely and insightful corporate management reviews, undertaken at suitably defined intervals, by gauging alignment with the overall business strategy and ensuring robust & effective corrective/preventive actions. Consequently, Organizational Effectiveness is achieved as actual

It is imperative that progressive leadership development and astute succession planning are tightly knit within the fabric of the organization to safeguard against unrelenting competitors/disruptive innovators

results strongly match with planned Objectives/ goals. The desired outcomes with lessons learnt are then fed back into updating the 'Knowledge Bank' for formulating future business strategies on long-term basis. Any new functional challenges in the short-term are carefully assessed and converted into Organizational Imperatives on merit to follow the same aforementioned structured approach.

This model has been designed to be cyclical/ closed-loop in nature to embed the principle of continuous improvement within its core functionality to synergistically integrate with the 'innovation' mindset that is pervading the corporate landscape. The level of success achieved with this approach is directly proportional to the quality of leadership at the organization's helm. Therefore, it is imperative that progressive leadership development and astute succession planning are tightly knit within the fabric of the organization to safeguard against unrelenting competitors/disruptive innovators. The price for excellence should never discount the cost of complacency. 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

MURAD SALMAN MIRZA is an innovative thinker and an astute practitioner in areas within and associated with the fields of Organizational Development, Talent Management and Business Transformation

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India Inc. is betting high with an industry-wide change management exercise. Let's do a Failure Mode Effect Analysis (FMEA) of idea generation!

The Integration Minefield

I love the much talked about story of iPod's success. Sony had amazing advantages even before Apple with amazing artists, the Walkman team, audio division, products, et al. Yet, it was Apple Inc. who stole the show with the iPod. Integration, can cost an enterprise dear.

India Inc. is betting high with an industry-wide change management exercise. Wipro has set it hopes in Holmes, TCS in Ignio and, so on. Let's do a Failure Mode Effect Analysis (FMEA) of idea generation. Keeping the FMEA steps in mind of Detect-Severity-Probability-Detection- Risk number, here is what happens behind the scenes:

People: The biggest and largest road block of an idea taking to orbit is - people. Its greatest strength is also its greatest doom. Internal company groups, the lunch time friends, the silent rivals and the 'my way or the high way' types kill a genuine and amazing idea.

My Department: Departments were created to bring in some structure to the job. To bring in roles, levels and spans of control. This very organized landscape is the noose around an idea's neck. Department-A won't work with department-B why? Because, both heads don't see eye to eye on the same strategies and ideas. Vijay C, from a leading internet security company says "I need complete control over my projects or I don't touch it." Hence every idea taking birth is strangled the moment it goes to the next level in the process.

It's Policy: "I'd love to get everyone together on a WhatsApp group but, it's not company policy to have one." The moment we suggest a formal group for say HR or Legal to be on one group, in comes the policy brigade and promptly handcuffs the potential. In my earlier role when I created an informal trainers group, I got all sorts



The biggest and largest road block of an idea taking to orbit is - people

of comments when launching it. Won't our content get compromised? How can you send material to them on their email? Will trainers still be relevant? and, so on. Today, its a must have for companies to nurture budding trainers.

Budget: Now this one is a changing. Many industry leaders have realized that the budget should have some element of impartial-ism in it, or a good deal may be missed. Buying an App, rolling out a new assessment, planning a new training - the idea still has budget hoops to jump through - the presentation to a committee, then a buy-in, then finally when every man and his dog seems to benefit by buying cutting edge VC equipment, the budget 'may' get allotted.

Why should I leverage? After buying something, it's important to use it. Sanjit, a cardiologist with XYZ Hospital says "I've seen a million dollar diagnostic equipment lying unused. Why? Because the idea was implemented by the central head and the branch head was not on the same page.

This resulted in the equipment lying unleveraged. The corporate landscape is no different. Refusal to use a new tool, equipment or services, for the simple reason that the other team using didn't have a say in its procurement.

Did you discuss with me? When all teams are not made partners in the idea. When everyone does not get visibility and share of the pie - that's a sure idea killer. Companies spend millions of dollars training on integration, cohesion and building a team spirit. But till we have "that is your track and this is mine" the field will not clear itself.

Rewards & Recognition(R&R) electric chair: This, in my view, is the biggest bargaining chip for an idea. After all, all we do what we do is for the extrinsic rewards and being seen as a 'champion' at the annual, quarterly R&R. I once had a complete department refuse to support a winning proposition only because their department wouldn't get recognized for it.

The lines from the movie 'Cloudy with a Chance of Meat Balls' encapsulates the solution for me. I learnt this - test-it (secretly if required), get influencers on the table, have people talk about it at all levels and then make it jump through all the hoops. Given that we can't change hundreds of years of departmentalization, we can certainly disrupt it with this idea. What say? 🍌

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

SAVIO FREITAS is Senior Manager HRD of a leading IT company in India

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