## people matters

#### **BIG INTERVIEW**

**Peta Latimer** CEO, Mercer - Singapore

Skills gap and what the L&D function is doing about it

#### **INTERVIEWS**

**Eva Sage-Gavin**Senior Managing Director,
Global Talent and Organization
Practice, Accenture

Archana Singh EVP and CHRO, Wiley

#### THINKERS SPEAK

#### **Whitney Johnson**

Thinker, speaker, author, adviser and an expert on disruptive innovation and personal disruption

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## I would if I could!

e have all faced it: Skilled people are hard to find. But the first question that comes to my mind is what skills are we looking for? Is it one skill? Or is it a combination of skills? Is a combination of skills even possible? Even determining this is a challenge. It is definitely hard to measure; forget about managing!

On the surface, we all feel we know what we want when it comes to skills in people, but just dig a little deeper, there's more to this problem than just skills. Will we ever find people who are both skilled at what we want them to be skilled at and also fit the bill when it comes to culture? Who will you choose — a skilled person or an eager-to-learn culturally-fit awesomely passionate person who is willing to go beyond what is expected? You know it — it is hard to make a choice (I would always choose the latter though). If I could, I would create a prototype of what we all want!

We train people to make them better at what they do, and to an extent, what they are. But determining how long this process of amelioration will be is difficult? What's the guarantee that people will stick to your organization after you give them the opportunity to learn? There's more to just skilling people or providing training or learning to employees. It's the whole ecosystem that needs to be revamped for your talent to learn, upskill, work, and stick around.

But in the cover story of this issue, we just stick to understanding how the L&D functions are managing this skills shortage. 45 percent of businesses are unable to find qualified candidates to fill job openings and 60 percent of all employers have job openings that stay vacant for twelve weeks or longer. The only way to accommodate and adapt to the changing times is through knowledge, instruction, and application and how, where, and what people learn needs to evolve today. A "one size fits all" approach to learning and development will not work and it's about time that organizations and their L&D functions allow employees to have customized individual pathways that meet their personal and professional demands. And this is what our leaders say! Read inside to know more!

For the Big Interview this time, we have Peta Latimer, CEO of Mercer, Singapore, who shares her insights and perspective on the evolving SEA talent landscape, growth markets, future of work, leadership and navigating structural shifts, regulatory policies, and volatility in the changing marketplace. The issue also features Eva Sage-Gavin, Senior Managing Director. Global Talent and Organization Practice, Accenture, who tells about the evolving equation between the businesses and CHROs, harnessing the power of digital technologies to innovate, unlock new sources of value, and reinventing the role of the CHRO for the future; Shailender Kumar, Regional Managing Director, Oracle India who talks about Oracle digital hubs, and how working environment and workplace design helps in attracting, retaining, and motivating employees; and Archana Singh, EVP and Chief Human Resource Officer at Wiley who provides her outlook on change and transformation at Wiley, leveraging the strength of a people-centric culture, and culture and brand as the two sides of the same coin.

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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hmmm...



we can't afford to give digital covers! I want more.



nice! back to school.



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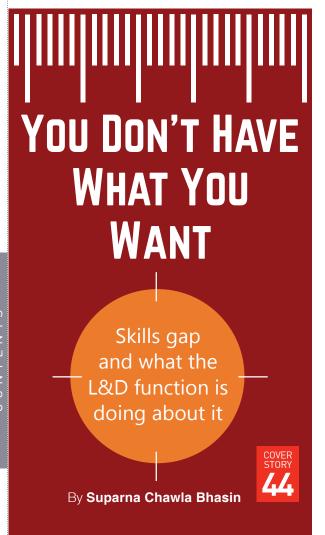
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	Basic Leadership Ski <b>lls</b>	Fr.Antony Uavari, S.J & Sunil Sarangi	September 3-7,2018	XLRI
	Basic Leadership Ski <b>ll</b> s	Fr.Antony Uavari, S.J & Sunil Sarangi	November 19-23, 2018	XLR
	Basic Leadership Ski <b>ll</b> s	Fr.Antony Uavari, S.J & Sunil Sarangi	February11-15, 2019	XLR
	Interactive Managers: Communicating for Management Success	Rahul Kumar Shukla	September1-20, 2018	XLRI
	Think Critically, Decide Swiftly and Communicate Effectively	Rahul Kumar Shukla	December 4-6, 2018	XLR
	Creativity, Problem Solving & Decision Making	Tamonas Gangopadhyay	January 8-12, 2019	XLR
	Presentation Matters : Mastering the Art of High- <b>I</b> mpact Presentations	Sunil Kumar Sarangi & Rahul Kumar Shukla	January 21-25,2019	XLR
	Talent Acquisition: Tools and Techniques	M. Srimannarayana	January 28-31, 2019	XLR
	Resolving Management Dilemma: Mapping Ethical and Moral Competencies	Fr. Ozzie Mascarenhas SJ and Sr. Doris D'Souza AC	February 18-20, 2019	XLRI
Human Resource Management	Strategic Industrial Relations	Pranabesh Ray	July 23-27, 2018	XLRI
	Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace	Tina K. Stephen	September 3-4, 2018	XLRI
	Assessor Certification Program on Assessment Centre Approach to Competency Mapping	R K Premarajan	September 3-7, 2018	Mumbai
	Assessor Certification Program on Assessment Centre Approach to Competency Mapping	R K Premarajan	February18-22, 2019	Delhi
	Managing Training: Design, Delivery and Impact Assessment	M Srimannarayana	September17-21,2018	XLRI
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	Certification Programme on The Art and Science of Competency Based Interviewing	R K Premarajan	November 1-2, 2018	Bangalor
	Human Resource Development	M Srimannarayana	November 2-16,2018	XLR
	Leadership Competency for Star Performance	M G Jomon	November14-17,2018	XLR
	Empowerment & Leadership for Women Executives	Anita Sarkar	January 14 -18, 2019	XLRI
	Career Development and Talent Management	R K Premarajan	January 17-19, 2019	Mumbai
	Effective Performance Management	Pranabesh Ray	Jan 28 - Feb 1, 2019	XLRI
	Talent Managment for Line Managers	M Srimannarayana	February 4 - 8, 2019	XLR
	HR Audit-Leading to Internal Auditor Certification	M G Jomon	February11 -14, 2019	XLRI
Human Resource Management/ Strategy	Design Thinking for High Business Performance	Soumendra Bagchi & Rajeev Sharma	December 4-6, 2018	XLRI
Economics/ Strategy	Out-think! - Howto use game theory to outsmart competition	Sumit Sarkar	February 25-26, 2019	Bangalore

Area/Compentency	Title of the Programme	Programme Director(s)	Duration	Venue
Marketing				
	Customer Cenfricify & Building Customer Focussed Organization	Sanjeev Varshney & N. Rajkumar	August 6-8, 2018	XLRI
	Putting People First: Legal, Ethical, Moral & Spiritual (LEMS) spaces of Corporate Decision-Making	Fr. Ozzie Mascarenhas SJ & Paramjyot Singh	August 20-22, 2018	XLRI
	Marketing Analytics for Effecting Maketing Planning	Sanjeev Varshney & N. Rajkumar	September 4-8,2018	XLRI
	Professional Sales Management	Pingali Venugopal	February 18-22, 2019	XLRI
Organizational Behaviour	People Analytics	Gloryson R B Chalil	August 6-9,2018	XLRI
	Teamwork Competency for High Performance	M G Jomon	September19-22,2018	XLRI
	Interpersonal Effectiveness through Communication Skills	Manish Singha <b>l</b>	September24-28,2018	XLRI
	Interpersonal Effectiveness through Communication Skills	Manish Singha <b>l</b>	January 21-25,2019	XLRI
	Leadership Excellence through Self-Discovery	Manish Singhal	October 8-11,2018	XLRI
	Designing and Implementing Coaching and Mentoring for Talent Managment	M Srimanarayana	December 4-8,2018	XLRI
	Leading Teams for Synergy	Manish Singhal	February 4-8,2019	XLRI
Organizational Behaviour / Human Resource				
Management	HR Business Partnership	Gloryson R B Chalil	July 16-19,2018	XLRI
Organizational Behaviour / Strategy	Business Acumen for Leadership Exce <b>l</b> ence	Manish Singhal & Atul Pathak	November19-23,2018	XLRI
Production, Operations &				
Decision Sciences	Business Analytics with R	Amitava Mukherjee	October 3-5,2018	XLRI
	"Measuring, Monitoring, Maintaining and "Improving Service Quality"	Amitava Mukherjee	November12-14,2018	XLRI
	Project Management	Rajiv Misra	November 19-23,2018	XLRI
	Data Analytics and Visualization	S K De	December17-21,2018	XLRI
	Marketing Research and Analytics with R	Amitava Mukherjee	January 9-11,2019	XLRI
	Supply Chain Analytics	T AS Vijayaraghavan	February 18- 22, 2019	XLRI
Strategy	Business Turnaround and Growth Strategy	Indrajit Mukherjee	August 6-9,2018	XLRI
	Strategy Innovation and Leadership	Munish Kumar Thakur	December10-12,2018	XLRI
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Author of national bestseller 'Kabeer In Korporates' and the Head of Learning & Development with a leading conglomerate

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## The Dale Carnegie Global Leadership Award 2018

Recent years have seen an abundance of sales methodologies position themselves as strategies for advancing customer loyalty. However, Dale Carnegie research found that one concept was a fundamental imperative to long-term customer devotion, and that was trust towards the seller. Far from diminishing in importance, this concept is today more vital than ever in driving sustained sales success.

At this year's edition of the Dale Carnegie Global Leadership Awards, our esteemed panel, comprising global invitees and some of India's foremost HR leaders, will delve deep into a discussion on 'Trust-Based Relationships — a Business Imperative' and provide their expert insights on the matter.

For inquiries on attending the Global Leadership Award event in Mumbai at the Taj Lands End on 31st October, email individual@dalecarnegieindia.com



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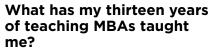


### Letters of the month

## Tall or Flat - Take a pick!

Over the years, corporates have used hierarchies and authoritative leadership to lead the workforce through times of change. and unify them against competition. However, the changing business ecosystem, workforce demographics, and technology invasion have prompted firms to relook at their traditional modes of operations and analyze the conventional organizational structures. The cover story couldn't come out at a better time. It not only gives a reflection of what the C-suite thinks about having or not having hierarchies but also provides an insight into the role that workplace demographics play in changing the dynamics of the workplaces. Yes, hierarchies do smother creativity and innovation, and also contribute to passive leadership, but I feel that hierarchies, frameworks, and structures are necessary evils – as the cover story rightly points out. Some form of a structure is imperative for the working of an organization. It is indeed a theme to reflect on and then ask if hierarchies actually work or not. But after all said and done, in an organizational context, you cannot look at an aspect in isolation. This cover story is a great effort in bringing to the fore themes that the leaders of the organizations need to start talking about.

- AVANTIKA BHATNAGAR



The article by Dr. Pavan Soni was thoughtprovoking. I do think that to a certain extent, generalization makes a career antifragile or robust against systemic shocks but it is definitely debatable whether 'specializations' limits job options and can ultimately put one out of a job if the area of specialty becomes obsolete. You cannot deny that at the workplace, we generally look up to people who are all-rounders. We've all even grown up with the expectation that we have to be all-rounders, whether studies or sports. So it's about figuring out if you want to be the "Jack of all trades and master of none" or not. The article made for an interesting read.

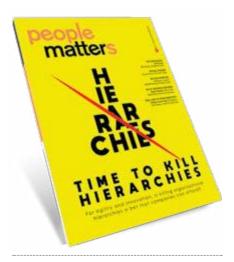
- DIVYA JAIN

#### A primer on Objectivity

Gurucharan Singh's articles are a treat! We all tend to think that we are objective in our opinions and outlooks, but in reality, we are far from it.

Come to think of it, do we really stand back from our perceptions, beliefs, and opinions and reflect on them, subject them to a particular kind of scrutiny? Are we really indifferent when it comes to judging a particular thing, person or a situation? Are we free of prejudiced and biases? Gurucharan is very right when he says that "A lot of prejudice passes off as 'logical' assumption."

- AJAY BAKSHI



SEPTEMBER 2018 ISSUE

## Hierarchy - Curse, Cure, or Clarification?

Clinton Wingrove in his article 'Hierarchy - Curse, Cure, or Clarification?' asks the most pertinent questions about hierarchies. Does removing hierarchies have a major positive impact? Clinton builds his point by stating that most so-called "success stories" of flat organizations are taken from unique organizations, unique charismatic leaders or relatively new organizations which, by definition, are unique and resourced by a tight-knit team with passion for achieving a shared vision. But these are hardly characteristics of most organizations. It is definitely not easy, sustainable, or cost-effective to not have hierarchies in most pre-existing organizations. But the most important question is to ask if we are actually comfortable with not having such structures that provide some form of order. And more so, what happens when there is a crisis? Who do we look up to in an organization that doesn't have an order?

- SHIVANSH KAPOOR



#### Interact with People Matters



People Matters values your feedback. Write to us with your suggestions and ideas at editorial@peoplematters.in



#### Leadership that works

Deborah Rowland's interview was inspiring. Not many people talk about or perceive leadership from a psychological and emotional lens. But Deborah rightly states that "Leadership is not an intellectual act – it's a deeply psychological and emotional one. To become a great leader, you need to go on an inward journey. to discover your true nature, your 'self' - some would say, to even discover that there is no 'self' — just pure consciousness, awareness." Leadership definitely starts with the 'self' and what one does has a significant systemic impact. No wonder success and failure both depend on how leadership is exhibited. But despite all the literature that we have read on leadership, we still don't see many successful leaders around us. Personal or professional, it's about time we understand that the only thing that binds profit, people and purpose is successful leadership.

### - ASHIMA JAIN

#### STEM industry: On the road to bridging the widening skills gap

Skills issue is an issue that organizations are grappling with.

The interview of Kishore Jayaraman, President, Rolls-Royce, India & South Asia is insightful as his perspectives on the industry and academia's attentiveness to bridging the existing skills gap in India and the need for policymakers, academia, and the industry to work together to prepare young people to enter the workforce are absolutely apt. Skills issue is not an issue that originates at the workplace. It is an issue that has roots in academic institutions; and the fact that the academic institutions are unable to offer tailor-made courses for specific sectors is something that needs to be looked at. Building a highly-skilled workforce will take more than just learning on the job. It needs to start at the grassroots level. Universities need to create outcomedriven and skill-based courses by linking the STEM subjects to industry requirements. That is the only way!

- TUSHAR KHANNA



#### The Fortunes of Family Firms

The dynamics of family led businesses are starkly different from those that are not.

But I liked that fact that Visty Banaii picked up on the role of a CHRO in dysfunctional family firms. What should a professional CHRO do in an enterprise with dysfunctional family dynamics? Banaji is right when he says that the CHRO is the true guardian of the organization's professed values and not simply a loudspeaker who finds the right jargon to support the actions the dominant family faction wishes to take. But as it happens every time, no matter how politically savvy and competent the CHRO may be, it is inevitable that one day s/he will have to face a choice between kowtowing to an owner-family member's whim on a matter that gravely compromises professional integrity or take the highway.

#### - HETAL TANDON

#### **Taking Charge of Change: Emerging HR Leaders**

People Matters' initiative to identify, recognize, and celebrate the journeys of emerging HR leaders is commendable. From what I have gathered over the years of attending this awards ceremony is that it is not only an award ceremony but a program that grooms leaders for the uncertain future that we all are unsure of. We hear a lot of talk on transformation and change, but there are very few who talk about who will bring the real change in organizations. I think this change will be brought about by dynamic, inventive, and resourceful leaders who can ride the wave of disruption and adapt swiftly. The feature rightly says that the leaders of tomorrow have their task cut out for them: thrive in an unfamiliar and unforgiving business environment. They need to embody the skills and traits that are much discussed today: innovation, agility, creativity, and collaboration. As organizations evolve to adapt to a new digital reality, the leaders of the future will have to carefully integrate sophisticated technological tools with human wisdom and judgment. In order to be able to do so tomorrow, they need to experiment, fail, and learn from it today. A great initiative!

- ASMITA BAJAJ

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#### Anand shivashankar @ggmarquez

Good piece! Essential to go Ground Zero to design all roles hence. #HR Thanks

#### Kaido @kaido\_group

This article is great! Extremely insightful and fun to read!

#### Ratish Jha @JhaRatishJha

Thanks @PeopleMatters2 @Ester\_ Matters @akki\_star @RPGEnterprises Looking forward for an exciting time

#### Lucia Real Martin @LuciaRealMartin

Energised talking to the HR community in Gurgaon about Gen Next

#### Lewis Garrand @LewisGarrand

It's always great to contribute with you. Thanks!

#### Fit First Tech @FitFirstTech

It's really exciting to see how the HR world is changing thanks to technology! Of course, people are and will remain the most important constituents for any husiness.

#### Shalini Sharma @ShaliniHarnot

What I like about #HRtech conferences. The #fun part. #funMoment of #techHr18 by @PeopleMatters2 . while discussing ROI of learning, @jasonaverbook suddenly pointed towards @williamtincup shoes and he added it to be the Weed effect. #TGIF Happy Friday guys.



#### CORRIGENDUM

In the Appointments section of the September edition, the appointment of Dayanand Allapur was incorrectly published. Dayanand Allapur has joined Cognizant as the Global Head of HR of Digital Operations. People Matters regrets the publication of the error and inconvenience it may have caused to the organizations and persons involved.



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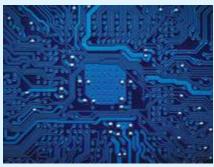




#### WORKFORCE

## **ASEAN youth optimistic** about the technology impact: Survey

As per a survey by the World Economic Forum and a Singapore-based Internet company Sea, Southeast Asian youth are highly optimistic about the impact of technology on their job prospects and incomes. According to the report, about 52 percent of generation under-35 years across the Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore and the Philippines believe that technology would increase the number of jobs available, while 67 percent said it would increase their ability to earn higher incomes. The survey also recorded the responses on where the respondents would like to work in the future in comparison to where they are working currently; and



while 58 percent of the respondents stated that they worked for small businesses – either for themselves, for their family business, or for a small or medium-sized

enterprises (SMEs), one in four aspire to become entrepreneurs, work for themselves or start their own business. On the other hand, those working for SMEs stated that they would like to work for a different organization and only 7 percent expressed the interest to work in an SME in the future. The survey also revealed that the youth preferred to work for foreign multinational companies with 17 percent wanted to work for one in future, and 16 percent wanting to work for the governments in future. These survey results not only point out to a preference for income stability but also a rising appetite for entrepreneurialism.





#### **ACQUISITION**

#### Co-working space

#### WeWork acquires Teem for \$100 mn

Co-working space provider WeWork has acquired Salt Lake City startup Teem. developers of office management software for \$100 mn. Teem, formerly known as EventBoard empowers organizations with intelligent tools and powerful workplace analytics to optimize their people, places, and technology. Teem will continue to operate as an independent business entity in Salt Lake City and its software will be integrated into Powered by We offerings comprising of bundled design, facility management, and technology services. Teem is WeWork's fourth acquisition this year and had previously acquired three companies including the Chinese co-working startup Naked Hub, for which it paid \$400 mn.

#### HIRING

#### **70 percent CEOs see** increased hiring this fiscal year

According to a CII snap CEO poll, more than 70 percent of the CEOs plan to increase recruitment this financial year with over 44 percent substantially raising investments, and 56.3 percent suggesting that employment will improve in the second half of the current financial year. The poll collected the responses of 71 CEOs and their opinions about the economic growth rate for the FY 2018-19. The poll results indicate a bullish and positive outlook on GDP growth, Corporate Revenues, Profits, Investments as well as employment. A majority of CII CEOs see the GDP growth between 7.25-7.50 percent



and the chief executives are betting big on revenue part as 47 percent of the CEOs predict revenue growth between 10-20 percent during FY 2018-19.

#### **JOBS**

#### GoI plans to set up 14 mega national job zones

The Government of India is planning to set up mega national employment zones across the country with the aim to provide direct and indirect jobs to one crore youth over the next three years. The plan is being finalized by the shipping ministry in consultation with the NITI Aayog. The employment zones are stipulated to have fiscal and non-fiscal incentives like tax holidays, capital subsidy and single-window clearance among others. These incentives will

be linked directly to the number of jobs created by firms willing to set up manufacturing bases in these zones. The shipping ministry has proposed setting up 14 national employment zones to be built in coastal states under the special purpose vehicle route. These zones are expected to have 35 industrial clusters across sectors like food, cement, furniture and electronics besides traditional labor intensive sectors like garments, leather and gems and jewelry.





### India's ecommerce sector can create over 1 mn jobs by 2023: Report



The Indian e-commerce market of \$35 bn is expected to grow at 25 percent in the next five years and exceed \$100 bn by 2022, according to a recent report by PwC India and the National Association of Software & Services Companies (NASSCOM). The report reveals that ecommerce can potentially create 1 million+ jobs by 2023

and will not just create regular corporate jobs but also increase employment in allied industries like logistics and warehousing. The report titled 'Propelling India towards global leadership in e-commerce' further states that e-tail and e-travel will continue to hold over 90 percent share of e-commerce, while online financial services will witness the fastest growth. The report says three out of four online customers are expected to come from tier II markets and beyond. A vast majority of them will be relatively less tech-savvy, seek greater transparency from brand and prefer consuming content in local languages. Additionally, the report stresses on the need for harmonization in the e-commerce policy framework that enables the growth of the sector.

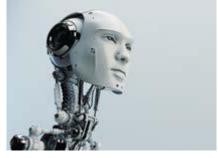


#### Simplilearn and Genpact collaborate to upskill employees

Professional training company Simplilearn has partnered with professional services company Genpact to accelerate the learning ecosystem at Genpact which is evolving rapidly as the organization is focused towards delivering digital transformation successfully. As part of Genpact's strategic global learning initiative called Education@Work, all existing employees can utilize Genpact's Training & Development portal and choose to upskill from over 150+ courses across in-demand digital areas like AI & Machine Learning, Cloud Computing, Data & Analytics, Digital



Marketing, and Cyber Security among others. The courses have been co-created by domain leaders and are available through a blend of online self-learning, live instructor-led training and masters programs.



#### Over 50% of retail companies will operate on AI by 2020

According to a research conducted by PeopleStrong, more than 53 percent of CHRO's representing over 500+ retail enterprises in India believe that their HR verticals are still six quarters away from embracing AI in their day-to-day work. One of the major reasons as observed by around 59 percent of the respondent CHROs is the absence of seamless flow of data between different HR functions as the information lies in silos and different platforms making it difficult to have a unified view of this data for better insights. The survey also highlights that Indian organizations are expected to bridge this gap by 2020. Both Indian and global HR tech companies have already initiated this journey of revolutionizing the way Indian Retail enterprises manage People and Talent function. Leading the way, PeopleStrong is transforming and advocating growing use of digital aids and has seen major benefits delivered by these transformations in some of the largest enterprises in Indian Retail sector. An indication of this development is the fact that 59.18 percent of these companies have started storing their HR Data on Cloud, with a majority of them replacing legacy systems in the recent past.



#### **PARTNERSHIP**

#### Wipro and Alight Solutions deal closes at \$1.6 bn

Wipro has bagged its largest information technology (IT) outsourcing contract, valued at \$1.6 bn from Alight Solutions LLC. This 10-year partnership will translate into \$1.5-1.6 billion over the duration of the contract. While Wipro will be focusing on automating Alight's operations, Alight will be leveraging Wipro's strengths in

automation, machine learning, and data analytics for accelerating its business. The last time Wipro cracked a large deal was in 2014 when it signed a \$1.1bn outsourcing contract with Canadian logistics firm Atco. Among Indian IT services companies, it is only Tata Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS) that has in recent times won multiple

billion-plus dollar deals. TCS has won three such multi-year mega-deals, which together bring in over \$5.6 bn in revenue. With this deal, Wipro may get back on the growth path. Last year, Wipro had added \$355.7 mn in incremental revenue to end with 4.6 percent dollar revenue growth and had ended with \$8.06 bn in revenue last year.

## **SOLVING THE TALENT** SHORTAGE

More employers than ever are struggling to fill open jobs. Forty-five percent say they can't find the skills they need, and for large organizations (250+ employees) it's even higher, with 67% reporting talent shortages in 2018. It's time for a new approach to the big talent problem: it's time to build, buy, borrow and bridge to ensure that there is in-demand skills for today and tomorrow. ManpowerGroup's 2018 Talent Shortage Survey reveals that companies must create a culture of learning and put people first by developing a workforce strategy incorporating build, buy, borrow and bridge. This is how we will solve talent shortages and enable individuals and organizations to reach their potential in the digital age



#### **GLOBAL TALENT SHORT-**AGES REACH 12-YEAR HIGH

As the global economy has steadily strengthened over the past decade, employers are more optimistic and hiring demand is stronger. Combined with changing skills needs, talent shortages have been pushed to their highest levels since our survey began in 2006.



#### TOP 10 MOST IN DEMAND SKILLS IN THE WORLD

While artificial intelligence is fast-expanding what can be automated, technology is redefining rather than replacing in-demand roles. Skilled trades – electricians, welders, mechanics and more – as well as sales representatives, engineers, drivers and technicians have ranked among the top five hardest roles to fill for the past ten years.

#### 1 SKILLED TRADES

Electricians, welders, mechanics



#### **3** ENGINEERS

Chemical, electrical, civil, mechanical



#### **5** TECHNICIANS

Quality controllers. technical staff



#### 7 ACCOUNTING & FINANCE

Certified accountants, auditors, financial analysts



#### 9 OFFICE SUPPORT

Administrative assistants, PAs, receptionists



#### **2** SALES REPRESENTATIVES

B2B, B2C, contact center



#### **4** DRIVERS

Truck, delivery, construction, mass transit



#### **6** IT

Cybersecurity experts, network, administrators, technical support



#### 8 PROFESSIONALS

Project managers, lawyers, researchers



#### **10** MANUFACTURING

Production and machine operators



One in four employers says filling skilled trade roles is harder this year than last

In the digital age, employment will not always require a college degree, but will rely heavily on continual skills development as even the most traditional roles are augmented with new technology.

#### WHY EMPLOYERS CAN'T FIND THE TALENT THEY NEED

As companies digitalize, automate and transform, finding candidates with the right blend of technical skills and human strengths is more important than ever.

#### Lack of applicants, experience and skills are top drivers of talent shortages



979 of employers say applicants lack either **L** / 6 the hard skills or human strengths they needed to fulfill their roles

#### THE TALENT SHORTAGE **CONUNDRUM: WHAT** EMPLOYERS ARE DOING TODAY

Companies are beginning to tackle talent shortages by upskilling their own workforce: over half are investing in learning platforms and development tools to build their talent pipeline, up from just 20% in 2014.



#### Strategies employers are using to overcome talent shortages

54% Provide additional training and development

36% ► Adjust education or experience requirements

33% Recruit from outside traditional talent pool

32% > Offer additional perks and benefits

30% Explore alternative work models (i.e. contract, freelance or temporary work)

29% • Offer higher salary packages

23% > Offer flexible or remote working

16% Outsource the work (i.e. other company or country)

11% Not pursuing any strategies

### SOLVING THE TALENT SHORTAGE: BUILD, BUY, BORROW AND BRIDGE



Invest in learning and development to grow your talent pipeline

Go to external market to find the best talent that cannot be built in-house in the timeframe required



**BORROW** 

Cultivate communities of talent outside the organization, including part-time, freelance, contract and temporary workers to complement existing skills

Help people move on or move up to new roles inside or outside the organization

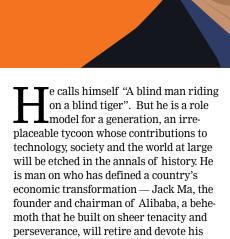






NEWSMAKER OF THE MONTH

## Jack Ma -'China's Internet juggernaut'



time to philanthropy in education. Jack Ma is a rags-to-riches story. He grew up in communist China, got rejected from dozens of jobs and 10 times from Harvard before he landed success with Alibaba. Ma, a former English teacher founded Alibaba in 1999 as a business-tobusiness marketplace with 18 people, in an apartment. With the belief that the "Internet would level the playing field by enabling small enterprises to leverage innovation and technology to grow and compete more effectively in the domestic and global economies", the company launched its first website and helped small Chinese exporters, manufacturers and

entrepreneurs to sell internationally. Today, Alibaba Group has grown into an e-commerce leader and currently has a market value of \$499 billion. Ma was Alibaba's Chief Executive until 2013, when he stepped down to become Chairman but he continued to help and guide the growth of the business and also led the company's initial public offering in 2014. One of the visions of the company is to last for at least 102 years for which it will rely on its culture, business models and systems that are built to last and grant sustainability in the long run.

Jack Ma currently has a net worth of about \$39 billion which makes him the second-richest person in China and the 20th-richest in the world. Ma is perceived to be the global ambassador for Chinese business and is listed as one of the world's most powerful people by Forbes. In 2017, Ma was ranked 2nd in the annual "World's 50 Greatest Leaders" list by Fortune.

(Compiled from online sources)

"TODAY, MAKING
MONEY IS VERY
SIMPLE. BUT MAKING
SUSTAINABLE
MONEY WHILE BEING
RESPONSIBLE TO
THE SOCIETY AND
IMPROVING THE WORLD
IS VERY DIFFICULT"

- JACK MA

#### **ASCI APPOINTS D SHIVAKUMAR AS CHAIRMAN**

Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) has appointed D Shivakumar as its Chairman. Shivakumar is currently the Group Executive President, Corporate Strategy at Aditya Birla Group, and has been the member of the board of governors of ASCI for three years and was earlier

serving the association as vice-chairman.



The State Bank of India has stated that the Central government has appointed Anshula Kant as the new Managing Director of the bank. Kant joined SBI as a Probationary Officer and has been with the bank for over three decades.

#### HDFC STANDARD LIFE APPOINTS VIBHA PADALKAR AS MD & CEO

HDFC Standard Life has appointed Vibha Padalkar, the Chief Financial Officer of HDFC Standard Life, as the Managing Director and CEO. Before joining HDFC Life, she was associated with WNS Global Services, Colgate-Palmolive (India) and PricewaterhouseCoopers.

### **AXIS BANK APPOINTS AMITABH CHAUDHRY AS CEO**

Axis Bank has appointed Amitabh Chaudhry, the current Managing Director of HDFC Life Insurance as the CEO and MD of Axis bank. Amitabh has been leading HDFC Standard Life

Insurance Co., Ltd. since 2010 and prior to that, was heading Infosys BPO Limited (known as Progeon Limited) for three years.

#### CAPGEMINI APPOINTS ARUNA JAYANTHI AS MANAGING DIRECTOR OF APAC AND LATAM

Capgemini has appointed Aruna Jayanthi, formerly Head of Capgemini's Business Services Unit as the Managing Director of APAC and LatAM. Aruna Jayanthi has been with

Capgemini since the turn of the millennium and has undertaken a number of high-level executive roles. The promotion comes off the back of just under three years in her previous role as CEO of Business Services.

#### WPP APPOINTS MARK READ AS CEO

WPP, world's largest advertising company has appointed Mark Read as Chief Executive Officer and the Executive Director. Mark takes over the position from Martin Sorrell, who resigned from WPP in April, 33 years after founding

the company, following allegations of personal misconduct and misuse of company assets.

#### **VEDANTA RESOURCES APPOINTS SRINIVASAN** VENKATAKRISHNAN AS CEO

Vedanta Resources has appointed Srinivasan Venkatakrishnan as the Chief Executive Officer. Venkatakrishnan joins Vedanta from AngloGold Ashanti Limited, the world's largest emerging market gold producer where he served as the CEO of

the firm since 2013.

## **PPOINTMENTS**

#### CAREERBUILDER APPOINTS IRINA NOVOSELSKY **AS CEO**

CareerBuilder has appointed Irina Novoselsky, the current President and Chief Operating Officer, as the Chief Executive Officer. Before joining CareerBuilder in 2017, Novoselsky served as CFO and then President of Novitex Enterprise

Solutions and prior to Novitex, she was an Investment Strategist at Dubin & Co., and an investment banker at Morgan Stanley in the M&A group.

#### ORIFLAME APPOINTS FREDERIC WIDELL AS THE MD **INDIA & VP-HEAD SOUTH ASIA**

Oriflame, Swedish direct selling beauty brand has appointed Frederic Widell as the Vice President and Head of South Asia & Managing Director India. Frederic Widell has been

associated with Oriflame for nearly 10 years and was the MD for four different key Oriflame markets - Sri Lanka, Vietnam, India and Indonesia.

#### **US BANK APPOINTS ISMAT AZIZ AS CHRO**

US Bank has appointed Ismat Aziz as the Chief Human Resources Officer. Aziz has more than 20 years of HR experience, and has most recently served as the CHRO of Sprint. Prior to that, Aziz held senior HR positions at several other large, global companies.

#### AMTEK GROUP APPOINTS RAJESH SONI AS **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - HR**

Amtek Auto Group has appointed Rajesh Soni as the Executive Director - Corporate HR. Rajesh has been with the organization for the last 12 years and has been leading the

HR function for the company. Prior to this, he was leading corporate HR at Jindal Saw Limited.

#### INTAS PHARMACEUTICALS APPOINTS AJAY BHATT AS PRESIDENT - GLOBAL HR

Intas Pharmaceuticals has appointed Ajay Bhatt as President - Global Human Resources to spearhead HR for its complete global portfolio consisting of India, Europe, US & Emerging

markets. Prior to this, Bhatt was the Director HR-Innovation & Development with Abbott Laboratories based out of Basel, Switzerland.

#### DHFL PRAMERICA LIFE INSURANCE APPOINTS **KALPANA SAMPAT AS COO**

DHFL Pramerica, a life insurance company, has appointed former ICICI Prudential and LIC executive, Kalpana Sampat as Sr. Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer. Prior to

this appointment, Sampat was the Chief Executive Officer of Swiss Re India.

#### **UBER APPOINTS NELSON J CHAI AS CFO**

Uber has appointed Nelson J Chai as the Chief Financial officer. Chai was most recently the chief executive of Warranty Group and has also held executive positions at CIT Group, Merrill Lynch and NYSE Euronext.

# At a fast pace - India Inc's bullish hiring outlook



As employment numbers have been growing on dodgy terms, new reports indicate a prospective rise in hiring. But as technological transformation becomes a mainstay, what does the future hold?

#### By Dhruv Mukerjee

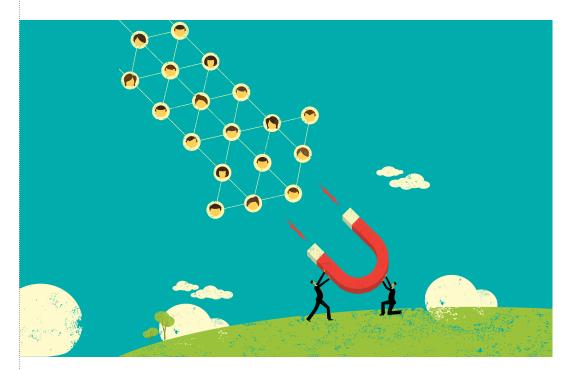
he opportunities and the threats that arise from the rapid technological adoption by the corporates have been much debated. The positives are often pitted against the job displacing negative effects to assess the overall impact of such technological shifts in everyday work. Although in a country like India such an adoption rate either remains low or mostly localized to specific sectors, its impact has been visible over the last few years. In sectors such as IT, major Indian players had to let go of portions of their staff as a direct result of adopting newer technologies that have now made many portfolios obsolete. In addition to this, many thousands in the sector are faced with the need to

reskill or suffer a similar fate. Such factors are now also beginning to impact other tech faring sectors like Banking and E-commerce.

As businesses delve further into the realm of automation, AI, the use of digital platforms and some of the key factors reshaping modern workplaces and skill requirements, one would expect certain 'risk averting' behavior by business heads when it comes to hiring. Given how rapidly skill preferences are evolving, a general sluggish approach towards hiring can be expected. But according to recent reports on projected job growth, that doesn't seem to be the case.

With favorable business conditions like strong market demand and increasing customer base, a recent survey by UBS found that companies are in fact willing to raise their staff levels, this too at a pace which would be faster than last year. According to UBS Evidence Lab's C-suite survey that reached out to 247 C-suite executives including CEOs, CFOs, and directors from strategy and finance departments, the hiring outlook of companies is relatively robust, with around half of the surveyed firms expecting the pace of hiring to be faster compared to last year. The report also expects four million jobs to be created per annum over the next five years, up from two million per annum in the past five years.

This is refreshing news in times when the labor market is still growing year after year, all while there seems to be no concrete proof of job growth within the country. Instead of resorting to the use of different methodologies to showcase job growth, positive hiring intent creates a better state of employment within the economy. Noting a similar trend, the Naukri JobSpeak Index also anticipates an increase in overall hiring number across industries like automobile, heavy machinery, even the BPO industry. The India Skills Report, at the beginning of the year, had marked a 'positive' hiring outlook for 2018 noting that hiring would grow up by 10-15 percent. So far this has held true. A Michael Page India report titled India Salary Benchmark 2018 highlighted the role of India's growing demand and a 'progressive economy' would create the need for professionals that fill highly specialized job roles. The report also highlights three key areas where growth and technological adoption are going to reshape much of what defines "skills in demand" and as a result their economic viability, chief in these areas being technology, digital and analytics, procurement & supply chain, and banking & financial services. The report further highlights that the implementation of domestic job creating policies like 'Make in India' provide a robust framework and support to the Indian economy to be able to manufacture more in India, thus improving hiring numbers. Although the progress on this front has been slow, the policy, in league with other policies like 'Digital India' and 'Startup Standup India' have led to the improvement of hiring numbers in the organized sector. This along with labor market legislations have helped certain sectors like e-commerce to grow significantly and contribute to job creation.



But how long can India's labor markets solely survive on robust demand patterns for growth, and by its virtue, an increase in hiring numbers, especially when tech-driven business disruption is yet to impact many parts of the economy? The UBS study pointed out that currently, the expected rise in hiring numbers also comes from many sectors that are yet to be impacted by the overwhelming business applications of modern technologies. Although many have gone through, or are currently going through a state of adoption of digital platforms, many still remain either unaffected or unaware of the implications of labor displacing technologies like Automation and AI. The survey noted that many firms were unaware of artificial intelligence/blockchain, and many others have not invested in these areas. "New automation techniques have yet to impact hiring plans," it noted.

Although skillsets preferences have been evolving, reports suggest that automation will accelerate such shifts at a rate that the Indian economy hasn't seen over the past 15 years. Research<sup>1</sup> by Mckinsey's finds that the strongest growth in demand will be for technological skills, the smallest category today, which will rise by 55 percent and by 2030. This surge is expected to affect demand for basic digital skills as well as advanced technical skills such as programming and machine learning. The report also reveals that the demand for social and emotional skills such as leadership and managing others will rise by 24 percent, while basic cognitive skills, which include basic data input and processing will decline by 15 percent, and demand for physical and manual skills which include general equipment operation, will also drop by 14 percent.

In light of such anticipated and unanticipated changes, positive hiring intent comes as a shortlived relief. As benefits of scale begin accruing and Most firms expect an increase in the number of employees (7 percent average increase), and their hiring plans are in line with expectations of changes in demand

industry-specific tech solutions become available, more companies would begin restructuring their business processes. Although this might still lead to businesses to keep their hiring numbers up, in most cases it would be in areas where highly specialized skill-sets are required. It comes as a little surprise that most of the job growth in the last two years has happened through the rise of temporary jobs and often contract based gigs. The International Labour Organization (ILO) recently stated that there has been a significant rise in employment numbers but a large portion of such an increase falls under what they define as "vulnerable employment". As a result, the benefits of a positive hiring intent across C-suite and sectors projected to have comparatively higher percentage of hiring than last years is good news in light of strong business demands. But sooner or later, many parts of the economy are going to head towards technological transformation and it will be critical to possess the right skills to ensure employability. Many reports have suggested that although the advent of such technologies is still going to create jobs, entrants to the labor market would require possessing up-to-date skills to find the right jobs. That becomes the real point of contention moving forward. @m

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Skill Shift Automation and the Future of The Workforce

## The fact of the matter

## - Can India be an AI powerhouse?

With AI alone generating over 2.3 million jobs worldwide by 2020, India's ambition to carve a niche for itself in an increasingly AI-driven world is becoming a reality. Let's take a closer look at how AI revolution is impacting Indian iobs and the workforce

#### By Manay Seth

ven as the Fourth Industrial Revolution stares us right in the eyes, we are unable to assess with certainty the scope of impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on our future life and work. A lack of clarity has given rise to anxieties regarding what the future holds, and at one extreme end is the fear that intelligent machines and robots will render humans jobless and take over the world. However, if history is anything to go by, the previous three industrial revolutions managed to make fundamental structural changes to the society and business without ringing in the apocalypse. While the advancement of technology obviously made jobs, and sometimes entire industries, obsolete, it also gave rise to the automotive and digital industries which created jobs, for instance, a large portion of today's workforce is working in jobs that were hardly heard of before the 1990's. Team-Lease Services expects AI alone to generate over 2.3 million jobs worldwide by 2020, but since it will

also wipe nearly 1.7 million jobs off the market, the impact will be muted.

#### AI and Jobs

The popular, and inaccurate, notion that robots will replace humans is unlikely to materialize in reality as experts argue that while robots might take over blue-collar and white-collar jobs, they will not eliminate the need for humans completely, simply because, unlike humans, machines are not motivated to rule the world. Ekkehard Ernst, Chief of Macro-Economic Policies and Job Unit at UN International Labour Organization (ILO) opines, "It is not so much about losing jobs but about how jobs are being transformed and employees in these sectors will add new tasks to their profile while being supported by computers and robots in others." In the process, however, AI will definitely make some roles and jobs obsolete. This means that new roles which require humans to interact with machines will gain prominence. And the Indian workforce is also reaching this conclusion on its own. Data from Indeed, a job site, shows that between June 2016 and June 2018, a remarkable 179 percent increase was witnessed in the number of job searches for AI-related roles. There has been a notable rise in the search for the roles of 'Data Scientist', 'Software Engineer', and 'Machine Learning Engineer', 'AI Engineer', and 'Business Intelligence (BI) Developer' in the last couple of years. Thus, new roles and jobs are being created and sought, even as old ones see a slump in their demand.

#### An opportunity for India

India offers experience, expertise, talent, and a vast workforce that puts it in a prime position to become a hub of process automation. For India to

Indians hold a positive outlook towards AI compared to other nations, and most of them expect the job market will significantly improve with the advent of intelligent technologies





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Dr. Pratima Sheorey, Director, SCMHRD

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be a leader in the wave of automation, a joint effort by all the stakeholders – industry, government, academia, and employees – is indispensable. The workforce's innate inclination to work in the IT sector, along with strong capabilities and focus can become a huge resource, provided they are given the right training.

The Indian workforce has another advantage that is unique. Indians are one of the most optimistic in the world about AI and robots in the workplace and are actually looking forward to working alongside machines. In contrast, automation isn't viewed as favorably the western world. A study by Salesforce showed that Indians hold a positive outlook towards AI compared to other nations, and most of them expect the job market will significantly improve with the advent of intelligent technologies. 64 percent of the respondents in the survey were confident that new jobs will emerge from AI and 56 percent were ready to upskill and update their skills to make them future-ready. Even Indian consumers expect AI to make the society smarter (50 percent) and life more convenient (58 percent).

As the demand for expertise on AI, machine learning (ML), data mining and analysis, neural networks, NLP, deep learning, encryption, and cyber security goes up, employees will have to update their skills in order to act as an interface between machines and processes. The industries of banking, financial services, insurance, manufacturing, automotive, telecom, and healthcare hold immense potential for process automation. These industries have a unique opportunity to leverage the best of technology and human intellect and design the future of work.

#### The Challenges

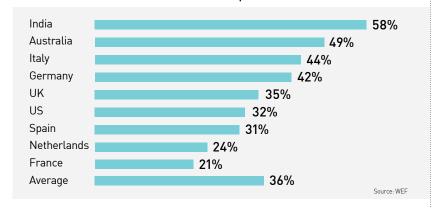
A recent Tata Communications study has shown that AI will diversify human thinking rather than replace it. However, the road to this diversification will be anything but easy, and the early signs are not very reassuring. While it is encouraging to see that Indian job-seekers are making themselves future-ready, the preparation is far from complete. The demand for AI skills has been double the talent supply beginning 2018 which has been consistently worsening, says Indeed, Furthermore, data from the National Institute of Skill Development (NISD) shows that a dismal 2 percent of the country's workforce has undergone a skills training. If the current situation prevails, the evolution from a laborintensive business environment to one that also incorporates machines and robots will, undoubtedly, be chaotic and tough. However, it doesn't have to be that way. Organizations and employees need to work on delegating repetitive tasks to machines and make way for current roles to be more creative and thought-driven. The increasing role of machines in a business and workplace setting needs to be viewed as an eventuality, and steps need to be taken to make the transition to this new paradigm as smooth

As there is an attempt to automate everything that can be automated, the benefits will no longer be limited to a few groups or organizations. This

#### Most searched AI related jobs in the past year (2017-18)



#### Use of AI at scale - Global comparison



The increasing role of machines in a business and workplace setting needs to be viewed as an eventuality, and steps need to be taken to make the transition to this new paradigm as smooth as possible

democratization will make the process more inclusive and further the integration of AI and ML into core business models and practices. Preparing the workforce by reskilling and updating their capabilities, and equipping the right people to power AI solutions, is key to a smooth transition into the future of work. At the moment, the rapid pace of change and relative lack of knowledge is posing a challenge to predict the future. As an increasing number of professionals learn the technology better and interact with it more deeply, skepticism will give way to confidence. But the window to build an inclusive and well-planned future is shrinking fast, and if companies want to ride through this disruption smoothly, they need to build on their strengths. India has a unique advantage, which if leveraged smartly, can propel it to the leadership position. @



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## Decriminalizing Homosexuality

## - Workplace Considerations





The recent SC's judgment decriminalizing Section 377 is more than just an act of inclusivity. But organizations that wish to move towards truly promoting and creating an equal opportunity workplace will need more than a mere change in mindset or policies

By Vikram Shroff & Archita Mohapatra



leading technology company in India recently terminated its Chief Diversity Officer for discriminating against a former employee basis his sexual orientation. The former employee had already resigned from the company based on certain incidents occurred in 2015, but decided to file a complaint now after the Supreme Court's (SC) recent judgment of partially decriminalizing homosexuality.

The SC's judgment may possibly go down in history as one of India's landmark rulings. Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, 1861 was partially struck down by the SC as it was seen to violate the fundamental rights of equality, prohibition of discrimination, freedom of speech and expression,

and more importantly, the right to life. As a result, being gay is no longer illegal...or to be afraid of. Although this ruling may soon become a matter of 'pride' for India, in a conventional society like India, considerable efforts will be needed to change mindsets.

Indian labor laws may take a while to reflect this development. For example, the benefits under the Maternity Benefits Act applied only to women. There is no provision of paternity leave, except for government companies. The Equal Remuneration Act prohibits discrimination of women in relation to recruitment, promotion, training or transfer. Conditions in relation to night shift work, especially in relation to employee's safety and security, are meant to protect only female employees. Hope-

History owes an apology to the members of this community and their families, for the delay in providing redressal for the ignominy and ostracism that they have suffered through the centuries. The members of this community were compelled to live a life full of fear of reprisal and persecution. This was on account of the ignorance of the majority to recognize that homosexuality is a completely natural condition, part of a range of human sexuality...

- Justice Malhotra

fully, the SC judgment might trigger a reconsideration of the extent of the coverage of these laws.

While celebrations of the SC judgment will continue for a considerable period of time, employers have already started evaluating its impact at the workplace. Whether the Indian corporate sector is likely to respond positively and recognize the rights of the LGBTQ community at the workplace, remains to be seen. Some progressive companies have already taken affirmative action to promote LGBTQ initiatives at their workplaces. For the rest, CEOs and HR leaders need to first address some important questions. Whether they would like to adopt any progressive measures voluntarily, without being required to do so by law? Are they ready and prepared to send the message that all employees are equal and welcomed? Can they assure LGBTQ employees that they will be valued and accepted by the entire organization?

Should the corporate sector decides to move ahead in the direction of creating an equal opportunity workplace in its truest sense, some initial steps to be taken are indicated below.

- a. Actively and continuously promoting gender diversity and feeling of inclusion at all levels within the organization.
- b. Reviewing employment forms and documents to broaden any categorization that may currently be limited to male and female, by including 'others' or 'neither' option.
- Reviewing HR policies to remove any gender bias and making the organization genderneutral, followed by ensuring awareness and acceptance of the revised polices among the employees by organizing company-wide discourses.
- d. Effectively prohibiting of any form of harassment, discrimination, bullying or victimization, based on an employee's gender or sexual preference, and showing a zero-tolerance attitude for any breach.
- Engaging external HR experts to regularly conduct training and sensitization programs to help change the mindset of the employees as well as contract workers.



- f. Reviewing existing employee benefits programs along with insurance coverage to ensure that the support is extended to LGBTQ employees and to their partners nominated.
- Showing support towards the LGBTQ employees by providing appropriate infrastructure at the workplace and giving them confidence of speedy and effective resolution of their grievances.

Organizations that wish to move towards truly promoting and creating an equal opportunity workplace, will need more than a mere change in mindset or policies. The SC's judgment decriminalizing Section 377 in line with the fact that 'no one can escape from their individuality', is in our view just the beginning! @m

VIKRAM SHROFF is Head, HR Laws (Employment & Labor) at Nishith Desai Associates. ARCHITA MOHAPATRA is a member of the HR Law (Employment & Labor) team at Nishith Desai Associates



## \*\* A GROWTH LEADER

In an exclusive interview with People Matters, PETA LATIMER, CEO of Mercer, Singapore, shares her insights and perspective on the evolving SEA talent landscape, growth markets, future of work, leadership and navigating structural shifts, regulatory policies, and volatility in the changing marketplace

By Suparna Chawla Bhasin

eta Latimer is the CEO at Mercer, Singapore. She is a global business leader with extensive experience across a range of industries and high profile projects. With many years spent advising multinationals on change and workforce transformation, and having run successful consulting teams, Peta is passionate about making a difference in the way work works and is always looking to drive high performance through people in an authentic and sustainable way.

Peta joined Mercer from KPMG Singapore, where she was leading the People & Change Advisory Practice for the past two and half years. With a focus on market impact, Peta represented the

Firm through professional memberships, IBM & Workday Alliance Partner, and participated as a Keynote and Panel Speaker for events across the region. Prior to KPMG, Peta held several leadership positions, including the Head of Smarter Workforce for IBM ASEAN and Global Head of Diversity and Inclusion for Kenexa Ltd which was acquired by IBM in 2010. Working across Europe & Asia Pacific for IBM Kenexa, Peta was instrumental in building stronger brand recognition for the

Peta has a Masters in Organizational Psychology from Birkbeck University of London, United Kingdom and a Bachelor of Commerce from The University of Sydney, Australia.



#### You have a distinguished track record and extensive experience across a range of sectors. What has this journey been like and what have been the key learnings for you?

A I often describe my career journey as one of 'fits and starts', having personally experienced disruption whether self-initiated or driven by the dynamic nature of the industries and markets I have worked in. My 5 year plans have never really gone according to plan, but I genuinely believe that it was this agility & new learning opportunities that have helped to accelerate my career. At an early age, I was very fortunate to manage a team of 8 people all of whom were more experienced and older. I have also had the opportunity to manage a large geographic territory and interact with people from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds – both of which were milestones in my leadership journey teaching me how to motivate different types of people in the workplace. I like to challenge and push myself to do, see and learn as much as possible.

With regards to lessons learned; the first is to be curious and say 'yes' to new opportunities. Advocating this kind of thinking and having the willingness to 'take the plunge' helps unlock potential

### We are at fault when we blame technology for being a disruptor - it's not, it is an agent of change

you never knew you had. The second lesson is to surround yourself with smart, challenging diverse people from within and outside your immediate network. Being exposed to people from different backgrounds has helped challenge some preconceived notions and pushed me to expand my thinking. In both instances, it's ultimately about having a growth mindset.

#### Where do you think the future of work going? What do you think will be the true impact of tech disruption on the workforce?

A It's an interesting question but not a new one. The future of work is something organizations have been discussing for the last decade, even longer if you consider the continuous improvement movement of the 70s-80s. I remember in one of my first roles after relocating to the UK in 2006, we released a paper entitled 'Change is the New Normal'! What we are seeing now is in response to the speed of change: organizations cannot afford to discuss the need for a new strategy, invest in months of current state reviews and market scans. debate transition roadmaps and interim states, and await the next budget cycle to begin the necessary investments. By that stage a new entrant would have captured a material portion of the market

share and you would have to be forced into a reactive position.

Personally I'm pleased to see the more proactive conversations about the impact of technology on today's workforce. It indicates that technology is being viewed as an agent of change, and we're seeing more organizations disrupt from the inside out. For me, the impact on the Future of Work relates to the integration of technology and human capital skill – changing the way work works, not simply automating or adding machine learning to improve process and speed of insight. Critically, we need to stop the scaremongering about the displacement of jobs and consider the changing nature of specific tasks within jobs that necessitate the need to learn new skills.

As organizations in Singapore prepare for the future of work, we're seeing an increasing effort to look at what work is actually taking place and better realigning value chains and structures to improve levels of customer anticipation and responsiveness. The ability to change and change quickly, is emerging as a differentiating competency. This means business-as-usual cannot be allowed to take priority. How can you expect leaders and employees to embrace new ways of working if they are still being measured against traditional KPIs and performance expectations? This ability to lead change is one I feel is lacking across some of the top echelons of organizations. Too often as leaders, we 'direct change initiatives' rather than personally leading by example. With a future dependency on soft skills like empathy, flexible thinking, creativity, resiliency, I think we need to have a true leadership revolution. One client I recently met calls it the time to 'unboss'.

Technology disruption is here to stay. We need to embrace it, learn how to test and fail fast, build flexibility into financial expectations, and truly foster a culture of life-long learning which to me means, challenging the status quo at every step.

 Singapore is economically transforming, becoming competitive in the global market, and the pressures on the workforce to glocalise have intensified. What approaches do you see organizations in Singapore applying for talent management for their own survival at this point in time?

A Singapore ranks the highest in Asia in attracting and developing talent, reflecting not only its world-class education system but how it's adapting skills in the digital era. With strong and historical emphasis on financial and technical skills, the government and local organizations continue to invest heavily in areas such as cybersecurity, data science, data governance and engineering. We're finding that rather than just seeking industryspecific skills, organizations are shifting toward 'technology application skills within industry'. Separately, with the speed of change and level of disruption, there is a growing impetus on core work-related soft skills such as complex problem solving, active learning and cognitive flexibility<sup>1</sup>. These skills are even more critical in emerging markets where the focus has traditionally been on technical or hard skills. I see this view reinforced in our work with government agencies across Asia and in particularly here in Singapore. Large Singapore organizations are becoming very strategic in their manpower sourcing and development plans. We have seen many examples of companies sending their top talent overseas to receive specialized education and gain exposure in different working environments before returning to work in Singapore. This of course assumes that organizations are good at identifying their workforce needs, are able to effectively manage supply and demand and can clearly articulate the future necessary skills.

McKinsey says that by 2030, some 6-8% of the total non-farm labor force in ASEAN alone or if you say 12-17 million workers could be displaced with technology. In terms of access to support in training or skills required in the digital economy, how do you think organizations are facilitating this?

A It is important to develop a clear understanding of whether a job in its entirety will be replaced, or whether individual tasks that make up that job will be replaced, aggregated or restructured. Whenever I advise my clients on this, I always look to undertake a full workload analysis so that we can identify activities at a task level, not just a job level. From there you can have more informed conversations about how to redesign the way people are currently working today. Then comes the challenge of understanding the areas we struggle to fulfil with the appropriate level of skill today, let alone the skills we think we need for the future. With the talent scarcity across the emerging markets, 'buying' or 'borrowing' skills are not easy and so we are often forced to consider the implications of longer term 'build' scenarios. When talking about life-long learning and exponential learning cultures, it's important to encourage employees to take ownership of their career development and to find ways to operate outside their comfort zone. Some of our consulting teams recently completed a Python Programming Course simply as a way to experience what computer programming and language is all about in an effort to understand the skill required. This is an area where I'm proud to join the Mercer family who truly differentiates by our ability to analyze and advise on job redesign requirements and internal labour market movements.

The gig economy has been on a rise in Singapore. What aspects of the gig economy matter to the businesses, and what strategic shifts are companies making in this regard?

A Helped by its land-size, it's been incredible to watch the gig economy grow across Singapore, particularly in the food delivery and transport sectors. We have also seen a rise in gig workers across the growing start-up community here in Singapore. The picture however differs when I have conversations with HR in some of the local and MNC



## We need to stop scaremongering about displacement of jobs; it is the displacement of tasks and necessity to learn new skills

organizations who often admit that they are not really looking at this as a serious means of dealing with the talent scarcity. To put it in perspective, according to Mercer's 2018 Global Talent Trends Study, 82% of executives in Singapore say flexible working is core to their employee value proposition but only 3% HR leaders say that flexible working is visibly present in their organization. As many as 48% of employees say they are concerned that flexible working impacts their future promotion opportunities.

I believe this comes down to implementation challenges, where hiring managers worry that flexible arrangements may erode trust and collaboration among employees and add complexity to performance management and rewards. Another challenge is providing gig or flexible workers with sufficient career pathways or on-the-job learning. Too often organizations leverage the 'contractor' model to bring in specific expertise to solve a short to medium term gap. The person fulfilling this role is expected to have the skills and hit the ground running. Whilst there will always be some tradeoffs, not seriously considering different means of employment may impact an organization's ability to meet their longer term talent aspirations. Locally, we have an opportunity to look at the culture of trust and educate managers on how to flex 'loudly'.

#### Do you think the challenges that Singapore faces is something that you also see in other SEA countries like Indonesia and Malaysia?

A Having worked in regional roles previously, I think the ability to change at speed and build agility and resilience in often ambiguous environments is similarly experienced across South East Asia. However, how each country is approaching this change differs. For Singapore, one of the biggest challenges will be their past success, where the 'good is the enemy of great' phenomenon can sometimes lead to a natural aversion to risk taking. According a recent Mercer study, only 4% of executives in Singapore consider their organization to be agile. This will need to change as Singapore competes with other countries in the region who have less to lose and whose governments are advocating 'leapfrog' aspirations. I had the opportunity to spend some significant time in Jakarta recently, and there I noticed a bolder conversation amongst senior leaders on how to leverage technology, global best practices and invest in human capital planning.

The Future of Work relates to the integration of technology and human capital skill - changing the way work works, not simply automating or adding machine learning to improve process and speed of insight

#### How is Mercer navigating structural shifts, regulatory policies, and volatility in the changing marketplace?

A If I think about the 3 major themes that were discussed at the World Economic Forum on ASEAN: Aging Workforce & Income Disparity; Rising Cost & Accessibility of Healthcare; and Talent Scarcity, Mercer is uniquely and centrally positioned to respond to our clients' local and global needs. One of the things we are actively embracing ourselves is technology. With the acquisition of Thomsons Online Benefits, we not only offer the world's most proven Benefits technology platform to our clients but we have also completed our solution portfolio to better meet the needs of organizations who want to offer their employees more personalized, flexible and meaningful total rewards. The technology is allowing us to build up our 'Marketplace' solution whereby we are easily able to connect a range of vendors to employees, who can then choose the most relevant services for them and their families.

As we celebrate our 40th anniversary in Singapore this year, we celebrate the fact that we have been in the business of creating more rewarding futures for our clients and their employees whether we're designing affordable health plans, helping individuals plan for a financial wellness, or applying digital innovations to match employers with the right talent.

#### 1 In your opinion, how do you think the HR plays a part in meeting business goals?

A I have been extraordinarily vocal about the HR profession in my career, namely about the need to increase capability and business acumen in order to truly support workforce productivity and optimization. With the impact of megatrends and technology disruption, now is the time for HR to drive business performance in a way they have never been able to do before. Every workplace is undergoing some form of transformation so the pressure is for organizations to ensure they bring their people with them on this journey, and who better to ensure talent retention, skill build, performance management and communications than HR? With so much commentary on the integration of technology and human capital and the assumed reliance on soft-skills, HR may finally be in a position to be heard and prioritized.

At the same time, technology is and will have a significant impact HR functions around the world. In Singapore, the uptake of cloud HR platforms has been impressive, as well as the experimentation of data and analytics to make more objective people decisions. It is definitely an exciting time to be working as an HR consultant!

#### You have an extensive leadership experience. Do you think there is a stark difference between what leadership is in the developed markets and what leadership is in growing markets?

A My leadership style has evolved as a result of my interactions with different cultures and experiences in different levels of market maturity. Having said that, I always enjoy getting into the trenches and working alongside my teams. I believe a leader's job is to remove obstacles so that every day the team can move forward. When I made the decision to relocate to Asia, someone warned me about the shadow one casts as a leader in the region. With more traditional hierarchies and positional power afforded to leaders, I did need to adjust somewhat and learn to ask more subtle questions and challenge in more humble ways. There is an expectation here that the leader knows all and a nervousness about challenging upwards. But that is not my style at all. I do not believe I always have the best answer, nor the best technical expertise. This was a real challenge for me for a long time working across different countries in South East Asia. Depending on the team, the business and the goal, I believe it is the leader's responsibility to flex style as appropriate. @



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## The "Fourth" Space

Does work have to be done only in an office? Is work-from-home the only alternative? Can the 'commuting space' be a place to work as well?

## Co-working is not just a rebranded old concept

ukhada Chaudhary is an alumnus of MICA, Ahmedabad. She was in Mumbai working remotely for a company in London when she got to know what working out of a co-working space was. She also

observed that startups were moving to smaller towns where the real estate was not as crazily priced as Mumbai. That was when she thought of her next gig. She came back to her home town, Nagpur, and started "Chaos Theory" – a co-working space. For 300 rupees a day, anyone can use the space. Beverages, Wi-Fi, printers etc. —

all are included in this deal. When Zomato started up in Nagpur, Chaos Theory was the obvious choice until they grew so rapidly that they needed their own office space. It has also been utilised by the team of Swiggy in its Nagpur launch phase.

Co-working spaces are different from managed offices. Mona Shukla of CorporateEdge, Gurgaon offers managed offices. These are high-end offices which rent out their space to one single client. The clients ask CorporateEdge to design the office in a manner that is consistent with their brand and convevs their values.

#### Co-working - the fourth space

Almost a decade ago Starbucks branded itself as the "third space" after office and home, where work happened. As the nature of work, working, and workers have all changed, a fourth space has emerged. This is the space called Co-working - which is many employers sharing a common work space. Co-working spaces get people from large, small, and medium enterprises and the solopreneurs (lone employee of a company or a gig worker who connects to the world on his or her mobile), and is a membership-based working space that can be rented for as long as you wish — a booming market in India. Such spaces have many different organizations and individuals working side-by-side — some of them "hot-desk", some have a fixed office space, while others rent out a cabin to work.

MEMBERSHIP BASE
INDIVIDUALS & ORGANIZATION USE IT.

WINFRASTRUCTURE & AMENITIES MAINTAINED BY PROVIDER

ALLOWS FLEXIBILITY TO SCALE UP OR DOWN AS BUSINESS NEED FOR DEFICE MEMORY SHIFTS

REDUCES FEELINGS OF ABBANIT SHAPERI



Starbucks claimed to offer the 3rd space to work after office and home. Co-working is the fourth

#### Plug and play in office space for employers

New York-based shared workspace company, WeWork started with 20 locations in India and in the last twelve months that it has been here, it has expanded its presence in Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru and will expand soon to Pune, Chennai, and Hyderabad. SoftBank invested \$3 billion into WeWork directly, and an additional \$1.4 billion invested into three subsidiaries, WeWork China, WeWork Japan and WeWork Pacific. Could that be that Soft-Bank sees the rise of communities around work as the future?

Several companies from a Microsoft to the college dropouts building their startups, are customers of co-working spaces. A part of the Jaguar Land Rover's team works from WeWork in Mumbai and almost 180 people work out of the Smartworks space in Pune. Smartworks Pune also has Amazon India while some of Google's teams work out of Awfis (another co-working space provider) in Gurgaon.

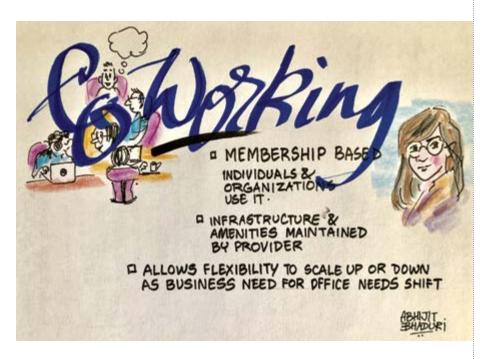
As organizations expand, they do not need to keep building or leasing office space. Co-working spaces offer a plug-andplay option and a terrific place for people to tap into the diverse skill sets available around.

#### A new way of working

Why is co-working emerging as the fourth space of work? When large companies want to expand their geographical footprint, they need to test the waters. Co-working spaces offer a great way to test the market. It is the equivalent of creating a "prototype". If the market opens up, as it did for Swiggy and Zomato in Nagpur, they can always add more seats until it makes sense to have their own office space.

For medium-sized enterprises, it is a cost-effective way to put money into business, not get locked into long term contracts for real estate. They also find co-working spaces handy for networking and creating an ecosystem of service providers, and also find partners and employees in that space. The co-working community is just a new way of working. Ride-sharing companies made people ask if it was worth having an asset that was used only a few hours a day; co-working spaces are making people question if it is worth investing in office space.

Does work have to be done only in an office? Is work-from-home the only alternative? Can the commuting space be a place to work as well? If Uber told us how to hail a ride through an app, the startup Shuttl wants to replace the need for organizations to invest in buses. With high speed Wi-Fi becoming ubiquitous, the commute



### Co-working is not a workspace industry; it's a happiness industry

to work could become a new place to learn, listen to music or podcasts, rest, and entertain on the way to work.

#### Not just another place to work

As companies are reducing their investments in office spaces, they are letting people work from home. Work from home allows people to address their domestic responsibilities like caring for a family. Gallup's data shows that 43 percent of American employees report that they work remotely "at least some of the time", up from 39 percent in 2012. Gallup also reports that the people who work remotely "at least some of the time" are spending even more time working remotely. The number of independent workers (freelancers, independent consultants, etc.) is also increasing, with most of these people working remotely. However, there is an emotional price to pay for this flexibility. That is the epidemic of loneliness.

In a survey released by the Global Co-working Unconference Conference, people using co-working spaces described the benefits of co-working to be social connections and better networks.

- 89 percent reported they are happier
- 83 percent reported they are less lonely
- 78 percent reported that co-working helps keep them sane
- 82 percent said co-working has expanded their professional networks
- 80 percent said they turn to other

- co-working members for help or guid-
- 64 percent of the respondents said their co-working networking was a very important (26 percent) or important source of work (38 percent)

#### What if your employer built a co-working space?

Many organizations struggle to build collaboration skills among their leaders. Innovation can happen effortlessly if the place encourages free thinking. Create a funky work environment and invite employees to work from that space occasionally. The digital giants are building big offices for a reason. If that is too much to do, just rent some seats in a co-working space. It is the fourth space. It is the future of working. @0

ABHIJIT BHADURI is the author of the bestseller "The Digital Tsunami" and a popular columnist. He is a consultant to organizations on issues of talent, leadership and culture. With more than 700,000 followers, Abhijit Bhaduri is India's no 1 influencer on social media.

# CHROs hold the opportunity to impact



In a special conversation with People Matters, **Eva Sage-Gavin**, Senior Managing Director, Global Talent and Organization Practice, Accenture, shares her perspectives on the evolving equation between the businesses and CHROs, harnessing the power of digital technologies to innovate, unlock new sources of value, and reinventing the role of the CHRO for the future

#### By Shweta Modgil

he future of work is changing and so are the expectations from leaders and employees alike. With talent becoming an imperative, the role of HR and a CHRO has elevated in the recent times. But in a world that's becoming competitive, digital, and AI-driven by the minute, what role will a CHRO play in the future workplace? What does the CHRO need to be equipped with to solve challenges around reinventing the business and bringing transformation through human capital?

In an exclusive conversation with People Matters, Eva Sage-Gavin, Senior Managing Director, Global Talent and Organization Practice, Accenture, sheds light on how the equations between the CHROs and businesses have changed over time and what the role of the CHRO entails when it comes to the future of work. Eva Sage-Gavin is responsible for shaping the market strategy for the Talent & Organization practice across Accenture, including its offerings and investment initiatives. She leads the team that helps Accen-

ture's clients harness digital technologies and evolve their workforces to innovate, unlock new sources of value and "lead in the new." She also plays a pivotal role in shaping the practice's market strategy, including offerings and investments. In her previous role, she served as a senior advisor at Boston Consulting Group (BCG), and contributed to BCG's CEO Advisory Practice, directly coaching CEOs. She has also served as a senior adviser to G100 companies, supporting CEOs, board directors and CHROs and has served for over 30 years

in executive human resource officer and C-suite leadership roles at companies like Gap Inc, PepsiCo, Disney, Sun Microsystems and Xerox.

#### • How has role of the CHRO and the expectations from the role changed over time? How has this influenced the equation that the CHRO shares with other business heads?

A major trend that I have seen in organizations is that today, everyone is considered a business leader with the responsibility of solving a business challenge — whether pertaining to growth, attaining competitive advantage, innovation, or market presence. Particularly with the role of the CHROs, I have seen that the expectations from them have changed. And there are three major asks from anyone who occupies the role of the CHRO. The first is the general business experience that an individual holds i.e. if the person has had a direct business responsibility. The second is how global the experience has been. So what is the experience in terms of maximizing the sources of talent or supply chain globally? The third is capability around core analytics, financial, and data analytics acumen. I feel all these three demands have really shaped the role of the CHRO and the equation that a CHRO shares with other business leaders.

#### The roles of HR and the CHRO have evolved to becoming business partners. But this partnership goes much beyond. Where do you think the opportunity lies?

A New relationships are emerging in terms of leadership in this triangle of the CEO, the CFO, and the CHRO. I think that is an unprecedented opportunity for impact. But I also believe that when you are given the opportunity, there is tremendous responsibility and expectation. There is a need for the CHROs to be value creators, have deep subject matter expertise, and the ability to provide predictive insights. There is a lot of dialogue about moving from lagging indicators to predicting sources of untapped value. The bestin-the-industry know where the source of the best talent in the world is, they know how to renew it, keep it agile and fresh, and they can predict if people are more or less engaged, and intervene before they have to face a loss. And just like the CFO, who has tools like standard accounting principles, CHROs now also have tools like analytics to dispense. Those who are

investing in such tools are not only changing the face of their companies but also that of the function. They are changing learning, rewards systems, as well as social roles. We will realize a few years down the line that a CHRO's role has become one of the three most pivotal roles.

#### • How is the relationship between the CHROs and boards maturing?

A HR now has an important seat at the board and talks directly to the board. The role of the CHRO is getting more respect and value as the CHRO now holds HR data curated with the help of predictive analytics. Today, a CHRO can come in with predictive analytics and talk about the major satisfiers and dissatisfiers for the business. The ability to make data-backed decisions is what brings the CHROs at par with the CEO and the CFO at the board level.

decades of history, instead of responding to a disruptive technology, you need to plan for disruption. You need to plan for a best case scenario, a mid-case scenario, a worst case scenario, and a brand new way of preparing for opportunities and risks.

#### • How imperative is it for CHROs to harness the power of digital technologies to innovate, unlock new sources of value and transform their organizations?

A The idea of now-ness, instantaneous real-time sensing, and predictive ability is made possible by technology today. It is important for CHROs to look at human capital not as 'production agents' but as human beings with hopes, aspiration, capabilities, backgrounds; and use advanced analytics to unlock these untapped sources of value. Their focus

Instead of responding to a disruptive technology, CHROs need to plan for disruption. They need to plan for a best case scenario, a mid-case scenario, a worst case scenario, and a brand new way of preparing for opportunities and risks

#### What do CHROs need to keep at the top of their minds to combat the future of work?

A This idea of disruption and how one is able to look at the possible scenarios, and to have workforce plans that are proactive is a new area of decision science and capability. I work a lot with leaders, and in a typical organization, a leader will have 20+ years of experience, they would have graduated from an academic philosophy and learnt certain management sciences. Now all of a sudden, some of the most productive and value adding individuals in an organization might have only 2-3 years of tenure. Their specialty might be data analytics or artificial intelligence or value chain analysis. So the biggest challenge before a CHRO is to keep the business model agile and respond fast enough to the rapid market shifts. If you are a CHRO of a 3000+ organization with

should also be on transformation driven by talent, on the basis of an innovation index, agility index, or other new capabilities that cutting edge CHROs are bringing to their organizations.

The idea is to find out the critical elements that will have the most impact. CHROs will need to figure out where the most innovation will occur and ask if their teams are ready to respond to the market conditions, how fast they can train them, and how many skill categories would be impacted. This extraordinary level of predictive capability will enable strategies that will give the best return on investment.

Also, let humans do what they do best, and let machines do what they do best. But remember that data is not perfect and without human judgment and interpretation, you could find yourself not getting the results you want. @

#### **CLINTON WINGROVE**



## Is technology closing the skills gap or making us complacent?

Technology is a powerful enabler but it rarely provides a comprehensive solution without excellent leadership and management – it merely increases the speed with which knowledge can be acquired but does far less to increase capability

orty Five percent of the small businesses are unable to find qualified candidates to fill job openings. 60 percent of all employers have job openings that stay vacant for twelve weeks or longer. 67 percent of leavers cite one or more interactions with their managers as having triggered them to look for a new job. The resulting costs of lost productivity and increased recruiting are massive. So, how can this be when the governments worldwide have invested more and more in education and companies have experienced "The War for Talent" before? How can this be when we have had nearly three decades of development and implementation of Learning Management Systems? How can this be when "You can learn anything on the internet?"

#### Is education the problem?

Many argue that education is still the problem and educational institutions are not producing good candidates – and that may well be true! Indeed, there are many informed voices, such as Ricardo Semler¹ and Sir Kenneth Robinson² who

clearly point out the flaws in our current education systems. But, even if education is the problem, that won't change soon. And, it is also no excuse for the employers. Business is about handling challenges and uncertainties. Without challenges and uncertainties there would be no competition, no winners and losers, no energy or drive. Without them, we would not need leaders and managers; life would be boring and unrewardingly easy.

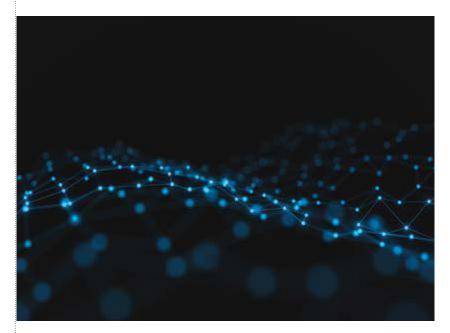
So, let's get real and deal with the hand we have. The simple reality is that when the 'new to the workforce' arrive armed with their education, the probability is that at least two-thirds of what they learned is already out of date. We, the managers and leaders, are the ones who have to crack this problem. We have to find ways to rapidly, dramatically, and continuously upskill our workforces and/or enable and inspire them to do it themselves. But we get complacent because research apparently points to simple solutions:

- Around 70 percent of anyone's talent is acquired whilst doing meaningful work.
   So, let's explain to employees that they can get most of the development they need on-the-job; they don't need to go into classrooms to learn anymore.
- Individual attention spans have reduced.
   So, let's make learning and development bitesized

The simple reality is that when the 'new to the workforce' arrive armed with their education, the probability is that at least two-thirds of what they learned is already out of date — and leaders have to crack this problem







Organizations (or those people making the decisions in them) typically undervalue individual development and, when they do invest in it, they frequently simplify it to the point of trivialization

- Video is the most engaging way of delivering content.
  - So, let's package "best practices" in short videos.
- Individuals want autonomy and control.
   So, let's make the learning videos available on demand.

## Is technology the solution?

Many organizations have already moved to using Learning Management Systems to store and deliver on-demand materials, creating bite-sized learning experiences, delivering short, web-based training sessions, promoting self-managed learning, and seeing technology as the solution.

All of those things are simple ... and they can add value. But, even when they are all applied, productivity, engagement, and staff retention data consistently show that such methods are not comprehensive enough or effective enough solutions.

## Three critical skills

I started my own career journey well-resourced for an ever-changing world. Maidstone Grammar School in the UK gave me my formative education and equipped me with the ability to undertake an objective self-assessment and work positively with the results of it, make the very best use of my strengths, not let any relative limitations hold me back, and manage my self-development with a strategic goal in mind.

In later life, those skills have proven far more valuable than understanding how to compute a Fourier Series in mathematics and all the other things I had to learn merely to pass examinations! After obtaining my degree, my first paid employment was with 3M United Kingdom who also believed demonstrably in development. There, I quickly learned the importance of innovation and behavior engineering, and that technology is a powerful enabler ... but, it rarely provides a comprehensive solution without excellent leadership and management.

From those two sets of experiences, I came to realize that organizations (or those people making the decisions in them) typically undervalue individual development and, when they do invest in it, they frequently simplify it to the point of trivialization.<sup>3</sup>

## What do we want from Learning and Development?

So, what are you trying to achieve through Learning and Development? I contend, two things:

- A pipeline of talent that will serve the medium to long-term needs of the organization as it, in turn, seeks to achieve the vision and mission within the constraints of its values and resources:
- Every employee actively seeking to realize their true potential, and most succeeding.

The former demands a strategic approach to recruitment — recruiting based on fit and potential rather than mere immediate capability. This, in turn, demands that the organization invests in a continuous review of what knowledge and skills will be needed, and takes action to ensure that those are acquired (either through recruitment or through development). After all, individual employees cannot be expected to know all of those emerging needs unless they are informed.

The second goal, "Every employee actively seeks to realize their true potential, and most succeed," is also unlikely to be achieved merely by advising employees that, "We support selfmanaged learning and development" or by providing "On-demand web-based learning."

Employees need to see and experience priority being attached to development. This means that development has to be a main agenda item and not the AOB agenda item; delegation needs to be development-focused; and the extent to which an employee has added to their knowledge and skills needs to be given appropriate value compared to the results they delivered.

Agility is also about adding the knowledge and skills that will be needed to respond to the upcoming changes. These are key to achieving an agile organization, capable of responding to the escalating rate of change. Agility is not only about rapidly using existing knowledge and skill to respond to changing demands and circumstances,





Despite massive advances in technology and associated communications, the quality of leadership and management is still the single most significant differentiator of successful organizations

> it is also about adding the knowledge and skills that will be needed to respond to the upcoming changes.

Technology and especially AI will add value ... but! Many argue that technology and especially AI will solve the problem. They will certainly add value. Contemporary technology can already, for example:

- Diagnose learning and development needs (by assessing our existing knowledge, skills, preferences and tendencies using operational data);
- Make recommendations for learning options (by monitoring our preferences);
- Make learning available on demand;
- Make learning extremely powerful by deploying gamification, virtual reality, augmented reality,

But this still begs the questions, "Why are we not seeing enhanced productivity? "Why are we experiencing a shortage of the talent we seek?" and "Why are people leaving employers to find greener pastures somewhere else?"

I believe that despite massive advances in technology and associated communications, "The quality of leadership and management is still the single most significant differentiator of sustainably successful organizations." With a few notable exceptions (for example, using gamification to help surgeons develop the manual dexterity needed for micro-surgery), the use of technology in all its forms for learning and development merely increases the speed with which knowledge can be acquired (the learning). It does far less to increase capability (the application of knowledge; the development of skill).

## Let's not be complacent

Let's not be complacent until organizations put the right people into people-management roles, equip them with the skill of managing their own development, make appropriate development resources and opportunities available, hold managers accountable for their own development, and hold managers accountable for the extent to which their staff develop, or else they will continue to experience talent shortages, sub-optimal productivity, and unacceptable yet avoidable levels of attrition.

Let's not be complacent until individual managers realize that they need to learn how to manage their own development, take control of their own development, develop far more talent inside, than keep trying to recruit it from outside, and encourage their staff to take control of their own development, or else they will remain frustrated by change, overly busy, and constantly fighting in the war for talent. @m

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## Creative destruction at business schools

It is about time business schools in the periphery learn from their own people and seek inspiration not so much from business schools in the core countries but from successful local organizations?

he attractiveness of US management methods is largely due to the uncontested strength of American companies during much of the twentieth century. American business methods also projected the American business schools internationally, infecting the business schools in rest of the world. This is how the teaching of US management permeated management practices in other contexts, under the doubtful premise that "what worked well in the US should do well elsewhere".

As it turned out, the US people management model that matched specialized skills and job descriptions created a national market for labor in America. This increased the mobility of people, which undermined community ties, including those that gave rise to trade unions. Weakened unions allowed the export of workplaces to countries with lower costs at the expense of the labor share of income in the US, whose distribution became more concentrated. Currently, there is no increase in wages though the US is close to full employment<sup>1</sup>.

The compression suffered by the American middle-class led to frustration to the point of increases in deaths from despair<sup>2</sup> with the social dysfunction also being expressed in mass killings even at schools3, besides other uncontested signs of growing dissatisfaction with the fraying of the American social fabric4. The new context of frustration, not be dissociated from the management for production, gave way to an important nativist movement<sup>5</sup>. Nativism promotes not only xenophobia, but also a withdrawal from the global role of the United States, to the point that it has distanced itself from its traditional allies in the Americas, Europe, and in Asia. Perhaps, the main long-term consequence of the new nativist American stance is the increasing erosion of its soft power: the US is losing its ability to inspire<sup>6</sup>.

The resumption of the intellectual independence in the business schools of the peripheral countries will allow the emergence of new people management strategies that are better attuned to their cultures

I imagine that the loss of the American attractiveness will soon permeate business schools in peripheral countries. This backdrop will lead to a reconsideration of the pertinence of continuing to manage people in countries where the US methods never attained similar performance. The resumption of the intellectual independence in the business schools of the peripheral countries will allow the emergence of a new management of people better attuned to their cultures.

I believe we will develop a less impersonal management of people with a better acceptance of paternalistic leadership and that the selection of people will focus more on staff selection through affinities rather than the strong emphasis on competencies, promoting a faster integration of work teams while giving greater emphasis to the development of skills through on-the-job training. Teams that are more independent will allow a stronger role for coaching by charismatic leaders of a paternalistic bend. Organizations will be characterized by the greater role of more effective

self-managed work teams, perhaps even with greater autonomy in the management of their resources. Eventually, this will facilitate outsourcing and I would not be surprised if the new business organizations in the periphery will look more like ecosystems: federations of independent companies, each with a greater degree of internal cohesion because their employees will enjoy a greater sense of purpose, belonging, and identification.

To shape these ideas, business schools in the peripheral countries should seek inspiration not so much from business schools in the core countries but from successful local organizations. There is a wide range of them delivering exceptional quality at low costs without ever having seen a professional with an MBA degree. I have in mind organizations as diverse as the samba schools in Brazil and the Dabbawalas of Mumbai7, among others, like the Jain diamond traders of Gujarat. All these organizations deliver globally recognized products by organizing themselves in alignment with their local cultures; hence, their high productivity and happiness at work. It is about time business schools in the periphery learn from their own people. @

### BOUT THE AUTHOR

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# YOU DON'T HAVE

Skills gap
and what the
L&D function is
doing about it

## WHAT YOU WANT

The workforce is not equipped for the workplace of the future, or even for the one that we inhabit in the present day. Simply put, we are struggling to equip the workforce to have the skills that are needed. Skills maintenance in a rapidly changing technological world is challenging to keep up with. So, what does it mean for the L&D function?

By Suparna Chawla Bhasin

he illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn."This line by the Futurist and philosopher, Alvin Toffler cannot be truer in these times when new advances in technology are bringing forth opportunities that we couldn't have anticipated in the past. But there is not one skills gap. Every industry or sector is dealing with its own kind of skills gaps. And a bigger issue than that is the misalignment due to changing role requirements.

Workplaces have been reimagined. Learning has transformed. Development is a fast-altering concept. This is the time to empower the workforce. But there is a significant disconnect between the supply and demand of skills at the workplace. 45 percent of businesses are unable to find qualified candidates to fill job openings and 60 percent of all employers have job openings

that stay vacant for twelve weeks or longer, which costs them \$800,000 annually in lost productivity and advertising fees. The only way to accommodate and adapt to the changing times is through knowledge, instruction, and application. How, where, and what people learn needs to evolve today. A "one size fits all" approach to learning and development will not work and it's about time that organizations and their L&D functions allow employees to have customized individual pathways that meet their personal and professional demands.

In this new reality, what is needed is the reminder of the fact that organizations must unlearn old, obsolete knowledge and old ways of doing business before they can seize tomorrow's opportunities. But are organizations transmuting to adapt and oblige to evolving changes and demands – changes and demands that exhibit in every business function? 🐽 **CHANGING PRIORITIES, EMERGING TRENDS** 

STATE OF WORKPLACE LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

We're passing via an essential transformation in the way we work. Automation and 'robots' are changing human tasks and jobs, changing the capabilities required for various jobs. A majority of these momentous changes have raised massive demanding situations for Talent, Organizations and L&D experts. While the rate of change is accelerating, no doubt, the ask for the 'top' talent is fierce. However, today 'talent' does not mean the same as 10 years ago. The important of the jobs, skills or even the job titles of tomorrow are unknown. The lifespan of skills is becoming shorter and employers cannot stand still.

So, how can businesses prepare for a future that can be hardly defined today? How can companies attract and retain people they want? And what does all this mean for Learning and **Development departments?** 

8%

8% Building overall learning culture

**15%** Leadership development Reskilling workforces

What is the most important focus area of

**L&D** programs for 2018?\*

> \*Large Organizations (1000> employees)

> > **Improving** employee performance



## Is Re-Skilling a Tool to Build **Future-Ready Workforce?**

The biggest challenge that confronts Indian organizations today is the rapid change in the skills which employees must possess to take full advantage of new technologies. And the need for re-skilling will be required majorly in large-sized organizations. No-doubt, that with the rise of digital disruption, a 4-generation workforce and 60-year careers, the pressure on organizations to upgrade their workforce will intensify. Gone is the era when learning was valuable for years. Now, knowledge and skills become obsolete within months. This creates an urgent need to develop employees rapidly and regularly. Organizations need to rethink about learning and development so that it's no more a once-in-a-while activity and instead become more of a continuous, ongoing campaign.

## Top challenges faced by the L&D function?\*

\*Large Organizations (1000> employees)



Employees don't attend trainings

Identifying training needs

## **19**%

Measuring Rol

Getting approval from the management

**Budget constraints** 

## **L&D Spends: No more expenses, in fact, Investments**

As companies find themselves in a situation of digital disruption, they are all willing to address kills gaps by investing in L&D. On asking our survey respondents, on how they are investing on each of its employee's training, some interesting insights came out.

What is the overall L&D programs spend per employee in your organization?



**INR** 0 - 7.000



INR 7,000 - 33,000



**INR** 33.000 - 1.40.000



INR 1.40.000 +



Average L&D Spend Per Employee Increases with the size of the organization. And, the average spend per employee at senior-level is 3x compared to entry-level

Blended Learning is No Longer a 'Nice to Have'- It's a must-have Strategy

81% of L&D experts say that Blended Mode is the most effective mode of delivering L&D Programs

## **Top Trends in Workplace Learning and Development**



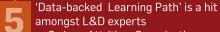
**Important** More than 80% of organizations have some sort of

structured L&D

- 38% of L&D experts say that 'Improving Employee Performance' is the prime focus of their programs in 2018.
- Re-skilling the workforce and preparing for the future.
  - The need for reskilling will be required majorly in large-sized organizations
- Proving value of learning to learner isn't as easy as it looks
  - Getting employees to attend trainings is highly challenging as learner of today is more demanding and looks for varied options of learning



- Learning is Evolving (Quickly) and so must the L&D Budgets
  - More than 50% organizations have increased their L&D budgets in 2018 compared to 2017. However, L&D spends differ within departments and employee levels.



In Low Attrition Organizations, 72% of L&D Teams find 'Pre- & Post Training Assessment' the most effective way to measure the ROI



## **Bridging the skills gap** with continuous education

## Winning organizations must adopt a culture that embraces lifelong learning

The most successful organizations adopt a growth mind-set, one where managers and leaders are invested in growing and developing people and cultivating an expectation for constant improvement within every employee

he global talent crisis, a subject of countless papers and research reports, demands our attention. ManpowerGroup's 2017 Talent Shortage Survey highlights that nearly forty-five percent of employers globally, the highest number in over a decade, are facing an acute shortage of qualified and skilled professionals.1 Compounding this alarming figure is India, which at fiftysix percent is experiencing an even greater and unprecedented skill scarcity. A contributing factor to this is the immense economic change India is undergoing; it is estimated that the Indian workforce will increase from the current 473 million to approximately 600 million by 2022.2

As the country's workforce continues to shift towards information technology and business

process outsourcing sectors, there is a further possibility of 2.5 to 3 million job opportunities opening in this sector by 2025, if the necessary skills are possessed.3 That this is the case should surprise no one. India has the highest proportion of digital talent.4 It is a position the Indian government is keen on maintaining, having recently doubled its budget allocation for the Digital India program to \$480 million in 2018-19. The Indian government also plans to further support the development of a digitally skilled workforce through the establishment of Centers of Excellence.5

## Meeting the demands of the digital workplace

Such a heavy reliance on technology puts pressure on organizations to ensure their workforce possesses the skills to keep current with the frenetic pace of technology. Digital transformation



**ONLY 55 PERCENT OF INDIAN** EMPLOYEES THINK LEAD-**ERSHIP IS COMMITTED TO** CLOSING THE DIGITAL SKILLS GAP WHICH MEANS REGARD-LESS OF THE STRATEGIES **DESIGNED OR MEETINGS** HELD TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE. WORKERS ARE FEEL-ING A DISCONNECT AND WORRY ABOUT THEIR JOB **PROSPECTS** 

is realigning technology and business models, as well as driving processes to deliver new values and experiences for customers and employees. Organizations and employees alike must now acquire knowledge and understanding of data analytics, mobility, social media, smart embedded devices and both new technologies and traditional technologies as well as how they are revolutionizing customer relationships, internal processes, business models and value propositions.

How organizations in India achieve this match will determine not only their success but also the success of the Indian economy. While many executives acknowledge the problem this poses, employees mostly do not feel leaders are leading on change. Only fifty-five percent of Indian employees think leadership is committed to closing the digital skills gap which means regardless of the strategies designed or meetings held to address the issue, workers are feeling a disconnect and worry about their job prospects.<sup>6</sup>

## Learning while working

Ensuring that organizations provide employees with the necessary upskilling opportunities is posing a serious challenge. Employees have little time during the work week available for learning. From research by Deloitte, we know the average employee only has 24 minutes a week to learn. With so little time, it becomes imperative that any learning completed is practical and applicable to not just the individual but also to the overall progression of the organization.

Key to this objective is ensuring that L&D efforts are personalized for the individual needs of the employee. Content needs to be tailored to the employee's knowledge today and their future requirements. Access is also critical – learners need to be able to access content from their smartphones, laptops, at work or home and whenever and wherever they are. In order to really impact an employee's future, programs should map job roles and competencies to development paths, provide actionable insight to learning administrators to increase utilization of learning resources, track individual and collective user behaviors and make recommendations based on this data.

## Meeting the expectations of learners

The corporate learning landscape is shifting in response to the rising demands and expectations of employees. An organization's chosen learning solution must allow employees to search, find, and watch micro-learning videos, read books, and listen to audiobooks right where and when they need to. Learners no longer expect to switch between work and learning; they want to see it happen simultaneously. This is why anyone respon-

sible for deciding what learning solution to select should consider another of Bersin's findings.

The Bersin by Deloitte Talent Maturity Model demonstrates that high performing organizations are those who intentionally design technology systems, processes, and practices that all work together to enable employees to have the information, capabilities, behaviors, and resources they need when they need them. Further, these organizations are increasingly developing their capability to "listen at scale" to the feedback of employees, so that they can rapidly customize their approach to workers, the work itself, or the market.<sup>8</sup>

Josh Bersin believes the future of corporate learning is "Learning in the Flow of Work®." In other words, learning must now fit into the daily schedule and align directly, or personally, with each learner's needs. Learning in the Flow of Work can be interpreted different ways — it can be a browser plug-in which embeds learning into

THE FUTURE OF CORPORATE LEARNING IS "LEARNING IN THE FLOW OF WORK®" – IN OTHER WORDS, LEARNING MUST ALIGN DIRECTLY OR PERSONALLY WITH EACH LEARNER'S NEEDS

applications such as Salesforce.com. It could also be ensuring that learners can access content from their collaboration tool like Slack.

Providing personalized learning and development paths is just one side of the coin. The flipside is an organizational culture change and the integration of continuous learning as a core value recognized from the top down – the concept of "Employer as Educator."

The most successful organizations adopt a growth mind-set, one where managers and leaders are invested in growing and developing people and cultivating an expectation for constant improvement within every employee. No longer can we view time spent on learning and professional development as "taking away" from executing on behalf of the organization. This means linking employee compensation to ongoing skill acquisition and development where performance reviews include learning achievement and goals. Only when continuous learning is adopted wholly and completely throughout the entire enterprise will organizations see any resolution to the ongoing skill shortages.



Chief Learning and Leadership Development

Officer, Aditya Birla Group

## The skills gap is real, but a bigger challenge is the mindset gap

Are organizations really anticipating the future opportunities and enabling their workforces to prepare for what is unknown?

here are a lot of spiels about bridging the skills gap and what organizations and especially the L&D functions in organizations are doing and can do about it. There is no denying that the skills gap is real, and data backs it too. The 2016-17 annual report of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship reveals that less than five percent of the total workforce in India has undergone formal skill training while it is estimated that around 50 to 70 million jobs will be created in India over the next five years, and about 75 to 90 percent of these will require some vocational training — this is a huge gap. ManpowerGroup's study, Talent Shortage Survey also reveals that almost half of Asian employers (46 percent) report hiring difficulties.

I believe there are two kinds of gaps that exist, one is a skill gap and another is the capability gap. The skill gap is "Here and Now" and the other is about "Shaping the Future Mindset". Organizations are looking at identifying many ways of bridging these "Here and Now" skill gaps. While some create internal academies to bridge these gaps on an ongoing basis, or plan orientation programs for some roles that may stretch from a few weeks to a few months, other organizations tie up with educational institutes to create customized curricula. There's more to be done in this area, but largely, organizations are aware of this problem

and are finding innovative solutions for the same. However, there is a bigger question: Are organizations really anticipating the future opportunities and enabling their workforces to prepare for what is unprecedented or unknown? Are organizations just addressing the challenges that render themselves visible on the surface-level or do organizations go deeper?

It requires capabilities to "Shape the Future". With the enormous focus on the stock market and quarter-on-quarter profits, organizations have a 'here and now' mindset. Few leaders and fewer managers are focusing on creating a future. But what is required is a different mindset - for identifying how the needs of tomorrow are going to be starkly different, and how we need to evolve our capabilities to manage the uncertain future. The biggest mindset shift is to move from the 'here-andnow' thinking and 'what is it that I am doing and can do more efficiently' to 'what future can I create which is different and how will it create a tremendous value for my customers'.

Employers don't do a very good job of anticipating what the future is going to look like and thus, they are not sure what capabilities will be required in the future. A lot of employers want to play the 'spot market' for labor, and when they do realize they need someone with certain skills, they just want to post a job and have someone who

## Shaping the Future Mindset



THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF GAPS THAT EXIST — ONE IS A SKILL GAP THAT IS "HERE AND NOW", AND THE OTHER THE CAPABILITY GAP WHICH IS ABOUT "SHAPING THE **FUTURE MINDSET"** 

## Skill Gap Vs Mindset Gap

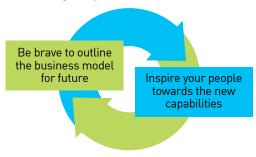


is ready with it and can fit into it. However, what they need to hire for today, especially in the critical high impact jobs, are people who have a mindset for change, mindset for innovation, mindset for managing ambiguity and biggest of all, a high learning agility.

These mindsets don't get created by going to learning programs. And capabilities get created when people undergo a variety of different, diverse experiences. Organizations need to hire such people and also provide varied experiences to them for creating an internal pipeline of talent.

What leaders need to do is to anticipate the future of the industries, and identify how organizations can help shape that future. They need to bring out and emphasize the elements of the future from a business model, organizational, structural, and from the required capabilities viewpoints. This will make people latch on to the real possibilities and capabilities towards which they need to propel themselves. Rather than be subject to a new reality, people would then be able to help create a successful future state for the businesses and for themselves.

## Leadership Imperative is The Learning Imperative



## Four Dimensions of Learning

Create culture of development. learning & coaching

Learning 'in-situ'

Diversity in the classroom

Embark the change with "high learning agility" people

L&D HAS A CHOICE TO MAKE — IT CAN EITHER BE A FOLLOWER IN IDENTIFYING THE SKILL GAPS AND HELP THE BUSI-NESS IN BRIDGING THOSE, OR IT CAN HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE FOCUS MINDSET OF THE ORGANIZATION AND ITS PEOPLE

L&D has to be at the forefront of changing mindsets and enhancing capabilities. First and foremost, it needs to create a culture of development, learning, and coaching, and focus on creating managers and leaders who are genuinely able to coach, support, and develop people for the new age that is fast-moving and fast-changing. This will fulfill the capability and skill gaps at the workplace. Secondly, L&D needs to help solve the unsolved business problems by facilitating learning 'in situations' or in situ, and by being involved in the issues and problems in real-time. It is about integrating learning and innovation, on-the-job. Thirdly, L&D needs to create diversity in the classroom. Collaboration is a reality in all business situations and classrooms also need to have diverse impact teams. A more diverse classroom will lead to higher levels of learning and will translate into the work environment. The fourth aspect is to draw-in the individuals who are high on learning agility. They will be the ambassadors of change for the organization. L&D needs to drive "shaping the future mindset" in people high on learning agility. and need to be able to call out these people through the existing systems and processes of performance management, potential assessment etc., and then use them as the ambassadors of change across the organization.

L&D has a choice to make — it can either be a follower in identifying the skills gaps and help the business in bridging those, or it can help shape the future focus mindset of the organization and its people. @m



## **Customized & outcome**centric learning for a **Skilled Workforce**

Indian working professionals are culturally diverse, functional English speakers, possess good STEM skills and are ambitious. So, what exactly is holding us back from filling the skill gap and how can we fix that?

'ndia's economy has progressed over the years leading to evolution of information technology businesses and continuous technology innovations that resulted in tremendous job opportunities like never before. While technology advancements have reached their peak with Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), and automation changing business dynamics, organizations around the world have been facing the reality of skill shortage, and India is at the core of this. A Talent Shortage Survey of 40,000 employers globally revealed that 45 percent of the organizations are struggling to fill roles and that India easily makes it to the top 10 most impacted countries list.

On the surface, skilling should not be an issue. After all, India has one of the youngest workforces in the world and 64 percent of its sizable population will be in the working age group by 2021. Indian working professionals are culturally diverse, functional English speakers, possess good STEM skills and are ambitious. So, what exactly is holding us back from filling the skill gap and how can we fix that?

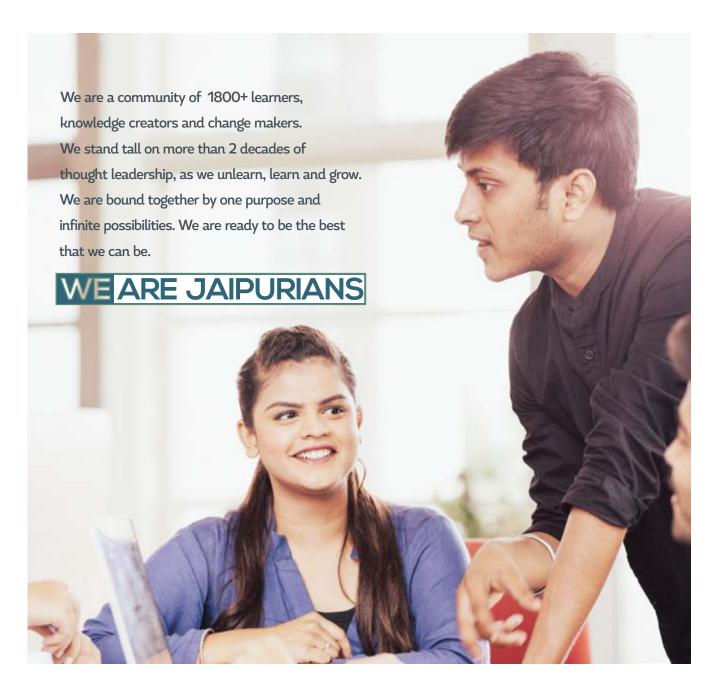
Constant technology evolutions have triggered workplaces to reimagine themselves. Development is a fast altering concept and learning is at the core of this. In the wake of digital transformation across industries, organizations are transmuting to adapt and embrace the evolving changes and demands that are exhibited in every business function. The only way to accommodate and adapt is through constant learning and real-world application. As there is a significant disconnect between the supply and

demand of skills owing to the nature of the businesses, a "one size fits all" approach to learning and development does not work and puts business performance and innovation at risk. The approach to learning needs to evolve to align employee productivity and welfare with the business goals and metrics.

As Indian enterprises kick start their digital transformation journeys, the need of the hour is to upskill and reskill their workforces in emerging digital technologies while also ensuring that the employees are adapting to the softer and cultural elements of digitally transformed businesses. Lowend IT jobs are becoming redundant, leading to a fall in hiring patterns, but the demand for professionals with specialized digital skills is on the rise. There is a short supply for such professionals mainly because of the disparity between industry expectations and academic curriculums. In the last two years, the need for reskilling has triggered professionals to proactively turn towards learning platforms to acquire new technology skills. The world is moving forward with advanced technologies such as Big Data, AI, Cloud, Machine Learning, Blockchain among others and professionals have realized that it's a "reskill or perish" scenario.

RESKILLING MOMENTUM SHOULD BE DRIVEN TOWARDS ACHIEVING TANGIBLE RESULTS THAT IMPACT THE EMPLOYEES AND THE EMPLOYERS POSITIVELY





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ORGANIZATIONS NEED TO CREATE EFFECTIVE LEARNING PROGRAMS THAT ARE NOT ONLY PERSONALIZED BUT THAT CAN ALSO PROVIDE CLEAR OUTCOMES TO EMPLOYEES WHICH ARE BASED ON THEIR EXISTING SKILLSETS, CURRENT AND FUTURE JOB REQUIREMENTS AND STRUCTURED CAREER PATHS

Close to 1.5 million graduates enter the job industry each year, which makes it important that the young working professionals do not just find suitable job roles, but are also able to continuously adapt themselves to the changing industry needs. As workplaces evolve and business models change, professionals constantly need new skills to succeed. Reskilling and constant learning is every global CEO's organizational vision and it's encouraging to see how organizations are adopting innovative and smart methods to instill a culture of learning that meets the personal and career growth ambitions of their employees and the demands of their growing businesses.

With geographically dispersed teams and evolving business needs, there is no-one-size-fits-all approach to learning. Learning needs to vary for every business function and hence learning modules can no longer be uniform and common to all. Learning modules that can be customized to suit various industries and trends will only further help employees to apply the knowledge on the job. The

training needs for fresher hires differ from those of mid-level managers and above. In fact, leading internet companies and Global In-house Centers (GICs) in India have online training programs as part of their onboarding process to ensure that their new hires are job ready, thus reducing the long training periods. On the other hand, Fortune 500 companies across IT, telecom, consumer and finance industries are now offering customized training programs on digital transformation to their employees across different levels and business units.

The purpose of online learning in enterprises is to overcome the hurdles associated with traditional classrooms yet provide its face-value and benefits. Pure play e-learning hasn't been successful on this front because of very low engagement, which has resulted in many MOOC learners dropping out because of lack of hands-on activity. The key for organizations is to ensure their employees are highly focused to learn through engaging learning programs that are outcome-centric. To address this, personalized learning through live virtual classes with global trainers, industry projects, labs and innovative features like study plans, community discussions, and teaching assistance further boost the learning engagement that results in higher course completion rates.

Personalized learning programs reassure employees that their organization is genuinely concerned about their career growth and is investing in their careers via innovating learning programs. Thus, the need is to create effective learning programs that are not only personalized but that can also provide clear outcomes to employees. The outcomes must be based on their existing skillsets, current and future job requirements and structured career paths. More and more enterprises today are choosing "Learning-as-a-Service". Collaborating with online training companies is giving enterprises many benefits such as affordable pricing, up-to-date and engaging learning content, ability to choose various industry experts as trainers, and most importantly, technology enabled learning is providing teams across time zones with the flexibility to learn from anywhere and at any time.

NASSCOM believes that 40 percent of India's IT and outsourcing workforce will need to be upskilled over the next five years to make the most of new technologies. India has a unique opportunity to leverage this movement and become a world leader in a technology-driven world order. For that to happen, customized and result-oriented learning programs need to become a reality. Organizations should continue to instill learning culture in every employee and ensure learning does not stop. The reskilling momentum should be more driven towards achieving tangible results that impact the employees and the employers positively.





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Chief Learning Officer,

Reliance Industries Ltd.

## The learning profession needs to establish a new moonshot

The lack of a steady supply of ready talent presents a huge opportunity to the L&D fraternity, which demands that they shift some of their operating paradigms and display even greater learning agility than what they would expect from their learners

orkplaces of today are completely unrecognizable as compared to what they were a decade ago. Work gets done anywhere, anytime with devices and technologies that did not exist earlier. While this is primarily the "Where" and "How" of work, the "Who" is also going through huge disruptions with some rapid strides in domains like robotics and artificial intelligence as well as the much talked about gig economy that is fast becoming a reality. While individuals are concerned about their job stability and skill relevance, leaders feel unsure about building organizational capabilities in the VUCA world. According to the 2017 Deloitte Human Capital Trends report, while 90 percent of CEOs believe their companies are facing disruptive changes driven by digital technologies, 70 percent say their organizations do

not have the skills to adapt. Complicating the issue further is the huge supply-demand mismatch that exists. On the one hand, while there is supply; on the other hand, there is acute shortage of right talent, leading to gaps impacting organizational performance and productivity.

It is the ever evolving, complex world where skills change rapidly, and where individuals and business leaders feel inadequate to address capability needs without a steady supply of ready talent! But this presents a huge opportunity for the L&D fraternity, which in turn demands that they shift some of their operating paradigms and display even greater learning agility than what they would expect from their learners.

## From 'do it all' to 'do it yourself'

From a command and control mode, organizations are increasingly focusing on empowering learn-



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ers and democratizing learning. We do not live in an era of 5–7 man days of training in year. It is not knowledge, but rather continuous learning that is the true competitive advantage and learning needs to happen on a continuous basis, on-the-flow by learners who can take charge of learning themselves. Learning professionals in many organizations have started wearing the hat of learning advisors or consultant, guiding people to the right learning resources. "Don't offer structured training if the learner can learn it on his/her own" is the guiding principle, and a fundamental shift from training providers to learning promoters is needed.

## Developing contemporary learning policies

Our policies should keep pace with the changes happening at the workplace and with the workforce. "If I need not and cannot provide all learning, then I should not try to monitor and control everything." Some organizations have made this shift effectively. A portion of the learning budget is allocated for individual learning, and individuals can use it at their will and discretion. Someone may want to do a MOOC, someone else may want to do another course. As long as that lies within stipulated guidelines, the learner has the freedom to go ahead and learn. It can be termed as "You Learn and We Pay". Learning is a key motivator and often the reason why millennials join an organization. And if the freedom to choose and execute is in their hands, it would not just be a motivator but would enhance the speed of learning and its effectiveness immensely.

## No 'one size fits all' approach

We have heard it often that personalization is key. Contemporary Learning Management Systems are miles ahead as compared to legacy ones with respect to personalization. Learning recommendations based on the past activities as well as mass activities are a standard feature in almost all LMSs. And that is just scratching the surface of Artificial Intelligence. Its true potential is yet to be leveraged and that is dependent majorly upon how robust our people processes are and how well they are aligned to the business goals. Once that happens, suggestions based upon an individual's key result areas, current and upcoming projects, career aspirations etc. would become a reality.

## Using non-traditional, innovative formats and platforms

If learning needs to happen continuously, then one needs to think beyond the traditional platforms like real/virtual classrooms and e-learning. Stretch assignments, study missions, job shadowing, corporate exchange programs, speaker sessions are all elements that are yet to be leveraged fully. Manag-



ers as coaches are another aspect that one needs to pay attention to.

## Leveraging peer learning

Peer learning is a potent source where one can learn from both successes and failures of peers. The value that it can generate is huge; however, having a mere social learning platform is not sufficient. Steering the culture of sharing and learning needs to be modeled in the organization and leaders need to share and collaborate. Recognizing best learning communities is another aspect that one needs to look into. When supported well, they have the potential to evolve in to a top-notch community of practitioners platform leading to not just knowledge sharing but knowledge retention as well.

Dan Pontefract's article on The Cultural Revolution sums up the L&D function's future perfectly:

"The future with respect to L&D is not about developing courses, learning management systems or evaluations. While these aspects can continue, more is needed from L&D. The learning profession needs to establish a new moonshot. It must lead the charge and change its decades old DNA from being tactical (and defensive) course builders to becoming proactive, progressive and practical thought leaders. The organization is in need of a culture change leader." And a key culture change that needs to be driven is one of self-driven continuous learning.

(The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the views of her employer.)



## 20 minutes a week: The short and long of corporate learning today

Given the automation, disruption, transformation, and somewhat expressoutmodedness of skills, how do companies make sure its employees learn?

**INDIRA SOVAKAR** Senior Vice President -Human Resources, Genpact

wenty minutes. What do they mean to you? Time enough to watch a Friends rerun? Burn 200 calories on a stair master? Or, stare into space and blink 400 times? Interestingly, in the workplace scenario, 20 minutes is the time most employees set aside for learning. In a week.

These 20 minutes per week are increasingly becoming the top priority for CEOs and HR leaders. Why? Because an organization has just these 20 minutes to leverage and deploy learning platforms and tools that are not just easy, intuitive, and compelling for the workforce, but also critical to the business success. Given the automation, disruption, transformation, and somewhat expressoutmodedness of skills, how do companies make sure its employees learn? In this 'age of apps' where one does everything from order a meal, to find a vacant parking spot or book a ride with a few clicks in their personal worlds — and absolutely easy availability of information, what relevance does the good ol' L&D function have in the corporate world?

### First, sample these numbers

As per LinkedIn's workplace learning report 2018, 58 percent employees prefer opportunities to learn at their own pace. 49 percent prefer to learn at the point of need. 68 percent prefer to learn at work. A recent ATD report tells us 94 percent employees

THE MODERN ORGANIZATION NEEDS TO MEET LEARNERS WHERE THEY ALREADY ARE—CONNECTING LEARNING OPPOR-TUNITIES WITH THEIR ASPIRATIONS. AND ENGAGING THEM THROUGH PLAT-FORMS AND TOOLS THAT THEY LIKE SPENDING THEIR TIME ON

say that they would stay at a company longer if it invested in their career development.

Let's face it. In the 'anything, anytime, anywhere' reality of our existence, it's very easy for the L&D function to become irrelevant. After all, employees can indeed learn anything anytime anywhere. They just need to go on to the Internet, or an app, or a learning portal, type in a few key words, and bang! It's all out there. Google, YouTube, Lynda.com, Coursera, Udacity, Udemy, the list goes on and on... have totally changed the learning landscape.

And yet, learning emerges as a critical priority for global leaders and a strategic growth partner for businesses

The global corporate training market, which is over \$130 billion in size, continues to grow. Why? Because it is this very digital disruption that makes learning one of the most relevant functions in any organization. Considering 85 percent of jobs that will exist in 2030 haven't been invented yet,



how does an organization make its people futureready? How does one ride the wave of change?

The answer is simple. The modern organization needs to meet learners where they already areconnecting learning opportunities with their aspirations, and engaging them through platforms and tools that they like spending their time on.

## At Genpact, we saw this wave of transformation coming our way

Based on our understanding of the changes taking place around us, we kicked-off multiple 21st century learning initiatives that would help us transform how we learn at Genpact. From mobile learning, to social learning, to video learning to self-driven, anytime, anywhere learning - the journey has been packed with innovative ways to make learning easier.

## Our learning evolution

At Genpact, our culture has always been rooted in the innate sense of curiosity to drive innovation and performance. Our legacy has been focused on learning and ties back to our employee value proposition - Learn.Grow.Succeed - which is structured around the premise of our future growth being dependent on our continued ability to build industry leading knowledge, skills and careers.

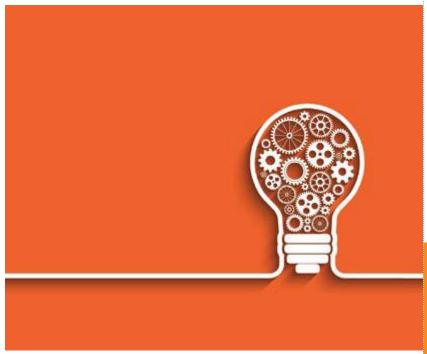
We believe the core driver of performance and success is the convergence of domain, digital skills and leadership. And our efforts have been to constantly innovate, experiment and refine our delivery in these areas, with an underlying philosophy of continuous learning.

## Domain expertise was and will always be our legacy

Over the years, we've been able to strengthen our domain expertise through a varied range of interventions across an employee's life cycle in the organization. Programs such as BUILD are interventions that create a talent ecosystem with just-in-time resources to support business growth and continuity. Education @Work, the in-house Genpact University, is a premier employee engagement and talent development initiative. The university is the first of its kind in the industry and has evolved immensely over the years, with almost 150+ tie-ups.

## We get digital done

Genpact's strategic pivot towards driving a shift into Transformational Services required us to build the digital quotient of our employees, based on the criticality of their roles and client needs. Our first intervention 'Lean Digital 101' was launched in 2016 and focused on certifying leaders



CONSIDERING 85 PERCENT OF JOBS THAT WILL EXIST IN 2030 HAVEN'T BEEN INVENTED YET. HOW DOES AN ORGANIZATION MAKE ITS PEOPLE FUTURE-READY?

in the organization to our business strategy and pivot. We moved away from classroom, went a 100 percent virtual, leveraged SME developed bitesized content and video-based evaluations. Today, we have 90 percent of our eligible population trained on Lean Digital.

Artificial Intelligence Development Program (AIDP), is our uniquely designed program that provides high-performing Genpact candidates with extensive AI leadership training. The program aims to fast track the learning curve of the candidates allowing them to keep up with the everemerging technology of artificial intelligence.

## Leaders are not born. They are made.

We are focused on strengthening our front line operational leadership talent pool by building strong, dynamic leaders internally, leaders who can contribute to the organization's vision and lead it into the future. Programs like SEAL (School for Effective Aspiring Leaders) and GOLD (Global Operations Leadership Development), are our flagship interventions with innovative



CULTURE IS THE PERSONALITY OF A COMPANY. IT IS THE SET OF BEHAVIORS AND ATTRIBUTES THAT DEFINE ITS PEOPLE – BOTH IN TERMS OF WHO THEY ARE AND WHO THEY COLLECTIVELY ASPIRE TO BE

learning methodologies, world-class mentoring, opportunities to work on high impact projects and networking

## Change is constant. Each of us leads it.

Culture is the personality of a company. It is the set of behaviors and attributes that define its people – both in terms of who they are and who they collectively aspire to be. At Genpact, we are empowering employees with our culture framework – (CI)2. It stands for Curious, Incisive, Courageous. On a bed rock of Integrity. It isn't a magical law. It's an awesome attitude. It's innovation-in-action. And learning is a key component that lies at the core of each of our tenets.

## We continue to believe in continuous learning

We culminated both industry and employee's needs to move towards a learning culture that is agile, flexible and inclusive, and promises a wholesome learner experience. We are also firm

believers in 'pull-based' learning and our latest offering, EdCast, is the proof of the pudding. An AI-powered learning experience platform, EdCast is bound to take our learners' experience to new heights.

## My 4 point perspective

### #1 Curate learning experiences

Curate. Not create. Over 3 million new blog posts are published a day. The amount of content on the web is expected to increase by 500 percent in the next 5 years. You don't want to give your learner what experts call a 'content shock'. Give them bite-sized, customized and curated information that they can easily break down and absorb.

## #2 Reframe the 70:20:10 learning framework

Unlike the traditional belief, the '10' in the formula needs to be used for change management. This is where we make learning pull-based and not reserve it for traditional learning. This learning model was created in the 1980s by researchers and authors Morgan McCall, Michael M. Lombardo and Robert A. Eichinger. In the world of 2018, the key developmental experiences of successful managers need a slight makeover.

## #3 Offer holistic learning

Foster a culture of continuous learning in your people by bringing 'real' benefits on the table—from critical communication to dealing with change and learning agility, to up skill them with the 'skills of the future'. Be agile and nimble. And integrate technology with the talent landscape to drive value and growth for an employee.

### #4 Ride the data wave

Be a part of the 20 percent of organizations that have initiated their 'learning analytics' journey. A recent internal study showcased a strong correlation between top performers and continuous learning. This study is just a drop in the ocean of learning behavior patterns that can be drawn out from the data available through the LMS, LXP, HRMS, Recruitment systems etc. Go ahead, get insights on how to engage your learners to maximize learning performance and achieve business results from data.

These are the top 4 things I feel any organization must do to match learners' expectations in the backdrop of all the digital disruption. There are after all some secrets to success. 🚱





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## NILOY DAS Head of Learning & Talent Management for the Middle East, India and Southern Africa at a global Fortune 500 company

## L&D is still out of sync with how people learn

Are skilling programs sufficient to address the scale at which the mismatch between skill development, employability, and job creation is?

he skill and employment ecosystem is rapidly changing in India, as it is the world over with rapid disruption of business models. The jobs and skills that exist today did not exist a decade ago and in this context, the skills gap of today is real. But as much as the academia, industry, and the government are trying catchup the pace at which the new-age industries are generating demand for new skills, it will be a while before we can bridge that gap. An agile and integrated skilling system that helps the current and future potential workforce to constantly adapt to the ever changing needs of the business world and also stay relevant for new opportunities is the need of the hour.

It is stipulated that more than 12 million youth between 15 and 29 years of age are expected to enter India's workforce every year for the next two decades. The government's recent skill gap analysis further concludes that by 2022, approximately 109 million more skilled workers would be

needed in 24 key sectors of the economy. But the skilling landscape is not yet in sync with the evolution and transformation of jobs and workplaces. The availability of in-demand talent and required skills continue to remain low, and one of the key reasons is the state of education system that is lagging behind in equipping today's students with practical knowledge and its applicability at the workplaces. Organizations have realized the need for a robust and continuous training, learning and development engagement for their employees to address skills and competency gaps. However, organizational intentions are usually inclined towards improving their own business goals and do not essentially contribute to mitigating the larger skills gap challenge in the overall employability land scape. But the good news is that, as per India Skills Report 2018, in the last five years, the overall employability has gone up from 34 percent to more than 45 percent which has resulted in more employable resources to the economy. The report also concedes efforts made by various stakeholders including the government-led skilling initiatives, the recent UGC and AICTE-led initiatives along with individual institute-led initiatives to improve employability across demographics have been somewhat successful.

But the question is: Are such programs sufficient to address the scale at which the mismatch between skill development, employability and job creation is? There is no denying that there is a need for more data-based clarity to enable bridging of the talent demand and supply in the country. Skills gap is the real cause of high unemployable

THE LEARNING FUNCTION
HAS TO UNDERSTAND THAT
WITH TIME, THERE WILL
BE NO GAP BETWEEN HOW
PEOPLE LEARN AND HOW
THEY WORK AND PLAY



population and as the world moves towards Industry 4.0, we altogether require differently skilled manpower rather than the popular and traditionally skilled mass workforce of today. Relevant skills and employability go hand-in-hand.

## Business of Learning - The Journey ahead

The way learning is produced, delivered, and consumed is being disrupted. Learning agility is fast becoming one of the key differentiating competencies and attributes for a professional to stay relevant. With trends in technology changing faster than we can spell technology, the concept of 'unlearning the old' while learning the new is fast becoming the norm. And if we truly notice the learning ecosystem, it is gradually and potentially evolving towards a new reality which calls for the need to constantly learn from the environment, experiences, and e-sources. In the future, learningdriven instructionally designed content will not be "created" by organizations but will be "curated" by the learners themselves based on what they want to learn. Bersin by Deloitte recently reported that over 35 million workers have enrolled in MOOCs such as Coursera and edX in the past year. This in turn has given rise to innovative cross-organizational collaboration in learning of a variety of forms.

I strongly believe that at this juncture, there is a need for creating a foundation of readiness in future professionals and employment seekers, for constant change, right from junior school. Academic institutions must play a major role in the transition, and so must the Campus to Corpo-

IN THE FUTURE, LEARNING-DRIVEN, INSTRUC-TIONALLY DESIGNED CONTENT WILL NOT BE "CREATED" BY ORGANIZATIONS BUT WILL BE "CURATED" BY THE LEARNERS THEMSELVES BASED ON WHAT THEY WANT TO I FARN

rate programs in developing the employability quotient. With the advent of social media and apps for everything in life, and attention spans getting shorter by the day and being driven by overload of information, the consumption of learning is going to be dictated by the wants of the evolving generation. Learning when I want, how I want, where I want and how much I want is going to be the order in the near future. The learning function has to understand that with time, there will be no gap between how people learn and how they work and play. Change, Speed, Innovation, Customization, Flexibility, and Agility are going to be the key traits in a learning environment that consumers of learning will demand in the future.

The L&D function in its current form will cease to exist. Learning leaders will need to relook into strategic business levers that drive the learning agility of employees and the organization as a whole.

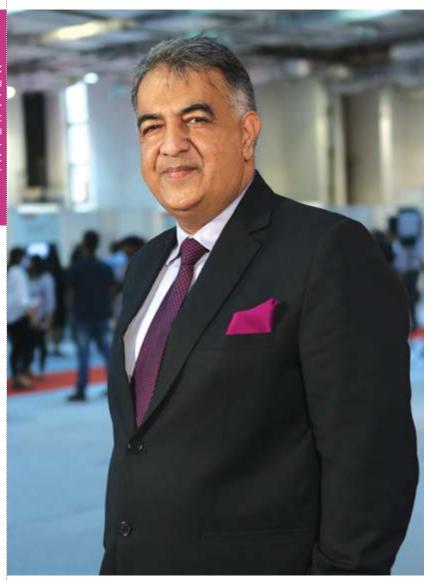
(The views and opinions expressed in the article are author's own and do not reflect the views of his employer)

## **Q&A**

## Designing hubs for collaboration, creativity, and productivity

In an uncontrived interaction with People Matters, Shailender Kumar, Regional Managing Director, Oracle India talks about Oracle digital hubs, and how working environment and workplace design helps in attracting retaining and motivating employees

By People Matters Editorial



hailender Kumar is the Regional Managing Director for Oracle India. He leads a team of sales and sales consulting professionals from all lines of business—including technology, applications, middleware, and systems—that is focused on delivering Oracle solutions to more than 7,000 customers in India. Kumar also oversees new businesses such as the public sector unit, geoexpansion into tier 2 and tier 3 markets, key accounts programs, and the cloud business.

Prior to his current role, Kumar was the Group Vice President, key accounts program, and he grew this business into one of Oracle India's most successful programs. Under his leadership, the key accounts team became a significant contributor to Oracle India's overall revenue and a critical asset of Oracle India's growth strategy. He also successfully orchestrated a tightly integrated working model between the line of business leaders and key account directors, which resulted in high profile transformational business for Oracle India. Previously, Kumar served as vice president for India's Oracle Fusion Middleware business.

Before joining Oracle, Kumar was the Managing Director at Quest Software and BEA Systems India Private Limited. In previous assignments, he has held senior positions at Microsoft India and IBM India. Kumar started his career with CMC Limited.

① Tell us about the Oracle Digital Sales Hubs. What is the business objective of these hubs?

A Primarily, the focus of Oracle Digital sales hubs is to help and support midsize organizations to transition to modern technologies, such as the Cloud as their buying needs are different — they look for simple processes, easy contracting and deployment etc. With our Digital Sales Hubs, SMBs can now have access to the modern solutions in the market that are available online via the Oracle Accelerated Buying Experience, direct via the hub, and through our expanded end-to-end ecosystem working with the vast Oracle Partner network. We want more SMBs to leverage Oracle Cloud solutions to streamline their operations, boost innovation, and gain a platform for growth. If you look at the SMB market in India, there are over 51 million SMBs, many of whom haven't worked with Oracle or used Cloud services before. Our objective is to offer more freedom to SMBs, empowering them to dream big,

giving them the freedom to transform, innovate, and focus on the core business putting aside infrastructure worries. Our investment reiterates our strong commitment to better serve the midsized market in the new cloud economy.

## What was the vision behind creating the new design for these hubs?

Our objective to engage and partner with new and emerging SMBs, support their growth journeys, and facilitate faster decision making by empowering them with our technology to accelerate their foray into new markets outside of India aligns with the design of these hubs. The new design is a reflection of our new thinking — our enhanced focus on the SMB segment. Each of our Digital hubs provides a distinctive native feel and exudes the energy of a startup. For example, the design of our India hub in Bengaluru revolves around the 'mandala' (a Sanksrit word symbolizing collaboration) and brings in the artistic flair of the Indian heritage together with the latest technology. The new approach has been purposefully designed to provide a space for unfettered collaboration, creativity, and productivity.

## The workplace design for Oracle Digital team is starkly different from the traditional Oracle office design. What are the factors that drove that departure from workplace design perspective?

A For us, the concept of 'space' is a part of organizational development and it encompasses the paradigms that revolve around what employees feel about the workplace, their likings and beliefs. We offer a plurality of spaces. We wanted to put in place a digital workforce that could understand the pulse of the SMB market segment faster and better. To house this digital workforce, we wanted to build a contemporary workplace with stimulating and supportive workspaces that reflect the diverse backgrounds of our teams, while also catering to the individual work styles, moods, and tasks. A deep understanding of local cultures and contexts mean that our teams are able to connect with our customers across many different levels. Our hubs are designed to help efficient interactions between the physical and digital worlds to create rich and immersive, experiences for our customers.

## How does workplace design help attract, retain and motivate employees and also correlate with organizational culture?

A Employees are the most valuable assets of any organization. In the digital economy, where the war for talent perennially rages on, companies need to think anything but linear to attract and retain the best talent. A key element of this process is providing the right workplace setting. There are numerous studies to highlight the benefits of a well-designed workplace - one that supports employee wellness, stimulates free and fresh creative thinking, boosts productivity, and lifts employee energy levels and pride.

Our hubs reflect our dedication to a sustainable workspace. Wherever possible, we have incorporated recycled or energysaving elements in the space. For example, the carpet is made from recycled fishing nets pulled from the waters. Our employees understand and appreciate Oracle's focus on sustainability and imbibe the same spirit. Workplace design embraces an organization's culture in different ways. At the heart of workforce inspiration, resides the organization's culture. A greater correlation between a company's culture and its

across our concentration and collaboration spaces, adding more dimensions and diversity across both axes. We've had great success with our innovative furniture ideas. Our people love using the modular furniture items that we've incorporated into our concentration (or individual), and our collaboration (or teaming), spaces. We've always worked on the concept of "neighborhoods", which means that everything an individual needs is accessible and from a very short distance away. In terms of innovation, we introduced more tactile technologies: touchscreen monitors, smart-boards, etc. Singapore also has more unstructured spaces to encourage design thinking and challenge the status quo.

## What are the benefits you are looking to achieve from the new design? How is this related to the transformation journey of Oracle?

 Oracle Digital is in the business of digital transformation. With these Digital

## We are a people-first company and care about how people feel about the workplace. For us, the 'workplace' is a part of the brand experience

workplace design leads to greater employee alignment to the organization's ethos. Given today's diverse workforce, a 'onesize-fits-all' approach to workplace design doesn't work. The key lies in figuring out how employees interact in their daily work. Our hubs offer breakout spaces for quick, short discussions as well as quiet, concentration zones for undisturbed thinking and collaboration.

## What are the different innovations that have been brought in the new center designs and what is the behavioral intent of those spaces?

A For the Bengaluru hub, our first such hub in APAC, the design was centered on a single, unifying theme: the Mandala. Team members have the freedom to explore workspaces that they feel most at home with and can choose to work in spaces that suit their needs, be it independent or as a group. Singapore, which houses our fourth such hub, is a multicultural country, as well as the ASEAN hub. We chose four 'ethnic' themes and commissioned a local graffiti artist to weave them into a stunning mural that highlights the harmony in diversity. We've pushed the envelope

Hubs, we're creating a different go-tomarket approach to empower more SMB customers to benefit from enterprisegrade technology and dream bigger than before. Through this approach, we're creating a different kind of workplace design that employs a digital workforce, one that's more in sync with SMB market requirements. Our hubs reflect this and are designed to transform the way we work, collaborate, and serve our customers.

We are constantly learning and adapting. We want the employees and customers to feel welcomed and so for the design, we went with images that reflected and connected the cultures with the contexts. For example, walls are etched with the outline of an iconic local skyline and we have even integrated a local 'flavor' or component into the ODP logo in each hub. For our next hub, we are looking at incorporating more unstructured and multipurpose spaces. We are looking at modular and even custom-built furniture that we design ourselves. We will definitely provide more fun-play areas in the hub where employees can have spaces to brainstorm and be more creative. @



## There is an Elephant in the Room

## - And the Blind Men of Indostan Can't See it

By closing our eyes to the most underprivileged quartile of our population, the Dalits and Tribals, are we depriving ourselves of a major opportunity to expand our potential pool of talent and laying ourselves open to the threat of crude legislative action that will hamstring India's private sector for decades?

he topic was 'Diversity and Inclusiveness in Indian Business and Industry'. The panel included highly respected CHROs, brilliant academics and even a consultant from the Big Four. Their expositions were informative, scintillating, and useful. There was only one problem. Not once during the discussion or the succeeding Q&A (until I got my turn to ask) was there even a glancing reference to inclusivity for Dalits and Tribals, those most deprived sections of our society who go by the constitutionally bestowed appellation of SC/ST. It was as if industry in India (at least the private sector part of it) had entered into a conspiracy of silence to avoid talking about the huge elephant in the room.

As Karen Joy Fowler wrote, however, "When there is an invisible elephant in the room, one is from time-to-time bound to trip over a trunk".¹ By closing our eyes to the most underprivileged quartile of our population, not only are we depriving ourselves of a major opportunity to expand our potential pool of talent but laying ourselves open to the threat of crude legislative action that will hamstring India's private sector for decades.

## Firing on All Cylinders

In this column, I will not enter the seismically sensitive zone created by some dominant castes muscling into the benefits initially intended for SC/STs, nor will I will step into the minefield that traces the origin and history of caste formation within India. I will limit myself to pointing out some commonsensical consequences of having such divisions in society.

When you run a 4-cylinder automobile engine, losing the spark in one cylinder is so damaging to performance that far from racing against cars not so handicapped, you would trundle your vehicle straight to the repair shop. Well, SCs and STs together are approximately one out of four in our popu-



If we are eager to ferret out the stereotypes and resistances that prevent us as managers from being more active in assisting the deprived, we must turn our gaze within – all of us harbor prejudices against other groups and are oblivious to most of these implicit biases

lation. When such a divided society pits itself against more egalitarian opponents, the outcomes are unlikely to be in its favor. Dr. Iswari Prasad, for instance, maintains that the wars between the Rajputs and the Muslims were "a struggle between two different social systems." Pragati Sen adds: "The Hindus were divided into many castes. .... Out of the four castes, the work of fighting was left to only one caste. The

people of the three other castes thought that they had nothing to do with the defense of the country and they seemed to be indifferent towards the same." There are doubtless many causes of the Muslim conquests but the non-involvement of a substantial part of the defenders' populations in the battles cannot have played an insignificant part. Some historians have also placed considerable emphasis on the

role played by the British and, in particular, by the censuses they conducted, in embedding caste distinctions and making them more rigid. To me what is more significant is the British belief in their own racial superiority in the latter part of their rule over India. All their political and military governance structures reflected this belief, making the white man administering India a caste über alles. This attitude spilled over into their commercial ventures in India as well, starting with the largest behemoth of them all, the Indian Railways. "... When the East Indian Railway started recruiting," writes Christian Wolmar, "the pattern for office work naturally followed the traditions of the Indian Civil Service, with British managers and Indian subordinates. However, in the railways ... this model was extended to all aspects of its functioning."4

Indians took over (rather than reinvented) the structures for running the civic administration, the military and the commercial enterprises established by the British. As such, any conscious or latent belief in caste hierarchies could be played out through the color and race-based segregation mechanisms the Raj left behind. Of course, the civil services, Government departments and public sector enterprises made some attempts to right the balance but it is a moot point whether 70 years of reservation have reduced or aggravated divides based on caste in those cadres and organizations.

In the meantime, the private sector turned a Nelsonic eye to all these efforts, barring a few superior sniggers at the contortions our public sector counterparts had to go through for filling every single position. It was inevitable, however, that once the public sector quit the commanding heights of the economy and private enterprises became the main engine of job generation, attention would be focused on them for providing opportunities to the most deprived sections of society. Periodic appeals have been made in this direction by various political leaders and industry associations have responded with more or less enthusiasm, hoping that the pressure will dissipate over time. I do not pretend to understand political compulsions. My appeal to India's private sector for responding positively is based not only on the claims of social justice but because it is greatly in our interest to broaden the pool within which we search for talent. Apart from the additional numbers we can tap is the diversity of culture and mindset we gain from people belonging to the very communities where we seek to extend our marketing reach and among whom we operate our factories and other operating sites.

## **Eyes on Affirmation**

Assuming India's private sector does respond to this call to fully utilize all 'cylinders' of our diverse population, there are three vital eye exercises it will need to carry out continually.

The first and simplest is to open our eyes to the reality around us. Peter Drucker is credited with having said: "If you can't measure it, you can't improve it." It is the rare Indian private sector corporate that has even a half-accurate idea of the percentage of SC/STs it employs by level, location and function. Fewer still can explain, for example, which of their affirmative action interventions have led to improvement or what changes have precipitated a decline in these figures. But figures tell only part of the story. If we are eager to ferret out the stereotypes and resistances that prevent us as managers (and more particularly those of us who are HR managers) from being more active in assisting the deprived, we must turn our gaze within. All of us harbor prejudices against other groups and are oblivious to most of these implicit biases. There is an excellent explanation of this subject contained in 'Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People'5 (disclosure of interest: the book is co-authored by a cousin of mine) which should be on the reading-list of

every HR professional. The general population of managers may find it more appealing to go through an awareness-building session and then take the relevant Implicit Association Test (IAT) which is available free6. What the IAT reveals about our hidden biases can be truly eye-opening and can be a huge impetus for well-intentioned managers to do something about it.

After opening our eyes, paradoxically, the second set of measures we need to take in order to minimize discrimination is to close them again. The paradox begins to get resolved when we recall that Lady Justice is shown blindfolded for exactly the same reason: to guard against irrelevant influences and to eliminate even the possibility of bias. Tremendous success has been obtained in debiasing hiring decisions through the adoption of 'Blind Recruitment<sup>17</sup>. This also has the potential to rid us of other costly mistakes in selection, such as those biases hard-wired into us as a result of our evolutionary history (for more examples of these errors see the section on 'Longing for Long Leaders' in a previous column)8. But much work remains to be done (and awards to be won) in other domains of talent management and career progression. Some of us, who have been accustomed to using markers of group identity in taking calls about people

Some of us, who have been accustomed to using markers of group identity in taking calls about people may find it disconcerting to use the reengineered processes where stereotype-triggering tags are stripped out



may find it disconcerting to use the reengineered processes where stereotype-triggering tags are stripped out. I venture to suggest that the transition will be no more difficult than the one we made when we stopped buying stuff from the well-known neighborhood shopkeeper and transferred our custom to an impersonal e-commerce site. An added advantage will be that these changes will aid us not just in our fight against SC/ST biases but with most of the other biases (e.g. against gender, minority community, age ...) that bedevil people decisions in Indian organizations.

Perhaps the most useful exercise is the one involving the Fourth Eve. I have borrowed this phraseology from Pradip Khandwalla's seminal book on creativity9 to emphasize how important out-of-box innovation will be to tap into this pool of talent without compromising quality or merit. Clearly, there are enormous challenges in bringing the count of SC/STs at all levels in organizations to approximate their presence in the general population of the country. Equally clearly, Indian HR professionals have excelled in finding innovative solutions to challenges when their organizations make unequivocal demands on them and both are rewarded for meeting those challenges. While professional HR bodies can give special recognition to HR leaders who pioneer in Affirmative Action for SC/STs, it will be a rare CHRO who can swim against the organizational tide in this regard. Hence, the key is to get organizations eager and committed to the cause of finding creative Affirmative Action solutions. There are three relatively quick levers that can be used for this purpose: one each in the hands of the Government, of Industry Associations and Professional bodies and, finally, of progressive HR professionals themselves.

The Government simply needs to put its money where its mouth is in the service of Dalits and Tribals by fiscally incentivizing the augmentation of their strength in corporate employment. A previous column had already suggested a practical formula for incentivizing durable employment in general.10 A special 'turbo-charging' multiplier can be introduced into that formula for employee expense deductions based on the increase in the proportion of wage bill going to SC/STs out of the total. If the multiplier is sufficiently high, we shall see miracles of innovation not just in the areas of intake and progression. Corporates will also find it useful to direct part of their mandated CSR spends towards preparing future sources of SC/STs for themselves at various levels.

Most Industry Associations and Professional HR bodies (as also some commer-

Those seeking to improve the intake of SC/STs in private sector corporations can learn a lot from the successes (albeit still incomplete) notched up by the movement for gender equality

cially run evaluators) give awards for excellence in people management practices. The more stringent among these are rightly prized and have been responsible for catalyzing significant improvements in the standards of HRM in India. Whenever I have been involved in designing the models for these awards or participated in the final juries, I have tried placing major emphasis on the organizations' track records in the engagement and growth of SC/STs. If more readers of this column were to do the same, it would provide a tremendous impetus to recognizing and encouraging innovation in Affirmative Action.

Sometimes innovation is released simply by observing how similar bottlenecks were removed for other disadvantaged groups. Those seeking to improve the intake of SC/STs in private sector corporations can learn a lot from the successes (albeit still incomplete) notched up by the movement for gender equality. Perhaps the drastic methods adopted by Lysistrata11 and Emily Davison12 might not serve our turn for the SC/ST cause but recent decades have seen remarkable tenacity and innovation by activists for gender equality. We may not get a blueprint from their methods but clearly there is a lot of inspiration to be gained as well as interesting approaches to be learned from them.

### Deny Affirmation - Get Reservation

If we don't do these eye exercises, we are likely to blind ourselves to the burning problem that opportunity-denial to Dalits and tribals continues to pose to society in general and private sector employers in particular. Under social and political pressure, we will truly be like the 'six men of Indostan', finding incomplete, negative, and even positively harmful solutions. Let's imagine six such positions which, incidentally, are not so imaginary because I have heard each of them being espoused

strongly by some very eminent personages:

- The Determined Discriminator believes reservation in education, the Government and the public sector has been so harmful that the private sector must effectively exclude SC/STs to compensate for it
- The *Do-nothing Defender* sees no reason s/he should bear the onus of righting historical wrongs and, under the slogan of 'letting merit prevail', takes no action to stop even the most blatant discrimination in the organization.
- The TTSP (This-Too-Shall-Pass) Tactician knows that pressure for change comes in waves and hopes that paying energetic lip-service while the pressure is maximal will suffice till it subsides.
- The Diversionary Delinquent acts like
  the teenager trying to show an irate
  parent his excellent marks in Physical
  Education when questioned about his
  failing grades in Physics. Many CHROs
  blazon their action on gender discrimination (the more fashionable ones add
  LGBT rights to their agenda) to claim
  plaudits for being pioneers in 'Diversity
  and Inclusiveness' while totally ignoring the SC/ST elephant sitting unattended in the room.
- The Government Grandstander is usually a bureaucrat who wants all statistics on SC/ST employment and progression to be reported to the Government regularly. What is to be done with such voluminous data remains unclear but the fear remains that it will provide future ammunition to the next-mentioned (and perhaps most dangerous) type of blind person.
- The Reservation Rampager is convinced (or at least sees sufficient political gain in seeming to be convinced) that only by enforcing reservation in the private sector will it be prompted to take any action at all.

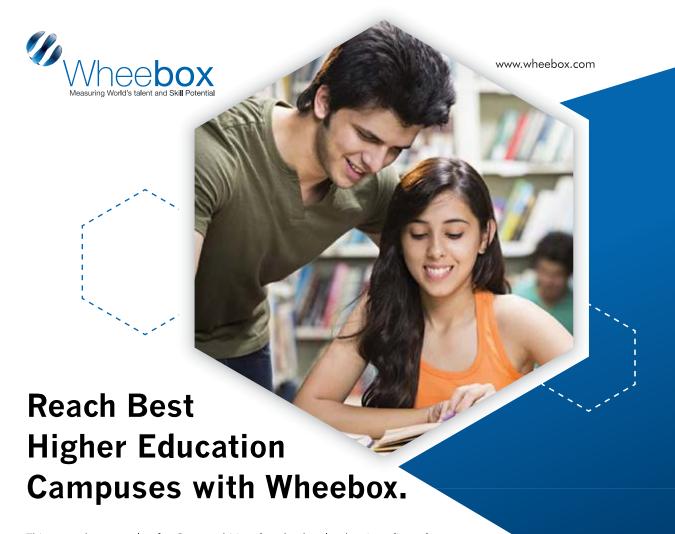
There is no better way to comment on the shortsightedness of these views than to use the penultimate verse of 'The Blind Men and the Elephant'<sup>13</sup>:

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong!

For the rest of us the message is clear: Let us exercise our eyes and make substantive and smart progress before something totally unpalatable is forced down our throats.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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## PRASHANT BHATNAGAR



## AI is closer than we think, but really far away

The promise of AI is big But can it really replace human consciousness?

t is 7:30am and on your way to work, Siri reads aloud an email from your Boss that your request for new headcount has been approved. You do a virtual high five and pat yourself on the back for having programmed Siri to announce messages from VIPs. Siri then inquires if you'd like to set up interviews with candidates that have been shortlisted basis the role you had drafted. It offers to begin with internal candidates who have been in their current role for over 18 months and their development plan includes a rotation in a role, like yours. It also recommends 3 external candidates that came close to being shortlisted on previous occasion and continue to remain employed at their previous organization basis their tweets from last night. On hearing affirmative, it sends out emails seeking candidate's interest along with Job Description and offers a few slots when you can meet them basis your calendar. It even offers your favorite coffee place as meeting location for external candidates, should they wish to keep this confidential. By the time you get into work at 8:30 am, you have received confirmations from 3 candidates, 1 of who is available to meet later in the day at 4 pm.

Welcome to the future of work or might I suggest, present for some!

Artificial Intelligence (AI), while still a fad for some, is collapsing many of our work processes that previously would have taken days by several people, into matter of minutes. Like other businesses, HR too is making rapid strides in use of AI across recruitment, on-boarding, performance management, learning & development, coaching, off-boarding and alumni programs. For example, using AI, companies are removing biases (unconscious or otherwise) from their recruiting processes by surfacing most qualified candidates, not just the ones that went to the same school as you. Or using chatbots, on-boarding teams are now responding to new hire queries real-time, when it is convenient for



them, rather than for you. Or, my favorite, using AI to predict the training you should consider if you are serious about advancing your career in the current place. There are many such use cases for HR in the AI world that have been written about already1. I believe HR in an AI world will warrant imagination and beginner's mindset while remaining grounded in humanity. Remember the time you were excited about something or disappointed? Even if vou chose to share that emotion on a social platform, you were looking for likes and comments from real humans, not chatbots. And yes, it was a human who imagined the chatbot or the numerous use cases for technology and AI. Some fear that AI will replace humans and the jobs they perform. I, however, fear the day, when AI starts to displace humanity.

A man and a young boy checked in to a hotel and were shown to their room. The receptionists noted the quiet manner of the guests, and the pale appearance of the boy. Later the man and boy ate dinner in the hotel restaurant and it was then the staff noticed that the boy seemed disinterested in his food. After eating, the boy went to his room and the man went to reception and asked to see the manager. The receptionist initially asked if there was a

Some fear that AI will replace humans and the jobs they perform. I, however, fear the day, when AI starts to displace humanity

problem with the service or the room, and offered to fix things, but the man said that there was no problem and repeated his request to speak to the manager privately. Upon meeting the Manager, the man begins to explain that he was spending the night in the hotel with his son, who was seriously ill, probably terminally so. The boy was very soon to undergo therapy, which would cause him to lose his hair. They had come to the hotel to have a break together, and because the boy planned to shave his head, that night, rather than feel that the illness was beating him. The father said that he would be shaving his own head too, in support of his son. He asked that staff be respectful when the two of them came to breakfast with their shaved heads. The manager assured the father that he would inform all staff and that they would behave appropriately. The following morning the father and son entered the restaurant for breakfast. There they saw the restaurant staff attending to their duties, perfectly normally, all with shaved heads.

Hey Siri, how can I teach you to feel this way? **©**■

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## TIME TO CHANGE THE WAY YOU USE **PSYCHOMETRIC ASSESSMENTS**

More and more companies are using psychometric assessments today, but to tap their full potential, HR professionals need to adopt the multi-criteria approach of combining complementary assessments.

sychometric assessments have been in use since the late 19th century<sup>1</sup>. From their early application in educational psychology to their widespread use by organizations in their various HR processes, we have come a long way. Today, in India alone, over 74% of companies use assessments in their recruitment process<sup>2</sup>.

But despite the growing trust and popularity, psychometric assessments are not utilized to their full potential. If utilized through the right approach, psychometric assessments can enable HR to fulfill a myriad of HR objectives ranging from evaluating complex profiles with customized competencies, revealing hidden facets of personality, predicting work-behavior and job performance, gauging fitment in a specific work culture, etc. However, these objectives are difficult to attain with the current method of using a single assessment in each evaluation process.

To effectively fulfill such objectives, HR professionals need to adopt the multi-criteria approach, which is the process of combining complementary tests results together for a more comprehensive, accurate, and predictive analysis of an individual. The idea is to consider beforehand, the different criteria of assessment expectations in terms of behavioral competencies, job fitment, culture fit, etc. A Harvard Business School study³ shows that the combined use of personality and intelligence tests increase recruitment-efficiency by 15% compared to a non-test recruitment process. For example, with the multi-criteria approach, the HR can combine a cognitive ability test, sales aptitude test, and emotional intelligence test for a more precise and predictive evaluation to successfully hire a sales team manager.

But the implementation of the multi-criteria approach can be easier said than done. For starters, when combining complementary test results, the assessor needs to juggle different assessment reports to obtain one definitive analysis. And there can also be the need to assess added competencies, compare multiple candidates, etc. When done manually, all this can become a daunting, complicated, and long-drawn exercise.

This is where HR professionals can use the TALENT MATCHER, which automates the implementation of the multi-criteria approach. Developed by Central Test (a leading psychometric assessment publisher), the TALENT MATCHER is an advanced predictive matching feature that harnesses the power of Smart Data algorithm with the multi-criteria approach to identify the most suitable candidates, matching them with the requirements of



Psychometric assessments combined with Smart Data algorithms to give HR professionals the power to accurately predict talent and potential.

specific job roles, functions and overall work culture. The TALENT MATCHER also allows to accurately anticipate talent and potentials of each candidate. Further, it can present a comparison between multiple candidates to explore their key differences on the various behavioral competencies and job roles.

The TALENT MATCHER is designed to boost the overall success of your assessment campaigns by making the evaluation process more efficient, effective, and simple. It is available within the Central Test's online assessment platform and a free demo can be requested on the website: www.centraltest.com.

- <sup>1</sup> The Psychometrics Centre, Cambridge Judge Business School
- <sup>2</sup> The state of psychometric assessment in India, People Matters, Sep 2016
- Discretion in hiring, Harvard Business School, 2015

### About the author:

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## Holding the reins

In an open and frank conversation with People Matters, **Archana Singh,** EVP and Chief Human Resource Officer at Wiley shares her outlook on change and transformation at Wiley, getting the right talent on board, leveraging the strength of a people-centric culture, and culture and brand as the two sides of the same coin

By Suparna Chawla Bhasin



- O From Hay group (a global management consulting firm) to Wiley (a global leader in education and scholarly research) – how different has the experience been in developing HR strategies and initiatives?
- ⚠ As CHRO at Hay Group, I was working with consultants advising Fortune 500 and Fortune 1000 companies on people and organizational matters. These teams knew my job as well as I did! What was important about that experience for me was the process of building confidence in the leadership team and across the organization. We "drank our own champagne" and enabled our consultants in the same way that our consultants enabled their customers. I had the opportunity to bring that thinking inside the organization and emphasized pragmatic design and practical application as we tested, learned, and practiced on ourselves.

When the Wiley opportunity came up, I was impressed by the organization's long-standing history and even more impressed by the transformation journey that lay ahead. Wiley was at the pivot point of evolving into a more customer-centric, technology-enabled organization advancing scholarly research and education. This was an amazing opportunity to leverage the strength of a people-centric culture and team and help lead a 210-year-old company at an inflection point in its history.

- When you say that you joined Wiley at the time when the business was transforming. Can you share some of the direction you have been taking the business in recently, and the strategy for success going forward?
- As change and transformation leaders, we often tend to look at things that are not working well. Over the years my thinking has evolved to ensure that

Transformation requires forward thinking. We do a disservice to that if we spend too much time looking back

we focus on things that are working well and build from those areas. Transformation requires forward thinking. We do a disservice to that if we spend too much time looking back. You can glance at the rearview, but you don't drive the car by looking back. I could see that nobody was talking about where we were going. My challenge was to shift our way of thinking and create a culture of looking ahead. My efforts of over the last two years have been about creating the energy and mindset that appreciates the past and using that to focus on the future. This has influenced our talent agenda and the culture and decisionmaking of our leadership.

- Getting the right talent on board and ensuring they work together is one of the most important challenges facing a transforming business environment and corporate culture. How is Wiley manag-
- A The coming year is going to be a watershed year when it comes to building our talent. We are thinking about how we develop our current talent and acquire new talent with targeted skills and capabilities necessary to propel Wiley forward. We have identified a set of skills and capabilities around data and analytics and are focusing some of our learning and development efforts on enhancing our digital mindset. We are proactively creating a talent pipeline in these key areas through a formal early career hiring plan which includes internships followed by placements into areas where talent can further develop. We have also invested in technology to foster collaboration between people across different functions and geographies. Increasingly, we are looking at developing our workforce to enable self-initiated change and development.
- In one of your articles you have mentioned that "culture and brand are two sides of the coin." Can you elaborate more on that?
- A This was really inspired by my work at the Hay Group. At Hay Group, our customer value proposition was that we help customers realize their true potential. I turned this on its head for our employee value proposition: We enable our employees to realize their full potential. The talent agenda, the organizational climate, the culture, and a whole combination of other things need to be geared towards enabling employees to realize their true potential. I strongly believe that there needs to be an authentic link between the brand, the culture, the customer value proposition, and the employee value proposition. It was important that the way we talked about

Hay Group aligned with the experience employees had on daily basis. This continues to ring true for me at Wiley. It is important that we be the client zero. We deliver on our value proposition for our employees which builds the conviction and clarity for them to deliver on our value proposition for our customers.

- Digital transformation is actually not about adopting new technologies or new tools. It is also about the way people think, the change in the way people perceive things including how an organizational culture supports all that. From a very traditional model you are transforming into a digital base, so, tell me how are you doing that? Do you feel any resistance from your employees when you talk about this digital transformation as such?
- A Change and transformation are inevitable and necessary for continued growth. There is always going to be some resistance. I have to enable my leadership team, our managers, and the organization to feel confident that individuals have the information and tools to lead themselves toward

onboarding plan has a strong buddy alignment that makes it easier for new joiners to integrate and mingle with existing teams. We use our internal social media channels to share news about colleagues actively across all offices. Personally, I reach out to new hires in their first few weeks and months and seek their early impressions as guidance for us. Our CEO is himself reaches out and engages with the workforce on multiple occasions. Enhancements to our onboarding program have continued into this year as we focus on being more connected globally. In addition, our leadership team and hiring managers are playing a more active role along with the overall team at Wiley to create a perfect blend of new and existing talent and a thriving culture for seamless, integrated, cross-functional teams.

Wilev has a unique culture that supports open dialogue, candid feedback, and enduring relationships and believes in the motto "human beings first, professionals second." How is Wiley integrating the cultures of its different

#### We are making a mindset shift that embraces agile decision-making and continuous adoption

change. We also must build an organizational culture to support that. This is where mindset shift is so critical. If you think about Wiley's history in the traditional publishing business, the standard is perfection. A print run should be perfect. The digital world, on the other hand, is constantly evolving. It is agile and requires the constant evaluation and reevaluation of data to improve. We are making a mindset shift that moves away from the 'traditional' and embraces agile decisionmaking and continuous adoption.

- As a 210-year-old organization, Wiley would have a unique mix of employees: the Generation Y, and a new group of the millennials, with new ways of working. What efforts do you have to integrate these two generations at the workplace? What are you doing to engage them so that it drives them to engage with your brand and your readers?
- A We have established an onboarding process that is a combination of focused efforts for both our executives and stakeholders with goals for 30-60-90-120 days, and a deeper emphasis on integration. The

#### offices and incorporating the unique character of each into the day-to-day

 We have amplified and extended our communications channels broadly. making them globally accessible and modular. We use several formats that enable this —Yammer, Update (an informal monthly global news piece written by the employees for the employees on what matters), town halls, leadership brown bags, executive leader's panels, and our employee resource groups that beam their panel events globally. Our Chief Marketing Officer also leads a global innovation program where 20+ offices engage in 24-hour sprints on design thinking and creating ideas that can help our customers achieve their goals. Additionally, there is a huge focus on soliciting inputs from colleagues on what matters and using SWOOP analytics for our social platforms. We are promoting innovative ideas across offices and truly value each and every initiative that supports strengthening relationships across the Wiley business. @



# The moot point

#### - Are hierarchies outdated in today's digital era?

Does hierarchy combined with empowerment and flexibility create an environment where high performance and constant innovation can flourish?

nnovative technology disruptions are transforming the way businesses have been operating across the world. Organizations that are embracing such changes by reinventing themselves are the ones that are and will be able to best leverage these developments, else there is a serious threat of becoming irrelevant. The VUCA world and its impact can be seen globally and one way to help businesses navigate this challenging world is by placing the power of innovation in the hands of every employee and allowing for a nurturing space for creativity and autonomy across the board through adopting flatter set-ups and flexible work environment.

#### The Hierarchy Debate

Today, organizations worldwide are encouraging employees to don their creative caps at all times to ensure market shares and pole positions are retained. It is also acknowledged that innovative ideas are as likely to emerge from the bottom as they are from the middle or top. The moot point then is: are hierarchies outdated in today's digital era? To some extent, they are. It is the hierarchical structures that once fostered the notion about inventions and that the best ideas generally emerged from the upper echelons. As the past decade or two have shown, some of the brightest ideas have emanated from the youngest minds. Thus, the case for flatter organizational structures has been increasingly growing stronger. To elaborate, flatter organizational structures lead to effective communication, more transparency and a better understanding of the linkages between business strategy and operations. This is augmented by the contributions each employee makes towards maintaining a flatter organization. Besides, the speed of decision-making can improve since the layers in an organization diminish.

At Schneider Electric, the Span and Layer initiative has enabled us to downsize layers and hence, the hierarchy. The broad idea has been to have fewer people manag-



ers with larger spans within the organization who display a strong employee orientation in sync with the company's people strategy. Our people priorities strongly focus on empowering team members and creating an environment that values free expression of ideas and opinions across levels. And while leaders often mentor and coach their teams, at Schneider Electric, we have created myriad opportunities and platforms for reverse mentoring. As is universally evident, Generation X is adept at working with pre-digital era technologies. But when it comes to digital technologies and social media, they are usually at sea. Conversely, the millennial staff in any organization is as adept at negotiating digital technologies and social media networks like ducks taking to the water. In such a scenario, the 'juniors' can mentor the 'seniors' in gaining a mastery of digital domains.

#### A Balanced Perspective

At Schneider Electric, CXOs realize the importance of seeking regular inputs from the youth on different aspects. For instance, some of the CXOs have formed Sounding Boards comprising the young talent from different parts of the organization. The Sounding Board functions as an advisory body that joins the CXOs for conversations on strategic topics. These are

mutually beneficial exchanges that provide the CXOs with fresh perspectives and allow the Sounding Board members the opportunity to build their understanding of the core tonics

Another strategy to promote the flow of ideas and utilizing a flatter organizational structure is the concept of cross-functional project teams. This involves offering exposure and bringing people together from various functions and business units. In unison, the cross-functional team delivers on the organizational priorities, coming up with innovative solutions. To speed up such breakthroughs, project teams may not have reporting hierarchies. At Schneider Electric, we also have what we call the 'Bold Pledge contest', whereby each employee can contribute to the overarching purpose of the organization, irrespective of hierarchy. These are open digital forums created on Schneider Electric's Yammer Platform, where bold ideas from employees are crowd-sourced, analyzed, and selected by the management team for implementation and deployment.

Taking all things into account, it's clear that hierarchies have sometimes impeded the best of ideas. Nevertheless, a note of caution needs to be sounded that hierarchies cannot be eliminated lock, stock, and barrel. While flatter organizations are the need of the hour, without certain direction, guidance and organizational systems, many employees may be unable to deliver their best performance. Consequently, some minimal form of hierarchy is essential to ensure every employee works for the company's common purpose while adhering to the overall organizational ethos. Just the right hierarchy, combined with empowerment and flexibility creates an environment where high performance and constant innovation can flourish. @

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people matters

# A NEW WORK ERA DESERVES A NEW KIND OF HR TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE

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#### **GURUCHARAN SINGH GANDHI**



# Our abilities are grossly overrated!

The claims of people at the workplace who profess to be proficient in self-awareness, objectivity, listening, and that they can change easily is grossly overrated. A deeper look at the phenomena!

orkplaces can be funny. If one has a sharp sense of it, then humor will keep calling. Many professions have a heightened sense of self-view, which, after a while, becomes amusing. Look at for example the profession of politicians. The sense of self-worth that they move about with can easily mislead someone to believe that perhaps the earth will stop moving around the sun if they would not do what they do. The observers of this profession, however, have a wide range of opinions about them - from disdain to disbelief, from irritation to repulsion, and finally from laughter to sarcasm. However, the politician is so engrossed in his sense of self-worth and so convinced about his role in moving the earth that the reaction depicted above does not even touch him. He is oblivious to his insignificance even when he is screaming to claim his significance. This soap opera as I said above is either tragic or comic depending upon the mood and day

of the observer. Workplaces are also susceptible to this, particularly, if we do not guard ourselves.

I am increasingly coming to the conclusion that at the workplace and particularly in people who profess to be proficient in the following abilities is grossly overrated. (The pronoun 'They" is used because the constant use of 'he/she' was becoming cumbersome. The thoughts apply across genders!)

Self-awareness: Tknow what I am doing'— In their own eyes, everyone knows what they are doing and more importantly why they are doing it. They know their motives very well, their reasons are clear and they are in full control of their actions and behavior. They are confident that there is nothing about them that we do not know, that all that is worth knowing about them is already known and that all areas that others do not like about them or they constantly receive feedback about is because 'they chose to be so'. Their anger, irritation, decisions, choices, patterns, preferences are all deliberate, towards a purpose and that



# There is no other way to say it but this — our ability to change is grossly overrated!

they are in absolute awareness and hence absolute control of it. I think this heightened sense of self-awareness is Grossly overrated!

Feedback: 'Active seeking and Active working on feedback'— In their own eyes, most believe that they are so interested in self-improvement that they know all ways of bringing about that improvement. What is still not captured through their sharp self-awareness (as mentioned above) is feedback. Such is the obsession towards self-improvement that they leave no stone unturned to collect feedback widely and deeply. They are diligent enough to seek feedback from seniors, humble enough to seek feedback from team members, and large hearted enough to actively

seek feedback from peers. They are also secular in the way they act on feedback. In the eyes of most beholders, they do not distinguish who has given the feedback before deciding whether to take it seriously and act on it or not - isn't it? They also believe that they work religiously and diligently on all feedback till the time those blemishes and creases are cleaned and ironed out. They leave no stone unturned to work on themselves. I think this heightened view about the ability to take feedback is Grossly overrated!

Objective: 'Free from biases' - In their own eyes, most believe that they are objective. They are convinced that their opinions and decisions are based on hard facts and facts only; that the way they reach their conclusions is tested on the touchstone of factual veracity, free from the interferences of preconceived notions, unfettered by the debilitating influences of personal biases of all kinds. They are resolute in their confidence about their decisions and more importantly the process with which those decisions have been arrived at. They are absolutely convinced that their own motives or preferences or influences of any other kind, obvious or subtle, have not colored their opinions. I think this grandiose claim of being objective is Grossly overrated!

Listen: 'Understand completely' - In their own eyes, everyone is a great listener. We all give enough time to hear other people out, figure out what are others really saying, go deep below the words, between the lines, and make complete sense from the conversation. Most believe that they are unencumbered from interferences of any kind, that their own noises do not impact their ability to understand what really the point being made is, that their minds do not wander and that they do not judge. Most also believe they can sift through a person's minds within a few minutes and within a few lines. Most believe that they can simultaneously be thinking of other things, be doing other things and yet be able to do justice to what is being said to them. Inattentiveness, lack of focus, inability to understand the real meaning etc. are issues that others face - not them. I think these heroic listening skill claims are Grossly Overrated!

Change: 'Change easily and at will'- In their own eyes, most believe that they are flexible and change without much fuss. This is my personal favorite in this list. Most of the people who I meet, including myself, believe that we change our stance, opinions, habits, preferences, thinking, and methods — as and when it is required. Most believe that inflexibility is a scourge that afflicts others and that they have been particularly blessed with suppleness of thought. This one is an epidemic these days particularly because the subject of change itself gets discussed like never before, almost ad nauseam. No one wants to be an atheist in the temple town. Hence everyone wears the 'ability to change' on their sleeves. Most around us are supremely confident that as the context, environment, strategy, business model et al



Most believe that inflexibility is a scourge that afflicts others and that they have been particularly blessed with suppleness of thought - this one is an epidemic these days particularly because the subject of change itself gets discussed like never before, almost ad nauseam

change, and as the demand from individual also changes as a result, they are amongst the first to change as a suitable and appropriate response to those changes. Everyone else takes time. In case one is charged otherwise, the intellectual defense comes camouflaged as decisiveness and firmness of decision-making. There is no other way to say it but this — our ability to change is grossly overrated! @m

**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 recognized in the Best first Published book category at the LIT-O-FEST, a literature festival in Mumbai || www.gurucharangandhi.com



# Decoding the power of disruptive innovation

In a candid interview with People Matters, Whitney

Johnson, thinker, speaker, author, adviser and an expert on disruptive innovation and personal disruption talks about the nuances of personal disruption, learning curves, hiring for potential than proficiency, and treating human resources as raw materials than finished products

By Suparna Chawla Bhasin

"Learning is not linear, but exponential: there is a cumulative and compounding effect. If you do something disruptive today, then the probability that you can be disruptive tomorrow increases. Momentum creates momentum."

ecognized as one of the 50 leading business thinkers in the world (Thinkers50). Whitney Johnson is an expert on disruptive innovation and personal disruption. She is known for developing her proprietary framework and diagnostics after having co-founded the Disruptive Innovation Fund with Harvard Business School's Clayton Christensen. This framework is complemented by a deep understanding of how executives create and destroy value and is codified in her critically acclaimed book Disrupt Yourself: Putting the Power of Disruptive Innova-

tion to Work and in her latest book Build an "A" Team: Play To Their Strengths and Lead Them Up the Learning Curve.

In addition to being a speaker, author and an advisor, Whitney is one of Marshall Goldsmith's original cohorts of 25 for the #100 Coaches Project, and is a coach for Harvard Business School's Executive Education program.

You have written and spoken extensively on personal disruption. Tell us what it means in today's business context.

A Personal disruption is about applying the framework of disruptive innovation to an individual — in terms of how one takes ideas and makes them meaningful to one's own self. Disruptive innovation has been a practice used by many organizations wherein they introduce a product considered inferior by the market leaders, which eventually leads to the market

leader's downfall. In the case of products and services, disruptive innovation usually starts small but over time, it becomes something like what Toyota did to General Motors, telephone did to the telegraph, or the car did to the horse and buggy. Personal disruption involves applying this practice to one's career. With personal disruption, an individual starts at the bottom of a career ladder, climbs to the top of that same ladder, but then jumps to the bottom of a new ladder. It's a work in progress and within an organization, it is the way one learns, leads, and repeats. And when one is willing to learn, lead and repeat, one starts over, becomes a beginner again, and that gives the innovative capacity.

#### In your book "Disrupt yourself", you talk about the S-curve. What is the S-curve in the context of disruption and how is it used for personal disruption?

A The S-curve was popularized by E.M. Rogers in his book Diffusion of Innovations in the year 1962. Through this, he was helping people to understand how quickly innovation can be adopted. Talking about this in an organizational context, when a product is introduced in a market, the product growth is usually slow until it reaches the tipping point ratio or knee of the "S" curve which is approximately 10-15 percent of market penetration. After this stage is the hyper growth which is the steep part of "S" or sleek back of the "S". And then you reach saturation at 90 percent. The same principles of the S-curve apply to understanding the psychology of disruption in the context of people. If you are trying something new, S-curve math says that initially you are going to work hard without seeing much progress, which enables an individual to avoid discouragement. But as the individual puts in the efforts, he will accelerate up the curve and his confidence will soar. Then, as he approaches mastery and everything becomes easy, boredom kicks in and it's time to jump to a new curve. In all this, one needs to be aware that one is at the top of the learning curve and a quick way to know this is by analyzing if one has been doing the same projects for more than a couple of years, or if there is a sense of monotony in the role. Once a person starts having such feelings and thoughts, it is time for that individual to do something new.

#### What are the variables that one can use to reach mastery along the S-curve and jump to a new curve?

A One of the things that I talk about in my book *Disrupt Yourself* is that how one can successfully jump to a new curve after one gets to the top of a learning curve.

There are seven steps or levels of change that individuals can achieve in order to do it successfully. What we found in our research was that these seven steps also allow individuals to go a long way through the learning curve. The first step is to take the right kind of risks. The second one is to play according to your distinctive strengths. The third is the willingness to embrace the constraints that you have. Fourth is battle entitlement, where you question things and identify things that can be done differently. Fifth is the willingness to step back and grow. Sixth is to recognize failure as part of personal disruption and to take the shame out of the equation because it's not failure that affects disruption but the shame that we attached to failure. And seventh is the willingness to be driven by discovery.

#### Leaders have to be the learning machines for other – for others to learn, lead, and repeat

#### O In your book "Build an A team" you mention that "The goal is to approach human resources as raw materials rather than finished products, the same way you would handle other resources". Tell us more about this.

A I think when we hire people, we look for the gold standards or the top of the curve expertise. But in reality, we should hire at the low-end of learning curve rather than hire for proficiency which is the high end of the curve. One of the reasons is that when you hire for potential, time is on your side. This individual is willing to work for you for about 3-4 years till the individual's potential is realized. But when you hire someone for expertise, you get six months or year before they start getting bored. One of the ways that you can hire for potential and not for proficiency is to look for people who are in your company, recognize their potential, and build on their competencies. We usually believe that external sourcing will solve challenges; but what we don't realize is that there is actual gold in our own teams — this gold is people who are willing to go above and beyond for us. These also include people who were a part of the workforce but they left the workforce to care for children or parents

but are ready to come back. Then there are those who don't necessarily have a degree or any credentials but are 'do-it-vourself' people who have learned a lot of things on their own and are very capable. These are the examples of hiring at the lower end of the curve and examples of disruption. When you are willing to do that, you are going to see actual returns on hiring and decision making.

#### Leaders often get people on board who share their visions, passions, and motivations - in a nutshell, a clone of themselves. In your book, you mention that if you are hiring a clone of yourself, you are not thinking about the S-curve. Tell us more about it.

A The interesting thing about this is that every new hire is hired to do two jobs the functional job and the emotional job (the emotional job comprises of things that we don't want to do ourselves.) But hiring a clone breeds frustration because there is no space for the other person to flourish because the expectation is to work, think, and function in an already established manner and identical to the person who hires. It's like tyranny. There is no headroom for the other person. There can also be a situation where the newly hired person is functionally better which might make one feel threatened. Leaders might feel that it is fun to have people like them but what leaders really need are the people who can do things that leaders don't know how to do. I think it is only human to want to hire someone who makes us feel good about ourselves. But I think we have to be very careful of not doing it.

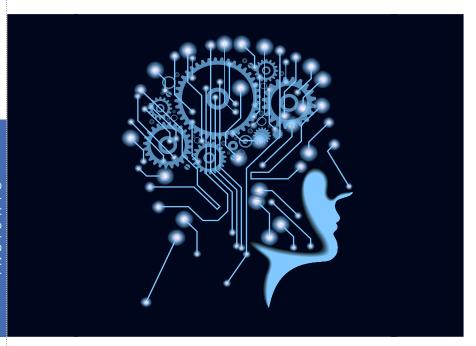
#### What does it really take to become an innovative leader that people want to work with?

A I think it takes a leader who is willing to let people learn. It is about facilitating other's learning forward to make it possible for them to, on your watch, know that they are going to be and give them the opportunity to boldly go where they have never gone before. Leaders have to be the learning machines for other — for others to learn, lead, and repeat. When leaders are willing to do that and when they have self-security and self-confidence to allow the people on their team to do that, they will become talent magnets and will enable their teams to be engaged, happy, and productive. And there will always be people who will be willing to work for them. That is how you become a great leader, a great boss and a boss that can lead a team and the organization to change. 🚥



# Artificial Intelligence: Control it or Go with the flow

Will it be organizations that can reconcile their AI push with a consumer controlled pull that will enjoy a sustainable future?



ord is reviewing its self-driving car plans, and that could include pushing back the planned launch of its first fully-autonomous production car beyond 2021, Ford CEO Jim Hackett indicated in a recent interview<sup>1</sup>:

When asked whether he expects a complete shift to self-driving cars, or whether people will continue to be able to own drive and drive their own cars. Hackett replied, "it's the latter." Hackett also indicated that self-driving cars won't completely replace human drivers, and that shared fleets won't do away with private car ownership. ..... We don't know that autonomous vehicle intelligence in the future will all be delegated to a service that no one owns but everyone uses,"...... "It could play a role in vehicles that people own, vehicles that aren't supposed to crash. You're buying the capability because of the protection it gives you. It's also possible it could be applied in these big, disruptive

ways that of course we're not blind to, but my bet is we don't know."

Ford will have to keep pushing the development of autonomous cars, but Hackett's more sensible attitude may be just what Ford needs to keep things in perspective. Why is his view sensible? Not so long ago, Daniel Pink published a nicely animated presentation on YouTube\* explaining the history of motivational theories. He concluded that beyond a certain level, money is a dissatisfier and that *Challenge, Mastery, and Making a Contribution* is what truly drives people. In other words, a meaningful activity that you control and challenges you is deeply inspiring.

Mastery: 'Control' vs. 'Go with the flow'. Since self-mastery was one of the most important motivational sources, we must be concerned about the challenges it creates when introducing Artificial Intelligence, as is used in the self-driving car. This orientation or "locus of control" is

Beyond a certain level, money is a dissatisfier; and challenge, mastery, and making a contribution is what truly drives people

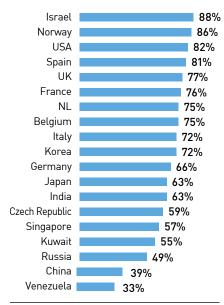
concerned with relationships and how we perceive our environment. Every culture has developed an attitude towards the (natural) environment. Survival has meant acting with or against it. The way people relate to their environment, internalistically or externalistically, is linked to the way they seek to have control over their own lives and over their destiny.

Internalistic people tend to have a mechanistic view of nature. They see nature as a complex machine, and machines can be controlled if you have the right expertise. Internalistic people do not believe in luck or predestination. They are "inner-directed". One's personal resolution is the starting point for every action. You can live the life you want to live if you take advantage of the opportunities. People can dominate nature, if they make the effort. Many Israeli and Anglo-Saxon people, for example, are highly internally controlled. So if the temperature is felt as too high, they adjust the thermometer of the aircon: you change the environment.

Externalistic people have a more organic view of nature. Mankind is one of nature's forces, so they should operate in harmony with the environment. Humans should subjugate themselves to nature and go along with its forces. Externalistic people do not believe that they can shape their own destiny. "Nature moves in

#### Internal vs. External Control

Different cultures prefer to be in control or go with the flow by choosing between "What happens to me is my own doing" or "Sometimes I do feel I have little control over the direction my life is going"



mysterious ways", and therefore one never knows what will happen. The actions of externalistic people are "outer-directed", and adapted to external circumstances. Russians, Arabs and Singaporeans are notably externally controlled. When the temperature is too low, they adjust by putting on a sweater: you change yourself, not the environment.

With the ever-growing influence of Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, and profiling algorithms that suggest what products to buy or what TV movies to watch, this motivational paradigm can be challenged — in the way people perceive 'mastery' and 'making a contribution'. But who is making the contribution? Do we still master the outcome?

Some cynics might argue that AI is just old wine in a new bottle. We have more data and speedier computers but in essence, the producer is ultimately a human individual or team and in full control of its output. In many instances, the cynics are right. We know the source code algorithms and data mining are not new. But what if our robots develop the kind of "intelligence" in that they start learning and we can't follow how and what it has learned. Are we still in control or aren't we?

This 'control' vs. 'go with the flow' tension leads to many contradictions. The general conflicts manifest themselves as follows:

The dauntless entrepreneur vs. Public

Originate products vs. Refine products Bureaucratic hierarchy vs. Organic hierar-

Quick to invent vs. Quick to adopt Technology Push vs. Market pull

The manifestations of such tensions have shown in many implementations of AI too. Let's take the interesting "autocorrect" function on our smartphones. Is it handy or isn't it? The answer depends on the mood. Sometimes we are delighted that we avoided a typo and other times we are irritated that it distorted the meaning of what we wanted to communicate.

Let's take the following business case as an example. A French production manager had to take a difficult decision on what machine to buy. He compared many alternatives and ended up shortlisting two types of machines — one fully automated with the latest intelligent software from Germany and the best in terms of perfor-

What if our robots have such a developed "intelligence" that they start learning, and we can't follow how and what it has learned

mance, stability, and price. The alternative was a Belgian machine that scored quite well on all the evaluation criteria but lower than the German machine. It had one major difference in the design in that it had a keyboard with a screen where the operator had the option to change the operational parameters for improving and fine tuning its performance. With the German machine that was done automatically by the AI algorithms. The French manager chose the Belgian machine with the simple argument that his operators liked to be in ultimate control of the functioning of the machine. The German argument was that it was empirically proven that the software outperformed any intervention from a human. The latter argument didn't make a lasting impression on the French manager. The rest is history.

A further example is related to the autopilot discussions at Boeing and Airbus. The Guardian announced in the beginning of this year that Boeing and other

plane manufacturers are exploring single pilot planes to cut costs. "Cargo planes are likely to be first on the single-pilot trial but passenger jets could follow if there is public support. Once there were three on the flight deck. Then the number of flight crew fell to two when the Boeing 757 changed the way cockpits were designed in the 1980s. Now, jetmakers are studying what it would take to go down to a single pilot, starting with cargo flights. The motivation is simple: saving airlines tens of billions of dollars a year in pilot salaries and training costs if the change can be rolled out to passenger jets after it is demonstrated safely in the freight business."

The reactions on the introduction of AI in the cockpit were culturally biased. The French, knowing very well that 60 percent of all plane crashes are caused by human error, would never allow the computer taking over the last power of decision to what the planes do; whereas other cultures were much more relaxed.

So, what do the cases tell us? They inform us that all the dilemmas raised are human and beyond any cultural set of values and norms. But the way we approach the dilemma of 'control' vs. 'go with the flow' are very much cultural. So what do we do with auto-correct to make it successful around the globe? We first of all need to allow people to switch it on or off. Something like what MS word and autocorrect does. You're not in control as far as the hints are concerned but in control to use it. That works for every culture. The same could apply to the self-driving cars and self-flying planes. You give the driver/pilot serious hints when passing a white line or flying towards a turbulent area and leave it to them to correct their course. This will work in any culture because it is reconciled.

#### AI in HR

Can we apply the same methodology to make the introduction of artificial intelligence work in HR across the globe? Sure we can. The types of dilemmas they are facing clearly depend on the level in which AI is implemented. Let's distinguish three levels2:

#### Assisted Intelligence

Technology is already widely available today, and improves what people and organizations are doing by automating repetitive. standardized, and time-consuming tasks and providing assisted intelligence as in diagnostic instruments as MBTI or cultural scans. Examples prevalent in change management today are apps that help you measure the gap between current and ideal culture, or helping in a Cultural Due Diligence process through an M&A App. You can also use the sophisticated Culture for

Business App where tips you get in managing, negotiating and meeting in 140 countries depends on either the country from which you come or your individual value profile. There are no real dilemmas here. You use the assistance offered or you don't. For the new versions of cars, it means a built-in GPS where the driver is in full control to use it or not.

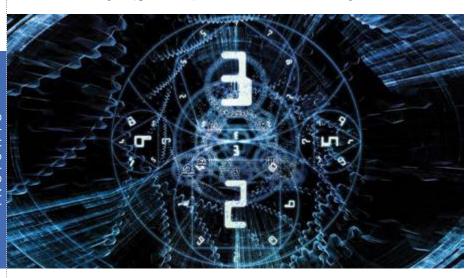
#### Augmented Intelligence

Emerging technology brings a fundamental change in the nature of work by enabling humans and machines collaborate and take decisions together. It makes us do things we couldn't otherwise do. For example, blended learning programs exist because of the combination of face-to-face activities and digital programs. AI powers and directs this. Uniquely human traits such as emotional intelligence, persuasion, creativ-

differences presented by the gap. This type of machine learning is a synergistic exercise between humans and machines. Machine learning in practice requires human application of the scientific methods and human communication skills. Successful organizations have the analytic infrastructure, expertise, and close collaboration between analytics and business subject matter experts. For the semi selfdriving car, augmented intelligence means that the driver feels some resistance at the steering wheel when getting closer to the demarcation lines, but still has the control over it when moving the steering wheel to the area where he needs to go. And in some systems, to activate the direction indicator relieves you from the resistance.

#### Autonomous intelligence

Autonomous intelligence is the most



ity, innovation become more valuable by this co-existence of man and machine.

However, the dilemmas that are diagnosed by the apps need to be worked on and reconciled through a face-to-face dialogue as both the meaning of the digital diagnosis becomes deeper and the face-to-face dialogues become more productive. It is the Hi-tech/Hi-touch reconciliation that is strived for. The way this dilemma is approached depends very much on the culture. In the USA, it is easy to start with the app followed by a workshop; and in most of Asia, it is more effective to start with a workshop and plug in the app.

Another good example of augmented intelligence is the value-based recruitment app1 that we developed for some large international organizations. It measures the profile of an applicant's values and compares it with the organization's values (either current or desired). Furthermore, it measures the degree to which the applicant is willing and able to reconcile the

advanced form of technology that relies on AI, establishing machines or other digital devices that act on their own and reach out to the subconscious level of information. An example of this will be full self-driving vehicles, when they come into widespread use. But when algorithms autonomously take over decision-making and selection processes, they create data ethics, privacy, and data security issues and also give rise to a new industry of data science and data-governance. In the field of HR, this type of sophisticated use is best illustrated by an app that we are developing which comes close to deep learning by networking of intelligence. The example is called the Dilemma Reconciliation Network App. The dilemmas that are raised by the users in M&As, Change processes, Risk management etc. are linguistically analyzed and rank-ordered in importance by an algorithm. The top five are sent back to the participants (up to 50,000 is possible) and asked for their preference. The top one is

### Reconciling Cultural Differences

The dynamic process of solving dilemmas is in six steps



chosen and participants get points for their rank-order and how close they are with the final rank-order. The participants follow the next five steps as presented in the graph.

At every step, participants' opinions are gathered, compared, and validated by themselves and points are given to those who are closest to the final choices. The algorithms, combined with linguistic analyses, not only help make the choices and enhance the quality of the dialogues but also learn from the previous choices made. At the end of the day, reconciliations are found by idea crowd-sourcing that outperform the outputs that we get through augmented intelligence. And there is more support for the implementation of the outcome because more participants are involved.<sup>2</sup>

In short, the meta dilemma of 'control' vs. 'go with the flow' has been reconciled in all three levels. It is the culture that decides where you take the starting point of the reconciliation. And systems that that don't reconcile dilemmas of this nature are artificial and not intelligent.

I've been (we've all) been hacked. Coca Cola, Amazon, FB etc. are all racing to hack you. Not your smartphone, not your computer, not your bank account. You might have heard we are living in the era of hacking computers, but that's hardly the truth, in fact we are in the era of hacking humans.... They are watching what you buy, where you go, who you meet. If the algorithms understand you better than you know yourself, authority will shift to them. Consumers who are externally controlled might curtail to these approaches but not those amongst us who are internally controlled. Not 'Love Island', not 'Get me out of here', there is a danger we will all be living in 'The Truman Show'. It is those organizations that can reconcile their AI push with consumer controlled pull will be those who will enjoy a sustainable future. @m

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**FONS TROMPENAARS** is a Dutch-French organizational theorist, management consultant, and author in the field of cross-cultural communication, who developed the 7 Dimension of Culture model for looking at national culture differences.

### 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.

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- Debarred worker entry

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## Past Month's events

**Integration, New Skills** & Tech Mapping - Role of HR & IT in Digital **Transformation** 

ORGANIZER: People Matters and PeopleStrong DATE: 7th September 2018 **VENUE:** Online KEY TAKEAWAYS: Before starting their digital HR journeys, organizations need to have access to unconstrained and scalable technology. They need new data sets, process designs in place and a strong alignment with the IT team. For a smooth digital transformation journey, it is also important to understand the expectations of the CIOs and CHROs.

To decipher the top integration challenges and issues HR needs to be aware of and to discuss the ways of mapping technologies at different stages of the employee lifecycle, a panel of renowned speakers came together in a webinar hosted by People Matters and PeopleStrong where expert leaders like Prakash Rao, Founding Member & Chief Experience Officer, PeopleStrong; Sanjeev Prasad, Global CIO, Sutherland Global Services and Rupinder Goel, Transition Global CTIO, Advisor Ex-CIO, Tata Communications shared some knowledge and best practices from their experience in helping organizations in their digital transformation journeys. The panelists talked about the prerequisites of Digital HR, the top challenges when designing an HR tech roadmap, and the upcoming trends HR needs to be aware of.

Bridging the compensation disconnect - What employers expect and deliver

ORGANIZER: People Matters and SAP SuccessFactors DATE: 11th September 2018 **VENUE:** Online KEY TAKEAWAYS: HR professionals often want to provide the right rewards and communicate effectively and also want the managers to have the autonomy to make decisions and address the employee's needs. But there are gaps in training and in how compensation decisions are made.

To throw more light on the differences between the expectations and execution of compensation strategy, People Matters and SAP SuccessFactors hosted a webinar. Nithyanandini Subburaj, Sr. HR Value Advisor, SAP SuccessFactors shared some insights from SAP's research and highlighted the top compensation challenges that companies face today. Anindya Shee, Global Head -Organizational Development, Cipla shared some best practices on how the gap between expectation and execution can be closed. He mentioned a few ways in which Cipla ensures transparency and leads effective communication when it comes to making compensation decisions.

**Employee expectations** vs. employer rewards -How to strike an effective balance

ORGANIZER: People Matters and Amazon Pay Gift Cards DATE: 12th September 2018 **VENUE:** Online KEY TAKEAWAYS: While moti-

vated and engaged employees are critical to the success of a company, a Gallup study reveals that only 13 percent of Indian workers are engaged. If companies want to attract the best talent and keep their workforces engaged, they need to understand employee expectations and make sure their interventions are aligned to their needs.

To discuss some ways in which HR and business leaders can make their R&R strategy effective, People Matters in association with Amazon Pay Gift Cards organized a webcast where Mohammed Imtiaz, Head, Business Development, Amazon Pay Gift Cards and Nanjappa B.S., Vice President, Human Resources. Infosys highlighted the latest trends in R&R programs and gave data-based insights on what employees want. Nanjappa B.S. also shared an organizational perspective on customization and costing and shared some types of R&R and best practices.

**Redefining Employee Experience in Business Travel and Expense** Management

ORGANIZER: People Matters

and Happay

DATE: 12th September 2018 **VENUE:** Online KEY TAKEAWAYS: Business travel is often the second largest expense for any company besides payroll. It is also the most difficult spending area to control. As corporates look for tools that eliminate manual work for employees. drive savings, process efficiencies, compliance and traveler safety, and as employees are demanding the same level of ease, speed, and convenience that they have in personal travel in business travel

as well, re-imagining the

imperative.

Employee Experience (EX) in

management is a key business

business travel and expense

To discuss the emergent need of revamping the business travel and expense management strategy, People Matters and Happay organized a webcast session. Speakers like Ramesh Iyer, Senior Advisor, Happay; Aftab Adenwala, Head HR, Fronius India Pvt Ltd. and Yasmin Siddiqui, **Employment Development** Head, RAK Ceramics talked about the role of Business Travel as a key focus area for redefining EX. The panel of speakers discussed how automation and AI could help organizations boost process efficiency, policy compliance, and employee productivity. Happay's T&E solution that helps to redefine Employee Experience across the business travel life cycle was also shared.



# Upcoming events

**Delhi HR Conclave** 2018: Emerging Human **Resource Ecosystem** 

ORGANIZER: Confederation of Indian Industry DATE: 10th October 2018 VENUE: Juniper Hall, India Habitat Centre, Lodi Road, New Delhi

THEME: To cover topics such as new developments in technology, gender inequalities in the workplace and the importance of industrial relations for employees and employers, Confederation of Indian Industry is coming up with its next edition of 'Delhi HR Conclave.' The theme for this year's conference is 'emerging human resource ecosystem.' Through in-depth keynote sessions, HR leaders and professionals will gain insights from experts and Indian industry leaders and the one day conclave will also include panel discussions.

#### HOW TO REGISTER:

http://www.cii.in/OnlineRegistration.aspx?enc=pZVQM37 jtSRTHIkmBsithWyrZJLfsABb31uodGHgIumARAGQjHLbd 3ovZDkE0Bom



The Changing Hiring Landscape - Being Strategy Ready for the Automation Era

ORGANIZER: People Matters and SDA Bocconi School of Management DATE: 12th October 2018 VENUE: SDA Bocconi Asia

Center, Mumbai THEME: A Study by NASS-COM says that in 2018, the number of jobs reduced by 50,000 as compared to 2017. The reason of this job reduction can be attributed to the rapidly changing technology. Technologies like machine learning and artificial intelligence are disrupting the job landscape and transforming the way work gets done. In this scenario, it is imperative to navigate the new era of work and question the relevant skills being demanded

in today's prevailing environ-

To find the solutions to these challenges and to discuss the changing hiring landscape, People Matters and SDA Bocconi School of Management have organized a roundtable which will feature industry leaders who will be brainstorming ideas for hiring the right candidates and discuss the skills which are looked by TA professionals while recruiting fresh candidates. The roundtable in Mumbai will also cover the role of B-schools in supporting progressive hiring practices.

HOW TO REGISTER: By invite only

**People Matters L&D Conference 2018** 

ORGANIZER: People Matters DATE: 23rd October 2018 VENUE: Grand Hyatt, Mumbai THEME: The spotlight shifts towards the Learning & Development (L&D) func-

tion as businesses spearhead towards the next frontier of growth – one that is led by the digital mantras of cyberphysical systems. Internet of Things, Cloud Computing, Cognitive computing and much more. To enable and empower leaders to build the right learning ecosystem and take ahead the capability building agenda at their organizations, People Matters has organized a daylong conference in Mumbai. Some of the speakers who will be lead the learning conversations in the conference include Kimo Kippen, Former Chief Learning Officer, Hilton: Devdutt Pattanaik, Author, Mythologist, Leadership Coach: Srinivas Kandula. CEO, Capgemini India; Rhoda Wang, Global Learning

Aditya Birla Group. Another exciting segment of the conference includes L&D awards, where best L&D practices undertaken by companies will be identified.

Experience Program Leader,

Uber Technologies and Ajay K

Soni, Chief Learning & Lead-

ership Development Officer,

HOW TO REGISTER: https://lndconference.people-

matters.in/register



**Total Rewards and Wellness Conclave** 2019

ORGANIZER: People Matters DATE: 16th January 2019 VENUE: JW Marriott, Aerocity, Delhi THEME: As the workforce today works more hours to keep up with the fast-paced business environment, fatigue or burnout is inevitable. While many organizations and employers who are realizing the importance of a healthy, happy and stress-free workforce are deploying creative strategies and tools to ensure that employees have the means and opportunities to have a work-life balance, there still exists a glaring gap when it comes to the conception and implementation of corporate wellness programs.

To help HR and business leaders build the most compelling and powerful rewards offering with a strong wellness strategy, People Matters every year organizes a oneday event to bring together thoughts, ideas, solutions and best practices at one place. In the sixth Total Rewards and Wellness Conclave, 700+leaders and functional heads managing the rewards, benefits, culture, employee engagement and service providers will come together to lead the discussion around the rewards and wellness trends which will be prominent in 2019. The one-day conference will also have an expo area where professionals can get a live experience of new and latest products and solutions for the rewards, wellness, culture, and employee engagement.

# Blogosphere » roshan cariappa



Taleb's classification of Entrepreneurs and Company-men as Wolves and Dogs forces one to think about if both have their rightful place in a functioning economy, and if a company can adequately use their services to advance its future

# Of Dogs and Wolves

'm reading *Skin In the Game* by the modern philosopher, Nassim Nicholas Taleb; now, virtually every page is a treasure-trove of insights and revelations that I have to pause for, re-read, and reflect upon. Among other things, the book extols risk-taking for a better life (and by extension a better world). One of the things that stood out was Shri. Taleb's classification of Entrepreneurs and Companymen as Wolves and Dogs, respectively. To quote from the book:

"In the famous tale by Ahiqar, later picked up by Aesop (then again by La Fontaine), the dog boasts to the wolf all the contraptions of comfort and luxury he has, almost prompting the wolf to enlist. Until the wolf asks the dog about his collar and is terrified when he understands its use. "Of all your meals, I want nothing." He ran away and is still running. The question is: what would you like to be, a dog or a wolf?"

Dogs and Wolves have different characteristics and tendencies. Dogs like to be fed thrice a day at a convenient hour by a master. Wolves go out into the wild, hunt for their food and feed on the day's spoils of varying nature and proportion. Dogs need the constant attention of their masters. In return they can be trained, they are loyal, and are predictable in their own ways. Wolves like to be left alone, don't respond well to constant attention, and pursue their own interests with single minded focus. Dogs live to be a geriatric 10-13 years in more or less the same surroundings, while Wolves live on average for 6-8 years and can thrive in a diversity of habitats.

Although, Professor Taleb makes no bones about which class of animal he favors, I tend to believe, both, Dogs and Wolves, have their rightful place in a functioning economy; and that a company can



The biggest risk is not taking any risk... In a world that is changing really quickly, the only strategy that is guaranteed to fail is not taking risks

- Mark Zuckerberg

adequately use their services to advance its future. You need the Wolves to seek out new paths, learn things along the way and show these new avenues to the others. You need the dogs to consolidate learnings, train teams on what is required to make the best of this new path and do it consistently enough in a disciplined manner for long periods of time. The Wolves can help think about things differently or innovate,

while the Dogs can sustain that innovation through meticulous efforts.

So, how can you nurture Dogs and Wolves in your organization? With the Wolves, maybe hire for a more generalist role and spend time articulating the problem rather than working on defining a solution with them. With the Dogs, hire for specialized roles where there is precedence and the scope is to scale the solution further. Seems all too simplistic at once, but these traits are intrinsically different and understanding what roles and responsibilities require one or the other can help hire with a clearer focus. In Sales for instance, 'hunting' i.e. seeking new account closures, and 'farming' i.e. mining accounts further for a larger share of the client's wallet, require two different mindsets.

In the early days, Dogs were, as Professor Taleb describes, Company-men who worked, walked, talked and even dressed in accordance to what was kosher for the company. They chose stability over risk-taking. Those days convincingly ended about 20 years ago since the dawn of the digital disruption. As Mark Zuckerberg, Co-founder of Facebook, is quoted to have said - "The biggest risk is not taking any risk... In a world that is changing really quickly, the only strategy that is guaranteed to fail is not taking risks"

We are Wolves or Dogs on this new, relative scale.  $\ensuremath{\mathfrak{G}}_{\ensuremath{\square}}$ 

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**CARIAPPA** has worked in startups for a decade, both, as an early employee and a founder. Currently, he leads Product Marketing at Vymo - a Gartner recognized, Sequoia funded Enterprise SAAS startup that helps organizations drive field force productivity. His interests include Leadership, Marketing, People, Product, and Startups. Connect with him on LinkedIn @ cariappack.

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**Srinivas** Kandula **CEO** Capgemini India



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**ERUDITUS** 



















**EXHIBITORS** 

















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See Josh Bersin's article on AI in HR a real killer App or AI in HR: A No Brainer by PwC)





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