

people matters

VOL. IX / ISSUE 11 / NOVEMBER 2018

₹150



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Grows Moves Fast
Mentor Teacher
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A way of working
A way of being
Coach
Innovative
Empowering
Adaptable and Flexible
Change Agent
A continuous learner with a growth mindset
Problem solver
Open to change & growth
Unifying
Connects the dots

The Agile Leader

LEADING A WORKFORCE FIT TO WIN

BIG INTERVIEW

Ferran Adrià
Acclaimed Chef,
Culinary Genius & Innovator

INTERVIEW

Doug Lipp
Former head of training at the Disney University
and the author of best-selling "Disney U"

SPECIAL FEATURE

CCL & SHRI Asia Study
Architecting future fluent
culture: Critical role of HR



women
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16th Mar



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11th May



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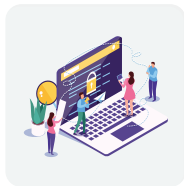
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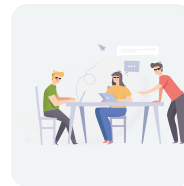
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Looking through the right lens!

A lot many things have changed in the last few years – concepts, notions, perceptions, mindsets, thinking, organizations, employees, employers – you name it! Suddenly, no one wants to be associated with the words ‘orthodox’ or ‘conventional’. We all want to do things that are unconventional. We all want to innovate. We all want to create. But all this applies to the tangible aspects more or less products and solutions. But when it comes to leadership, have we really innovated? Aren’t we still following the orthodox and conventional patterns of leadership?

Isn't leadership still confined to “the action of leading a group of people or an organization”? And lastly, is ‘action’ enough?

These days the buzzword is ‘agility’. There’s a lot of talk on organizations becoming agile, systems becoming agile, and people too. And the topic of leadership in this context is hotly debated. But what no one is asking is, is ‘agility’ in leadership something that we just learned about? Is it not something that comes with being a leader? Is ‘agility’ just a new catchphrase – an old concept in a new garb? But that’s just me thinking that way!

Agility, in theory or in practice, is an integral part of leadership and an essential element when we talk about managing the

VUCA world. That’s why, in this edition’s cover story, we attempt to explore what ‘leadership agility’ truly means and while leaders require the competencies to envision the big picture, anticipate trends, and enable their organizations to act with agility and speed, how are organizations creating this shift in leaders and transforming them from traditional to being agile leaders? Many more insights on this from leaders like Shanmugh Natarajan, Abhijeet Mukherjee, Ryan Ross, and more thought leaders.

For the Big Interview this time, we have Ferran Adrià, often called as “the Salvador Dali of the kitchen”, a famed Spanish Chef and co-owner of elBulli, a groundbreaking modernist, unorthodox and avant-garde restaurant in Spain, that has been reconstructed into a research lab and exhibition space called ‘elBulli 1846’ where a team of 20 people research and experiment on creation and innovation to improve efficiency, studying and analyzing how to implement the dream creative ecosystem.

This edition also features Guruprasad Gaonkar, APAC SaaS Leader – Office of Finance (ERP) & Digital Supply Chain, Oracle who shares his insights on digital transformation success at organizations in Asia, the trends and embedded capabilities in SaaS, and Oracle’s future outlook; Pallavi Srivastava, Asia Pac & Greater China Talent Leader, Global Technology Services, IBM who gives her two cents on the evolving notions of talent and workplaces, the talent landscape in the South East Asian region, building a future-ready workforce, and the role that HR plays in strategic business growth; UpGrad’s Head of South East Asia, Weisheng Neo, who talks about the evolution of online learning in the region, and the compelling challenges in learning that needs to be addressed; and Rosaline Chow Koo, CEO of CXA Group who shares her incredible journey of disrupting the employee benefits space in Asia.

We also have a special feature on a research study “Architecting Future-Fluent Culture: Critical Role of Human Resources” – Asia Study 2018 conducted jointly by the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) and Singapore Human Resources Institute (SHRI) that seeks to explore the roles that the HR function must play in order to shape a future-fluent organization culture.

As you know, People Matters has launched TechHR Conference in Singapore scheduled for the 28th February 2019 at Marina Bay Sands, and as we expand our efforts in Southeast Asia, we invite you to be part of our journey in making HR mission critical to business.

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

Happy Reading!

Esther Martinez Hernandez EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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THE COVER STORY (BEHIND THE SCENE)

what is this?

what is this? flying balls?

circus?

i feel like running away, this isn't working either!

hmmmm

aaah, okay, getting there

done



skillsoft.com/celebrating-20-years

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A BROAD GAUGE EFFORT!

- AGILE LEADERSHIP

By **Suparna Chawla Bhasin**

Adaptable Empowering
and Flexible A way of being
Grows Creative
A way of being: Mentor
Unifying Coach Adaptable
Moves Fast and Flexible
A way of working Creative
Empowering
Adaptable A way of being
A way of working Teacher
Unifying Coach Mentor
Adaptable Empowering
Coach and Flexible
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Unifying A way of working
Coach Empowering
Grows Moves Fast A way
Moves Fast Coach Teac
Adaptable and Flexible Coach
A way of being Coach Adaptable Change Innovative Not about one-size-fits-all
A way of working and Flexible Agent Mentor A way of working Moves Coach Learning Adapts
Mentor Empowering A continuous learner with a growth mindset Coach connects the dots Mentor
Unifying A way of working Unifying A way of working Grows A way of working Coach Creative Teacher
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Employee Engagement: It's Time to Go All-in

Over the last few years, the case for continuing the pursuit of a perfect employee engagement score has strengthened, with data continuing to highlight the earnings of organizations who achieve significant gains in this domain.

However, most studies still indicate that the average level of employee engagement in recent years is essentially unchanged. So, what's really holding us back?

Dale Carnegie's latest research, titled **'Employee Engagement: It's Time to Go All-In, Making Engagement a Daily Priority for Leaders'** aims to shed light on exactly this. Visit <https://www.dalecarnegie.com/en> to download it for free.

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You Don't Have What You Want

The domain of L&D has been experiencing disruptions for some time now, and the very idea of learning has been evolving since the proliferation of the Internet. As we step into an uncertain future, the need for being well-versed in handling intelligent tools and systems is indispensable. The cover story is a timely reminder of the fact that we, as organizations and individuals, cannot afford to become complacent. The fact that traditional skills are increasingly becoming obsolete even in today's world is alarming and has rightly forced employers to focus on improving the skills of their employees. 45 percent of businesses being unable to find qualified candidates to fill job openings is a statistic too grave to be ignored. While all the authors who contributed to the cover story made prolific comments, for me, Ajay Soni's article on changing the mindset was particularly insightful and relatable. As an HR professional, I am thrilled to be a part of this process wherein those who "learn, unlearn, and relearn" will have an edge.

- ROHIT BASHANI

Can India be an AI powerhouse?

There's no doubt about the fact that AI and automation will redefine the ways in which we work; in fact, they have already started to do that. However, this presents a bigger opportunity for countries with high human capital, like India, to cement their position as a pioneer in the field. In my experience, Indian employees are more flexible than their western counterparts

and more willing to learn new skills to save their jobs. The fact that India is leading the use of AI is an encouraging sign. I think that we need to comprehensively train our workforces and address the huge gap between the business and the academia. I agree that the government, the corporate sector, and educational institutes, will have to collaborate with each other if India is to be developed as an AI powerhouse.

- SHIVAM MANCHANDA

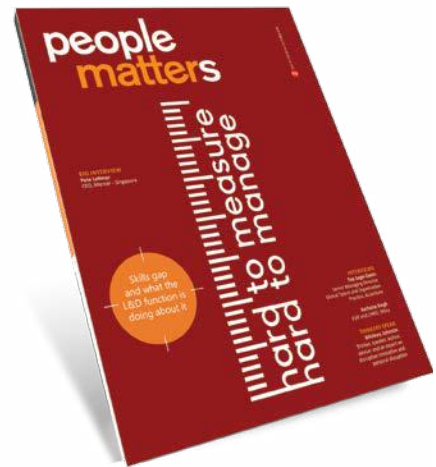


A Growth Leader

Peta Latimer's interview was truly inspiring. We need more leaders who are as knowledgeable, articulate, and pragmatic as her.

I wasn't surprised to read that Peta dabbled in a variety of roles at the beginning of her career. Her insights on the gig economy, the future of work, and leadership were relatable and enriching. She is right to suggest that the 'future of work' has been under the spotlight for several decades now and that 'change' has always been prevalent; it's just the speed of change that is of concern now. The thought that not jobs but tasks will be automated, & new skills will be needed to thrive in a new world is reassuring. Her thoughts on the function of HR that will expand in scope and play a more business-critical function going ahead was affirming.

- KRATIKA CHATTERJEE



OCTOBER 2018 ISSUE

Bridging the skill gap with continuous learning

Having recently joined the corporate world, I feel under-equipped for my role despite graduating from a prestigious institution. Most of my peers feel the same way. Chad Gaydos's take on bridging the skill gap with continuous learning then, naturally, made for an interesting reading. He rightly points out that the Indian workforce is yet to catch up with the changing demands of skills of a digital workplace, and that an effective strategy to tackle the issue is to continually train employees and equip them with new skills. However, I am not sure if businesses are ready to undertake such a massive level of upskilling and also making it accessible, convenient, and personalized. The 'Employer as Educator' model has a lot of potential and will be met with enthusiasm from employees like me who are willing to learn.

- SACHI ADHIA





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



Decriminalizing Homosexuality - Workplace Considerations

In the landmark judgment delivered by the Supreme Court which decriminalized homosexuality, the sexual minorities of our country were given an agency to establish their identity. In the Indian workspace, LGBTQA representation hasn't really been a prominent point of the discussion till now. Going forward, I hope this changes for the better and hope that organizations work towards fostering a more open and inclusive culture and pay heed to the suggestions by the authors. It will be interesting to see how Indian companies work towards establishing a healthy and open culture while appeasing the religious and conservative sections of the society. A truly progressive workplace should enable every individual to realize his or her true potential, regardless of factors like gender, race, age, or sexual orientation, and it is high time Indian employers provided the same to its employees.

- VIKRAM SRIVASTAVA

There is an Elephant in the Room

Visty Banaji has discussed a really pertinent and critical question that has sadly been ignored by the Indian corporate circle.

In addition to the subjectivity of human nature, I think that the cultural and class barriers in India have been really rigid and unforgiving. After decades of progress and development, the fact that the discourse on SCs and STs is trivialized for political purposes is unacceptable. The plush offices and the high-rise towers have also, unfortunately, neglected the most deprived sections of our society. The shackles imposed by outdated customs and narrow mindsets are preventing India from realizing its immense potential. As I read the descriptions of the six men of Indostan quoted in the article, I couldn't help but notice that despite being fundamentally flawed, these narratives have become so common that we hardly raise our voices against them anymore. By failing to protect the interests of the marginalized, those who are better off are monumentally failing them.

- KAUSHIK MAHESHWARI



Decoding the power of disruptive innovation

Reading Whitney Johnson's interview was a treat! Her take on disruption and leadership and their applicability to individual careers was refreshing. The S-curve was an interesting concept to read about and most definitely relevant for our generation. The seven levels of change described by Whitney in the interview might sound deceptively simple, but are extremely hard to implement. I also agree with Whitney when she says that leaders who are hiring clones aren't being thoughtful of the S-curve; which is more often the case than not in the real world. Lastly, as pointed out by Whitney, a crucial element of leadership is to allow others to learn and grow. However, I believe even the best leaders falter here, for the fear that their protégés might overtake them.

- ANGAD RAO



Designing hubs for collaboration, creativity, and productivity

The concept of 'work' has come a long way from working in isolated cubicles, and the focus today is on providing employees with an open and collaborative work environment.

Organizations today are going all out to attract and retain the best talent in the market, and building enjoyable and rewarding work experiences. Shailender Kumar's notions on the concept of design and space, used in Oracle Digital hubs made for a wonderful read. The fact that these hubs have been able to increase collaboration, creativity, and productivity and foster a culture of innovation is commendable. I was particularly pleased to learn that these hubs are also sustainable workplaces and have used recycled or energy-saving elements. As the definition of work continues to evolve, it is only fitting that the workplaces are brought up to speed!

- JYOTSANA THAKUR



Maria Christine Nirm Maria @#PMLnD

Thank you for this opportunity....great learning

Vivek Subramanian@VivekSubraman12

Thank you - Multiple perspectives & insights !!! #PMLnD

Devang Shah@devang_sl

It was a great Chat. A lot learned! #PMLnD Great job @PeopleMatters2

Kevin Anselmo@kevinanselmo

Really delighted that my Learning and Development Stories podcast episodes will now regularly be featured on @PeopleMatters2!

David Blake@DavidBlake

The book review was fantastic. Thanks a lot @PeopleMatters2

Garima Kasshi@GariaKasshi

To reveal or not to reveal, an interesting take @PeopleMatters2. Great job!

Nivedita Kuruvilla@Nivedita1K

Looking forward to the people Mtters L&S conference ! #PMLnD

Udacity India@UdacityIndia

Thank you for organizing this wonderful tweetchat session. @Ester_Matters @PeopleMatters2 #PMLnD

Bharat Wakhlu@Dilleye

Thank you Ester for the opportunity to share our views!

gaurav Pujari

A very well organized and well executed chat, thank you for hosting it

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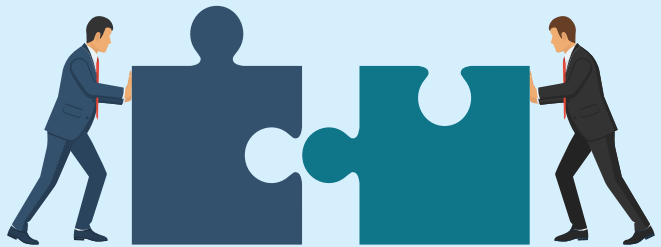
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PARTNERSHIP

Oracle and LinkedIn collaborate to enhance employee experience

WITH TECHNOLOGY CONTINUING to transform the global talent marketplace and shrinking the shelf life of skills, HR teams need to swiftly evolve their strategies and technologies to manage and address the escalating recruitment costs and increasing employee turnover. To help HR professionals meet such shifting demands of the talent economy, LinkedIn has collaborated with Oracle HCM Cloud to enable the HR teams to take a holistic view of their talent's experience, skills and career aspirations in order to achieve a meaningful alignment between each employee's job responsibilities and the organization's overall business objectives. This



partnership is set to help HR teams meet heightened candidate and employee expectations by combining future-proofed Oracle HCM Cloud and Taleo Enterprise platforms with one of the world's largest talent marketplaces. The new integrations between Oracle HCM Cloud and LinkedIn include Talent Profile Import, Recommended Matches and Embedded Search, Referral Recommendations, Recruiter System Connect, Deeper Integration with Oracle Learning Cloud.



COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

India to witness 10 percent pay hike in 2019



IN CONTINUATION OF the actual salary increase in 2018, pay in India is expected to rise at 10 percent as per the latest Q3 2018 Salary Budget Planning Report released by Willis Towers Watson. While the projected salary increase for the country is stabilized, it is the highest in APAC, followed by Indonesia at 8.3 percent and Sri Lanka at 7.9 percent. Countries like Australia, Japan, and Singapore will see a fairly low increment in pay at 3 percent, 2.5 percent and 4 percent respectively. As per the report, the high salary increments in India can be attributed to the steady economic growth, progressive reforms and cautious optimism across sectors. The report further highlights that about 42.6 percent of the total salary increment budget is dedicated to top or above average performers. It also reveals that on an average, 17 percent of the salary increase budget is being allocated to top performers, which covers about 13.1 percent of employees in India.

INSIGHTS

Businesses in APAC lack agility

WHILE THE TERM 'AGILITY' has been trending for some time in the business circles, there is no denying that a majority of businesses are struggling to achieve this evasive competitive edge. A recent report titled Agility + Ability – to enable business growth, by KellyOCG, the global workforce strategy, solutions, and operations company uncovers the mindset shifts that organizations need to adopt to achieve agility and thrive in today's testing business landscape. The report finds that every two in three businesses in the Asia-Pacific region are not agile enough to "redesign the workforce to meet urgent business needs." The report further reveals that a key limiting factor for agility in workforces is a lack

of understanding of the talent strategies required to enable agility, together with empowerment of HR leaders to step up to a more strategic role and drive change with the C-suites. The report also mentions the four key points underpinning the need for agility: increasing automation across the board, rapidly changing workers' preferences, a growing contingent workforce, and expectations of HR to be more strategic.



INSIGHTS

82 percent of technology professionals favor CEO activism

ACCORDING TO CEO ACTIVISM in 2018: The Tech Effect commissioned by global communications and marketing services firm Weber Shandwick in partnership with KRC Research, 82 percent of tech professionals have a favorable opinion of CEO activists, and 81 percent think CEOs have a responsibility to speak up about issues

that are important to the society. The study reveals that nearly nine in ten tech professionals or 88 percent agree that CEOs need to speak out when their company's values are violated or threatened and 35 percent believe that CEOs should take public positions on issues if it aligns with company values.



ACQUISITION

Apple to acquire chip maker Dialog for \$600 mn

APPLE INC IS ALL SET to acquire the power-management technology at the heart of its iPhones in a \$600 million deal with Dialog Semiconductor which is set to boost Apple's internal chip development efforts. Apple will spend \$300 million to license intellectual property related to Dialog's power management chips, and use the other half of the \$600 million transaction towards new chip orders. This deal is also being termed as Apple's biggest acquisition in terms of talent acquisition. About 16 percent of Dialog's total workforce will be joining Apple as a part of the deal. The partnership which involves not just an exchange of tech but also of valuable human capital is cru-



cial for Apple's journey ahead. The remaining employees who will be working under the Dialog umbrella will focus on Internet of Things, mobile, automotive, computing and storage markets. The acquisition will boost Dialog's ability to expand its investments in innovation.



Mercer acquires HR tech startup Mettl

MERCER, ONE OF THE LEADING global consulting firms in advancing health, wealth and career has acquired Mettl, an HR tech startup with cloud-based technology and data sciences-driven talent assessments. This deal reflects the increasing interest of global companies in HR Tech startups and their advanced solutions, and the acquisition is said to mark Mercer's entry into the global assessments market. In turn, by leveraging Mercer's global footprint and leadership position, Mettl plans to scale its presence and reach, helping companies avoid the cost of suboptimal hiring decisions amidst ongoing digital disruption.

One Co.Work acquires IShare Space for 3.5 cr

COWORKING OPERATOR One Co.Work has acquired IShareSpace, an emerging co-working space provider for 3.5 crores. This acquisition has further strengthened the infrastructural framework of One Co.Work which will have 8 centers and 1500+ seats to give a substantial boost to the growing popularity of co-working in India. IShare Space was founded by Priyanka Krishnan and Aayush Maheshwari in 2016 to cater to the needs of modern-day entrepreneurs and professionals. The current acquisition is in line with One Co.Work's recent initiative, EcoSpaze, which is an affordable office-space for bootstrapped start-ups who are low on resources but high on passion. The concept of EcoSpaze had been specially developed to reach out to markets where there is a lesser paying capacity but a need for fully equipped workspaces.



FUNDING

Leena AI raises \$2 mn seed funding

HR TECH STARTUP LEENA AI that focuses on HR chatbots to resolve employee queries has raised \$2 mn in seed funding from a bevy of investors including renowned investor Elad Gil, Snapdeal co-founders Kunal Bahl and Rohit Bansal, FundersClub Fund, Quiet Capital (Lee Linden, Matt Humphrey, and Ray Bradford), and Cathexis Ventures along with a few other angel investors. The round follows the recent investment by the American seed accelerator, Y Combinator in July this year. The HR tech startup will use the proceeds to scale the company, acquire more customers, and hopes to gain 50 enterprise customers within the next 12-18 months. Founded by Adit Jain, Mayank Goyal and Anand Prajapati in 2015, Leena AI is an AI-powered HR Assistant providing instant responses to employee queries and improving the employee experience.



Coworking startup Innov8 raises \$4 mn

COWORKING STARTUP INNOV8, owned by Guerilla Infra Solutions Pvt. Ltd., has raised a \$4 mn in a pre-Series A round led by Credence Family Office and will use the funds for expansion beyond its current operational locations in Delhi NCR, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Chandigarh and plans to double its seat count to 8,000 in the next six months. Prior to this round, the startup had raised an undisclosed amount in angel investment from Lets Venture and Venture Catalysts in February 2017. Innov8 also plans to invest in building technology platforms for its business solutions such as proprietary access control and consumer-facing applications along the lines of a social networking platform for co-workers.



A NEW CULTURE FRAMEWORK

The context in which organizations are operating continues to change, making it challenging for leaders to respond to new disruptions while continuing to bolster and improve their workplace cultures. The 2018 Global Culture Report by O.C. Tanner reveals the current and future state of workplace culture, identifies key insights and highlights simple actions organizations can take to create meaningful employee experiences that dramatically improve workplace culture



QUICK READS

Culture Disruptions



A more diverse workforce



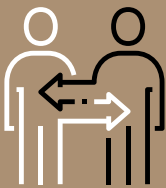
Generations working together



Increased use of technology and artificial intelligence



A lack of connection in an increasingly connected world



Only **16%** of employees feel "connected and engaged" by employers

A New Cultural Framework of Talent Magnets

The six fundamental elements that are crucial to an employee's decision to join, engage with, and remain at an organization are the 'Talent Magnets,' — these six areas attract and connect people to the places they work, and comprise a Culture Framework that is essential for leaders to evaluate, measure, and improve workplace culture.

CULTURE



Leadership



Success



Wellbeing



Opportunity



Appreciation



Purpose

Talent Magnet Global Index Scores

(Measured in a 0-100 point scale)

66%

Feel a Sense of Purpose

59%

Feel a Sense of Opportunity

60%

Feel a Sense of Success

57%

Feel a Sense of Appreciation

53%

Feel a Sense of Wellbeing

57%

Feel a Sense of Leadership

Companies who perform well in each Talent Magnet see tremendous results:

4x more likely to have highly engaged employees

4x more likely to have employees that are promoters on the standard Net Promoter Score scale

74% more likely to have increased in revenue last year

7x more likely to have employees innovating and performing great work

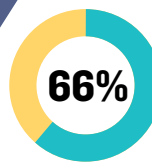
11x less likely to have experienced layoffs in the past year



Purpose



Senior leadership teams have recognized the importance of a clearly defined purpose. Yet, the data demonstrates that purpose is lagging worldwide



Only 66% Employees worldwide feel a **sense of purpose** from their organizations



When your purpose is harmonized with your employee value proposition, customer value proposition, and tied to social good, the research shows there is a:

935% increase in the odds that an employee will have a sense of purpose

288% increase in the odds that an employee will have a sense of opportunity

858% increase in the odds that an employee will be engaged

Opportunity



While employees value promotions and pay raises, employees want to do challenging work, to try new things, to work on special projects, and to be continuously learning. Opportunity for employees today means providing the ability to grow, develop, and to contribute.

68% Leaders agree their workplace provides **opportunities**, compared to only 44% of individual contributors

Appreciation



Appreciation is more than a mere 'thank you'; it is an exchange between coworkers and leaders that connects great work with organizational purpose.

61% Employees feel **appreciated** in the workplace, and when recognition is given, it is done incorrectly 1/3 of the time.

When leaders do not effectively communicate accomplishments, employees are:

- 70%** less likely to feel appreciated
- 74%** less likely to stay at the organization
- 42%** less likely to be engaged
- 46%** less likely to promote their organization

Wellbeing



Organizations can no longer define wellbeing as simply the physical or financial status of an employee. Initiatives must encompass social and emotional dimensions to truly prioritize individual wellness.

53% Employees are forced to respond to work inquiries during personal time

38% Can't stop thinking about work when they're not at work

Success



Success has a buzz that is palpable in thriving organizations. But success is not merely about winning, it is about establishing a pattern of supported victories.

Feelings of success differ based on job level:

65% Leaders feel a **sense of success**

45% Individuals feel a **sense of success**

Employees feel successful when they:

1. Have the tools they need
2. Receive fair performance assessments
3. Know how to achieve more in the organization
4. Understand what success looks like

If these four elements are present, 92% of employees say they feel successful. If these elements are missing, only 17% say they feel successful. That is a 441% difference!

Leadership



Great leaders are more than just gatekeepers; they are mentors and catalysts for greatness.

When leaders are perceived as mentors, as strong advocates for employee development, and connect employees with special projects, the results are incredible.



1,019% increased odds of a favorable leadership perception

582% increased odds of feeling appreciated

600% increased odds of feeling like they have opportunity at their organization

647% increased odds of feeling successful, at an individual, team, and company level

837% increased odds of being engaged

433% increased odds of feeling like their organization and work has purpose



IN FOCUS

Gita Gopinath

- Upending the conventional (economic) wisdom



GITA GOPINATH, ONE OF THE LEADING ACADEMICS AND THINKERS ON THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL SYSTEM, EXCHANGE RATES, SOVEREIGN DEBT AND CAPITAL FLOWS, WILL BE THE FIRST WOMAN TO LEAD THE IMF'S ECONOMIC RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

Her appointment is heralded as a crucial one, and she is being seen as someone who will bring in a fresh perspective related to the mind-set, perceptions, and practices that should echo the real conditions of the macroeconomic indicators and the financial challenges. The International Monetary Fund appointed Harvard University's Gita Gopinath as its new Chief Economist. Gita Gopinath, one of the leading academics and thinkers on the global financial system, exchange rates, sovereign debt and capital flows, will be the first woman to lead the IMF's economic research department. Credited with 40 research papers on exchange rates, trade and investment, international financial crises, monetary policy, debt, and emerging-market crises, Gita's research focuses on the persistent supremacy of the US dollar in the global financial system and why 40 percent of world trade is denominated in dollars, a sum that is roughly four times higher than the U.S. share of world trade. With economists assuming that high-debt nations prefer monetary unions with low-debt nations, Gopinath's work research states that they benefit more from union with a mixture of high- and low-debt countries, thus challenging the conventional and orthodox

notions that the IMF has relied on till now.

Gita currently serves as the John Zwaanstra Professor of International Studies and Economics at Harvard University and co-director of the International Finance and Macroeconomics program at the National Bureau of Economic Research. She is also the co-editor of the prestigious *American Economic Review*, and has extensively researched on how countries can respond to debt crises and also examined the mechanics of how complex international economic forces work. She is also a visiting scholar at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, member of the economic advisory panel of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and Economic Adviser to the Chief Minister of Kerala state (India).

Gita Gopinath is of Indian-origin and received her Bachelors from the University of Delhi and Ph.D. from Princeton University. Her thesis advisers included economic experts like Ben Bernanke (Federal Reserve chairman) and Kenneth Rogoff (IMF's chief economist from 2001 to 2003). Gita has been a professor at Harvard since 2005.

(Compiled from online resources)

APPOINTMENTS



GE APPOINTS H. LAWRENCE CULP JR. AS CEO

General Electric has appointed H. Lawrence Culp Jr. as the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. Lawrence Culp served as the Chief Executive Officer and President of Danaher Corporation prior to this appointment.



AMWAY APPOINTS MILIND PANT AS CEO

Amway, the maker of Artistry cosmetics and Nutrilite health supplements, has appointed Milind Pant as the CEO. Milind Pant most recently served as the President of Pizza Hut International of Yum! Brands and before that, spent 14 years with Unilever in executive roles.



F-SECURE APPOINTS RAHUL KUMAR AS COUNTRY MANAGER - INDIA

F-Secure, a global cybersecurity company has appointed Rahul Kumar as the Country Manager for India and SAARC. Prior to this, he was the Country Manager and Director of data security provider WinMagic.



GOOGLE APPOINTS MARC WOO AS COUNTRY HEAD FOR MALAYSIA

Google has appointed Marc Woo as the new country head of Google Malaysia. Prior to this role, Marc was the head of the ecommerce, travel and financial services business for Google in Malaysia.



NESTLE MALAYSIA APPOINTS JUAN ARANOLS AS CEO

Nestle Malaysia has appointed Juan Aranols, currently the CFO for Nestlé Group's Zone Asia, Oceania and Sub-Saharan Africa, as CEO. Juan joined Nestle in 1990 as an auditor for Nestle Spain and since then he has held many roles across a number of different markets in Europe and Latin America in his 28 years with the company.



DAIMLER APPOINTS OLA KÄLLENIUS AS CEO

Daimler has appointed Ola Källenius as the CEO. Källenius currently heads the group research and vehicle development for the Mercedes-Benz luxury car division and joined Daimler in 1993. Ola Källenius



TALENTIFY APPOINTS BRIAN J. KELLY AS CHIEF REVENUE OFFICER

Talentify, an AI-based recruitment startup has appointed Brian J. Kelly as its new Executive Vice President & Chief Revenue Officer (CRO). Brian has worked with companies like Vestrics, Mercer and Infohrm in the past and holds more than 20 years of experience.



PETRONAS GROUP APPOINTS TENGKU MUHAMMAD CFO

Petronas Group has appointed Tengku Muhammad Taufik as the Chief Financial Officer. Taufik currently serves as the oil and gas leader at PwC Malaysia and has been the group CFO for SapuraKencana Petroleum Bhd (now Sapura Energy Bhd) previously.



HDFC BANK APPOINTS VINAY RAZDAN AS CHRO

HDFC Bank has appointed Vinay Razdan as the Chief Human Resources Officer. Prior to joining the bank, Vinay was the CHRO of Idea Cellular Ltd. In the past, Vinay has held leadership positions with marquee organizations such as ITC Ltd and HCL Technologies.



UBER APPOINTS NIKKI KRISHNAMURTHY AS CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER

Uber has appointed Nikki Krishnamurthy as the new Chief People Officer. Prior to this appointment, Nikki was the Chief People Officer of Expedia and also served as the VP of Expedia Local Expert. Before joining Expedia, Nikki held human resources roles at WaMu and PNC Financial Services Group.



SHELL ENERGY APPOINTS CHEE-WEI TAN AS GLOBAL HEAD OF HR

Shell Energy has appointed Chee-Wei Tan as the Global Head of HR. Chee-Wei has over 20 years of human resources and consulting experience. Prior to this appointment, Chee-Wei was the regional head of HR for Shell Lubricants for Asia Pacific and the Middle East.



CONTINENTAL GROUP APPOINTS AJAY KUMAR AS CHIEF OF HR

Continental group has appointed Ajay Kumar as the Chief HR of the India business. Prior to joining Continental, Kumar was with Bosch India as General Manager and managed the people side of the business.



FISERV APPOINTS KANISHA RAINA AS DIRECTOR - HR

Fiserv has appointed Kanisha Raina as Director - Human Resources. Prior to this appointment, Kanisha Raina worked as Talent Leader for IBM India and South Asia for almost 10 years and holds over 13 years of experience in Human Resources.



TELEKOM MALAYSIA APPOINTS FARID BASIR AS HR HEAD

Telekom Malaysia (TM) has appointed Farid Basir as Chief Human Capital Officer. Prior to this appointment, Farid Basir was the Chief Human Capital Officer at Bank Rakyat for almost three years. Before that, he has assumed various human resource-related roles at several organizations including Etiqa and Nestle.



GOOGLE APPOINTS PRABHAKAR RAGHAVAN AS HEAD OF ADVERTISING

Google has appointed Prabhakar Raghavan, the current head of Google's business-applications unit, as Head of Advertising. Raghavan joined from Yahoo! Labs in 2011 and was appointed to lead G Suite and other business services in 2014.

A wobbly pedestal:

A case of ill-prepared business leaders

With business conditions getting more unpredictable, the onus on leaders to perform has grown manifold. But are our leaders really ready for the future?

By Dhruv Mukerjee

Corporate leadership structures play a major role in ensuring their company's growth and sustainability in today's modern times. In the past few years, businesses have witnessed a rapid change in technological adoption, growing protectionist policies across the globe, and the impact of market economics in a globalized world. With the functioning of world economies growing more complicated, the external business environment has become more volatile, the impact of which can be felt on companies, who today are in a great need to adopt a proactive approach when it comes to mitigating potential challenges while being able to identify newer opportunities to enable the growth.

To understand the relevance of such market changes, one has to look at how leadership structures have evolved, often in response to economic threats and evolving industry practices. Leaders today have more on their plate than ever before, a fact that also increases their importance and accountability. In addition to the quintessential roles as business leaders, they also have to don many hats often with a higher degree of accountability. Not only does it come with the need to make accurate and successful business decisions, the role expands into building company culture, incubating future talent, establishing the right technological architecture within the company, and ensuring that it is ready to face unforeseen business challenges. To look at this broadened scope and to assess how successful our current leaders are in meeting such dynamic requirements, one finds that there are still many gaps left to be addressed which was also echoed in a recent DDI leadership report titled the "Global Leadership Forecast 2018".

Sustainable leadership development

According to a CEO study done by the leadership development firm Egon Zehnder on 402 CEOs from 11 countries, over 68 percent claimed to have acknowledged that in hindsight, they weren't fully prepared to take on the CEO role. This reveals a significant gap in how leaders, across levels, are being hired, developed, and deployed in companies. Although a global survey, the conditions within many Indian companies aren't any better when it comes to building and fostering leadership talent in the organization. The DDI leadership forecast report mentions that in India's case, developing the 'next generation' of leaders and the failure to attract and retain top talent that could've been honed for leadership positions were rated as key challenges by over 68 percent and 64 percent of the respondents, respectively.

Given how the technological, demographic, and socio-political changes all remain a constant force of economic uncertainty, for companies to identify talent retention and development as the two major problems are indicative of the fact that companies might soon face a talent crunch when it comes to having the right leaders for the job. This was also highlighted in the report when the top skills needed for leaders in the country featured 'identifying and developing future leadership talent' as the number 2 skill behind building digital literacy.

Only 38 percent of India HR professionals rate their organization's bench strength—the supply to fill critical leadership positions over the next three years—at any level of strength (slightly strong, strong, or very strong) and, on average, only 39 percent of positions could be filled

There is a glaring gap between the perceived readiness of employees to become leaders and their actual readiness as perceived by the organizations



by an internal candidate immediately. Forty percent believe their succession management system and processes to be of low or very low effectiveness and 85 percent of employees responded favorably when asked if they felt they were ready to take on leadership roles before they were asked or even the opportunity was available. There is a glaring gap between the perceived readiness of employees to become leaders and their actual readiness as perceived by the organization.

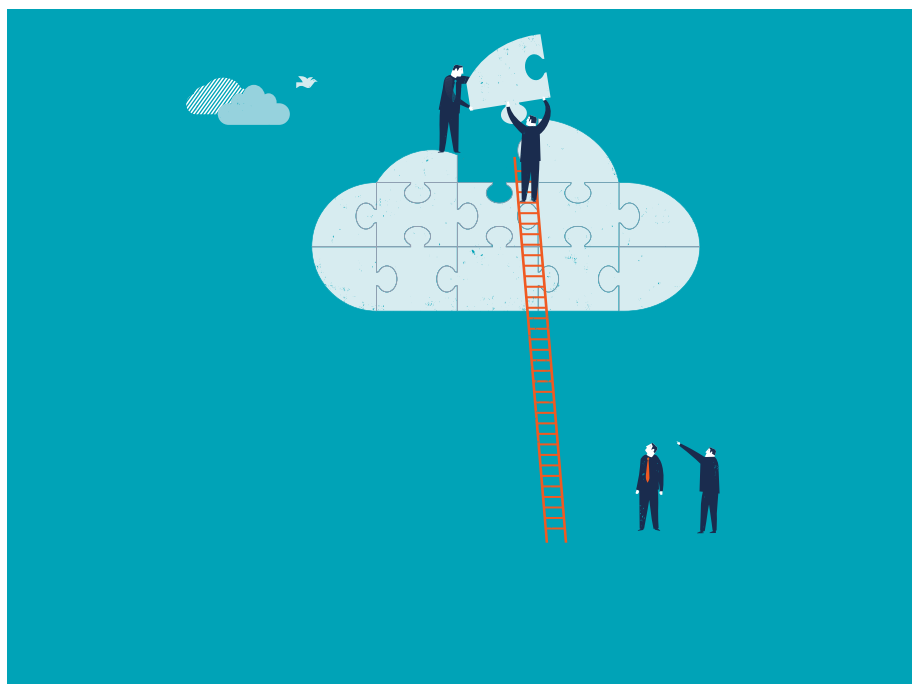
The ROI of leadership development

Today, leadership talent faces a potential threat of not being adequately prepared for the challenges of tomorrow. One of the most important tasks of talent development teams in companies is to build leadership qualities in their respective future leaders to ensure that a smooth transition happens as the role shifts between individuals and often across generations. As a result, today the focus, both in terms of investments and time, has gone up to building leadership and talent acceleration programs. But the DDI report finds that many are still skeptical of their use in ensuring that leaders of tomorrow are able to fulfill the expectations arising from an external environment where, due to technology like AI and automation, unprecedented change is slowly becoming a norm. The report found only 47 percent of HR professionals in India who thought their organizations had an effective leadership strategy. Companies that do have such strategies in place report better returns on their investment in talent. They consistently feature deeper leader bench strength and stronger leaders at all levels.

Often it's not about all such development programs failing but rather not having the right approach to leadership development. Half-hearted and often disorganized in nature, leadership development programs that try to deal with symptomatic problems rather than executing an overall planned program fail to prepare leaders of tomorrow. Leadership models and development programs abound, only a few tie to business goals. Worse yet, there's scant evidence that they actually work. What's needed is a coherent, integrated leadership strategy as a well-crafted blueprint ensures that companies have the right talent, at the right cost, and with the right capabilities to deliver today and into the future.

Digital and data-driven decision-making

With leaders being tasked with both developing their own competencies by leveraging technologies like AI and Big Data, and ensuring their company culture enables its talent to do the same, building leadership



In comparison to 'digital laggards', leaders with a firm grasp on digital technologies are 9 times more confident operating in a digital environment, and over 4 times more likely to anticipate and react to change

capability that suits the current digital-era demands a workplace that facilitates learning every day. Being digitally literate is not only necessary to enable leaders to make better decisions, but also has a high correlation to many other beneficial attributes. The report notes that digital-ready leaders actively manage their own growth and development. For example, compared to their peers who aren't as skilled, digitally-ready leaders in India are more likely (93 percent versus 75 percent) to take on assignments to build new skills. They're also more likely to provide key inputs to grow the business (65 versus 40 percent) and seek it from others (92 versus 84 percent). Digitally literate leaders also impact their company culture in more ways than one as getting the culture right delivers more able, confident leaders. Digitally adept leaders are significantly more confident than their other counterparts in handling business challenges. The report notes that, in comparison to 'digital laggards', leaders with a firm grasp on digital technologies are 9 times more confident operating in a digital environment, and over 4 times more likely to anticipate and react to change.

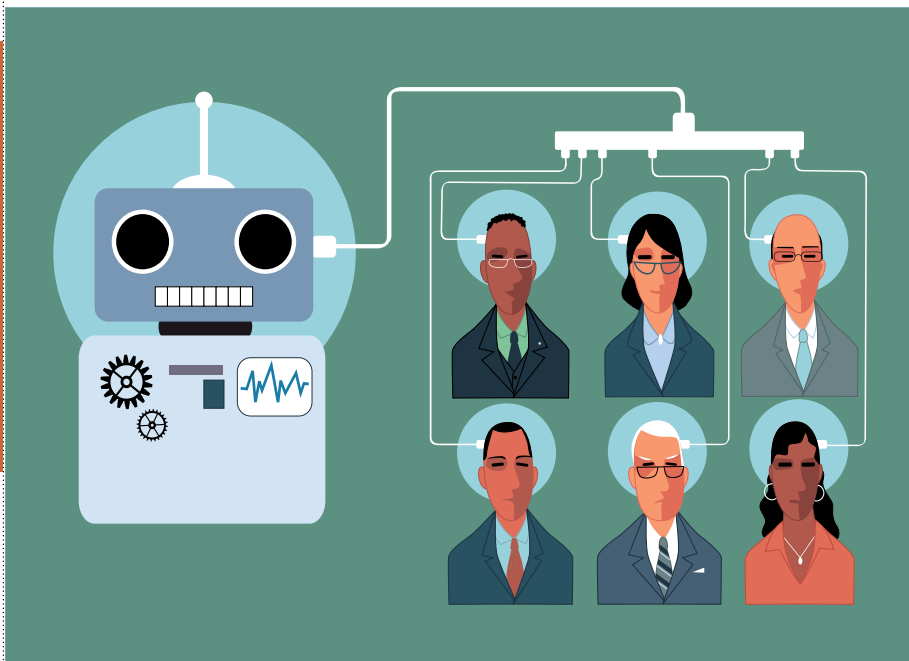
As organizations undergo significant changes owing to a tumultuous external environment, business leaders have become an important part of their success equation. Even for a highly capable CEO to be effective in today's world, one needs a capable bunch of leaders that can execute her/his vision. But this is where major gaps appear in talent development programs as currently, only 20 percent of CEOs in India believe that they have the leadership talent to execute their strategy. In addition to focusing on development programs, building digital organizations is the other key component that requires a reset of talent and leadership infrastructures. These are also the key areas where the HR function has to step in to ensure businesses don't falter. For this, the HR must transform to become nimbler, data-driven, tech-savvy, and more in tune with the evolving business needs. In addition to building the right crop of future leaders, the HR function has to update itself too to remain impactful to business. The role it plays in the coming years would determine how prepared future leaders are to take on an increasingly uncertain and complicated world. 🌐

Getting the most out of the workplace

-AI, the future of work, and Cognitive Diversity

Can AI enhance the collective intelligence and intellectual diversity of workers and enable them to do more diverse thinking, become more efficient, and undertake more creative, fulfilling labor? In a comprehensive analysis of how AI will impact the day-to-day work and functioning a recent study by Tata communications provides insight on the many specific ways AI could benefit organizations in the future

By Manav Seth



intelligent than humans, we need to find ways to work together efficiently. This will open up new domains of collaboration and actually make the information, knowledge, and intelligence more diverse than ever.

AI will enable competent decision-making by backing human capabilities with well-structured and analyzed data. In other words, the need for human labor will not fade away and it might as well become more prominent for the importance of human-centric abilities will be higher than ever. AI will help humans enhance their abilities in two ways: by freeing up their time and doing repetitive tasks, and by fostering richer connections between teams and organizations and helping them collaborate effortlessly. It should then come as no surprise that 93 percent of the leaders in the study are implementing, experimenting with, or thinking about AI. More so, 75 percent of the leaders surveyed in the study said that AI will create new roles in their business and 71 percent believed that re-skilling of workers will be needed in the next five years.

While it is reaffirming to think and believe that the future will be more agile,

AI will diversify human thinking and could help create and maintain working groups that optimize cognitive thinking

Predicting the future of work can be a daunting task. The only thing we know with surety is that at present, we don't know nearly enough. This has led to divisive opinions being formed, wherein on one hand AI has been termed as a 'job killer', on the other, a harbinger of innovation. In this context, a recent study provides a much-needed perspective on how the future might play out. *'Cognitive Diversity: AI & The Future of Work'* is a comprehensive study on AI and its impact on work by Tata Communications¹. The study reveals how AI is changing and will change, the way we work, and also identifies the trends and impact of AI on work and the workforce while providing a histor-

ical context to the recent developments that have taken place in the domain. Let's take a closer look at some of the highlights of the report.

The Paradigm Shift that AI will Bring

Instead of believing the one-dimensional narrative that AI will take over the world of work, how about we prepare for a future wherein machines and humans work together? The 'singularity' world-view, wherein machines reign supreme, will not become a reality. This is because "despite many advances in narrow domains, AI is extremely far from achieving human-level general intelligence." Hence, instead of worrying about machines becoming more

productive, and inclusive, the transition to the said future will be anything but easy. However, simply being conscious of the challenges of today and tomorrow is likely to make a big difference. Humans have proven to be rather flexible and adaptive throughout history. The report discusses the success of 'High School Movement' in the USA in the first half of the twentieth century, which was aimed to prepare students for jobs other than farming, owing to increasing farm automation techniques. It further suggests that a similar movement to emphasize the uniquely human skills of creativity, curiosity, imagination, empathy and human communication, diversity and innovation needs to be undertaken today in order to prepare for the future.

The Opportunity for Individuals

The 'workforce' is often regarded as a single homogenized unit that will not be able to compete with AI. However, the fact of the matter is that even two people in the exact same role might do things very differently, which means that the way AI will impact their day-to-day work could be drastically different. The study analyses and contextualizes these differences in jobs in the framework of AI. For CEOs, AI can provide insights on decision-making in order to remove bias and maintain objectiv-

ity, help in assembling diverse teams, and further innovation. Intelligent systems could accurately point out weaknesses in decision-making or use natural language processing to understand how teams feel about their leaders. AI can also aid HR leaders in engaging employees, predicting impending people crisis, tracking immeasurable cues and metrics, streamlining learning and making routine HR tasks self-serviced. Similarly project managers, office managers, and supply chain managers can benefit from AI by formalizing innovation and ideation, handling complex scheduling and rosters, building relationships and enhancing collaboration. Customer service representatives could handle customer tickets and queries much more effectively by learning about the severity of the issue, the mood of the customer, and could benefit with better coordination with the backend technicians. Similarly computer programmers could use intelligent AI systems to track upcoming innovation, identify upcoming academic trends, and shortlist relevant training material and courses.

Entrepreneurs and store owners could optimize communications, business processes, and marketing promotions to increase efficiency and save resources. Truck drivers would benefit by getting assistance, optimizing their time and plan-


ning, and picking the best routes. Journalists stand to gain by using AI systems to cross-reference news and happenings with reliable sources, new developments, and ensure consistency of information; thereby focusing on reporting reliably and giving news more context. The way intelligent tools and systems will help individuals work better is becoming clearer by the day, but the environment in which both will operate together hasn't been clarified yet, which sets the tone for the final section of the report.

AI: The Present and the Future

The report discusses four prominent themes regarding AI and the future of work:

- The structure of work will change and require greater agility and flexibility
- AI has the potential to help individuals become more agile, curious, and nimble
- AI has the potential to enhance human collaboration
- AI has the potential to enhance cognitive diversity within groups

80 percent of the companies that were surveyed or studied during the making of the report are already using AI for research and development, management and human resources, customer service and production. Furthermore, at the very core, the human attitude towards AI is more positive than negative, as more people think that AI will bring about a positive change and create new jobs than those who think that AI will replace jobs and humans. A majority of leaders believe that while AI will replace existing job roles, it will also create new ones. Leaders of both small and large companies are convinced that AI will have a positive impact and are preparing accordingly. Unsurprisingly, leaders who value cognitive diversity also believe that AI's impact will be positive. There is also a very clear recognition of the fact that significant changes need to be made to the present way of working. The leaders stated that they are providing tools of re-skilling, aligning systems and processes to adopt AI, changing their product and service offerings, teaching their employees to function alongside AI, and also updating ethics and code of conduct policies.

The study presents an encouraging glimpse into the future and vindicates supporters of AI and automation. However, more than anything, it confirms that there are a lot of possible scenarios of the future of work, and that we have a lot of ground to cover, and we might be already running behind schedule. 

The structure of work will change and require greater flexibility and agility, while work will move from being task-based to strategic, enabling workers to enhance their curiosity and creative thinking



¹ With Prof. Goldberg



Rewards of ‘Resilience’ during times of change

Most of the tools for addressing change are reactive and focus on helping people deal with the disruptions of change while or after it is occurring. Is building resilience in employees the answer?

Your CEO just announced a major change in the strategic direction pointing to changes in customer expectations, influence of digital innovations, and competition. As a leader in the organization, this change provides you with a significant challenge.

- How do you communicate this change and lead your constituents with focus and clarity?
- How does your team help you execute this strategy?
- What does the future look like for you and your team?

When you look around at your team, at other leaders and employees, you see a lot of uncertainty, more questions than answers, and people seem stuck.

Addressing change and change management has long been a requirement of the Talent Development function. Unfortunately, most of the tools we have for addressing change are reactive, i.e. how to help people deal with the disruptions of change while or after it is occurring.

Discretionary Energy

During times of change, either positive or negative, the amount of “discretionary energy” employees contribute is their choice. Discretionary energy is the amount of energy an individual uses over and above the minimum needed to keep his or her job and refers to all the various forms of initiative, responsibility, interest, motivation, creativity and dedication individuals control within themselves.¹

In making the choice, we have found that employees tend to go in one of three directions. Proactive – fully committed and enrolled. You can see it. Reactive – grudgingly compliant, resisting and maybe even motivated to get even. Again, you can see it! Inactive – pseudo compliant, wait and see, unplugged. Given these three paths, the reality is that most employees move

Resilience is less about countering the old negative story and more about creating the new story imbedded in the context of realistic opportunity

towards ‘inactive’ where the primary use of energy is to remain undetected.

Our experience is that the key to effective organizational change is to ensure leadership is proactive by building the skill of resilience in the workforce. Unfortunately, how to build resilience in people is not well understood.

Resilience

Resilience is often described as durability + sustainability, i.e. the ability to recover from the disruption of change and move forward confidently in a context of opportunity. In fact, resilience is about refocusing your energy towards being relevant given the change.

Building resilience involves three critical steps:

Recognizing how you respond to loss.

Change is often perceived as a loss - a loss of status, friendships, identity, authority, etc. Each of us responds to loss differently - what we call the 4-Dises: Disorientation - “Where do I fit in?” Discontent - “Isn’t it awful?” Dis-identification - “I used to be somebody.” Disengagement - “I will just quit and stay.”

To be resilient, one must recognize when one is feeling a loss, for you and for your employees.

Manage your self-talk. The sense of loss is felt deeply within and is driven by what one tell oneself about the loss. Low resilience often occurs when our self-talk spirals downwards into a stronger and stronger sense of loss. Resilience involves the ability to disrupt the self-talk. By altering self-talk, one alters the response to loss, building the ability to sustain energy through changes.

Leading the change process. The problem with most reactive forms of change management is they deal with countering the negatives of change, countering the thoughts people have about whether they or the company will survive the change, or concerns over the losses.

Resilience is less about countering the old negative story and more about creating the new story imbedded in the context of realistic opportunity — refocusing energy for you and your employees. It is not about what we lost in the change, but what we gain that needs to be told. Building resilient employees may be the best thing an organization can do because when employees are stuck, the organization becomes stuck.

Today, success is less about helping employees “get through” a change process and more about building change resilience so people can adapt to the continuous change surrounding them. 🍌

¹ Adapted from New Rules by Daniel Yankelovich

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DAVID YESFORD, Sr. Vice President of Wilson Learning Worldwide, has more than 32 years of experience developing and implementing human performance solutions around the world and is the contributing author of several books, including *Win-Win Selling*, *Versatile Selling*, *The Social Styles Handbook*, and *The Sales Training Book 2*.

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Keeping the promise

There is no one solution that will solve for the disparity in gender representation in corporate India. However, organizations have started to look beyond merely complying with the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act and address the real needs of new parents at work especially in terms of tangible support like crèche facilities

RESEARCH

To promote female labor force participation and meet the Government of India's G20 commitment to reduce the gender gap in labor market participation rates by 25 percent by 2025, the Center is encouraging the States to notify and implement crèche rules. Organizations have already started to look beyond compliance to address the real needs of new parents at work and are providing childcare, parenting and maternity support benefits that help in retaining a diverse workforce and creating trust among employees. In light of the recent notifications on crèche rules from states like Maharashtra, Karnataka, Haryana and Kerala that cover a large share of corporate India, companies are taking cognizance of the crèche provision under the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act and acting on it. Tangible support like crèches near offices or homes is now becoming a reality for India Inc.

Childcare shows positive impact

A recent ProEves survey across 40 organizations reveals that amongst all maternity and paternity support policies provided by employers, crèche support has the highest ROI in terms of greater positive impact and lower implementation challenges for the organizations. Positive impacts asso-

ciated with crèche benefit are increased maternity engagement and retention, improved trust of employees, and diverse hiring. Roshika Singh, Tackling Childcare & Employment - India Lead, IFC elaborates on it and says that, "The MB Amendment illustrates a genuine effort by the government to remove childcare as a barrier to parents' and women's participation in the workforce. Globally, women spend approximately three times the amount of time spent by men on unpaid work that includes childcare, but in India, research reveals that women spend close to ten times more time. Without access to quality childcare support, mothers often choose between

their jobs and caring for their child. Providing employer-supported childcare services can boost women's labor force participation, enhance firms' performance, and contribute towards economic growth in India." With state guidelines being notified, companies are increasingly picking up this agenda.

Even young, growing organization like OYO with 27 as the average age of employee is investing in childcare. "We are cognizant of our employee needs and the launch of our in-house daycare, Little O, which is a significant step towards ensuring work-life integration for them. Daycare is available to all parents working for OYO and we are seeing more and more children being enrolled every month. In addition, to the facility, there is a reimbursable monthly allowance which can be availed by YOpreneurs working at different locations across the country" states Dinesh R, CHRO at OYO.

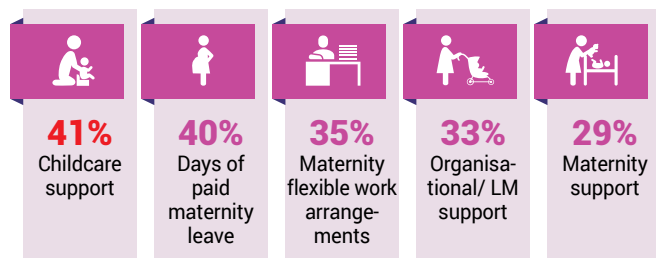
Amongst all maternity and paternity support policies provided by employers, crèche support has the highest ROI in terms of greater positive impact

The real picture

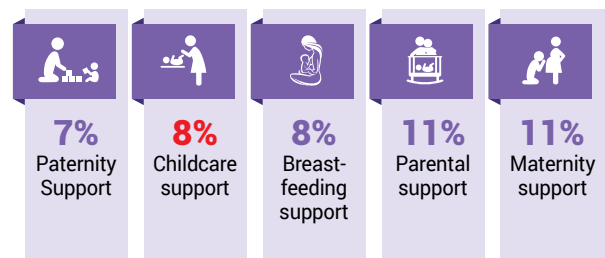
The State notifications on crèche rules are clear with respect to the distance of the crèche facility. In Maharashtra, the crèche rules specify a distance of under 1 kilometer, while in Haryana and Karnataka, government notifications provide for a distance of up to 500 meters from

Practices with High Impact and Low Challenge Scores

Top 5 Practices with Highest Impact



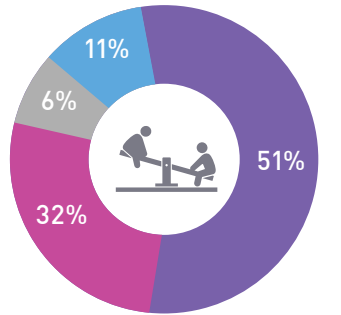
Top 5 Practices with Lowest Challenge



Childcare Support clearly has the best ROI with highest impact and one of the lowest challenge associated with it

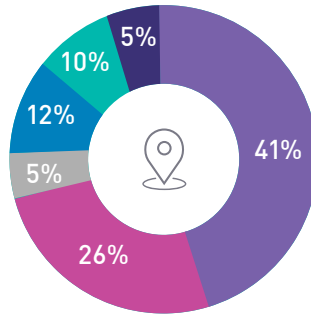
Daycare Catchment and Distance Considered for Tie-Ups

Daycare Catchment in Commercial Areas



■ Less than 500 m ■ 500 m - 1 Km
■ 1 Km - 3 Km ■ 3 Km - 5 Km

Distance considered for tie-ups



■ Under 3 Km ■ 3.5 Km
■ 5-7 Km ■ Onsite
■ Not yet decided ■ Others

the place of work. ProEves research (that surveyed 117 companies) reveals that 72 percent companies are considering near-site daycare tie-up, out of which 41 percent are considering distance under 3 km to provide the safest nearest daycare to their employees. ProEves also analyzed the daycare catchment across 100 commercial complexes spanning 7 key cities (including Mumbai (MNMT), Delhi, Pune, Gurgaon, Bangalore, Chennai and Kolkata). The findings reveal that only 17 percent of commercial areas have quality daycares in less than 1 km radius. While the rules on close proximity of the crèche have been established to allow for nursing mothers to visit the facility up to 4 times a day, it is not the preference of parents who have children who are no longer nursing and live in cities where local transport and high real estate costs are issues.

Beyond Childcare

Along with investments in paid maternity leave and crèche facilities, leading companies are providing additional support in terms of online resources, coaching, and counseling to expecting and new moms and their line managers to enable the transition into motherhood and return to work smoother for working mothers. Companies like Capgemini, Wipro and Infosys provide access to online learning and resources, maternity apps for expecting and new mothers support them during this transition, along with maternity buddy and mom mentor program.

Some of the leading companies are now extending maternity resources to include paternity cases too as new fathers are at equal risk of feeling dissonance on becoming a new parent as they feel they aren't able to either support enough at home or

Globally, women spend approximately three times the amount of time spent by men on unpaid care work, but in India, women spend close to ten times more time

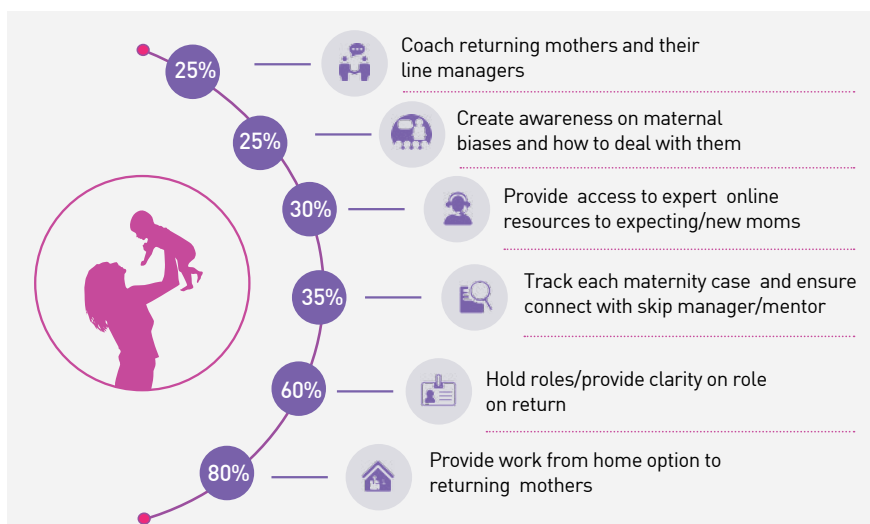
continue with their focused commitment at work. ProEves insights based on childcare and parenting support show that an equal if not more percentage of working dads want support. 55 percent of working parents stressed about work life balance are men, and more than 80 percent of working mothers want their spouse to become active parenting partners and seek advice on how they can involve them. Companies are providing family-friendly policies like four weeks of family support leave for elderly care or childcare to both genders, in addition to maternity and paternity leaves.

There is no one solution that will solve for the disparity in gender representation in corporate India as implementation challenges remain. Companies that have a wait and watch approach towards crèche implementation will soon realize that this is a low cost-high impact benefit. The target segment that will utilize this benefit comprises less than 10 percent of workforce. Providing such a benefit not only increases retention of experienced professionals but also builds empathy and trust in the organization. Coupled with post-maternity and parental support benefits, it creates an equal society that is conducive for both genders.

About the Survey

*ProEves Crèche Benefit Research conducted in Dec 2017 surveyed 117 companies making it the largest study on crèche related practices in India. #ProEves Childcare, Maternity and Parental ROI Survey April 2018 surveyed 40 leading companies to understand the impact of these practices.

How India Inc Supports Expecting and New Moms at Work



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DIVYA AGARWAL is the co-founder of ProEves. Prior to ProEves, she led the gender diversity agenda for Unilever, South Asia and worked with Aon Hewitt in talent and organization consulting.



AUDITING THE CREATIVE PROCESS

FERRAN ADRIÀ is more than just a world-renowned chef. He is a marvel who has cracked the code of creativity and innovation, and has seamlessly juxtaposed gastronomy with the domains of art and technology. The much-acclaimed creator of the ‘culinary foam’, Adrià is often associated with “molecular gastronomy” and deconstructivist cooking, but his creativity is not confined to just cooking or gastronomy — the values and goals that Adrià has established encompass projects centered on knowledge, education, business and innovation in many fields, disciplines, and industries. Adrià and his team have curated a method “Sapiens” to transform organizations through innovation, and have committed themselves towards providing educators in any domain with the necessary means to nurture the next generation of creative thinkers.

For Adrià, it is about promoting creativity and innovation and sharing it with everyone with the will and spirit to improve, evolve and innovate, making them participants in the past, present and future experience, researching and experimenting to accelerate talent and help everyone seek their own limits.

By Ester Martinez & Suparna Chawla Bhasin

Ferran Adrià, often called as “the Salvador Dali of the kitchen” is a famed Spanish Chef and co-owner of elBulli, a groundbreaking modernist, unorthodox and avant-garde restaurant in Spain, that has been reconstructed into a research lab and exhibition space called ‘elBulli 1846’ where a team of 20 people research and experiment on creation and innovation to improve efficiency, studying and analyzing how to implement the dream creative ecosystem. This team, led by Ferran Adrià, researches efficiency in innovation by applying the ‘Sapiens method’, carrying out a creative audit and adding to the creative archive.

In 2011, Adrià transformed the elBulli restaurant into a non-profit foundation for culinary research called the elBulli Foundation that has been actively educating, enriching, and pushing the boundaries of gastronomy and food research with a vision based on the desire to continue promoting innovation and creativity through the language of cooking and to preserve the legacy and spirit of elBulli for society. Adrià has also analogized his experiences with innovation and from auditing his own baroque creative processes in the “Auditando el proceso creativo”, a multi-platform project promoted and supported by the Telefonica Foundation.

People Matters met Ferran Adrià at elBulli Foundation to know more about Sapiens, innovation, creativity, and what inspires him to do more every day at elBulli.

Q The values for El Bulli – creativity, innovation, risk, freedom, passion, effort, ethics, and generosity – how have they enabled you to achieve what you set out to do?

A These are the words that we have been incorporating little by little to what we do and we have set out to achieve. We have always worked hard to understand what we have done, the whys, and how to be more efficient in the future – basically the concept of analyzing. In the last four years, we have been able to do some of the best innovation that has never been done. These 7 values have been very important to us because we know that following them is the way to go ahead always. And it has always worked for us. All through these years, these have enabled us to understand who we are, what we have done, and what we need to do in the future. The analysis is inherently looking at the past with two objectives: becoming more and more efficient and at the same time making sure that we are not “copying ourselves” and being true to the creations.

We believe that values help organizations summarize their DNA in words. For example, ethics is a very important value for us and means transparency but also being direct or on-the-face. Every organization has values, whether they are written or not, and these come from the leaders and the founders and percolates down across the organization’s culture. For us, these are not just words that look good on the walls; they are a way of life for us.



We have always tried to have the freedom that an artist has but at the same time, we have always tried to balance it with the business. A businessman is always focused on making money but sometimes you need to earn money to earn your freedom.

Q How do you balance freedom and business? Do you think these two are inherently contradictory?

A Life is a contradiction, and one needs to find equilibrium. My vision has always been holistic. I have had the opportunity to work with scientists in Harvard, business leaders from across industries, artists, politics – I have had the opportunity to have relationships with creatives (creativity) and business, and I have learned so much from so many people. That has helped us to create our own philosophy that encompasses so much diverse knowledge.

When we were running elBulli, we were a “model” organization. As a restaurant, we mastered efficiency. There are organizations like for example a hospital’s operating theater – they are extremely efficient for few minutes or hours, during the operation per se. For us, at elBulli, we had to operate at that level every day for 12 hours — we were monsters of efficiency and opera-

tions – if you were not as crazy about efficiency, it was impossible to work with us. We were machines! When we were closed for the rest of the 6 months, it allowed us to reinvent ourselves. At the same time, we had the opportunity to re-start afresh and most of the talent we had was seasonal, that meant we never had to retrain anybody.

In the case of elBulli, the problem is that we have done so much that is impossible to simplify. Every day we comprehend new things. Every year we forced ourselves to do something completely new. This model helped us to go very fast but also burned us very fast. We did in 20 years what we should have done in 100 years. This means you need to cut and start again. That is very difficult. We reached so far that we had to stop.

Q Tell us about change and innovation. What does this mean in a business context?

A It takes longer for any meaningful change to happen. It takes knowledge and research, which people are not really interested in. People just want to get the final result. We haven’t seen a disruptive innovation in gastronomy for a long time because disruptive innovation is indeed very difficult to achieve. If you think about Apple, after Steve Jobs, what has really changed? iPhones just have bigger screens or faster software, but that’s about it. For people like us, innovation happens in small things. Innovation is an investigative process and it has been this innovation process that led us to the recipes and techniques that made us who we are today. We are more interested in the innovation process than in the result itself, and that is what we have been researching for the last few years.

But passion is a prerequisite for innovation. It is difficult, however, to feel passion for a project or company that is not your own. 16-hour workdays and creating 365 days a year without monetary incentives requires immense commitment. Hence, innovation must be owned.

Innovation is not just the activity of one department. It is the activity of an entire organization. Maintaining creativity is a challenge. An organization can only reach creative resonance if every new cycle of disruption is reinforced by the outcomes of the previous one. Hence, documenting every step of the process is essential. Innovation can save the world and everyone can and should be an innovator, even the people who clean the restaurants! Silos and egos kill creativity, but vanity poses the biggest threat of

elBulli Foundation ➤ A foundation to promote new creativity, innovation and also challenges not only in the field of gastronomy, but also in the field of innovation.

Bullipedia ➤ A culinary encyclopedia of 35 books and a digital platform to share all the knowledge and research about food, cuisine, cooking tools, drinks, ingredients, and many other issues.

Sapiens ➤ A methodology, created by elBullifoundation, to understand and analyze a project, with the objective of improving efficiency in innovation. It is also a conductive thread of DNA for all the projects used to develop not just the Bullipedia, but all the projects at elBulli.

Seaurching ➤ A super search engine or a tool that connects all the data that has been researched inside Sapiens, developed to arrange and disseminate the knowledge through new technologies.

elBulli 1846 ➤ An exhibition lab that will research efficiency in innovation using the exhibits as tools for study.

Bullinians ➤ All the people who represent the values and have built the spirit of elBulli.



all. What movie director would accept advice from a cook, or an economist? People accept others' creative work only if there is admiration and respect. Self-auditing and self-criticism are also a must. That is why we documented our 25 years of disruptive innovation efforts in over 7,000 pages and published the highlights every 5 years. This helped us to revisit the solutions that could have been but never came to fruition.

Q What is your creative process - the one that enables you to replicate excellence over and over again?

A There is another side to innovation. It is about ultimately understanding things, accumulating and classifying knowledge because when you are accumulating and understanding, you are adding. Arranging and understanding the past is essential in order to move forward. Order is the fundamental premise for understanding what we are talking about and for working efficiently. Order is essential, especially for formulating complex ideas and tackling difficult processes. It means taking decisions, trying to understand how the different elements of disciplines are grouped together. Ordering implies reflecting, grouping, classifying, distinguishing, establishing families — in short, forming categories that allow us to understand the processes that define disciplines. Ordering is a way of encouraging chaotic states that favor the flow of creativity.

Q Tell us about Sapiens and how this can be applied to any discipline, including businesses?

A Connecting knowledge is the best way to understand, but the question is how knowledge is connected. Sapiens is the methodology created by elBullifoundation to understand and analyze a project with the objective of improving efficiency in innovation. Sapiens is like Frankenstein. If you take all the ambits like systems thinking or design thinking, we have taken all.

Here are the steps we follow in the Sapience method: 1) Question the status quo – how do we stimulate everyone to question the status quo? 2) Understanding, Classifying, Ordering scientifically. Which method to use? Which system? 3) Go beyond, serach beyond, looking for diverse points of view, with maximum freedom and with global outlook, and 4) At the same time, doing all these with very little resources, looking for efficiency.

We firmly believe that to maintain effectiveness and efficiency in the fields of innovation and education, it is absolutely necessary to understand the different stages of disciplines, and have therefore developed a methodology that helps us decode the most important processes involved. Although our main purpose was to decode and understand the genome of gastronomy, Sapiens hopes to use it to decode all other creative disciplines.

To begin with, it is indispensable to ascertain the questions raised by the discipline, which will enable us to understand it: the what, how, when, where, who, for what and why of all its processes, how they are contextualized and how they interact. We call this methodology Sapiens. There are thousands of processes (that can vary greatly according to the discipline in question), each one of which brings its defining elements

into play. A discipline can be decoded to a great extent through these processes, moving from more to less, from maximum to minimum, from general to concrete – a company, a service, a concept, a specific product. For instance, we may decode the processes involved in mobile phone engineering as a discipline, but we may also decide to decode the processes of the Apple company, of the iPhone concept or even of a specific generation of iPhone. In this sense, the creative, productive, experiential and commercial processes of iPhone1, which were essentially disruptive, have little in common with the more evolutionary processes of subsequent generations of iPhones.

Studying a discipline's processes can be an absolutely boundless, infinite task—the fascination for diversity. The processes involved in the making of a large-scale painting will necessarily differ from those required to make a small painting or a series of paintings. Those that are involved in filmmaking can diverge considerably in the case of a commercial blockbuster, an animated film or an educational documentary. When we speak of disciplines in the field of science we start from a common methodology, the scientific method, but even so the processes

Arranging and understanding the past is essential in order to move forward. Order is the fundamental premise for understanding what we are talking about and for working efficiently

involved in the work of biologists and physicists are completely different. Processes can be produced more or less simultaneously. For example, a painting can be conceived and made at one and the same time, and experienced later. A menu can be created in one phase, produced in another and experienced in a yet another. The decoding of processes is the first premise for approaching a discipline, for it helps us understand it as it is produced, as it works, although it doesn't tell us what has taken place in the story and how the plot has developed, for which we need an evolutionary analysis that will contextualize each finding, each contribution, that will be set within a specific time frame

Reflection and realization are the best ways of understanding. But the point here is that you cannot be a specialist of everything. Sapiens is about this — of knowing what is essential. In art and philosophy and in the business world, accumulating knowledge serves you enough to innovate. But what you have to do is to connect this. I connect food with science. The dialogue between science and food before us did not exist. But I am like a scientist in the kitchen who likes to investigate and give those findings as resources to the cooks. **em**



Agile Leadership = Agile Organization

Can agile leadership development, if done in a structured way, help scale up an organization?

I am 29 years old. I spent three years in my father's insurance firm. It has fifteen employees and it has grown steadily over the years. I spent three years being in the back office doing odd jobs. But today my father decided to put me in Sales, something that he has personally loved doing since the '80s. I remember he would often step out of a long drawn negotiation with a client and then tell me how much he enjoyed the negotiation. But I don't think I could be like him and do the same job for three decades like he has. He has been giving me management books to read in order to get me to learn the new skill, but I don't think I can learn like that. I learn by observing and then trying it out. I am starting the new job next week, and I am looking forward to it but I do not feel prepared enough. I guess, one day, I will be taking over the firm and being in Sales is a good place to get prepared."

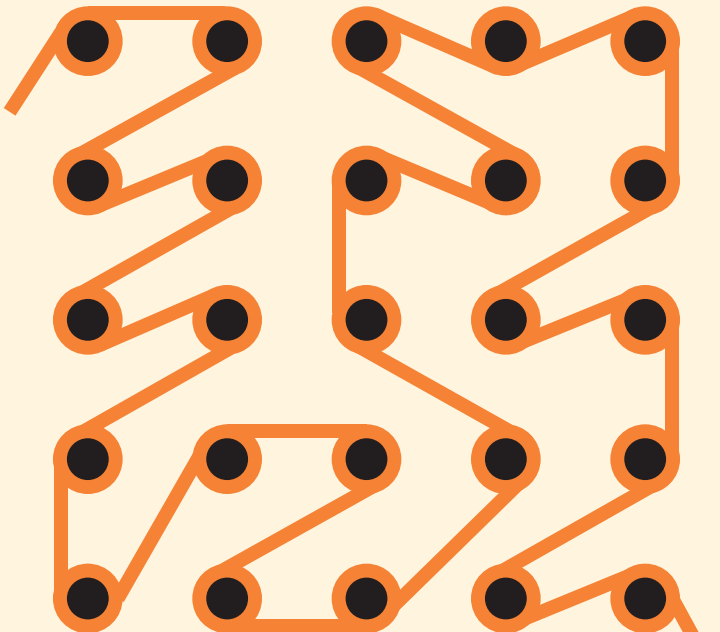
The Agile Learning Method: 4Es

Although a scenario like above is not unheard of and most of us have become leaders by learning on the job or through the help of management books, today's business operating ecosystem demands much more from leaders as traditional or conventional learning methodologies do not make the cut. Organizations need to adopt the 4Es of agile learning to develop leaders in a rapidly shifting environment.

Education: Structured learning of the basics helps in building skills at scale. Learning the alphabet helps us to form words. We combine words to craft sentences. Reading the theory helps the learner understand the design principles of the competency being developed. Being aware of the core body of knowledge prepares a someone to join a profession. When someone says, "I am a practical person. I do not read", you know this person is proudly flaunting his ignorance. Reading is a sign of intellectual curiosity and openness to new ideas in agile leaders. Weak signals and early trends often show up in a new book or article. An early start of a year can help an agile leader capture critical mass in the market.

Exposure: To be able to connect the dots, it is important to have enough dots to choose from. That is just what internships are designed to do. For example, being the apprentice of a top-notch practitioner gives a young surgeon the exposure to multiple variations and scenarios where they learn from the master surgeon. The Tata Administrative Service was designed for build leaders who had broad exposure to the business across geographies, whereas short term assignments across geographies and functions over a two-year period was the basic principle of the Global 100 program of Wipro. Apple brought a leader from Burberry when they were launching

To be able to connect the dots, it is important to have enough dots to choose from



their own stores. Agile leaders are able to adapt and implement ideas from other contexts.

Experience: Education gives the leader knowledge, learning, and a head-start. A musician will be taught the theory of music and then given exposure to multiple interpretations and possibilities as they watch several maestros interpret the same piece of music in their own unique manner. The Indian army puts its officers through various assignments during their careers. Every two to three years, they have to uproot the family and move to a new location and assignment. This helps them put their education and exposure to use. This is also the phase when having a coach can step-jump the competency of the agile leader. When a leader takes on a new role in the organization, having a coach can enable them to become productive early. Firms often spend a lot more on hiring leaders but will forget to invest in a coach who can onboard the new hire. Transition coaching is one of the most effective methods of building agility in a new hire.

Expertise: I have often seen a master craftsmen practice a single line of a composition hundreds of times till they get it right. “Don’t you get bored doing the same thing over and over again?”, I have asked a famous music director. “Until I can play the notes to perfection from muscle memory I am not playing the same piece. It may all sound the same to a novice but an expert will know each quiver and tremble.” The difference of one hundredth of a second can be the difference between an Olympic gold medalist and a silver medalist. While a lot of people claim to have a passion for what they do, until they get comfortable with deliberate practice, they only have a fleeting interest – not passion. When someone says that they are passionate about something, check to see their comfort with repetition. The best cricketers are often the ones who will wake up an hour earlier than their peers to retain their extra edge. The Grand Slam winners still have a coach who will polish their craft even if the improvement will not be visible to others.

How do we learn effectively?

Add new mental models and theories. Try to explain things to others by simplifying complexity. Find examples from other fields that can help someone else experience an “aha” moment. Create something to practice what you learn.

Build time chunks to think and reflect. Most leadership development programs are ineffective because organizations do not build time and space for reflection. Without time to reflect, it is hard to learn from failure. Warren Buffet blocks chunks of his time every day to read, think, and reflect. He uses this time to process information from the environment, simulate, and predict and then update his own predictions before taking action. Ask if you are creating new mental models.

Become a part of a learning community: Being a part of a community of practice helps us to learn more effectively. It helps you to know



Without time to reflect, it is hard to learn from failure

what good looks like. Having a mentor can be a very powerful way to accelerate your learning. Create a group of mentors who will challenge your thinking and question your choices. They will connect you to other people you can learn from. A novice can be a great source of learning too.

Agile organizations continuously stay in touch with the outside environment and change their internal processes and workings to stay in tune. Agile leadership development, if done in a structured way, can help scale up the rest of the organization. The organization moves at the pace of the weakest link. Agility comes from every day actions – not one off training programs. 📌

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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.

A Triad of Obsession, Resilience, and Execution



Rosaline Chow Koo, the Founder and CEO of CXA Group, has an incredible story to tell. From nurturing a dream to building it successfully, she is known as one of the top women in tech today. Koo's professional and personal sacrifices enabled her to establish CXA's distinct platform and caliber. In this interaction with People Matters, Koo shares her insights on her journey to insurance brokerage, disrupting the employee benefits space in Asia, and how CXA has transformed the way employees in Asia look at 'health' and 'healthcare'

By **Yasmin Taj**

Rosaline Koo grew up in a poor immigrant family in South Central LA during the Watts Riots that helped Rosaline Koo develop survival skills and a strong work ethic early on. She went on to earn a Cybernetics Degree at UCLA and MBA from Columbia University. From supervising a production line for P&G in rural Iowa to Wall Street, Koo moved to Asia in the mid-90's and launched 2 funded startups during the dot-com boom. She then transitioned to the insurance industry, and over 8 years, grew Mercer and Marsh's employee benefits business by 800%, and across 14 Asian countries.

In 2013, she founded CXA Group, a technology startup that brings evidence-based wellness into the workplace to improve employee health and control healthcare costs. Clearly seeing the benefits that technology could bring to the workplace in Asia, where chronic disease is hitting 10 years before the West, Rosaline tried to persuade her employer to invest in it. After five years of failed attempts, she left to build the CXA platform on her own. Convinced that the antiquated paper-based industry was ripe for disruption, Rosaline invested

her entire life savings of \$5 million, and borrowed \$5 million more, to establish CXA. She recruited a world-class team to build Asia's first benefits and wellness marketplace platform and acquired Singapore's largest home-grown employee benefits brokerage. Today, CXA has grown into a \$100 million company that works with employers to transform current healthcare spending from treatment into benefits and wellness programs.

Q You have an incredible story (of funding \$10M of your own money in a deep belief for a healthcare vision and a personal/professional journey that has taken you from San Francisco to Asia); and now you are now recognized as one of the leading healthcare entrepreneurs in Asia. How did you embark on this journey?

A The reason I decided to build my dream on my own was because I was trying to convince my old firm for 5 years to do this. But as it turned out, the global CEO got fired and then my global healthcare boss got fired. I knew I was next. So, I convinced them to vest all my shares and bonuses and let me go. That way, I could get the money to start my own company since so much was locked away in shares and bonuses because I never missed a budget in 8 years growing Mercer 800%. I was convinced it would work as clients in all countries faced the same challenges of rising healthcare costs and one-size-fits-all benefits. It was about using data to personalize benefits and wellness services for each employee and technology to connect the entire ecosystem.

Q There is always an opportunity, now you have the freedom to do it your own way. Are you happy the way things turned out? Do you think it gave you that opportunity?

A Yes, I believe in destiny and I'm thrilled since I can move at hyper speed and focus on execution instead of justifying, begging, and writing business cases on the nuances of Asia. Not only was this my third startup, all I've done in the last 20 years is startups and corporate turnarounds. So, I'm not really a person that easily gives up. It became a deep obsession since chronic diseases are getting worse over time.

Q Tell us about the challenges you had to face when you migrated to Asia to start this? Mercer said no to your idea 5 times. What was it that you saw that probably they did not see as an opportunity?

A What I saw was hyper growth and that a current solution wasn't there for the entire industry to fix the rising cost issue due to aging populations and chronic disease. But since I had built two startups during the dot-com era and worked on 401k defined contribution retirement plans during my New York banking stint, I actually knew how to use data and technology to build a new defined contribution healthcare product. And since we had grown 800 percent, I knew there was a demand. It would have been easier if I did it for Mercer since they already

had the brokerage licenses, brand, offices and clients. All I needed to do was \$10m to build the technology, but they never agreed to invest in Asia.

Q Why did you choose Asia in particular? What were the industry dynamics that you saw in this region?

A Asia is different from the rest of the world. First thing, chronic disease came to Asia 10 years earlier and at a lower BMI of 23 versus 25 in the West. Asians have more abdominal fat and more tiger moms who raise studious kids who may be less physically active. Then the food choices here are also different with more carbs, sugar, fried food, and more food courts. Additionally, employee benefits in Asia are predominantly employer-sponsored vs. nationalized health in Europe, Australia and Canada. Asia employers cannot sustain double-digit annual premium increases as well as the spiraling salaries from the on-going talent war. With this perfect storm in Asia, employers have to get at the root cause of their employee health issues in order to fix the costs.

The key to success is to get the future-first before anyone else

Q Tell us about the problem statement and how has it evolved as we go deeper and deeper into the business? How have you managed to run the business and scale it up successfully?

We are still solving the rising cost of healthcare, but our business model has been much refined in terms of how we use data to solve the problem. I always knew I was going to shift treatment money into prevention to improve employee health; but once we got deeper, we learned so much about the complexities of the employee health ecosystem.

We're working with reinsurers to use various data points such as health screening, lifestyle and claims data to score each employee and give each firm an aggregate health score. That way we can predict the future disease prevalence and group medical premium. So, if companies improve their health score, we can use the data as brokers to negotiate reduced premiums.

Q As part of the success of the business model which is about the journey of prevention, how has the journey been?

A We actually pre-select Fortune/Global 500 companies who care about employee engagement and wellness and being employers of choice. Such companies work with us together on the employee communications, health days and on creating benefits that could be tailored to each employee's life stage and health needs. So, the engagement has been really high primarily because it really matters to these firms.

Q Who are the customers for CXA group? How does the platform cater to the various stakeholders: (i) employers, (ii) employees, (iii) providers and (iv) distributors?

A Employees get a wallet funded by the monetized value of their company's insurance + healthcare spend. If they have duplicated coverage from their working spouse or are young and fit, then they can shift those amounts to something more. They can also assess their lifestyle, upload their blood test results, talk to a tele-doc and e-pharmacy or use their money at local wellness providers from our discounted, cashless marketplace. They can be rewarded if they lose weight, quit smoking or participate in health screenings or win a fitness challenge.

We help employers split employees into teams for corporate challenges to leverage peer pressure, leadership and fun and get the less motivated on board. They can eat, take blood tests and exercise together. Gamification works to make the experience more fun.

I do take chances on people by empowering them to do lots of different things. People know what they are good at, but I always want people in jobs beyond their comfort zones because that's how they can be stretched

For employers, we provide anonymized aggregated data analytics by connecting the providers in the whole ecosystem (i.e., insurers, health screening, TPAs, panel networks, gyms, diabetes management, weight management, nutrition, smoking cessation) into a one-stop-shop and digitizing all the paper, information flow and payments.

Q What are the interesting trends in healthcare and insurance you are observing in Asia and how is that different from US and Europe? What are the things you look ahead in the business?

A We are already expanding outside of Asia. Our new investors from Europe, America and Asia will all come in as distribution clients with very large enterprise bases, not just in Asia but in North America and Europe as well, so we plan to go global.

The next phase will be really exciting since our impact will be much greater. Not only will we be going directly to HR, but to all the companies that have thousands of enterprise and SME clients. Distributors such as banks, insurers, telcos and

payroll companies will white-label our SAAS employer and employee platforms to cross-sell benefits, insurance and financial services products to the employees of their enterprise base. They're using our platform because our rich and unique data and recommendation engine will help them sell the right services to the right people at the right time.

We'll soon be announcing our fund raising round where all our new investors will be coming in as clients to help us grow. That to me, is a great affirmation of our business model and potential.

Q You have led startups and corporate turnarounds for 25 years in US and Asia, what are the interesting lessons you have learned in your career? What skillsets have you learned from startups and the turnarounds?

A In addition to working in startups and turnarounds, I've been fortunate to work in different industries (FMCG, Banking, Tech, Insurance, Professional Services) with different business models, so it's easier for me to come up with unconventional ways to solve industry problems. The key to success is to get the future first before anyone else. So, the first skillset is the ability to imagine a very different future, given the same constraints everyone faces in the industry.

The second skill is execution -- the ability to transform a dream into reality. In many of my roles, I was the go-to-person, starting things from a blank slate or fixing something broken. I believe there's a valid excuse for every single failure, but if you learn how to overcome those valid excuses, you can get to the future first no matter what happens. One of the critical factors for success in life is how you react to setbacks -- you can either let hardship drag you down or you can learn and become stronger.

The third is leadership. Since you can't do it alone, it's important to know how to galvanize the best talent to follow you on your journey towards accomplishing the mission.

Q How would you define your leadership style?

A I like to move people around to different roles so that they can learn different skills. If you're going on a super hard journey where you going to work together in the trenches for years, you want everyone to come out of it feeling a sense of achievement and fulfillment. I think of skills as muscles that you have to exercise and challenge in order to grow stronger. How do I put high-potential talent into different areas where it intersects with their interests and intersects with their company's mission as well? I do take chances on people by empowering them to do lots of different things. I don't like to micro-manage and believe there are many paths to problem-solving. People know what they are good at, but I always want people in jobs beyond their comfort zones because that's how they can be stretched. **CM**



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The Future of Work Requires Work - And Tech is Part of the Problem

Most 'tech-utopias' see technology as the prime solver of all future problems, and while they admit the future is uncertain and challenging, as long as the employees of tomorrow are given a change-embracing VUCAbular by HR and keep learning the latest tech-toy, their prosperity will be assured. Is it so?

Welcome to 'The Future of Work' craze. Each business journal is filled with glowing tales about the gig economy and how to prepare the workforce for it. Every alternate HR conclave is awash with the theme and the remaining ones dedicate at least a prime-position session to it. Interviewers' questions, whether to the exalted international luminaries of HR or to humble candidates for HR manager jobs, invariably include searching ones on this subject. The tone of these articles, seminars and interrogations is almost invariably euphoric. The unstated presumption seems to be that we are on the threshold of being wafted, almost effortlessly, into a high-tech nirvana. Most 'tech-utopias' see technology as the prime solver of all future problems. While they admit the future is uncertain and challenging, as long as the employees of tomorrow are given a change-embracing VUCAbular by HR and keep learning the latest tech-toy, their prosperity will be

assured. Thereafter, the HR managers of the day-after can "in Elysian valleys dwell, resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel."

The reality will be grimmer. Unless we can prevent trends that are already in evidence from materializing fully, for the vast majority of the working population in India, the actual future is unlikely to resemble the one prognosticators are seeing through rose-tinted glasses, which is not to say that efforts to change these gloomier projections will be fruitless. On the contrary, most of the adverse trends described here have known solutions – several of which have been addressed in earlier columns of mine and will, therefore, only be referenced but not repeated in this one. However, if we only busy ourselves with providing a minority of the workforce with the means to understand and use the latest technology, we shall not miss the dystopian bus, which is hurtling towards us. If my descriptions of the future of work appear overly bleak and definitive, they are made so with the intention of waking us to plug the leaks in the dikes before they become floods.

The Future of Work - Or Is There None?

Work is an endangered species. Of course, it will never become extinct but quality work is likely to be available for a smaller and smaller proportion of our country's still-growing working population. Why else should there be worries about jobless growth when India's economic performance beats that of almost every large economy? The progress

Even today, some of the most forward-looking companies have problems figuring out how to treat employees as more than 'rented humans'



of technology³, growing international protectionism and rigid labor laws⁴ in our own country are among the important reasons for this situation.

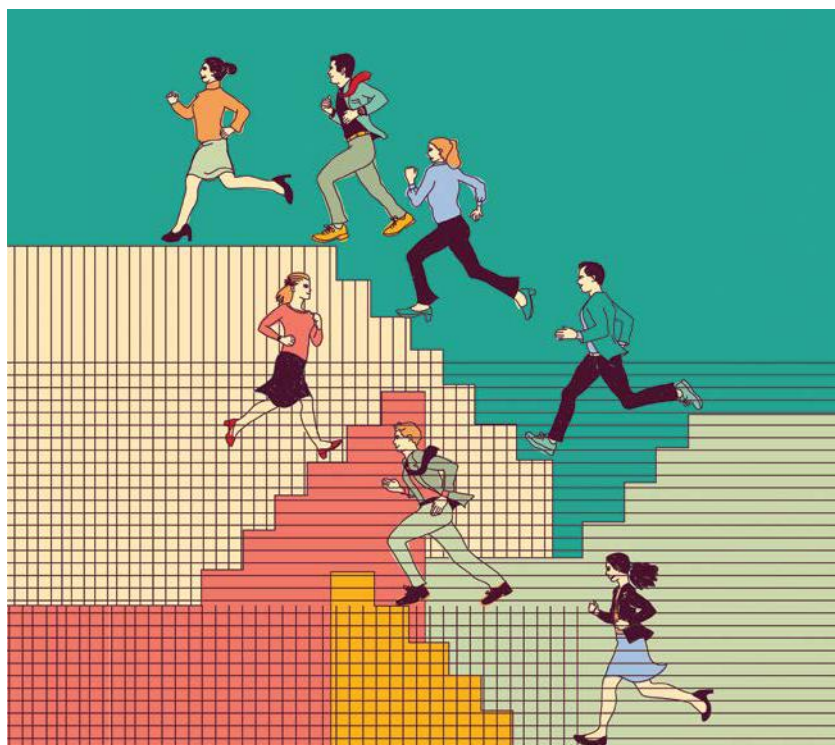
Some argue that even if work, relative to the population vying for it, becomes sparser, it will still be available for a very large number of people and that the 'gig'ly future of work will at least apply to this group. This hope too may be forlorn. Some work there will certainly be and of many varieties but little of it may be of the kind that interacts with or, even better, creates technology and provides self-fulfillment to those doing it. There are three reasons for the trend towards the dilution of average work-quality in India.

All over the world, the heady tasks of discovering new technologies and their advanced applications are confined to jobs that are numerically infinitesimally smaller than the number of jobs they displace or 'de-smart'. The challenge for India is aggravated not only by the higher numbers entering the workforce than in any other country but because it has been out-raced by several other countries that now occupy pole positions in developing some of the most promising new technologies. For instance, the AI battleground is pretty much dominated by the US and China.⁵

Global trends apart, in India we have hollowed out corporation after corporation of the major part of its durable employment in the headlong rush to 'contractualize' work⁶. While such precarious work is plentifully available in the aggregate, in any given corporate, it is often a prime target for automation because there are minimal complications in the consequential downsizing. Even if people with such shaky tenures could be persuaded to equip themselves for a tech-sparkling future, in the absence of knowing which industry or company they might be in the following months, the oasis of retraining for the supposed jobs of tomorrow may be no more than a mirage.

Tech has, of course, spawned entire industries which provide occupations to millions. Several of these have, however, waspishly grown on the flesh of industries they have replaced and it is not obvious net employment has gone up. In cases such as e-retail, the mom-and-pop stores they replace will dis-employ people whom the emerging industry is unlikely to recruit. The influx of large numbers of relatively uneducated young men into the ranks of the unemployed has been a precursor of higher crime and unrest in several societies. We are yet to see this unfold in India nor have e-retailers so far faced significant pangs of union organization and industrial action on account of the large numbers they have concentrated (compared to the dispersed employment of traditional retail).

One of the ways e-retailers have deferred collectivization is by treating many of their workers as individual contractors. It is something aggregators like Uber have practiced for several years⁷. It would seem, however, that both in India⁸ and abroad, this means that avoiding collective action by workers will be threatened. The term 'aggregator' is itself a bit of a misnomer. While it may be appropriate for industries (like taxi services) where individual



In tech-controlled corporates, verticalization will have to extend to many more levels before the enrichment gains materialize

operators were networked and interfaced with their customers through a tech platform, there have been traditionally organized industries (such as hotels) that have been substituted and truncated by similar platform networks. In such case, tech becomes a 'disaggregator' for the people earlier employed by organizations. The disaggregators' need to keep their people at arm's length weakens or entirely dissolves the three Cs of cohesion (Cause-focus, Caring for people, and Camaraderie with colleagues) that bind employees to traditional corporates. That can hardly be a recipe for building the trust and proximity necessary for asking people to re-equip themselves for future challenges and changes, leave aside the connectedness that is a prerequisite for enjoying work and being engaged with the organization that provides it.⁹

Tech Surveillance and Robotic Support

The few that are able to secure durable employment in the corporation of the future will certainly be fortunate but may still not be totally contented. In critiquing some of the organizations considered to be the best employers today, Christopher Machin writes: "... these developments at Google and Tesla signal a new reckoning by employees – white collar and blue collar – with the limitations of the modern utopian workplace.

They describe pent-up forces, now apparently loosened, that will not be tamed by vague managerial assurances, or yogurt stands. Facebook, Amazon, and Apple may not be far behind. The problems highlighted are structural and longstanding. They point to a fundamental flaw with a particular and peculiar institution, the employment relationship, which is so ubiquitous that it appears natural. A fundamental fact haunts that relationship across all kinds of workplaces, modern and traditional. Employees without substantial ownership and governance rights, employees who are not members of democratic corporations, have no standing. They are merely rented humans. They are visitors on someone else's planet.¹⁰ Machin is, I think, unduly pessimistic about the employment relationship but there is no doubt that the small proportion of the workforce that attains durable employment in future will be far more demand-

from the mechanistic and unfeeling responses of the support desk, that I had been interacting with a chatbot. I have long believed (and been at pains to ensure in the HR groups I have supervised) that listening to employees and solving their problems is at the heart of an HR professional's job. The anger I felt at the financial services firm which fobbed my problem off to a bot would have been multiplied a hundred times if I were an employee desperate to get help (say, on a problem relating to the health of a child) from my HR manager, only to find I had been baring my bosom to a bot.

Job Monotony and Hell's Bells

There will continue to be hotspots of innovation in the future where the most talented minds will find huge opportunities for their entrepreneurial and creative impulses¹². The problem will be not

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ing of its rights. Where Machin is prescient is in observing that even some of today's most forward-looking companies have problems figuring out how to treat employees as more than 'rented humans'.

Adding to the alienation of the rights-conscious employees of tomorrow is the use of technology in many corporates for increased monitoring, surveillance, and other privacy-invading purposes. Those interested in a more detailed exposition of these assaults on employee rights and the cures for them can read my earlier column titled 'Brave New Corporate World'¹¹.

The other disaffection technology portends hits even closer to the heart of HR's role in caring for people. I wonder if you have ever had the experience of dealing with an e-commerce or financial services support site or app for a particularly tricky problem. I have. After expending considerable time and effort in explaining the intricacies of my situation, I felt doubly frustrated to discover,

just that these hotspots will engage a diminishing share of the working population but that they will increasingly be detached from run-of-mill corporations themselves. As a result, there will be increasing disparity of work content, growth opportunities, and remuneration between the humdrum work-lives of the many and the exalted experiences of the few, which will be aggravated by the reducing number of bridges to progress from one to the other. In such scenarios even the proven (though not much used in recent years) means of enriching jobs¹³ will become more difficult to attain in practice. For one thing, in tech-controlled corporates, verticalization will have to extend to many more levels before the enrichment gains materialize. Equally critically, the slack that is essential for the mistakes and inefficiencies of enrichment experiments will be decreasingly available in many of the enterprises seeking to engineer themselves for the future¹⁴. Simply put: job enrichment





will become more challenging. But it will not be impossible unless it is erased from the HR agenda, as has already started happening. When I judge aspirants for best employer awards in recent years, I see fewer and few instances of work being re-engineered to enrich it rather than simply to speed it up. Judging HR professionals and departments for their achievements in making jobs more intrinsically exciting may be the catalyst to making them care once again about work design and enrichment.

Left unchecked, however, most of tomorrow's employment-providers will suffer from designs that militate against job-content enrichment, precarious engagements that preclude purpose-driven excitement for the majority and welfare-stripped business models that will not accept the costs of investing in caring cultures. In this modal scenario, there will be little hope of eschewing transactional, extrinsic material rewards and great temptation to minimize their impact by some resuscitated version of the bell curve. Contra to the fashion-statements that are in vogue, here is a recent description of the situation at one of the fastest growing employers of tomorrow: "The company ranks its employees and eliminates those who can't cut it. In a set-up that sounds like something out of 'The Hunger Games', once a year managers come together to review employees' work and debate their standings. ... Employees are ranked according to their performance, and those at the bottom are eliminated each year in a grueling process..."¹⁵ The idea is not to put a negative spot-light on a single organization as much as to point out what the compulsions of the workplace of tomorrow demand from successful players, even if few admit to them.

The Future Could Be Fun

The picture I have painted for the future of work is not as happily-colored as generally prevalent

Judging HR professionals and departments for their achievements in making jobs more intrinsically exciting may be the catalyst to making them care once again about work design and enrichment

thinking would have us believe. Yet it is not an unrelieved prospect of gloom either. There are and will continue to be exceptional enterprises which organize work and people-relations in a manner that makes every Monday morning the eagerly awaited beginning of a new adventure.

Even for the majority of the workforce, it is possible to improve the bleak future of work that present trends indicate. While solutions have been thin on the ground in this column, some are evident even today in the few organizations that genuinely put employees first and make work a joy. More specifically, the four earlier columns of mine that I have referenced here have remedies for the major destroyers of sustained satisfaction at work. Admittedly they do not deal with job enrichment or corporate democracy but those are weighty topics in themselves that deserve separate treatment (as part of the future of my work!). None of these solutions are easy or magical but all of them are important if we really want a fun-filled future of work. 🍌

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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



Q & A

Digital transformation is not a project; it is a board mandate

In a candid conversation with People Matters, **Guruprasad Gaonkar**, APAC SaaS Leader - Office of Finance (ERP) & Digital Supply Chain, Oracle shares his insights on digital transformation success at organizations in Asia, the trends and embedded capabilities in SaaS, and Oracle's future outlook

By People Matters Editorial

Guruprasad Gaonkar holds the responsibility of Oracle's Digital transformation orchestration across industries for the Office of Finance (CFO), Operations (COO), Information Technology (CIO) and Digital Supply Chain. He heads the ERP and Digital Supply Chain teams for Asia Pacific markets namely Australia & New Zealand, South-east Asia and India. Prior to joining Oracle, Guru-

prasad spent nearly two decades in international executive roles, management consulting and advisory roles across Asia-Pacific, Europe, Africa and Latin America.

Q When it comes to digital transformation and technology, how are Asian organizations operating differently than organizations operating in the developed markets?

A Firstly, digital transformation is defining what tomorrow looks like. The idea of ‘tomorrow’ is no surprise for people, as all of us here spend a lot of our time figuring this out. For enterprises across Asia-Pacific though, waking up to a drastically different possibility of tomorrow has been a challenge in the last few years. There are the four pillars that every organization across Asia Pacific are looking at —, the first thing that is top of mind is the future of work and what it would look like? Secondly, how supply chains will be transformed? Third, what are the changing expectations from finance as a function? And finally the most important, on how do we make customers experience better? These are obviously underpinned by the digital technologies that are enabling them; and this necessitates the call for greater focus on digital because businesses in Asia have never been as digital as they are today. There are several positives in Asia including consumer openness to new technologies, spread of the mobile internet and social media penetration. However, there are also contrasting factors in regulatory environment and concerns related to cyber security, thereby willingness by companies to innovate that make the impact on digital readiness more striking in one market than in other. Asia thought has a brilliant business ecosystem but there’s always scope for learning from other “digitally developed” markets in terms of what and how they offer, and the boldness of integrating new business systems.

Q What are the regional variations when you execute digital transformation journeys for your clients?

A The business models of organizations are usually market-centric that they operate in. The primary focus are on personalization and user experience, product diversification cost efficiency, automation and innovation. The pace of change is exponential in all our markets hence the key question being asked – is the ability of the organizations to respond to this change quickly. We see, cloud is fast becoming the foundation for digital transformation. Digital native organizations are the first ones to adopt. There are however variations across industries and in the way organizations are dealing with digital transformation and cloud adoption. In the banking industry for example, adoption of new technology consumption models (especially SaaS) is fast translating into staying up-to-date on the evolving compliance and regulatory changes. Australia, Singapore and Thailand are very forward-looking markets as many banks and insurance companies moving many of their back-office processes to the cloud for agility in business operations while also stay compliant with evolving regulations. We also experience significant traction in India across the board for cloud adoption, while there are challenges especially in regulated industries such as banking and insurance.

Q What do you think works or doesn’t work when it comes to digital transformation success?

A Digital transformation is not a project, it is a board mandate. What we have seen works well is when organizations have a board mandate on digital - started to guide management by asking the right questions about technology. Most successful organizations have already taken a broader approach and maintain focus on business outcomes that they want to achieve from digital transformation rather than a silo IT approach. And more and more organizations are now taking an outcome-driven transformation approach. For example, digital transformation in workforce management translates into an intense focus on the Line-of-Business HR i.e high organizational level of Digital IQ that understands, harnesses and applies those new opportunities towards creation of the workplace of the future. Similarly with office of finance, CFO functions are able to fundamentally move from being “transaction” support in the past to “decision” support. This is enabling CFO’s become advisers to the CEOs and directly influence decisions. What we have seen not working well are mostly the internal elements rather than external. Organizations

Organizations need to adopt the process of continuously refreshing skills – either up-skill or refresh skills in order to embrace digital transformation

that are not willing to experiment, push back on certain digital initiatives because there is resistance for change - based on what they are used to. This slows down transformation of any kind in general. Organizations need to adopt the process of continuously refreshing skills — either up-skill or refresh skills in order to embrace digital transformation. It is also about role definition. If one is measuring the success of a particular role on the matrix laid down in the past, it does not benefit from digital transformation.

Q What do you think organizations are doing to manage such challenges and what is your advice to the HR leaders or community who usually leads such transformations in organizations?

A For HR leaders, there has never been a better time before, to define what future of work means for their organizations. Time is now, and the CHRO has the most important role in the organization to drive an impact on business. Technology is fast becoming the core foundational enabler but you obviously need a change agent to facilitate that improvement. If you look at the role of a CHRO today and in terms of how strategy at the board gets translated to the employees, there is a “strategic” gap. For example, diversity and inclusion



HR teams need simple and powerful solutions that combine an intuitive user experience with the latest innovations in areas such as chatbots and artificial intelligence

is a board agenda of many organizations, but it doesn't really get translated into every department. There are gaps between what strategy is, and the way it is executed. This is where there is an opportunity for CHROs to translate the board strategy into execution putting the wheels in motion by employing technology as the foundational enabler.

Q From an HCM perspective, can you share some use cases of how technology and embedded capabilities have benefitted organizations in the talent space?

A Union Bank in the Philippines is a classic example with the focus on aligning business goals to performance. Oracle HCM Cloud enabled relentless automation of many processes and today empowers employees at the bank the freedom over managing their own career development and performance in alignment with organizational goals. As a result, more engaged and enthusiastic employees deliver even better services to their customers. Second example is UST Global, a global provider of technology and innovation services across 25 different countries. Oracle cloud solutions help improve efficiencies and let employees perform the same tasks with 20 - 40 percent less time. To accelerate

innovation, improve productivity, and successfully prepare for the future of work, HR can no longer make this trade-off. Instead, HR teams need simple and powerful solutions that combine an intuitive user experience with the latest innovations in areas such as chatbots and artificial intelligence. The new AI and user experience enhancements within Oracle HCM Cloud are powerful innovations that greatly benefit organizations. Many other organizations are adopting chat-bots as well.

Q Where do you think SaaS is heading and what are the customer expectations from a technology company like Oracle in the coming future?

A Customers expect more and more to help deliver outcomes. The growing prevalence of Oracle subscription business models and next-generation technologies is fuelling large-scale digital transformations to make our customers more productive, smarter, and faster. Therefore, moving to Oracle SaaS has become more of a "when" choice than an "If". And the biggest driver for that shift is Oracle SaaS's ability to deliver more relevant innovation, much faster. Oracle SaaS today has both the broadest and the deepest capabilities whether it is for Customer Experience, HR, Finance or Supply Chain. For Oracle SaaS Customers these translate into three main things: firstly it's the Speed, agility and to be able to drive business outcomes – be it in HR, Finance, Supply Chain or Customer experience. Secondly to completely eliminate complexity that came with traditional organizational structures and procedures. Thirdly, access to sophisticated tools and embedded innovations such as AI, IoT, blockchain etc to drive business value. **em**



Chasing SMART Goals FAST makes you Agile

What makes the 'agile' proposal interesting is not the agile need for a "North Star", but what makes agile interesting is its stress on people and structure

Buzzwords periodically wash the management field; agile is the latest of them, but it holds promise. When management was presumed to be scientific, practitioners measured the productivity of workers under different lighting and resting periods. That is how we landed the Human Relations area of management. After Peter Drucker published "Management by Objectives", all managers worth their name had to have goals. That's how lean organizations became fashionable. Until a few weeks back lean organizations also had to chase SMART goals, but now those are not enough either: goals must also be FAST ones. We all know what the acronym for SMART goals stand for; even the FAST acronym has a meaning: Frequent, Ambitious, Specific and Transparent. The 'S' in FAST is a die-hard one, lingering on from SMART goals.

All this was to say how we got where we are now: lean organizations following SMART and FAST goals must now be agile too. You are not alone if this sounds like a throwback to the Jane Fonda 1982 workout.

Change is now purported to be so fast that the Agile proponents did not even bother about mnemonic acronyms — Agile has none, perhaps because the agile lot know that there is little purpose in helping people remember what might not make much sense tomorrow. This would be a shame, because there are elements of the agile tenets which are worth looking into in greater detail.

What to me makes the 'agile' proposal interesting is not the agile need for a "North Star", which is not new, nor is the agile call for stress on rapid and effective processes or even on appropriate technology; rather, what makes agile interesting is its stress on people and structure. Agile calls for a focus on mobile but cohesive teams. Naturally, this requires an adequate structure. In bare-bone parlance, agile

To be agile, communities must be mobile, so let us focus on cohesion during mobility. The smaller a group of people, the more cohesive it is likely to be

proponents suggest the structure should allow for an accountable ecosystem of communities of knowledge and practice ruled by a hands-on governance. Though this is easier said than done, it is an interesting concept in organizational knowledge that is now making an inroad into mainstream management.


To be agile, communities must be mobile, so let us focus on cohesion during mobility. The smaller a group of people, the more cohesive it is likely to be. So, how large can a mobile team be and still be cohesive?

A few decades ago, Dunbar, a British anthropologist matching the size of groups of primates to the mass of their brains' prefrontal cortex came up with a magical group size: close to 150. Larger numbers would require more rules and a greater effort in enforcing them to attain similar group cohesion. Thus, groups larger than 150 would lose efficiency.

Gore Tex manufacturers are known to implement the rule of 150 quite strictly, to the extent of preferring not to house collaborators in factories holding more than 150 people. Also unaware of the Dunbar number, Brazilian Samba Schools

parade in Carnival with several cohorts of roughly that same size, each with one leader who knows how to blend smaller groups adding up to that total.

Managing 150 would require shouting out too loudly even if you stood-up on a chair, so it is quite likely that, like Samba Schools, cohorts of 150 are made-up of work teams of a dozen or so members. That allows natural team leaders to emerge and coordinate them without shouting too much. Practice shows which team leaders have the potential to blend larger teams, offering a system to groom future organizational leaders. If you do not believe it works, just think of how W.L. Gore & Associates, with 9000 employees and \$3 billion in revenue selected Terri Kelly for CEO once the founder retired: the board polled Gore employees asking whom they would be willing to follow.

Polling a large number of people to ask whom they prefer to be led by requires them to have a fair idea of who that person might be. This can only happen if communication is transparent company-wide to foster a shared purpose. That allows for names to surface in association with an aura of servant leadership, precisely the type of leader collaborators are keen to respect and follow. There you are, agile management might turn out to be more than a buzzword. 

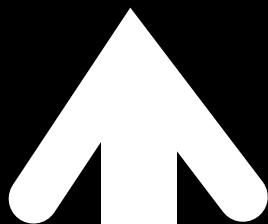
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DR. ALFREDO BEHRENS is Lecturer at Harvard Business School Publishing and is in Portugal on a sabbatical as Professor of Cross-Cultural Leadership at FIA Business School, São Paulo, Brazil. His most recent book, *Gaúcho Dialogues on Leadership and Management*, Anthem Press, 2018, is now a finalist for the Best Latino Management Book Award by ILBA.

A BROAD GAUGE EFFORT! - AGILE LEADERSHIP

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 A way of working
 A way of being
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 A continuous learner with a growth mindset
 Change Agent
 Innovative
 Adapts
 Not about one-size-fits-
 Problem so
 A way of working
 A way of being Mentor
 Teacher Cr
 Open to Con
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ng Coach Adaptable and Flexible
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 OR Empowering
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 Coach Fast Coach
 Mentor Empowering Mentor
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A way of being
 Problem solver



Leadership development has become synonymous with self-development. The new era of work, workers, and the workplace demand a shift from competence to consciousness and from content to context. But are our leaders evolving from having a broader intent and awareness, to exhibiting agile leadership behavior?

By **Suparna Chawla Bhasin**

"A leader is a dealer in hope"

- *Napoleon Bonaparte*

We don't need to be reminded of the fact that we live in a VUCA world. We don't need to be reminded of the fact that we have all seen organizations transforming and making some fundamental shifts to survive and sustain in the face of unprecedented change, its speed and impact. And we certainly don't need to be reminded of the fact that for sustained success, organizations need to develop organizational agility that suits the accelerating levels of complexities in the business environment. But while organizations are becoming agile, are our leaders really making the efforts to change themselves to lead in uncertain times?

Leading and managing are not one-time efforts — these require evolved abilities, and it almost always comes down to the intellectual and emotional capabilities that one needs to possess to navigate the uncharted waters. And this process starts with changing the mind-sets and by adopting agility in thinking, and actions that are focused, fast, and flexible.

Today, leadership development is not an isolated concept anymore. Leadership development has become synonymous with self-development. The new era of work, workers and the workplace demand a shift from competence to consciousness and from content to context. But while leaders require the competencies to envision the big picture, anticipate trends, and enable their organizations to act with agility and speed, how are organizations creating this shift in leaders and transforming them from traditional to being agile leaders? 🍷

AGILE LEADER IS AN INCLUSIVE DEMOCRAT

Agility is not just about soft skills, creativity, flexibility or adaptability, but also about a desire for speed, commitment to change, and the communication skills to navigate ambiguity while remaining connected daily



Shanmugh Natarajan

Managing Director & VP (Products), Adobe India

Our lives today are evolving fast, and so are our workplaces. Majority of the workforce these days comprises of millennials, who are open about sharing their experiences and expectations from their jobs, bosses, and workplaces. They bloom in an environment where free-flowing conversations across the hierarchies are encouraged. A casual pat on the back to say, “I loved the way you planned that project!” goes a long way in making them appreciate their value in the organization. This new age workforce looks forward to striking a fine balance between life at work and outside.


In this age of digital overload with very few constants, if I were to list out the qualities of a good leader, agility and adaptability would top the list.

Agility, however, is not just about soft skills, creativity, flexibility or adaptability. In leadership, it has been defined as “a desire for speed, commitment to change, and the communication skills to navigate ambiguity while remaining connected daily. It promotes connecting the dots and operating as one”. I see an agile leader as an inclusive democrat who is as open to new ideas and change; who can constantly reinvent self to influence the teams; thrives in the face of uncertainty by creating an environment where frequent, incremental changes constantly produce value. He is as focused on personal effectiveness as on empowering the team, and in my opinion is a visionary or an agent for change. They don’t merely drive and promote the change; they become the change and lead by example. They are aware of themselves, their strengths and shortcomings, and are not afraid of taking risks to enable transformation.

To be effective change agents and be able to bring transformation at scale, the ability to think in terms of lean management, empowering and involving the entire organization, managing the risks involved, prioritizing between what stays and what goes, in order to make the transition smooth and widely accepted, are all part and parcel of effective change management. Agility, on the surface, may be a part of the other qualities that run in parallel in a business leader; however, in the end, it is about understanding that there is always



AN AGILE LEADER IS OPEN TO NEW IDEAS AND CHANGES, CAN CONSTANTLY REINVENT SELF TO INFLUENCE THE TEAMS, AND THRIVES IN THE FACE OF UNCERTAINTY BY CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE FREQUENT, INCREMENTAL CHANGES CONSTANTLY PRODUCE VALUE

need for transformation, be it in the people, systems, strategies or policies. It’s safe to say that an effective and truly agile leader understands that for any transformation to be successful, a one-size-fits-all approach will never work; agility in adapting to the changing needs of each individual and situation and tying it in with the overall growth of the organization, well, that could be the hallmark of an agile business leader. 

PITCH THE RIGHT GIFT

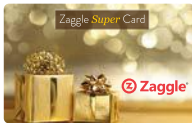
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Jasprit Bumrah
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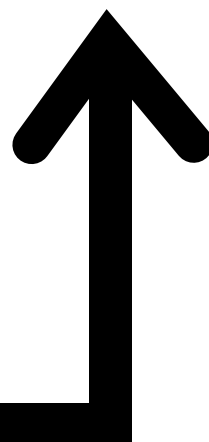


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IF YOU AREN'T AGILE, THE FUTURE IS FRAGILE

In today's constantly changing times, agile leadership is the thing that can ensure the relevance and success of organizations



Abhijeet Mukherjee

CEO, Monster.com,
APAC and Gulf

Recently, the corporate world woke up to the news of General Electric (GE) unexpectedly ousting CEO John Flannery in little more than a year. The frustration of the board due to the slow pace of change under Flannery is being cited as one of the major reasons for this abrupt move.

Over the years, 21st century leaders have started acknowledging the need to be agile in fast-paced, uncertain and highly competitive business environments. They have made a shift from the principles of Taylorism to something that many of us would relate to as “agile leadership.”

Leadership agility is defined as the ability to take action in complex and constantly changing situations. It is the ability to foresee dynamic situations and to respond to them appropriately. The same goes for agile organizations and teams. However, leading teams across generations, cultures and geographies with diverse needs, wants and motivations can pose several challenges to leaders. In addition, the global economy is witnessing relentless, rapid change, whether due to political or policy decisions such as Brexit or developments in technology.

Under such circumstances, agile is the key to navigate new waters and chart new successes.

According to latest research on agile leadership conducted by Boston-based firm ChangeWise, “Leadership agility is not a single competency.” They found that it is a combination of interconnected capabilities that include “context-setting agility, stakeholder agility, creative agility and self-leadership agility.”



LEADERSHIP AGILITY IS NOT A SINGLE
COMPETENCY — IT IS A COMBINATION OF
INTERCONNECTED CAPABILITIES THAT INCLUDE
CONTEXT-SETTING AGILITY, STAKEHOLDER
AGILITY, CREATIVE AGILITY, AND SELF-
LEADERSHIP AGILITY

Agile leaders understand that they must constantly adapt in a chaotic global environment and have a proactive approach to change. They are creative thinkers, who can adjust their leadership style and are open to feedback and to learning from past mistakes. They ensure positive business outcomes, streamline internal workflows without losing sight of the organizational vision, create a collaborative corporate culture and lead the whole team to the finish line on time. Given that ‘agile’ has become such a buzzword across workplaces with everyone eager to hop on the agile train without knowing how to get started, in its truest sense, it is something as modest as a daily stand-up meeting that can foster a growth mindset and culture. A daily stand-up provides a platform for crucial actions and answerabilities offering agility to address business issues there and then. As digital visionary and thought leader Pearl Zhu says, “Agile is not prescriptive and which techniques are appropriate will depend on the context.” In today's constantly changing times agile leadership is what can ensure global conglomerates stay relevant and ahead of the curve. Here are a few leadership lessons for agile leaders.

Lessons #1: Agile leaders prioritize ruthlessly and manage risk effectively in this age of digital overload. It is important to have a vision and to constantly steer your team in that direction. For that it is important to set goals, which ensure overall success, efficiency, and productivity. The strength of agile leaders is in the ability to innovate and find newer ways to communicate with a generation that gets all its information from mobile phones.

Lessons #2: In a rapidly evolving world, an agile leader should be able to innovate and stay agile to adapt to the changing market trends.

Lessons #3: Leaders must embody a growth mind-set, lookout for business opportunities and partnerships and play a key role in expanding their ambitious plans.

Lessons #4: In a rapidly evolving world, a leader should be able to recover fast from a setback, learn from the experience and apply it to lead his team to success.  



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WHEN IT COMES TO LEADERSHIP, EVERYTHING COMMUNICATES



Doug Lipp, renowned international consultant, former head of training at the Disney University and the author of best-selling “Disney U” talks about **agility** in leadership, cultivating a **culture of honesty** and how aspiring leaders can find a balance between **reflection and action** needed for **transforming** in an age of **digital overload**

Q What is the biggest challenge you see in leaders in the organizations you work with?

A One of the biggest challenges that organizations face in leadership is creating and sustaining a culture of honesty and trust. Leaders who encourage their teams to be honest with them—and who accept that honest feedback without punishing the messenger—create resilient cultures open to change. Contrast this with the culture of fear generated by those leaders who either don’t accept honesty or, worse yet, punish honesty. Lack of an honest, trusting leadership culture is one of the most detrimental patterns I have seen in organizations and such organizations suffer every decade and every year regardless of new technologies or market pressures.

Q Agile and Agility are the two buzzwords today. What does leadership agility look like to you?

A Agile leaders surround themselves with contrarian thinkers in their leadership teams. These leaders hire and promote people who think, and act, differently than they do, (the contrarian thinkers) and then welcome the contrasting perspective. Tremendous agility results when those who offer differing ideas are encouraged and celebrated. After all, differing perspectives offer leaders a lot more data and ideas to work with. Conversely, if everyone on the executive teams says the exact same thing or gives a unanimous group-think perspective, then organizations run a tremendous risk of missing opportunities in the marketplace. Instead of looking for chances to improve services or products, these organizations strive to maintain status-quo. This creates rigidity ... quite the opposite of agility.

Q Leaders need to have the knowledge and ability to think and act as 'Lean-thinking manager-teachers.' Do you think organizations are doing enough to cultivate this knowledge and ability?

A I believe everyone who is in a leadership position is teaching. Teaching moments appear in various forms, such as through a leader's speaking or writing style, their tone of voice, choice of words, or behavior/action. Lean-thinking manager-teachers know the power their messages carry with their employees or teams. Lean-thinking managers don't waste time undoing the confusion caused by sending mixed or confusing messages. Think of it this way: when a leader's words, tone, and actions are not congruent, employees become confused and, worse yet, distrusting of leadership. This results in massive waste and lost opportunity ... quite the opposite of lean.

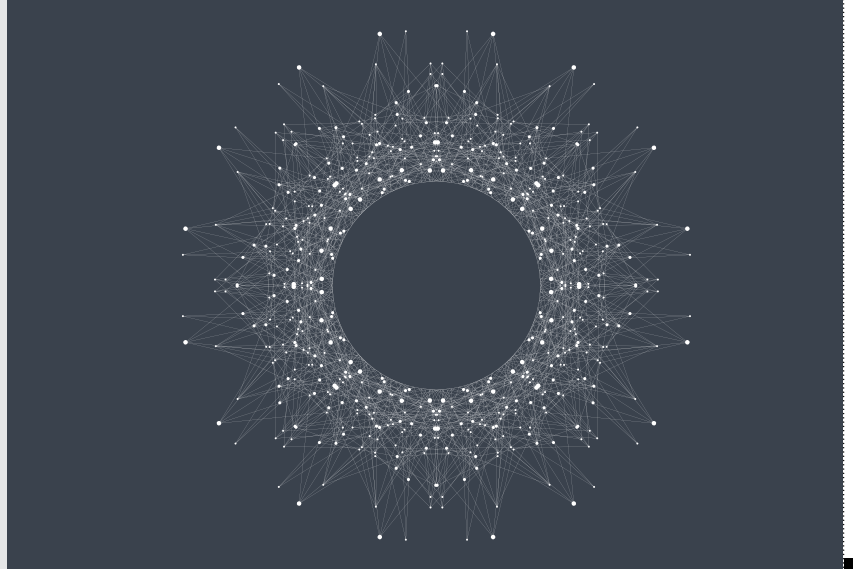
Developing more lean-thinking manager-teachers is a tremendous opportunity overlooked by far too many organizations. Yet, instead of embarking on paths of true improvement, I see many organizations simply searching for the quick, simple fix. I see organizations busily hiring consultants, or putting up posters with motivational slogans about engagement, vision, mission etc., but the real heavy lifting of addressing "Are we an honest culture?" is rarely addressed. And why is this? Because it's difficult! Organizations must look beyond the superficial "feel good" initiatives that trap so many:

- "Let's create an egalitarian culture by changing how we refer to our employees; they're not employees, they're associates!"
- "I think we should offer free food and table tennis tournaments in the break rooms!"

Let's face the truth, many of these superficial initiatives (while done with the best of intentions) are short-lived. Think of it this way, does a new coat of paint on an old building make the walls or foundation stronger? Of course not, and lean-thinking manager-teachers understand this. Instead of wasting time and resources on superficial culture-change initiatives, (painting the walls) these leaders address what really matters in their organizations (the foundation). After all, the prettiest of walls eventually crumble if the foundation is weak.

Q How can leaders or aspiring leaders find a balance between reflection and action needed for transforming, or even just surviving, in an age of digital overload?


A The most resilient and creative teams strike a delicate balance of having some leaders who excel at reflection (thinking), and those leaders who excel at action, (doing). This goes back to our earlier discussion of cultivating contrarian thinkers on your team. Rest assured, a well-balanced



WHEN TEAMS OF THINKERS AND DOERS ARE BOUND BY HONESTY AND TRUST, THEY LEVERAGE THEIR COLLECTIVE WISDOM TO MOVE—WITH GREAT SPEED AND AGILITY—FROM THE FRUITFUL DISCUSSION STAGE TO ACTION

team will self-regulate; when the Thinkers get too theoretical, the Doers will drag them back to reality. Likewise, when the Doers get caught up in the minutiae of daily operations, the Thinkers will help lift them out of their ruts! When teams of Thinkers and Doers are bound by honesty and trust, they leverage their collective wisdom to move—with great speed and agility—from the fruitful discussion stage to action.

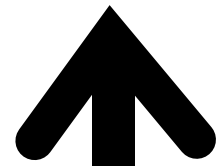
With everything we've discussed, there remains one of the toughest litmus tests of leadership agility; asking recipients of your services (whether internal customers, employees, or units within the company etc.) for feedback. What do they like about how you treat them? What do they dislike? And, truly agile leaders go beyond the data mined from customer and employee surveys. Truly agile leaders leave the comfort and safety of their offices and get out into the field. Truly agile leaders interact with their customers, in person!

Given that we've devoted a good deal of time during this interview to the topics of culture, honesty, trust and agility, I challenge the leaders who read this to ponder the following: When was the last time you engaged directly with your employees and customers, gathering feedback about your strengths and areas for improvement? And, if you're truly agile, you won't be satisfied with the answers, you'll act on them. 

AGILITY TODAY, SOMETHING ELSE TOMORROW

WHAT MAKES A GOOD LEADER HASN'T CHANGED; WHAT WE CALL IT HAS

Agility in leadership is about the ability to effectively balance factors that drive organizational performance at a rapid pace. But does moving quickly, integrating data, and engaging staff really require a different type of leadership?



Ryan Ross

Managing Partner, Hogan Assessment Systems

The leadership consulting industry loves catchphrases. Popular ones include transformational leadership, servant leadership, boundless bravery, coherent confidence, learning agility, grit, and now agile leadership. These are all superfluous words consultants use to keep their work current in the eyes of consumers.

The challenge with all these phrases is the majority are just a repackaging of what we have known for a long time: personality predicts leadership performance. The lens through which personality is viewed – and the buzzwords – can change; but in the end, personality is just that: personality.


This brings us to “Agile Leadership”, which some describe as the ability to effectively balance factors that drive organizational performance (i.e. people, processes, and innovation) at a rapid pace. Sure, information is flowing at faster rates than ever before, and leaders are being asked to integrate all of this into real-time decisions. But does moving quickly, integrating data, and engaging staff really require a different type of leadership? Although the evidence-based answer is still pending, our preliminary findings suggest that the majority of high-potential leaders simply need the organization’s environment to change. Many of these leaders are already fighting what McKinsey describes as the “machine organization.” Specifically, their goal is to introduce a new mindset of collaboration, new technology, less structure, and higher team engagement — but most have to fight against their organization’s old-fashioned ways.

We believe the discussion should not just focus on digitization and the speed of change. Equally important to the debate is the need for strategic self-awareness — the ability to be introspective while listening to outside opinions of oneself. A stronger focus on self-awareness is the underpinning of true agility. The characteristics of great leaders include the ability to understand how they view themselves, and how that aligns or departs

from how others view them. Accordingly, leaders like those at ING, Pixar, Alibaba, and Walmart would be appropriately described as having agility.

Three things can occur to help drive leadership agility in organizations. First, recognition that many leaders have the necessary characteristics to survive in the digital world; they just need to be unleashed. Second, that organizations, not so much the people in them, need to change structures to tear down silos. Third, using valid personality measures can facilitate the awareness that current and future leaders need in order to keep the concept of agility top of mind.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF AGILE LEADERS INCLUDE THE ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND HOW THEY VIEW THEMSELVES, AND HOW THAT ALIGNS OR DEPARTS FROM HOW OTHERS VIEW THEM

Agile leadership is important, but it is not new. It is just being rediscovered. The emphasis must be put not only on the individual, but also the organization. Some organizations are so stuck in the past that agile leaders waste most of their energy fighting history. So, let us not get so awestruck by a new phrase that we forget the basics of effective leadership — to build and maintain high-performing teams. Industry buzzwords will continue to change, and in 2019 there will undoubtedly be a new catchphrase that enamors organizations. However, what won’t change are the tenets of leadership that translate to organizational success, and those can be measured using valid personality assessments. 

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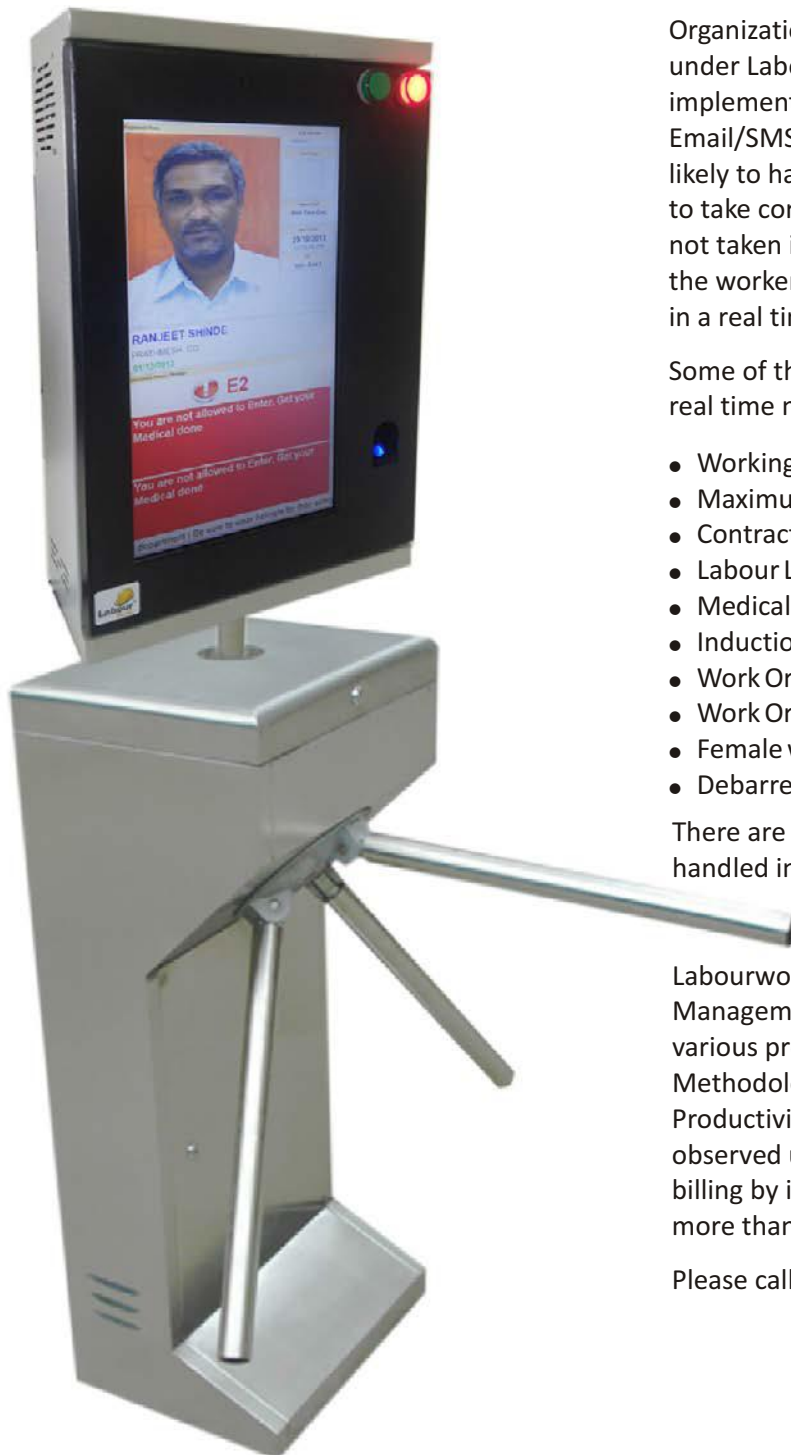
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ADDRESSING THE AGILE-INCLUSION PARADOX

The situations that most demand agile working are likely to make leaders shut down and become blinkered, the very opposite of being inclusive. So how, if one genuinely wants to be an inclusive and agile leader, does one go about it?



Anita Kirpal

Director & Global Head of Inclusive Leadership, YSC

Technology has dramatically changed the pace of business and speed is now essential to customer intimacy. Firms need metrics that track metabolic rate as well as scalability. The solution is AGILE methodologies.¹ At the same time, the changing demographics of the workforce coupled with evidence that shows more diverse teams lead to more innovation has put Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) front and center, along with the fact that the 21st century leaders need to facilitate and drive outcomes from diverse workforces.² As a result, there has been a constant pressure on leaders to examine themselves and evolve quickly, and change their leadership playbooks. While historically leadership has been about learning, doing and succeeding in a hierarchical context, today it is about leading a network of teams structured around mission-critical roles. This requires different skills like faster relationship building, influence over control, and clearer expression of values and behaviors. It also requires diversity of thought i.e. bringing in a multitude of perspectives to address complex problems, more like a goal-influencing process³.

It is a common misconception that working in an agile way means focusing on achieving goals fast. This is then simply translated into pushing people to work harder, typically under severe time pressure. This approach is stressful and unsustainable. Agile working is not simply about speeding up existing processes, it is about radically challenging our beliefs about how work gets done.

Leadership agility is not:

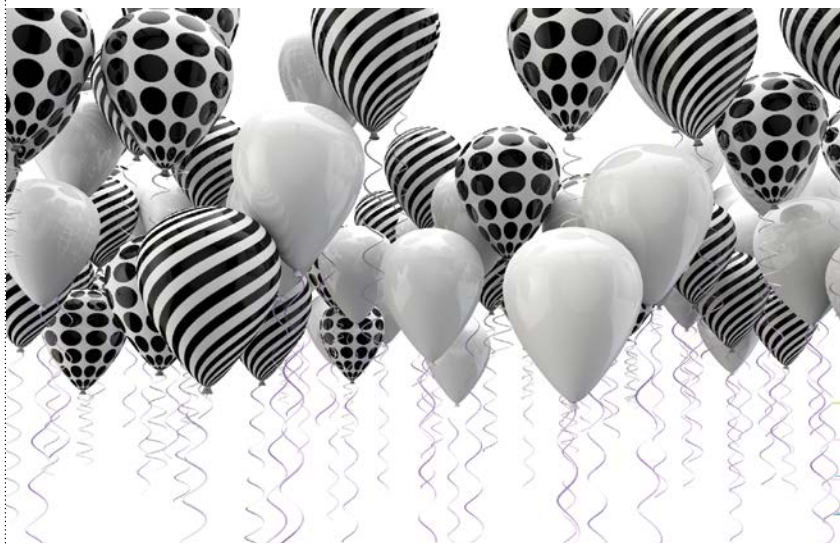
- Changing team structure
- Speeding up existing processes
- Simply emphasizing the need to collaborate

Leadership agility is:

- Team members being proactive and raising issues before they become a problem
- Rapid resolution of problems when they do arise, resulting from effective brain-storming
- Having a 'psychologically safe' environment in which people feel confident to express their viewpoints

As both 'Agile' working and D&I have become strategic business priorities, the common response has been to identify ways in which these ideas create tension. On the surface they look diametrically opposed: one says, 'be lean and move fast' and the other says, 'include different perspectives and take time to deliberate.' However, on closer examination, *it is clear that working in an agile way and being inclusive are not only interrelated, they are interdependent. Said another way, you can be inclusive but not agile, but you cannot be agile and exclusive.*

The reason for this is because working in an agile way means working in teams. Agile is, at its core, a rapid action learning process for teams. Action learning is a process that involves teams working on real problems to develop new solutions to pressing, complex problems. And there is evidence to suggest that teams who can handle



complex problems and adapt rapidly to changing circumstances are in fact inclusive. These teams tend to be made up of people who are different from each other; and different not only in terms of age, gender and ethnicity, but also in terms of personality and thinking styles. Their blended viewpoints and skills work together towards a common outcome, one that adds significantly more business value.

The situations that most demand agile working – complex situations that require a rapid response – are likely to make leaders shut down and become blinkered, the very opposite of being inclusive. So how, if one genuinely wants to be an inclusive and agile leader, does one go about it?

The answer lies in leaders thinking about themselves more as facilitators than traditional, hierarchical bosses. Their role is not to issue orders, but to ensure that team members are working collaboratively towards common goals. That means being aware not only of what people are like, but how they are interacting and treating others. This requires a considerable degree of emotional intelligence. Leaders need to be able to create an environment where differences are valued and where it can thrive. People need to feel confident to take a risk and speak out, raise concerns before an issue becomes a major problem, and share ideas that may sound initially outlandish. Leaders need to know not only how to spot genuine differences and nurture them, but also exert good judgement: to know whom to invite into the room, and when to close discussions down; to know which ideas are worth paying attention to and which should be respectfully discarded. This is difficult. We are instinctively drawn to people – and by extension pay greater attention to the ideas of people – who look, think and talk like us. Under pressure, this is heightened and our desire to take quick short cuts can result in higher levels of unconscious bias. This is extremely unhelpful when it comes to creating inclusive, agile teams.

Leaders also need to successfully balance pressure and stress, shifting these reactions into balanced motivation. Over-worked, over-tired employees will not be happy or resilient.⁴ Our own research at YSC shows a clear correlation between leadership stress and deteriorating interpersonal relations. It is crucial that leaders become aware of this and manage it in themselves and their team.

Another watch out for an agile, inclusive leader is achieving the correct balance of harmony and conflict to generate creative tension. This is similar to how we learn experientially as humans – take risks, which creates tension within us, and then experiment and integrate our experiences into new ways of knowing, working and being. Leader who genuinely want to be effective and agile need to pay as much attention to developing their own interpersonal and relational leadership skills as much as their abilities to drive outcomes. Their development needs to be towards becoming ‘Goal-influencing’ leaders who facilitate an atmosphere of inclusivity at the individual and group level. Leaders who will shape the future will know



AGILE WORKING IS NOT SIMPLY ABOUT SPEEDING UP EXISTING PROCESSES, IT IS ABOUT RADICALLY CHALLENGING OUR BELIEFS ABOUT HOW WORK GETS DONE

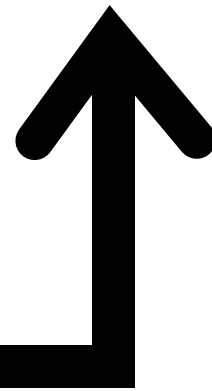
how to manage the agile-inclusion paradox. They will leverage their relational skills, foster inclusion, and solve complex problems at pace.

Practical tips

- Learn more about agile working – go to a talk, course, speak with an expert.
- Help your businesses become more agile by conducting more extensive market research to better understand the marketplace.
- Train in facilitation – learn how to engage diverse thinking styles, approaches, and opinions in a constructive way. Practice running creative workshops or team meetings.
- Get to know the individual members of your team and their stories. Through this, establish a system for accountability, assigning individuals to roles and tasks where they feel valued and included and so can operate optimally.
- Create fluid, open communication streams that allow all parties to actively contribute ideas
- Build an internal network of colleagues from different backgrounds and in different roles, tapping into their expertise for a more creative outlook.
- Protect against personal biases. Actively guard against it, for example, put in place a structured hiring process to ensure you get the necessary diversity reflected in the group – demographic, cognitive, stylistic, and/or experiential/cultural
- Manage stress levels – your own and others, and learn practical and personalized methods to strengthen resilience for yourself and your people 

INSPIRED AGILITY

To increase leadership agility, managers must get better at linking the work with what an individual really wants to do - get them to see and believe the larger purpose of what they need to do



Rajeev Peshawaria
CEO, Iclif Leadership and Governance Center

It is 6:30 a.m. on Monday morning and Jim's alarm rings. He can't believe it. Already? Fortunately, he has another alarm set for 6:50 a.m., so he silences his phone and tries to sleep some more. But of course, he can't fall back asleep. Another work week is ahead of him. The same old subordinates who just don't get it, and the same old boss who has unrealistic expectations. Gosh! Why does it have to be this way, he thinks. He finally gives up his attempts to catch another snooze and reluctantly rolls out of bed.

Sounds familiar? You've probably either been there yourself or know someone in this state. Going to work becomes a lifeless exercise - a necessary evil. What are the chances that managers and employees in this state of existence can cope with the demands of today's hyper-connected era where speed is everything? How agile might these people be? While this state of undetected work-depression is a common phenomenon, managers are still largely clueless about how to address it. In fact, the way they do address it is counter-productive. Let's look at it.

When someone is not excited about their work and their work environment, they tend to do the minimum required to survive on the job. Even if they work hard, it is forced and therefore not fully spirited. Naturally, the results delivered are equally unimpressive. And what do managers do to address this? They impose tighter controls by way of more measurable KPIs, and regular follow-up sessions. In some cases, they diagnose the problem as an incentive or skills deficit, and therefore throw a bit more money, threats or training at it. In other words, they manage the situation closely.

Now, imagine yourself in such a state of work-depression. Imagine your boss coming after you in the same manner as described here. How would you feel, and how would you respond? If the job is important to you because of financial reasons, you'll probably pull up your socks just enough so that the boss can see improvement. But if you are convinced that the situation is hopeless, will you be truly engaged in your work? Will you bring entrepreneurial ownership and agility to work with you just because your boss demands it?

Now, recall a time when you were truly excited about something? You had a vision for something and could not wait to get started. Once you got started, you completely lost track of time and worked tirelessly until the task was completed. This is exactly what happened to me when I was writing my first book *Too Many Bosses, Too Few Leaders* a few years ago. I had decided to quit my corporate job and breakout on my own. I saw the book as my launch platform and was convinced that a successful book would give me the credibility I needed to embark upon a leadership consulting business. With that clear picture in mind, I worked round the clock for a full year and

CLOSE SUPERVISION
COMBINED WITH
CARROTS AND STICKS
GETS COMPLIANCE, NOT
MOTIVATION AND AGILE
PERFORMANCE



ONCE WE ARE CONVINCED
THAT OUR WORK WOULD
MAKE A MEANINGFUL
DIFFERENCE, WE ARE
INSPIRED TO WORK
RELENTLESSLY WITH
A GREAT SENSE OF
OWNERSHIP AND AGILITY



completed the book. I struggled hard for another few months after that, often facing loads of rejection before eventually landing a book deal with a reputable publisher. During that very trying period, I never gave up or allowed myself to get disheartened. I strongly believed in my work, knew it would make a difference to the world, so I continued relentlessly until I succeeded.

Consider another example. This is the case of Angela, one of my subordinates. I noticed a lag in Angela's performance and wanted to help her get back to her usual sense of urgency and ownership towards her work. Upon speaking to her, I realized she was unhappy with the big project we had assigned to her. She simply could not see why she should be the one doing it. When I probed further, I realized she could not see the connection between the project, and what she really wanted to do in life. Angela was passionate about helping people become more self-aware, and in turn become better leaders. She was steeped in the usual methods of leadership development – psychometric assessments, coaching, and skills training, and generally received good feedback from her clients. The project we had her working on involved research on how the world had changed in recent years, and what organizations needed to do differently to create leaders of the future. Angela saw the research project as an academic exercise - something that kept her away helping real people via coaching or training.

Once I understood Angela's root concerns, I took time to explain to her why existing methods will not succeed in the world of digital disruption, and that if the company could uncover new ways, not only would we be more successful compared to our competition, we would be in a much better position individually to help our clients. When Angela finally understood and grasped that alignment, she was able to shift focus and worked

extremely hard to produce ground breaking research (and practical insights) in record time.

So, what changed for Angela and me in these two instances? How were they different from Jim's case? It wasn't a change in management style as practiced by Jim's boss. It wasn't about short-term carrots and sticks either. Both Angela and I became agile because we could clearly see a larger purpose in our work. We were convinced that our work would make a meaningful difference, and that inspired us to work relentlessly with a great sense of ownership and agility. Once we were self-motivated with a sense of purpose, we did not need to be micro-managed. We were alive with hope. In my case a mentor had helped me see the light, and in Angela's case a few years later, I was able to help her similarly.

Bottom line: to increase leadership agility, managers must get better at linking the work with what an individual really wants to do – get them to see and believe the larger purpose of what they need to do. For someone to get a on a bus willingly, the intended destination of the bus should be appealing to a traveler. Close supervision combined with carrots and sticks gets compliance, not motivation and agile performance. For that, you need to address the why rather than the how, and help employees make the shift from competence to consciousness. 🙏

**Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

RAJEEV PESHAWARIA is the author of the Wall Street Journal and Amazon bestseller 'Open Source Leadership' and 'Too Many Bosses, Too Few Leaders'. He has previously held the position of the Global Chief Learning Officer of Coca-Cola and Morgan Stanley, and has occupied senior roles at American Express and Goldman Sachs.



Is agile leadership really what we need?

The use of the word “Leadership” is potentially confusing as many of the behaviors that are defined are more about management than they are about leadership. So how can we truly know if agile leadership is what we need?



We must cease to simplify roles beyond what is meaningful; managing people and organizations simply isn't simple!

extent to which it is meeting stakeholder expectations;

- At all times, actively engages those who are best equipped to handle decisions, moving final decision-making as close as possible to each issue.

My challenges to much of the popular thinking about Agile Leadership are these:

1. If we are genuinely to seek to identify and/or develop GREAT Leaders, we don't only need to know what differentiates GREAT Leaders from the rest, we also need to know what they have in common with the rest, as these attributes may form an essential foundation.
2. Many of the differentiators described are often characteristics or attributes, not clearly articulated in terms of behaviors. If we don't define the behaviors, it is difficult to equip others to display them.
3. The use of the word “Leadership” is potentially confusing as many of the behaviors that are defined are more about management than they are about Leadership.

Picking up on the third point, those of you who have read my prior articles will know that my own research and experience over the past 40 years enabled me to diagnose four dimensions of GREAT

Since the 70s, the rate of change has continued to accelerate. So, clearly agility is needed. But, if we are to believe the business press, there is a magic formula, Agile Leadership, that is going to solve all our ills and bring fortune, calm, and happiness to all. Once again, our yearning for simplicity has trivialized what is a complex issue beyond what the need for understanding justifies. Many may be disappointed.

The undoubted success of Agile as a way of developing software has spawned numerous variants, now including Agile Leadership, Agile Product Development, and even Agile HR. And, I do not dispute that many of the associated initiatives may lead to improvements in the organizations committed to them. Many of these initiatives are even based on research by great minds. Based on that research, various attributes

are attached to these apparent exceptional leaders, including but not limited to tolerance of ambiguity, creativity, emotional resilience, vision, and flexibility.

So, let's try to summarize what we mean by Agile Leadership. I prefer to do this in terms of its outcomes as those are by what we measure success. In my mind, every Agile Leader ensures that their organization is:

- Is resourced with motivated and talented individuals who share a common vision and set of values;
- Focuses on satisfying stakeholder expectations to achieve its vision;
- Implements solutions, adjustments, and corrections at the earliest opportunity;
- Promptly elicits, responds to, and incorporates feedback;
- Monitors, measures and tracks the

LEADERS. I have defined these below from our Quaternion Profile®.

In our research, the exceptional leaders (who were definitely agile) were good at all of these competencies and simply excelled at a few. But, those who were not good at any one or more of the 52, could not compensate by being better at others, even those that specifically enabled agility.

Note: All of the competencies detailed below are needed for any “manager” or “leader” to perform well. The *italicized* entries have been *annotated* and/or *high-lighted* to indicate those demonstrated by exceptional leaders, who clearly have the attributes now associated with Agile Leadership.

Management: Optimizing the use of resources to deliver the vision; making things happen

- *Recruiting and deploying employees – especially individuals willing to adapt and flex to meet stakeholder needs*
- *Clarifying employee roles – and adapting those as needed*
- *Planning performance – in a rolling and adaptive process rather episodically*
- *Enabling and enhancing performance – especially removing obstacles to excellent performance*
- *Monitoring and measuring performance – and responding promptly to variances*
- *Assessing and evaluating performance – against stakeholder expectations and responses*
- Holding others accountable
- Managing interpersonal conflicts
- Committing to specific contributions to the organization
- *Facilitating individual development – to enable excellence*
- *Engaging and retaining employees – to win commitment to flexibility and adaptability*
- Workforce planning
- Managing environment and non-human resources

Personal effectiveness: Optimizing personal contributions and impact

- Driving own career and development
- Demonstrating self-awareness
- *Establishing personal presence and impact – to gain buy-in*
- *Responding constructively to change – in demands and in circumstances*
- *Demonstrating resilience & perseverance – to avoid denial and procrastination*
- *Communicating to achieve shared understanding – to keep the vision alive*
- *Influencing and persuading others – to drive change*



If we are to identify and/or develop great leaders, we don't only need to know what differentiates them from the rest, but we also need to know what they have in common with the rest

- Meeting or exceeding commitments
- Building and sustaining professional brand and networks
- Building effective working relationships
- Building respect and trust
- Demonstrating empathy
- Acting with integrity

Business Acumen: Demonstrating the knowledge, skills and aptitude to operate in a complex and changing environment


- Demonstrating understanding of the whole organization
- Displaying political and organizational savvy – knowing how decisions get made
- *Demonstrating commercial acumen – agility without this can be costly*
- Demonstrating functional expertise
- Project management
- *Using data effectively*
- *Decision-making*
- *Driving innovation*
- *Solving problems*
- *Risk management*

- Resolving conflicting priorities
- Negotiating to achieve robust outcomes
- Developing persuasive business proposals

Leadership: Creating a vision of the future, bringing it alive, and securing the commitment and resources to deliver it

- *Connecting and engaging with strategic stakeholders*
- *Making sense of the strategic landscape*
- *Visioning and direction setting*
- Path-finding and strategic planning
- Structuring and resourcing the organization
- Setting values and standards
- Taking accountability
- Inspiring others
- Building the brand
- *Championing change and innovation*
- *Sustaining focus and momentum*
- *Acting when faced with ambiguity and uncertainty*
- *Making the tough calls*

So, back to the question, “Is Agile Leadership really what we need?” I do not believe that there is a quick answer, so here is mine:

The caliber of those in leadership and management positions is the single most significant differentiating characteristic of sustainably successful organizations. We must cease to simplify roles beyond what is meaningful; managing people and organizations simply isn't simple! There is a complex set of competencies that are all required to be good at leadership and management. If those competencies are demonstrated well, then excellence in a subset enables the individual to respond more promptly and effectively (with agility) to changing demands and circumstances. That can produce substantial competitive advantage. 

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EXHIBITORS





Millennials, Artificial Intelligence, Digitization and other wolves

The next time you hear someone opine too strongly on millennials, AI or digitization and paints a picture of an impending doom – don't bother beyond a certain level – the world has survived the advent of new generations and technology for thousands of years and there is no reason to believe it won't survive this time around

In a recent conference, the hot topic of discussion was about what would become of the subject of leadership in the coming age of AI and ubiquitous digitization. Then there are the ones that talk about the workplace and begin with the preamble on the millennials; and there are a few more that almost every expert worth his or her two bits pays homage to. I am no expert or futurist on most of these subjects and neither would I risk an opinion on this crystal-gazing as a prediction, but I do have a word or two to add as a layman with a sense of humor. Here are top two of these refrains in the conferences that I find to be terribly overplayed in their own unique ways.

Millennials: Most of the experts would like us to believe that millennials have arrived from Mars and that they have characteristics that aliens have, and that understanding them will require extra-sensory perceptions. They would like us to believe that never before a phenomenon like this has ever taken place on the mother earth. I find our opinions about the millennials an exact replica of the opinions that every generation has of the next generation – our grandparents had that of our

parents and our parents had that of us – and lo & behold, we are having that of the next – except that we are calling them millennials; just because they were lucky to have timed themselves to be on earth around the change of the millennia.

Let's try to pen down what we say about the millennials generally, and all that you have to do is try and remember the refrain your parents had of you.

- a. Too distracted to focus on one thing
- b. Has no focus on one thing more than a few minutes/hours/days – too fickle
- c. Too irresponsible
- d. Deteriorating work ethics/no loyalty/no patience/no respect
- e. Too self-centered/thinks only of oneself/no social qualms

I am sure you get the drift. I think what is happening is that with the solitary exception of hand-held devices, there is hardly anything that separates them from the previous generation. Even on that count, people said the same things when the youngsters discovered LP records/magnetic tape records/CDs/television. You can repeat my previous 5 points as a description of the youth that grew up in 70s/80s and the 90s.

Millennials are just another generation who have newer toys and newer ways of enjoying life—they will come of age just like the generations before who came of age after the necessary phases of experimentation, realization, and awakening. They will continue with some and find some new peculiarities. So the next time you hear someone

To believe that 'this time it is so different that it will cause the end of the world as we know it' is a classic case of over dramatization





opine too strongly on millennials and paints a picture of impending doom – don't bother beyond a certain level. The world has survived the advent of new generations for thousands of years and there is no reason to believe it won't survive the millennials. In any case, they are better than us in many crucial ways however, that is a subject of some other day.

Artificial Intelligence and Digitization: First thing first – I think it's a case of rebound echoes. Most parrot this phenomenon because everyone else is parroting it. Almost everyone begins his/her speech with the preamble – “In this day and age of artificial intelligence and digitization...” to fill in anything and everything that needs to be filled. A few years ago the same preface was “In this day and age of VUCA...” Around two decades ago this was “In this day and age of globalization and liberalization...”

Every decade has a theme. There are certainly factors which are more dominant, more visible and more frequently at play than others and it is important to take note of them. However, to believe that ‘this time it is so different that it will cause the end of the world as we know it’ is a classical case of over dramatization.

There is no doubt that artificial intelligence and digitization will certainly change many things around us. It will change many processes, make many jobs redundant, change the nature of relationships between man/woman and the machine, make lives simpler and richer in many ways and yet cause disharmony in many ways. TV did that. Computers did that. I think fire did that and so did the wheel. Automobiles did that. Every new technology does that. The only thing that is different is the manner in which it impacts and changes things on the ground. Humankind has survived all of them – and I have no reasons to believe that

Every time a new technology made human efforts simpler and made some jobs redundant, human enterprise and ingenuity found new channels of expression

humankind will not survive artificial intelligence and digitization.

Every time a new technology made human efforts simpler and made some jobs redundant, human enterprise and ingenuity found new channels of expression. They found newer areas to become experts in. They found that they could spend the time so released can be used to solve newer problems – either hitherto unattended or new problems that might have surfaced.

So the next time in a conference some serious looking old bloke tries to scare you of your redundancy with the advent of the artificial intelligence and digitization, you can be sure of one thing – most likely he/she certainly has lost the plot and is shouting for help. There is enough unsolved, unresolved, and unattended for the rest of us crying for our attention. ☹️

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GURUCHARAN SINGH GANDHI is the author of national bestseller 'Kabeer In Korporates' and the Head of Learning & Development with a leading conglomerate. The book was recognised in the Best first Published book category at the LIT-O-FEST, a literature festival in Mumbai || www.gurucharangandhi.com

Online learning is where e-commerce was 10-15 years ago



UpGrad's Head of South East Asia, **Weisheng Neo**, in an uncontrived conversation with People Matters talks about the evolution of online learning in the region, and the compelling challenges in learning that needs to be addressed

By Jerry Moses

Weisheng Neo leads the expansion of UpGrad's operations in South-East Asia and holds extensive experience in the education and technology sector. Weisheng holds an MBA from the University of Pennsylvania- Wharton School and a Bachelor's Degree from Singapore Management University.

UpGrad is an online higher education platform providing rigorous industry-relevant programs designed and delivered in collaboration with world-class faculty and industry, and merges the latest

technology, pedagogy, and services, while creating immersive learning experiences.

Q In an age where there is a widening capability gap and future readiness cannot be predicted beyond the immediate future, how do you think companies can strategize their learning road-maps?

A There are two things here that companies need to consider — Mindset and Method. For mindset, the company has to create a learning culture. This seems straightforward and obvious, but learning can take a backseat if the culture is not conducive to upskilling for employees. In high-performance-driven cultures, companies often overlook training for the next phase of growth, exposing inadequacies in the organization when the next phase hits. One great way to create a learning culture is to have leaders who lead by example as leaders are the most visible people in an organization and their actions inspire employees. Second is 'method'

or the mode of learning which is a crucial element. If you are upgrading the skills of technicians to handle complex equipment, then you want to look at hands-on, in-person training. If you are looking at upskilling designers (who sit across geographies) to the newest software, you can think about online, synchronous learning. Technology has given us tools that overcome constraints in learning, but how and when we use them is critical.

Q In your experience, what have been the key challenges in organizations operating in the South East Asian region when it comes to adopting online learning?

A For online learning to be adopted on a wide scale, some inherent problems/myths have to be resolved. And one of the key barriers is language. Online learning is made with scalability in mind, and most platforms are currently only in English which inevitably alienates the non-English speakers. There is also the belief that in-person learning is better and that engagement is higher in a classroom than on an online platform. That is not necessarily true as there are tools in online learning to track engagement and interactivity levels which can be very sophisticated.

I believe that online learning is where ecommerce was 10-15 years ago. When ecommerce came to the fore, most were skeptical of buying online (I can't try it, can't feel it, and there's no recourse if the product is defective). But today, ecommerce is ubiquitous because the industry has managed to solve most of the long-standing problems.

Q There's a lot of emphasis on providing tools for self-study in today's workplace. But how can organizations support employees when employees do not prefer self-study techniques?

A First of all, self-study seldom works. That is the reason why schools exist even though all the knowledge you need is probably available in the public library. A big part of why education institutions exist is because instruction is critical in gaining knowledge. And be it online or in-person learning, instructional design is critical to achieving desired outcomes. Organizations can support employees by choosing providers that provide great instructional experience.

In classroom learning, you want to make sure the instructor is able to keep participants engaged. In online learning, you want to make sure that the instructional design element is strong, and that there is a support staff at the backend looking after the needs of the students. For example, if students are not logging onto the platform, the system administrator should be able to pick this up and assign a counselor to get in touch with the student. With technology, learning is becoming more personal, and not less.

Q What is the impact of technologies like AI on learning?

A With AI, on top of eliminating variability in experience, you now get a shot at drastically improving the experience. In the learning space, one key challenge is how to maximize interaction and engagement. When learners are engaged, outcomes improve. We build in tools to collect all kinds of data on engagement. For

example, we will track data such as scroll speed, video play, pause, questions answered correctly on first try, log off points etc. Using data, we can tell where our curriculum is lacking in engagement if there is a sudden spike in logout rate at a specific point. We also know our learners' profiles, and that was how we found out that older learners tend to be more engaged, but also take longer to ponder on questions. Additionally, it is theoretically possible to track learners' eye movements, pupil dilation etc., all of which is information to the administrator on whether the content is engaging. Of course, this is a little intrusive so we don't have this in place, but it is worth considering for monitoring younger learners. In classroom learning, the learner's experience is dependent solely on the instructor. If you get a dynamic, engaging instructor, even the most mundane topic can be interesting. In online learning, you eliminate this variability.

Q How can organizations choose the right learning products for their employees considering the plethora of learning products in the market?

A Every organization tries to optimize for something different, whether duration, engagement levels, content, or price etc. We built UpGrad to optimize for what we believe are the most critical issues faced by HR and L&D professionals. But there are three elements that organizations need to consider. The first is 'Time'

Be it online or in-person learning, instructional design is critical to achieving desired outcomes

(or the lack thereof) – Working professionals are a busy lot and taking time off to attend training programs often becomes a chore. That is part of the reason why the market has (too) many short 1 to 2 days courses. Although such courses are great, but they don't impart the actual knowledge. Thus you need to choose a course that teaches enough skills so that the learner knows enough to self-correct. I find that courses lasting a few months in duration are ideal for most learning outcomes. The second is 'engagement' – Choose a course that engages. In-person and online learning have their merits, depending on the situation. And the third is the mode of training – If you are training high level, C-suite folks, it makes sense to get them in a room. For example, you might be training the Chief Technology Officers from around the globe in your organization. This training is best conducted in-person. However, if you are training the many engineers working under the CTOs, online learning is probably more viable.

As a side note, companies tend to send finance folks for finance training, marketing folks for marketing training, and sales folks for sales training. Training happens almost exclusively in their own domains. In today's world, it might be a good idea to send staff for training outside of their domains. The cross-index and cross-pollination of knowledge could turn up great results. **Q**

BUILDING A FUTURE-FLUENT CULTURE - HR'S MANDATE

SPECIAL FEATURE



What must HR do to create a future-fluent culture? What are the must-have capabilities for HR teams as they drive cultural transformation? Should HR play a more proactive role, almost being the ‘architect’ and ‘guardian’ of the organization culture? This special feature pivots on the findings of a research study **“Architecting Future-Fluent Culture: Critical Role of Human Resources” - Asia Study 2018** conducted jointly by the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) and Singapore Human Resources Institute (SHRI) that aims to understand the roles that the HR function must play in order to shape a future-fluent organization culture

By People Matters Editorial

Rapidly evolving business models, technology changes, ease of capital flow, geopolitical pressures, and increasing and different aspirations of new and traditional stakeholders are shaping the landscape of the business environment. As Asian (and global) organizations continue to grapple with the pace of disruption, while managing their day-to-day operations, they will have to learn how to juggle two sets of priorities with seemingly different skill-sets and mindsets. Such a shift may need organizations to almost rewire their cultural and operational DNA. Leaders at the helm must also build new capacities and capabilities, and change mindsets around how they ‘think’ and ‘do’ things.

HR has always played a critical role in shaping enterprise culture. There is, however, considerable room to drive more impactful outcomes. While HR has been tasked with leading “anything to do with people,” its role has traditionally been more execution-oriented, rather than strategic. The same applies to the cultural transformation journey in enterprises. HR is “called” into the journey often when the internal dialogue is already past the culture-architecting phase which means missed opportunities for HR to play a more impactful role.

But how important is having the “right” culture for future readiness of an enterprise? What is business leadership’s and HR’s role in shaping the right organization culture? What are some of the challenges in shaping a future-fluent culture? What responsibilities must HR own in order to play an effective role in shaping the organization culture? What are the best practices (successes) or failure stories in this regard? The research conversations in the report center around the role of HR and business leaders in architecting future-fluent culture, critical challenges, and tactics that work and also reveal the capabilities and behaviors HR teams must exhibit to bring about cultural transformation in large enterprises.

Cultural Transformation for Future-Fluency

Future fluency is when leaders are prepared for the future, are able and willing to embrace continuous innovation, seek out fresh perspectives, harness the power of data and analytics, and prosper through constant change. It is about getting ahead of the curve by bringing together the right mindsets and capabilities, supported by having context-relevant business and operating models which are reviewed and revised constantly. Future-fluent leaders often think, learn, feel, and act differently. However, while leaders must have the key capabilities such as learning agility, adaptability, thinking digital, technology fluency, they must also exhibit people and related capabilities like the ability to build win-win partnerships and relationships to develop an ecosystem approach to solve key challenges, constantly thinking about building team capabilities, and leaning on the “wisdom of crowds.”

Owing to the amount of change Asia is likely to witness over the next two decades, Asian leaders need to cultivate the ability to be future-fluent not only to leverage numerous opportunities that the region may present, but also to navigate incremental constraints that businesses and societies may face in the future. Since future fluency is about mindsets, capabilities, and behaviors, having a future-fluent culture is a must-have for creating

FUTURE FLUENCY IS WHEN LEADERS ARE PREPARED FOR THE FUTURE, ARE ABLE AND WILLING TO EMBRACE CONTINUOUS INNOVATION, SEEK OUT FRESH PERSPECTIVES, HARNESS THE POWER OF DATA AND ANALYTICS, AND PROSPER THROUGH CONSTANT CHANGE

a mindset and capability set around continuous learning, digitalization, agility, resilience, innovation, collaboration, etc. Organization culture defines values and behaviors in an organization. As mindset and capabilities are almost always a function of the dominant culture in the organization, there is a direct link between the right culture and the level of future fluency in the organization. Leaders should be able to anticipate, embrace, and accept that today's skills will be obsolete and that they must continuously search for the best way of doing things in the future. An organization's culture directly impacts the efforts the leadership team may undertake towards creating a future-fluent enterprise and therefore directly intersects with the aspiration of the leadership team to create future-fluent capabilities and mindsets.



Cultural transformation in organizations is usually the result of one or more internal and/or external shifts. These range from incremental competition, to advancing technology, and rapidly changing regulatory environments. There can be a few drivers – a new CEO wanting to leave her mark during early tenure, the need to upgrade to new technologies, newer sources of risk, keeping up with the competition, or the burning need for customer centricity. A right culture is a necessary building block to make an organization future ready and is one of the three main pillars of any transformation. These three pillars are culture, talent and strategy. Most failed transformation attempts are not attributed to poor strategy, but to not having the right culture and talent to execute the strategy. But what is the right time to take up a cultural transformation exercise? Any cultural transformation has to be triggered by business strategy.

HR leads the way - Key HR Levers...

The HR function needs to be a critical influencer in the cultural transformation journey. It also needs to play the execution or driver role to implement cultural changes. As the frontline function for any people-related agenda, responsibility for creating

the right behaviors and values squarely sits with HR, once the leadership team defines the desired culture, and plans alignment of key practices to shape that desired culture, HR needs to come into the picture and lead the culture curation journey. HR is a subject matter expert in this case; it has the knowledge and skills it can use to advise the senior leadership team as they define the culture. HR must also proactively manage culture in the enterprise as it has the best sense of the pulse of employee perceptions about the company culture, about leadership quality, and the fairness quotient in the organization.

In most organizations with even moderately mature people practices, HR has access to longitu-

AN ORGANIZATION'S CULTURE DIRECTLY IMPACTS THE EFFORTS THE LEADERSHIP TEAM UNDERTAKES TOWARDS CREATING A FUTURE-FLUENT ENTERPRISE AND THEREFORE DIRECTLY INTERSECTS WITH THE ASPIRATION OF THE LEADERSHIP TEAM TO CREATE FUTURE-FLUENT CAPABILITIES AND MINDSETS

dinal data about employee engagement, confidence and trust, etc. In addition, HR has the expertise to assess how well leaders model desired values and behaviors in the enterprise. Finally, HR has several very critical levers that it can selectively deploy to drive attributes, mindsets, skills, and capabilities required to drive a future-fluent culture. These include compensation, recruitment,

competency frameworks, performance management tools, training and coaching, and organizational design. The experience, skills, and maturity of the HR leader, however, play a key role in deciding what levers to use, sequencing of the lever deployment, and how hard to “press” the lever to get the desired result. For instance, if the organization is looking to create a high-performance culture, it may need to deploy the compensation lever more than the others. Or, if the organization is trying to improve flexibility and/or collaboration, it may decide to use the performance management and organization design levers more than the others.

Roles HR must play

For any cultural transformation to happen, HR needs to play key roles, deliver on certain responsibilities, and build critical capabilities. HR must continuously play four critical roles, one feeding into the other – advisor to business as a subject matter expert, facilitator of key changes in the



organization, guardian of values, and auditor, to measure impact of HR initiatives and provide feedback to the senior leadership team.

Advisor: *Play a trusted partner and subject-matter expert to the leadership team and help craft the cultural transformation journey.* The advisor role requires HR to be a thought leader to the executive leadership team and a subject matter expert on anything to do with the people element in the organization. Key responsibilities include making the leadership team accountable for cultural transformation, challenging conventional thinking, and helping craft the transformation journey. Must-have HR capabilities include courage, credibility, influencing, and strategic mindset.

Facilitator: *Institutionalize cultural changes via effective communication, modifying talent management processes and organization design, and equipping stakeholders with appropriate tools.* A facilitator role requires HR to roll up their sleeves and execute cultural transformation. Key responsibilities include converting values to behaviors, creating a communication plan, using the right HR levers and embedding the new culture in HR sub-systems, equipping managers with appropriate tools, and role-modeling new behaviors. Must-have capabilities include planning and execution, collaboration, engaging with stakeholders, and managing change.

Guardian: *Ensure consistency of values and demonstrated behaviors in the organization, reporting dissonance if any, and supporting leaders to align to the new culture.* In a guardian role, HR needs to be fiercely protective of the cultural values – identifying value-behavior mismatch, report dissonance, and acting “tough” if required. Must-have capabilities include managing conflict, having sound judgment, confronting problem employees, and delivering feedback.

Auditor: *Identify appropriate metrics, measure impact of culture change initiatives, and report back to the leadership team to course-correct.* The auditor role needs HR to create and own the processes associated with measurement of cultural changes and behaviors. To do a good job, HR must identify suitable metrics, ensure measurement rigor, and report back to the leadership team and course correct. Must-have capabilities include analytical skills, results orientation, and courage to report data and deliver honest feedback.

However, to play the four critical roles – advisor, facilitator, guardian, and auditor – HR must proactively build competencies and capabilities like credibility, trust, courage, project management, analytics, strategic thinking, and collaboration.

Conclusion - Fostering a Future-Fluent Culture

Owing to the uncertainty that engulfs businesses due to hyper-competitiveness, technology shifts, unstable geo-politics, volatile financial markets, changing business models, and an evolving regulatory framework, only a small cross-section of leaders are confident about their organization's future-readiness. The number one reason for



HR must curate the ‘right’ values and behaviors that can make the organization future-fluent, rewarding behaviors that will define success in the future, and perhaps penalizing those that may slow it down. As people experts, we HR leaders must juggle four hats – advisor, executor, guardian, and auditor – to guide our organizations on the path to future fluency.”


Sunil Puri

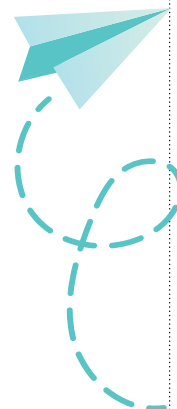
Head of Research – Asia Pacific,
Center for Creative Leadership



lack of future-readiness is absence of the “right” organization culture with must-have values to be future-ready. Leaders are unanimous in their view that “right” organization culture can help provide a compelling competitive advantage to organizations. While cultural transformation is a joint responsibility of the leadership team, HR often emerges as the flag bearer of the exercise.

HR functions in pursuit of building a future-fluent organization culture must start the journey by reflecting upon the existing culture, HR's credibility in the system, elements of existing culture to retain and elements to change, etc. This will help the function form a baseline. HR then must prepare to play four critical roles – advisor to business as a subject matter expert, facilitator of key changes in the organization, guardian of values, and auditor, to measure impact of HR initiatives and feedback to the senior leadership team. But to play these roles in a compelling manner, HR will need to evaluate their readiness on some critical capabilities. These include courage, influence, collaboration, managing conflict, analytical thinking, etc. If these are development areas for the team leading the cultural transformation journey, then the CHRO must lead the initiative in uplifting these capabilities for her team.

Finally, the function must also role-model the ‘right’ behaviors and values. The HR function is often under the spotlight during any cultural transformation initiative. Therefore, to drive any changes, HR leaders must walk the talk. The leadership team must collaborate intimately for any cultural transformation journey to be a success. Mutual respect, living the values, driving changes in their teams, and holding each other accountable are must-dos for the success of the initiative. Finally, culture is a connecting tissue in the enterprise, the leadership team therefore needs to continuously nurture and develop the connecting tissue to strengthen the organization, make it more resilient, and ready for the future. 



ARCHITECTING A FUTURE-FLUENT CULTURE

How important is having the “right” culture for future readiness of an enterprise? What is business leadership’s and HR’s role in shaping the right organization culture? What are some of the challenges in shaping a future-fluent culture? What responsibilities must HR own in order to play an effective role in shaping the organization culture? The Architecting Future-Fluent Culture research explores these elements and talks about how HR leaders can develop themselves and their teams on critical capabilities to lead the cultural transformation journey.



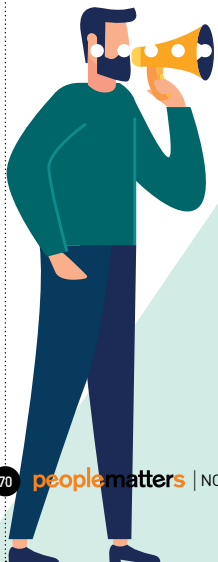
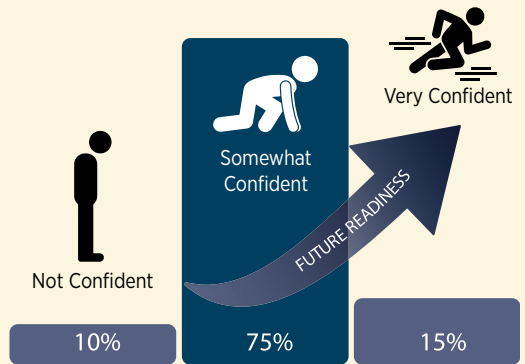
SPECIAL FEATURE

Top 10 Priorities for CHROs in Asia



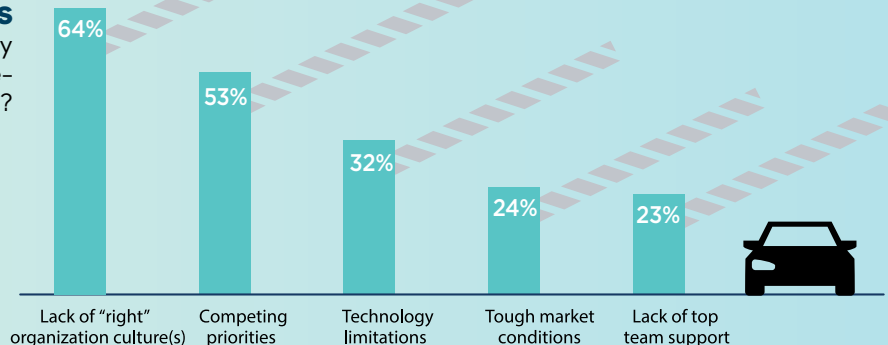
Confidence Level - Organization Future-readiness

% respondents who selected the option

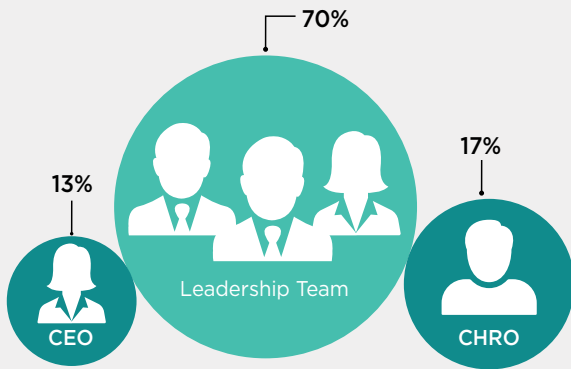


Critical Stalls

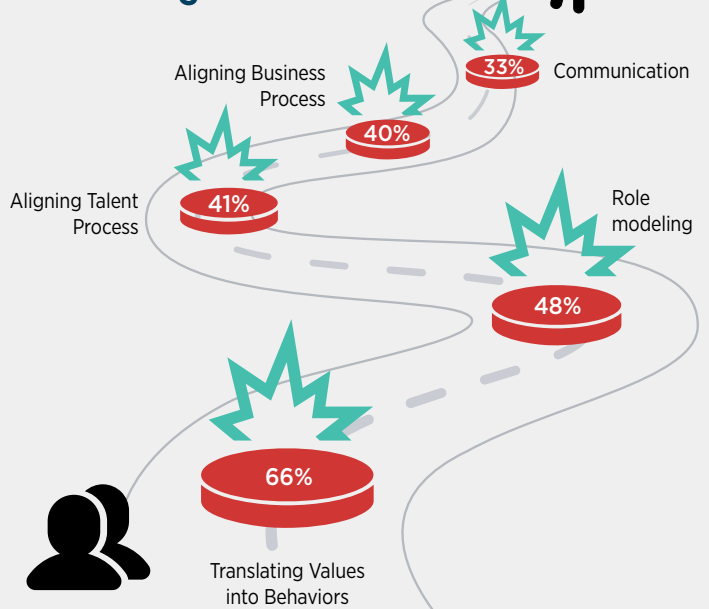
What are the Key Barriers to Future-readiness?



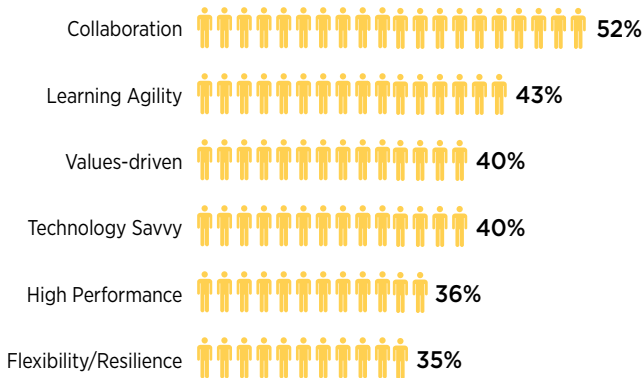
Ownership of Company Culture



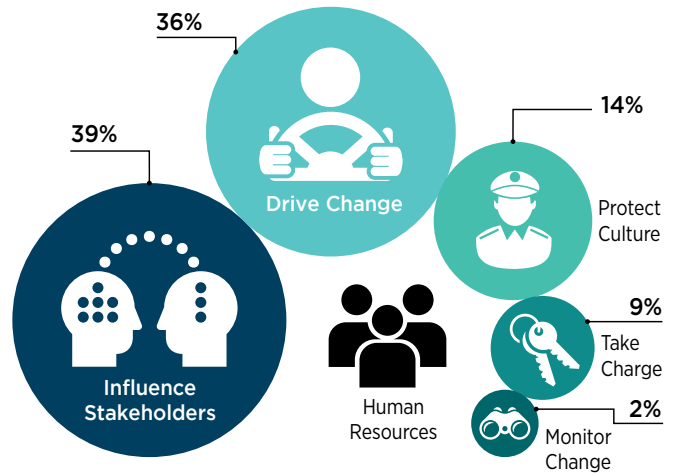
Top Five Culture-Related Challenges



Must Have Elements of Future-Ready Culture



Expectations From HR



HR Response

HR must play 4 critical roles in shaping the culture



Source: Architecting Future-Fluent Culture: Critical role of Human Resources, Asia Study by CCL & SHRI

Fungible roles and skills will be critical in the future

In a special interaction with People Matters, **Pallavi Srivastava**, Asia Pac & Greater China Talent Leader, Global Technology Services, IBM shares her perspectives on the evolving notions of talent and workplaces, the talent landscape in the South East Asian region, building a future-ready workforce, and the role that HR plays in strategic business growth

By **Suparna Chawla Bhasin**



Pallavi Srivastava is the Asia Pacific & GCG Talent Leader for IBM Global Technology Services. In this role, she is responsible for leadership development, organizational and account-based succession planning, leveraging talent analytics for defining and executing strategic initiatives, fostering engagement and high performance culture across the units. Prior to this role, Pallavi was the Country HR Leader for IBM Singapore and was responsible for talent development and enhancing IBM's position as an Employer of choice in Singapore. Pallavi holds more than 23 years of experience in the field of Human Resources across areas related to HR strategy, HR Analytics, Corporate mergers & acquisitions, Leadership talent acquisition and succession management, executive compensation and leadership development. Pallavi has held several portfolios with IBM's internal HR and HR consulting units and worked in India and US, and now based in Singapore for past 10 years.

A passionate believer in leveraging technology for HR solutions of the future, Pallavi has been closely involved with IBM's HR transformation journey towards cognitive-enabled HR offerings. Pallavi has received the Business HR professional and Global Compensation & Benefits certification from Cornell University and is certified by IBM for Design Thinking, Agile and as a Cognitive HR practitioner. Pallavi was featured in the HRD Magazine's HRD Hot List in 2017.

Q In your extensive experience across the HR spectrum, how do you think the notions of 'talent' and the 'workplace' has evolved over the years?

A From a talent perspective, apart from the demographic changes (that have resulted in four generations working together and youngest Gen Z soon to come in) the mix of talent has changed from many other standpoints. In the global business environment and in particular MNCs like IBM, we are now seeing a significant diversity of cultures/ethnicities at the workplace. Another particular positive trend that I have observed is that the concentration of women in the talent mix

and the workplace has significantly grown and there is more women engagement in technical domains, C-Suite positions, and in corporate boards than before. With the onset of digital technologies, there is also the proliferation of the gig workers and more people working remotely, on contractual basis or simply on projects. But the most recent talent trend is the rise of the New Collar workers, a word coined by IBM CEO Ginning Rometty, which involves hiring and developing talent that works in the contemporary tech industry, but it is the talent that does not hold the traditional/formal 4 year college degree — this talent is about skills and competencies that are obtained through vocational training. I see this trend becoming more pervasive in the coming years.

And as the concept of talent has evolved over the years, so have the workplaces. We have gone through the whole gamut of formal office space to remote and work from home, from closed office cubicles to agile and open workspaces, from meetings happening in conference rooms to meetings on WebEx and zoom, and now the co-working spaces. Although the new ways of working have brought along their own set of challenges, these are in turn defining the trends of how teams and work are getting organized, and how structures and hierarchies get defined.

Q In today's day and age of tech disruption, do you think organizations are doing enough to create a future-ready workforce?

A One of the key realizations of technological disruption has been that no one organization or unit can have all the capabilities required to create the readiness that is needed. It has to be a joint effort and we have to operate and leverage the ecosystem of tech partners, collaborators, and experts to build the skills for the future. Both the governments and the education sector are increasingly realizing that organizations have a key role to play here and we see many such projects coming up to support the building of the future-skills. In Singapore early this year, IBM launched the Pathways in Technology P-TECH program in partnership with the Singapore Govt and several polytechnic colleges in Singapore for early college and high school students where they get an early exposure to jobs in the Information and Communication Technology and other STEM disciplines. The main objective is to create a future-ready workforce through early exposure to technology and its offerings. In India too, we have launched a first-of-its-kind New Collar curriculum in collaboration with the Ministry of Skill

Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) in 2018. The two-year Advanced Technical Diploma Program, co-created and designed by IBM, will be offered at the Industrial Training Institutes in Hyderabad, Bangalore and NOIDA to create a job-ready workforce and to build the next generation of skills needed for New Collar careers — positions that do not always require a college degree but rather sought-after technology skills. The program will include industry relevant courses on hardware maintenance, web development, cloud-based development and deployment, analytics and soft skills training and students can seek admission post 12th grade and will be offered internship opportunities at IBM.

Such partnerships are crucial in ensuring that the skills and capabilities for the future are planned for, and available when needed. While almost all jobs will be affected in the era of technology disruption, there will be ample opportunities for employees to avail themselves of training

The New Collar worker trend will become more pervasive in the coming years

needed to work in the new jobs that will get created. I personally believe that the scare around jobs going away is overstated. We need to ensure that our workforce is ready to embrace technology that will enable them to operate efficiently and will make them more productive. The people who will struggle to get employed will be the ones who do not build their competencies in parallel with the new technology offerings in whichever function they belong to, including the HR function.

Q Tell us about the skills landscape in the South Asian talent market and how is IBM differentiating itself when it comes to upskilling its workforce?

A Skills shortage in this tech disrupted era is a global phenomenon and the South East Asian region is not immune to it either. However, the reasons that contribute to skills shortage differ in the SEA region than its global counterparts. While some factors relate to language, others relate to the lack of digital literacy and inadequate focus on disciplines related to Analytics, Computer Science, and STEM

fields. Leadership competencies too have changed and there is the need for more resilient and agile leaders who can thrive in uncertain environments, have the ability to transform operating models, and who are tech evangelists and are able to visualize and harness the power of technology.

IBM is attempting to scale its skills requirement through a combination of external and internal skills and research programs. A few years ago, IBM set up the Business Analytics Innovation center in partnership with Singapore's Nanyang Technology University, and continues to partner with them on new initiatives. In India, IIT Mumbai will be part of IBM's AI Horizons network — an international consortium of leading universities that is helping in AI research. Similar work is happening in other countries of South East Asia to create a string pool of talent to source from.

Internally, we have a very high focus on upskilling and reskilling of our talent for future. For this, we leverage our AI-enabled learning platform, Your Learning, a platform designed for a personalized, self-paced learning experience that provides curated best-in-class content for all types of skills and competency training — from soft skills to core technical skills. We continue to invest heavily in our training programs to ensure our workforce is aligned with the strategic skill requirements, and we encourage self-learning that has really helped us to create a sense of responsibility in employees to scale-up their capabilities. While educational institutions have started to upgrade their curricula, the training needed for future skills is still very much in the corporate domain. Going forward, talent will look to their employers to provide these skills and this capability will be one of the key employer brand propositions.

Q The pressures on the organizations and the workforce to globalize have intensified. How is IBM navigating the volatility of the changing marketplace expectations?

A IBM, as a 106+ years old company, has always been ahead of the curve in adapting or transforming its business models and organizational structure to the changing needs; and have ourselves undergone transformation from a hardware to software, and now to a cognitive and Cloud Platform Company. We have been operating for decades in most of the 170 countries we currently have offices in, including all the growth regions. So we have a workforce that has been internationally mobile for the longest time and understands the challenges and opportunities of globalization.

We operate in all the major industries and sectors in the world and are driving innovative changes for both social and societal impact through our technology platforms.

Being one of the key inventors of the new AI-enabled technology solutions, we have been both the predictors of the technology trends as well as facilitators of tech who are helping businesses navigate the changes. To manage our own transformation, we have been focused on skills development and today 8 in 10 IBMers are equipped with growth-oriented skills for the future. We support our clients similarly, in their digital transformation journey through our Hybrid Cloud and Watson platforms.

We also realized that one of the most important skills we need our leaders to develop is 'resiliency'. Today, not only systems and platforms need to be resilient to survive the onslaught of new technol-

ogy changes, but leaders, managers, and employees all need to build the ability to face uncertainty and volatility and still thrive. Hence, we have been focusing on training initiatives that build resiliency in our leaders and clients. But at the same time, IBM realizes the value of strong ecosystem and each of our country operations has robust connects and partnerships with industry bodies and governments to support national agendas.

No one organization or unit can have all the capabilities required to create the readiness that is needed for technological disruption – we need to operate and leverage the ecosystem of tech partners, collaborators, and experts to build skills for the future

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Q How do you think the human resources function is managing the disruption caused by technological innovation?

A HR is one function that has seen dramatic changes in its mission, vision, and operational impact in the past decade, not just due to shifts in technology but also due to the impact the softer aspects of the function have had on preparing organizations to manage the digital disruption. The role of the function has now changed to building insights around business and

talent metrics, and leveraging such metrics to enhance employee experience and engagement. It is more purposeful around impact and outcomes than program execution.

In the future, HR will see significant transformation with AI technology. The value it will provide to business in terms of analytics and automation will validate the investments made for such transformation. The possibilities of AI in HR are not just confined to chatbots, but also to harness the value of data and enhance decision-making capabilities. We see immense possibilities in the HR tech space and IBM has been one of the few organizations to transform its own HR leveraging its AI Watson platform. We have created innovative offerings across the whole value chain of Employee's work experiences using Watson technology and its analytics capabilities. So much of the debate on AI

is around bias. To address that, IBM also recently launched the Watson Recruitment's Adverse Impact Analysis capability that identifies possibilities for bias on accounts of age, gender, race, education, or even the previous employer.

All in all, readiness of the HR leaders and professionals to understand, embrace and then leverage tech capabilities will prove to be the differentiators. In this digital era, the value of HR can also be monetized for business growth but the journey should be via employee experience and keeping the human touch.

Q In your opinion, how has the HR evolved to play a larger contributing role in meeting strategic business goals and growth?

A I do not think that the strategic value that the HR holds is debated anymore. Progressive CEOs have started to view their CHROs as people who drive growth and not just HR programs. More and more organizations are now realizing that HR is

a business function like any other, and manages the most important resource of any corporation – its people. As such, the HR function now holds the mandate and the strategic muscle to bring changes to an organization's growth trajectory. There is more alignment between people programs and larger organizational goals, and HR programs are now being designed to enhance employee productivity, employee engagement, positive work culture, talent retention which integrate with the organizational goal of delivering to the clients.

I believe that in today's day and age, an HR unit that does not play a direct part in the business growth is likely to be irrelevant. And for HR to make an impact, three critical skills are needed – understanding business metrics and its levers of growth, keeping a constant outside in focus in the function and the knowhow of what is available in the market, and having a consulting mindset with high degree of HR analytics capabilities to infer insights from data and trends.

Q When you look out over the next couple of years and prioritize growth, how do you view things in your own industry or sector?

A I think the tech sector is certainly more prepared for the impacts of digital disruption as in many cases we are the ones predicting and creating those disruptions. This sector therefore also has the larger responsibility and accountability to prepare the rest of the world for the upcoming changes – and so we will see other sectors seeking to learn and harness tech capabilities. Industry convergence has already been happening for some time, and almost all sectors are building technology arms for their operations. We will continue to see tech talent getting higher premium in almost all sectors. Cloud, AI, Blockchain and Quantum computing are the tech trends that will continue to revolutionize the markets. But having said that, talent in the tech sector will need to be a few steps ahead in terms of skills readiness and that will be a key focus. The speed at which technology is changing is creating gaps in the timely availability of future-focused skills in the market. So how does one hire for an environment that is predicted to get disrupted? Fungibility (in terms of skills and roles) will be a critical characteristic as organizations transform, and keeping skills current for the market will be one of the key differentiators from a growth perspective. 



Employee Engagement

- A leadership commitment

A majority of leaders believe that the most important asset of the company is their employees; but the sentiment holds value in the true sense only when the employees are engaged

Employee engagement as a concept looks at how committed employees are towards their work and their organizations, and what keeps them continually motivated. A McKinsey's research revealed that employees with higher engagement levels are 20-25 percent more productive, while many other studies have shown the value of higher employee engagement, and the measures companies are adopting to keep their workforces engaged, specially the high potentials. A majority of leaders believe that the most important asset of a company is their employees; but the sentiment holds value in true sense only when the employees are truly engaged. Leaders and managers need to successfully act as navigators to manage the difficult tracks of the new era of transformation if they have to be early adopters/leaders of change, which makes building a culture that is anchored on the values of trust, transparency, and personal accountability in the ecosystem as crucial. Research also reflects that 70 percent of organizational transformation efforts don't prove to be successful as planned, the reason being, the change process is hard, time consuming, and usually has higher volatility in form, cost, and time investment. Change can be difficult for employees to adapt to, causes anxiety and affects deliverables when approached improperly. But here is where the true power of engagement lies. Although the steps for improving engagement aren't complex, they simply must be executed in a structured manner. Below are the steps that can be adopted for the right employee engagement.

- Step 1:** Get the right people for the job and place them in the right roles
- Step 2:** Provide proper training and development
- Step 3:** Assign meaningful/appropriate Work
- Step 4:** Continuous feedback
- Step 5:** Frequent engaging communication




Leaders need to use the power of digital to help employees engage, collaborate, and communicate with a focus on making extraordinary people deliver extraordinary results

Organizations that crack this formula right can see higher financial returns, surge ahead of competition and become aspirational places to work. Digital transformation has completely changed the way companies connect with employees. Today's workforce is tech savvy, and companies have to get their digital strategies right to connect, perform better, and have more engaged employees. Leaders need to choose from an array of digital options to support their teams like

virtual instruction, gamification, MOOCs (Massive Open Online Course), social platforms to connect and strengthen mass bonding, apps to deal with various work transactions, and platforms to collaborate and innovate.

Using the power of digital to help employees engage, collaborate, and communicate with a focus on making extraordinary people deliver extraordinary results is crucial for ongoing engagement. Thus, it is always essential to take the first step right and provide an experience that is delightful for all the employees. For example, organizations can consider Welcome Cards to be sent to employees few days before joining; Social media platforms can be used to establish bonhomie and sharing between existing and new employees; Current employees can share their experiences of the work environment in a unique and creative way through various mediums; Pre-joining informal meeting can happen between new entrants and their Managers/Team members/ Buddies; and Gamification in a pre-join program can give a good glimpse of strengths and areas of improvements of new entrants in a simulation environment.

Employers need to focus on the intent over content, communicate it in a transparent manner, build a culture of respect, acknowledge everyone individually, collectively drive unified company values, ensure collaboration, engage employees at every stage of the business life cycle, and enable the business and stakeholders digitally. 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

RAJESH PADMANABHAN is Director & Group CHRO of Welspun Group



Diversity in Bonding: From exclusive to inclusive

Organizations now seem to be focusing on what values are shared, what binds different populations and cultures together, whilst enriching their identities through differences. So how can organizations attain diversity whilst at the same time feel inclusivity?

CULTURAL COMPETENCE

One has become very aware of the after-effects of the terrorist attacks all across the world. And we had the economic crisis a while back — enough stimuli to go for a trusted environment with not too much diversity around. You can't really trust "foreign" cultures in the broadest sense of the word. People look out for the familiar. This had led to an ever increasing polarization: Republicans versus Democrats, Christianity versus Islam, Left versus Right, USA versus Russia etc. And we have political leaders who thrive on bi-polarity with dangerous super players as Trump, Erdogan, Kim Jung-un and Duterte.

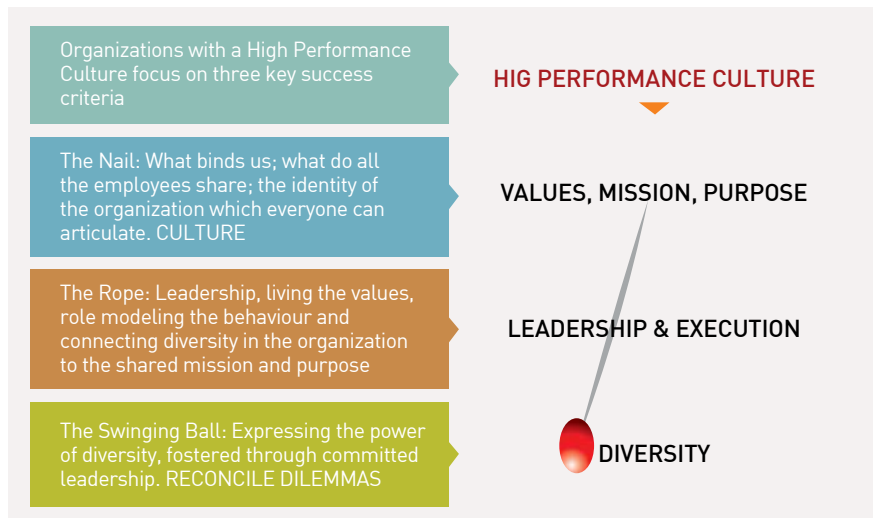
However, business is looking for new alternatives. It is quite striking that many Western organizations have been looking for programs that help them move beyond diversity. And now it is the turn for Asian organizations. They seem to be

looking for inclusion but not inclusion where we feel as one big family because we are all similar in values and behavior. After having devoted much attention to the issues pertaining to diversity, organizations now seem to be focusing on what values are shared, what binds different populations and cultures together, whilst enriching their identities through differences. How can one attain diversity whilst at the same time feel inclusivity? Let's look at the pendulum metaphor. You can focus on the ball swinging in the diverse areas of life and values. But the pendulum is only effective when the nail at the top holds everything together. If the nail is as big as the pendulum we have inclusion without diversity. If the nail snaps, we have lots of diversity without inclusion. Both are pathologies. Thus, how to adopt global strategies locally or how to decentralize the central are the key competencies of today's leaders.

Intercultural competence

While diversity programs have taught us how to respect diverse cultures, inclusion will help people to know what we share. The way an organization reconciles inclusive values with diverse values is a measure of its maturity and performance — one of the main competencies underlying this maturity is the degree to which it can reconcile cultural differences. This is very much in line with the thinking of Milton Bennett (1986) who developed the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) in which six phases of intercultural sensitivity are distinguished — the larger the sensitivity, the bigger the chance that the organization is taking advantage of cultural diversity. The first three phases are *ethnocentric*. Here, people unconsciously experience their own culture as "central to reality." The most basic form of ethnocentrism is best summarized in the first phase of denial. In this phase, people are not yet able to see or experience cultural differences. There are no alternatives to their own logic, and if there are any, they are seen as of less value or even inhumane. You can still find this attitude among managers in the Midwest of the US, for example, who will tell you "If we all just speak English everything will be OK." These people have never expe-

The Pendulum



Trompenaars Hampden-Turner

Cultural differences exist and are tolerated, but a strong corporate culture creates a strong pressure towards conformity

rienced a culture shock (and very likely will not), which is in great contrast to the people who surround them. They resolve cultural diversities by isolation or separation, like the Apartheid in South Africa. These managers have no clue about their own culture because they lack any impetus which urges them to find out about themselves.

If we look at the following chart, we can see on the Y-axis “My values” and on the X-axis “Other Values.” This first phase of denial can be put on the 1-1 position. These people and the organizations they represent don’t know any other values and, therefore, lack any understanding of their own values. This type of organization typically operates in one nation. The best they do, perhaps, is export goods to nations that they will never visit.

A second ethnocentric phase is one of *defensiveness*. In this phase, people do experience cultural diversity, however, the world is immediately divided into “us” and “them,” whereby “us” is, of course, superior to “them.” This is typified by an internationalizing manager who is convinced that his organization (and the technology it represents) is the very best. Local differences are not really appreciated. If the threat of the defensive phase is being reduced by the assumption that, at the core, all persons are equal, one then enters the phase of *minimization*. This final level of ethnocentrism is approached in the so-called global organization, if we use the terminology used by Ghoshal and Bartlett (1998). One sees that cultural differences exist, and are tolerated, but a strong corporate culture, such as IBM, HP and Proctor and Gamble or GE, creates a strong pressure towards conformity.

In global organizations, there is a strong drive towards standardization and management teams consist purely of nationals who have grown the business



from home. Bennet has characterized the first phase in *Ethno-relativity* as the phase of acceptance. The managers of the organization have, through longstanding international contacts, understood that they have their own cultural context determining their behaviors, and that other cultures give meaning to their lives in other ways. These organizations pay serious attention to attracting staff from different and diverse cultures, and will fully understand the value of cultural diversity, far beyond the formal rule-based interpretation of diversity that we see so often. The top management in such organizations will, however, still typically consist of nationals from the country where headquarters are based, but there will be one or two exceptions. A good example of this *International Organization* (Ghoshal and Bartlett, 1998) is Walt Disney, which relates slightly to the countries – France and Japan – where it also have its theme parks.

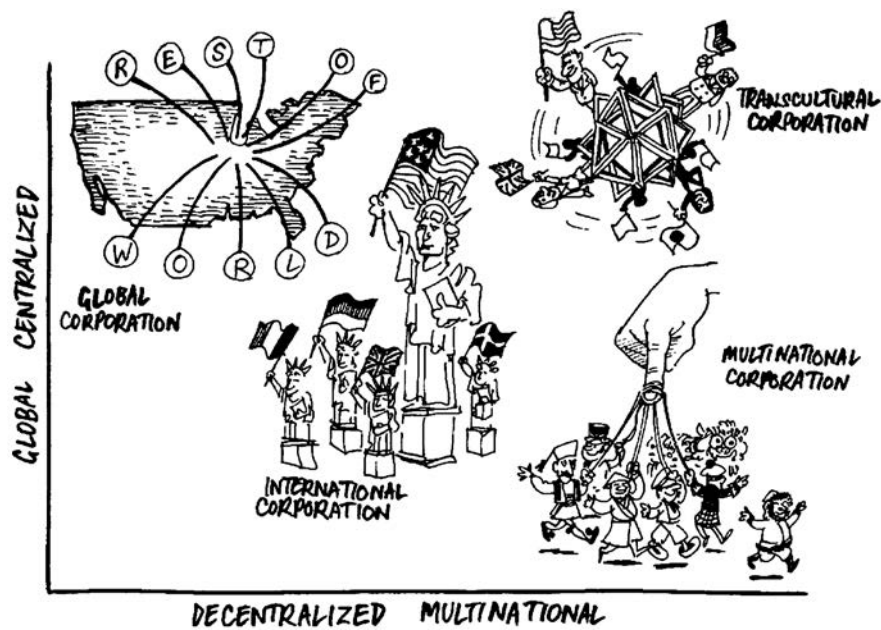
The last but one phase is referred to as adaptation. Managers are able to look at the world through different lenses. They adapt easily to changing local circumstances. The Anglo-Dutch companies like the Royal Dutch Shell and Unilever (not by coincidence both bi-national organizations) are good examples of this group. And work gets done in the *Multi-National Organization*. Their managers are used to doing “In Rome as the Romans do”. Their organizations are easy to recognize, because they put a lot of effort into language training, and have many traditional cross-cultural training programs such as “doing business with the Japanese.”

Whereas, *Transnational or Integral Organizations*, of which probably ABB,

Booking.com and Applied Materials would be the best examples I know, have actually entered a sixth phase: that of complete integration. No one can do like the Romans anymore, since Rome no longer exists. When visiting Applied Materials, I learned that their top management of seven included seven different nationalities (even omitting the double nationalities), and that the organization was directed from different centers, of which several were outside the United States. Because all international activities are performed in multicultural teams, all managers are familiar with swapping from one cultural context to another. They view themselves as moving from one culture to the other, and do not perceive themselves as being at the center of the world. They very often use the interface between cultures as a platform from which to develop a hyper-culture that transcends and makes use of the differences. Another example of this is Advanced Micro Devices and the way they operated in Dresden. They beat Intel for the first time ever by combining the talents of German and US cultures with a disciplined program of dealing with diversity. Programs were developed to integrate and take advantage of the cultural differences, but around clearly defined business issues. Each culture tends to emphasize its uniqueness, and, therefore, is at least partially excluding other cultures. However, the hyper-culture of what Charles Hampden-Turner calls reconciled values is one that includes and brings together people with an individually exclusive identity. It is a corporate culture that brings people together around tensions between different viewpoints, and thereby time after time achieves advantages and

Dilemma: Diversity of value versus inclusion of values





It is possible to help the growth towards the integral organization in which values are reconciled into something that everyone shares?

benefits. It is also an organization that is explicit about its core values. Respect for diversity has become a “common good.”

In our experience, it is possible to help the growth towards the integral organization in which values are reconciled into something that everyone shares. First of all, attention needs to be given to the diversity of values that distinguishes one group from another. Once these diverse viewpoints are known, the process of respect needs to sink in. When differences are acknowledged and respected, it is time to integrate these values into a hyper-culture of things shared.

Connecting Viewpoints

The Transcultural or Integral Organization is cut like a diamond of which it is very difficult to determine the top. They do combine opposites of which diversity and inclusion is the most generic one. So if we take our seven meta-opposites (as described in *Riding the Waves of Culture*) they encompass possibly seven dualities that are reconciled as follows: “We standardize our best customization”; “We strive for teams that consists of creative individuals”; “We are passionately controlling our emotions”; “We give people direct feedback with diplomacy”; “We act as serv-

ant leaders”; “We speed up sequences by synchrony”; and “We push our technology through the pull of the Market”.

How can we embed these dual or yin and yang values in the desired behaviors and behavioral competencies that need to be established within the organization for which the responsibility lies with the leaders of the organization?

One of the biggest financial institutions in Canada recently introduced three dualities of values. This was a reaction on their overarching belief in Ambition, Innovation, and Collaboration that led to a very harsh environment in the beginning of the financial crisis. They were so innovatively ambitious that no collaboration could save them out of the swamps. The values have become pathologies because they were not counterbalanced by their opposites. Now they are trying to help their leaders to integrate the specific with the diffuse by Ambition and Prudence, Innovation and Rigor and finally Accountability and Collaboration. Leaders are now asking how prudence can help them to frame their ambitions. How can rigor help with innovation? And how leaders can be held accountable for being collaborative? This financial institution has chosen to adapt their Charter of Behavior and ask ques-

tions such as: How can I see you become more innovative by using rigor, or how has prudence helped you to get more ambitious? This is very much in line with the dual values of PepsiCo International and Applied Materials: “We strive for teams that consist of creative individuals and we give people direct feedback with Diplomacy.”

Branding

Here too, we see a clear difference between the segmented multi-local and the global brand. Take for example the brand experience of Merrill Lynch. In the US, Merrill is seen as large but ‘middle of the road’. In Europe, one sees a changing picture while in Asia everything is being done to belong to the top of the brands. In this sense, Goldman Sachs is a global brand name that is counted among the most selective financial institutions regardless of the continent. The transcultural organization also requires a change in the approach to which we position our brand name. The essence of the message is that we make a global approach locally attractive and meaningful. Is it not interesting to see that the award-winning advertising campaign HSBC has made this philosophy the core of his message? It’s all about bringing together points of view. Their campaign, which has received the significant title “connecting viewpoints” is based on the different local interpretations of objects and people. They have done it so effectively that the message has no cultural bias and is very popular in the US, Europe and Asia and does not compromise their mission to become the world’s local bank.

So, what can leaders do?

The examples above are typically organizational. To enhance diversity and inclusion, an organizational context of dualities in values and branding that connects both difference and sameness by being the world’s local something, is very helpful. But if a leader doesn’t feel there is time to go through that top-level process, what can one do tomorrow on an individual level? And what can HR do to help?

Rewards. There is nothing more deadly for combining diversity and inclusion than a lagging remuneration structure. Take the example of a large oil company. At first there were mainly British, Americans and Germans working there. The group sought cooperation with a Japanese party within its Research & Development department. After the agreement was concluded, teams of people with a completely different cultural background had to work together. This led to in-depth discussions about the remuneration structure. Individual bonuses were one option. Especially the Americans

and the British would work even harder with this system, but the more Japanese and Germans focused on the group would be seriously demotivated. Another option was to provide group bonuses. Wonderful for the Japanese, but for the Anglo-Saxon staff there would be no incentive for that. The either-or-option was therefore discarded. Then perhaps one-and-one? A compromise whereby half of the bonus is awarded on the basis of individual performance and the other half for the performance of the team? Then perhaps one half would be stimulated by one and the other half by the other. But this one-and-one option did not make it either. Instead, the positive of individual competition was ingeniously reconciled with the good of cooperation within the team. A mixed bonus system was introduced. On the understanding that individual employees could only receive a bonus if their team had proclaimed them the best team players. In addition, teams had to show how they had tried to get the best out of their individual members. An independent audience then chose the best team. The system works well and is an example of something we will see much more often: 'co-opetition' — competition to improve cooperation and cooperation to achieve better competition. The new reward system made the diverse groups inclusive.

Appraisal. In the late nineties, Motorola introduced an interesting process to stimulate a dialogue between a boss and a subordinate under the title 'Individual Dignity Entitlement'. A number of times a year a dialogue unfolds around six important questions, such as: 'Is the work you do meaningful?' 'And: 'Do you have enough resources to fulfill your tasks?' Yes or no are the alternative answers. With 'yes' as the answer, there is no dialogue, but with 'no', there has to be a dialogue about how to get yes in the next period. This system launched by Motorola's CEO in Chicago proved not only to be an excellent tool that led to relevant conversations between boss and subordinate, but also produced a number of quantifiable yes's and no's. In short, it worked pretty well in the United States, where transparency and quantifiability have a motivating effect. But how to explain that the 'yes' scores were 98% in South Korea? And that on a site where the local chip production was anything but successful. After a number of interviews with the Koreans, it quickly became clear that they appreciated the system introduced by the head office. It was only the American specificity of the videos and books that influenced the effectiveness. Why only yes or no? In Korea, the answer to the boss is always yes, regardless of



It is the more extended systems of values that will be the context in which integral leadership will prove its excellence

the nature of the question. And why was there a need to measure and publish those yes's and no's? However, the quality of the underlying philosophy was praised. In parts of Asia, the system was introduced with similar questions. But the dichotomous yes/no has been replaced by a scale, so the 90% 'yes' is a subtle indicator for the Korean 'no'.


Perhaps the most appealing is the example of McDonald's, the bastion of global standardization. Even McDonald's has to deal with the limitations of that policy. If they want to spread the gold M around the world, they will have to pay more attention to local flavors — soy sauce and no mayonnaise; rice and no potatoes; fish and no meat; McKrokot next to the burger. Ironically, the international division of McDonald's with its diverse offerings is most profitable. Moreover, most ideas come from the local and regional organizations and the best are standardized. Diverse foods lead to inclusive offerings. If there is hope for McDonald's, there is hope for everyone.

Effective integral organizations are aware of the values they bind, realize the most important differences in the regions, and have leaders who both connect. The quality of the nail determines how much swing can be given to the ball and the quality of the rope is determined by the intercultural competence of the leaders.

Leadership Development. There is a lot of evidence that diverse teams have more potential to outperform teams than teams with less diversity. However, the opposite is true too. Consistent results show that the difference can be accounted for by the quality of leadership. Good leaders can make diverse team members feel inclusive and achieve better results. Leaders with less competence to reconcile diversity and inclusion make teams significantly less effective, even compared to randomly diverse teams. (DiStefano, 2000)

Can dilemma competence be developed or is it innate? Our thinking is that values are not "added" by leaders, since only simple values "add up". Leaders combine values: a fast and a safe car, good food yet easy to prepare, functional yet beautiful. Nobody claims that combining values is easy, but it is possible. A computer that is able to make complex calculations can also be customer friendly. Obviously hi-tech should not replace hi-touch. It is in the unique combination of technology and face-to-face interventions that the integral leader makes organizations perform better. It is the more extended systems of values that will be the context in which integral leadership will prove its excellence.

From our extensive, reflective critique of our evidence, we conclude that the newly identified competence of reconciling dilemmas is not simply just learned or innate. It needs a systemic approach. The whole organization needs to provide a framework that supports, stimulates and facilitates people to reconcile diversity and inclusion. We have seen individuals with high potential, yet not able to progress further than a (lose-lose) compromise because their work environment did not appreciate creative solutions. Conversely, we have found less effective individuals that achieved significant reconciliation by their stimulating and supportive environment. So, how to create such an environment? It begins with leaders who practice what they preach. And it is of utmost importance that rewards are created that motivate individuals and diverse teams.

It is about linking reconciliation to business issues and business results and making it into a continuous process so that it becomes a way of living rather than a conceptual exercise. 

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.

Jobs of the week



2COMS Consulting Private Limited
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VDart Software Services Private Limited
Team Lead- Talent Acquisition
Location: Trichy
Job ID: 22890557
Description: Identify future talent needs and proactively recruiting and sourcing; develop talent pool or social engagements.



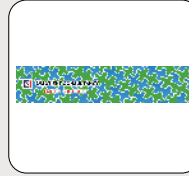
Capgemini Technology Services India Limited
HR Business Partner AC
Location: Pune
Job ID: 22903190
Description: Proactively ensures the delivery of HR Processes in the BU Cluster and Region, Drive and implement employee engagement strategy.



People First Consultants Pvt Ltd
Manager-Compliance HR
Location: Kolkata
Job ID: 22900107
Description: Act as a liaison with other HR teams to coordinate development of people compliance, enterprise HR compliance systems, and processes to support the business.



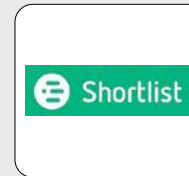
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Senior IT Recruiter
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Job ID: 22871038
Description: Manage full-cycle recruiting process for our Business organization ensuring a seamless, uniform and incredible positive candidate experience.



Quotient Consultancy
Manager - HR Operations
Location: Mumbai
Job ID: 22860797
Description: Should possess good knowledge of end to end employee life cycle management, Ensure timely and accurate completion of processes.



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Past Month's events

Implementing Childcare Facilities at the Workplace: A Guided Approach

ORGANIZER: People Matters and KLAY Prep Schools and Daycare

DATE: 25th September 2018

VENUE: Online

KEY TAKEAWAYS: It has been a year that the government mandated the provision of child care facilities at the workplace. However, the introduction of this new provision came with its own set of challenges, implementation of childcare facilities being one of them. Priya Krishnan, Founder & CEO, Founding Years Learning Solutions Pvt. Ltd. in the webcast shared some practical stories of what implementation mechanisms are organizations adopting. She threw light on the key mandates of child care facilities that organizations need to be aware of and cleared some of the ambiguities that the HR leaders get stuck with. In an interactive session, Priya took many queries that came in from the audience and discussed the do's and don'ts that organizations establishing child care facilities should know.

HR's Role in Shaping the Finance Teams of Tomorrow

ORGANIZER: People Matters and ACCA

DATE: 26th September 2018

VENUE: Online

KEY TAKEAWAYS: Businesses today are in a state of flux. With rapidly changing processes, making cost-effective decisions is crucial. From CFOs to mid-level managers and new employees, everyone is tasked with the responsibility to overcome steep learning curves and step out and contribute to larger business change. To reflect on the changing demands of the finance sector and to discuss the top priorities from an HR perspective, People Matters and ACCA organized a webcast featuring Pauline Schu, Professional Insights Manager, ACCA Global, and Sandeep Batra, Chief Financial Officer, Crompton Greaves Consumer Electricals who discussed changing skillsets and jobs and shared the top 5 priorities for the finance talent in the next 12-18 months.

Pre-Hire Strategy: Making It Impactful For a Candidate and the Company

ORGANIZER: People Matters and SHL

DATE: 11th October 2018

VENUE: Online

KEY TAKEAWAYS: With immense competition booming in, organizations need a comprehensive and inclusive strategy that not just helps them hire the best of graduates, but also helps manage the volume of hiring. Pre-hire solutions when linked with hiring strategy can help businesses achieve the desired business outcomes, which is why identifying, assessing and hiring the 'right' talent is crucial for them. To discuss the importance of pre-hire strategy and to decipher how it can be implemented for maximum impact, People Matters and SHL organized a webcast where speakers shared the steps involved in creating the right pre-hire strategy and gave 4 simple steps to achieve measurable outcomes. Some case studies from progressive organizations were also uncovered.

People Matters L&D Conference 2018

ORGANIZER: People Matters

DATE: 23rd October 2018

VENUE: Grand Hyatt, Mumbai

KEY TAKEAWAYS: On 23rd October 2018, business, HR and L&D leaders came together and discussed the latest trends, innovations and best practices in the space of learning and development. Various thought-leaders and experts like Devdutt Pattnaik, Author, Mythologist, Leadership Coach; Rhoda Wang, Global Learning Experience Leader, Uber and Ajay K Soni, Chief Learning & Leadership Development Officer, Aditya Birla Group, among others divulged into thought-provoking conversations on

critical aspects of the entire learning lifecycle from strategizing to design to the impact. Sessions ran in three parallel tracks in various formats like Panel Discussions, Masterclasses, Keynotes and Exhibition lab and addressed the challenges and opportunities in the most critical function in today's rapidly changing environment. The one-day conference ended with an awards ceremony where companies with exemplary practices in L&D space were recognized. Some of the award categories included Best in Onboarding Solution, Best in future tech skill building and Best in leadership transformation, among others.

Upcoming events

3rd Edition of FICCI HR Conference: Redesigning HR in the Era of Disruptive Technology

ORGANIZER: FICCI

DATE: 19th and 20th November 2018

VENUE: Federation House, New Delhi

THEME: Digital disruption is challenging the status quo, reshaping value chains and altering consumers' behavior and expectations. As a result of this, digital transformation is being driven from the top and sits in the top of the agenda of most of the boardroom conversations. As the journey of successful digitalization goes beyond investment and technology, it pivots on the most the Human Resources which must spearhead in helping the company and its leaders in becoming digital. HR has the responsibility to reinvent the digital processes and produce team-centric HR solutions and tools. The 3rd Edition of the FICCI HR conference will focus on "Redesigning HR in the Era of Disruptive Technology" and will see debates and discussions while reviewing why a successful digital transformation sits at the heart of HR and how can the HR function be an evangelist for seeding cultural changes within organizations and embracing the future looking technologies to successfully ride the wave of digitalization with flying colors.



HOW TO REGISTER:

<http://payment.ficci.com/hrconference/online-registration.html>

Total Rewards and Wellness Conclave 2019

ORGANIZER: People Matters

DATE: 16th January 2019

VENUE: JW Marriott, Aerocity, Delhi

THEME: An ASSOCHAM study released in the beginning of 2018 revealed that the lack of robust corporate wellness program is costing Indian organizations up to \$20 bn each year. While many organizations and employers are realizing the importance of a healthy, happy and stress-free workforce & are deploying creative strategies & tools to ensure that employees have the means and opportunities to be the best they can, there still exists a glaring gap when it comes to 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 will be hosting the sixth Total Rewards and Wellness Conclave where 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.



HOW TO REGISTER:

<https://www.total-rewardsconclave.com>

9th Nation Conference on Equity Compensation - Form - Facets - Features

ORGANIZER: ESOP Direct

DATE: 11th December 2018

VENUE: ITC Maratha, Mumbai

THEME: Equity compensation in India has evolved over the last two decades in every sense from form and features to dimensions. Companies across all sectors and sizes have actively used this tool to attract, retain and incentivise their key talent. The annual conference organized by ESOP Direct reflects on how equity compensation has changed phases and evolved over these years. Case studies from various companies who have implemented these have experienced the entire lifecycle will be presented. Domain experts will also present finer aspects of Plan design, legal compliance and Accounting for such instruments. The one-day conference attempts to provide answers to all the questions compensation leaders are often stuck with. It also provides an opportunity for professionals to network and learn from experiences of other companies.

People Matters TechHR Singapore

ORGANIZER: People Matters

DATE: 28th February 2019

VENUE: Marina Bay Sands, Singapore

THEME: The best of businesses, HR Leaders, HR Product & Service experts and HR Technology partners & startups from around the globe will come together to raise the bar for talent transformation and HR technology. After leading the HR Tech discussions for 5 years in India, the Asia's largest HR technology conference will now be held in Singapore on 28th February, 2019. It will host 1,000 Delegates, 50

Speakers, 30 HR Tech vendors and 50 Startups. Some of the speakers include Jason Averbook CEO and Co-Founder, Leapgen and Ray Wang, Principal Analyst & Founder, Constellation Research Inc. Brands like Microsoft, IBM, SAP, Cornerstone and LinkedIn will also exhibit their products.



HOW TO REGISTER:

<https://singapore.techhrconference.com/>

Blogosphere » SAHIL NAYAR



With the invasion of IOT, AI, Machine Learning and the gig economy, organizations all over have either hit a roadblock or are about to hit one. So what is the key to survival?

The Learning Continuum

The other day, as I was lazily flipping channels trying to catch something interesting on TV, I stopped at one of the Hindi movie channels. They were airing *Dil*, an Aamir Khan movie from the 90s. I let out a yawn and continued flipping channels again. After a while, I stopped at another movie channel. It was another Aamir Khan star, this time *Dil Chahta Hai*. I continued flipping forward. After a while, he appeared again. *Dangal* this time. I almost felt like a viewer being stalked by a movie star. But jokes apart, it got me thinking about the man himself, his journey and most importantly, some key takeaways for modern organizations from his career. He joined the movies at the end of the 80s, had a fantastic run for about a decade or so, then hit a road block, survived, came back and is at the top of his game again today. Somewhere in between the roadblocks, survival and return, a whole lot of unlearning, adapting, evolving, relearning and personalizing happened.

Cut to the business world, with the invasion of IOT, AI, Machine Learning and the gig economy, organizations all over have either hit a roadblock or are about to hit one. They are in a state of constant flux today as they prepare to battle the demons associated with the workplace of the future. And I believe that the way things are progressing, the key to survival will lie in being privileged or being prepared. Being privileged is more a matter of chance than choice. But being prepared is surely in our hands. Basically, we need to unlearn what we have been doing all these years, adapt and relearn newer techniques so that we may be hired and paid by the privileged lot to help them survive and thrive. Or else we just risk getting perished. That, in a nutshell, is going to be the focal point in the story of “The Learn-



ing Continuum - Survival via learning” in the new world. The Learning & Development function is undergoing the biggest transformation in the history of the corporate world. The solution however, lies not in trying to beat them, but in joining them and leveraging the power of AI to create a more personalized learning experience. The trick lies in ensuring that policy makers working with education providers (traditional and nontraditional) improve the basic STEM skills through the school ecosystem, put a new emphasis on creativity as well as critical and systems thinking, and foster adaptive and life-long learning. As personalized learning gradually picks up steam at the school level, the same be carried forward in our workplaces.

As the dots connect back and I flip the channel to watch an old episode of Satyamev Jayate, I feel that’s exactly what Aamir Khan did, he dropped out of the star-driven rat-race, reflected back and started doing work based on his own pace and style. Sure, he was privileged enough to leverage his family lineage, but he chose

The Learning & Development function is undergoing the biggest transformation in the history of the corporate world. The solution however, lies not in trying to beat them, but in joining them and leveraging the power of AI to create a more personalized learning experience.

to prepare himself instead and emerged a winner. Why, he even made a whole movie to propagate the idea. Taare Zameen Par, anyone? 🙏

(The views expressed in the article are the author’s own and do not reflect the view of his employer.)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

SAHIL NAYAR is a Human Capital Professional working at a leading professional services firm in India.

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Diversity in Bonding: From exclusive to inclusive

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