

# people matters

VOL VIII / ISSUE 7 / JULY 2017

₹150

## TALENT ACQUISITION **SPECIAL**

Optimize your *talent acquisition* efforts with actionable advice from leaders on recruitment trends, technology and practices.

### **BIG INTERVIEW**

#### **Norm Judah**

Chief Technology Officer,  
Microsoft Services

### **SPECIAL STORY**

#### **HiPo Programs**

Are they delivering  
on the promise?

### **INTERVIEW**

#### **Alexander Alonso**

Senior Vice President -  
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# The Talent Paradox

**T**alent paradox is a reality today. Despite high unemployment rate, organizations are facing challenges while filling job vacancies.

According to ManpowerGroup report, 40% of global employers report talent shortages and are finding it more difficult and expensive to attract new talent. And according to People Matters – Indeed “India Hiring Outlook 2018”, despite 63 percent of the companies increasing their hiring budgets, organizations are cautious in their hiring outlook. Where we know that the future of finding talent is through technology, and automation could increase value by taking over tasks that require less skill, the questions still remains the same — what do organizations do to acquire the talent that has the skill to do what automation cannot?

How equipped are organizations to search the talent pool? Are they leveraging the next gen tools and models to calibrate their hiring processes and recruiter capabilities? Are recruiters and hiring leaders learning the fundamentals of recruiting right and right recruiting?

Talent acquisition, today, is not just about “acquiring” but really aligning with technology to embrace the trend of liquid talent while inventing innovative ways to attract and engage candidates too. Our

cover story on talent acquisition says the same — “Talent acquisition is not just about hiring. It is an amalgamation of frameworks and encompasses concepts like employer brand strategy, candidate experience, recruiting optimization, talent partnership and last but not the least, engagement.” The cover story presents People Matters – Indeed Study on “India Hiring Outlook 2017-18” that captures trends in talent acquisition, India’s hiring outlook, key strategic priorities and business readiness of the TA function, and the role of the recruiter; while also featuring what organizations and TA leaders are doing for dynamic talent acquisition in terms of user experience, personalization, social connections, collaboration or using a 360 degrees TA approach.

For the Big Interview this time, we have Norm Judah, Chief Technology Officer of Microsoft Services who shares his outlook and insights on the role of HR in capability building, the role of the CTO, delivering solutions, disruptive technologies and skillsets for the future.

The issue also features a special story on the 5th edition of HiPo Week, a People Matters and Right Management collaboration, which focuses on the effectiveness of HIPO programs. It also includes Right Management’s survey on High Potential programs that assesses some of the key objectives of HiPo programs and what needs to be done to make them sharper.

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)



not bad huh,  
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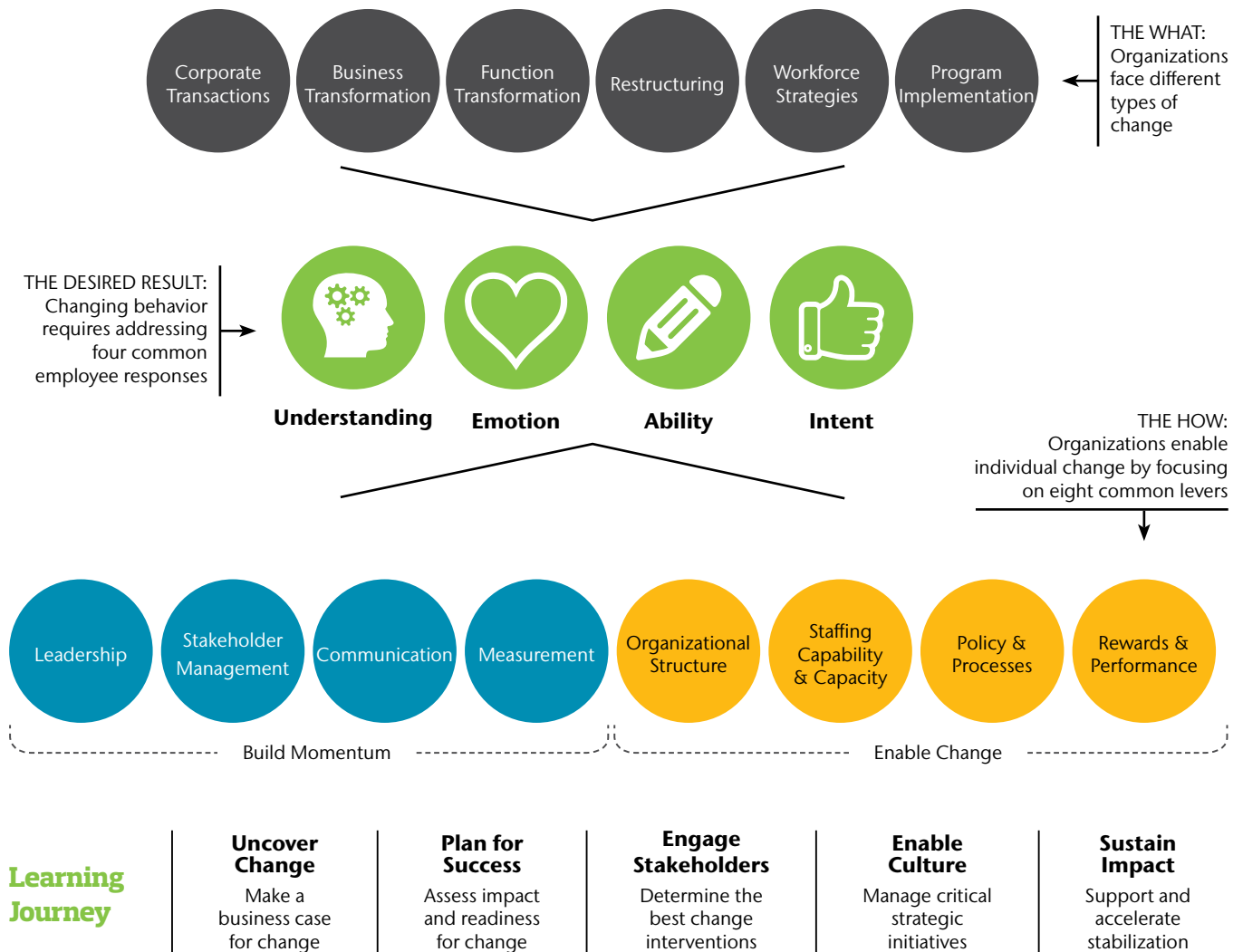


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## TALENT ACQUISITION

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
**Esther Martinez Hernandez**

SENIOR EDITOR  
**Suparna Chawla Bhasin**

MANAGER - CONTENT  
**J Jerry Moses**

ASSISTANT MANAGERS - CONTENT  
**Shalini Sengupta | Vani Vyas  
Bhuvan Gupta**

SENIOR ASSOCIATE - CONTENT  
**Anushree Sharma**

SR. MANAGER - RESEARCH  
**Megha Agarwal**

DESIGN & PRODUCTION  
**Shinto Kallattu**

DIGITAL HEAD  
**Prakash Shahi**

PHOTOGRAPHY  
**Marta Martinez**

GENERAL MANAGER - SALES  
**Rubi Taj**  
rubi.taj@peoplematters.in  
+91 (124) 4148102

ASSISTANT MANAGER - SALES  
**Saloni Gulati**  
saloni.gulati@peoplematters.in  
+91 (124) 4148102

MARKETING & ALLIANCES  
**Parul Shukla**  
parul.shukla@peoplematters.in  
+91 (124) 4412302

SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER -  
**Neha Yadav**  
subscribe@peoplematters.in  
+91 (124) 4148101

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ask@peoplematters.in  
www.peoplematters.in

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**MDP OFFICER, XLRI, Circuit House Area (East), Jamshedpur - 831 035**

Phone : 0657-6653330, 6653329, Mobile : +91-9835115262

E-Mail : [mdp@xlri.ac.in](mailto:mdp@xlri.ac.in), [mdpoffice@xlri.ac.in](mailto:mdpoffice@xlri.ac.in), Website : <http://www.xlri.ac.in/mdp>

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FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

NORM JUDAH  
ANSKUSH PURI

ALEXANDER ALONSO  
MOUSHUMEE BASU ROY

CONTRIBUTORS IN THIS ISSUE

MONODIP CHAUDHURI  
VISTY BANAJI  
MURAD SALMAN MIRZA  
ABHIJIT BHADURI  
AMOL PAWAR  
SINDHUJA PARTHASARTHY  
AMITABH ADHIKARY  
GURUCHARAN SINGH GANDHI  
ANTHONY JOSEPH  
RAMESH SHANKAR  
SHALINI PILLAY  
YOGI SRIRAM  
LORRAINE RODRIGUES  
INDRANIL CHAKRABORTHY  
HARLINA SODHI  
RSWAMINATHAN

ANSHULA VERMA  
RITU BHATIA  
SUNANDA K.MALIK  
SATYA D.SINHA  
SONALI ROYCHOWDHURY  
VINAY DESHPANDE  
AADESH GOYAL  
MEENAKSHY SRIDHAR  
SMRITI KRISHNA SIGH  
PRASHANT PANDEY  
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# Letters of the month



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JUNE 2017 ISSUE

## Doing it the Disney way!

The interview of Doug Lipp was very insightful and it was indeed inspiring to read about his professional journey. He reflected on three core points while talking about his journey – passion, persistence and preparation that are crucial for any person to succeed. It was compelling to read about Disney's organizational culture, the company's values and priorities that are still alive and popular today. Doug also talks about culture of trust in organizations and how combining it with appropriate employee training results in engaged and empowered workforce.

- KOMAL NATH

## Leadership excellence for the digital age

The article is an informative piece and offers tips to readers for converting possibilities into opportunities. I particularly liked the idea of converting 'aspirational' employee engagement into 'inspirational' employee engagement. The author, Murad Salman Mirza, suitably explains the inspiration-based approach which is more enduring option as it assures 'sustainable employee engagement'. Another helpful tip was related to cultivating high-commitment employees (HICOs) rather than high-potential employees (HIPOs) as HIPOs are more extrinsically-driven whereas HICOs are more intrinsically-driven employees

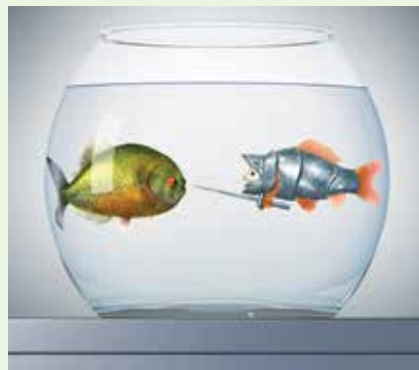
and are inherently engaged and hard to poach by opportunistic competitors.

- KEERTI NAIR

## Redefining the box - Britannia's transformative people practices

In this interview, Ritesh Rana shared insights about Britannia's unique culture and the organization's highly effective people practices. He rightly mentions in the interview that it is important to bring together highly talented people into creative and collaborative work environment. It was interesting to read about – 'Britannia for Britanniains' – their unique culture which focuses on providing on-the-job learning opportunities to instill healthy balance of values and quality of work.

- RAJINDER SHARMA



**The art of persuasion**  
The article highlights ways in which persuasion can help in achieving goals. Author Swati Sinha clearly states that persuasion is the primary means of affecting decisions. She also beautifully defines it as an effective interplay of art and science, and an act or process of ethically winning the mind and heart of others.

- AVANTIKA BHATNAGAR

twitter

**Gaur Farmaiye @Shikhar\_Gaur**

Kudos to @PeopleMatters2 @Ester\_Matters for highlighting such issues which bite the dust but yet are important to be addressed.

**Darren Cruickshank @dcrucks**

Interesting read in @PeopleMatters2 on how #workspace digitization enhances employee engagement. bit.ly/2r287S0

**AMRIK SIDHU @asid1989**

Great questions . It was a refreshing session with great insights @PeopleMatters2 #HiPoWeek

**Praveen Purohit @PraveenPurohitA**

Classic topic and look forward to great learning coming our way... thanks

**Prashant Pandey@prashpandey6**

What is the key org driver for a HiPo prog? Managing attrition? Succession? Engagement? Some insights during the #HiPoWeek @PeopleMatters2

**Yugesh Goutam@YugeshGoutam**

#Digital is reshaping the business. #HR needs to adapt to new age #Technology @PeopleMatters2

**Rajarshi Chakraborti@the\_Bong\_one**

How you build Culture the Armed forces way @PeopleMatters2 has got a really impressive topic covered here.

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## Corrigendum

In the cover story of June 2017 edition, the caption of the team picture in Schneider Electric's column is incorrect. The correct caption is: Anil Chaudhry, Managing Director & Zone President, India Zone (fourth from right - front) and Rachna Mukherjee, Chief Human Resources Officer, India Zone (third from right - front) with their team at the Schneider Electric India Office. Also, the name of Bharti Infratel's MD & CEO is incorrect in the caption of the team picture. The correct spelling is: Devender Singh Rawat. We regret the errors.

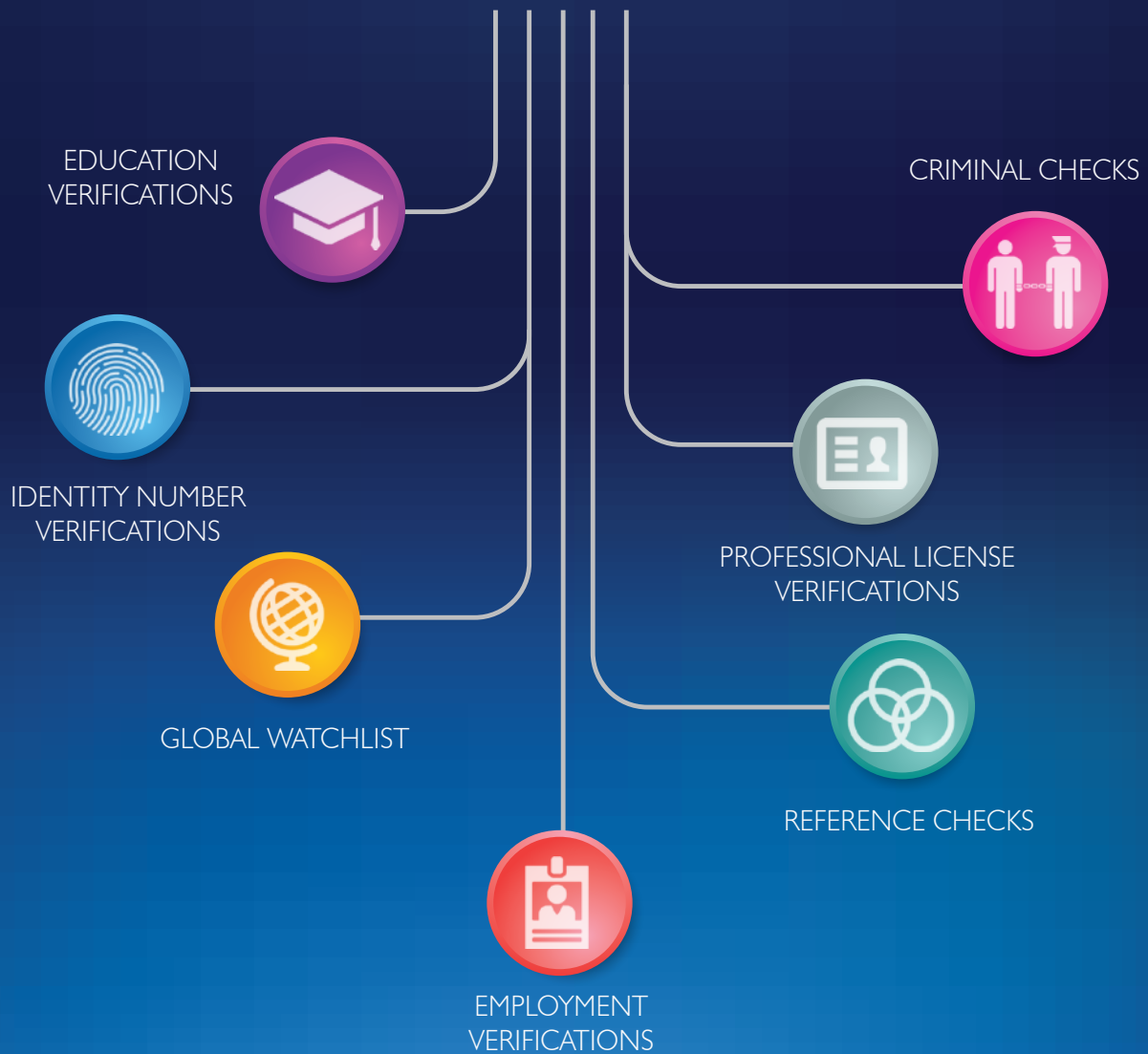


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INVESTMENT

## TeamLease to buy 30 percent stake in Freshersworld

Temporary staffing company TeamLease Services has announced that it will buy a 30 percent stake Freshersworld.com, an online job portal at an 18 crore pre-money valuation, for scaling up its hiring business. One of the key variables for staffing business is hiring at the 0 to 3 year experience category, where there is a long tail of demand. Staffing companies have large teams of recruiters reaching out to this category of talent in sourcing and hiring. One of the critical ways to scale this stage of the hiring process is to bring in technology, access to reach and experience on attracting this category of talent on digital and social platforms. As part of the

agreement, TeamLease will infuse another Rs 2 crore to enhance product features and back-end technology at Freshersworld and will look at increasing its stake or a total acquisition in the next three years.



PARTNERSHIP

## Sodexo partners with Zeta to provide employee benefits platform

Sodexo, a paper-based meal-voucher firm operating in the space of employee benefits and services has teamed up with Zeta, a technology startup which provides digital payment infrastructure for companies, to offer a seamless digital experience to its consumers. This news follows the RBI directive which requires the phasing out of paper-based employee vouchers. Paper-based meal vouchers, according to policy update by RBI, won't be accepted beyond 31st December 2017. Sodexo, whose meal



vouchers and cards are currently being used by 11,000 corporate entities of India, and accepted at 30,000 merchant outlets hopes to combine Sodexo's market know-how and Zeta's digital technology solutions for management and distribution of employee benefits. With this alliance, Sodexo's 3 million daily consumers will get access to simple and user-friendly technology solutions to enjoy their everyday meal benefits. Zeta, on the other hand, will get access to Sodexo's expertise in the B2B domain of sales and fine customer service.

EMPLOYER BRANDING

## Top 25 companies 2017 by LinkedIn: Where India wants to work



LinkedIn released the list of top 25 companies 2017 where India would like to work. The top companies were identified by LinkedIn data team who minutely observed actions taken by LinkedIn's 500+ million members. Flipkart tops the chart in India, followed by Amazon and KPMG India. The remaining 22 are: One97 Communications, Ola, HCL Technologies, Adobe, Alphabet, OYO Rooms, Reliance Industries, Capgemini, Accenture, Deloitte India, Tech Mahindra, Swiggy, Cisco, IDFC Bank, Wipro, Tata Communications, Vodafone, Cognizant, Grofers, MakeMyTrip, McKinsey & Company, and Oracle.

HR EXCELLENCE

## Tata Motors receives 'HR Innovation of the Year' Award

With the aim to make the Indian automotive industry globally competitive, Tata Motors has been a forerunner in launching a series of programs to provide technical and vocational training for the unemployed youth in India. For this effort, the company has been awarded with the 'HR Innovation of the Year' award by the Asia Pacific Excellence Award, held in Hong Kong. The Company over the past few years has associated with over 135 ITIs across 19 states, to develop skilled & highly competent manpower that's future ready.





## M&A

### Quikr acquires Zimmer to strengthen its lead in household services

Quikr has joined the bandwagon of the M&A express by announcing the acquisition of Zimmer, an on-demand household services provider, to further scale its hyper-local household services business. This strategic move will help the company accelerate its growth in household services and continue to progress towards its goal of organizing this fragmented category. As part of this, Zimmer will benefit from the strong synergies it has with QuikrServices and other Quikr verticals and enter into newer markets. Zimmer will continue serving all its on-demand service customers and will continue to focus on service quality. As part of the overall integration process, Amit



Kumar, Co-founder & COO and another founding member Siddhartha Srivastava, CPO along with the Zimmer team will continue to drive Zimmer growth under larger Quikr umbrella.



## HR SOLUTIONS

### Excelity Global partners with Zeta to offer digital employee benefits

Excelity Global, one of Asia's largest providers of payroll administration, benefits and human capital management, has partnered with Zeta, the pioneer in digital employee benefits solutions, to offer employee benefits to corporates on a fully digital platform. The company has also announced the inking of a strategic partnership with GaiaWorks to connect their respective software and cloud services to provide an integrated solution covering workforce management and payroll services to clients in Asia-Pacific. Excelity will offer its customers Zeta Optima's digital portfolio and paperless reimbursements for medical, fuel, LTA etc.



## DIVERSITY

### Accenture's Diversity Goal: 50% of its workforce to be women by 2025

Committed to a gender-balanced workforce, Accenture has set a target to achieve the gender parity with 50 percent men and 50 percent women by 2025. Currently, Accenture has about 150,000 women employees which comprise 40% of its global workforce. Over the past several years the company has set milestones on the path to gender equality which include, Setting a goal to reach 40 percent women new hires by 2017 – and achieving it a year early; Promoting its largest percentage of women to the managing director level in 2016 (30 percent); and growing its percentage of women managing directors to 25 percent globally by 2020. The company has also collaborated across businesses and governments to further enhance gender equality in the workplace, with commitments that include the White House Equal Pay Pledge, Paradigm for Parity, and Catalyst CEO Champions for Change.

## L&D

### The Challenges of Global L&D: Survey

A recent survey of 200 L&D senior decision makers by Open University Business School, 'The Challenges of Global L&D survey' revealed that nearly two-fifths of organizations do not have a global strategy for learning, and almost half of the L&D decision makers think that learning is not seen as important. About 66 percent of the respondents stated that organizations with a learning culture will be the most successful in the future, and 62 percent suggested that global learning programs will be the most important in the coming years. 60 percent are of the belief that effective learning is 'critical' to organizational success, as it helps companies



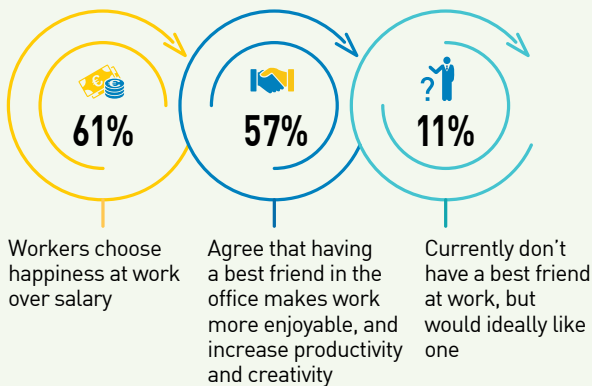
adapt quickly. More than half the respondents stated that there would be a 'significant' commercial impact if their L&D teams collaborated with the world. Over 50 percent believe that in-depth global learning programs attract talent from across the world and only 20 percent of the organizations consistently share learning across geographies. In nearly 50 percent of the organizations, learning architecture was found to be 'decades' out of date however 94 percent of the respondents are planning to increase investment in international training programs.

# FRIENDS IN THE WORKPLACE SURVEY

What motivates you at work? Financial reward or happiness in the office? Which is more important to you at work? How does having a “work best friend” impact your job? What would be your preferred method of improving worker relationships in the office?



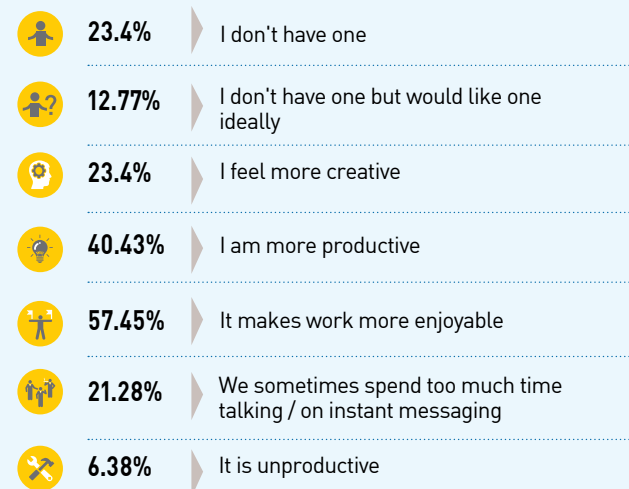
## HAPPINESS VS. SALARY



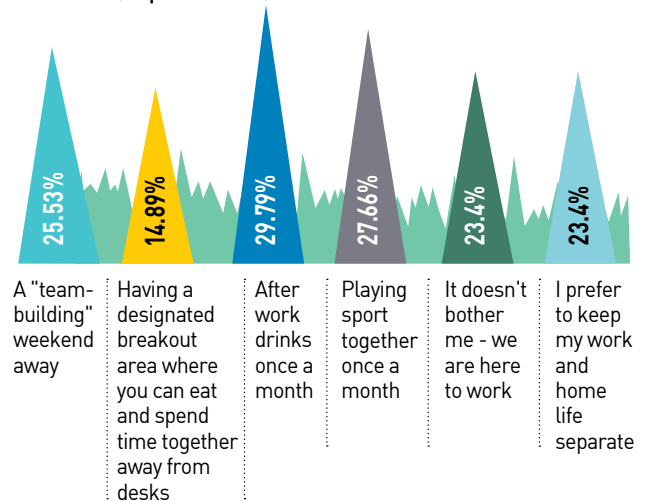
## WHICH IS MORE IMPORTANT TO YOU AT WORK?



## HOW DOES HAVING A "WORK BEST FRIEND" IMPACT YOUR JOB? (Pick Up To 3 Options)

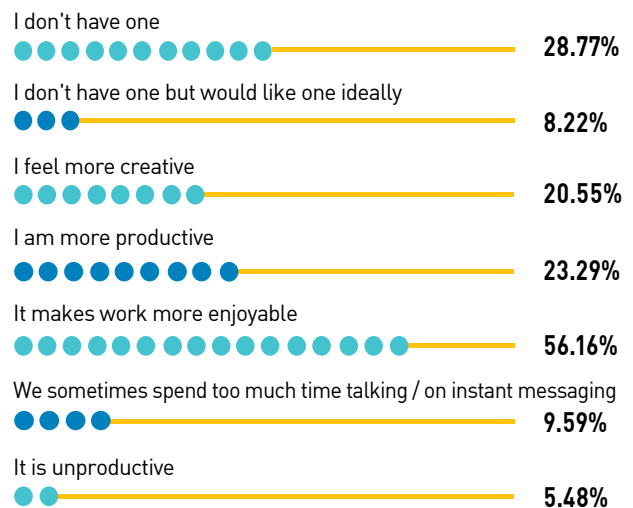


## WHAT WOULD BE YOUR PREFERRED METHOD OF IMPROVING WORKER RELATIONSHIPS IN THE OFFICE? (Top 2 choices)



## FOR THOSE WHO CHOSE HAPPINESS

### HOW DOES HAVING A "WORK BEST FRIEND" IMPACT YOUR JOB? (Pick Up To 3 Options)



Source: Friends in the Workplace Survey by Wildgoose



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NEWSMAKER OF THE MONTH

# Kalyan Krishnamurthy Behind Flipkart's volte face



QUICK READS

Apart from overseeing the finance function, he will now supervise the Human Resource department, while other prominent teams at Flipkart including category design management as well as private labels, customer shopping, and marketing, will continue to report to him directly

**T**his is the man who rescued the sinking ship. In Flipkart's saga, he is the turnaround man — Kalyan Krishnamurthy, the Chief Executive Officer of Flipkart, who has now taken over the human resource department of the company. Today, Kalyan Krishnamurthy is considered as the doyan of the corporate world.

Kalyan Krishnamurthy, a two time MBA from University of Illinois and the Asian Institute of Management, joined Procter and Gamble in the Supply Chain Finance section after which he had a successful stint at eBay for 6 years in various capacities. But it was in 2011 that Tiger Global Management, an investment firm based out of New York hired him and sent him to Flipkart at the position of Head – Category Design in 2016. And as fate would have it, he eventually became the CEO of Flipkart. All through, Krishnamurthy has been involved

with Flipkart's matters as a prominent investor and an officeholder. But this time, he is in charge of a much wider role. Apart from overseeing the finance function, he will now supervise the Human Resource department, while other prominent teams at Flipkart including category design management as well as private labels, customer shopping, and marketing, will continue to report to him directly. The move to put the Human Resources function under the purview of Krishnamurthy comes at a time when the company is looking at issues pertaining to talent acquisition, retention and contouring of different functions in the backdrop of its integration with Ebay, and being in talks with Jasper Infotech, the owner of online marketplace Snapdeal, along with pressures of the impending acquisition, including redistribution of the team and a round of funding from SoftBank. 

# APPOINTMENTS



## INDIAN OIL CORPORATION APPOINTS SANJIV SINGH AS CHAIRMAN

Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) has appointed Sanjiv Singh as the new Chairman of the company. Prior to this appointment, Singh was a Director of Refineries at IOCL.



## RAMCO SYSTEMS APPOINTS PR VENKETRAMA RAJA AS CHAIRMAN

Ramco Systems appointed PR Venketrama Raja as its new chairman. He would be heading the company's board of directors, said Ramco Systems.



## SHRM APPOINTS JOHNNY TAYLOR AS CEO

SHRM has appointed Johnny C. Taylor, an attorney and credentialed HR practitioner as SHRM's seventh president and CEO. Since 2010, Taylor has been the President & CEO of the Thurgood Marshall College Fund.



## JET AIRWAYS APPOINTS VINAY DUBE AS CEO

Jet Airways has appointed Vinay Dube as the company's Chief Executive Officer. Prior to Jet, Dube was the Senior Vice President - Asia Pacific at the Delta Airlines, where he helped the airline profitably expand its Asia-Pacific business.



## PRASAR BHARATI APPOINTS SHASHI SHEKAR VEMPATI AS CEO

Prasar Bharati has appointed former Infosys executive Shashi Shekar Vempati as Chief Executive Officer. Vempati is an alumnus of IIT Bombay and has over two decades of experience as a technocrat with specialization in areas of corporate management and digital media.



## ADECCO GROUP INDIA APPOINTS MARCO VALSECCI AS INDIA CFO

The Adecco Group India has appointed Marco Valsecchi as Chief Financial Officer for the India market. Prior to joining Adecco, Marco served as the Managing Director for Punkt in Lugano, Switzerland and comes with 20+ years of experience in finance and investment.



## URBAN LADDER APPOINTS JAIPAL SINGAL AS CFO

Urban Ladder, the online furniture retailer, has appointed Jaipal Singal as its Chief Financial Officer. Singal has 14 years of experience in working for retail brands such as M&S, Mahindra Retail and Arvind Lifestyle.



## METLIFE APPOINTS SUSAN PODLOGAR AS CHRO

Metlife Inc. has appointed Susan Podlogar as Executive Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer. She will be a member of the company's Executive Group and will report to Chairman, President, and CEO Steven A. Kandarian. Susan is currently working as Vice-President Human Resources at Johnson & Johnson.



## BAJAJ FINANCE APPOINTS SUBEER BAKSHI AS HEAD - HR EXCELLENCE

Bajaj Finance has appointed Subeer Bakshi as the Head of HR Excellence. In this newly created role, he would help to build next generation HR Capabilities across the employee life cycle. Subeer's special focus would be on HR Effectiveness and Analytics, working with Deepak Reddy who heads HR for Bajaj Finserv.



## MYNTRA APPOINTS JEYANDRAN VENUGOPAL AS CTO

Myntra, an Indian fashion e-commerce marketplace has appointed Jeyandran Venugopal as its Chief Technology Officer. Venugopal has over 18 years of experience and has worked with Snapdeal as a technology advisor and was a part of the executive leadership team at Yahoo R&D division.



## HINDUSTAN COCA-COLA APPOINTS SEEMA NAIR AS ED - HR

Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages has appointed Seema Nair as Executive Director, HR. Nair will lead the HR function of the company in India, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh. Prior to this appointment, Nair worked for Cisco, Intel Corporation, Microland Group and Crompton Greaves.



## OMIDYAR NETWORK APPOINTS SAURABH NIGAM AS VP HUMAN CAPITAL

Omidyar Networks, an investment firm, has appointed Saurabh Nigam, the former Snapdeal HR Head, as Vice President - Human Capital. Prior to Snapdeal, he led the human resources efforts for Beroe Inc for four years, and has also worked with the Aditya Birla Group.



## PAYTM APPOINTS AMIT SINHA AS COO

Paytm has appointed Amit Sinha as its new Chief Operating Officer. Prior to this appointment, Amit Sinha was the Senior Vice President of Business at One97 Communications and looked after HR and financial processes of the company since 2008.



## TWITTER APPOINTS EMILY HORNE AS ITS NEW COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

Twitter has appointed Emily Horne as its new Communications Director. Previously, Horne served as the Assistant Press Secretary and Director of Strategic Communications, for the National Security Council and was the spokesperson for the White House.

# The NDA Report-Card

## - Has the needle moved at all?



From promises to commitments, policy formulations to real solutions – in the three years that Modi has been in office, we assess how his government has fared in skilling people and creating jobs

By Manav Seth

**T**hat Narendra Damodardas Modi is an able and effective leader is a fact that even the stringiest critics cannot deny. The 14th Prime Minister of the nation has captured the imagination of a vast majority of the population, and has an effective communications strategy in place which is an undeniable fact. The man has a gift for getting what he wants, as electoral victories in states and local elections have not halted despite implementing the single most economically disruptive step (of demonetization) in recent times. His achievements and short-comings are likely to be discussed feverishly in the next two years, and possibly for the next several years or decades perhaps. While several volumes of books can be (and have been)

written about his performance on the economic, political, diplomatic, social and environment front, the scope of this article is restricted to evaluating two high-stakes fields: skilling and job creation. And despite all the accolades he has won, even his ardent followers cannot claim that these two areas have been significantly been calibrated.

### **Skill India: An experiment gone awry**

While launching the 'Skill India' mission in July 2015, the Prime Minister announced that the goal was to skill 400 million people by 2022. The National Skill Development Mission, and the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vika Yojana (PMKVY) were launched with impressive visions and targets. However, two years later, no major break-through has occurred. As a matter of fact, a committee, constituted by the government itself, has noted severe functional discrepancies in the entire exercise. The Committee headed by Sharada Prasad presented a report "Report of the Committee for Rationalization & Optimization of the Functioning of the Sector Skill Councils" which was made public in April this year. The report revealed

that lofty “skilling targets and subsidization has created a system that is not demand-driven in terms of skills needed by their respective industry nor is it high-quality education that is likely to land them a job.” Regarding Skill Sector Councils (SSCs), autonomous industry-led entities responsible for skill-gap studies, curriculum development, training of trainers, trainee assessment, the report says, “Most of the SSCs in their quest to achieve the targets, compromised in quality of training, assessment and certification leading to the current situation of mess”.

Furthermore, the biggest drawback of the previous governments’ interventions hasn’t been rectified: different stakeholders, ministries, departments and organizations are working towards the same goal of skilling people, but have minimal coordination. Among the quality and duration of courses on offer; mismanagement of funds, inefficient methodologies to measure the skill level of trainees, questions are also being raised on how many people are actually placed with jobs as a result of the training imparted by the government. The Prasad Committee report reveals that, “out of 18.03 lakh persons trained under PMKVY in 2015-16, only 12.4 percent persons were placed.” The fact that the panel has called various councils a “hotbed of crony capitalism”, with many SSCs trying to “extract maximum benefit” from public funds, is indicative of how grave the challenges are. Jayant Krishna, Chief Operation Officer of the National Skills Development Corporation, stated in an interview to *The Wire* that schemes had glitches and inadequacies, yet course correction is already underway. However, he also admitted that skilling 400 million people by 2022 was a ‘daunting task’ in the same interview, considering that only 5 percent of the 480 million workforce is formally skilled. Last month, NSDC is said to have initiated a dialogue with the government to review the 2022 target to make it more ‘realistic’.

### Job Creation: Is it at the new low?

It is estimated that some 12-13 million people join the workforce every year in India. While campaigning for the 2014 election, Modi had promised to create one crore jobs, and taken shots at the ‘jobless growth’ during the previous UPA regime. However, if numbers are anything to go by, the NDA government is faring much worse. After peaking to an all-time high of 9.5 lakh new jobs per year between 2009 and 2011, job creation has seen a steady fall. After increasing in 2014, creation of new jobs has progressively nose-dived. Between 2015 and 2016, the average has dipped to less than 2 lakh jobs per year. During the second quarter of 2016, this number dipped to a new low of 77,000, as per the information by Labour Bureau.

As per a report in *The Hindu*, when job creation dipped to 1.5 lakh in textiles, metal, leather, gems and jewelry, IT and BPO, transport, automobiles

and handlooms; the alarm bells rang, and the government sought a review in the methodology of data collection. As a result, education, health and restaurants were added to the list. An HDFC Bank jobs report in 2016 said that India’s employment elasticity was 0.39 fifteen years ago, and it stands at 0.15 now, which means the rate of job creation has more than halved. In other words, jobless growth is very much a reality. Add to that the blow that demonetization must have had to employment the informal sector.


The recent turbulence that has hit the IT sector, the \$150-billion worth crown jewel of the services industry means that things aren’t likely to improve anytime soon. With slipping growth, new skill requirement, and tough global policies, talks of lay-offs and salary cuts have become all too common. If the industry that employs over four million people is in deep trouble, the impact is bound to be profound.

### The Road Ahead

No matter how well the government has done on other accounts, skilling the huge workable popula-

**After marginally increasing in 2014, job creation has progressively nose-dived. Between 2015 and 2016, the average has dipped to less than 2 lakh jobs in one year**

tion of the country and providing them with jobs remains a fundamental challenge. There needs to be a systematic, strategic and comprehensive overhaul of skilling interventions to ensure that they achieve the objectives. The government knows what doesn’t work; hence, needs to control the damage. Furthermore, ensuring the overall health of the economy is essential for the sectors to keep growing and assimilating more people. However, that is not all. The government needs to ramp up its efforts to attract foreign investment, allow private players to expand their facilities and form a channel that effectively builds a pipeline of skilled talent.

A population wherein a majority is unskilled and unemployed can tip the scales anytime; and that is a challenge that the government needs to consider credibly. The government is known for being opportunistic, creative and taking risks; it should extend the same qualities to its skilling and employment interventions. 

### References

*Prasad Committee Report: <http://msde.gov.in/report-ssc.html>*

# From research to job search – Google makes it easy



Google's recent initiative "Google for Jobs" aims to make it all easy for job seekers to search for jobs – A look into what this tool is about

By Ridhi Chugh

**F**or a technology giant that organizes the world's information and makes it accessible to people, it is not surprising that it will now also make it easy for job seekers to search for jobs. Google has launched Google for Jobs, an initiative which would not just be listing the jobs for the white collar workers, but would sort through job listings and optimize matching job opportunities with candidates. This initiative is a combination of Google's ongoing developments in the field of Artificial Intelligence and its established search engine capabilities, and seems to be a celebration for the job seekers world over.


Google CEO Sundar Pichai at Google's developer conference mentioned that "46 percent of US employers face talent shortages and have issues filling open job positions. While job seekers may be looking for openings right next door – there's a big disconnect here... We want to better connect employers and job seekers through a new initiative, Google for Jobs." Last November, Google had announced jobs Application Programming Interface, and when Google started working on it, they realized that people often search for jobs on Google but they type in different terms referring to the same job role. It then started the work with its

It is speculated that in addition to the new Google for Jobs, the company is also experimenting with an ATS-type of application for employers called Google Hire

partners including Monster, Glassdoor, Career-Builder and LinkedIn to understand more about what exactly people are looking for. The API is capable of recognizing which of the terms refer to the same job profiles and clusters them together, which will make job search far more efficient.

But what is extremely interesting is that 'Google for Jobs' is a moniker which was previously being used by Indeed, the largest aggregator of jobs currently in the world. This is also being seen as a direct hit for Indeed which would likely be the most affected by this move. As reported in this analysis, there have been complains by employers worldwide about Indeed's job listing being ranked higher on the Google search page than the one on their own career pages, and in all probability, Google would leverage its existing search capabilities to bring more visibility to the original job postings on its website.

For now, Google would be sourcing job postings from its partners, but it is extremely likely that it would also tie up with the employers directly in the long run for postings on its search engine. But what truly puts Google in an advantageous position is that unlike other job portals for whom getting jobs posted on their websites is a task and job postings are their major source of revenue, Google does not need people to post on its network, rather, the information is readily available, and all it needs is to index it according to the relevance to the user and probably the urgency of the employer. The users will also have the option to apply to jobs directly from the search tool.

In the future, it would not be surprising if Google provides a host of services to both job seekers and the employers. In fact, it is speculated that in addition to the new Google for Jobs, the company is also experimenting with an ATS-type of application for employers called Google Hire. 



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MONODIP CHAUDHURI



# Maternity kicks: Laboring to score an “own goal”

An ill-considered attempt to help a cause can convert the best intentions into an “own goal” with potentially disastrous ramifications. The recent amendment to the Maternity Benefit Act is a perfect example

**W**hen the recent amendment to the Maternity Benefit Act 1961 became law, Women and Child Development Minister Mrs. Maneka Gandhi proudly claimed, “We have made history.” It is debatable whether this is the kind of history we need. This refers to a clause in the Amendment which raises the period of maternity leave from 12 to 26 weeks with another month added for complications. The additional month makes sense; the 26 weeks does not.

As a nation, we have little to be proud of when it comes to our legacy of treating women in years gone by. Among other things, we had left the matter of women’s education untouched. Our grandmothers somehow learnt to write their names in the vernacular and that was it. None other than the great Swami Vivekananda, after his first visit to America and Europe, admonished us about this and proclaimed that without women’s upliftment no society can prosper. Let it

be said that we have certainly improved since our independence. The best colleges and institutions have produced outstanding women and they have more than held their own in the workplace in a hitherto totally male-dominated society. In HR, we have seen employers shift from point blank refusal to reluctant acceptance of women employees, and that reluctance is waning as returns are becoming apparent. With this enactment, it is very likely that we will be going back to square one. This time the reluctance is no longer prejudicial but eminently practical. It promises to get worse in days to come.

This time around, as just mentioned, the reluctance will not stem from a mental block. We must remember that an employer is not a social crusader. He runs a business and he owes it to his stakeholders to run it well, with optimum efficiency and cost effectiveness. Asking him to try out a woman employee with the knowledge that she may get married, have a family and be away from the workplace on paid leave for 26 weeks

As a nation, we have little to be proud of when it comes to our legacy of treating women in years gone by

twice over is going to be a very tough ask. Working from home and itinerant options do not always work out. Women already employed may benefit, but what about the future? Even those employed at present may well feel that their careers have taken a beating as they are quietly side-lined for promotions and greater responsibilities. The typical Indian solution to fix a problem is to allocate a quota. If that happens then meritocracy goes for a toss. Surely our objective must be a “fair” and not a “skewed” employment opportunity for women.

It is extremely difficult to fathom out logic for this particular clause in the amendment which



critically harms women's employability in the future. Is it a case of misplaced concern or knee-jerk populism?

The Hon'ble Minister has stated that this change will produce healthy children. Laudable thinking. However, when women of the future do not get jobs in an age where double income is a must and not a fad, it is debatable whether the health of children will derive benefit from tight-ened budgetary constraints at home. It is no secret that the job market is not growing sufficiently anywhere in the world including India and now with this legislation the employer will naturally look at the male species as a first choice, given the requirement to give prolonged leave to the other gender. The new generation of potential working women, growing up to be more educated, more mobile and more spirited, will be severely hit by this change.

**An employer is not a social crusader – asking him to try out a woman employee with the knowledge that she may get married, have a family and be away from the workplace on paid leave for 26 weeks twice over is going to be a very tough ask**


Moreover, we have, over the last 7 decades, moved away from a paternalistic society and it is increasingly understood that parenthood today is a joint responsibility. Paternity Leave is also talked about. In one fell swoop, this enactment brutally shifts the onus of child rearing straight back onto the lap of the mother alone. Is this desirable? Arguably not.

In going back to the figure of 26, one cannot but wonder how this came about. Let it be said that nobody would suggest that this is an arbitrary figure but the logic needs to be understood. The International Labour Organization has recommended 14 and we were only two short. How the number 26 was arrived at is baffling. Given that half of 52 weeks in a year is 26, was it a case of divide and rule or a play of divisive forces? It is pointless to argue that one or two countries are even more liberal. They do not have our legacy of keeping women away from the workplace with the

sole responsibility of minding hearth and home. We were just coming out of this legacy and now this! I am reluctant to give too much credit to the social awareness of our elected representatives since I have been given to understand only about 53 MPs including 11 women were in the Lok Sabha when this Bill was being discussed. One may feel justified in wondering how many would have been present if some scam was under the spotlight.

All in all, it needs reiteration that whenever such measures are contemplated, a hard look is



necessary at all the future ramifications. Nations are not run by lofty intentions and ideals alone. Ground realities, past legacies and future pitfalls must be considered. It is not intended to infer that the powers that be did not have the common good in mind, but as mentioned in the very first line, the result may well be that we have scored an own-goal. Worse still, an immediate rectification is not likely to be politically feasible. By the time it may be, alas, the damage would have been done. 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**MONODIP CHAUDHURI** is the Founder of Acumen Associates Inc, HR/IR Consultants with 4 decades of leadership experience in ITC Ltd, Shaw Wallace and Exide Industries Ltd.

 [monodipchaudhuri13@gmail.com](mailto:monodipchaudhuri13@gmail.com)

Q &amp; A

# MICROSOFT'S TECHNOLOGY EVANGELIST - NORM JUDAH

In an exclusive interaction with People Matters, **NORM JUDAH**, Microsoft's Chief Technology Officer of Services shares his outlook and insights on the role of HR in capability building, the role of the CTO, delivering solutions, disruptive technologies and skillsets for the future

By **Ester Martinez & Suparna Chawla Bhasin**

**N**orm Judah, Chief Technology Officer of Microsoft Services holds a Masters of Applied Science from the University of Toronto and a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from the University of Witwatersrand. In this exchange of thoughts, he discusses the fundamentals of the disruptive organizational changes at Microsoft and how it is building its people and changing lives with innovative technology.

**Q As an outsider to the HR function but also as an insider to the business as a business leader, what do you think is the future of HR?**

**A** It is incredibly interesting for me just to watch and see the rate of change of the people function and what they are doing. I have spent a lot of my time talking to people internally and externally about the function. Organizations are realizing that they can actually get much more out of their people, and when it comes to people productivity, the key sponsor should be the HR head. And so when we talk about HR function holistically, it has to be an active player in its own change, because they are themselves their own customers.

I have spent a fair amount of time on building capability and readiness, and I think the overall behavior of the people with you, the injection of new talent and diverse opinion and views can change the way people work or integrate. The introduction of different technologies and skillsets is a big part of the partnership that exists between technical leadership and people leadership — these can't be separate anymore. This is happening within Microsoft and with customers we are touching across the world. In many countries, whether emerging economies or bigger economies, this question is arising constantly up the roll — Is HR being able to redefine themselves and actually be a part of it too? This is an interesting aspect because on the one hand, they are managing their own change while on the other they are helping orchestrate changes too.

**Q The office of a CTO is a crucial one for any organization - but especially in an organization that has redefined what technology means to us today. Tell us a bit about your journey to your current role.**

**A** I have been in Microsoft for almost 27 years and I have had multiple careers. As far as the role of a CTO is concerned, I actually synthesize this role down to 3 core pillars: technical strategy (deciding which technology to use and when; and how you convert innovation to action), quality (doing it correctly) and people (how you grow technical people and technical leadership, in particular). When you combine strategy with quality, it leads down to how you build community, knowledge and readiness, and how you deliver this in a global organization in multiple languages to enable people around the world to collaborate and share. So readiness and community are tied together and have a co-dependent relationship. And it's not about what you know, but what a group of people know.

**Q With respect to the three pillars you talked about — strategy, quality and people, how do you define your role and take decisions?**

**A** The role of the CTO is part technologist, part evangelist (bringing people with you), and part “external evangelist” (meeting with customers, presenting to them and listening to them too). And so this combination is what really defines the role. An element of it is wisdom, which is the ability to see things. I have the best job as I sit between engineering and customer and not between technology and solution. The wonderful part of that is gluing technology together to deliver amazing solutions. And so being able to not only show things that work but to be able to demonstrate them — it is an evangelist role but also a development role in terms of bringing people with you along with enabling others.

For decisions, there are multiple input sources of influence. In our case as a provider, some of them are based on engineering and some on research. Many of the things that you see today with AI, virtual or augmented reality or Cloud have come out of the research environment. Internally, I am checking input sources and influences from both engineering and research. Externally, there is a

## When you combine strategy with quality, it leads down to how you build community, knowledge and readiness, and how you deliver this to enable people around the world to collaborate and share

huge customer influence part and some of it is what customers are doing and some of it they are asking. The combination of those two is also very important.

However, the magic lies in synthesis. It's the ability to look at the sources together and make magic, and that's the capability we try to grow. Whether you are a CTO or an architect, it's the ability to look at internal or external influences and sources that enable you to execute the job you are trying to do. And there's a lot of internal, external and in-between collaboration that happens while doing this.

**Q How do you see the function of the CTO evolving?**

**A** I love the energy that comes from change. And it is an inherent part of this role. In commercial companies, a part of what the CTO works on is deciding on the best thing to take, which translates into “Where am I going to take the company forward?” But given the rate of change today, the question also is “Do you take a financial lens for making decisions?”, which is that every time you make a decision, you also need to take a financial decision, not only a technical one.

And how you manage this role should be as if you are managing a portfolio of mutual funds.

My perspective, as a CTO is that if you are not building things or not experimenting and understanding, you are essentially using your own inherent capabilities and outsourcing that. Today, most companies are insourcing it, because such decisions are fundamental to the transformation of businesses. The CTO has a big role to play in that. And I think the wonderful opportunity they have is to play that role.

**Q Can you throw some light on how organizations can make decisions that are transformational for their business models?**

**A** One of the things that many people are investing today in the scope of Artificial Intelligence is bots.

## The role of a CTO is part technologist, part evangelist (bringing people with you), and part “external evangelist” (meeting with customers, presenting to them and listening to them too)

There’s a common view of what a bot is and what an artificial agent or an intelligent agent is. One of the ways of doing this is to actually experiment with it. You can experiment with a bot in a call center. Microsoft is doing work with a bank in Latin America that is actually looking at how they can relieve the load in their call center for simple calls related to balance, transactions etc. so that they can create capacity in the call center to do more complex things. You can experiment and you can move with that in an incredibly agile way to get an understanding.

Let’s take another example, of a retail company that has a website and a physical store. What you could do using a bot is actually connect those two environments (the website and the physical store); you can use the bot as an immigration point between the virtual and the physical. For example, when you are considering to buy a television set, you can do the homework online and can go to the store to buy it without the sales associate knowing as to what you have been looking for. But if those two environments can be connected, when you go in to the store, the store associate via a connection will know who you are, and what you have been looking for and they can sell it to you. So the goal is selling more in a short amount of time.

Such are the places where you could actually experiment today. Instead of waiting for the absolute big thing, you can use real world problems to understand technology, rather than doing it in a lab and not really understanding.

**Q So what’s stopping organizations to experiment more?**

**A** I think it comes down to giving the time and energy to actually encourage experimentation. Part of this is the fear of deciding right. People usually struggle to decide “the one” rather than experimenting. What I find in my conversations with the technical leadership and also business leadership is that at times, business leadership or people can push the agenda to a certain extent, but it actually comes from initiative and being inquisitive. There is a need for agility in experimentation because technology is evolving quickly. One of the conversations we are having is how to innovate — as a provider of technology or a consumer of technology. We are seeing organizations setting up innovation labs/centers that are places for people to innovate. This is an enabling idea of innovation in an agile way.

**Q You mentioned synthesis for making magic. Tell us how prevalent this is in the business environment today?**

**A** From a business perspective, the magic is in being able to connect the dots. I will give you an example. A retail company was redoing its stores and was trying to understand the customer sentiment. They installed devices with smiley faces, and frowning faces and what they asked the customers to do was to press those buttons according to how they felt. But what they could do instead is use the security cameras and recognize the customer sentiment by looking at the video footage of people who come in the store. And more than that, you can recognize the demographics. You can actually build a demographic model in an anonymous way that can give you richer information than just somebody pressing a smiley face button or not. That for me is a simple example of taking two random things and being able to connect them together. So in technology or business, connecting those dots is important.

**Q What’s your opinion on what would be the most disruptive technologies of the future and what kind of bets are you taking?**

**A** Six years back, I was asked in an interview, “What do you think about the Cloud?” And at that time, people were questioning the Cloud. Today, people are asking ‘if’ and ‘when’. But in five years, the conversation will be ‘how’ and ‘why’. Today, the number of people who are moving to the Cloud is more than what most people expected. I will say the same thing about Artificial Intelligence. A lot of people are investigating it but the reality is that the conversations about AI are about “Whether I should use it or not?” In five years, the conversation will be “How do I use AI and how it has changed the business?” I think that AI, broadly, is going to be one of those massive bets that will be durable.

One of the other places where we are seeing a lot of investment today is in Augmented Reality (AR) and AR is really changing the way people are interacting with systems. We spent the last forty years teaching people how to use computers, and

Augmented Reality will change that as computers will now suddenly understand people; this means that the relationship that people have with systems either as a consumer or a part of the supply chain will change dramatically. It's no longer the computer but the system that a person interacts with. So there are a number of bets like that.

**Q You mentioned that the relation between humans and systems will change. How do you think this will manifest?**

**A** If you take a slightly medium term view, as an individual, a lot of work that I am doing relates to finding information, collaborating with people, and getting things done. Today, I have to be knowledgeable about how to do them, how to find things, how to switch, and all the way to getting things done — the actual task completion. I feel that the interaction of people and systems in the future, a large part will be through an intelligent agent, who will know you and your preferences, who will help you in getting things done in different ways. But there's an interesting break point to this, and it will happen when the agent changes from becoming advisory to doing things itself. That subtle change will happen at some point, but it will be in your control to decide when you are comfortable switching from that advisory mode to a closed feedback loop. What it means is that your interaction with the system won't be through 150 apps that are sitting on your phone, but it would be through an agent. But there is an interesting consequence to this, which is that as a company, as an entity that deals with customers and consumers, the agent reflects the brand of the company much like a website that reflects the brand of the company — it is a deep integration of who you are as a business. That's going to happen to the agents as well; your agent will become a reflection of your business. The interaction that you have with the system will be a part of a collaboration that will come through the agent in some way. So you will see a lot more of it.

**Q You mentioned that the systems will become an additional source for us to get work done. How do you see the future of workplace and employment?**

**A** I think that different people will do different things. In every lifetime we have multiple careers, I've probably have had two or three, and in my view, what makes me successful is operating within the environment that I operate in, building an incredible network and connecting with people. The other side of it is the environment where there are people who like change, take risks and enjoy the excitement and the ability to grow in different ways. There will be people who will be very successful in one environment and people who will be very successful in the other. What is wonderful about this is the connection; the systems know the provider and the suppliers' contexts, and the ability to match those two things can become sophisticated. Finding people and information will accelerate dramatically, and that's the part I like.

**Q What is your opinion on the advancements in technology affecting areas like privacy and security?**

**A** I think the essence of it is trust — to me, my company and the systems and people I deal with and how they deal with my information. Do I know what they are doing with my information? Where they are storing or sharing my information? — Trust becomes the essence of all of this. If my data is valuable and I get value out of it, then I might agree to you sharing it. People need to understand that it is their data and they own it, how that data gets established, the privacy and trust of where it goes, I think that will differentiate how we deal with this problem. But I think there is an incredible value in the ability of a system to help you collaborate and communicate; and people will place that value against the value of their data and context. My context is my context and I should be accountable for how it's being used; and it only comes with trust.

**Q If you were to build a team for the future, what would be your strategy for recruiting talent and what skillsets would you recommend for the future?**

**A** Internally, from a Microsoft view, we are a global company with a global presence. We deal with small and large customers all around the world and across

## The relationship that people have with systems either as a consumer or a part of the supply chain will change dramatically

multiple industries and so, we are very interested in actually being represented where our customers are. The other thought is injecting people at different layers of experience, from industry experienced to university hires. Having a diverse view is important. And it is related to the role of HR. This requires the HR team to become more analytical and use the information and integrate it with external information for identifying and matching patterns or anti-patterns. Growth of any company will be in the ability to attract and retain interesting people doing interesting work.

The real question today is around what students at high school or university level should be learning so that they are employable in ten or fifteen years' time. I think that the essence of that is going to be in the core elements of data, understanding schema, models and systems, reviewing supply chain, medical etc. and understanding the way systems work. It's not a single specific skill but broad systemic thinking, and a definite core capability of data, as well as understanding information because that's going to be present in everything we do. **EM**

VISTY BANAJI



# The Attrition Advantage Use - Don't Shoot - the Messenger

Voluntary attrition is not just valuable as an indicator that the organization's health is stressed but it can yield substantive benefits too

THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED

It's been a long time since I heard this fable by Aesop (when people didn't think it was a misspelt Employee Stock Option Plan), so I may have a few details wrong. There was a stag called Techmajor who stood admiring himself in the pool of public perception. He was the proudest of his antlers, one of which he named 'foreign' and the other he named 'postings'. But he was ashamed of his four legs which he derisively called Vo, La, Tree and Shun. He went to Dr. Comp, an orthopedic surgeon, and paid lots of money to get his legs cut shorter. One day a lion called Business Downturn (no more names, I promise) started chasing Techmajor. He ran as fast as his now shortened legs could carry him. Unfortunately, his antlers got caught in a trump tree (well, just one more) and he became lion protein.

The point is not to glorify voluntary attrition and never seek to curb it. But if it is simply suppressed before mature people managing processes are in place, artificially lowered attrition can make the organization's health worse instead of better. As we shall see, during this phase of immature people systems, letting attrition continue may not be such a bad idea after all.

## Attrition is the Symptom - Not the Disease

A harried business leader in a start-up asks the CHRO to do something about the very high levels of attrition. So far so good. A sound CHRO will already have worked out an HR strategy which plans on putting a series of foundational and then increasingly sophisticated people processes and practices into place. If she has carried the

CEO and Business Partners with her in formulating the strategy, it should be possible to explain at what stage these processes will have enough traction to retain and engage an increasing proportion of high performers. These will take time. When the CEO demands immediate solutions, some CHROs are only too eager to present quick-fixes. A classic one being a demand for higher staff compensation. Not only does this put the ball neatly back in the CEO's court but the enhancement will ultimately raise CHRO's pay-boat as well! Even if such fixes work temporarily, they have not tackled the root causes of attrition. It is like treating typhoid with Aspirin.

In fact, voluntary attrition is not just valuable as an indicator that the organization's health is stressed. Given below are some examples of the more substantive benefits it can yield as well.

## Restructuring With Minimum Distress and Cost

Organizations at the stage of evolution where their people practices do not provide adequate adhesion for talent are also likely

Organizations that operate a meritocratic culture need to be prepared for the fallout when their top talent competes strenuously for positions of leadership



to have fluctuating workforce requirements or lack the predictive ability to avoid downsizings and layoffs. In such situations, attrition provides the least expensive means of 'bringing down the headcount' and, the higher the attrition, the quicker the process.

Clearly this does require an investment in training some people before deploying them to new roles but this is generally more economical than redundancy payouts and invariably less damaging to morale. It may be objected that such deployments don't always place people with the right aptitude for the roles they are to occupy. In reality, I have found people frequently discovering the right aptitudes in themselves when the alternative is redundancy.

### Stopping Second-best Suppuration

Organizations that operate a meritocratic culture need to be prepared for the fallout when their top talent competes strenuously for positions of leadership. Sound selection programs don't stop only at identifying the best but go on to counsel and place the 'just missers' into other challenging roles. Organizations that have not yet developed such comprehensive selection solutions risk repeated disruption because it is the almost-as-good contender who can spread the worst disaffection and cynicism. As Exeter points out (in Shakespeare's Henry VI):

*"When Envy breeds unkind division:  
There comes the ruin, there begins  
confusion."*

Far better, in such situations, for the ones who don't make the cut to find careers elsewhere than that golden handcuffs and other attrition alleviators shackle them to the enterprise while they are still smarting from their loss.

### Market-managing Careers

Even long-established, people-friendly enterprises are hard pressed to establish robust talent management processes, where the organization's future needs for leaders is met while individuals can make career choices that best permit them to develop their potential. The plight of startups (and of other corporates that have not bothered to develop people processes much beyond recruitment and on-boarding) can well be imagined. In such situations, individuals can face frustration, stagnation and dissatisfaction even though the organization may be growing. Till these processes are satisfactorily implemented, it is preferable that discontented employees take their aspirations to other organizations which



are better equipped to fulfill them. In some cases, the same employees may come back with varied exposures, wanderlust satisfied and a true appreciation of what the organization they initially left has to offer.

There is a secondary benefit of departures in organizations where business growth has slowed (or where productivity gains are sufficient to mop it up). Opportunities for progression are created at the next lower level which may otherwise not arise for long periods, especially when the workforce is homogeneously aged.

### Preventing Disaffection from Coagulating

The above is only one instance of attrition taking festering disaffection out of the system before it can do much harm. In the absence of well-developed people processes, this is perhaps the most valuable service attrition provides. There is some similarity to an amputation saving a gangrenous limb from infecting the rest of the body except that here (in the case of voluntary attrition) the disaffected part excises itself. It is important, of course, to ensure that the best performers are still retained and only others take the exit option. This much is expected from HR even before more sustainable attrition reduction processes are in place.

One of the ways in which untreated unhappiness reveals itself is through unionization in employee categories that were so far immune from it. What is happening today in the tech space will immediately come to mind. While unionization in this sector owes its origin to far more egregious people management errors, most of these majors are still actively trying to buy retention, which actually aggravates the problems the current downturn in their business is causing.

Organizations that have not developed comprehensive selection solutions risk repeated disruption because it is the almost-as-good contender who can spread the worst disaffection and cynicism

### Sequence is the Key

It is worth reiterating that the argument we have been pursuing applies only to voluntary attrition. Forced attrition (or the sudden discovery of the precipice at the end of the bell curve) in fact adds to disgruntlement instead of relieving the pent up pressure.

It is equally important to note that this is not a call to give up the battle for retention. It's just that the battle must be fought with sustainable strategies which make a long-term difference to the attractiveness of the organization. In the meantime, attrition is preferable to bolting down unhappy people to stay through short-tem (usually monetary) fixes.

People of my generation will remember the Simon and Garfunkel favorite, 'Sounds of Silence'. I hope they will forgive me for tweaking its opening lyrics:

*Hello attrition, my old friend,  
I've come to visit you again.  
Because when the vision starts sleeping  
And people processes are only slowly creeping,  
It's not so bad if you still remain  
To relieve the strain,  
And restore a sense of balance. 🙏*

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**VISTY BANAJI** is the Founder and CEO of Banner Global Consulting (BGC)

MURAD SALMAN MIRZA



# The Dilemma of Decision-making

There is no doubt that astute decision-making is a difficult skill to master. A look at how organizations and leaders can realize the vulnerabilities & pitfalls for charting successful initiatives

**T**aking decisions is a natural consequence of being confronted with tantalizing situations and organizations are routinely expected to make sound judgments for ensuring the efficacy of their business practices, especially, to placate the key stakeholders. However, quite often, organizations are hampered by extenuating circumstances that impede timely and incisive decision-making leading to floundering in the business wilderness. This debilitating stagnancy is further exacerbated by the perplexing inability to effectively realize any decisions that are eventually taken. Let's take a brief look at some of the key aspects to appreciate the inherent complexities in the respective context.

## External Factors

These aspects have the capacity to adversely influence astute decision-making. They are generally harder to predict and planning an effective recourse is challenging due to the burdening presence of such uncontrollable factors. Examples include:

### • Political Considerations

Government policies tempered by the prevailing political climate can play a crucial role in shaping the decisions of organization since they can be progressive or stifling in nature, e.g., a high tax regime can force a business to shift operations abroad, although, that might not be the preferred option due to the damage caused to the local economy. Such a predicament has been faced by multiple companies in the developed world, e.g., US, UK, France, with accusations of innovative tax avoidance techniques, such as, Tax inversion<sup>1</sup> levied against prominent businesses. Another dynamic aspect is the wobbly relationship between the 'parent' country of an organization and the 'host' country, for e.g., the recent escalation of tensions between Japan and China over owner-



ship of uninhabited Senkaku islands<sup>2</sup> has led to curtailment of several Japanese businesses in China due to incidences of violent backlash.

### • Economic Uncertainty

Precarious economic conditions can also be a big headache for organizations trying to make sense of the prevailing circumstances to survive and/or thrive in a competitive business environment. Examples include, sourcing desired talent in a shrinking labor market, keeping business afloat in view of rising costs of critical production materials, staggering expansion plans due to fickle customer base, etc. A particularly tough challenge is to predict the cyclical nature of the overarching economic activity and trying to formulate robust business strategies that can withstand its fluctuating nature, especially, when global reverberations are involved, e.g., due to the symbiotic relationship between the major stock markets of the world.

### • Disruptive Technologies

The pace of growth has substantially increased with the arrival of the digital

Prevailing rules/regulations under a formal legal framework significantly impact decision-making, especially, in terms of employment, corporate governance, data protection and privacy concerns

age and the Internet proliferation has led to the emergence of new players that have embraced innovation and nimbleness at a much greater rate than the lumbering industry titans. This has been true in case of technology-intensive firms like Google, Facebook, Apple, Amazon, eBay, etc., that have created major disruptions within their associated/aligned sectors by radically changing the business paradigm. Being 'blindsided' by such astute competitors has increased the stakes for even previous trendsetters, e.g., Microsoft being famously late in embracing the 'mobile' realm and Wal-Mart struggling to develop an online retail presence to embrace the demands of the digital age. Additionally, the fear of becoming irrelevant or obsolete due to the emergence of revolutionary technologies adds another 'grey' area within the thought processes behind the envisaging of strategic imperatives for ensuring a viable 'going concern' status.

### • Legal Ramifications

Prevailing rules/regulations under a formal legal framework is another area that has a significant impact on decision-making, especially, in terms of employment, corporate governance, data protection and privacy concerns. One of the key challenges comes in the form of local labor laws that are sometimes overprotective in terms of securing better employment opportunities and safeguarding the citizens, due to which companies have to accommodate such stipulations within their own Talent Management policies and procedures, e.g., several GCC countries<sup>3</sup> have promulgated laws that focus on ensuring certain percentage of the workforce within corporate entities being locals who are given much better pay packages than their expat peers, such as, the 'Emiratization' program in UAE, the 'Omanization' program in Oman, the 'Saudization' program in Saudi Arabia, etc. Such measures tend to cloud the desired meritocracy that needs to be embedded within the Corporate Talent Management System to ensure organizational justice<sup>4</sup>. Consequently, relevant decisions become subservient to prevailing legal stipulations of doing business in a certain country which can create different standards of working within subsidiaries of the same MNC that are operating in different regions of the world.

### • Environmental Issues

The adverse impact of an organization's products and services on the environment has become a significant liability for competitive businesses, especially multinationals who are obliged to maintain a pristine reputation to sustain their global appeal and formulate decisions that are in congruence with such considerations. This has translated into review and refinement of internal business practices, often after a major disaster has occurred, which are frequently much more stringent than those required by several countries where such organizations tend to operate routinely. Examples include, the Bhopal gas leak in India<sup>5</sup>, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico<sup>6</sup>, the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster<sup>7</sup>, etc. Costs are a major issue in terms of the changes needed to comply with regulatory standards and companies often seek remedies that mitigate, rather than eliminate, the undesirable byproducts of their business, e.g., industries that utilize coal as a fuel have an inherent propensity for pollution and can only strive within a 'workable' margin to reduce the harmful impact before the bottom line starts hurting. Such industries are naturally caught in a dilemma when engaging in strategic business decisions.



**If the confidence of employees is not redeemed by an invigorating leadership then any attempt made to inculcate a profound sense of purpose to accomplish difficult challenges can become an exercise in futility**

### Internal Factors

These aspects have a penchant for debilitating sound decision-making and its effective implementation from inside the organization by aggravating simmering misgivings, deepening fractured relationships, fomenting a corrosive grapevine and exploiting systematic breakdowns between the various hierarchical levels within an organization. Examples include:

#### • Disjointed Leadership

Employees look to their leadership for vision, direction, role modeling and inspiration. However, if their confidence is not redeemed by an invigorating leadership then any attempt made to inculcate a profound sense of purpose to accomplish difficult challenges can become an exercise in futility. This is further exacerbated by any bungling in the prioritization of objectives that need to be achieved in order to ensure a steady progressive stride. Another aspect that creates confusion with respect to roles, responsibilities and authorities in the organization and exhausts meaningful endeavors for aiding timely and effective implementation of insightful decisions is the phenomenon of fad-surfing<sup>8</sup>. This erodes the confidence of employees in their leadership as the latter rides one

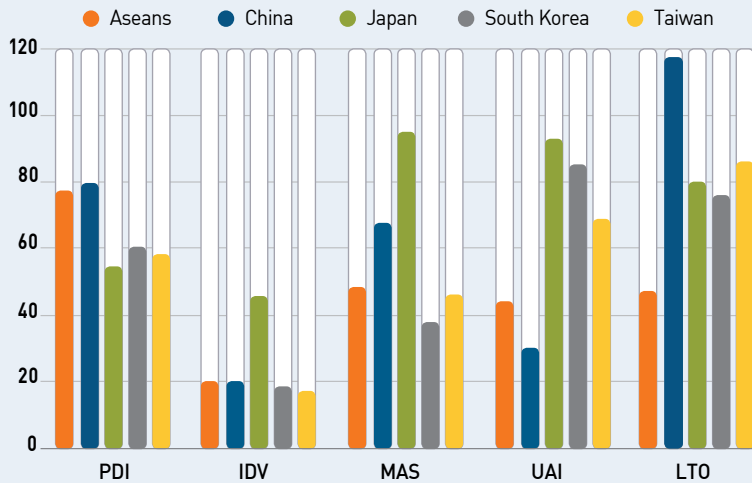
management trend after another hoping to achieve 'efficiency nirvana', while, leaving a trail of 'half-cooked' meals along the way to corporate wilderness.

#### • Inhospitable Organizational Structures

Organizations are vibrant entities that thrive on dynamic interactions. The extent to which these can be beneficial is largely determined by how organizations are structured. For example, highly centralized and bureaucratic setups are liable to have slower decision-making, proliferation of risk-averse attitudes and plethora of 'managers' donning the garb of leaders. This can be easily visualized by Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory<sup>9</sup>, e.g., in case of ASEAN and East Asian countries (next page).

The aforementioned aspects become even more pronounced in organizations that operate as Monopolies, Duopolies or Oligopolies. Such entities are generally lulled into a sense of complacency buoyed by a firm belief in their invincibility. However, they are prime candidates for a 'rude awakening' from disruptive competitors who can easily expose the frailties of their decision making processes as they scramble to maintain their relevance in the market.

## HOFSTEDE FIVE DIMENSIONS: ASEAN + EAST ASIA



Legend: PDI = Power Distance Index, IDV = Individualism, MAS = Masculinity, UAI = Uncertainty Avoidance Index, LTO = Long-Term Orientation

Source: <https://lnkd.in/fd46q7g>

## The remedy for avoiding brinkmanship with corporate disaster requires an honest self-appraisal and venturing into the 'dark alleys' of the organization to realize the sources of 'real discontent'

### • Systemic Process Deficiencies

Efficient business processes are the lifeblood of a well-functioning organization. Any impediments in the smooth flow of their associated activities can create bottlenecks that can hinder the achievement of desired strategic and operational goals. For example, any business initiative for introducing a new product/service needs harmonization of interactive processes complemented by synergistic collaboration of all functions at various hierarchies within the organization. Such decisions can be dreadfully delayed or unceremoniously laid to waste if there are no seamless handovers between the constituent elements of various associated activities. One of the related challenges is how the formulation/significance of such

initiatives is conveyed, understood and embraced by the various process owners at various rungs of the organization. Another aspect is the tantalizing expectations pertaining to corresponding reward and recognition that simmer below the surface of a laudable achievement. It is generally advisable for the leadership to be proactive in assessing, realizing and ensuring the robustness of their organization's business processes before embarking upon ambitious initiatives that can test the foundations of organizational cohesiveness for successful implementation.

### • Corrosive Organizational Politics

Trying to climb the corporate ladder can be an arduous and hazardous journey, especially, for the uninitiated ones in the art of organizational politics. This plays havoc with the ability of those entrusted with the responsibility of taking decisions that have profound impacts on the future of the organization. For example, a weak and insecure leader will hesitate to take a decision that can antagonize a sizeable segment of the employee population and/or powerful unions. He/she will instinctively seek a compromise with the powerful quarters which can result in diluting the goal of making the decision in the first place. Consequently, either the goal is not met or a general apathy descends on the workplace regarding any meaningful impact of leaders who are often caricatured as stooges of powerful interests. Organizational culture pervading in such a work environment is often corrosive and real talent is routinely brushed aside in favor of nepotistic practices. This mani-

festes in weak talent pipelines, futile succession planning and high attrition rates.

### • Disgruntled Middle Management

Middle management is the backbone of corporate entities. They have a finger on the pulse of the organization and are critical to the smooth operationalization of strategic imperatives. Any disturbance within their ranks, e.g., due to a fractured psychological contract, can send echoes of discontent throughout the organization and create major impediments for any progressive initiatives. This is complicated by the fact that most of such resentment is borne internally and is reflected through passive resistance which may not be even discernible to an apathetic leadership. On the other hand, companies with a major union presence are susceptible to industrial actions which have the capacity to derail any improvement/transformational exercise and significantly damage the employer brand. The first casualty with a peeved middle management is clear and honest communication that cedes control to a rampant grapevine that is almost impossible to control in the absence of vigorous confidence building measures.

### On Parting

There is no doubt that astute decision-making is a difficult skill to master even for leaders of prominent organizations. The stakes are dangerously raised if a lackadaisical attitude is adopted towards decisions and their implementation, especially, for those residing in a 'leadership bubble' and shielded by a team of sycophants. The remedy for avoiding brinkmanship with corporate disaster requires an honest self-appraisal and venturing into the 'dark alleys' of the organization to realize the sources of 'real discontent' and taking transparent, accommodative and prudent steps to alleviate organizational discord before embarking upon any improvement/transformational measures for achieving organizational excellence. Care to engage? 🙏

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### 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



# IMAGINE TECH COMPANIES WITHOUT NEXT GENERATION TALENT

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ABHIJIT BHADURI



# Sell your data and make a living!

If robots take away our jobs, will selling our own data be the next method by which we will make money?

*"I rob banks because that's where the money is."*

This was the answer that a bank robber Willie Sutton (1901-1980) gave when asked the question, "Why did you rob the bank?" Sutton reportedly made over \$2 million in the course of his many robberies and was on the Ten Most Wanted list of the FBI. He used to change his disguise every time. Sometimes he came dressed as a policeman, a window washer, a maintenance man or even a bank guard.

But that was in the analog world.

In the digital world, the likes of Willie Sutton have proliferated. They are called hackers or cybercriminals. The browser and not the bank is where we deposit the stuff that is more precious than money – our data.

## The age of Individualization

The analog world was all about mass production. It offered economies of scale. Choice was limited. We lived in a world of scarcity. Every house had the same brands. We watched the same television

channel, heard the same radio station. It was a black and white world. You either had what many others had or you didn't. The goods were the same; and people had to fit in.

The digital world is different in every way. It is an age of abundance. There are seven billion versions of every product or service – one for every person in the world. There are multiple ingredients offered and we pick what we like and create our own cocktail. Individuality is celebrated. Every member of the family is different. It is this celebration of the individual that is the foundation of the digital world. The only way the producers make money is when they are able to create their products for a market of one.

That is why data is so precious. It is basis of all individualization. That is where the money is. That is where the modern day Willie Sutton will be found.

## You are being watched - all the time!

When we install any software, it presents us with a legalese filled End User License Agreement. The Windows Operating System agreement has 5268 words. None of us really read it before we press "I agree" and get on with the task. Websites ask for your permission to install "cookies" to track your web surfing habits. Go to your phone settings and you will be shocked how many apps have access to your phone's camera, microphone and geo-location. All the permissions have been given by you. Hence, we have all agreed to being tracked.

Google is a company that sells the data it collects from all the "free" services like YouTube

Data is precious. It is basis of all individualization. That is where the money is. That is where the modern day Willie Sutton will be found



ABHIJIT BHADURI

(just one of its free services) where people watch a billion hours of videos every day. Data of a billion kilometers of navigation is collected through Google Maps. Google's search engine knows just what you looked for. 500 million users upload 1.2 billion photos every day on Google Photos. 800 million users upload 3 billion objects every week on Google Drive. When you connect the data that is generated through each of these services, an awful lot about you is known. This data can now be sold for targeted ads.

### Not just what to sell!

The Internet Service Provider (ISP) knows every site you visited and every page you looked at. So does your web browser. This can reveal everything from your political views to your sexual orientation. This can be used to personalize the ads that you watch. The ads act like nudges that will help companies sell us more stuff. But so can the governments.

The data we generate is then used to craft algorithms that can predict our next move. That is the basis of all the nudges we get as we shop. "Those who bought X also bought Y" is the algorithm trying to figure out your next move. The algorithms are always trying to second guess you — till the time you give up controls of your life to the algorithm.

It is not just what is being collected and sold to advertisers. Every time there is a data breach, your data lands up with someone you may not want to be associated with. Government backed hackers, underworld, terrorist organizations and much more land up grabbing a slice of your data without your knowledge.

### Make money by selling your own data

People donate their kidneys and get paid. Surrogate mothers get paid. Why don't we get paid in the new currency? — Our own data. Instead of giving it away for free, we can now take control over what data is being collected about us and how we can be paid for it. A new marketplace is springing up where you can profit from your own data.

In the UK, Citizenme collects your data and gives you a peek into how an advertiser will categorize you. Once you install the ad and connect your Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts, you will see the data that is generated by you and how the advertisers will use your profile. Then you can anonymize it and sell it. They become like your authorized agent for selling your data.

Their site says:

*Your data has value. Citizenme helps you exchange your personal data for cash rewards anonymously with businesses. Your data will only be used for research purposes. The best thing is you get paid cash instantly into your PayPal account. No minimum usage required.*



Instead of giving our data away for free, we can now take control over what data is being collected about us and how we can be paid for it — a new marketplace is springing up where you can profit from your own data

Datacoup is a similar service that claims

*It's about time you earned more than a 'free service' for your data. Datacoup is the only company that helps you sell your anonymous data for real, cold hard cash. It's simple. If you connect data, you'll earn.*

They want to be ones to sell the digital footprints you leave behind. They want to be your sole agents. If robots take away our jobs, will this be the next method by which we will make money? Maybe the world will be divided into two or three major players and we will decide which data market we wish to sign up for. Every time we surf, we will be depositing some cash in our bank account. That will be the new definition of work and pay. 🍷

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**ABHIJIT BHADURI** is a columnist and the author of the bestseller *The Digital Tsunami*. You can follow him on LinkedIn and Twitter @AbhijitBhaduri

# Agility of the HR will emerge as game-changer

In an interaction with People Matters, **Ankush Puri**, Business Head - India at Lee Hecht Harrison talked about the talent development trends and challenges, the impact of automation, and how HR will help organizations to tide through all such changes

By **Shalini Sengupta**

**A**nkush Puri is the Business Head at Lee Hecht Harrison – India. The organization offers talent mobility solutions throughout the entire employee lifecycle – from on-boarding, through career and leadership development, engagement and retention to redeployment and transition. Puri’s 18-years of experience maps almost the entire HR spectrum from organization development to performance and talent management, change management and leadership consulting. At LHH, his responsibilities include business profitability through effective client consulting and associate management. Apart from this, he is also an OD Consultant involved in driving Leadership Development and Executive Coaching Assignments nationally.

## Q What are the talent development trends in India?

**A** Talent Development in India is entering a new space. To a very large extent it gets defined by the following:

**Talent Demand Supply equation:** For e.g. the Trump effect will alter the demand supply equation for the IT industry and the focus of organizations will tilt from talent development to honing their talent acquisition practices or differences in terms of the competitiveness of a particular sector. Thus, talent development in protected sectors will be driven by the policies rather than business needs as compared to mediocre growth sectors where it would be an active function but not as aggressive as high growth sectors.

**Maturity and effectiveness of the education sector:** A country like India still faces a huge gap in terms of the requisite skill level and industry readiness of Talent. A major chunk of learning is still left to ‘on the job’.

**Employee age groups:** Sunrise sectors that thrive on innovation, purpose, speed and disruption may prefer to employ a younger work group as compared to the mature and stable industrial sectors. This yet again defines how each sector looks at Talent Development as it is defined by the needs and preferences of their Target talent group.

Technology is a powerful tool that is available to Human Resource Managers, waiting to be deployed meaningfully



While the above points necessitate the need for a differential treatment, there are some common threads that cut across these disparities like:

**Subjectivity to scientific frameworks:** Organizations are gradually moving towards scientific frameworks to breakdown job roles, identify and define desired behaviors and establish frameworks that help them structure a scientific approach to talent development.

**Data Analytics:** Organizations in India are increasingly resorting to establish correlations between talent dimensions and work place behavior, thus leading to the emergence of a new sub-sector i.e. HR analytics.

**Revisiting qualification:** Indian organizations are slowly moving out of the trap of perceiving qualification to be a reflection of competencies. On the contrary, many organizations are seeking support and successfully creating their own filter mechanisms to define and identify talent based on competencies, rather than using qualifications as a predictor of behavior.

**Challenging the stereotypes:** India is waking up to challenge stereotypical definitions like age, gender, geography, functional experience, industry exposure to tap into a latent potential talent base within and outside the organization and thus grow their talent reservoir multiple times.

**Enterprise:** Organizations are willing to experiment and try out disruptive techniques and formats to develop talent, though the techniques may seem not even remotely connected to the job of the employees.

**Evolution of HR:** Human Resource as a function is evolving into a game-changer function, overtaking the importance of finance in many sectors, as a function. The percolation and transference of HR into the business is something that is increasingly being practiced and recommended.

**Mass customization:** While development has emerged as a burning need and a compulsion to engage the workforce, the workforce is in a position to demand customization and contextualization, in the absence of which, they are quick to reject the organizations development initiatives and perceive a generalized approach as lackadaisical attitude of the organization, towards employees.

**Q On one hand, jobs are getting specialized and on other hand technology is proving to be a major competitor to human upskilling. What are the ways in which there can be a synthesis of both with regard to talent development?**

**A** This is a trend, here, to stay. The need for speed, consistency, accuracy and uniformity will compel organizations to get all the more closer to technology; however, what we need to keep in mind is that even technology needs to be managed by human interface. What might possibly change is the role of the human and the desired competencies. As these changes unfold, the organizations need to

ensure that their human workforce is aligned and ready to adapt to the change in desired behaviors and build the necessary skills, in time.

**Q How do you think technology is affecting talent development in India?**

**A** Technology has had some major repercussions on talent development practices in India. Right from the emergence of technology-based platforms and gadget based learnings that have relieved the managers from the shackles of distant geographies, time constraints, mismatch to learning styles to tools that accentuate speed and accuracy in helping Human Resource Managers gather, analyze and draw meaningful inferences about performance and potential of employees.

To think of a Human Resource Manager trying to assess potential candidates for a job opportunity or planning successors or assessing leadership potential for a group of people across geographies, equipped only with pen and paper tools, trying to match their schedules, would have been a nightmare in yesteryears. My salute to our predecessors who managed these complexities! Technology

The need for speed, consistency, accuracy and uniformity will compel organizations to get all the more closer to technology; however, what we need to keep in mind is that even technology needs to be managed by human interface

today is a powerful tool that is available to Human Resource Managers, waiting to be deployed meaningfully.

**Q What are the challenges in talent development and how will HR as a function evolve to handle the challenges in this space?**

**A** The 3 critical elements with respect to talent that are Understanding Talent, Developing Talent and Deploying Talent, form the bedrock of an organization's performance. While the solutions lie here, so do the challenges. As India becomes one of the few fast growing economies, the competitive scenario for organizations will change in India, the country will attract more organizations, more expats, the demographics of the work population will undergo changes, and it's the agility of the HR to ensure uninterrupted talent flow, which will emerge as the game changer. This would mean accuracy and further detailing in defining talent, faster and accurate means of evaluating talent, innovative, customized methodology and content for developing talent and meaningful, engaging ways of deploying talent. **Qm**



# The journey of CoCubes

Aon Hewitt's acquisition of CoCubes, a hiring assessment company in India, has added a new dimension to the existing set of assessment in India. A look at CoCubes journey of growth in the HR market

By Amol Pawar

**T**he year 2007 was a remarkable year. This was the year when Indian start-ups especially technology start-ups were just coming up. This was the year when Facebook had about 5% of its current user base and its Founder CEO had famously turned down the \$1Billion offer from Yahoo & Viacom. A billion dollar valuation for a start-up which was just 3 years old was an amazing thing for most tech companies. This was to be later known as the Unicorn, thanks to VC Aileen Lee. The dot com boom and bust was behind us and everyone was upbeat about India's potential and especially solutions that fundamentally changed the way business was done using technology.

During this time if you were a smart techie backed by a degree from one of the premier institutions in India, you mostly thought of doing a start-up and getting into this billion dollar club. It was a time when most youngsters understood and believed not only the potential for Indian market but also their ability to serve a global audience from India. This was the year when Flipkart and Myntra were founded. This was also the year when

Mahindra formed the joint venture with Renault while Volkswagen set up its office & manufacturing plant in India.



**"You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future."  
- Steve Jobs**

From the year 2007, we will take a look back to the year 2005. In the year 2005, 2 friends, Vibhore Goyal and Harpreet Grover graduated as Electrical and Civil engineers from IIT Mumbai, accidentally. I say accidentally because like most engineers both wanted to study some other branch of engineering. They had been thinking of working together and starting something on their own. They did start something of their own, however, working in 2 different setups. Vibhore was the first to quit his Microsoft campus job to work with Babajobs as CTO.

Vibhore who came from a middleclass family and whose parents were not well-educated was very clear from the beginning that he wanted to get into programming. He started to learn coding on his own and today, he is known for his ability to code away in the night to finalize a solution. He filed for 6 patents during his 18 months at Microsoft. His exposure to last mile connectiv-

ity of device at Microsoft actually led him to join the Babjobs team as CTO. As far as CoCubes was concerned, the ground was getting set.

Harpreet on the other hand was more enterprising. He was someone who started a comic book store in 3rd standard and yes, ran it successfully and profitably till his desire to read and share comics existed. He continues to share interesting books with individuals in his circle now. Soon after graduating from IIT, he joined a Consulting firm and worked in data analytics and won an award not for his knowledge of SAS, by his own admission. He then experimented with BePrepared.in, meant to be an interactive experience of interview, job and career for students, but folded it up in about 2 years.



"I look at only 2 things when angel investing. Are you solving an important problem? Do you care about the end users?"

- Gary Vaynerchuck

### The Early Days

Armed with this experience of last mile digital connectivity & innovation, coupled with early experimentation with students, they both came together to start CoCubes. Like most ideas, this was triggered through a conversation with a relative, who asked for help in placing someone who had completed engineering from a regional college. The problem statement became clear — to help connect multiple engineering colleges to companies and provide equal employment opportunities.

A quick market study, typically done to prove yourself that you are right, was done to establish that there were 100's of campus drives that took place where companies sent their HR to multiple locations to conduct campus interviews. But for the last 20 years, no technology solution was used to reduce this travel and multiple college interactions. The main hurdle was in fact the availability of internet connectivity in colleges and the usage of mobile being very low in the Tier-2 & 3 cities. Thus, through a pilot customer, the proof of concept (POC) was quickly established. It was decided to charge a certain fee to the company per campus drive conducted via CoCubes. The revenue model was established and through this "outsourced" service model, the company started to expand and grow.



"A startup is a temporary organization designed to search for a repeatable and scalable business model." - Steve Blank

### The Slowdown & Growth

It soon dawned upon the team and the questions related to who they really were and what problems they were solving started to crop up in conversations. They realized that the behavior of companies impacted colleges and vice versa, and thus if they continued in the sourcing model, they would have

## COCUBES WAS FOUNDED IN AUGUST 2007 AND RAISED FUNDING FROM OJAS VENTURE PARTNERS AND ANGEL INVESTORS

In November 2016, Aon Hewitt, the global talent, retirement and health solutions business of Aon Plc, acquired CoCubes, a hiring assessment company in an all-cash deal approximated at Rs 70-80 crores

## CoCubes was formed by combining the experience of last mile digital connectivity & innovation, coupled with early experimentation with students

to keep adding staff & manage relationships. The fact was, of 300 students appearing for the interview process only 3 were getting selected. So the need to move from sourcing to filtering happened and they moved to an annual contract with colleges. They were skeptical if colleges would pay for these assessments, but they did pay.

This was the time when they also decided to buy S Quotient Analyzer, a company that operated in the field of competence benchmarking and assessments and was led by Saurabh Misra, BTEC (Gold Medallist) and an IIM Calcutta graduate. This acquisition helped CoCubes quickly build a battery of assessments and acquire the capability to build their own assessments.

This was also the time when TVG Krishnamurthy, member of board of advisors of Ojas Ventures, the investors in CoCubes, asked them to focus on "present asset erosion" and on building a profitable venture.

Come year 2011-12, and the slowdown in manufacturing and IT hit the company hard, because of which CoCubes had to let go of a large chunk of their staff, realign their energies and ask themselves again "What is the problem we are solving". This led them to adopt lateral hiring solutions and focus on helping companies select the right talent using a battery of assessments. They also got involved with Sector Skill Councils to build assessments for vocational roles and currently they cater to 21 of the 36 sector skill councils. This was a big leap of faith in the direction of purely assessment-based productized offerings. CoCubes Pre-Assess(R) is one of the services they offer a pool of pre-assessed engineering talent across the country to corporates.

One of the constant features of the CoCubes journey is that they were not afraid to ask and try. They asked their clients for testing the newer processes and approaches and perfected the same with

the clients, thus forming not only deeper relationships with clients but also creating solutions that made sense to the industry in general.



“I’ve found that luck is quite predictable. If you want more luck, take more chances. Be more active. Show up more often.”

**- Brian Tracey**

### The Next Frontier

In the year 2009, the challenges faced in the Common Admission Test (CAT) for IIM brought the issue of online exams in focus. This led many start-ups to focus on online exams in India. While skill assessment for corporate jobs was a separate vertical, the online exams in itself presented a huge opportunity. This led to a division of players on who would do the online examinations while the others who do the online skill assessment. Companies like Mettl, MeriTrac who started with skill assessment also branched out to online exam solutions as fundamentally the technology platform remains the same in these 2 areas. With competition in this sector increasing, Co-Cubes had to create a niche for themselves and hence they stuck to Engineering colleges while also working on the vocational programs via the sector skill councils. Their focus on keeping the business profitable started to pay dividends. As per the fillings with govt, CoCubes had done a business of

INR 8.5Cr in the financial year 2014-15 and INR 13.6 CR in FY 2015-16, year-on-year growth of 60%. In the same period, their PBT had jumped from INR 1.32 CR to INR 2.13 CR - an increase of 61% again while maintaining the profit margin of 15% in this period.

The increased interest of VC & PE firms in this space, coupled with a successful and profitable business was bound to attract interest while CoCubes was focusing on scaling the business within India and globally. As they started to look at their options, two clearly emerged – raise more capital and do it yourself, or partner with a successful global business. The time had come to try and meet the needs of sourcing and filtration of Indian & global corporates. The problem statement had changed once again – “How do we help companies across the globe find the right talent? And how do we do this in a transparent and scalable manner?”

### Enter AON Hewitt

On some other side of the table, Aon Hewitt a global HR services company had been building its assessment portfolio and working with Indian and global organizations, with a suite of online assessments primarily focused on behavioral and cognitive aspects. With their experience of assessing about 20 Million candidates each year, they were looking to build or buy capabilities in the technical and functional areas. CoCubes looked perfect – it was a company which had built their offerings on technical and vocational assessments, was working with Sector Skill Councils and running a profitable enterprise by motivated first generation entrepreneurs who complemented each other.

But why would CoCubes sell out? With Aon Hewitt, they became a global company almost overnight, while retaining their unique value proposition of technical & vocational assessments. They could go deeper in the assessment area and

One of the constant features of the CoCubes journey is that they were not afraid to ask and try – they asked their clients for testing the newer processes and approaches and perfected the same with the clients



offer a comprehensive solution to their clients by combining their assessments with the behavioral and cognitive assessments of Aon Hewitt. They could accelerate their growth by approaching the combined client base while working to scale globally. With this one move, Co-Cubes and Aon Hewitt were thus able to create a unique value proposition in this highly competitive market place. And as they say the rest is history!



**"Everyone wants to live on top of the mountain, but all the happiness and growth occurs while you're climbing it."**  
- **Andy Rooney**



**"To paraphrase Steve Jobs, 'I'm always amazed how overnight successes take a helluva long time.'"** - **Verne Harnish**

### What this deal means for the industry?

The HR tech industry in India has been growing at a rapid pace. Some estimates peg the total value of HR tech industry in India at about INR 30,000 Crore. This is attracting a lot of interest from various types of players. We have already seen success in terms of Teamlease & more recently Qess which went public. This acquisition of an Indian HR Tech company by a global organization underlines the market potential while more importantly also reinforcing the belief that "world class can be made in India". This is a great testimony to the new wave of entrepreneurship that has come in the country in general and in the tech sector in particular.

The HR Tech industry in particular has been witnessing a flurry of activity since 2015. CoCubes-Aon Hewitt deal is all set to further improve the activity of start-ups and funding in the industry. We also expect more and more HR services and tech companies to take the IPO route while we will see increased M&A activity in time to come. This deal proves that if you identify a niche in this market and build a profitable, scalable business backed with a strong globally deployable technology platform, you can win.

### Key takeaways for entrepreneurs

While many quotes in this article reflect the essence of this story, we feel that each entrepreneur and especially first generation entrepreneur can learn the following from this story:

1. Focus on building a profitable business. The first thing any investor or buyer is going to look for is your balance sheet & profit/loss statement (While there are exceptions to this norm, the heated debate about them tells you a lot).
2. Focus on solving a real problem in a real easy way. Everybody loves a solution that's easy to understand, deploy and scale.

## WHAT THE INVESTORS HAD TO SAY



### Q Why did you choose to invest in co-cubes in the first place?

India is a growing economy with a number of jobs being created at the entry level. Hiring fresh graduates & post graduates has always been a challenge for corporates. CoCubes was an exciting idea to enable and simplify recruitment of students. This was clearly going to be a large market, but more importantly the founding team was one of the best young teams in the country. This led us to an investment in CoCubes in early 2009.

### Q What's your view on the HR Tech space in India?

While I don't claim to be an expert, my involvement with CoCubes over the years has certainly given some insights. India is a large market for anything to do with HR given the scale. That said, I believe any solution that offers a clearly differentiated value proposition starts to see some traction - be it a job board focused on certain areas or a background checking solution.

### Q What is your advice for HR Tech entrepreneurs?

Few key points - (a) this space requires patience to build a successful & sustainable company; (b) areas around recruitment technology are largely dominated by Naukri & LinkedIn increasingly, so better to avoid unless there is a clear differentiator; (c) have a clearly defined metric/ROI in your sales pitches instead of fuzzy promises of productivity improvement; (d) be prepared for long sales cycles.

*(As per responses received from Gautam Balijepalli, Partner at Ojas Venture Partners)*

## With Aon Hewitt, CoCubes became a global company almost overnight, while retaining their unique value proposition of technical & vocational assessments

3. Remember the first principle of design thinking - Empathy. Learn to empathize with your customers and their needs while focusing on building a solution that solves the broader problem.
4. Finding the right tech co-founder is critical to the success of your tech founder (duh!). So if you have a friend like Vibhore who codes in between everything else he does well hold on to him tight.
5. There is only so much data out there and your interpretation of the data will change as you mature; surround yourself with a bunch of advisors who know what they are talking about and take the leap of faith. 🍀

*(The contents of this article have been put together based on People Matters interviews with Harpreet Grover & Vibhore Goyal, Co-Founders of CoCubes, and includes information from web sources.)*

SINDHUJA PARTHASARTHY



# The myriad shades of a high EI!

What if emotional self-regulation is not always prosocial? Or having the ideal high EQ boss, peer or friend is not the utopian dream you imagined it to be?

**H**ave you come across people who, in all circumstances, are optimistic, compassionate and empathetic? Do they always seem to be in control of their emotions and can express their feelings unabashedly without letting them negatively impact their professional image? Do they seem extremely motivated at all times and have no inertia, self-doubt or impulse? Are they also great with interpersonal relationships and can handle conflicts and negotiations with great chutzpah?

Well then, apart from being 'God sent', they are also Goleman's dream man, woman or transgendered person. These people are possibly using their high Emotional Intelligence (EI) to achieve the elusive win-win outcomes in all situations. But what if emotional self-regulation is not always prosocial? What if having the ideal 'high EQ' boss, peer or friend is not the utopian dream you imagined it to be but in fact a murky situation to be in?

Well, Emotional Intelligence is a multi-dimensional paradigm that can have both negative interpersonal and intrapersonal effects. A 2014 research study by Austrian psychologists, 'Is There a Dark Intelligence?' established that there is a positive correlation between EI and Narcissism, specifically "narcissistic exploitativeness" i.e. some self-obsessed people may possibly be using their warmth, charisma and fascinating personality for malevolent reasons. Bingo! Another 2014 study 'The Relationship between Narcissistic Exploitativeness, Dispositional Empathy, and Emotion Recognition Abilities' clearly associated 'narcissistic exploitativeness' with 'emotion recognition' — those who were very good at recognizing/reading emotions are invariably prone to manipulating them.

This is because EI doesn't necessarily mean high Morality Quotient. In fact, EI is 'morally neutral' and therefore can be used to promote self at the cost of others. High EI might even lead to sheer Machiavellian-

## With a lot of emergent support for 'dark EI', one can safely assume that there is no universally beneficial high EI

ism — the art of manipulating others to achieve one's own self-centered needs. And Machiavellianism is one of the dark triad personalities, characterized by a blatant disregard for morality, employment of cunning two faced interpersonal behaviors and an obsessive focus on personal gains.

A 2010 study "Strategic Use of Emotional Intelligence in Organizational Settings: Exploring the Dark Side" reveals that people with high EI would disguise emotions to strategically pursue a personal goal. They have the skills to misrepresent, block or dramatize rumors, gossip, and other types of emotion-laden information.

How does high EI affect the person gifted with one? Well, those who use their skill to manipulate (sometimes unconsciously) aren't immune to being manipulated themselves. Studies have proved that high emotional sensitivity can lead to higher stress reactivity. "Will Get Fooled again", a 2013 study states that those with higher EI may also be duped more, mostly because of the overconfidence in their ability to read others. The Atlantic in its famous article "The Dark side of EI" argues that people who are have strong ability to read others' emotions many a times are very trusting and fail to perceive trickery in those who displayed distress. To quote "they picked up on the distress but not the authenticity; they could read the emotions but not the minds". Goleman too agreed to the argument in the Atlantic

and said "Let's not idealize emotional intelligence". He had earlier introduced 3 types of empathy; Cognitive empathy i.e. one's ability to relate to other people's perspectives, ideas, opinions and mental models; Emotional Empathy being one's ability to connect and relate to the other's emotional state of being; and then there's Empathic Concern, which is about being sensitive to other's needs and willingness to support.

He suggests that while a leader can have high EI, he can still lack in empathetic concern. So while they use their cognitive and social empathy to know exactly what makes others tick, they might use that ability to leverage that for their own benefit. For instance they could use one's fears, anxiety or insecurities to get things done. They might even opportunistically use those times when one is in a good mood, to get certain things that are against your own best interests. Or they may offer constant appreciation, just to flatter so that they can ask you for a favor at an opportune time.

They would possibly be presenting one side of the story, maybe even misrepresenting data to present a certain picture. They may also ask you a lot of questions to know your real motives, without much of self-disclosure. The most important though is the power play they might engage in. They could create a false of power by ignoring you, postponing meetings, acting constantly busy or just giving you very less face time.

So there goes your warning; with a lot of emergent support for 'dark EI', one can safely assume that there is no universally beneficial high EI. If you are one with high EI and you work with someone who has, knowing it's a double edged sword is pertinent! 🍷

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**SINDHUJA PARTHASARTHY** is an educator associated with Center for Behavioral Excellence at Wipro and an Independent Photo journalist documenting human rights issues.

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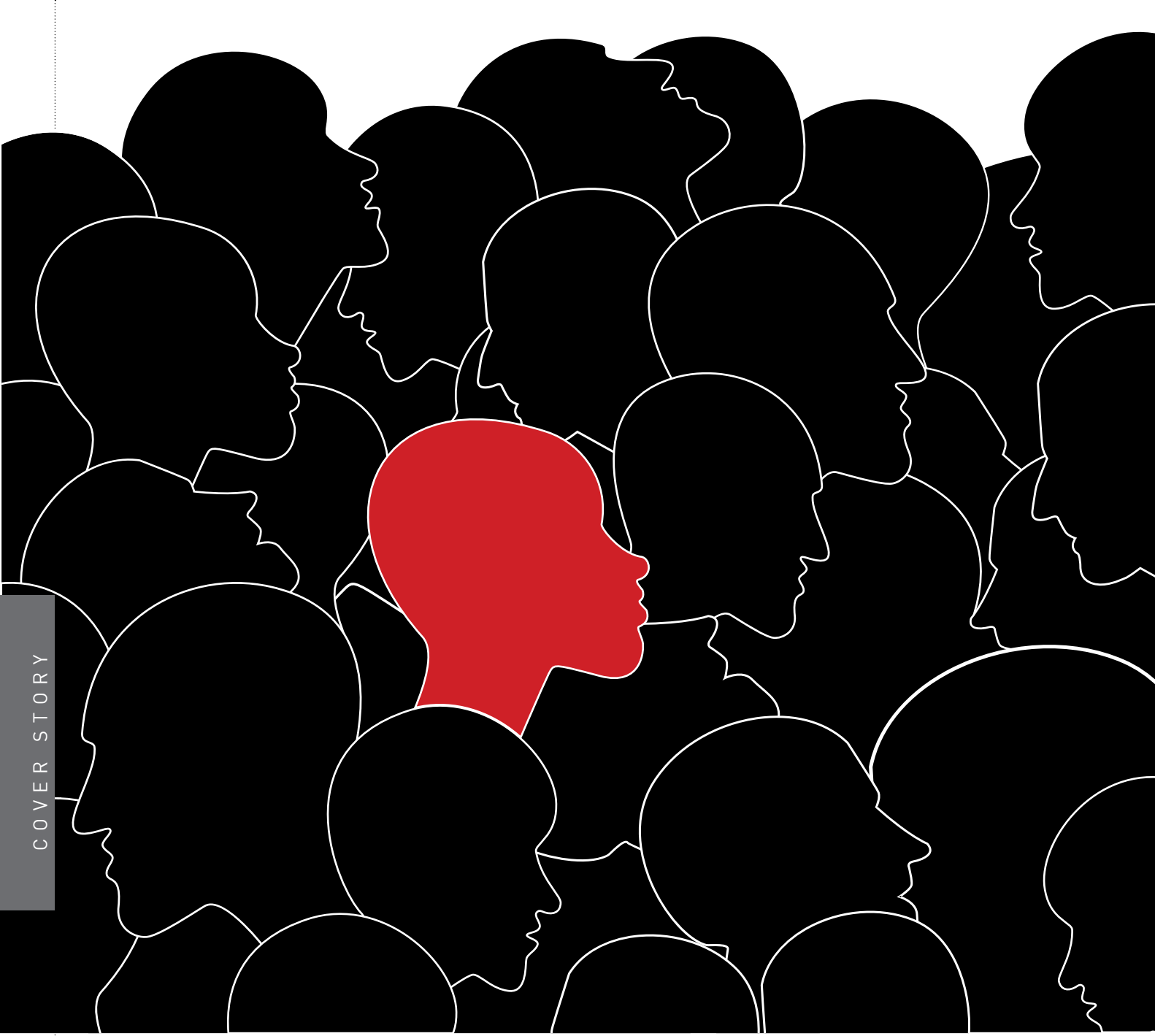


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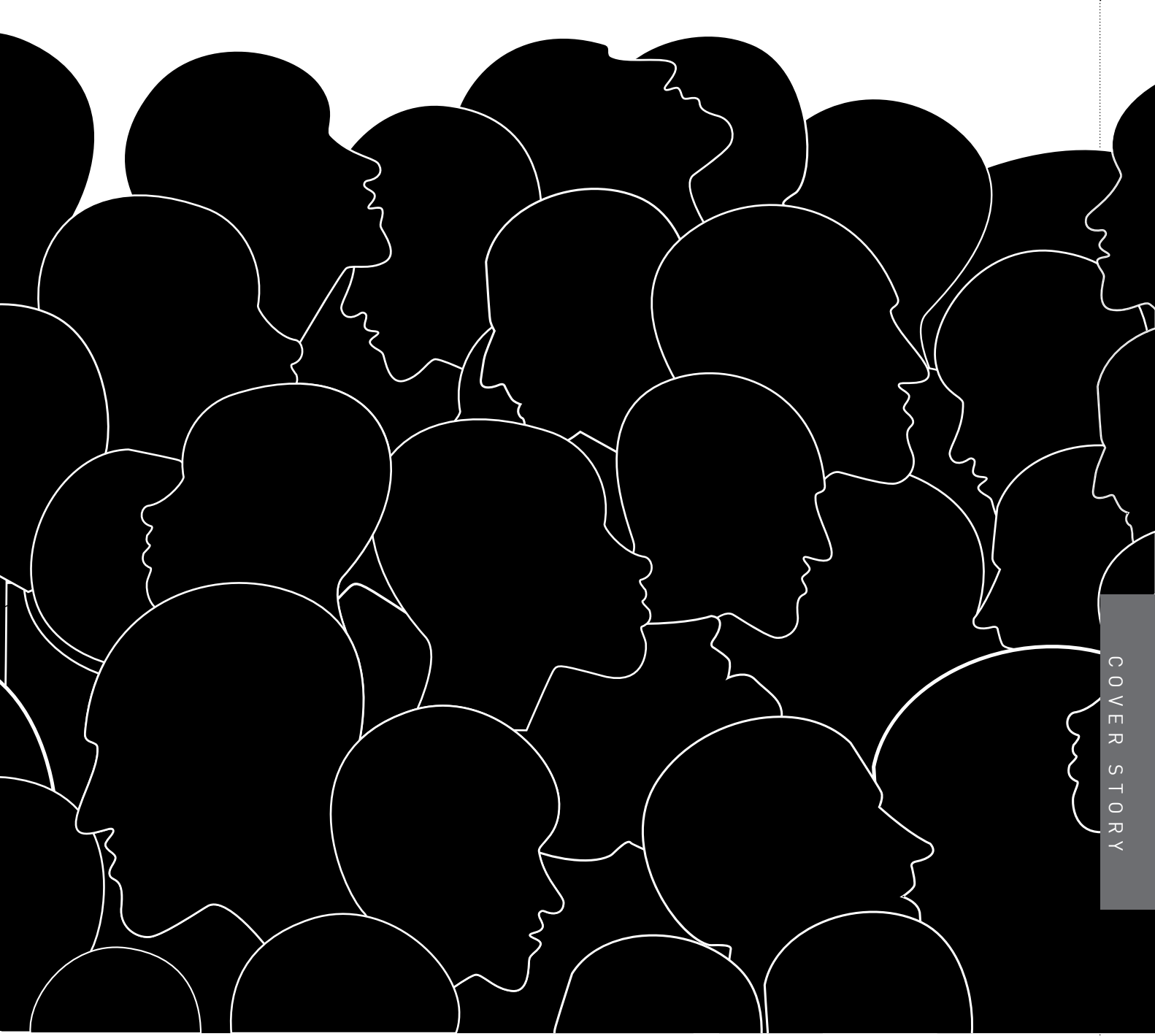
COVER STORY

# TALENT ACQUISITION

ARE YOU DOING WHAT  
IT TAKES?

This cover story presents actionable advice from leaders on recruitment trends, technology, and practices to optimize your talent acquisition efforts, and also unveils the survey research “India Hiring Outlook 2018” — a People Matters and Indeed Study about the current state of hiring processes that recommends best practices for talent acquisition

By **People Matters Editorial**



**A**ll organizations want and need talent. But how equipped are organizations to search the talent pool? Are organizations truly doing what it takes to build their recruiter brands? Are they leveraging the next gen tools and models to calibrate hiring processes and build recruiter capabilities? Are organizations using advanced analytics to improve candidate sourcing?

Talent acquisition is not just about hiring anymore. It is an amalgamation of frameworks and encompasses concepts like employer brand strategy, candidate experience, recruiting optimization, talent partnership and last but not the least, engagement. And from being metrics-driven to tech savvy,

recruiters and hiring leaders need to learn the fundamentals of recruiting right and right recruiting to establish credibility and build sustainable relationships with candidates and clients alike.

This cover story presents People Matters – Indeed Study on “India Hiring Outlook 2017-18” that captures trends in talent acquisition, India’s hiring outlook, key strategic priorities and business readiness of the TA function, and the role of the recruiter; while also featuring what organizations and TA leaders are doing for dynamic talent acquisition in terms of user experience, personalization, social connections, collaboration or using a 360 degrees TA approach.

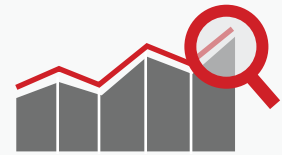
## KEY FINDINGS



**63% of the companies** are increasing their hiring budgets. And the hiring outlook is Optimistic but cautious

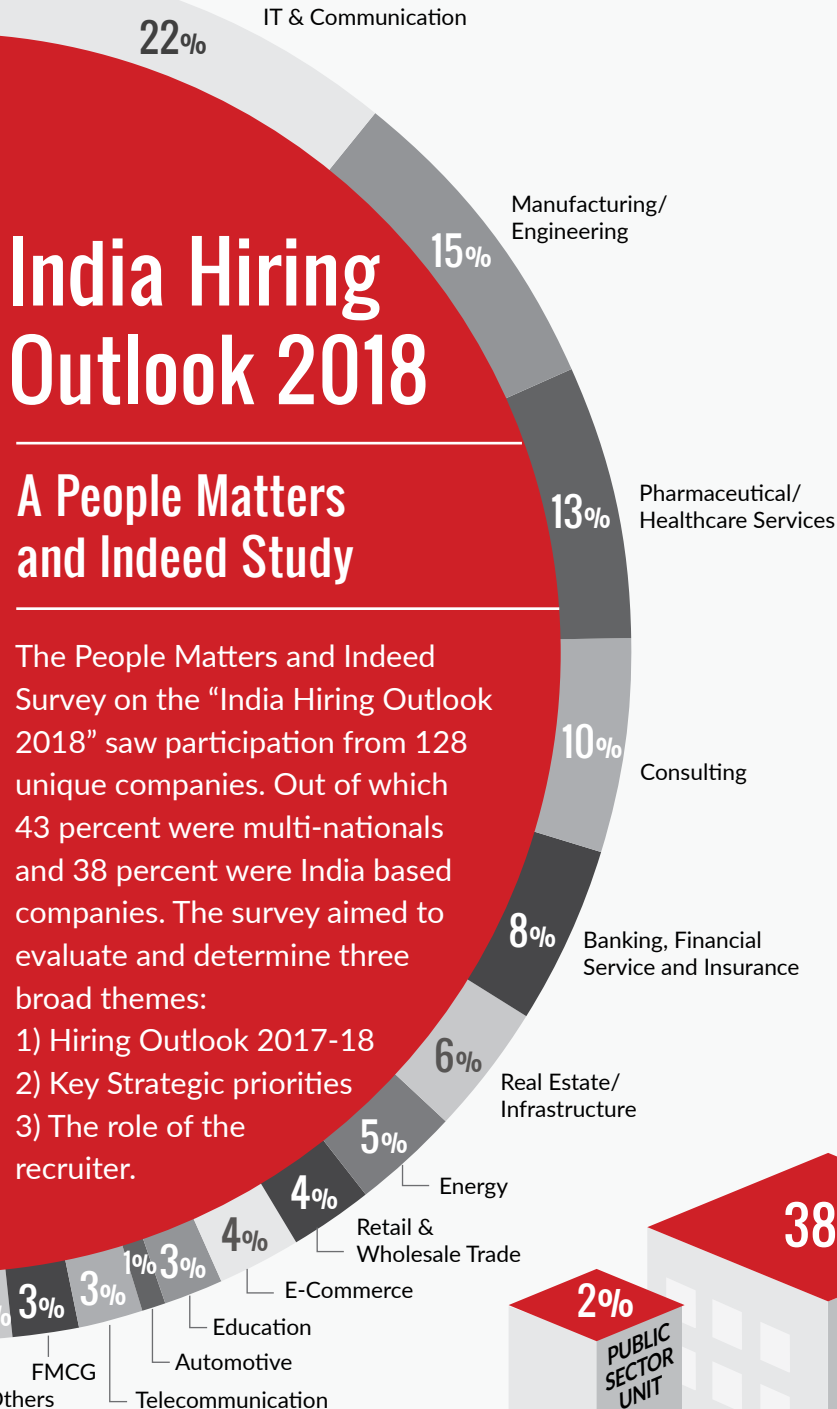


**Employer Branding** will be a key investment area in the upcoming year



**Knowledge of HR outside TA** and **Data Analytics Skills** will be key skills for TA professionals in the future

### INDUSTRY TYPE



# India Hiring Outlook 2018

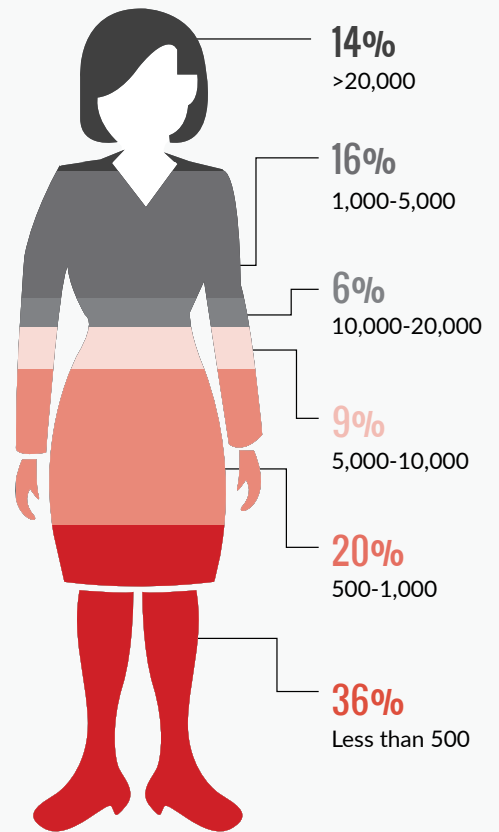
## A People Matters and Indeed Study

The People Matters and Indeed Survey on the "India Hiring Outlook 2018" saw participation from 128 unique companies. Out of which 43 percent were multi-nationals and 38 percent were India based companies. The survey aimed to evaluate and determine three broad themes:

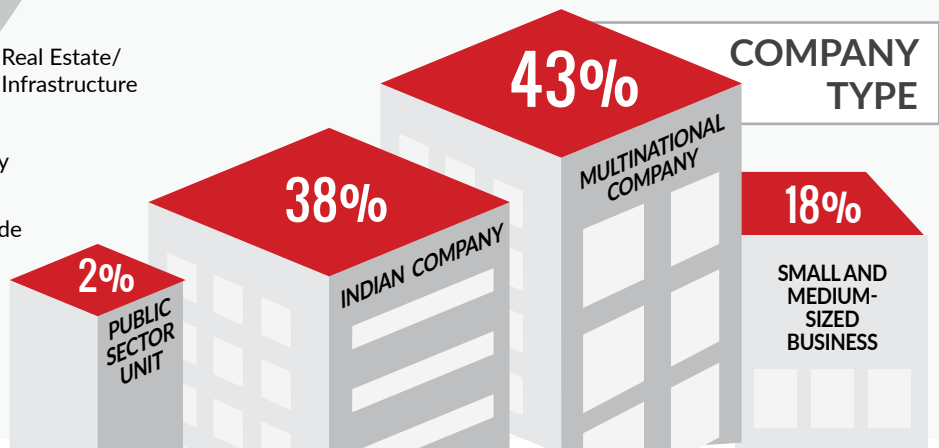
- 1) Hiring Outlook 2017-18
- 2) Key Strategic priorities
- 3) The role of the recruiter.

## RESPONDENTS PROFILE

### EMPLOYEE SIZE



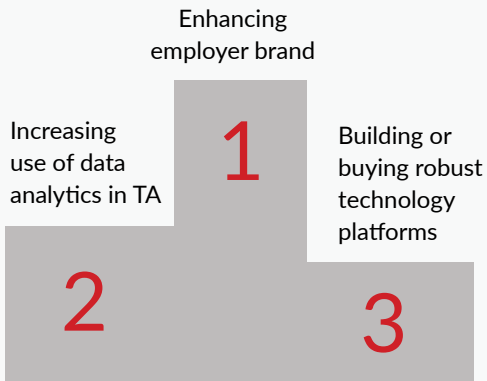
### COMPANY TYPE



## EFFECTIVENESS OF HIRING CHANNELS



## TOP 3 INVESTMENT AREAS IN THE TA BUDGET FOR NEXT YEAR



## KEY TA PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE



1. Aligning TA strategy to business

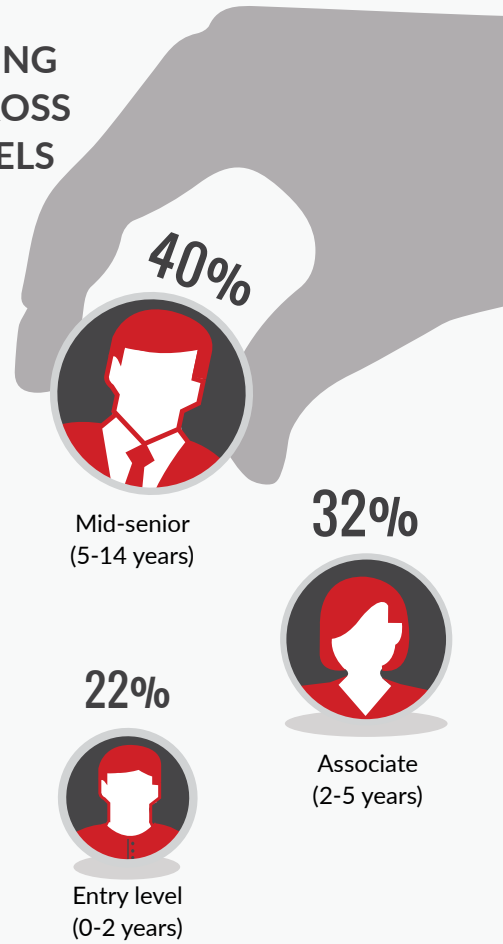


2. Articulating the employer brand in the marketplace

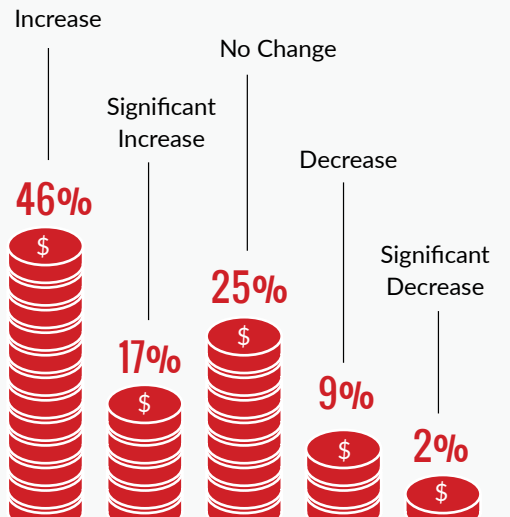


3. Identifying candidates with the right culture fit

## HIRING ACROSS LEVELS



## TA BUDGET FORECAST



## TOP 5 SECTORS WHERE HIRING WILL INCREASE



IT & Communication



Manufacturing & Engineering



Pharmaceutical/ Medical Devices/ Healthcare Services



Banking, Financial Service and Insurance



Consulting

## TA PROFESSIONAL'S SKILL GAP

Current Skill set	Empathy & listening	Business understanding	Curiosity	Stakeholder Management
Skill set for the future	Knowledge of HR functions beyond TA	Strategic thinking	Data analytics skills	Technology skills

# INDIA HIRING OUTLOOK 2018

## A People Matters and Indeed Study

People Matters – Indeed Study on the “Hiring Outlook 2017-18 and trends in talent acquisition” attempts to understand the key trends in the talent acquisition space

**J**obless growth’ has been a much talked about issue recently, which coupled with the lower than expected GDP numbers has put a question mark on the job opportunities expected in the coming year.

Despite a growing economy, the level of utilization of the demographic dividend in the country has been a key concern.

Added to this is the disruption that technology has fostered in the world of business. With the recent news about the retrenchment of employees in the IT sector, there has been a renewed interest in the impact of new technologies like artificial intelligence, automation, cognitive technologies, virtual reality, and advanced robotics that have re-defined the job market. In India, the impact is beginning to be felt, albeit in a small and indirect manner.

For HR professionals and jobseekers, it is important to know what corporate India is planning in terms of Talent Acquisition, the concerns of the TA fraternity and how they plan to address

such challenges. With such a context, People Matters – Indeed Study on the “Hiring Outlook 2017-18 and trends in talent acquisition” attempts to understand the key trends in the talent acquisition.

**1) Hiring outlook:** What does the hiring outlook look like across different sectors? Are companies increasing their hiring budgets for the upcoming year?

**2) Key strategic priorities and business readiness of the TA function:** What are the most used and effective sources of hiring? What areas of investment are crucial to recruiters?

**3) Role of the recruiter:** The gap between the skills that recruiters possess currently and the skills required to navigate the future.

The survey respondents of the study comprised of senior HR and TA professionals from 128 companies across different sectors. In the following pages, the key takeaways from the responses are presented, along with the opinions and insights of HR and TA leaders.

## 1 Hiring Outlook : Optimistic but Cautious

The hiring outlook for the upcoming year ranges from optimistic to stable. 55 percent of the respondents stated that they are planning to expand their workforce while 35 percent plan to maintain the current levels of workforce. Talent acquisition will be driven by expanding business activity and replacing talent lost due to attrition.

Similarly, Hiring Budgets are also expected to increase for a majority of respondents, though the spending patterns are likely to shift in favor of technology and employer branding. Ramesh Shankar, HR Head, Siemens says “Hiring budgets are looked upon as investments in future building, and covers both the direct (logistical/administrative) & the strategic investments in brand building & recruitment technologies.”

Despite news of layoffs in IT and Communications sectors, majority of respondents from these sectors indicated plans to hire aggressively. Deeper analysis indicates there is continued optimism due to opportunities in IT enablement in growing sectors such as the BFSI, Infrastructure and Retail. Also, small and medium sized IT companies are more bullish on expansion compared to large ones or those dependent on outsourcing business from overseas clients. Other sectors that plan to hire in the coming year are Manufacturing and Engineering, Pharmaceutical/ Medical Devices/ Healthcare Services, Banking, Financial Service and Insurance and Consulting. Incidentally, N. Chandrashekar, Chairperson of the TATA Group recently noted that outlook in IT for job creation will continue to boom and will have 7 million direct jobs and 10 million indirect jobs by 2025<sup>1</sup>.

## 2 Strategic priorities related to talent acquisition

**What type of candidates are recruiters looking for?**

An analysis of the hiring demand across different sectors revealed that the demand for mid-career professionals will be the highest in the upcoming year with 40 percent of the companies looking for professionals with a work experience between 5 years to 14 years. This is closely followed by the Associate level i.e., experience between 2-5 years. A focus on managerial and team leader levels indicate that organizations are building broad and flat organizational hierarchies, by keeping the top-levels light. Companies are working towards making organizational structures simple with minimum number of layers.

The focus on hiring in the pharmaceutical industry and healthcare space will majorly be on mid-senior levels and in the IT sector and manufacturing sector, it will include both associate and mid-senior levels.

**What tools are recruiters most likely to use?**

The survey's findings show that the most effective

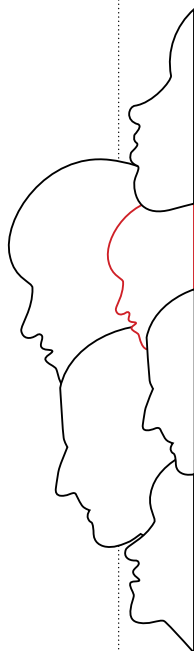
# TA professionals skill set for the future include domain knowledge of HR functions besides TA, Strategic thinking and Data Analytics

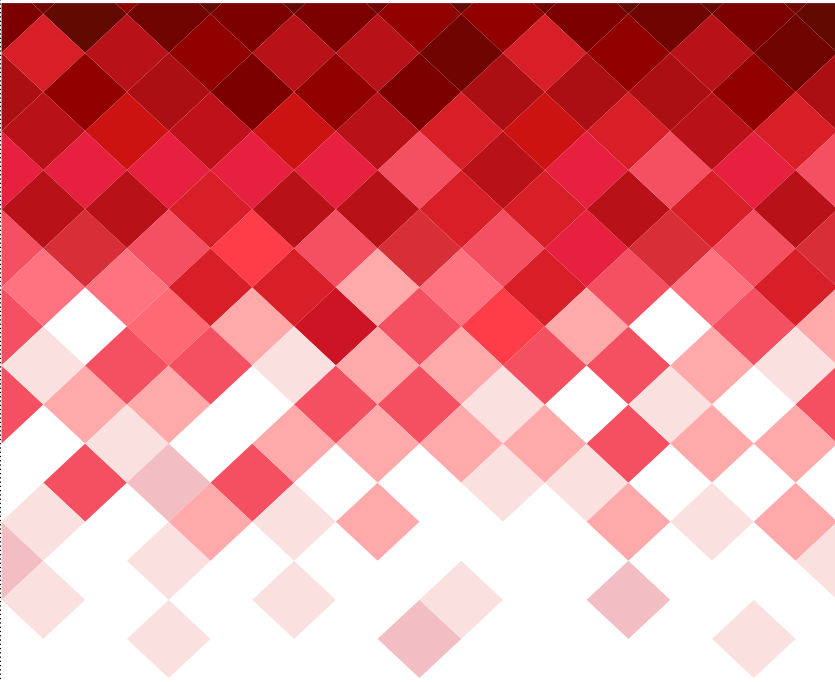
channel of recruitment has been Employee Referrals followed by Job Portals & Campus hiring. Social hiring has not been found to be very effective by respondents. In the coming year, companies plan to increase the usage of Job portals and Referrals. In fact companies such as L&T have made “getting reliable referees” as one of their strategic TA priorities. Despite the buzz around social hiring techniques, it is mostly used in IT and consulting sectors and companies that use the channel say it is effective.

Another trend which stands out from the survey is the expected increase in use of automation and analytics in recruitment. Three key areas of investment that are at the top-of-the-mind of HR professionals include: Employer Branding, increasing the use of Data Analytics and building or acquiring robust technology platforms to aid recruitment.

Shalini Pillay, Partner and Head of People, Performance and Culture, KPMG India notes that “it is vital for the TA community to reflect on which aspects of the life cycle of hiring need to be automated and which ones need a personal touch.”

Adoption of automation and analytics among respondents is quite low at 17 percent, with most activities being carried out manually by the TA teams.





## Opportunities will be available for experienced professionals at Associate and Mid-Senior levels, especially in mid-sized companies, across sectors

### 3 Role of the recruiter will change: A focus on new skills and employer branding

The traditional role of the recruiter is set to change. In the words of Yogi Sriram, SVP-HR of L&T group, “The role of a recruiter is no longer about filling a vacancy; it is about creating a compelling employee journey to attract the right talent.”

Similar sentiments are expressed by Meenakshy Sridhar, Head Recruitment for Corporate and Services at Reliance Industries Limited. She says that “The role of a recruiter has become similar to a marketing role, in the future, they will carry marketing and branding role to engage the best talent available for the role”

For TA teams to become successful brand ambassadors for their organizations, they need to have a greater understanding of business, beyond the HR function. These requirements are reflected in the survey results which indicate that the top priorities for the TA team are greater “business alignment” and “culture fitment”. The need to tie-in the “Talent strategy and deliverables” is evidently the top priority across sectors, with almost an equal number of ‘product’ organizations and ‘service’ organizations choosing this response as a top priority.

35 percent of respondents have expressed the intention to invest in “Employer Branding” with higher allocations of hiring budgets but an area of concern across respondents was the organization culture being aligned to the TA strategy. 65 percent of the organizations felt the need to work on the culture to achieve desired results.

With focus on employer branding and culture fitment of candidates increasing, the role of a recruiter is getting increasingly demanding and complex because there is a need to understand business requirements and the technical competencies that the business requires.



To be able to meet the challenges of the future, TA teams will need to polish and augment their skills. Our survey showed a gap between what skills recruiters possess today and their aspirations for the future. While the current talent acquisition professionals possess interviewing skills, empathy and listening, business curiosity and understanding, in the future, they will need strong domain knowledge of other HR functions, data analytics and strategic thinking also figure in the list of priorities.

The way TA teams measure their efficacy is also likely to alter in the coming year. As per the survey, the most commonly used metrics ‘Applicant drop off’ and ‘Tenure/Retention rate’ are likely to be augmented by monitoring of ‘Reviews on Social and Professional network’ in the future. In fact the social media is more likely to be used as means of propagating and managing the employer brand rather than a source for talent.

### Conclusion

The hiring outlook for the year 2017-18 is bullish but cautious. Despite the buzz around artificial intelligence and automation, leaders across different sectors believe that it will take time for any significant disruption in the job market to take place. The need for business alignment and culture fit is a crucial area that talent acquisition professionals will have to focus on.

The future also calls for a new role of the recruiter, which simply does not stop once the recruiter is hired. Since the skills that an employee brings to the organization, their culture fit and ability to be agile directly impacts the performance of the organization, the recruiter is required to be more specialized and aware of the pulse of the organization and the industry.

The future of the TA function is aptly summed up in the words of Ramesh Thakur, HR Head, Siemens: “Hiring has changed from mere ‘job requisition fulfillment’ to becoming a window for employer branding, business partnerships & engagement with the target talent pool.”  

### Reference

- <sup>1</sup> <http://blogs.economictimes.indiatimes.com/et-commentary/it-industry-to-have-7-million-direct-jobs-and-10-million-indirect-jobs-by-2025-n-chandrasekaran/>

*(Insights and expert views compiled in collaboration with Prashanth Bhatla and Anushree Sharma)*

# Real Time Compliance Management

**Avoid non-compliances taking place than a post mortem after the damage is done.**



Organizations have to adhere to many compliances under Labour Law , Factories act & similar laws. By implementing Labourworks you not only send advance Email/SMS notice about a possible non-compliance likely to happen & give an opportunity to the contractor to take corrective actions. But if the corrective action is not taken in time then you can simply block the entry of the worker & avoid non-compliances from taking place in a real time mode.

Some of the compliances that can be implemented in real time mode are

- Working without a weekly off
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- Contractor Labour License expired
- Labour License Capacity exceeded
- Medical Check up not done
- Induction training not completed
- Work Order expired
- Work Order Capacity exceeded
- Female worker entry during night shift
- Debarred worker entry

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## HIRING FOR VOLUME AND SKILLS

Talent acquisition is no longer about a simple vacancy filling process; a recruiter also needs to understand why employees join, stay or grow in a company

**Anthony Joseph**, President, Global HR, Hinduja Global Solutions



**F**or Hinduja Global Solutions, the focus on hiring has been to address the growth driven by client growth and the replacement caused due to attrition. Recruiters look for frontline employees who are highly efficient and detail-oriented.

In terms of the macro level shifts, there is an excessive focus on the negatives due to automation. However, it is useful to remember that shifts due to disruptive automation does not happen overnight, one sees incremental innovation in our industry. In the next 3-5 years, the nature of work will be significantly different from what we do today. The second macro shift is to do with the global movement of talent, especially to countries like the US, which has come under scrutiny of late. In terms of the industry growth, there are varied reports that predict slow growth to stable outlook. Apart from macro-level shifts, consumer behavior is central to understanding the potential of the market growth. The imperatives from a HR standpoint are to hire for volume and specialized skills.

Talent acquisition is no longer about a simple vacancy filling process; the recruiter also needs to understand 'What

Under-investment in talent acquisition function is an area of concern not only from a monetary point of view but also in terms of time and training recruiters

makes an employee join the company? What makes an employee stay? What does it mean to grow in the company? And what is the happening in the market outside?

A major roadblock for the recruiting function is to keep up with uncertainties of the market. Delivering a well-articulated and designed hiring forecast is becoming a challenge in itself. What is an area of concern is the under-investment in talent acquisition function, not only from a monetary point of view but also in terms of time and training recruiters about the business, trends and technologies. 

## SHIFT FROM 'FILLING A VACANCY' TO 'VALUE BASED ALIGNMENT'

To stay relevant in the current market, organizations need to shift from hiring for a role to hiring the right talent

**Ramesh Shankar**, HR Head, Siemens

**I**n today's world, organizations are competing for talent not only within their own industries; they are also competing with new age organizations. Hiring budgets are looked upon as investments in future building, and cover both the direct (logistical/administrative) and the strategic investments in brand building and recruitment technologies. The aim is to be relevant to the new generation and also provide the best in class experience to the customers.

The key themes that are impacting hiring include: 1) Digitalization; 2) Diversity; and 3) Localization. In our industry, we see displacement of jobs in manufacturing, for e.g. blue collared jobs are rapidly changing with the use of technology. And speed, quality & efficiency have improved.

The focus on diversity has to do with increasing the percentage of women across all levels, especially in senior leadership


Hiring has changed from being a job requisition fulfillment to a window for employer branding, business partnership & engagement with the talent pool

roles. We will also focus on ex-service men and differently-abled.

Localization too has thrown open the possibilities of becoming a manufacturing hub. Producing things locally also gives a competitive edge from pricing perspective & we become more relevant to our local customers.



Amidst these shifts, we are consciously working towards making our organization structure simple with minimum number of layers. Expert teams are being created to facilitate speed of delivery and best in class service/product.

The challenge for TA, like many functions, is going to continuously evolve and revolve around being relevant. There is a clear shift from being fulfillment of a vacancy to value based alignment. Hiring has changed from mere 'job requisition fulfillment' to becoming a window for employer branding, business partnerships & engagement with the target talent pool. 

## BULLISH YET CAUTIOUS

It is imperative for talent acquisition professionals to understand technical competencies and market level shifts for their specific industry

**Shalini Pillay**, Partner and Head of People, Performance and Culture, KPMG India

The current hiring outlook can be summed up as “bullish yet cautious”. It is bullish from the perspective of the market opportunity ahead of us, to grow and attract the right talent. And it is cautious because we need to be conscious of our internal needs and talent requirements in the current business context. The macro level shifts that have impacted the talent acquisition strategy are to do with technology. Automation, robotics, cognitive and analytics are transforming many job roles in a fundamental manner.

The need from a talent standpoint is to hire agile and mobile talent. At KPMG, the



talent acquisition team is organized in a way that allows centralization to deliver efficiencies needed for organizations operating on our scale. And it is decentralized to allow the team to be embedded into various businesses internally to cater to the nuances and demands of the specific business.

The role of a recruiter is getting increasingly demanding and complex because there is a need to understand business requirements and the technical competencies that the business requires. Also, people in the hiring role need to

A key concern for the talent acquisition function has to do with the increasing commodification of the function

understand and sense the pulse of the market. A key concern about the talent acquisition function has to do with the increasing commodification of the function with technology. With a number of service providers tackling different aspects of the talent acquisition cycle right from the first touch point to the candidate's onboarding processes, it is vital for the TA community to reflect on which aspects of the life cycle of hiring need to be automated and which ones need a personal touch. **em**

## HIRING FOR GROWTH

The skill of selling a job at present to the incumbent will be outweighed by the need of fostering a long term association as talent availability becomes scarcer with time

**Yogi Sriram**, SVP – HR, L&T Group

The enhanced government spend announced in the national budget for the infrastructure sector is promising. The growth potential is high and we hope to win orders largely in smart cities, water, defence and aerospace, power, power transmission, renewables and other businesses which have significant growth potential. The intake of fresh talent will be more selective, and mid-senior level hiring will depend on the growth plan. In certain geographies, there would be selective expat hiring for skills that are not so easily available in India.

Our top five TA strategic priorities include: 1) adopting a workforce platform by using digitalization to match skills, aspirations, team requirements, project

requirements, potential of talent; 2) Building and improving L&T's brand image on a global scale; 3) Hiring the best young engineering talent; 4) Creating a compelling candidate experience and journey; 5) Getting more reliable referees and authentic reference checks.

To meet these TA priorities, we enable the TA team with skill development to meet the challenges of high quality recruitment. Internally, there is a dedicated leadership level TA team which works on critical hiring projects. The role of a recruiter is no longer about filling a vacancy, it is about creating a compelling employee journey to attract the right talent.

The future challenges for businesses include the availability of domain specific leadership talent, highly skilled recruiters, shortage of experienced talent for roles in

Future challenges for businesses include the availability of domain specific leadership talent, highly skilled recruiters



project management and the core infrastructure businesses along with the inability to access the best talent at leadership level from PSUs and the Government due to various restrictive clauses of employment. As the world is becoming more polarized, barriers to free flow of talent will be a challenge too. **em**

# DEALING WITH TALENT ACQUISITION PARADOXES

We need to be more agile, get accustomed to regular reviews and be prepared and willing to say, "What we put in place a year ago no longer meets the needs of our workforce today"



► **LORRAINE RODRIGUES**  
Country General  
Manager, Fidelity  
International

It wasn't surprising at the People Matters Conference in Mumbai this month that "*dealing with talent acquisition paradoxes*" was a hot topic. The ones that raised the temperature of the room were automation and the risk of hard-coding bias in the hiring process, the generational gap between policy makers and a growing millennial population, women in senior roles - supply and demand and managing expectations on budget versus cost to hire.

Budget versus cost to hire is a topic close to everyone's heart which means *wanting the best talent and not willing to pay for it*. There were lots of nodding heads when this one came up. A close second was: *job profile doesn't match the job profile in the hiring manager's mind*.

However, these two issues are not unique to the hiring process. These are challenges that we deal with in everyday business decision making. If HR wanted to implement a new hiring tool, we would go through the process of capturing business requirements, evaluating options, assessing the financials and agreeing on a solution. Somehow, the best of us fall into the trap of thinking this approach only applies to projects. However, we should treat each new hire as a little mini project, especially during the business requirements phase. A joined-up approach between Hiring Manager and Recruiter will lead to a shared understanding where the focus is on future requirements rather than the immediate need. When a shared under-

standing of the role is achieved, remuneration shouldn't be a topic because this is agreed and understood upfront. Both the business and HR own the outcome.

*Women in senior roles — the supply/demand paradox*. In fact, I would like to put it differently. I would say the paradox is our words not matching our actions. The most frequently cited reason is ratios are representational of women graduating in these disciplines. Second most popular reason — women opt out of the game when they start a family. However, we have more educated women than ever before, more women wanting to have careers than ever before, more returning mothers than ever before, yet the ratios don't reflect this.

If we agree that leadership skills are transferable from one domain to another, recruiters play a key role in challenging conventional wisdom particularly when the "domain expertise" card is over-played. In fact, filling an executive role with someone from a completely different domain is a sure way of introducing creativity, innovation and transformation into the business.

As we embrace technology in the hiring process, let's not forget that we are dealing with real people at the other end; So, let's use technology to make the candidate experience equal to a customer experience

Generational gap between the policy makers and the growing millennial population creates the paradox where *business practices are not keeping up with the pace of change*. How do recruiters attract the best talent when they fall short on policies and practices? This is where HR Business Partners need to leverage analytics to drive changes in policies and practices. We need to be more agile, get accustomed to regular reviews and be prepared and willing to say, "What we put in place a year ago no longer meets the needs of our workforce today".

Finally, as we *embrace technology in the hiring process, let's not forget that we are dealing with real people at the other end* — people with emotions and memories, who can make judgments and are well-networked. So, let's use technology to make candidate experience equal to a customer experience. A candidate who doesn't make the cut today may be the senior manager you wish to hire in 10 years' time, and, a poor candidate experience today is a poor opinion of your organization forever and maybe even a lost customer forever. 🍌



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# A STORY AT A TIME

Does collecting and sharing stories send the attractiveness of your company soaring and help in talent acquisition?



► **INDRANIL CHAKRABORTY**  
Founder, STORYWORKS

Imagine this is 1992, you are a 2nd year student and you have just received a 5 page letter from a friend who is one batch senior to you. Your friend has just spent the first 2 months of an 18 month training program at one of the leading FMCG companies in the country. A few excerpts from that letter read...

*"...places that cannot be covered by direct distribution e.g. small villages are covered by cinema vans. These vans are used as propaganda vehicles in order to increase awareness of our products. I have been working with one such van since yesterday. The villages we have covered are over 100 kms from Gorakhpur. During the day, we went to two villages where we setup stalls and used a loudspeaker to run ad jingles. We have now stopped for lunch under a tree and the driver and helper are cooking lunch. This evening, like yesterday, we will setup a screen in one of the villages where we will be showing a 'chitrahah' type film song reel interspersed with our ads. All this is such a fantastic experience...."*

*"....last two weeks were extra strenuous because after returning from a full day at the market, my trainers came to the hotel and took classroom courses everyday till midnight. For two days, the sessions went on till about 3.30/4.00am. Now I know why this training program is so famous. The amount of time my trainers are willing to spend on me (for no benefit of their own) is incredible. This is definitely not a job. I have really enrolled myself in a school of marketing funded by soaps and detergents...."*

Now imagine the next day at campus where a competing company is holding a pre-placement talk. Some very senior managers in natty suits make a presentation. They start with telling

you about the vision, mission and values of the company. They share last year's results and in the next 5 years plan to become the fastest growing FMCG company in India. They also talk about the fact that they have brought all their global best practices for trainee induction into the program they have designed for India. They assert that the induction program is very well designed and that the foundation they give on field sales and marketing is second to none. They finish by reminding you that in your marketing bible written by Philip Kotler, no other company has as many mentions as they have.

You now have a choice to make. Are you going to apply for a job at the company your senior works (the one who wrote the letter) or the competitor?

The above excerpts are from a 5 page letter I had written after my first two months as a management trainee at what was those days called Hindustan Lever Limited. Even as you were reading the story, something fascinating was happening in both our brains. The neurons lit up and followed a similar pattern, a phenomenon called 'speaker-listener neural coupling'. That is the difference between the power of a story and the power of assertions. Assertions aren't often credible and can never connect to the core of an individual. Stories do. Hearing a story is as close as the listener can get to a first hand experience of watching the event in real life. The conclusion that the listener then draws for himself is almost unshakeable and far more powerful than assertions.

Apart from the credibility of a story and the power it has to let listeners come to their own conclusion, stories harness two other powers — stories are memorable and stories are repeatable. It is this memorability and repeatability that lends

Many companies have understood that employee-speak is a powerful way to convey a message to both the prospective employee world to attract them and to the current employees to cement their beliefs about the company

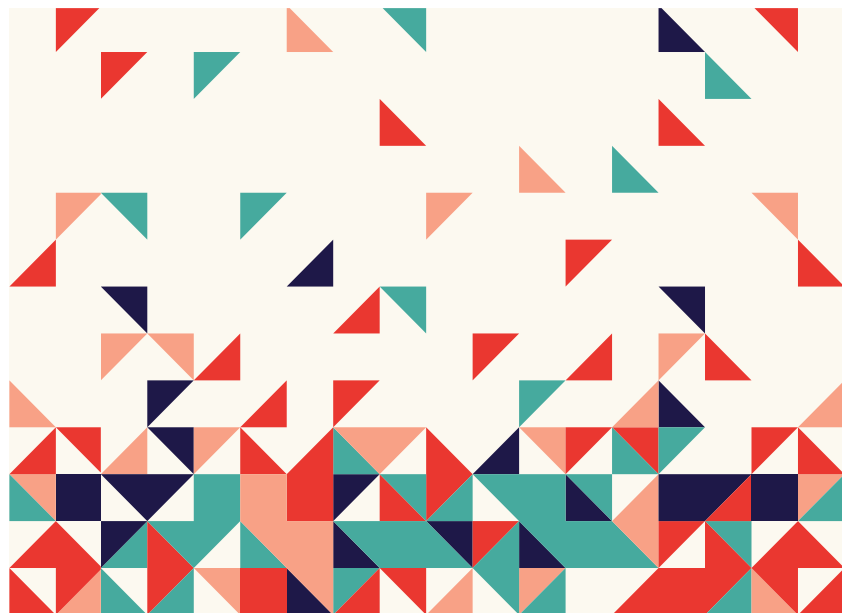
to the spread. When was the last time you heard a student got out of a pre-placement talk and talked about the values, beliefs and the five key takeaways the next day? Well structured and well narrated stories will get told over and over again.

Many companies have understood that employee speak is a powerful way to convey a message to both the prospective employee world to attract them and to the current employees to cement their beliefs about the company. But what most of these are getting wrong is that employees asserting that the company listens, the company empowers, the company has an open culture is again never as credible as when employees let stories about their experience of the same and let the listener come to the conclusion.

Many of these companies label the videos as 'employee stories' as stories slowly seems to have become a new management buzzword. In the last few weeks I have watched 50 videos on company websites and company YouTube channels, and of these only 6 are actually stories, even though almost all of them have the word 'story' on the label. Just calling something a story doesn't make it a story. And assertions definitely don't make it a story.

According to Shawn Callahan and Mark Schenk, who run one of the world's leading business storytelling companies, there are five elements that are essential ingredients for a story.

- Stories usually start with one of two ways: with a *Time Marker* or a *Place Marker*. Most oral stories start with Time Markers. So if you hear some say "On Tuesday..." or "A few months ago..." or "In 1992..." there is a good chance you will hear a story.
- Stories are always *about something happening* – a causal sequence of events. This event followed this event which resulted in that event. Good stories help you see what's happening. Great stories help you *feel* what's happening.
- If you hear people's names, and in particular if you hear *dialogues*, then you know you are in a story.
- And it isn't a story unless *something unanticipated happens*. A story is a promise to the listener that they will learn something new. It has to contain something that is at least a little unexpected.
- While I often like to leave the story at this stage and let the listener make the obvious conclusion, often people are more comfortable in making sure the message is clear and driven home; and for that the fifth element is
- A *relevance statement*. Why am I telling you this story? What is the business point you are making. The story might even be prefaced with

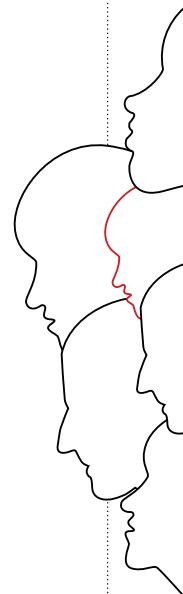


Assertions aren't often credible and can never connect to the core of an individual. Stories do. Hearing a story is as close as the listener can get to a first-hand experience of watching the event in real life

this point, e.g. "The leaders in this company really care about the well being of the employees". The rest of the story then illustrates this.

So how does one go about collecting these stories from employees? In the work I do, in order to collect stories, we run something we call anecdote circles – group discussions designed to elicit stories. Unfortunately, the question "Tell me a story about leaders caring for employees..." is unlikely to lead to the story. This is because we have been conditioned, in business, to give our opinion. "The sales are down because...", "our project needs more resources because..." etc. etc. To elicit stories, we use questions that take people to a moment in time where they experienced the same.

Since stories are best told orally, we would video record them and push them out into the ether through the various channels available to the company. So my invitation to you is to go ahead, collect and share stories and see for yourself the power of stories as it send the attractiveness of your company soaring. 🍌



# SOLO ACT TO SYMPHONY...FUTURE OF EMPLOYER BRANDING

Employer branding is not a spectator sports but a contact sport! But is it already a mega trend? Have companies redesigned their organizations to factor this as a full time role?

## ▶ HARLINA SODHI

Senior Executive Vice President – HR, IDFC Bank



Recently at a dinner with a group of senior HR leaders, it was surprising to see the conversations completely revolved around the value of employer branding. The zeal and fervor with which everyone discussed the ascendance and power of the concept was akin to the importance that has been accorded to likes of big data and culture in the recent past.

Now we all know what Employer Branding is all about; Google is full of articles, blogs and views and opinions from thought leaders to research agencies to publishing houses, all extolling the value and virtue of it. After all employer branding is not a spectator sports but a contact sport! What begs a question then is: Is it already a mega trend? Has work begun on it in holistic manner? Have companies redesigned their organizations to factor this as a full time role? Is it getting talked about in the board room? Let me share my points of view on these questions:

**Is it a mega trend? Not so far, but soon will be.** The onus lies on us as HR professionals

The onus lies on us as HR professionals and leaders to understand the subtleties and nuances related to employer branding and nurture employee value proposition to unleash employee ambassadorship

and leaders to understand the subtleties and nuances related to employer branding and nurture employee value proposition to unleash employee ambassadorship. This, together with organizations marketing efforts can become a force multiplier to propel employer branding. If all talent influencers and business leaders can put this discussion front and center, it will gain momentum.

**Has the work begun on it in a holistic manner?** No it hasn't. But that's ok. As always, there are initiators who have taken this raging bull by the horns and have started to make the inroads. They are making this their priority and focus, and are starting to invest both resources and time on it. For example, Mark Zuckerberg regularly shares his stories of dreams, successes and failures. But why is he doing it? Well, it does give tremendous impetus to the FB brand which no amount of marketing spends can! Added bonus – it's free for him! Makes business sense – right?

**Have companies redesigned their organization to factor this in as a full time role?** Progressive companies that are catching the rising tide on concepts such as Future of Work, Modern Workplaces have certainly begun to do it (Remember my conversation on the dinner table). Like it happened with Diversity and Inclusion, Internal Communication and Employee Engagement, Employer branding, which has also been an additional assignment so far, is becoming a full-time role reporting to CHRO/CXO.

**Is it getting talked about in the board room?** Yes absolutely! It has made its way to the board room. The reputation of a company both from value creation and risk management perspectives is one of the top things boards are beginning to focus on, especially in this era of IOT and social media. Astute board members and the CEO/CXO teams today are fully conscious of its materiality and have a technology leader on their board who's the soul keeper of leveraging social/technology both for creating business value as well as to fuel employee ambassadorship. Anand Mahindra, the Chairman and MD of Mahindra group consistently tweets and updates his followers on what is happening within the company. His twitter followers are 4.8 mm nearly twice of the major national dailies in India. No wonder then, his speed and reach of communication about the Mahindra brand is phenomenal!

So does employer branding really matter? Does it make business sense? Do stakeholders value it? Is there a concept of materiality to it? Such and many other questions will get asked, and are getting asked. There will be soothsayers, naysayers and opinion makers. Either way, the brand is getting built. The difference is will it be by design or default. The music will ebb and flow for a while before it reaches a crescendo, but then, that's how symphonies are written! 🎵



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# THE GIFT OF STAYING RELEVANT!

At WNS, creating a talent framework that continuously assesses an organization's skill readiness and corrects any misalignment with new talent acquisition is crucial

“**W**hat got you here won't get you there.” When management thinker and writer Marshall Goldsmith wrote a book by this title, he put succinctly one of the biggest business challenges the world faces today.

Underscoring the importance of re-tooling, he said that the capabilities that got a professional so far will not be good enough for success in the future. Today, this is a maxim that holds good for every professional as new technologies disrupt the way we work, rendering many skills redundant and making new skills critical for success. Look around and I am sure you have heard/read about robotics, automation, artificial intelligence, digital and other trends changing jobs forever.

Therefore, up-skilling or re-skilling talent to align organizational capabilities to business requirements has become a top priority for people managers across industries. They need to identify the skills that employees currently possess, map those to the company's business requirements and design programs to bridge any existing skill gaps. It means creating a talent framework that continuously assesses an organization's skill readiness and corrects any misalignment with new talent acquisition or by providing the required training to internal resources.

## What is the 'Gift of Staying Relevant'?

A few years ago an employee's definition of a good workplace was one that provided a clear career roadmap, a fair and transparent work environment, and equitable compensation. Today, they must ask another question: Is the organization creating opportunities for me to

advance my skills so that I can progress in my career? There is no better gift that organizations can give their employees than by providing them the right skills training. I call it “*the gift of staying relevant*”. Workplace practices should be tailored in a manner that employees are constantly re-skilled to stay relevant to current business environs.

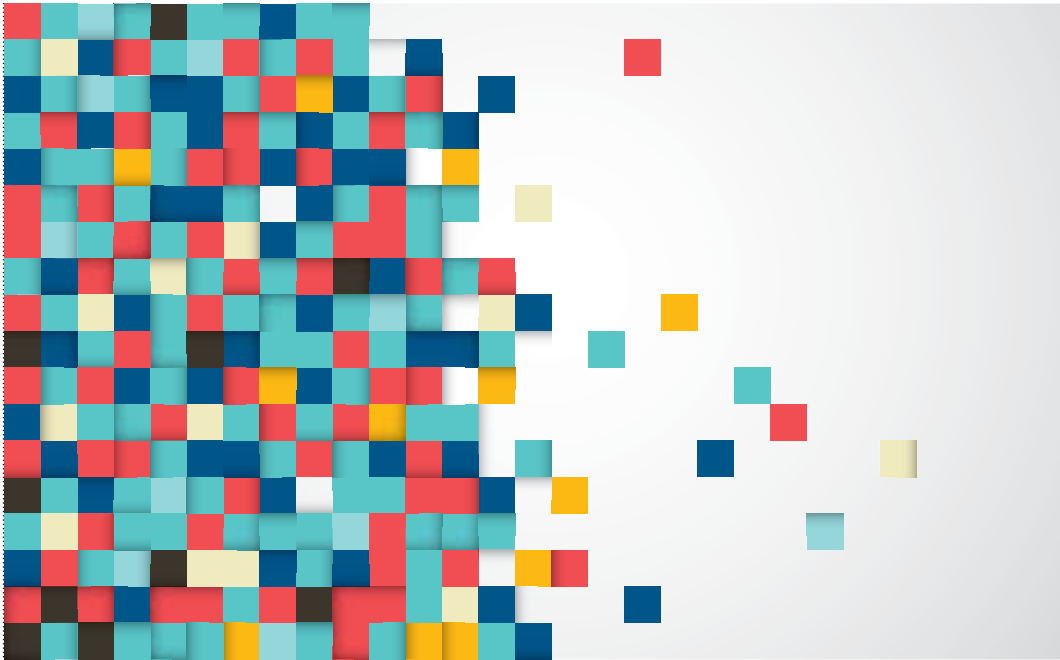
At WNS, our talent development initiatives are focused on employees' continuous skill development. We nurture potential, but more importantly, the latent potential that can be harnessed to further the company's and individual's objectives.

Our workplace talent practices are focused on developing “T-shaped” professionals – where we believe the center is the ‘T’, that stands for the individual and the three points of the “T” represent domain expertise, technology knowledge and sales orientation. We believe that the future belongs to specialists of every kind (across functions and industries).

There is no better gift that organizations can give their employees than by providing them the right skills training – “the gift of staying relevant”

► **R. SWAMINATHAN**  
Chief People Officer,  
WNS Global Services





So whether an employee has a client-facing role or not, a sales orientation will give him or her better understanding of the customer. Or someone with strong technology expertise will be able to create more relevant solutions if he or she understands the issues peculiar to a client's industry domain.

### **Design Thinking, Data Analytics in Talent Development**

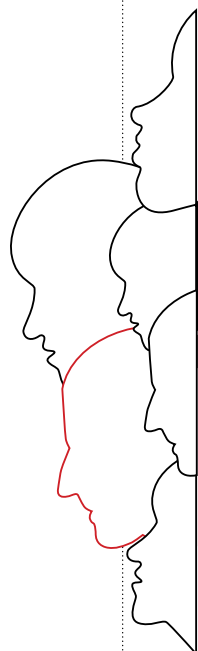
We use design thinking for our skill development programs. Design thinking in HR is nothing but putting people at the center of a program so that we look at it from people's point of view. It is about marrying insights from people and business, and incorporating those to build a program rather than going by our in-house HR learnings. With design thinking, HR managers can focus on the experience of training rather than a pre-defined process with set goals. In this methodology, the outcome is measured not only by the goals set at the beginning of training but also by the experience that employees who received training underwent – thereby making employees a part of the learning journey and tweaking the program for better results as we go.

Design thinking in skill development is becoming important also because the employee base is a heterogeneous mix with five generations of people often working in one organization. The traditional way of developing one set of training programs for the entire talent base will not work. Skills training must address the aspirations and concerns of a millennial as much as that of a baby boomer. We can now develop trainee personas and segment the trainee base accordingly to meet the unique requirements and interests of each

## At WNS, People managers create a work culture that distinguishes itself for the opportunities it provides employees to stay relevant and that allows improvisation and customization

segment. For example, millennials like to have better control of their learning journey and so we have created do-it-yourself modules that they can choose at a pace they want. Our domain university, The Gateway, is a perfect example of this mode of learning.

People managers must also use design thinking for an iterative approach to learning. They can now test solutions before launching them, and use data to either confirm or refine their program. This has given rise to HR analytics in talent development. WNS is using HR analytics for a program called Aspire in which we use data to identify and train senior managers in the organization who have the right skills, aptitude and aspiration to become functional leaders in the future. People managers have the job cut out for them – they need to create a work culture that distinguishes itself for the opportunities it provides employees to stay relevant; they need to develop frameworks that allow improvisation and customization; and they need to make use of data for better outcomes of their efforts.



# SMARTER RECRUITMENT DECISIONS WITH WORK-FORCE INTELLIGENCE

EY believes in hiring talent that demonstrates integrity, respect and teaming with a vision to build a better working world



▶ **ANSHULA VERMA**  
India Recruiting Leader,  
EY

**R**ecruitment is undergoing a major transformation with social media platforms and analytics coming into play. The war for talent has made organizations look at various ways in which they can source the best-in-class talent and retain it. EY being one of the fastest growing professional services organization with a vision of creating highest performing teams depends on its people to identify, develop and retain the best talent in the market.

To ensure we find the best, our talent acquisition team has been structured and customized for the size and needs of the organization. With specialized functions run by dedicated teams on the basis of their expertise such as database management, market research, sourcing and stakeholder management etc., it has helped the organization in improving the quality of hire and also in providing exceptional service to its internal stakeholders.

## Hiring millennials

Millennials are the future of businesses and EY is committed to hiring the best from campuses across the country. Year on year we have increased our brand presence through various campus engagement programs including the EY

Scholarship Program, Campus Anchor Program etc. These initiatives aim at giving young graduates an opportunity to meet our leaders, seek information, understand the organization structure, values and culture thus gaining insights into what life at EY is really like.

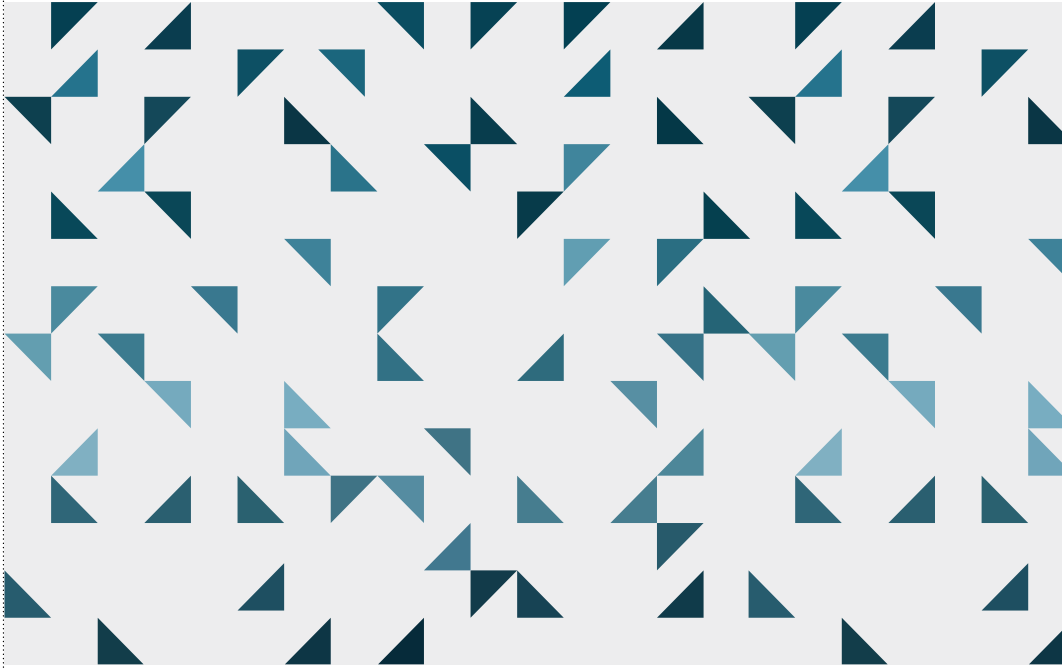
## A strong referral channel

At EY, we believe in broadening our hiring scope to maintain a strong and healthy mix for sourcing the best talent from referrals, social media, recruitment agencies and campus hiring. This has helped in creating a ready database of diverse talent that feeds smoothly into our normal recruiting stream. We pride ourselves in our strong referral contribution, a whopping 46 percent for the last year with the referral percentage for some of our large practices soaring close to 50 percent. With this referral program we are able to encourage our employees to share high potential talent from the market and build better, long-lasting and well-bonded working teams.

## Social media connect

Developing and maintaining strong candidate pools is the need of the hour. Building relationships ahead of demand ensures that even in crisis, our recruiters will be able to act quickly to fill pressing hiring needs. It is imperative to take an interactive approach that builds a community based on sharing information with candidates/prospective candidates, even if that information is not about specific job openings it keeps the candidate pool responsive.

EY uses an approach that is focused on utilizing workforce intelligence – the combination of HR analytics and strategic workforce planning to answer most critical recruiting questions while improving the team's business impact



With the advent of social media platforms, we have invested and shall continue to invest in digital platforms to tap active and passive talent. Our team currently uses various social media platforms including LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter etc. for recruitments and to stay connected with the market. Hiring via social channels ensure that we are in sync with the rhythm of the growing digital platforms.

### **Data analytics**


Analyzing and curating data to measure and improve hiring is important in order to move away from traditional recruitment methods dominated by instinct and begin to master the ability of turning everyday data into recruiting intelligence. EY uses an approach that is focused on utilizing workforce intelligence — the combination of HR analytics and strategic workforce planning to answer most critical recruiting questions and improve the team's business impact. This data-driven method enables seamless way to connect all employee data — from sourcing to hire and beyond — and also tie this into our strategic workforce planning. With this complete picture, recruiters are able to meet the demands of the organization more easily and effectively.

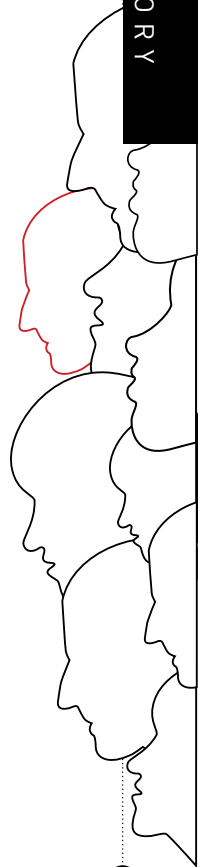
### **Diversity focus**

EY recognizes the importance of diverse teams that help serve clients better and create

We believe in broadening our hiring scope to maintain a strong and healthy mix for sourcing the best talent from referrals, social media, recruitment agencies and campus hiring

a competitive edge for the organization. We as an organization have taken it upon ourselves to ensure a healthy gender ratio at all levels by promoting and hiring more women employees. Special initiatives are being run at the organization wide level to promote gender diversity and to prevent unconscious bias. Re-enforcement from the leadership also helps us in recognizing the value in diversity, the importance of the entire organization embodying diversity, and in taking significant steps towards fulfilling diversity-driven hiring agenda.

Overall EY believes in hiring talent that demonstrates integrity, respect and teaming with a vision to build a better working world. 



# BRINGING BACK CURIOUS

Instead of waiting for the right candidate to reach them, Genpact reaches out to talent through mediums they know they frequent; and help them understand the value proposition



▶ **RITU BHATIA**  
Executive Hiring Lead  
(APAC), Genpact



▶ **SUNANDA K. MALIK**  
Talent Marketing &  
Communications Lead, Genpact

75000 employees. 74 offices in 25 countries. \$2.57 bn in revenues. Listed on the NYSE for a decade. And this is what a candidate said when one of our recruiters called her to fix an interview about a year back.

“Genpact who?”

To be fair, the candidate was based in one of the newer geographies for us and was from a different industry. Yet, this incident wasn't isolated. We faced varying levels of awareness when speaking with candidates outside of India. In India, the challenge was of a different kind – legacy. For too long, we'd been associated with the term 'BPO' and were now having trouble convincing doctors, actuaries, chartered accountants, and techies that they would be doing meaningful work here.

## The power of employer branding

It is no secret that companies with a strong employer brand have higher revenue growth, lower cost per hire and see an increase in quantity and quality of hire. And yet, few companies make a material investment in marketing to candidates. At a recent recruitment conference, it appeared that less than 10 percent of the companies present had a dedicated employer branding person and even fewer had a dedicated team. This, despite statistics showing that 75 percent of job seekers today consider an employer's brand before even

applying for a job. Of course, one could argue that companies like Google, Facebook, and other large B2C organizations have been doing this really well for a long time, but let's face it, when employee perks include being able to bring your dog to work and get free massages on campus, you don't need to worry about employer branding. For the rest who don't have bankers and barbers in office, we need to work harder at winning over candidates.

## Not just a rat RACE

At Genpact, we took a conscious decision of setting up a talent marketing function that would partner with the executive hiring function to bolster recruitment efforts. Here are the 4 steps we took (christened the **RACE** model) to develop and kick off our flagship campaign, Bring Back Curious, which aims at establishing our employer brand as a vibrant and curious workplace.

*Research (yourself and your target audience):*

Unless we know why talent is attracted to us and stays with us, we won't know what to tell people. As we spoke to people inside and outside the company, this is what we learnt: Employees quoted 'learning opportunities', 'empowering culture' and 'cross functional exposure' as the top reasons for working with Genpact; external talent revealed the need of ownership and exposure to different kinds of work; while our leaders stated that they looked for intellectual agility and curiosity in the talent they hire.

*Articulate (and read between the lines):* We found an inherent connection between what the groups were saying – When people with endless curiosity are exposed to a culture that encourages questions, it leads to learning, empowerment, and growth. And that's how we arrived at the concept of: “Bring Back Curious”, the idea being that most people start out curious as children but as life happens, they often lose that sense of wonder. However, our culture encourages people to bring that curiosity back.

*Create (and be bold!):* Joan Gantz Cooney, a television producer in the late 1960s wanted to use television to spread literacy in toddlers. She envisioned a one hour show that would air five times a week. Skeptics scoffed at the idea of television doing anything other than entertain. And yet,

When people with endless curiosity are exposed to a culture that encourages questions, it leads to learning, empowerment, and growth



her show Sesame Street undoubtedly has been one of the most acclaimed educational TV shows till date. Before our campaign was launched, many took a double take at the phrasing of “Bring Back Curious”. Wouldn’t “bring curiosity back” make more grammatical sense? However, some of the most iconic marketing slogans have played with the rules of grammar, including Apple’s ‘Think Different’, Adidas’ ‘Impossible is Nothing’, and California Milk Processor Board’s ‘Got Milk’. The point is to cut through the clutter.

**Execute (where the talent is):** Any marketer worth his/her CTR will tell you that social and digital is where you get the bang for a buck. We took the campaign across Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn as well as made updates to our careers website, job descriptions, recruitment collateral and other touch points. The campaign focuses on bringing to life the stories of actual employees and how they bring back curious every day. Once launched, we experienced an increase of 22 percent engagement in our social channels. Our engagement rate went through the roof which led to our Talent Brand Index sharply rising over a short time. The number of applications increased significantly which led to a consistent rise in our direct hiring rate.

### **Gender diversity. Not just a ‘tick in the box’**

The previous year, we started off with a campaign focused on increasing gender diversity at the mid to senior levels (first in India and then to the US and UK). Christened Career 2.0, the campaign aims to bring women who have taken a sabbatical, back to the workforce. This stemmed from global research that many women tend to drop out of the workforce due to multiple reasons and when they want to get back, they either worry about outdated skills, or don’t know how to get started. Career 2.0 gave hope to these women and helped them gain the confidence they needed by assuring them that their time away would not be held against them and that they would come back to full time roles at their market value.

We received an overwhelming response both in terms of quantitative and qualitative feedback. Hashtags flew thick and fast, mentions flooded social media accounts and the buzz grew manifold. News about the program went viral in a matter of days, and we got prominently featured in national dailies and news channels. But the most rewarding aspect was the personal connect from the women who applauded our efforts to give them what they deserved. We suddenly went from “who are you” to “thank you for an opportunity like this.”

Since then, we have done webchats and events through partners like Sheroes, JobsforHer and Gurgaon Moms. Our story has been blogged about and converted to a case study by LinkedIn. Overall, Career 2.0 has given us close to 80 talented and dynamic women employees who are extremely passionate about their careers and want to strike a balance between work and family. This has helped increase our confidence in our ability to communicate directly and reinforced our faith in





Genpact has successfully shifted more than 50 percent of its hiring to smarter sources, and has created and leveraged new channels that have proven to be both quick and cost effective

the power of employer branding on social media tremendously.

### **Connect, check. Impact, check**

As we look back at the last 2 years, it’s clear that the investment in employer branding and partnership between the recruitment and talent marketing teams has paid off. We have successfully shifted more than 50 percent of our hiring to smarter sources and created and leveraged new channels that have proven to be both quick and cost effective.

Our recruiters today are viewed as business partners. Where earlier we were relying solely on search partners, today we have a strong social media sourcing strategy with proven results. Instead of waiting for the right candidate to reach us, we reach out to talent through mediums we know they frequent, and help them understand the value proposition ourselves. It’s a freer world where it’s easier for us now to connect and understand the candidates ourselves and talent landscape in a far less formal setup.

Our sourcing strategy has completely changed with our learnings, hits and misses. We are at a point now where we are debating and looking at more mediums and ways on social media to conquer... “What’s next” is the buzzword these days in our teams.  

# BALANCING HUMAN CONNECT & TECHNOLOGY

Today, technology has brought a total disruption in the entire recruiting landscape. But we surely need technology and human connection to provide a “WOW” experience to candidates



► **SATYA D. SINHA**  
CEO of the HR Services  
firm, Mancer Consulting

Nothing can replace the human element in Talent Acquisition; technology will enable TA professionals to engage better and make smart hiring decisions. TA space has many manual use cases; if technology can automate at least few of the use cases, it will enable TA professionals to discover, network and engage with top qualified candidates quickly.

Finding the best-fit talent and providing an excellent candidate experience is at the core of any recruitment process. Smart recruiters strive to efficiently accomplish both. They do it by using their headhunting, selling and relationship-building skills. A typical hiring process involves screening resumes and interacting with candidates before shortlisting a few who are most suitable for an open position. Although the process is exhausting for recruiters, consistent human interaction results in a better experience for candidates.

However, things have been changing quite fast. Today, technology has brought a total disruption in the entire recruiting landscape. The advancements in technology, especially the Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning have completely changed the way companies hire talent. In TA space we surely need technology and human connection to provide a “WOW” experience to candidates.

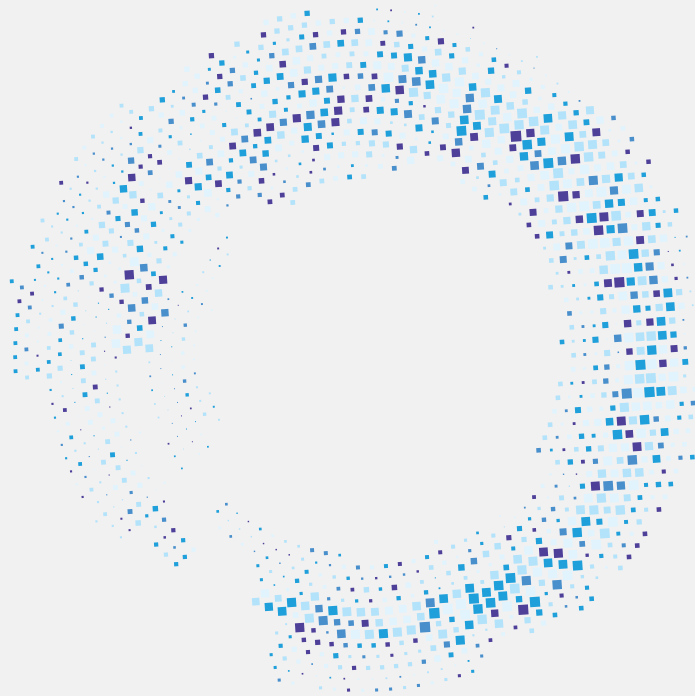
Fast-growing companies can make or break their business plans based on how quickly they can find the right candidates. In the coming days, the only businesses that will survive are those who are innovating, leveraging data and embracing change. TA space surely needs Next Gen platforms which can help recruiters to discover candidates, engage candidates and help to make data backed decisions.

Mancer started investing in HR Tech companies and recently invested in a company (Param.ai), which is working on innovating “In-bound recruiting” and automating many manual use cases in candidate engagement. Param. ai Technology plugs into the company’s internal talent databases (ATS and CRM), and cleans, updates and standardizes the data. Smart algorithms read the historical and trending hiring patterns of the company against each role and ranks, and then matches them against open job roles and other relevant roles which may not be captured by the Job Description.

Existing solutions are still largely based on Boolean logic and recruiters have to manually input, which adds another manual use case to their Job. Param’s smart algo auto picks the desired skills and starts mining huge data set that would help recruiters to engage with only the top qualified candidates. It not only matches, but the candidate summary feature helps recruiters to “make great hiring decisions”.

According to a research published on HR.com, a majority of candidates think that discussions with recruiters are the best way to know about the company’s culture and if they are the right fit for the organization. However, it is hard to get such insights if technology replaces recruiters. Technology has also altered the way candidates apply and interview for jobs. Many candidates, particularly middle and senior level professionals feel frustrated when they spend a lot of time in applying for a job, just to find out that their candidature has been rejected by a drone-like resume filtering system.

Technology has also altered the way candidates apply and interview for jobs; it could be hard to get insights through discussions if technology replaces recruiters




Also, professionals who are already employed may not have enough time to input detailed information to "convince" technology to get shortlisted by software applications. It is like one-way investment where candidates need to do almost everything and the employers simply use a few search strings and algorithms to decide the fate of the qualified talent.

Today, the world is facing a severe talent crunch. The demand exceeds the supply when it comes to the number of qualified professionals. This gives leverage to the talented people due to which they may refuse a job offer if the position or the employer is not hard-sold to them. Thus, bad candidates' experiences may lead to increased number of refusals from the selected candidates. Therefore, under no circumstances, organizations can afford to deteriorate the candidate experience for better recruitment efficiencies. Our Product ManStock is the best suitable product for a better Candidate Experience.

The employers should note that the technology advancements and recruitment efficiencies can't come at the cost of candidate experience. Thankfully, there are several ways to maintain the delicate balance between the candidate experience and recruitment efficiencies: Applicants can track their application status — Let the candidates check their application status on a real-time basis. It will be favored by most of them as they will know where they stand in the

A bad candidates' experiences may lead to increased number of refusals from the selected candidates; therefore, under no circumstances, the organizations can afford to deteriorate the candidate experiences

hiring process. Also, ask some tough questions while implementing a recruitment technology solution — Ask questions which are pertinent to candidates' conveniences. For instance, how much a working professional would like to invest in the application process? Try to address these using the technology itself.

It is critical for organizations maintain a balance between making the hiring process most efficient and managing the relationship with prospective employees. It can only be done when technology is utilized to enhance and not to replace the human interaction. 

# DEVELOPING TALENT ACQUISITION TEAMS: WHOSE JOB IS IT ANYWAY?

People are, and will be, the cornerstone of any organization's success; and to recruit the best, we need to have our organization's best enrolled in that journey

**S**arah, the Marketing Head of a renowned multi-national company, was having a rough time. The Brand Manager on her most critical brand had recently quit, and they were unable to source the right replacement. In the past few days, HR had sent her multiple candidates who had cleared the selection process, but none was making the cut in her assessment. With the business being in its toughest times, this was not a staffing gap Sarah can afford!

Does this sound familiar? Talent Acquisition is a never-ending problem across multiple facets of business-linkage, turnaround time, or candidate experience.

In my ~20 years of being in HR, I have realized that "joint responsibility" of talent acquisition processes eases this pressure a lot. When HR and business partner, along with the right internal and external experts work together, it significantly improves the quality, timeliness and acceptance metrics – it not only brings the right expertise into the hiring process (thereby making it faster and more streamlined), but also ensures hiring the right person and a great experience to all involved. More sourcing avenues open up, hiring managers have more ownership of the talent they have helped recruit and the system slowly starts operating as "one team" to hire and retain the very best!

However, very few companies are able to do this successfully, and the reasons range from time crunch to capability gaps to "is it my job?!" Below

In this highly digitized and technology-enabled world, the differentiator will be companies which are able to bring in the human element

are my top ten tips on how companies can break this barrier and make talent acquisition a business AND HR responsibility:

**Leadership advocacy:** How your leader perceives and communicates the importance of talent acquisition is the single biggest "make or break" element of joint ownership. The organization is highly perceptible and reads into informal gestures more than a formal town hall script. Ensure that the system has the right leadership sponsorship, both formally and informally, and leaders see acquiring the right talent as critical as building the right brands/products.

**Ingrain it in the DNA of your organization metrics:** It is critical to be clear on what success looks like, especially since it will involve considerable time and effort at their end. This will ensure that all stakeholders are committed to the time spent, and it is budgeted for and supported. I know of a few companies which articulate "organization" responsibility as a critical performance metric for their middle-management and above levels, which drives significant ownership and results.

**Integrated end-to-end talent management processes:** "Joint responsibility" is an overall talent management philosophy. If you plan to involve your business managers into recruitment and no other organization processes (like organization design, performance management, learning and development, etc.), your approach is bound to fail on both counts. Go for joint responsibility only if it is a philosophy that works for your organization and then embrace it across all fronts – intensity, however, across various processes can vary.

**Innovation must be a strong by-product:** Your Talent Acquisition systems should get better and better as time passes by, especially since the external environment is highly dynamic. As you get more involvement from your line teams,

▶ **SONALI ROYCHOWDHURY**  
Director HR, Indian Subcontinent & IMEA Distributor Operations, Procter & Gamble



channelize their ideas and energies to innovate the system for future. I remember when I was heading Recruitment for Procter and Gamble in India back in the '90s, my biggest innovation idea came from a Marketing New Hire who was a part of our Campus Team.

**Make it aspirational!** I was talking to one of my mentees recently who has just got promoted to middle-management. The biggest AHA for him related to his promotion was not the bigger role or higher salary... it was in fact that he is now an organizational leader and can be an interviewer on campus!

- Ensure that the right rewards and recognition (including leadership exposure) are in place for the extended Talent Acquisition team, so that being a part of organizational activities is aspirational for them. Only then will you be able to attract top talent with high passion.

**Build capability:** A few years back, my recruitment team brought to my notice a senior business manager who was making multiple recruitment errors. Essentially, the person was just not able to select the right candidate! On doing a deep-dive, we realized that the manager was not trained enough on our interviewing process – and all it took from our side was a focused one-day interviewing college, along with 10-12 interviews where experienced interviewers coached him on-the-job on the nuances of interviewing. My key learning from this experience is that we should never underestimate the power of capability-building and not leave anything to chance. This is critical now when we are looking for more diverse profiles, yet we have to calibrate to the competencies needed in the company.

**Allocate based on expertise:** The starting point is identifying the 'what' and the 'who'.

- What are the skill-sets required to perform a particular hiring activity?
- Who (within and outside your organization) is the right person to perform that activity?

For example, the hiring manager might be the best person to shortlist profiles because they best understand the vacant job, recent campus recruit might be the best person to be campus ambassador because they best understand the target audience, an outsourcing agency might be the best person to manage hiring logistics because they are SMEs of that process, so on and so forth.

**Automate, automate and automate:** As you involve more arms and legs into your processes, the system will become more complex and prone to manual errors. Tracking and follow-ups will take exponentially more time. Hence, proactively identify areas where you can automate and prioritize running them like a machine. For example, make




“Joint responsibility” of talent acquisition processes significantly improves the quality, timeliness and acceptance metrics

job applications online, track via mobile applications, integrate with a hi-tech travel agency, etc.

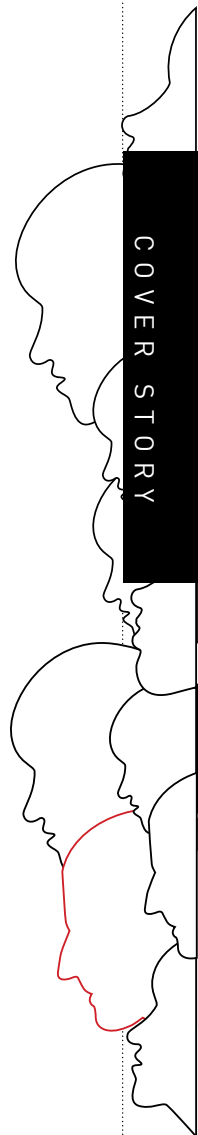
**Proactively handle the distractors:** In my experience, nothing stalls a team of highly-motivated people more than unnecessary distractors. Ensure that you have proactively killed all of them before they become a barrier for your resources – pre-align budgets, pre-book calendars, systematize your communication channels, so on and so forth.

**Human touch** – The more people get involved, the more you can tap into bringing personal touch into your processes, especially candidate experience. In this highly digitized and technology-enabled world, the differentiator will be companies which are able to bring in the human element. There are multiple ways of doing that – mentor/buddy roles, softer skills trainings, scorecards, etc.

*Richard Dupree, former CEO of P&G, said in 1947, “If you leave us our money, our buildings, and our brands, but take away our people, the company will fail. But if you take away our money, our buildings, and our brands, but leave us our people, we can rebuild the whole thing in a decade.”*

People are, and will be, the cornerstone of any organization's success. And to recruit the best, we need to have our organization's best enrolled in that journey. 

(With inputs from Himani Maharshi, Senior Manager-Human Resources, Supply Chain)



# INTEGRATING HUMAN AND TECHNOLOGY

Intelligent technology has touched and improved upon almost every aspect of the employee lifecycle, and talent acquisition arguably is one of the areas which has greatly benefitted by it

► **VINAY DESHPANDE**  
Chief People Officer  
- Financial Services  
Sector, Mahindra &  
Mahindra Group



In today's times, where the world is increasingly becoming global with accessibility to global resources, the focus is paramount on creating a unique experience for the consumer. It is no longer, business as usual. According to CK Prahalad and MS Krishnan (authors of *The New Age of Innovation: Driving Co-Created Value Through Global Networks*), there has been "a significant transformation from a business process focus on the firm to a business process focus on each unique customer experience."

In the world of talent acquisition, we are slowly but surely waking up to this phenomenon with a mounting focus on candidate experience. This also has a lot to do with the "Gen Z" entering the work force. HR teams are familiar with smart and tech-savvy Gen Y, but Gen Z has grown up in a world where information is not only real time but voice and gesture controlled.

HR teams are increasingly looking to technology and tools to manage the five generations in the workforce that are functioning side-by-side. Machine learning, algorithms and Artificial Intelligence are the buzzwords currently flitting through hallowed halls of corporate offices and HR professionals' minds. Artificial intelligence is about devices or applications designed to think and act rationally, taking decisions based on the data that is fed into the programs. Some of the most

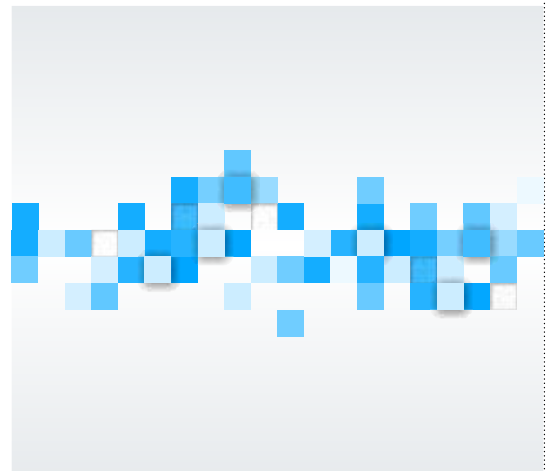
advanced AI tools are "artificial assistants" that are solely focused on improving the candidate experience. These tools help to automate and customize communication processes with candidates during the entire hiring process. Machine learning was developed as a branch of Artificial Intelligence that with Internet amounted to a huge increase in digital information being generated, stored, and made available for analysis. Engineers realized that rather than teaching computers and machines how to do everything, it would be far more efficient to code them to think like human beings, and then plug them into the Internet to give them access to all of the information in the world.

As SHRM Online reported last year, an AI tool "Mya" uses natural language technology to ask questions to candidates based on job requirements. It also answers applicants' questions about employers and keeps them apprised of their hiring status. Mya answers candidate questions on company policies, benefits and culture around-the-clock through SMS, Facebook, Skype, e-mail or through a browser window called a chat client where people can chat instantly. This saves recruiters from having to field the same questions time and again. If Mya is stumped, it contacts a human recruiter and then returns to the candidate with an answer.

Another noteworthy tool is IBM Watson, which helps recruiters derive insights from ATS data, build knowledge and offer recommendations for candidates. Watson can help recruiters measure the degree of efforts required to fill certain job openings and help prioritize job requisitions, predict with accuracy the likelihood of candidates being successful and perform social media "listening" to create insights that help recruiters improve messaging to candidates. There are other AI tools that automate the entire scheduling managing multiple calendars at once, freeing recruiters to concentrate on the strategic aspect of talent acquisition.

While there are these tools and self-learning machines, we need to pay attention to the reams of

We encourage internal growth for employees and have an active Internal Job Portal to promote lateral and upward movement for employees within Mahindra Finance



data collected – “big data analytics”. This has been successfully implemented in the business areas for organizations and is now being more frequently applied to various areas in the human resources function — talent acquisition, onboarding, training, talent management, employee engagement, and attrition. Since Talent Acquisition is the first and one of the most important, not to forget, also one of the most expensive stages in the employee life cycle – it is perhaps the most sensible area for the implementation of data analytics.

It is widely understood that as compared to a telephonic conversation, video calling enables you to have deeper conversations, where you are able to pick up on subtle non-verbal cues of human behavior. In the SMAC world, with an increasing penetration of mobility devices and Internet, the playing field has been vastly leveled. Information, ideas are accessible even in the remotest parts of world and helps create a better, smarter world.

With AI tools and machine learning taking over more and more operational tasks, areas and jobs that cannot be automated are going to be even more powerful and valuable. We, unfortunately, tend to give the short end to the human side of things under pressure of processes, tasks and odd menial jobs. With technology helping to tackle these tasks in a faster and more efficient manner, we as a class of people would be able to concentrate on the more human attributes which cannot be programmed in a robot. The Indian consumer has always been pretty tech-savvy, eager to latch on to latest innovations in the technology. The talent acquisition space has seen the advent of some of the available tools like utilizing social media for employer branding – creating employee growth stories and creating a brand worth working for. At Mahindra Finance, we have painstakingly built the brand and created a trusting relationship with the heart of India – rural and semi-urban markets, which is the core of our organization both from a customer and employee perspective. It was a part of our strategic vision to maximize hiring from the areas which act as our primary customer base so that our employees understand the culture, topography, business cycles and most importantly customer sentiment.

Following through the philosophy of hiring locally and the strong brand pride that we have in our employees, it is perhaps not surprising that our largest source for new hires is employee referrals. More than 50 percent of our hiring every year has been through our employees. This in itself is a strong indicator of the sense of pride, engagement and commitment that our employees feel for the brand.


We also encourage internal growth for employees and have a very active Internal Job Portal to promote lateral and upward movement for employees within Mahindra Finance. Around 30 percent of hires across India were closed through IJP movements in FY15-16. We also have a very active Internal

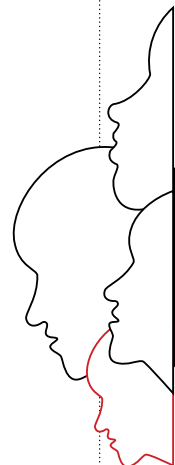


We are in the process of upgrading to a new HCM suite which will help us to complete the entire talent acquisition process right from job posting to onboarding with minimum human intervention

Job Portal within the Mahindra group, leveraging talent from across industries but with the same sense of internal pride and values.

Intelligent technology has touched and improved upon almost every aspect of the employee lifecycle and talent acquisition arguably is one of the areas which has greatly benefitted by it. From ATS (Applicant Tracking System), posting vacancies to multiple job boards, to intelligent resume parsing and screening, we have seen it all. Mahindra Finance has several aptitude and psychometric tests in place at various levels for testing candidates’ various functional and behavioral competencies. We are also in the process of upgrading to a new HCM suite which will help us to complete the entire talent acquisition process right from job posting to onboarding with minimum human intervention. We are also adopting a completely new on-boarding process which is based on principles of gamification to create a better connect with the new employees and making the on-boarding process enjoyable and fun.

As a concept, balancing ‘human’ and ‘tech’ may soon be replaced with the word “Integrating”. Integrating the human connection with the new age technology would make us efficient, productive and at the same time relevant. 



# DESIGN THINKING - THE NEW PREAMBLE FOR TALENT ACQUISITION, RETENTION & GROWTH

While design thinking has mostly been associated with a company's operations, it can now be explored in an organization through several methods



► **AADESH GOYAL**  
Global Head - Human  
Resources, Tata  
Communications

Talent acquisition and retention have always been topics of great discussion and debate across enterprises and academics globally. The advent of the digital economy has quickened the pace and the intensity of these conversations. Value engineered and highly designed HR strategies and policies have become the mainstay of all conversations as organizations are dealing with digital disruption across various functions.

Josh Bersin at Deloitte estimated that in 2017<sup>1</sup>, HR teams will focus on designing high-value experiences to get employees to be excited about their role in the organization and keep them inspired through varied engagements. These efforts could range from curating opportunities to developing skills or enabling the option to explore newer skillsets, to introducing flexibility at work. As employees innovate to create tailor-made products and services, companies are taking this opportunity to retain resources by allowing them the opportunity of all-round growth alternatives in the organisation.

Design thinking can be explored in an organization through several methods<sup>2</sup>. While an organizational design helps to hone roles in a company during restructuring, engagement ensures that the work done by the employees is made easier, efficient and that good work is rewarded appropriately. User experience is at the core of all design thinking. Employee satisfaction is the prime motivator for creating a robust and symbiotic learning

and development module for employees across organizations.

Today, the teams managing employee relations are expected to innovate to form new digital tools to create seamless experiences for employees. The aim is to create an ecosystem of learning and development that will help nurture talent across levels and functions which works to not only retain talent but also acquire good resources.

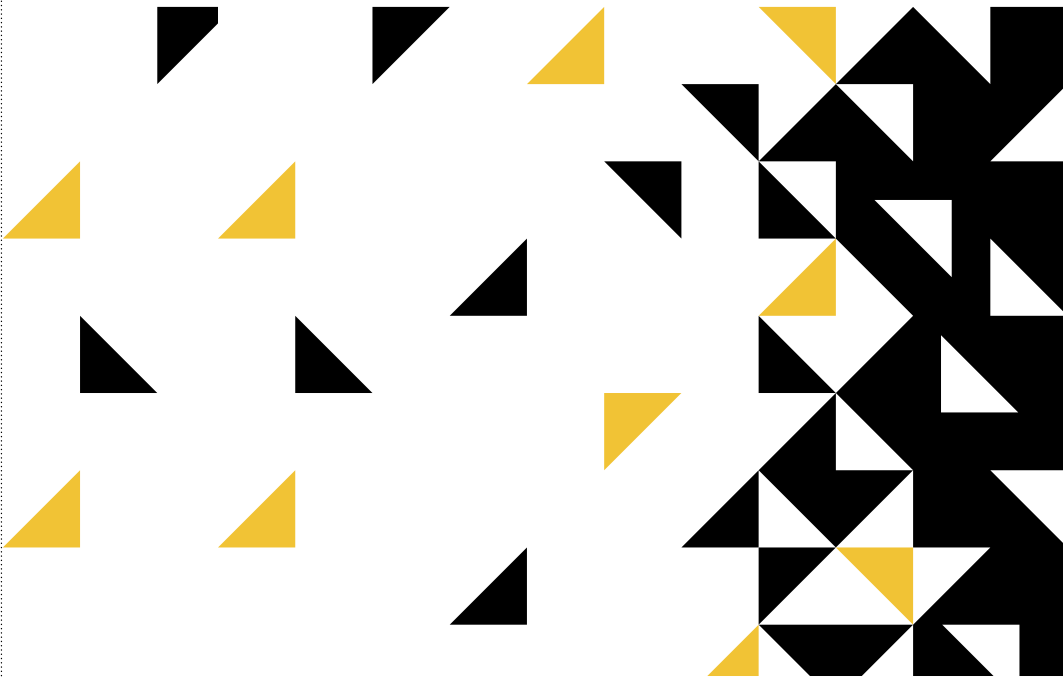
Processes are being made simpler for hiring managers and candidates through the extensive use of digital technologies that allow them to make their processes less complex. At Tata Communications, design-thinking helped us to create a solution that could sharpen our recruitment processes. Our hiring managers now save ample time and effort by using an artificial intelligence (AI) based automated tool that auto-matches a role with best-in-class individuals. Analytics and automation are also brought into play when a new employee joins the company.

Our semi-automated social induction program aims to create a network experience by announcing the arrival of the new employee to the team and providing a checklist of things they could do to make the employee feel welcomed. This could be something as simple as recommending a must-read document/induction material or a restaurant near the office. The program helps break the ice around a new joinee and enables quicker socialisation within the system.

We also have 'Shape the Future' initiative which endorses our open culture and gives employees an opportunity to give inputs on the operational functioning of the company and contribute to the

User experience is at the core of all design thinking; and employee satisfaction is the prime motivator for creating a robust and symbiotic learning and development module for employees





direction the company is headed towards. Under the initiative, employees can submit ideas that they believe have the capability to evolve into a \$200-million business in a decade and impact masses. The best ones are selected and the ideators are allocated teams that can help implement the idea effectively. The effort paves the way for employees to innovate, gain new skills and become an integral part of the organisation's growth.


Today, companies follow the thumb-rule of growing their employees not just in the company but also as individuals with various capabilities through skill development initiatives. The ecosystem has evolved to embrace a return investment in employees, with the belief that the return would be substantial towards innovation and creativity — the principles that help organizations to stay ahead of the curve.

At Tata Communications, we created an internal Project Marketplace that spans across 40 countries to enable employees to contribute their skills to key projects, build new skills and create new networks within the organization. The internal platform enables anyone across the business to register their skills and to seek assistance on a project from staff around the world. This again leverages world class digital collaboration and connectivity tools and helps employees inch closer to their ambitions by adding to their capabilities.

Feedback systems have also progressed today to save time while keeping intact the personal connection with the employees. Spending long hours in filling unwieldy forms while evaluating an employee's work are processes that have faded away, as platforms are now equipped to handle instant responses coupled with feedback mechanisms.

Design-thinking has helped us to create a solution that has sharpened our recruitment processes – our hiring managers now use an AI based automated tool that auto-matches a role with best-in-class individuals

Processes and strategies today are being decoded in terms of data-dependent strategies, removing any ambiguity in processes and results. This demystification today is further trickling down to hiring processes to ensure a better quality of talent addition in the company. Meanwhile advanced analytics are utilizing several tools that help with better sourcing of candidates.

While design thinking has mostly been associated with a company's operations, the fourth industrial revolution presents a canvas that can be custom-painted for every single employee. Talent acquisition processes are expected to become more precise and automated. Talent will always be key to enable a thriving and market – leading organization. 

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# REINVENTING TALENT ACQUISITION

Talent Acquisition is attracting a receptive audience or nudging the passive audience to interested receptive audience, which hopefully manifests in higher conversion rates in closing the organizational manpower requirement



► **MEENAKSHY SRIDHAR**  
Head, Recruitment –  
Corporate and Services,  
Reliance Industries  
Limited

In India, in the past few years, the economy has not been greatly affected despite a global economic slowdown. While IT industry may not have done as well, certain sectors like e-commerce, healthcare, hydrocarbon are on the growth path. The hiring outlook is neither exponential nor completely null but it is more linear.

For me, talent acquisition as a value chain in the organizational context comprises of 'Attraction, Assessment, Engagement & Retention'. At the risk of sounding negative, if you don't perform any one of these acts correctly, you stand a chance of getting a 'not-so-relevant' candidate onboard. In my honest opinion, the theme of Talent Acquisition is attracting a receptive audience or nudging the passive audience to interested receptive audience, which hopefully manifests in higher conversion rates in closing the organizational manpower requirement. While this sounds pretty simple, let me tell you, this goes beyond key word search in resumes on job board!

My over 17 years of experience in Talent Acquisition function helps me simplify the entire aim of the function by:

- Accurately defining the quality inputs (what traits, skills, competences, etc.) one is looking for to bring on board as employees and future leaders
- To be mirrored in the output (what you assess and hire for)

The pointers above may seem simple, however, in organizations with massive scale of operations or in conglomerates, adhering to the process of input and output needs relentless effort and a must element to eliminate is the tendency to have inherent biases. Automation and other technologies have helped in streamlining many processes and reduced transactional work so that the focus can be on more critical aspects of the recruitment process. But the key challenges in recruitment have to do with the quality of candidates (who often lack in-depth knowledge in area of their specialization); the second challenge is to do with retention; and the third is to re-invent talent acquisition practices to meet demands of the market.

There are a few trends across most talent acquisition strategies in different industries, which are: 1) Social Recruiting; 2) Cultural Fitment; and 3) Diversity. Job Boards alone are not going to help find qualified candidates. Traditional tools of hiring are increasingly losing their relevance; this is where social recruiting will play an important



Talent acquisition as a value chain in the organizational context comprises of 'Attraction, Assessment, Engagement & Retention'; and if you don't perform any one of these acts correctly, you stand a chance of getting a 'not-so-relevant' candidate onboard

role. There is a far greater emphasis on organizational culture than ever before and diversity at the workplace is another goal that companies are embedding in their talent acquisition strategy — this could be cultural, socio-economic diversity, cross functional, age, gender etc.

The conventional role of the recruiter has not changed but evolved. The transactional work is being automated and there's a lot more focus on value-added work, an example being augmented hiring with social recruitment. The role of a recruiter has become similar to a marketing role, as in the future, they will carry marketing and branding role to engage the best talent available for the role. So one way to upskill TA team is to keep up with these new trends and provide opportunities to them to learn on the job and through skill development initiatives.

I would like to sum it up by saying that the purple squirrel does not exist in the market, and salary is not the only deciding factor for candidates to accept a job offer. 🐿️

*(Views expressed in the column are personal and do not reflect that of the employer or the organization.)*

# SHAPING THE FUTURE OF TALENT ACQUISITION

Expectations of organizations need to change — while performance and results cannot be compromised, the focus should be on getting the best talent and getting the best out of them while they are with the organization

► **SMRITI KRISHNA SINGH**  
CHRO, Sony Pictures Networks India

The word “talent” is a non-inclusive word i.e. it does not include everyone who checks the box on experience required for a role. Experience being equal, the word “talent” refers to the select few who have unique skills and capabilities that differentiate them from everyone else. Therefore, the future of talent acquisition lies in getting sharper and smarter at attracting the select few in a world of choices.

The challenge of talent acquisition is further heightened by the increasing entrepreneurial aspirations of talent. Starting their own ventures takes key talent out of the job market, further narrowing the talent pool.

So what should organizations do to attract talent in the future:

The first step is to be cognizant of talent expectations which are increasingly becoming diverse and non-linear. It is not just about the organization brand, role or compensation anymore. Organization culture, empowerment, the freedom to create, flexibility to indulge in personal hobbies, an opportunity to contribute to society and the likes have become important drivers of job satisfaction.

Millennials who have grown up in the information age have broad ambitions for themselves and work is just one part of their lives, and most prefer to keep it that way. Therefore, expectations of organizations also need to change — while performance and results cannot be compromised, the focus should be on getting the best talent and getting the best out of them while they are with the organization. Hopefully, they will stay for long-term if they remain excited about the organization’s vision, culture and future orientation. While some organizations have always been ahead in providing diverse exposure through HiPo programs, this will have to become second nature to attract and retain future talent. Getting key talent involved with technological and business changes of the future — seeking their opinion, allowing them to be heard and contribute in shaping the future — are all measures organizations can take to engage more deeply with talent.

The other important aspect to consider is how to reach talent. While much has been said about social media — organizations need to leverage social media smartly to attract talent. The current generation of job seekers is extremely socially connected as we know but the adage of A players attracting A players has not changed. Like organizations seek out influencers to market their products and services, they can also identify key talent and encourage them to be their “hiring



Like organizations seek out influencers to market their products and services, they can also identify key talent and encourage them to be their “hiring influencers”

influencers”. When key talent within the organization speaks well about their experiences or better still, in a world of low attention spans, says it with pictures or images (non-confidential of course) of team celebrations, capturing the spirit of the culture, the work they do, the freedom they experience and so forth, it has an impact that is wider than a senior executive talking about the organization in a formal setting. While organizations debate about what kind of information goes out on social media and what kind of rules need to apply, social connections over Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. are a reality and organizations must be flexible to adapt to that reality.

If we are paying good attention to key talent, the issues of misuse can be managed through appropriate guidance rather than throwing the rule book at them that kills all social conversation about the organization.

There are fascinating technological developments taking place with AI, bots etc. in the field of talent acquisition. While they will aid in improving speed and quality of the process, they can never replace human touch which I predict will continue to be the key driver in converting key talent from candidate to employee. 📧

# HR needs to refine its data and critical evaluation skills

In an exclusive conversation with People Matters, **Alexander Alonso**, Senior Vice President - Knowledge Development, SHRM talks about his career trajectory, SHRM Competency Model, automation of HR processes, data skills for HR professionals, and scenario-based learning approach

By J. Jerry Moses & Bhuvan Gupta



**A**lexander Alonso is the Senior Vice President of Knowledge Development, SHRM. Prior to this, he was the Vice President of Research at SHRM. Dr. Alonso has been instrumental in the development of SHRM Competency Model, and has also served as the head of examination development and operations for the SHRM Certified Professional and Senior Certified Professional certifications. Dr. Alonso has also been honored by the American Psychological Association and the Society for Industrial Organizational Psychology (SIOP) for his contributions to applied psychology and workforce research.

Below is an excerpt from his conversation with People Matters where he talks about the skills that HR professionals need and the importance of finance and technology for the HR function.

**Q You're back from SHRM's Tech'17. How was your experience like?**

**A** The conference was exciting for a number of reasons. Firstly, it was a truly global conference with over 13 countries representing. But what made it sensational was the fact that it was the perfect place for learning. The entrepreneurial spirit and the opportunities to learn about technology were great.

**Q You've had a long career in knowledge management. Please tell us how the SHRM competency model came about.**

**A** I started out with SHRM as the lead researcher for designing the SHRM Competency Model. It was my job to design and validate the HR Competency Model. In this effort, we worked with more than 32,000 individuals to develop and validate it over a year and a half.

The research is fascinating because it gave us insights into both behavioral and

As the move from less tactical task work to more strategic functioning takes over, we're seeing a greater emphasis on the behavioral skills than the technical knowledge

technical competencies. The most critical competencies can be broken down into four clusters: 1) Technical expertise – that includes 15 different areas of functional knowledge. Let’s say I’m a talent acquisition professional, an area of knowledge for me would be to do with recruitment retention and selection skills. The three other clusters have to do with behavioral competencies: 2) Leadership; 3) Interpersonal skills – how well you build and manage relationships; and 4) Business acumen, one part of this is to do with your core business skills – how do you make business decisions? What is your judgment like? The other side is to do with how well you analyze data and information to help you achieve business decisions. As the move from less tactical task work to more strategic functioning takes over, we’re seeing a greater emphasis on behavioral skills than technical knowledge in the upcoming five to ten years.

**Q What skills (technical, leadership, interpersonal or business acumen) do HR professionals need to refine?**

**A** HR professionals have the greatest opportunity to enhance data skills and critical evaluation skills in service of organizational objectives. What’s interesting about Big Data is that a good portion of it is not what Big Data can do for you, but how you can apply Big Data? Adopting a data scientist’s approach for analyzing business problems, but beyond collecting data, will impact operations most. It is also critical to understand what relationships exist between the data and how they impact the outcomes. So that’s the area which needs continuous refinement and it looks like HR is doing a good job.

**Q What should HR professionals do to build these data skills?**

**A** The most effective route is a combination of approaches to learning. I’ve seen programs within organizations that are exploratory, and are meant to be like assignments that give people a chance to understand what data they should be collecting, what the nature of data is and how they should be using that data. That’s an experiential approach.

According to DDI Worldwide Leadership forecast, 3 of the 5 people consider mentoring or coaching as one of the ways to develop oneself as a leader or as a consumer of data. Coaches play a vital role in ensuring that: 1) You’re thinking about what data usage means; and 2) Understanding what it means for your organization. When I think back to the way that I was trained as an organizational psychologist, what was really effective for

me was to sit down with my professor and have him walk me through a data set and explain to me what he thought about data and the questions that he asked himself while looking at that data. This is approach that I would expect HR professionals to take — to sit with their mentors and say, “How do you think about this data?” And more importantly, “What would you want to collect as data that we’re not collecting today?”

**Q What are your thoughts about automation when it comes to HR processes?**

**A** I think automation will create a new set of challenges for the HR profession, but I don’t think it will replace the HR profession in any way, shape or form. What frightens me is that we create fatigue, burnout or reasons for the workforce to be dissatisfied rather than finding ways to make their work-life easier, or to make the employee-employer connection smooth — for me, the risk with automation lies in not getting it right which can have a detrimen-

## What frightens me is that we create fatigue, burnout or reasons for the workforce to be dissatisfied rather than finding ways to make their work-life easier, or to make the employee-employer connection smooth

tal effect on the relationship between the employer and employee. But I think that’s a place where the HR plays a good role.

A tool that HR professionals need to use, but they don’t always, except in larger enterprises is concept testing or pilot testing. One example is a “think aloud interview” and it’s a tool that would be invaluable for every HR professional. Imagine you are using Snapchat and tracking your daily tasks — a think aloud approach would have you tell me how you think about the ways that you use it and track your daily activities, responsibilities. How do you communicate information? Who do you share it with? How and what do you share? So you tell me on a cognitive level what it is that you would do and how you would use and what my objective is. It tells me how you’re thinking and interpreting the world that is valid.

**Q How has the learning content and mode of delivery evolved for HR professionals over the years?**

**A** From a professional development perspective, SHRM takes a scenario-based learning approach. A part of what we do is that we grow our repository of scenarios that someone might experience. And the other side of the coin is that we build educational content around those types of scenarios. In the last two years, we’ve added 1200 new pieces of behavioral competencies content — all designed with micro-learning, e-learning, and seminar-based events to enable people to effectively respond if faced with such scenarios. People ask us all the time as to why we focus on this and the truth is that it is because research told us that this is where we needed to be.

Ten years ago, our portfolio was primarily live events and seminars. There were limited asynchronous training, we had some virtual offerings. As we go on to grow on in the next ten years, we will focus more on specialized micro-learning opportunities and on specialty micro-credentials.

**Q What is your one key takeaway from this trip?**

**A** The number one skill that is often overlooked in communication is listening, and for me, the most valuable thing about coming here is not to share insights, it is actually to learn from others — to borrow others’ perspectives, scenarios and learn about other people’s unique journeys of growth and applying that to my own context in my day-to-day work.

**Q Are there any functional areas that HR needs to pay attention to?**

**A** One of the two areas that stand out to me is finance, and it’s not just understanding finance from an accounting standpoint, but finance from “how do I build a business case and understand the pro forma financials behind it?” perspective. The other area is technology — the easiest way for any organization to fall down in terms of its strategy is to ignore the relationship between human resources and technology. **cm**

# HIPO PROGRAMS

ARE THEY DELIVERING  
ON THE PROMISE?



SPECIAL STORY

56 percent organizations agree that HiPo programs are somewhat effective when it comes to ROI. To assess whether HiPo programs have proved credible, People Matters, in partnership with Right Management organized the fifth edition of HiPo week that facilitated discussions about how effective HiPo programs have proved for organizations and what can be done to accelerate their impact. This Special Story highlights the key takeaways from the HiPo week!

**By People Matters Editorial Team**

**Y**ear after year, the HiPo Week has covered diverse themes to enable and assist leaders promote and strengthen their HIPO programs — from enriching discussions around various facets related to understanding how HiPo's can enhance the Employer Value Proposition, developing high potential employees, analyzing the perspectives of the different stakeholders on HiPo programs, to designing and customizing HiPo programs.

For the 5th year, Right Management & People Matters have collaborated to present the HiPo week with a fresh perspective. And this year, the focus is on the effectiveness of HIPO programs.

It's a fact that a focus on ROI is critical for businesses across industries, and cost optimization has become the new normal. And regardless of the objectives that HIPO programs have had in the past (creating an internal pipeline for succession, key talent retention, leadership alignment) — the point of discussion today is how effective have the HIPO programs been to move such metrics. And while HiPo programs are extremely critical for building a strong leadership pipeline and future-proof organizations, an increased focus is on how we can really overcome the challenges associated with execution of Hipo programs, and how can organizations augment their impact.

*This special story captures a few reflections from the HiPo week.*



# ARE HIGH-POTENTIAL PROGRAMS DELIVERING?

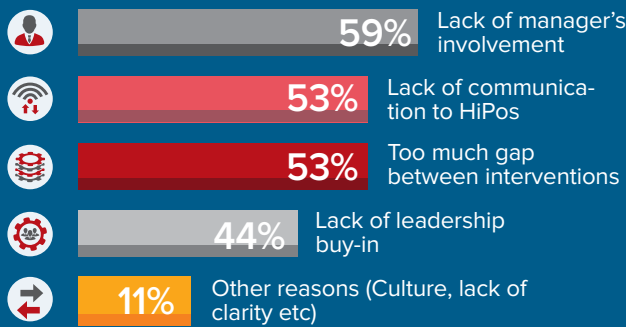
## A RIGHT MANAGEMENT SURVEY ON HIGH POTENTIAL PROGRAMS - HIPO WEEK 2017

Is there a need for adding a new facet to the science and art of High Potential Management? Here are some key findings of the survey that assessed some of the key objectives of HiPo programs and what needs to be done to make them sharper

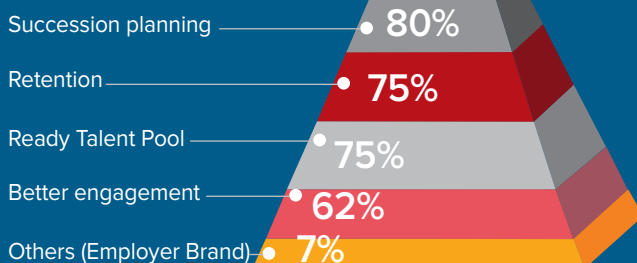
### RANKING OF EFFECTIVE HIPO LEARNING INITIATIVES



### POSSIBLE DE-RAILERS



### BENEFITS OF A HIPO PROGRAM

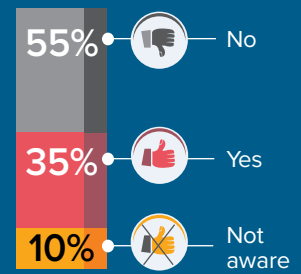


### EFFECTIVENESS OF HIPO PROGRAMS

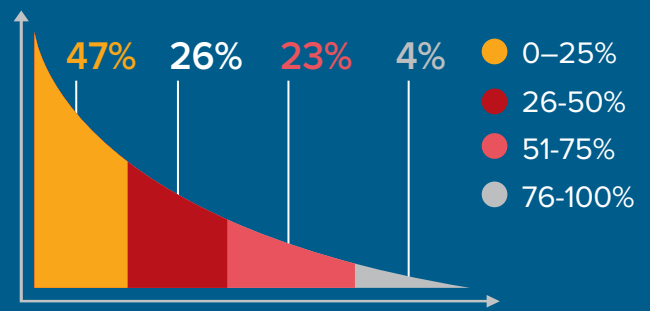
Is there a clear career path for HiPos in your organization?



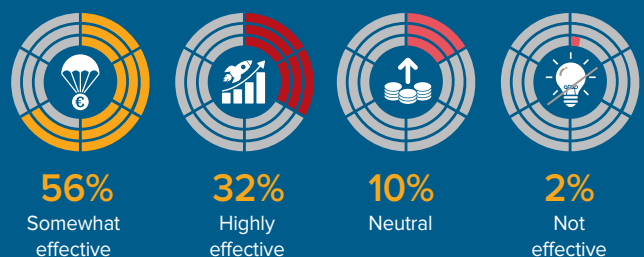
Does your organization have a structure methodology for measuring effectiveness?



### Percentage of HiPos who fill key leadership roles



### Effectiveness of the HiPo program on ROI



# learning: the next element



League Annual  
Conference 2017

11th October 2017 | Mumbai

Organizations and employees are constantly under pressure to upgrade their skillsets to adapt to the new competencies in this fast-paced digital world of work. To enable and empower leaders to stay ahead on this learning curve, and spearhead the next-gen capability-building agenda at their organizations, **People Matters presents L&D League Annual Conference** in October 2017. The Conference will bring global thought-leaders and experts in the L&D space and spark off thought-provoking conversations on critical aspects of the entire learning lifecycle – right from strategy, design, and the impact.

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# THE 5 ESSENTIALS FOR “THE RUBBER TO MEET THE ROAD!”

Are the High-Potential programs in organization delivering on what they promised to do?

By Prashant Pandey, Country Manager - India, Right Management

**T**he world is experiencing a global readjustment over the last few years, in which powerful forces (economic, political and social) are converging to create a new reality where business models will have to be redesigned, value propositions redefined and social systems reinvented. In this new reality, human potential will become the major agent of economic growth. In this Human Age, people will take their rightful place at center stage as the world’s only source of inspiration, passion and the driving force behind endeavor and enterprise.

It is in this new reality that we see a number of organizations investing on structured High Potential development initiatives on the rise. This is a great sign of the realization that human capital is a true differentiator and that it pays to invest on internal talent in the long run.

The question however to ask is – “Are the High-Potential Programs in organization delivering on what they promised to do?” The survey we did recently in India covering organization across industries, clearly pointed towards some challenges in this regard. About 68 percent of the respondents indicated only partial satisfaction on what their HiPo programs were delivering. While over two-third of the respondents indicated Succession Planning as one of the prime objectives of a HiPo program, over 70 percent felt that they are contributing to fill less than 50 percent of key leadership roles. Some other worrying indicators in

the survey were a high dropout and attrition from the program or the organization; Low leadership involvement, and On-ground performance of the participants in their new roles.

The survey data clearly pointed to the fact that there is a need for adding new dimensions to the science and art of High Potential Management. If an organization wants a better return on the investments they make on their Hi-Po programs, there is a need to revisit both the “What” and “How” of the programs.

Organizations may do well to ensure that some of the following elements are deliberated and addressed as they undertake this key strategic initiative.

## 1 Top management alignment and involvement

An effective HiPo program is one that is “by-the-business”, and “for-the-business”. Hence, it is critical that the program has complete sponsorship (both during the design and execution phase) from the top management of the organization. This will ensure that the business is articulating their leadership needs in light of their strategy. Also, they then play a role in ensuring that the best talent is being identified from the larger pool into the program. The top management needs to play a role in the development journey too (best done by being sponsors/mentors to Action Learning Projects) in order to get a first-hand feel of how the participants are responding to the pressures of the program, and if the needle is moving for them or not. Another key aspect to consider is how the immediate manager of the participant is involved in the program. The manager’s threat perception needs to be managed through effective communication and keeping them informed about the program movement. The participants will be under stretch while in the program, and the support and encouragement they receive from their managers can be a key enabler for their success.

If an organization wants a better return on the investments they make on their Hi-Po programs, there is a need to revisit both the “What” and “How” of the programs

## 2 Aligning HR processes to support the program

What happens when a key role opens up in one part of the business that is a great fit (from competence, aspirations and organizations needs viewpoints) for a HiPo employee in another part of the business? What if the immediate supervisor of this employee is not keen to let-go of the talent? Do organizations have defined processes to address such situations, or are the decisions ad-hoc? It is critical that an organization is clear in its own head on how they intend to deal with HiPo mobility, and communicates and aligns all stakeholders on the same. Individual careers and aspirations should not be held ransom to power centers and ad-hoc decision making. This not only compromises the larger purpose of a HiPo program, but also erodes the credibility of the leadership leading to cynicism in the minds of the talent.

## 3 Rigorous selection process

A HiPo program should not be used by an organization as an R&R or engagement tool. In order to ensure that you are investing in the right talent that is truly a high potential, you should ensure that you have a selection process that is robust and beyond biases. This starts by defining the entry criteria for the program, and continues with an assessment process that helps one differentiate between the chalk and the cheese. HiPo programs are meant for employees who are truly up-for-it – both from a potential, and also from an attitudinal viewpoint. Hence, an organization needs to be clear on what data points it collects and factors in while selecting the participants. For example, how do you measure and take into account the internal drive and ambition of an aspirant for the program? This will ensure that organizational resources are being invested right and will give us talent that is ready when one needs it most.

## 4 Setting participants' expectation right

A well-structured HiPo program by design needs to stretch the participants. It is important that the participants of the program understand this. They need to appreciate that the program will be demanding and will be over and above their day-job. This is a key element that needs to be communicated to the participants in order to ensure they are willing to do their part once into the program. They should not see this program as an automatic entitlement to promotions or any other benefits. Also, they need to understand that they need to keep delivering and actively participate in the program in order to continue to be part of the cohort. A HiPo program is not an automatic guarantee of any benefits. It is important that some of these expectations are communicated and aligned in order to ensure active participation and no heartburns later.



An effective Hi-Po program is one that is “by-the-business”, and “for-the-business”; it is critical that the program has complete sponsorship (both during the design and execution phase) from the top management

## 5 Bet on your people

The moment of truth for any HiPo program is when a key role opens up in an organization. How confident is an organization then to take a bet on one of its own rather than look for talent from outside? One needs to have confidence in its selection and development process. Giving the right opportunities and exposure to internal talent at the right time is key. An over-emphasis on “What isn’t”, rather than “What is” may send one on the hunt for a purple squirrel that does not exist. Also, when an organization reposes its faith on employees’ part of a Hi-Po program, it sends a strong positive message to the larger workforce and makes the program much more aspirational. It will also be important that the participant is provided with some support in the new role.

Winning in a VUCA work requires organizations to think of newer ways of engaging and managing talent. While an effective High Potential program can truly be a strategic lever for an organization to win — it will demand single-mindedness, and some fundamentals to be addressed during both the design and deployment stage. 🍷

# WHAT DO HIPO PROGRAMS TRULY COMPRISE?

The process of managing talent should have an integrated approach. So what do programs that focus on HiPo development truly comprise?

By **Milind Apte**, SVP - HR, CEAT Tyres

**T**he core foundation of a successful company is built on the solid grounds of skilled workforce and high potential employees (HiPo). A major factor responsible for driving such business success is to build a pipeline of talent that is prepared to take on greater responsibilities and leadership roles. Given the current backdrop of rapidly evolving global scenario and technology advancements, demand for leaders who can succeed in today's volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) business is on the rise. However, at the same time, there has been an acute shortage of able and qualified leaders.

High-potential talent is any organization's most precious asset that possesses the true potential to take the company to newer heights. And in order to balance the talent pool — identifying, engaging, nurturing and developing high potential employees at all levels becomes a key process. This process can be effectively managed with the introduction of robust talent management practices. According to experts, the companies which follow comprehensive talent management practices increase their succession planning effectiveness by almost 100 percent. Though, its success highly depends on leadership and performance management modules.

It is believed that the process of managing talent should have an integrated approach. Amidst the important roles of employee engagement and recognition, talent management is a significant

business strategy that helps ensure attraction and retention of valuable employees. Its strong and dominant presence in a company's human resource policies helps instill confidence in prospective employees by providing ample opportunities of development and grooming.

Employee engagement is an essential aspect of talent retention. And, in order to drive a higher level of employee involvement and motivate them to become valuable assets to an organization, the following ways are recommended:

## **Introduce employee rewards and recognition programs**

High-potential talent is the critical business differentiator. And, with changing global competition and new opportunities, retaining talent has become very challenging. However, one of the best ways to encourage high-potential employees is to recognize their talent with suitable rewards. Recognition is a critical component of employee engagement and it enables an organization to showcase that the employee is truly valued.

Talent today needs independence, authority to make choices and execute and face time with senior leaders – the proposition of 'What's In It For Me' should be clearly articulated in HiPo programs



### **Increase intensity of challenging work**

Interesting, new and challenging work plays a significant role in motivating the workforce and helps to keep them engaged and interested in respective job roles. A particular section of employees, especially the high potential ones are always on the lookout for new challenging projects. This inculcates a realization amongst employees that they have made a worthwhile contribution to the business and their own personal development.

### **Provide abundant growth opportunities**

Evaluation of employee performance decides the next step for identifying various avenues to fulfill employee's future aspirations. In order to take care of employee aspirations, along with training and skill development, keen importance should also be given to career advancement and promotion.

### **Link with influential mentors**

Getting a high potential employee engaged with an influential mentor or motivator can prove to be a great employee retention strategy. Along with increasing company's retention ratio, it can also effectively contribute in attracting new talent by demonstrating company's willingness to the employee's holistic development.

### **Training and Development**

High potential employees are often very ambitious in nature and career development opportunities carry a great deal of weightage to them. Frequent training and development programs to the deserving employees provide employers with a big return on investment in the future.

### **Create a stress-free work environment**

Creating a stress-free working area promotes a healthier workforce and helps to retain top-notch talent in the organization which might get affected due to toxic environment. Furthermore, in order to ensure the successful implementation of organization's employee engagement initiatives, a combined effort of HR professionals and senior management play an important role.

### **The role of HR & middle management**

To foster a culture of engagement, HR should lead the way in designing, measurement and evaluation of proactive workplace policies and practices. This can further help to attract and retain talent with skills and competencies necessary for growth and sustainability. Middle management plays a key role in employee engagement by creating a respectful and trusting relationship with their colleagues and setting expectations for the day-to-day business. However, managers need to be empowered by giving them larger responsibilities and encouraging higher involvement in strategic decisions. By taking up more responsibilities and realizing the level of trust the organization has on the employee, it makes employees much more productive.

While dealing with high potential employees who have a higher aspirational quotient, the biggest challenge facing organizations is to keep



One of the best ways to encourage high-potential employees is to recognize their talent with suitable rewards; Recognition is a critical component of employee engagement and it enables an organization to showcase that the employee is truly valued

them happy and gain loyalty. To get desired return on investment after developing employee succession and leadership programs, create compelling career options suitable to employee's future aspirations and curate effective training and development programs to produce leaders of tomorrow. When an employee is designated as 'top talent' within an organization, it is natural for him/her to expect differentiated inputs than those available to everybody else. The Talent Manager needs to ensure that the proposition of 'What's In It For Me' is clearly articulated which creates a sense of exclusivity for the employee. Talent today needs independence, authority to make choices and execute and face time with senior leaders. Putting an intervention in place which offers this will be one of the key success factors of an organization's talent practices.

India is on the verge of becoming the world's youngest country by 2020 with almost 40 percent of the country's population being under 35 years of age group. This allows us a huge opportunity to implement best talent management practices in the country. Increased levels of engagement help to promote talent retention, foster customer loyalty and improve organizational performance and stakeholder value. 🍷

# TRAIN & RETAIN WITH HIPO DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

While identifying HiPo employees and executing a development program are challenges in themselves, retaining Hi-Po employees is an uphill task as well

By Manav Seth

**H**ere are some quick facts related to High-Potential (Hi-Po) employees and programs:

A CEB research shows that HIPOs are 91 percent more valuable than non-HIPOs. However, 73 percent of HiPo programs are failing to deliver business outcomes or ROI. Only 1 in 7 high performing employees classify as HiPo. 2/3rd of HiPos say that they are dissatisfied with their training program and over two-thirds of HIPO programs (69 percent) have failed to build a strong pipeline of leaders to take over from their firm's current crop. In addition to this, nearly 40 percent of internal job moves made by people identified by their companies as "high potentials" end in failure.

The word "high potentials" has long been a buzzword in the HR community, but it seems like we are still struggling with the most basic challenges of identifying HiPo employees, and designing HiPo Development Programs. The first step in identifying

the most suitable employees is of crucial importance as it sets the tone for the rest of the program. But, the scope of this article is restricted to discussing mechanisms to retain HiPos once they are a part of such development programs. Retaining employees who are a part of such developmental programs is easier said than done, but if the following are considered, retention does become easier:

## Learning comes in many forms

No matter the duration of the program, focusing on only one aspect of the training can prove to be a deterrent. The development program must be pragmatic enough to take everyone along, and must strike a balance between hard and soft skills, along with core theoretical information and hands-on practical training. A sure shot way to pump some energy into the program is to integrate a mentorship-styled learning method, and allow senior leaders to groom HiPo employees. Furthermore, exciting high-visibility tasks should be a part of the program to make the participant feel like they are actually making an impact to the working of the organization, as opposed to the feeling of being in an incubated stimulator.

## Take them along on the ride

What several HiPo Development programs fail to do is consider the importance of communication and

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## High-visibility tasks should be a part of the HiPo programs so that the participants feel that they are actually making an impact to the working of the organization, as opposed to feeling being in an incubated stimulator

dialogue in the process of training. Rigid outcomes of the program mean that participants are given a mandate that they have to complete, and complete it by any means possible. However, this leads to disenchantment over a period of time as crucial support structures that hold up employees when needed are absent. The only way to work around this is to ensure that feedback is shared at every step, communication is two-way and engagement is consistent. Consult the participants continuously regarding their career goals and paths, and make sure the program incorporates the suggestions. Begin the process of alignment – of where the employees see themselves after the program, and where the organization sees them – at this junction itself.


### **Acknowledge their value**

While rewards and benefits based on program outcomes are the surest way to show your appreciation for your HiPo employees, they are not nearly enough. An efficient mechanism to highlight the progress and achievement of HiPos in the program is by providing opportunities to them to lead publicly, giving constant attention to their attempts at improving, and public recognition of their milestones. Merely identifying a HiPo employee for development is not enough – you have to work doubly hard to engage them too. The biggest acknowledgement must come in the form of an

end-goal, with special duties, expanded responsibilities or an official promotion that will pave the way for the employee to feel truly valued.

### **Meaning and Purpose**

Reinforce the organization values, mission and goals during the program, and make sure that this is connected to the broader career development goals of the participants. The program must make the employee feel that there is an earnest attempt to help them reach their potential – and not just be future ready for a bigger role in the organization. Every organization prides itself in solving a particular problem, or having a unique vision; the development program must make sure that leaders being prepared for tomorrow truly understand, cherish and embody the same. This understanding that work goes beyond performance and numbers will instill a sense of purpose in the employee, and they are much more likely to follow the overarching values and culture of the organization.

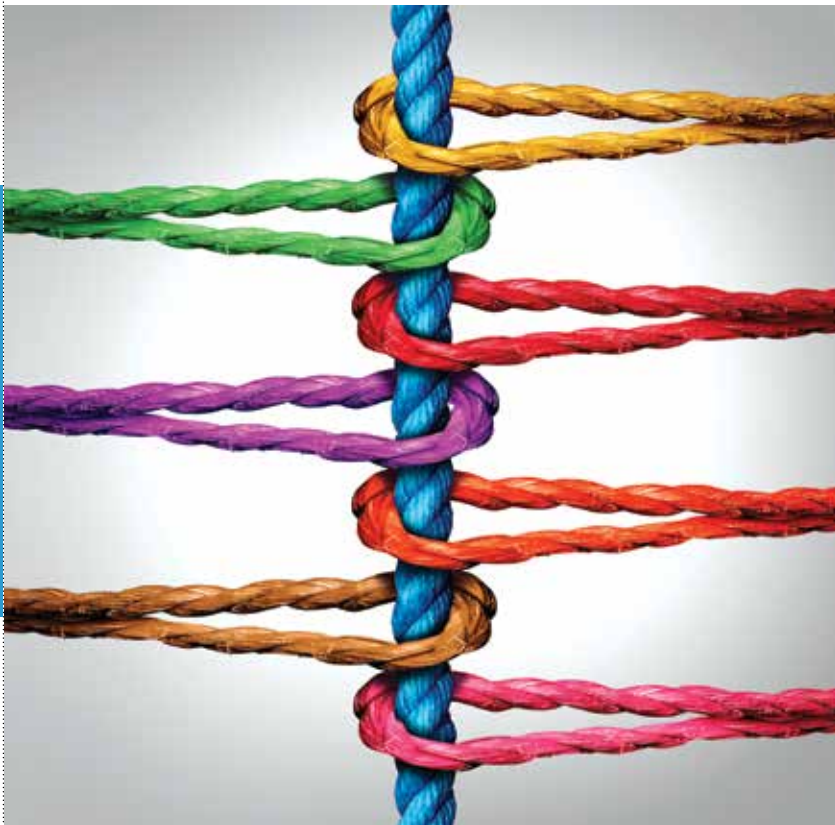
At the end of the day, having clarity about the path of the development program and sustained communication is essential to successfully retain HiPo employees. Employees can seek a higher designation or more salary elsewhere too, but if you can communicate the interest you have in truly developing them as leaders of tomorrow, they are likely to stick around. 

AMITABH ADHIKARY



# DIVYANG: Up the game from Ramp to Board room

We are convinced about the benefits of an inclusive culture at the workplace. But what do we have to say about inclusion of DIVYANG – the differently-abled?



DIVERSITY

The cliché of talent scarcity, drooping employee loyalty, rising attrition and then discussions on solutions through Diversity Council, disability-friendly infrastructures are good but not enough

to this other group that is always in the shadows: DIVYANG — the physically challenged? 2011 Census study reveals that 22 million of India's population lives with physical challenge. Let us try to understand them and ourselves, and why it makes sense to up the game. When we meet someone for the first time, we often judge them on the basis of their physical appearance or exterior visages. And we often perceive a person's physical inabilities far beyond the limits of his own challenge, which in turn compounds our attitude towards them. For example, we perceive a person affected by polio to be less mobile and unsuitable for a job that requires traveling.

All in all, our own attitudes determine not only the social expectations and treatment accorded to a DIVYANG, but also his self-image. The message that perhaps a DIVYANG child receives about self from the environment, to a large extent determines his attitude about who he is, what he can do and how he should behave. This is the process of internalization of role expectancy. If parents perceive their child as different from what is considered "normal", they will, generally, treat him differently, thereby encouraging him to be different from normal. Our stereotypes guide our interactions with the differently abled and they, like others, build ideas and feelings about self through such interactions.

**H**enry Newman's prayer "Lead kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom, Lead thou me on!" is answered at "Dialogue in the Dark", a restaurant in Hyderabad. You enter a completely dark restaurant, led by servers and guides who are blind. It's unique emotional experience when you get to rely on other's senses. There is complete role reversal and the experts are the ones who can't see. You understand your limits, learn to communicate with other in unconventional ways, and reinforce a collaborative mind-set.

We have all seen, believed and appreciated women in leadership and experienced the impact it can bring to business. We are convinced about the inclusive culture and the overall benefit it brings to the workplace. But can we replicate our thoughts

Rejection produces inferiority, self-consciousness and fear. A DIVYANG rarely finds opportunities in society because of social rejection, discriminatory employment practices, architectural barriers and inaccessibility to transport.

Let us see how we can make a business case to have the differently-abled on Board.

A DIVYANG learns some life skills which are taken for granted by a normal person.

**Planning and strategizing:** Each time a physically challenged person has to go to a new building, he will look for information about the building, whether the building has elevators, if there will be any help in case he is stuck and other such elements. While traveling by train, the person will visualize and assess the possibility of reserving more accessible seats. Thus, for each new activity, he does meticulous planning of time and resources so that they are utilized to yield highest possible return.

In an organization, such a person's strength's will be planning and optimum utilization of time and resources.

**Problem Solving:** A DIVYANG confronts adverse situations every day and is forced to develop solutions for those situations. For example, a person with a crutch who needs to access an elevated area will plan ahead to have friend accompanying who will support him.

An important skill one learns while living the life of DIVYANG is identifying challenges and defining them for developing solutions. Such a person would evaluate the solution alternatives to achieve the desired outcome while retaining as much independence as possible.

Back to working in an organization, where a leader has to generate solution alternatives within the restraints of resources — doesn't this life skill of DIVYANG seamlessly fit into organizations requirements?

**Team Spirit:** A DIVYANG has limitations and needs support to do some tasks. But he has the natural adeptness on when to give control to a more capable person. He contributes with his strength and seeks support to compliment his efforts to accomplish tasks. His physical challenges force him to see through his strengths as well as challenges that threaten the success of his efforts. His vulnerability to challenging situations forces him to do scenario planning and anticipate change. In an organization, we look for such virtues for building a High Performing Team, which a DIVY-ANG practices every day.

**Organization & patience:** A DIVYANG would need more effort to accomplish a task compared to his normal peers. Activities require more time, planning and extra effort. This causes impatience when he compares his productivity to his peers, but learns to have patience, organizes his efforts and generates solution alternatives to improve his productivity. He may appear slow in his efforts but he thinks over to get the complete picture, generate solution alternatives and then execute his plan.



## Change will happen when we look at the challenges related to the inclusion of differently-abled as a 'human' issue

Haven't we heard organizations telling their managers about delayed response and thinking through the problem holistically?

The cliché of talent scarcity, drooping employee loyalty, rising attrition and then discussions on solutions through Diversity Council, disability-friendly infrastructures are good but not enough. Change will happen when we look at the challenges related to inclusion of differently-abled as a 'human' issue. Let us do a "dialogue in the dark" to remove our stereotypes, and observe and assess the differently-abled on their life skills. We will suddenly see a big, untapped talent pool emerge.

A DIVYANG will reach Board Room when each one of us says "I need a DIVYANG in my Team"; and be the face of change I want to see. 🙏

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**AMITABH ADHIKARY** is General Manager - Human Resources at Aditya Birla Group

GURUCHARAN SINGH GANDHI



# Columnist or Novelist: What are you as a Leader?

What distinguishes a columnist and a novelist at a very fundamental level and what can leadership learn from the distinction?

God help the team and the organization that lives for the day - even though there is indeed a struggle for existence daily

the privilege of the best possible education and exposure. Yet once in a while there comes a leader who refuses to fall prey to the very real and very pragmatic lure of fixing the current leak instead of looking into the quality of the pipe itself! The lure of 'today' is not very easy to resist; there is exhilaration in solving for the day. It gives a 'sugar rush' that misleads energy for nutrition, to borrow a dietary metaphor.

The columnist enjoys his fame every morning only to realize it by noon that he needs another one for tomorrow's morning. He has to find newer and often more dramatic ways to capture the attention of his readers every day morning, day after day. It is a kind of pressure that makes us often slip on the slope of populism. God help the team and the organization that lives for the day - even though there is indeed a struggle for existence daily. The aphorism behind which this is sought to be intelligently hidden is often "without the short-term there is no long-term".

A novel and by implication the novelist on the other hand is a different kettle of fish. It is hard labor — of thinking deeply about the plot and the characters, of doing the meaningful work of fleshing out those characters and what they would stand for; of at least having the broad understanding of the sequence of events, the drama, the tension and the wide flow of the narrative and finally ascertaining how it would connect with the reader at a very deep level.

A good novel is written when it finds resonance for the voice of many even if it is being written as the voice of one. A good novelist is adept at finding the echo of the collective even as she begins the

**A**lthough I do not remember exactly where, but I read this poignant difference between a columnist and a novelist; a columnist writes for the day and most often what he writes for the day is a part of trash the next day while a novelist writes with at least the intention of seeing his work outlast him. It had struck me then that while this may be a debatable definition for some, it had some ring of truth in it. It is not a surprise that most of us will struggle to remember names of columnists who would have ruled the column inches half a century ago while we can rattle many a names of accomplished novelists still widely read and relevant even after half a century or more. In fact many a times those remarkable novelists actually seem more and more relevant with each passing decade, sometimes acquiring cult status long after they are dead and gone. I thought there was something that leadership in the corporate world could reflect from this distinction.

It is not uncommon to find leaders who work for the day or the quarter or the year at best. Many of them are quite smart and sharp and have had



## Real people get inspired by real stories and not by intellectual abstractions and concepts

search for her own voice. There is universality even in the novelist's uniqueness – and a novelist transcends those boundaries. Leaders have a thing or two to learn from this.

Finally, even as the flow of events in a novel takes the plot and the characters forward, each growing in meaning, significance and stature and by the time the reader flips the last page both the readers and the characters find solace in the meaningfulness of the journey. It makes the tumult every bit worth its while.

So what distinguishes a columnist and a novelist at a very fundamental level and what can leadership learn from the distinction – even though there is merit in the thought that in real corporate world we need to be both; that there is symphony in the balance between both.

I believe that at a very fundamental level, the novelist has a far greater sense of the long-term than the columnist. A novelist is not in a hurry – she is willing to give the characters time to build, the story time to evolve. He recognizes that institution-building is a slow and painstaking process; that speed might have virtues but has great follies too.

The second distinction is that a novelist, while having an eye for the reader's approval is not held ransom by it. A novelist is willing to go three levels beneath the issue, unraveling human motives and angst layer by layer. The novelist appears to

be far less prone to populism of the day, far more courageous to say things that might hurt current sensibilities but things that must be said and confronted if any meaningful breakthrough has to be accomplished.

The third distinction is a distinction of style of narrative – a novelist uses characters to bring out contrarian points of view. It has a far less chance of being perceived as pontification or sermons this way than a columnist. Real people get inspired by real stories and not by intellectual abstractions and concepts.

The fourth and final distinction between them that leaders in the corporate world can possibly learn from is the rather obvious deep embedding of the author in a novel than a columnist in a column. There is so much of the author, his experiences and stake in the novel that it is quite impossible to decant the novelist from the novel. This adds so much more credibility for the novelist in the eyes of the reader. The columnist and the column, and this need not be really so but appears to be more and more true, usually appears to be two different entities. We relate to the messenger as much and perhaps more, than the message. Our ability to assimilate and act on a message becomes so much more when we realize that the messenger has equal or even more stake in the message. The corporate world usually says this differently – “there is skin in the game”.

For the record – I like novelists and columnists in equal measure; but if push comes to shove my vote will be for the former. ☺

### 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. The book was recognised in the Best first Published book category at the LIT-O-FEST, a literature festival in Mumbai. [www.gurucharangandhi.com](http://www.gurucharangandhi.com)

# I believe in the maxim 'Ideas spread horizontally'

In a candid conversation with People Matters, **Moushume Basu Roy**, Head - SuccessFactors at SAP India shares her perspectives on enabling a culture of innovation, encouraging entrepreneurial mindset, the evolving technology ecosystem, and managing diverse teams

By **Ridhi Chugh**



## Q How do you enable a culture of innovation in what you do and your team?

A Today, we all are witnessing an accelerated pace of change around us. The speed at which ideas are shaping or disrupting the business environment has increased manifold and in this context, innovation is not just about creating a differentiating aspect of business but it's an essential survival skill both for an individual and to an organization.

At SAP, we encourage our team to have an "entrepreneurial mindset" and strongly support creative and unorthodox thinking. Ideas leading to innovation can come from anybody in the team and I personally believe in what Seth Godin says, that "Ideas spread horizontally". Since most of our work involves working with diverse teams with different skillsets and backgrounds, we embrace differences in the team's point of view and cohesively work towards connecting the dots to get the best possible outcomes. At the core of our approach is the understanding that innovation can come from any source and hence, we work towards creating a workplace that is based on trust, transparency and inclusiveness so that ideas and innovation can flow freely.

Apart from "imparting" and mandating training, today's workforce needs 'self-directed' learning at their own pace

**M**oushume Basu Roy leads SuccessFactors, SAP's cloud line of HR business in the Indian subcontinent. In her role she is responsible for growing and managing the SuccessFactors line of business. She has more than two decades of experience in Sales, Marketing and Operations in IT

and Telecom across domestic and multinational organizations and has handled markets in Indian sub-continent across the enterprise as well as SME segments. Prior to joining SAP, she has worked with organizations such as CMC, Reliance Infocom and KPMG. Moushume is an MBA from the Indian Institute of Social Welfare and Business Management (IISW&BM).

**Q Many resources come together to make what you do a success. How do you rationalize these resources and what can be some of the biggest challenges associated with bringing everything/everybody together?**

**A** Working with a team from diverse backgrounds and skills has its own challenges and benefits. Of course, the biggest hurdle in making the team effective is breaking the silo that in many cases tends to creep up and reduce the impact that the team can have on the business. As highlighted earlier, at SAP, we work with teams that are rich in diversity and bring to the board different skillsets and are often collaborating from different geographies. One of the key reasons for our team's success is that we are a transparent organization and our workforce feels comfortable communicating varying points of view. This, in turn, provides us with a bigger repository of ideas and solutions to the challenges that we face. At a macro level, I believe what brings us together as a cohesive unit is our shared belief and the sense of purpose that we have to make our customers run better.

**Q Over the past twenty years, the information technology space has undergone immense change. What according to you has been one of the biggest changes that technology has rendered and how has it impacted the industry?**

**A** Cloud technology is, by far, the biggest change that we have seen. It is disrupting every industry that it touches and is compelling the old established legacy players to change their business models. It has radically democratized technology and has provided a level playing field in which both large enterprises and the small enterprises have the benefit of the same technology and the results are staggering.

One of the important aspects of cloud technology is that it reduces the dependency on IT and helps the 'line of business' functions like HR to become more strategic to the business. For example, for HR, one of the biggest benefits that cloud brings is the access to work-related software or information from any device, anywhere, at any time.

**Q Do you think the adoption of cloud based technology has broadened the scope and application of solutions provided by IT industry?**

**A** Yes, massively. One of the prime reasons is that it helps organizations focus on its core competency and take away the prob-

lem of managing IT besides giving them the scale, efficiency and resilience. As mentioned earlier 'line of business' functions which were traditionally dependent on IT are now independent and have access to innovations which were earlier quite restricted. This, in turn, has widened the scope and applications of IT solutions at an unprecedented level.

This change in trends is captured in a recent Gartner report which says that in 2017 CMOs are expected to spend more on IT than CIOs. Marketing leaders currently allocate 3.24 percent of their company's revenue to technology and CIOs' technology spend equals 3.4 percent of revenue. Gartner expects that narrow gap between CMO and CIO technology spending to close during 2017. We are witnessing similar trends in HR and Finance lines of business wherein technology spend is also rising continuously.

**At the core of our approach is the understanding that innovation can come from any source and hence, we work towards creating a workplace that is based on trust, transparency and inclusiveness**

**Q In an industry that undergoes continual change in the form of evolving technology, how important is imparting continuous training to the employees?**

**A** In the current business environment of fast paced change, the importance of training of employees cannot be emphasized enough. However, this critical area is often ignored or neglected by most organizations. As per a Deloitte report, more than two-thirds of companies believe moving to next-generation learning is urgent or important, yet only 6 percent have mastered the technology and content aspects of learning. Skill development and training in an organization will strongly impact the overall business results, boost productivity, and increase organizational competitiveness. It will also produce positive business outcomes in critical areas and at key moments in an organization's development, such as during mergers, acquisitions and business restructurings.

Another aspect to be considered for Learning and Development is that apart from "imparting" and mandating training, today's workforce needs 'self-directed' learning at their own pace, along with job needs and aspirations. The organization needs to provide a comprehensive learning platform and an environment that fosters the culture of continued and voluntary learning.

**Q Tell us about how your journey as a woman in leadership position like? Have you ever faced the conventional challenges that women face directly/indirectly face in their careers?**

**A** I have worked for organizations spanning across industries such as CMC, Reliance, KPMG and SAP. I have been fortunate enough to work in very forward-looking organizations, to be recognized

for my contributions and be able to work with some of the best managers in the industry, who walked the talk. Out of these, my longest stint has been with SAP and long before diversity became a buzzword at the workplace, SAP is a living embodiment of equal opportunities and equal challenges. The most refreshing part has been that I have not been treated any differently from any of my male colleagues when it came to challenges thrown at me or growth opportunities extended to me. Simultaneously, when as a woman, there were occasions where I needed to balance and manage things across home and work, there has always been complete understanding, trust and respect for that need for flexibility. So it's been a satisfying journey and the challenges I have faced as a woman employee, which has in fact helped me feel alive, engaged, connected and fulfilled. **EM**

Jobs of the week



**dEEVOiR Consulting Services Private Limited**

Business Partner HR

**Location:** Pune, **Job ID:** 20755892

**Description:** Should have experience in working in a multi-faceted hands-on HR role including both operational matters and strategic advisory.



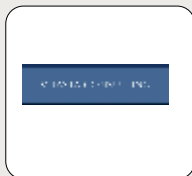
**Sampoorna Computer People**

Dy. Manager / Asst. Manager ( Human Resources )

**Location:** Other India

**Job ID:** 20779157

**Description:** Taking end to end ownership for employee engagement activities including implementing employee strategies.



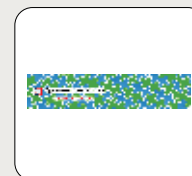
**Vitasta Consulting Private Limited**

Manager / Asst. Manager HR

**Location:** Other India

**Job ID:** 20779114

**Description:** Employee Life Cycle Management, Talent Acquisition and Induction Leverage employee referrals and job-sites to minimize costs.



**Quotient Consultancy**

Head HR Group Lead

**Location:** Mumbai

**Job ID:** 20772094

**Description:** Collaborate with the senior management to define and execute the talent strategy.



**New Era India Consultancy Private Ltd**

Assistant Manager/ Deputy Manager Talent Acquisition

**Location:** Other India (Manesar)

**Job ID:** 20758734

**Description:** Should have excellent knowledge in Talent Acquisition, Headhunting, Recruitment.



**Black Turtle India Private Limited**

Vice President- HR Business Partner

**Location:** Chennai

**Job ID:** 20756775

**Description:** Should have hands on work experience in managing Talent Management, Talent Rotation, Performance Management.



**Talent Corner Hr Services Private Limited**

HR Manager

**Location:** Surat

**Job ID:** 20740560

**Description:** Recruitment, Training, Employment law compliance, Employee benefits, Handling grievances etc.



**2COMS Consulting Private Limited**

HR Manager

**Location:** Other India

**Job ID:** 20769085

**Description:** To approve the instructions relating to production operations and ensure their strict implementation



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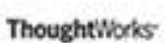


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# Past Month's events

## Social Hiring - Module: 1 - Be Branded-Build Your Social Profile

**ORGANIZER(S):** People Matters & LinkedIn Talent Solutions

**DATE:** 1st June

**VENUE:** Online

**KEY TAKEAWAYS:** The webinar focused on understanding the role of social profile for a successful social recruiting. The opening session of the certification program focused on educating the participants about creating a social profile to set the foundation of a successful social recruiting journey. The key takeaways of the event included:

- Define your own personal brand
- Identify the critical elements of your social profile
- Know the steps to create and maintain an exciting social profile

## NASSCOM D&I Initiative - "Successfully Navigating the Workplace for Women Leaders"

**ORGANIZER(S):** NASSCOM (in association with Diversity Dialog)

**DATE:** 12 May, 2017

**VENUE:** India Habitat Centre, Delhi

**KEY TAKEAWAYS:** Developing women leaders is a critical part of NASSCOM's mission, as companies in India are challenged with the low representation of women in leadership positions. Therefore, NASSCOM, in association with Diversity Dialogs organized an interactive workshop on 'Successfully Navigating the Workplace for Women Leaders' that aimed at aspiring women in middle management to take on larger and more strategic roles.

Some of the key takeaways of the session included:

- Understanding the business case for gender diversity
- Understanding the organization and customer structure and dynamics
- Understanding unconscious biases, stereotypes, misconceptions of self and others

## Talent Acquisition League Annual Conference 2017

**ORGANIZER:** People Matters

**DATE:** 9th June, 2017

**VENUE:** Taj Lands End, Mumbai

**KEY TAKEAWAYS:** A PwC research reveals that finding the right talent is the biggest challenge that keeps CEOs awake at night. In this rapidly transforming business scenario, CHROs and Recruitment leaders are going back to the drawing board to redefine talent acquisition to ensure 'Right Recruiting' and 'Recruiting Right', which was the theme of the event. People Matters hosted Talent Acquisition Leadership League Conference, where global thought-leaders and experts divulged into the critical aspects of talent acquisition with a focus on tenets of delivering on the business expectations and future of the talent sources.

## Unpacking employee experience

**ORGANIZER:** People Matters & Oracle

**DATE:** 16th June

**VENUE:** Online

**KEY TAKEAWAYS:** While a new generation of digital natives takes over the workforce, the challenge in front of talent leaders is to re-engineer experiences that these professionals have outside of their work. This means providing consumer-grade experiences for driving employee mood, engagement, and behavior. In this webinar, Shakun Khanna, Sr. Director, HCM Transformation, Oracle discussed how smart organizations are approaching the challenge to deliver unique experiences for their customers. The key takeaways of the session included:

- Re-engineering engagement to experience
- How smart companies drive employee mood, engagement and behavior using key insights from intelligent and real-time technology
- Employee experience in the manufacturing sector – how to help boost productivity

## Unified view of work life - Aditya Birla Financial Services Group Success Story

**ORGANIZER(S):** People Matters & People Strong

**DATE:** 14th June

**VENUE:** Online

**KEY TAKEAWAYS:** When you have 14000 employees, spread across 1500 points of presence – getting a single view of data is one of the biggest challenges. Disconnected systems are often difficult to integrate and they result in revenue leakage and a significant business impact. Aditya Birla Financial Services Group understood the power of a unified view of work life for employees, managers, HR teams and CXOs and leveraged the power of SaaS and mobile to empower them. Suresh Mani, who spearheaded the Digital HR transformation of such a large scale, shared his experiences and insights from the journey through this event.

## 5 ways to optimize hiring campaigns

**ORGANIZER:** People Matters & Indeed

**DATE:** 30th May

**VENUE:** Online

**KEY TAKEAWAYS:** The webinar aimed to share creative testing tactics from real-world campaigns and focused on key optimizations. From fine-tuning budgets to reworking job titles, the session provided best practices and tips for creating effective hiring campaigns. The key takeaways of the event included:

- Optimizing job titles for better performance in search
- Streamlining application process to lower application abandonment rates
- Strategic allocation of budgets to ensure reception of the best applicants at the lowest cost
- Tracking sources to identify performing campaigns and improving the overall ROI

# Upcoming events

## HR Summit

**ORGANIZER:** NASSCOM  
**DATE:** 20th - 21st July, 2017  
**VENUE:** ITC Grand Chola, Chennai  
**THEME:** The future of work is expected to impact all three levels of HR — Strategic, Functional and Operational. NASSCOM's HR Summit – 2017 will be joined by futurists, technologists, business leaders who are witnessing the change from the front and HR masters who are walking through the storm of the change. The two day summit will comprise discussions on what we know and what challenges we are ready to take.  
**HOW TO REGISTER:** To register online, visit [www.nasscom.in/hrsummit/](http://www.nasscom.in/hrsummit/)

## 5th NHRD HRM Summit "HR - The Next Wave"

**ORGANIZER:** NHRD  
**DATE:** 8th to 9th September 2017  
**VENUE:** Welcom Hotel Sheraton, Saket, Delhi  
**THEME:** The summit will revolve around themes such as Digital Wave and Implications for HR, Artificial Intelligence, 'Human' aspect in Human resources, 4 generations at work, Ageing Experts, White collars IR, Diversity and Inclusion. The sessions will be held in an interactive mode and format will include presentations, panel discussions and case studies.  
**HOW TO REGISTER:** To register visit NHRD events sections

## TechHR'17 Conference & Exhibition

**ORGANIZER:** People Matters  
**DATE:** 3rd & 4th August 2017  
**VENUE:** The Leela Ambience, Gurgaon  
**THEME:** TechHR - Asia's Largest HR Technology Conference & Exhibition 2017 will bring together the best of businesses, HR Leaders, HR Product & Service experts and HR Technology partners & start-ups from around the globe. The much sought-after conference is focused on providing expert insights, information and exposure to business leaders, CHROs, strategic advisors and senior HR professionals. From leaders like Fons Trompenaars, the global guru of culture and transformation; and Kate Sweetman, author, speaker and a leadership consultant; to Brian Sommer, global technology industry expert and many more, TechHR will have leaders from across the world who will share their perspectives and insights on a variety of themes. It's all set with only one purpose – to empower you with unparalleled industry content and deep-learning conversations on topics across the spectrum or organization transformation and talent dynamics.  
**HOW TO REGISTER:** <https://www.techhrconference.com/register>

## 6th SHRM India Annual Conference & Exposition

**ORGANIZER:** SHRM  
**DATE:** September 14-15, 2017  
**VENUE:** Taj Palace, New Delhi  
**THEME:** The SHRM India Annual Conference will bring together thought leaders from across the globe to provide insights on HR best practices and new age tools that will give an edge to the HR practitioners.  
**HOW TO REGISTER:** To register visit: [www.shrmiac.org/](http://www.shrmiac.org/)

## Digitizing MSMEs: The Way Forward Capturing Next Growth Level through Finance, Technology, Marketing & Capacity Building

**ORGANIZER(S):** ASSOCHAM  
**DATE:** 21st September, 2017  
**VENUE:** Hotel Pllazio, Gurugram  
**THEME:** The objective of the summit is to provide assistance to the regional MSMEs in connecting with fund providers, technology providers, and marketing gurus as per their needs ranging from collateral-free loans, receivable financing to ERP implementation and digital marketing among others. The event will enable MSMEs going digital in various domains.  
**HOW TO REGISTER:** To register visit ASSOCHAM events section

## 19th NASSCOM BPM Strategy Summit

**DATE:** 13th-14th October, 2017  
**VENUE:** Bengaluru  
**THEME:** The Summit will present new ideas and real world examples of how to overcome challenges while driving breakthrough business performance. Learn how to shift services from standardizations to enabling innovation through technology, insights and rapid execution of ideas.  
**HOW TO REGISTER:** To register visit NASSCOM events section



Why does the much hyped employee “honeymoon phase” fade away so unceremoniously – from a sense of excitement into a lull-period of demotivating air with uninspiring hours?

## Open Letter to an Employer

To,  
An Employer  
SUB: Corporate Bullying; Behavior Matters

**H**ave you ever paid heed to why a young bright employee who joins your corporate with starry eyes and a spark to deliver the best, often loses his passion with reasons beyond the “*Law of Diminishing Returns*”? Why his solidarity for the company dwindles and why his spirits goes kaput that eventually results in either brain drain or uninterested stiffened workforce? Whose loss is it...? Why does the much hyped “honeymoon phase” fades away so unceremoniously from a sense of excitement into a lull-period of demotivating air with uninspiring hours?

One may give the reasons as the nature and load of work, working culture or conditions, inter-personal or intra-personal relationships, remuneration and even passage of time. But that’s not all; there is another side to it too.

An employee in corporate world tenders effort to fulfill both individual and collective goals of the assigned job, therefore, rightfully termed as “human resource” — bringing in revenue and sometimes goodwill to the company. Now, like any other resource, the ‘human resource’ could either be utilized to the best, improved, upgraded, conserved and reinvigorated over-time. That or it could be exploited, mishandled, ravaged and “used-and-thrown” as carelessly as possible.

A reprimand from a senior undoubtedly works like a self-check especially to speed up tasks but, could ‘yelling’, ‘name-callings’ and unparliamentarily ‘abuses’ really prove motivating? While it may serve as an example in front of an open office — it surely doesn’t go down well, neither in terms of work ethics nor general human-

### A reprimand from a senior undoubtedly works like a self-check especially to speed up tasks but, could ‘yelling’, ‘name-callings’ and unparliamentarily ‘abuses’ really prove motivating?

ity. The temporary push of ‘negative reinforcements’ may eke-out some iota of productivity but the person broils within because of apathy and insult.

The rise in expectations at workplace viz-a-viz the real challenge to keep motivations up however, doesn’t work always. The general management rule – “come with solutions, not problems” – goes a long way in resolving work-related maladies and proves great in keeping the machinery focused and running. However, somewhere in the process of “demanding results”, many forget to add ‘that’ simple human touch of a decent, civil behavior.

Heeding the excerpt from the book “*Time Management – Make Every Second Count*” (Bly, Roberts) – (sic) “Although, machines and chemicals don’t care whether you scream and curse at them, people do. Your staff and co-workers are not just engineers, administrators, clerks, and programmers; they’re people, first and foremost... with families and friends, likes and dislikes... *with feelings. Respect them as people and you’ll get their respect and loyalty in return. But treat them coldly and*



*impersonally and they will lose the motivation to perform for you.”*

“Corny as it sounds, the Golden Rule – “*Do unto others as you would have others do unto you*” – is a sound, proven management principle. The next time you’re about to discipline a worker or voice your displeasure, ask yourself, “*Would I like to be spoken to the way I’m thinking of speaking to him or her?*”

I do understand that this letter may hardly make any difference to your perspectives as our viewpoints may not match; yet if we could even ‘agree to disagree’, imagine what a clear channel of communication could help us accomplish together. The seeped in abrasive platitude behavior is worth paying attention to for bringing efficiency and mental peace, and for maintaining a cordial trustworthy workforce.

Wishing well,  
*An Employee Who Also Matters* 🙏

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**TANAY CHAUDHARI** is a Management Professional and a freelance writer.



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