

people  
matters

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BIG

x

What business trends and strategic priorities will most impact HR's agenda in 2019?

**BIG INTERVIEW**

Ricardo Viana Vargas  
Executive Director of the  
Brightline Initiative™

**SPECIAL COVERAGE**

L&D League Award  
Winners 2018

HR

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## Every end is a new beginning!

2018 was another spectacular year for HR. The year delivered on expectations, as expected — yet we dealt with a lot of anticipation about a lot of things - gig economy, consumerization of the workforce experience, technology onslaught, AI-related dread, future of jobs and work, and what not! There was disruption, chaotic activity on the part of organizations globally to revamp their strategies for the future, and an overwhelming apprehension in many of us as the sudden anxiety related to the future of work and our place in it became the core points in discussions. But the anticipation was justified. And why shouldn't it be? As it is said by a wise man, "Wisdom consists of the anticipation of consequences".

But the hoopla doesn't stop here! The year 2019 will see more in terms of every theme we have touched in 2018 — from productivity, solutions, technology, design, automation, AI, and intelligence — 2019 will be the time to aggressive action, response, reaction, and operation. Long story short, this is the time for HR to stop internalizing and start acting on what it has gathered over the years. And this means going aggressive and ambitious in

converting efforts with the aim of putting the points on the board. For this cover story, we reached out to leaders and HR practitioners who gave us their views on what 2019 will be like for HR, business trends and strategic priorities that will most impact HR's agenda in 2019 and what it will take to pioneer strategic change.

For the Big Interview this time, we have Ricardo Viana Vargas, Executive Director of the Brightline Initiative™, who talks about bridging the gap between strategy development and implementation, and about transforming the future. This edition also features David Yeo, Founder, and CEO of Kydon Group, Parenthesis, and LEARNTech Asia who gives a glimpse on how he started out on the journey of entrepreneurship and his perspectives on transforming the learning technology space; Dr. Jaclyn Lee, CHRO of Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD) who shares her perspectives on how HR can adopt a multi-disciplinary approach for structuring itself, agility in workforce management systems, and attracting and retaining multidisciplinary talent; and Vaclav Koranda, Vice President - Human Resources at T-Systems Malaysia who give his insights on talent management, leveraging predictive analytics, and new-age learning and development.

We also have a special feature on the L&D League award winners 2018 that showcases the strategies and practices adopted by organizations who successfully transformed their leadership to attain competitive edge, who made progress in making their talent more agile and future-ready, who fostered a thriving culture of self-learning, who focused on building a smooth onboarding experience to engage employees and help them become productive, and who re-engineered L&D interventions using technology and analytics.

I just wanted to remind you! 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)



earthquake? again?



you're out of ideas?



nice!



# BIG HR SHIFTS

COVER STORY  
40

## TIME TO RESPOND AGGRESSIVELY

2019 - A YEAR OF PRAGMATISM FOR HR

By **Suparna Chawla Bhasin**

### EXPERT VIEWS

**42** Will HR drive or hinder growth in 2019?  
BY **BRIAN SOMMER**, *Founder - TechVentive & Technology Industry Expert*

**43** HR should anticipate and lead, not react and follow!  
BY **PRABIR JHA**, *President & Global Chief People Officer, Cipla*

**44** A new kind of HR for the social enterprise  
BY **DAVID MALLON**, *Chief Analyst, Bersin, Deloitte Consulting LLP*

**46** Prioritizing and balancing technology for the right uses  
BY **PIYUSH MEHTA**, *CHRO, Genpact*

**47** One Small Voice of Invitation & Encouragement to HR in 2019  
BY **DAVID ZINGER**, *Speaker, educator, author, & consultant*

**48** Enhancing capability of people managers will be a significant priority for HR  
BY **ANUSHA SURYANARAYAN**, *CHRO, Signify India*

**50** 2019, a challenge for HR  
BY **CLINTON WINGROVE**, *Director, WantToBeGreat*

**52** Agility will be the game-changer  
BY **SUMIT MITRA**, *Head - Group Human Resources and Corporate Services, Godrej*



### THE BIG INTERVIEW

24

## The road from strategy to implementation

**Ricardo Viana Vargas**, *Executive Director of the Brightline Initiative™*

By **Yasmin Taj**



### INTERVIEW

30

## A multidisciplinary approach to propel HR

**Dr. Jaclyn Lee**, *CHRO of SUTD*

By **Ester Martinez & Vallari Gupte**

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	Creativity, Problem Solving & Decision Making	Tamonas Gangopadhyay	January 8-12, 2019	XLRI	Interpersonal Effectiveness through Communication Skills		Manish Singhal	September 24-28, 2018	XLRI
	Presentation Matters - Mastering the Art of High-Impact Presentations	Sunil Kumar Sarangi & Rahul Kumar Shukla	January 21-25, 2019	XLRI	Interpersonal Effectiveness through Communication Skills		Manish Singhal	January 21-25, 2019	XLRI
	Talent Acquisition: Tools and Techniques	M. Srimannarayana	January 28-31, 2019	XLRI	Leadership Excellence through Self-Discovery		Manish Singhal	October 8-11, 2018	XLRI
	Resolving Management Dilemma: Mapping Ethical and Moral Competencies	Fr. Ozzie Mascarenhas SJ and Sr. Doris D'Souza AC	February 18-20, 2019	XLRI	Designing and Implementing Coaching and Mentoring for Talent Management	M Srimannarayana	December 4-8, 2018	XLRI	
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	Assessor Certification Program on Assessment Centre Approach to Competency Mapping	R K Premarajan	September 3-7, 2018	Mumbai		Organizational Behaviour / Strategy	Business Acumen for Leadership Excellence	Manish Singhal & Atul Pathak	November 19-23, 2018
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	Human Resource Development	M Srimannarayana	November 2-16, 2018	XLRI		Marketing Research and Analytics with R	Amitava Mukherjee	January 9-11, 2019	XLRI
	Leadership Competency for Star Performance	M G Jomon	November 14-17, 2018	XLRI		Supply Chain Analytics	T AS Vijayaraghavan	February 18- 22, 2019	XLRI
	Empowerment & Leadership for Women Executives	Anita Sarkar	January 14-18, 2019	XLRI		Strategy	Business Turnaround and Growth Strategy	Indrajit Mukherjee	August 6-9, 2018
	Career Development and Talent Management	R K Premarajan	January 17-19, 2019	Mumbai	Strategy Innovation and Leadership		Munish Kumar Thakur	December 10-12, 2018	XLRI
	Effective Performance Management	Pranabesh Ray	Jan 28 - Feb 1, 2019	XLRI	Strategic Thinking		Munish Kumar Thakur	February 11-13, 2019	XLRI
	Talent Management for Line Managers	M Srimannarayana	February 4 - 8, 2019	XLRI	Blue Ocean Strategy		Apalak Khatua	September 03-04, 2018	XLRI
HR Audit-Leading to Internal Auditor Certification	M G Jomon	February 11 -14, 2019	XLRI	Blue Ocean Strategy	Apalak Khatua	February 11-12, 2019	XLRI		
Human Resource Management/ Strategy	Design Thinking for High Business Performance	Soumendra Bagchi & Rajeev Sharma	December 4-6, 2018	XLRI					
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# contents

**18 NEWS FEATURE**  
Jobs of the future:  
Where are they headed?  
BY **SHWETA MODGIL**

**20 Innovation and Talent:**  
Exploring key linkages  
BY **DHRUV MUKERJEE**

**22 Picking up the pace**  
BY **MANAV SETH**

**28 DIGITAL**  
2019: The Year of New  
Media at Work  
BY **ABHIJIT BHADURI**, *Author of the  
bestseller "The Digital Tsunami" and a  
popular columnist. He is a consultant  
to organizations on issues of talent,  
leadership and culture*

**32 THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED**  
#Metoo Deserves More  
Than Me-too Solutions  
- Effective Ways to Quickly  
End Sexual Harassment in  
Corporates  
BY **VISTY BANAJI**, *Founder and CEO of  
Banner Global Consulting (BGC)*

**37 PERSPECTIVE**  
Shaping the future  
BY **HARSHVENDRA SOIN**, *Chief People  
Officer at Tech Mahindra Ltd.*

**38 COMPELLING CONVERSATIONS**  
Leading learning  
BY **DAVID YEO**, *Founder and CEO  
of Kydon Group, Parenthesis, and  
LEARNTech Asia*  
BY **YASMIN TAJ**

**54 TEAMWORK**  
More than a game!  
- Team Sport & Its Influence  
on Corporate Business  
BY **Y SHEKAR**, *Executive Coach and a  
student of Research - researching on  
future of organization structures and  
nature of managerial roles.*

**57 LEADERSHIP**  
The real shift - Agile  
leadership  
BY **ROSTOW RAVANAN**, *Chief Executive  
Officer & Managing Director at Mindtree*

SPECIAL  
FEATURE  
**62**



## IN-FOCUS: LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

BY **MANAV SETH**

- 64** Best in L&D Technology and Analytics - **Raymond**
- 65** Best in Leadership Transformation - **[24]7.ai**
- 66** Best in Onboarding Solutions - **India Infoline Finance Limited**
- 67** Best in Future Tech Skill Building - **Zensar**
- 68** Best in Building Self-Learning Culture - **JLT India Pvt. Ltd.**

**58 LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT**  
A true democratization  
- L&D of the people, for the  
people, & by the people  
BY **MUKUND NAIR**, *Director at Nagarro*

**60 INTERVIEW**  
There aren't enough  
matured tools available  
to manage talent in  
organizations  
BY **VACLAV KORANDA**, *Vice President -  
Human Resources at T-Systems Malaysia*  
BY **MASTUFA AHMED**

**61 CORPORATE SUFI**  
All 'movements' need a  
conscience  
BY **GURUCHARAN SINGH GANDHI**,  
*Author of national bestseller 'Kabeer  
In Korporates' and the Head of  
Learning & Development with a leading  
conglomerate.*

**80 DIGITIZATION**  
Redesigning HR in  
the era of disruptive  
technologies  
BY **PEOPLE MATTERS EDITORIAL**

### FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

DAVID YEO  
DR. JACLYN LEE

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PRABIR JHA  
PRASHANT KHULLAR  
ROSTOW RAVANAN  
SHALU MANAN  
Y SHEKAR  
SUMIT MITRA  
VISTY BANAJI

**70 RESEARCH**  
**A High-Impact Work-  
place Learning Culture**  
L&D Trends Study 2018  
- A Research by People  
Matters and BITS Pilani  
BY **PEOPLE MATTERS EDITORIAL**

### INFOGRAPHIC

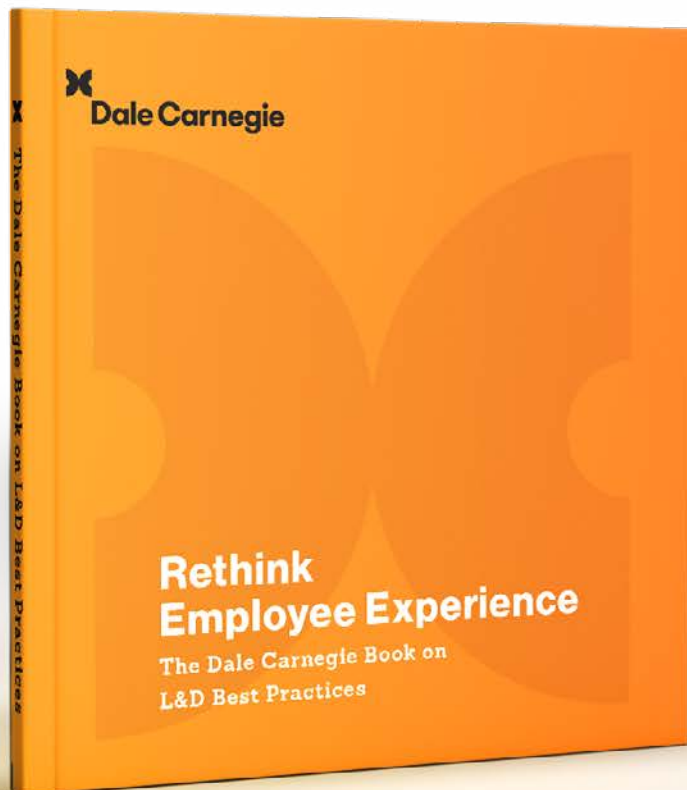
- 74** Building a high-impact  
learning culture
- 76** BY **GOUTAMI DUTT**, *Head of Learning  
and Development and HRBP, OLX  
India*
- 77** BY **JANESH KUMAR**, *Chief Human  
Resources Officer, Airtel Payments  
Bank*
- 78** BY **PRASHANT KHULLAR**, *Chief  
Human Resources Officer, Mahindra  
Holidays and Resorts India Limited*
- 79** BY **SHALU MANAN**, *Global Capability  
Development Leader - Shared Services,  
Genpact*

### REGULARS

- 04** From the Editor's Desk
- 10** Letters of the month
- 12** Quick Reads
- 82** Knowledge + Networking
- 84** Blogosphere



## The Future of Work Has Arrived - Faster than We Predicted It



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## A Broad Gauge Effort! – Agile Leadership

The cover story is a timely and fitting reminder of the fact that the journey to becoming agile has just begun. While everyone has their part to play in building a better future, leaders have a special part to play in facilitating this transition and ensuring that the direction we choose is progressive, inclusive, equitable, and also profitable. The experts who contributed to the story all raised diverse and excellent points regarding the concept. While I agree that leaders have a tough task cut out ahead, I also think that this is an opportunity to make sweeping positive changes in organizational structures, management hierarchies, and company processes to make room for new leadership styles and functions. As companies and employees prepare for an unpredictable future, the importance of a steady hand steering the ship has never been more palpable.

- JAYANTH BISHT

## A Wobbly Pedestal: A case of ill-prepared business leaders

I think that one of the most important factors that help employees to succeed is the conviction demonstrated by their leaders. It is then, a bit startling to learn that a majority of leaders themselves do not feel prepared and or ready to lead from the front and that there is a gap in the perception of this readiness. The fact that less than half of the HR professionals believe

that their company's leadership is 'effective' begs the question of what is being done to ensure that a leader is adequately supported to do their job. As the writer suggests, maybe it is time for organizations to create an integrated leadership strategy that allows for their top leadership to ask for help when needed, especially considering the challenges they face in integrating the use of digital technologies in business processes.

- VIVEK HEGDE

## A Triad of Obsession, Resilience, and Execution

Rosaline Chow Koo discussing her meteoric journey made for an inspirational reading.

In just five short years, she has managed to defy all odds and prove that conviction, hard-work, and perseverance results in success. Facing rejection isn't easy, and yet, after being turned down by a leading organization multiple times, Rosaline managed to turn her idea into a thriving and valuable business. The fact that she put her own money on the line is a testament to an unshakable belief in her idea and her own self. My biggest takeaway from her interview was that it is very important to trust your instincts. I am sure Rosaline will don many more hats in the future and continue to learn, experiment, and deliver results ahead.

- ADIKA VERMA



NOVEMBER 2018 ISSUE

## Building a Future-Fluent Culture

The findings of 'Architecting Future-Fluent Culture: Critical Role of Human Resources – Asia Study 2018' suggest that building the right company culture to fuel growth and engagement has become a priority for CHROs in Asia. As noted by the research, HR must play the role of an auditor, advisor, facilitator, and guardian to ensure that a healthy and inclusive workplace culture is cultivated and sustained. I am also particularly delighted to learn that HR is expected to influence stakeholders and drive change in addition to protecting the company culture. All in all, the research report made for a rich and insightful reading and clearly indicates that the importance of having the right work culture has never been more pronounced. It will be exciting to witness how employers and leaders are able to solve the biggest challenge of building the right culture i.e. translating 'values' into behavior.

- RESHMI BOSE





People Matters values your feedback. Write to us with your suggestions and ideas at [editorial@peoplesmatters.in](mailto:editorial@peoplesmatters.in)



## Keeping the Promise

The article's excellent analysis of the on-ground status of maternity benefits offered to mothers in India should serve as a starting-point for organizations, leaders, and HR personnel to craft effective child-care policies for their employees. Being a working mother myself, I can attest to the fact that many parents, particularly women, feel guilty about leaving their children to be looked after by someone else. Conventionally, having a successful career has been pitched against being a hands-on mother, but we need to realize that with help, guidance, and support, women can choose to excel in their careers without having to compromise on being mothers. Crèche support, as discussed, can make a great positive impact on the personal and professional lives of new parent employees. It is also heartening to know that Indian organizations are starting to demonstrate serious concerns for employees who have recently become parents, and are willing to offer a comprehensive support system to help them. As rightly pointed out in the article, there is no one solution to fix everything, but this is a welcome start!

- NIKITA ADHIA



## Millennials, Artificial Intelligence, Digitization, and other Wolves

What a delight it was to read Gurucharan Singh Gandhi's column! I completely agree with him that most people today merely echo what they have heard and there is an acute lack of context to every report, debate, or discussion we have. Millennials and AI have received plenty of bad press and often evoke a negative perception. While, on the one hand, it is assumed that millennials aren't loyal, hard-working, or responsible; on the other, AI has been pegged to be the 'Terminator' for all kinds of jobs. The fact of the matter is that similar changes in the workforce and nature of work have taken place in the past and humans have proved to be impressively adaptive in order to survive. It is, as Gurucharan says, those who believe these extremes to be true have actually lost the plot and need to be focusing on other critical issues.

- POORNA MOHANTHY



## Auditing the Creative Process

While it was obviously thrilling to read about Ferran Adria's journey and learning experiences, it was particularly refreshing to read a successful leader talk about things outside of businesses and discuss creativity and innovation with so much passion! The fact that Ferran has managed to create a thriving ecosystem of experimentation and innovation which transcends the culinary world is a commendable achievement. The more I read about Ferran's approach to work and life, the more impressed I became with his crackling personality. I adore Ferran's reiteration of the conventional wisdom that in order to do something extraordinary and special, you need to keep experimenting with diverse and new ideas! After all, as he says himself, "life is a contradiction, and one needs to find equilibrium." Kudos to the People Matters team for introducing us to Ferran Adria.

- ATHERVA MURALIDHAR



## Fungible Roles and Skills Will be Critical in the Future

**Pallavi Srivastava's take on HR and the future of work was really enriching.**

As someone who has been a part of the HR space for nearly a decade now, I have witnessed the changes in the talent and workforce that Pallavi discusses. I would agree on the fact that not only are these sub-domains of HR witnessing an evolution, but the entire function of HR is going through a long-pending change. While IBM's efforts to upskill its workforce are laudable and will ensure that the company steps into the future on a strong foundation, what's more important than individual programs is the collective efforts of all the involved stakeholders to prepare for a new future of work. Going ahead, only those who are flexible enough to adapt and relearn will be able to innovate and grow.

- NITISH GARG



### @shreyapilani

Corporate initiatives like #workfromanywhere #Hotdesking #flexibleworking are immensely appreciated by #employees. Not only do these contribute positively towards their happiness index but also help reduce traffic, pollution & lead to better resource planning in offices @The\_OSB

### @carygotheblues

Monday morning gyaan: we're too eager to jump to answers without spending the time to think it through. Here in @PeopleMatters2 magazine I write about how we should value Approach over Answers -

### @MotionInfusion

This is going to be an amazing event! So excited to go to New Delhi in January. #PMTRWC #NewDelhi

### @DougLipp

Thrilled to be interviewed by @PeopleMatters2 for this edition. I shared Four Strategies for Leadership Agility. Hope you enjoy.

### @rucsb

Be a hi touch Leader in the age of hi tech . Look forward to this discussion @PeopleMatters2 #AI #LetsTalkTalentWeek #HR

### @Madhavspeaks

Aswesome @Ester\_Matters & the team @PeopleMatters2 You guys always picked relevant conversations and in real-time. keep upping your game.

### @pearl\_dsouza1

Enjoyed this @PeopleMatters2 read! @nanjappa\_bs really nicely written, valuable insights thank u #hierarchy #culture

### @vykasdua

Way to go @Ester\_Matters and @PeopleMatters2 . There's no doubting the impact you have created in furthering #HR agenda in our country!

### @Madhavspeaks

Love the relevant topics you curate #LetsTalkTalentWeek

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## JOBS

# Digital disruption to create 1.4 million IT jobs by 2027

**ACCORDING TO A JOINT STUDY** by Cisco and International Data Corporation (IDC), India is likely to add over 1.4 million new IT jobs by 2027. This points out to a 46 percent growth in jobs that is set to be inherently driven by emerging technologies like cybersecurity, Internet of things (IoT) and Big Data. The study also highlighted that of the 9.1 million IT job positions in India in 2017, 5.9 million job postings were for new-age roles, and globally, new-age jobs are expected to add more the 5 million jobs by 2027. The report revealed that roles like social media administrator, machine learning designer, and IoT designer would be most sought after in the coming years.

## RANKINGS

### India ranks 77th in ease of doing business

**INDIA HAS SECURED** 77th rank in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business rankings, jumping 23 ranks since last year. In the 2017 rankings, India ranked 100th and had jumped 30 places from the previous year. In 2016, 2015 and 2014, India was placed at 130, 131 and 134 positions. The Index ranks 190 countries across 10 indicators ranged across the life-cycle of a business from 'starting a business' to 'resolving insolvency'. The jump signifies the realization of India's goal of strong and sustained economic growth that has shown in improved business environment for small and medium enterprises and the government's strong commitment to broaden the business reforms agenda. The World Bank noted that India has improved its rank in



6 out of 10 indicators and has moved closer to international best practices (Distance to Frontier score) on 7 out of the 10 indicators. But, the most dramatic improvements have been registered in the indicators related to 'Construction Permits' and 'Trading Across Borders'. India and China have emerged as the two large economies which are among the ten most prominent reformers among 190 countries. New Zealand tops the list, followed by Singapore, Denmark and Hong Kong.

## SKILLING

### Oracle and SkillsFuture Singapore partner to bolster the talent economy

**ORACLE WILL WORK WITH** SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) to embed the Skills Frameworks in Oracle Human Capital Management (HCM) Cloud, allowing HR professionals, employers and employees to quickly and easily access the Skills Frameworks. This provides them with a common skills language that helps in recruitment processes, talent management, and facilitating learning and development for the organization. The collaboration will help to improve talent management, provide better workforce insights, improve smarter recruiting and facilitate intelligent skills matching to the job role. The collaboration also supports the SkillsFuture movement by helping organizations equip their workforce with critical and emerging skills that are in demand. Oracle currently offers training programs via partners that are Oracle Approved Education Centers and Oracle Education Resellers.



## FUNDING

### Enboarder Raises \$4 mn in investment round



**ENBOARDER, THE CLOUD-BASED HR-technology** company that enables employers to create engaging onboarding experiences has raised \$4 million in its latest funding round led by Greycroft, one of the top venture capital

firms in the US. The Australian-based, Our Innovation Fund (OIF) also participated in the funding with a \$50 million. The funding round was undertaken to accelerate growth in the U.S., as well as fuel the ongoing development of the platform. Enboarder is the world's first and only Engagement Onboarding Platform, built to help organizations create engaging onboarding experiences. It transforms employee onboarding into an ongoing, engaging, rich and consistent experience, rather than a one-off event and provides all the tools necessary for organizations to maximize employee engagement for today's digital generation, without the need for IT or a creative department.





### TECHNOLOGY

## Kronos and Workplace by Facebook collaborate for a **workforce scheduling chatbot**

**KRONOS AND WORKPLACE** by Facebook have ventured into a new collaboration to launch a workforce scheduling chatbot that will make it easy to fill in last-minute open-shifts, allows mobile activation from anywhere at any time, making work-life balance a more attainable reality. The chatbot is said to seamlessly interface with Workforce Dimensions to assess the requests related to staffing requirements, employee accrual balances, skills and certifications, compliance, and other pre-defined business rules. Employees are instantly



notified when the request is accepted and managers have the access to evaluate the request further if required or write in to the employee with an explanation in case the time-off cannot be granted. What is an interesting twist to this innovation is that when the chatbot gauges the availability of an employee to fill in sudden open shifts, it does not just check for eligibility and availability but also takes into consideration aspects like fatigue, compliance and overtime served and based on such considerations, draws up a list. Once the manager approves the list, employees get an alert to take up the task voluntarily and the manager can decide whom to assign the task to if more than one employee accepts the same.



### DIVERSITY

## China leads in global university employability ranking

**A GLOBAL EMPLOYABILITY** ranking designed by emerging human resources consulting firm and published by Times Higher

Education revealed the top 150 institutions for employability. France, Germany, and China are among the best-represented countries in the employability ranking, along with the United Kingdom and the United States. Both Germany and Japan have an institution in the top 10 with Chinese and Canadian universities also appearing high in the ranking. A total of 26 East and Southeast Asian institutions are featured in the top 150 this year including Japan, South Korea, Singapore, China, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. There are seven universities in China in the top 150 while the National University of Singapore and the University of Tokyo have made it to the top 10. The University of Malaysia is ranked as 149 this year.

### TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

## ASEAN to train 80,000 tech specialists over five years



**AS TALENT REMAINS A KEY FOCUS** for the ASEAN economies, the responsibility to ensure their continuous development also falls upon them. Considering the rapid digital transformation all economies are experiencing, preparing the talent for the future of work and equipping them with the necessary tech skills is crucial. Realizing the importance of digital skills, Association of Southeast Asian Nations announced a program for training 80,000 manufacturing and digital industry specialists in five years. The initiative will focus on skilling engineers, researchers and business managers in manufacturing, artificial intelligence and other fields. This program will be supported by Japan which will help countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations as part of a broader effort towards cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.



### PARTNERSHIP

## Mercer and EDGE partner to help build gender-equal workforce of tomorrow

**MERCER HAS PARTNERED** with EDGE Certification to give an accelerated, globally scalable, comprehensive solution to organizations seeking to enhance their gender diversity programs. Mercer | EDGE offers a holistic, robust approach to analyzing companies' gender gaps while aligning leaders and stakeholders around finding concrete solutions to close those gaps. It not only identifies and eliminates gender gaps but also enables companies to create optimal workplaces for women and men so that organizations can benefit from a more diverse workforce. Benefiting from Mercer and EDGE's combined global expertise and

local resources, companies will be able to obtain an appraisal and documentation of their business imperatives for gender equality to align their key stakeholders on the importance of improving it.



# IS SHE YOUR NEXT LEADER?



Endorsing gender parity in leadership is a smart way to build an inclusive and successful organization. However, the current representation of women in leadership reveals the disconnect between organizations' current strategies and women's inclusion at workplace. In light of this backdrop, EY's report titled, "Is SHE your next leader?" explores how bringing diverse perspectives and innovation to the table while enhancing an organization's profitability at the same time makes the business case for increased women representation in leadership more compelling and widely accepted and contributes to building a better working world for everyone.

## According to World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2017,

It would take **217 years** for the economic gender gap to be closed.

Iceland occupied the top position in the index and closed **88%** of its gap. It has been the world's most gender-equal country for nine years.

India was ranked **108** in the index out of 144 countries (ranked at 139 in economic participation and opportunities for women).

## What holds women back?

### Attitudinal barriers

- Age old stereotypes to corporate leadership
- Less advocacy for pay raises and promotion

### Structural barriers

- Gender insensitive hiring practices
- Trade-offs on work life balance
- Limited women role models
- Dearth of sponsorship and accountability

### Stereotypes

#### Men take charge

- Strong
- Decisive
- Assertive

#### Women take care

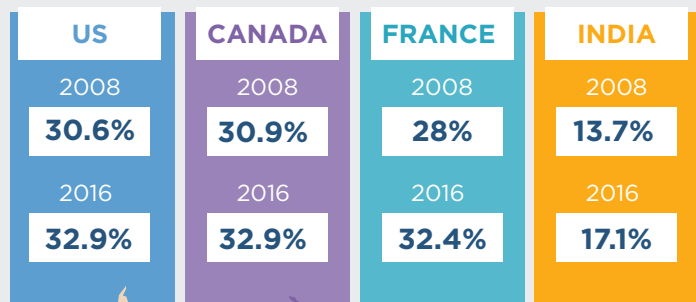
- Nurturing
- Emotional
- Communicative

### Double bind

When women take charge, they are viewed as competent leaders but disliked

When women take care, they are liked, but viewed as less competent leaders

## Female hires by country (new leadership roles)



Age old stereotypes to corporate leadership: "Women take care, men take charge"



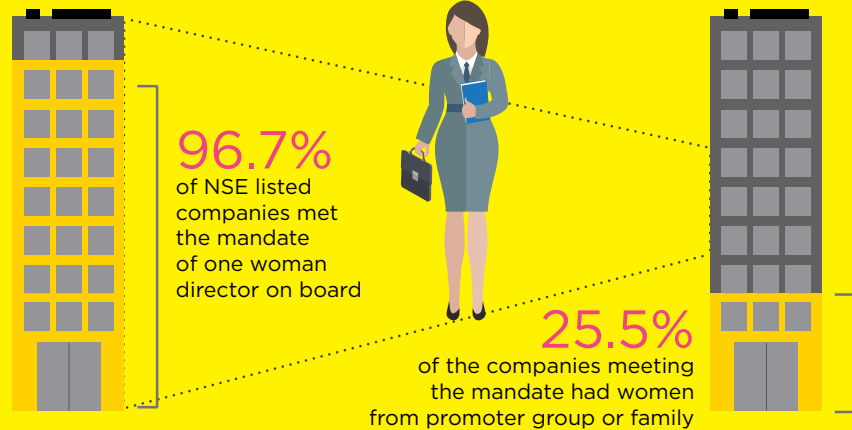
# INDIA

**The Companies Act, 2013** makes the appointment of a woman director mandatory. Under Section 149 (1) of the Companies Act, every listed company and such class of companies such as a public company having paid up share capital in excess of INR100 crore or turnover of INR 300 crore or more, shall appoint a woman director.

**The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) guidelines** mandates **all listed companies to have at least one woman on their boards** - either as an executive or a non-executive director - before April 1, 2015.

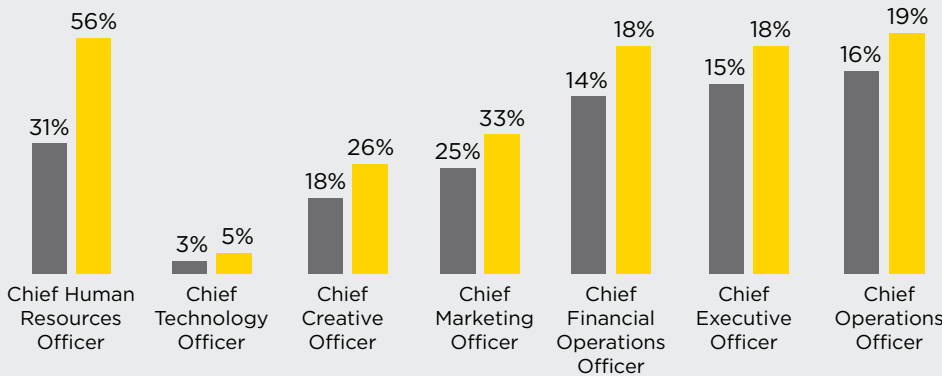
In October 2017, the SEBI constituted the **Uday Kotak Panel on Corporate Governance** which recommended the appointment of **at least one independent woman director in all listed companies**. This will help to break traditional gender stereotypes and lead to a gender balance to increase boardroom effectiveness.

285 NSE listed companies had >1 woman on board while 56 NSE listed companies with no woman director



## Budding women CHROs in the workforce

Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) role saw the highest increase (82%) in terms of the percentage of female executive hires globally during 2008-16. Chief Technology Officer role came in a close second with an increase of about 60% in the same timeframe.



## How the needle has moved in having more women leaders?

Despite several government and organizational initiatives to recruit, retain and encourage women in senior executive and board positions over the past decade, progress remains slow and the glass ceiling remains obstinately intact

## Studies establish a direct relationship between women leaders and organizations' returns

In 50 companies with at least one woman key management person in BSE 100





IN FOCUS

# Binny Bansal

## Leaving behind a legacy



QUICK READS

**SPECULATIONS ARE RIFE ON WHETHER THERE IS ANY MERIT TO THE ALLEGATIONS, BUT THE ALLEGATIONS WERE ENOUGH FOR WALMART TO APPOINT A US LAW FIRM TO CARRY OUT A DISCREET INVESTIGATION WHILE THE DUE-DILIGENCE PROCESSES WERE BEING CARRIED OUT FOR THE WALMART-FLIPKART MERGER**


**H**umble beginnings, meteoric rise, and the end of founder's association. This is essentially how one can sum up Flipkart's story.

Binny Bansal, a successful entrepreneur, a celebrated figure not just in India but worldwide, the co-founder of Flipkart became the CEO of the company before becoming the CEO of the Flipkart Group. He not only went on to become the titan of the Indian startup ecosystem, but also became the face of India in the global entrepreneurial system.

But in an unexpected turn of events, Binny Bansal resigned after an investigation by a global law firm revealed "lapses of judgment" and serious "personal misconduct" without anyone clearly specifying the nature of these allegations.

Speculations are rife on whether there is any merit to the allegations, but the allegations were enough for Walmart to appoint a US law firm to carry out a discreet investigation while the due-

diligence processes were being carried out for the Walmart-Flipkart merger. According to a joint statement from Walmart and Flipkart, Bansal "strongly denies the [unspecified] allegation ... [and] while the investigation did not find evidence to corroborate the complainant's assertions against Binny, it did reveal other lapses in judgment, particularly a lack of transparency, related to how Binny responded to the situation. Because of this, we have accepted his decision to resign."

This is perhaps the roughest patch in Flipkart's story. Although many are deeming Bansal's exit being leveraged as a settlement for unrelated issues internally, a case of new management enforcing a cultural and operational takeover, and even deliberating if this was Walmart's planned move to get the founders out of the company, the controversy does bring to fore many questions that perhaps will not see answers soon. 

# APPOINTMENTS



## **PAYTM PAYMENTS BANK APPOINTS SATISH KUMAR GUPTA AS CEO**

Paytm Payments Bank has appointed Satish Kumar Gupta as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the digital bank. Gupta previously worked as the Chief product officer at National Payments Corporation of India and Deputy General Manager at State Bank of India.



## **ZOMATO APPOINTS CHAITANYA MATHUR AS GLOBAL HEAD**

Zomato has appointed Chaitanya Mathur as the Global Head for Zomato Live. Mathur has also been the founder of Excited Monkey Entertainment in 2008 and also co-founded the festival platform, The Grub Fest in 2014, along with the music portal Bangin Beats in 2011.



## **OYO ROOMS APPOINTS ADITYA GHOSH AS CEO**

OYO Rooms has appointed Aditya Ghosh as CEO. Prior to this, he was with Tata Trusts as Senior Advisor and looked after the Cancer Care Initiative at Tata Trusts. Ghosh had stepped down from Indigo in July, 2018.



## **NIELSEN APPOINTS DAVID KENNY AS CEO**

Nielsen Holdings has appointed David Kenny as the Chief Executive Officer. Most recently, Kenny served as Senior Vice President of Cognitive Solutions at IBM, where he led IBM's AI platform and portfolio. Before that, Kenny was the Chairman and Chief Executive of The Weather Company.



## **WHATSAPP APPOINTS ABHIJIT BOSE AS CEO - INDIA**

WhatsApp has appointed Abhijit Bose as the CEO for the India region. Bose started his career as an associate at Bain & Company and has worked with companies like Oracle, JiGrahak Mobility Solutions Pvt. Ltd., Intuit. Bose is also the co-founder and CEO of Ezetap, a mobile-payment market.



## **APPLE APPOINTS ASHISH CHOWDHARY AS COUNTRY HEAD - INDIA**

Apple has appointed Nokia veteran, Ashish Chowdhary as the Country Manager for India. Chowdhary has more than 25 years of international experience in the enterprise and telecom sectors, and at Nokia, he was the Chief Business Officer.



## **INFOSYS APPOINTS JAYESH SANGHRAJKA AS INTERIM CFO**

Infosys has appointed Jayesh Sanghrajka as the interim Chief Financial Officer. Sanghrajka is currently the deputy CFO of the Bengaluru-headquartered IT services exporter and is a CA with more than 20 years of experience in various leadership roles in the finance function.



## **ABD APPOINTS BIPOLOB BANERJEE AS CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER**

Allied Blenders and Distillers has appointed Biplob Banerjee as Chief People Officer. Prior to this, Banerjee was the Executive Vice President - HR and CSR at Jubilant Foodworks.



## **CITI APPOINTS SHRINATH BOLLOJU AS HEAD - SOUTH ASIA OPERATIONS & TECHNOLOGY (O&T)**

Citi has appointed Shrinath Bolloju as Head - South Asia Operations & Technology (O&T). Bolloju joins from RBL Bank where he was the Chief Operations Officer and member of the Management Committee. He was with Deutsche Bank between 1996 and 2017, where his last role was Managing Director and Head of Securities Services Transformation in the Transaction Banking business.



## **FLIPKART APPOINTS SMRITI SINGH AS CHRO**

Flipkart has appointed Smriti Singh as the new Chief Human Resources Officer. Prior to Flipkart, Singh was working with Sony Pictures Network India as a Vice-President and HR Head.



## **GOOGLE APPOINTS THOMAS KURIAN AS HEAD - GOOGLE CLOUD**

Google has appointed the former Oracle President of product development and technologist Thomas Kurian as head of Google Cloud. Kurian was previously with Oracle and was instrumental in the transformation of Oracle's products.



## **INCRED APPOINTS RAHUL BHARGAVA AS CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER**

InCred, which offers bespoke loan products, has appointed ex-Amazon Rahul Bhargava as its Chief Technology Officer. Rahul is an MBA from Harvard Business School and an MS in Engineering from Carnegie Mellon with over 20+ years of leadership experience.



## **BHARTI AIRTEL APPOINTS ADARSH NAIR AS CHIEF PRODUCT OFFICER**

Bharti Airtel has appointed Adarsh Nair, previously Head of Product and Growth at Convoy Inc., as the Chief Product Officer (CPO). The CPO role had been vacant for the last three years since Anand Chandrasekharan had quit his position and migrated to Snapdeal.



## **MATCHMOVE APPOINTS KRISHNAN SARANGAPANI AS CTO**

MatchMove, a Fintech company has appointed Krishnan Sarangapani as its Chief Technology Officer. Krishnan has more than 20 years of experience in information technology, engineering and service delivery across industries in health-care, e-commerce, banking, telecom and the public sector.

# Jobs of the future: Where are they headed?

Governments and organizations have started waking up to the reality that jobs are going to change in the future. So what exactly is the future of our jobs? And more importantly, are we prepared for it?

By Shweta Modgil

**M**obile app developer, Social media manager, Uber driver, Cloud computing specialist, Driverless car engineer, Data scientist, Drone operator, Sustainability manager, YouTube content creator, Millennial generational expert — Have you noticed anything peculiar about these jobs?

Apart from being rooted in technology, while many of these jobs seem like commonplace giving the impression that they have been here for long, these are actually pretty recent. These are a few of the jobs that didn't exist 10 years ago. This only tells us that the future appears to be coming on to us at a much faster rate than ever before and that the world around is changing much faster than we can fathom. As per the latest report "The Future of Jobs Report 2018" by the World Economic Forum, take a look at this timeline when machines will achieve human-like capabilities:

- 2024: Translating languages
- 2025: Assembling LEGO
- 2026: Writing high school essays
- 2027: Autonomous trucks
- 2029: Run a 5K race against people
- 2030: Customer service in retail

So what exactly is the future of our jobs? And more importantly, are we prepared for it?

The report states that a cluster of emerging roles will gain significant importance in the coming years while another cluster of job profiles are set to become increasingly redundant. Across all industries, by 2022, growth in emerging professions is set to increase their share of employment from 16 percent to 27 percent (11 percent growth) of the total employee



## Governments and organizations have started waking up to the looming changes ahead and realizing that reskilling imperatives need to be at the forefront to prepare for the future

base of company respondents, whereas the employment share of declining roles is set to decrease from currently 31 percent to 21 percent (10 percent decline). About half of today's core jobs—making up the bulk of employment across industries—will remain somewhat stable in the period up to 2022.

Within the set of companies surveyed, representing over 15 million workers in total, current estimates would suggest a decline of 0.98 million jobs and a gain of 1.74 million jobs. Extrapolating these trends across those employed by large firms in the global (non-agricultural) workforce, it is estimated that up to 2022, 75 million jobs may be displaced while 133 million new roles may emerge that are more adapted to the new division of labor

between humans, machines and algorithms.

### So which jobs are set to become redundant?

Across the industries surveyed, jobs expected to become increasingly redundant over the 2018–2022 period are routine-based, middle-skilled white-collar roles—such as Data Entry Clerks, Accounting and Payroll Clerks, Secretaries, Auditors, Bank Tellers, and Cashiers. There are jobs that are susceptible to advances in new technologies and process automation, meanwhile jobs such as Data Analysts and scientists, AI and Machine Learning specialists, software and application developers and analysts are expected to increase in demand. When it comes to the skills

in demand, those of analytical thinking and innovation, active learning, creativity, technology design, and programing will tide over skills like manual dexterity, memory and spatial abilities, and technology installation and maintenance.

### Factors affecting the future of jobs

As per the global employers surveyed by this report, four specific technological advances—high-speed mobile internet, artificial intelligence, widespread adoption of big data analytics, and cloud technology—are the positive drivers which will dominate the 2018–2022, affecting business growth positively. These are flanked by a range of socio-economic trends driving business opportunities in sync with the spread of new technologies, such as national economic growth trajectories; expansion of education and the middle classes, in particular in developing economies; and the move towards a greener global economy through advances in new energy technologies.

Meanwhile, technological and social trends expected to negatively impact business growth include increasing protectionism, cyber threats, shifts in government policies, the effects of climate change; and increasingly aging societies. Also accelerated technology adoption, changing geography of production, distribution and value chains, and reskilling imperatives will shape the future of jobs.

By 2022, according to the stated investment intentions of companies surveyed for this report, 85 percent of respondents are likely or very likely to have expanded their user adoption and entity big data analytics. Similarly, large proportions of companies are likely or very likely to have expanded their adoption of technologies such as the internet of things and app- and web-enabled markets, and to make extensive use of cloud computing.

### Preparing for the future

Governments and organizations across the globe have started waking up to the looming changes ahead and realizing that reskilling imperatives need to be at the forefront to prepare for the future.

In India, organizations are waking up to this challenge and investing in development initiatives. For instance, this July, National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC) rolled out a slew of L&D initiatives as it seeks to align its people strategy with the changing business environment. The organization is focusing on learning and development through experiential learning and custom-made management development programs.

## The Jobs Landscape in 2022

Emerging roles, global change by 2022

133 Million

75 Million

Declining roles, global change by 2022

### Top 10 Emerging

1. Data Analysts and Scientists
2. AI and Machine Learning Specialists
3. General and Operations Specialists
4. Software and Applications Developers and Analysts
5. Sales and Marketing Professionals
6. Big Data Specialists
7. Digital Transformation Specialists
8. New Technology Specialists
9. Organisational Development Specialists
10. Information Technology Services

### Top 10 Declining

1. Data Entry Clerks
2. Accounting, Book-keeping and Payroll Clerks
3. Administrative and Executive Secretaries
4. Assembly and Factory Workers
5. Client Information and Customer Service Workers
6. Business Services and Administrative Managers
7. Accountants and Authors
8. Material-Recording and Stock Keeping Clerks
9. General and Operations Managers
10. Postal Service Clerks

Source: WEF

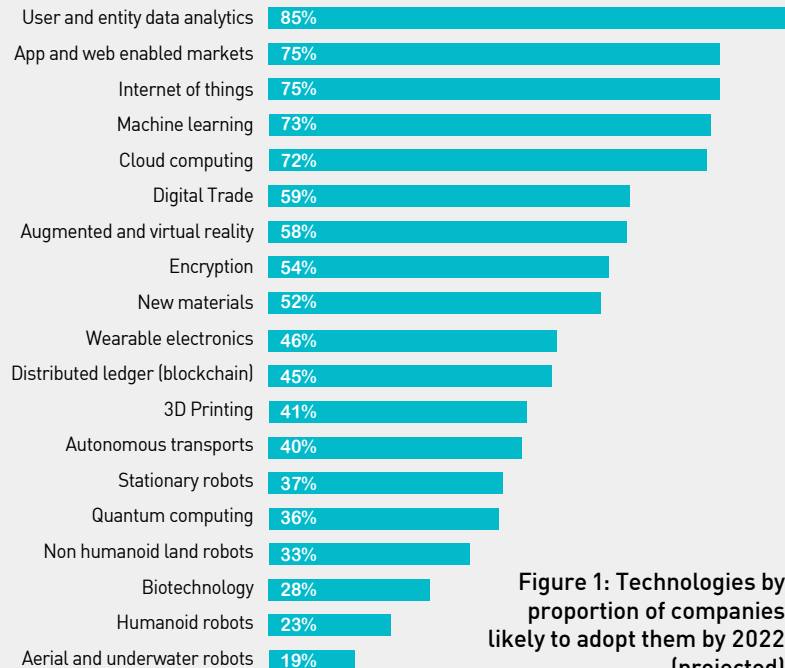


Figure 1: Technologies by proportion of companies likely to adopt them by 2022 (projected)

Source: WEF

Last month, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi allayed fears of job loss due to technological development, stating that the '4th Industrial Revolution' will change the nature of jobs and provide more opportunities. Speaking at the launch of the Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, he said artificial intelligence, machine learning, Internet of Things, Blockchain and big data hold the potential to take India to new heights. The WEF's new Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution in India

would endeavor to bring together the government and business leaders to pilot emerging technology policies.

The silver lining is that governments and organizations have started waking up to the reality that jobs are going to change in the future. What remains to be seen is that as technological advancements pose challenges to existing business models and practices and change them, how fast will we be able to adapt and reskill the workforce to this changing future.

# Innovation and Talent: Exploring key linkages

The need for companies to innovate and transform their business processes has never been more relevant. But how successful have the investments to push up innovation really been? We take a look!

By Dhruv Mukerjee

**T**he business world today is faced with a dichotomous and a fairly ubiquitous problem. In recent years, the performance of the latest technologies relative to their costs has improved substantially. But this hasn't necessarily reflected in how modern day organizations have been able to tap into such a potential to improve the company's growth. The gap between the advancement of technology and its successful adoption within companies today is of key concern. In other words, the gap between how much companies are investing in innovation and its adoption into improving business processes poses a challenge in front of companies, especially when studies show such a gap has been increasing.

A recently published study<sup>1</sup> by Capgemini's Digital Transformation Institute highlights this growing trend. 87% of companies have a lab or space dedicated to innovation. However, the report found that although many firms, over the years, have significantly increased investments

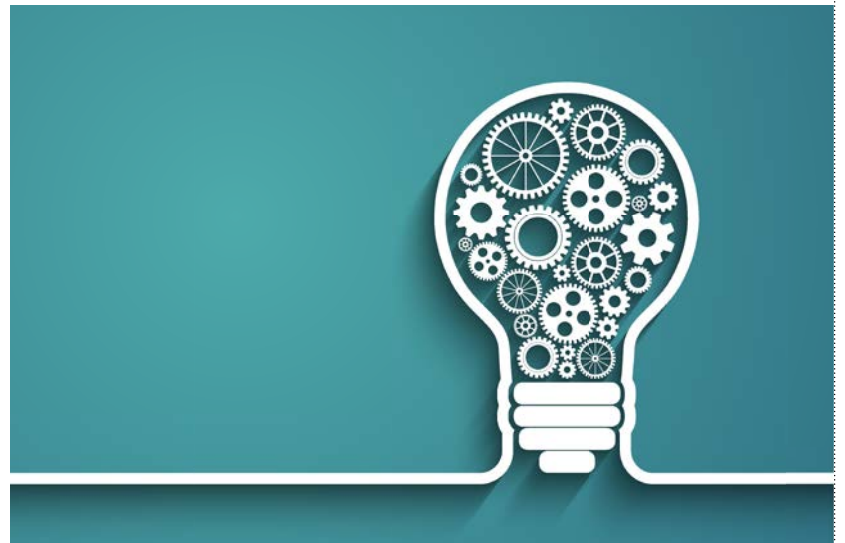
in innovation centers, they are still to see tangible results. In addition, the investments into R&D projects have also risen globally. According to an Accenture analysis, top global companies have all increased their spending on R&D projects—and show almost a 6 percent rise between 2012 and 2017. It also predicts this to be a rising trend as many more companies are expected to follow suits with executives expecting a rise from anywhere between 25 to 50 percent in their R&D investments over the next five years. Such a rise in innovation centers and R&D projects are done with the intent to ensure companies are prepared to weather market disruptions and embrace business transformation to remain productive. But that has not been the case. Companies today are still wary of the threats that external markets pose today and still feel unprepared to undergo transformation processes like shifting to completely digital platforms. Accenture's recent report "How to unlock the value of your innovation investments" reveals how most organizations report incremental innovation levels which in the current times does little to proactively prepare the organizations for incoming challenges while keeping a lookout on the possible opportunities. Given its increased importance within companies today, the low success rates of companies in successfully 'innovating' to leverage markets conditions better while investments into developing such capabilities are on the rise, is certainly puzzling.

One thing that often takes on a significance when it comes to innovation in a company's context is to know that it's not a one-time effort to innovate and neither can one person completely ensure that a company is innovating. It is not something that can be achieved without creating the necessary conditions that make such a process sustainable. Thus, when it comes to identifying the culprit that's been holding companies back by

Over the years, many organizations have significantly increased investments in innovation centers, but they all are still to see tangible results



# Failing investments in research and innovation stem from the lack of culture that can sustain innovation or the lack of talent needed to translate any innovation into a working reality



creating impediments in their innovation journey, many factors come into play; some factors which squarely find themselves in the realm of modern-day HR functions. Factors like a company's culture, lack of engagement and coordination with different stakeholders, and a lack of qualified talent — all act as variables in the final equation. Many such issues directly, and some indirectly, fall into the ambit of an effective HR functions role.

## Talent: a missing part of the equation?

According to the latest Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends report, over 90 percent of leaders globally state that making organizations future ready is a key priority. But the same study interestingly points to how few, 11 percent of the same cohort, believe that their organizations are ready and possess the capabilities to do so. Innovation in the workplace is an important indicator when it comes to creating the institutional capabilities to manage change and be future-ready. For many companies, the ability to innovate is often considered the single most important predictor of future growth. In light of such a reliance on innovation, heavy investments in building an organization to successfully innovate make much sense. But human talent still forms a core part of how companies are able to sustain and maintain their abilities to constantly innovate. And it often becomes the reason why innovations in work fail to have a larger impact on the company's performance.

Currently with the continued improvement of advanced technologies, the gap between what technologies make possible and the ability of companies to internalize it is only going to grow. Failing investments in research and innovation stem from the lack of culture that can sustain innovation or the lack of talent needed to translate any innovation into a working reality. To ensure that innovation becomes the mainstay in companies today, corporate innovation strategies need to aim at being more people and human capital-centric. Strategies, like engaging and incentivizing key talent for the purposes of innovation, promoting and rewarding entrepreneurship and risk-taking, and allowing opportunities to develop innovation skills for all

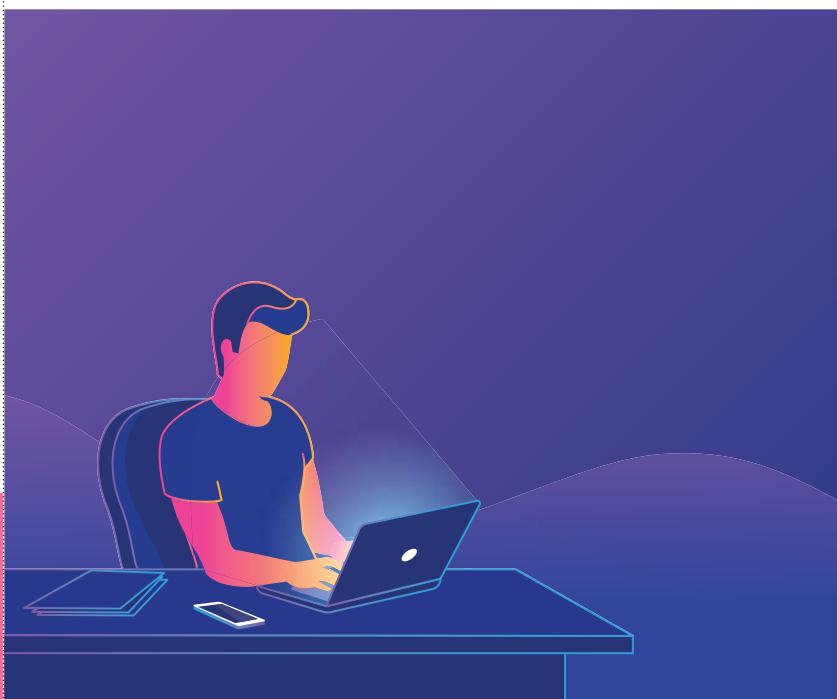
employees, helps create the necessary cultural shifts. This would greatly improve the abilities of the organizations to reflect the true value of their spending on innovation strategies. Creating a culture that enables companies to innovate and having the right talent that helps it become future looking, therefore, becomes a necessary component in the larger machine that would drive corporate innovation. And this is where the HR functions across the globe become crucial and play a key role in ensuring that companies keep up with the external changes.

## The role of HR

The Accenture study also mentions that having a supportive and inclusive work culture is necessary to ensuring that businesses are able to change how they operate. With the kind of talent decisions that the HR function is entrusted to make, they can help their companies realize their goals of being better innovators. With Talent models evolving with the advent of freelance and project-based works, HR professionals today can help businesses meet talent expectations when it comes to leveraging market innovations for better business performance. Similar to the case of supporting business transformation, HR professionals have to play an active role in ensuring their company is able to innovate in a way that keeps them ahead of the curve. Reports note how companies today are struggling with a lack of innovation-focused culture, the absence of robust internal processes and a lack of leaders who promote such a culture internally. These are critical aspects that require immediate problem-solving. For the HR function, this might involve breaking free from the established path of following 'best practices' and using levers like rewards, performance management, L&D, and organization design to solve problems of coordination, vision, and the absence of a culture that structurally and sustainably promotes innovation. Only then can innovations truly help modern-day companies, and to do which HR itself might need to think of innovative solutions. 

<sup>1</sup> The Discipline of Innovation

# Picking up the pace



After a challenging 2017, the Indian IT Industry has scripted an impressive turnaround this year. Every objective parameter indicates that the sector is growing and is expected to continue on this trajectory in the near future

By Manav Seth

**A**ccording to every industry indicator, the Indian IT industry is back on track. Revenues and margins are improving, hiring is picking up speed, and massive up-skilling programs are underway to ensure workforce agility.

But before we analyze these developments, in order to fully appreciate the importance of this recovery, let's take a quick look at the various issues that the industry battled last year. It would be safe to say that 2017 was one of the most challenging years for the Indian IT industry. Amidst a rise in the global protectionist policies, companies failed to deliver expected growth numbers and laid off thousands of employees. According to one estimate, more than 56,000 workers were handed the pink slip in the industry last year, which experts believe make it worse than the 2008 financial crisis.

Most industry giants, including, Cognizant, Wipro, Infosys, Capgemini, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), and Tech Mahindra saw their headcount reducing (even if marginally) in at least one of the quarters in 2017. Hiring and campus recruitment activity saw a drastic decline, as companies struggled to adapt to changing business environ-

ments. However, since the beginning of this financial year, and particularly in the quarter ending in September, an undeniable positive uptick has been recorded.

## Soaring high

Prominent Indian IT companies have added nearly 38,000 employees collectively in the second quarter this year. There is a significant improvement from last year and more than double the number in the first quarter in 2018. As a matter of fact, TCS made the highest net addition to its employee strength in the last 12 quarters and announced its plans to hire 28,000 employees in campus placements. However, for most companies, a part of these numbers also consists of the employees that have been hired outside India, as they are under pressure to increase local employee count.

The Experis IT Employment Outlook Survey has revealed that the IT sector will have a net positive hiring sentiment of 53 percent (for the period October 2018 – March 2019) and the job market will witness a certain revival. Based on the responses of 550 Indian IT employers in the country, the survey states that companies are excited about hiring and upskilling their employees. However, it is also quick to add that most Indian employers are looking for candidates that display a high 'learnability quotient', particularly in the 0-5 years' experience category. Industry experts have mentioned that this is due to the growth in major business industries like BFSI and retail. Additionally, a growing need to digitize operations has helped IT companies clinch hefty deals. For example, Infosys closed deals worth over \$2 billion in the second quarter; TCS inked new deals and renewed existing ones to the tune of \$4.9 billion; Wipro announced a new \$1.5 billion deal in July; and even mid-sized players like Mindtree expect to close deals worth over \$1 billion this year. A rapidly depreciating rupee has also benefitted the industry.

## Who is hiring - And for what levels?

The Experis survey shows that a majority of hiring is expected for the junior level and employers are predominantly seeking skills like critical thinking and creativity. "While many IT companies are now looking for fresh talent in the market that is already upskilled with the latest technologies and job-ready from day one, a lot of companies still want candidates with 1-2 years of prior hands-on experience." Furthermore, as employers rush to make their workforces future-ready, there is an increasing demand for experienced professionals in the domains of robotics, big data, analytics, automation, Internet of Things, AI, virtual and augmented reality etc. Notably, non-IT

companies had a collective positive outlook of 45 percent. This is because as the demand for special roles to implement digital transformation goes up, non-IT companies are increasingly hiring IT professionals as well. Similarly, the thriving Indian start-up sector, especially in niche technologies, will help add new roles to the job market.

In addition to hiring, IT companies have also started undertaking massive upskilling and reskilling drives. As a result of limited supply of talent and soaring costs of hiring, companies are now looking inwards to build an agile workforce. The Experis survey found that there is an increased spending on training programs to update the skills of existing employees. This has been corroborated by a recent Quartz report which stated that TCS has already trained some 210,000 trainees and Wipro trained nearly 40,000 employees in digital skills last year.

The complex hiring requirement has also significantly altered HR's talent and recruitment strategies as well. The survey also mentions that "To hire resources in demand this season, HR is disrupting all its conventional strategies and adopting alternative methods to fit the volatile requirements. These alternative talent acquisition strategies include liquid workforce, temp, on-demand hiring, increasing contract resources and implementing upskilling/re-skilling of internal staff to cater to complex/niche requirements."

### Challenges Ahead

All in all, it would be unwise to assume that the journey ahead for the IT industry will be smooth sailing. For one, the full impact of the Trump administration's America-First policy will be felt beginning January 2019, as the USCIS plans to come out with new proposals for H1B visas. It is important to note that Indian IT professionals comprise roughly 75 percent of all the H1B visa holders in the USA. When the new administrative changes kick-in, a further decrease in the number of approvals can be expected. Similarly, H4 visa holders (90 percent Indians) are likely to experience a loss in employment opportunities under the new regulations.


On the other side of the Pacific, with Brexit becoming a reality soon, companies will have to act according to the terms of separation and might struggle to adapt to the changed economic structure of the European markets. There is uncertainty regarding the political and regulatory environment in the region, which has resulted in a drop in the number of big-value deals from the UK. The country has also been gradually implementing protectionist policies and revising immigration laws, under fire due to local economic and unemployment challenges.

Finally, regardless of the political scenario, the pace of digitization and adoption of intelligent technology is also likely to result in further disruptions. While many organizations have adopted a pragmatic approach and started reskilling their workforces, a lot more needs to be done.



## Leading Indian IT companies have added nearly 38,000 employees collectively in the second quarter this year with TCS making the highest net addition to its employee numbers

As projected by the Experis survey, as management loses its sheen, IT job roles in the middle and senior management are likely to be significantly impacted. Although AI and automation will be a net generator of employment, it will create roles which require new-age skills. Thus, for Indian IT employees and employers, reskilling will be critical for survival.

As the IT industry picks up pace and expands its workforce, Indian IT professionals certainly have a reason to cheer. However, maintaining the current momentum of expansion and re-skilling is key to ensuring a minimal negative impact of digital disruptions in the future. As noted by the survey, on the back of new jobs and roles and the advancement of next-generation technologies, the Indian IT industry will continue to be a net hirer. However, alternative hiring and training strategies will be deployed to ensure that the industry remains ready for the future. 

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Q & A

# THE ROAD FROM STRATEGY TO IMPLEMENTATION

In an exclusive interaction with People Matters, **RICARDO VIANA VARGAS**, Executive Director of the Brightline Initiative™, talks about bridging the gap between strategy development and implementation, and about transforming the future

By Yasmin Taj

**O**ver the past 20 years, Ricardo Viana Vargas has been responsible for more than 80 major transformation projects in several countries and industries, covering an investment portfolio of over 20 billion USD. He is also an entrepreneur in the digital economy, with focus on project management tools using artificial intelligence and machine learning.

He is currently the Executive Director of the Brightline Initiative™, a coalition of leading global organizations from business, government and not for profit sectors, including the Boston Consulting Group (BCG), the Project Management Institute (PMI) and the Agile Alliance. He is the first Latin American to be elected Chairman of the Project Management Institute (PMI) and has written fifteen books and a dozen of technical articles.

In an exclusive interaction with People Matters, Ricardo talks about the crucial role of project management in organizations, about Brightline Initiative's People Manifesto and why it should not be about thinking how the future would be, but about transforming it.

**Q You are a multi-faceted personality. You began as an engineer and then shifted towards project management, entrepreneurship and the initiative of Brightline. Please take us through your journey.**

**A** I am a Brazilian and was raised in an environment which demanded working with a mindset to rely more on my ability than someone else taking my hand and guiding me throughout my whole life. Since I was fourteen, I developed a true passion for Chemistry, labs and technology and I started working at a very young age in my own neighborhood by selling perfumes which marked my first experience as a Chemical Engineer. Then I shifted my interest to the transformation industry to understand things like how people create plastic, petrol and transformed it into gasoline for airplanes. It was my engineering class that helped me build an extremely strong background in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Industrial Engineering. I studied about how to create transformation from raw materials and other products, how to optimize them to make products faster and this is what opened my eyes to project management.

**Q When did you begin to pursue this idea of project management?**

**A** It was when I was 21 years old and I could bring PMI to my state for the first

time. I became the first Latin American member to be elected to the PMI Board of Directors and was made the Chairman in 2009. Everything was based on this passion of transforming raw ideas into results. Over the past 15 years, I have had the chance to write about fifteen books and dozens of technical articles and I established a company in Brazil which became very big and I sold it in 2006 with 4500 employees. I then took my career international and became the global Director for Project Management at the United Nations between 2012 and 2016. This was a very important phase for me as it gave me the chance to use my skills and knowledge for the humanitarian and development purpose, something that was not about making my clients wealthier. Hence, what inspired me the most to get into project management was the fact that I love getting things done. I am not the kind of person who stays only in the ideas environment. It is not about thinking about how the future would be, but transforming the future. This mindset was extremely help-

of creating a space to transform ideas into result, in a world that demands much more improvement.

So, why can some companies deliver and some cannot? Is it a financial problem or is it a technology or human problem? What is blocking organizations to be successful in delivering their strategies and ideas? At Brightline, we develop research and raise awareness around these issues. If people do not have the awareness that there is a problem to solve in terms of transforming their strategies and ideas into results, then they will not act on it. And Brightline is an initiative for raising the awareness and build ways to tackle the problem. Within a year, we successfully conduct an online training course on Coursera for free with almost 3300 students enrolled at the moment. We organized the Strategy@Work conference in New York this October, which is an exclusive invite-only event with CEOs, strategy executives and thought leaders sharing their experiences on how to better link their strategy design with strategy delivery in

## We see a lot of people who say they don't understand where their company is moving towards

ful for me at the UN, since I was the one heading the implementation of projects and getting the job done on the ground. For example, we built 4000 kms of roads in Afghanistan and hundreds of schools and hospitals in challenging environments and conflict zones. The project execution part was what motivated me the most.

**Q How did the opportunity emerge to initiate Brightline which is closely associated with project management?**

**A** As individuals, we all need to develop flexibility to adapt to different opportunities that may arise. I knew since the beginning that my work at the UN was not a change in my professional life; it was more like a project. When I brought this project at the UN into fruition, PMI reached out to me along with BCG and Agile Alliance with a new and unique idea. The idea was to convene the message to people on the importance and know-how of getting things done. So, in this way, the 'embryo' of Brightline was formed, with a mission

this volatile world we all live in. We have been producing multiple research pieces as well with global leading organizations on topics such as strategy implementation, crisis management, people, etc. In one year, we accomplished things that many could not do in 20 years. At Brightline, we have a startup mindset and we work in an extremely nimble and agile environment with headquarters in Philadelphia and team members all over the world. Moreover, everything we produce is available for free for the public. Brightline is about a mission on bridging the gap between ideas and results; this is beyond business, which excites me and motivates me to transform things.

**Q What are some of the fundamental guidelines and principles that you can share with us on the basis of your experience with great leaders or role models on execution of ideas? What are some of the gaps that you have seen between idea and execution?**

# BRIGHTLINE PEOPLE MANIFESTO

People form the link between strategy design and delivery!

People are generally recognized as the most important source of an organization's competitive advantage. Yet they are frequently the most misunderstood and least leveraged asset.

People form the link between strategy design and delivery; they turn ideas into reality; they are the strategy in motion. Success requires a deep understanding of the fundamental complexity of this trickiest element: OUR PEOPLE.

## Leadership is over-emphasized

➤ The criticality of leadership is well understood. Senior leaders need to reach out to engage and activate the extended leadership team, convincingly speak with one voice on the change and powerfully model the new target behaviors. So, to make big things happen, be ready to definitively lead, but when the time is right, also be prepared to follow. While we are conditioned to believe we must always lead to be valued, there is also a place and time to follow. Follow when someone else has greater competency or insight to address the issue at hand. Leaders need followers to be successful. Make “follower-ship” a valued behavior. Rather than always looking for ways to lead, recognize when and how to take more of a backseat.

## Collaboration is key, but isn't everything

➤ Strategy requires having the right individuals who can each do their own thing and, when needed, work well together. When the task requires it, teams can break down silos, add diversity to the creative process, and generate thinking and responsiveness far greater than the sum of the individuals. Care must be taken to craft such teams – whether from internal or external talent pools – with the right mix of capabilities and skillsets and explicitly set the conditions that allow people to work collectively. Recognize that collaboration takes time and coordination, and not all initiatives require team effort. When appropriate, give the right individuals the authority to make decisions and drive execution on their own.

## Culture is never built

➤ Culture and strategy are, more than ever, entwined. Not only must culture support strategy, it must move in lock step with a dynamic, evolving strategy where the behavioral recipe for winning is not fixed or static. While culture cannot be built directly, nor accomplished through a blueprint or a checklist, it cannot be left to chance. It requires understanding the intricacy of culture, as a dynamic and living “organism” made from the collective tension between individuals' behaviors and responses. Coupling culture with strategy is a complicated and never-ending endeavor in shepherding influences, assessing outcomes, and adjusting focus to build behavioral advantages that deliver winning strategies.

## People act in their own self-interest

➤ Change is a human endeavor and, as such, can make delivering strategy a messy and complicated process. People have different interests, motivators and tolerance – which influence behaviors and create potential misalignment and barriers. Their response may not appear rational at first, because change is often processed as a threat. New strategies always require different ways of working, so leaders must recognize the time and effort required to shift individual interests, mindsets and behaviors. Even when people may be convinced that the changes are in the collective interest, their individual behaviors may not align if the personal cost of change seems too great. Look for these entrenched behaviors and create the conditions and dialogs to make change individually desirable and at the same time aligned with the broader interest.

➤ About one year ago, we created the Brightline Initiative 10 Guiding Principles, a creative comment document consisting of 10 guiding principles that is the cornerstone of Brightline's work. I would like to metaphorically represent the guiding principles as a connector like a river or a bridge linking two mountains symbolizing idea and execution respectively. We identify that it is important to create awareness among people that equal value should be attributed to both ideas and execution.

For example, the first principle is that we need to acknowledge strategy delivery is as important as strategy design. In other words, ideas without execution is nothing. Second is the principle on accountability especially accountability on the ones that design the strategies. The accountability demands right resources, an in-depth understanding of the market and steps to translate strategic initiatives into favorable results. All of the 10 principles have a human component in them and the challenge lies where people cannot transform and adapt in the speed of the technologies and they cannot follow Moore's Law. That is, people are not able to change as fast with the environment. This brings up the significance of the People Manifesto we just launched, which acts as a bridge between people and change.

➤ **In the People Manifesto, you have highlighted leadership, collaboration, culture and self-interest. What do you suggest as the most important one among them?**

➤ The People Manifesto is designed to provoke people's thinking on the most fundamental and complex element in strategy—THE PEOPLE. It highlights four areas that have been discussed a lot but need to be revisited and better understood. As the People Manifesto highlights, people are generally recognized as the most important source of an organization's competitive advantage. Yet they are frequently the most misunderstood and least leveraged assets.

The four areas of the People Manifesto are all super relevant, for example, leadership is overemphasized, culture is never built, collaboration is key but isn't everything, etc. The one that is the most evident one for me is that people act on their own self-interest. If people do not buy the idea, they don't act on it. People are much more complex and if they fail to identify what is in it there for them and even if they don't acknowledge their work, they do it in their own self-interest. If an organization does not understand the interest of its people, then people do not buy in to the idea and transform. We can see a lot of people who say they don't understand where their company is moving towards; it is actually a polite way of saying that they don't agree with this strategy.

**Q What is the role that HR professionals need to play in the present scenario which demands more agility as projects are a lot more dynamic today? How can HR create an organizational structure with the right culture and agility for the execution of principles?**

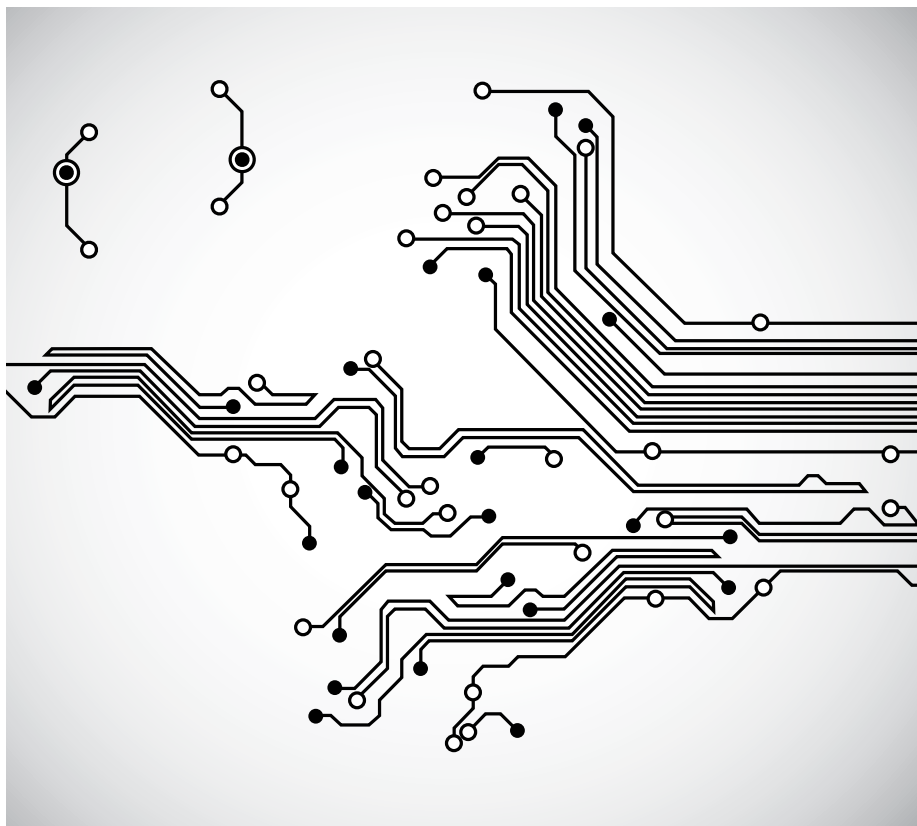
**A** First, we need to reinvent how we handle the team and people. We need to give people the autonomy, foster their self-development and go out of their comfort zones. It takes a lot of trust and also courage to do. But without doing so, it will lead to failure when a company keeps protecting its employees like keeping them in a golden cage that is so comfortable. It will prevent them from adapting to the fast-changing environment outside of the golden cage. In the Brightline Strategy@Work conference in October, former Chairman and CEO of IBM, Mr. Gerstner spoke about the sense of urgency for leaders to act in this fast changing world. I think the sense of urgency is definitely key here. It demands HR professionals and leaders in the organizations to create the change and culture that every single person should know his/her individual responsibility and work on individual self-development. Also, people should not be scared to make career moves. HR needs to foster such environment and mindset of flexibility in the workplace where employees can have access to knowledge and access to opportunities.

**Q What is your point of view on the role of technology in the world of work?**

**A** With regards to technology, what we need to do is channel technology and use machine learning to improve human capability of doing things. However, if we do not bring people together first and are not inclusive, technology will benefit only a fraction of the society, and this at some point, might collapse the society. If we can create opportunities for everybody to succeed at different levels, we are improving the society in general and this is what we should aim with the advancement of technology. We are not meant to support technology that just enables people to kill jobs; it should rather generate new opportunities for people. People should not feel excluded. So, if we want to create a good society, technology should be applied in the right way.

**Q How do strategic leaders need to do things differently for the future of work?**

**A** In my opinion, if you are to be a leader, you have to do what you say instead of preaching and practicing different things. You need to walk the talk. You need to lead



## If we can create opportunities for everybody to succeed at different levels, we are improving the society in general and this is what we should aim with the advancement of technology

the organization by being a true example or as a role model who can understand and adapt with the environmental changes happening around you. I strive to do that myself. When I graduated in Chemical Engineering, my parents believed that I should pursue my career in a large oil company, start as an intern and finish my career 35 years later as the top management. But today different approaches are getting approved and the new workforce demands different working experiences in diverse geographical regions. I know 80 different countries as well as different perspectives from Japan to the Gaza Strip. This is what the leaders should foster - to have a global view of what's happening and be able to adapt to the changing environment.

**Q Is there anything else you would like to suggest to the HR community and to leaders?**

**A** I would like to invite everyone to take a look at the Brightline People Manifesto and think and connect with the wisdom in the People Manifesto. As an HR professional, everything that seems to be obvious needs to be challenged because people are constantly evolving. This is what we attempt to do with the People Manifesto when we say that we have to overcome this leadership overemphasizing. The extreme sense of leadership would curtail our ability to follow which is highly required to have a wider experience. HR needs to foster this mindset for creating a productive work culture. **em**



# 2019: The Year of New Media at Work

Digital has pervaded all aspects of our lives. But are we still living in the analog times at the workplace? Has the new media really stayed outside the world of work?

**T**he digital tsunami has created a hyper-connected world. We live our lives through our phones. The mobile devices have become the windows to how we communicate, buy, learn, and even date. But once you enter the workplace, we step back in the analog time. It is as if the new media has stayed outside the world of work.

*“AR view lets you view products in your home before you buy them. You can see how they fit, and test how they look. Curious whether a throw pillow is the right shade of blue, or whether a mixer you like will fit under the counter? Now just pull out your phone to find out.”*

That is just how you can shop at Amazon. The Amazon app lets you pick a product from their store and see how it looks in your home; whether it clashes with your décor or enhances the look you are comfortable with. In the experience economy, consumers like to try before they buy. But not when it comes to careers.

## New Media in Talent Management Simulate the job

Imagine being able to use the same “try before you buy” principle when it comes to your career decisions. The best way to hire a candidate is to have him/her experience what that job could mean — both in terms of challenges and opportunities. That is the equivalent of having a pilot demonstrate the skills in a low risk environment (like a flight simulator) before letting the person fly a multi-million-dollar aircraft. What if we could do the same for every job?

## Experience a walkthrough

Augmented Reality is being used to help people shop. Why not use the same technology to let people decide whether a particular job is what they expect it to be. Currently, people have to believe the sales-pitch or read reviews on websites to take a call. AR apps can make sample experiences a vital part of the decision-making process. The scientist who you wish to hire can see

## Imagine being able to use the same “try before you buy” principle when it comes to your career decisions

the lab equipment even as the hiring decision is being finalized. It is possible to do this without having the person step into the office. The talent acquisition process can be an immersive experience for the employer and the candidate. It should simulate what it is like to work together. It should help answer what it would feel like to be part of the team. That experience can be a powerful way to integrate and onboard the new hires.

## Holographic Images – the possibilities

Recently Imperial College Business School organized an event called Women in tech. They brought in speakers from Los Angeles and New York. What is new, you may ask. These speakers were brought in via holographic images. The speakers who were brought in as holograms could see the audience, speak to the audience, and take their questions.

Imagine the possibilities that could throw up. The leaders of the organization could do hologram briefings about their vision to students on campus. They could teach a class anywhere in the world. It takes collaboration to the next level. What a fantastic way it could be to run a geographically distributed team.

## New Media is being used already


When Jaguar Land Rover needed to source talent to fill Graphics Performance, Cyber Systems, Software Development and App Development positions, they partnered with British band Gorillaz to recruit the

next generation of world-class electronics and software engineers through the virtual band’s alternate reality app. They created a free app where candidates could learn more about electric vehicles and play but had demanding code-breaking puzzles. Those who performed well are then fast-tracked through the recruitment process.

## New Media Adoption in 2019

Phil Hettema, a veteran theme park designer said, *“The secret sauce of theme parks is that they’re really about the experience they create between people who are visiting.”* The way the new theme parks are doing it is to let the visitors not only pose for pictures with the characters, but to go beyond.

To reimagine the workplace as an experience, one needs to understand the new media. Whether it is AR or VR or Mixed Reality or Holograms or even podcasts, there is a lot to choose from. For that, the HR teams will need to learn enough about the new media and then layer it with their imagination and creativity to create the experiences. The workplace needs to be a deeper digital experience and instant access to information is one way to create that. The HR teams must work with people who understand web design, user interface design, video production, data visualization and of course, content creation.

I hope in 2019, new media will let HR truly become employee experience designers. 

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## 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.



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Q &amp; A

# A multidisciplinary approach to propel HR

Planning the workforce for the Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD) from the scratch to hiring top-class faculty members from across the globe, in a candid interaction with People Matters, **Dr. Jaclyn Lee**, CHRO of SUTD shares her perspectives on how HR can adopt a multi-disciplinary approach for structuring itself, agility in workforce management systems, and attracting and retaining multidisciplinary talent

By Ester Martinez & Vallari Gupte

**D**r. Jaclyn Lee has more than 20 years of experience in HR and capability development and has played a crucial role not only in building the foundation of workforce management at SUTD, but also in establishing the framework of this institute from the scratch, setting up compensation structures and performance management system while spearheading new HR policies and processes. She has also worked with the senior management team in developing the mission, vision, and values of the new university when it was inception.

Lee was previously Senior Vice President, Group Human Resources, responsible for manag-

ing the full spectrum of human resources for Certis CISCO Security Pte Ltd, a security services company in Singapore. She holds a PhD in Business Information Systems from University of Twente in the Netherlands, a Masters in HRM from Rutgers University, a Masters in Management from Singapore Management University, and a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Brandon University.

**Q Taking a multidisciplinary approach towards each function is in SUTD's DNA. Please tell us more about this approach and how HR can leverage it to its benefit?**

**A** We do not have academic schools or departments; instead, we are organized by Pillars of Specialization. This is reflective of the real world where most problems cannot be solved without assembling a team of experts with diverse skills to be able to develop products, systems, and services to meet the demands of individuals, industry, and governments. This is what we call an “outside-in” approach. The four pillars or core areas of specialization at SUTD include Architecture and Sustainable Design, Engineering Product Development, Engineering Systems and Design, and Information Systems and Design, and these are structured around products, services, and systems centered on the theme of “Design”.

# It is HR's responsibility to propel a cultural transformation in organizations

I believe that HR divisions still have a long way to go in adapting to the changing times. As HR partners with the businesses and help organizations assemble talents to meet the needs of businesses, HR needs to adopt a multi-disciplinary approach in the way it structures itself.

## Q How does a multi-disciplinary approach for structuring HR teams provide organizations with a competitive advantage?

A Many HR practitioners are trained in social sciences and have functional skillsets. They have the depth that is required but not necessarily the breadth of that functionality. Adding diversity to the skillsets of the traditional HR division provides the much needed breadth to propel the value-add of the HR Function.

At SUTD, we have assembled a diverse team comprising data analysts, IT professionals, digital marketing specialists, as well as team members trained in statistical abilities. This diversity has helped the SUTD HR team to delve into data analytics and empower the university with a strong employer brand through digital marketing efforts. In addition, our IT team has been able to develop complex capability systems and data dashboards for reporting. Therein is the value of the multi-disciplinary approach to structuring HR divisions of today.

## Q How can employers ensure that they attract and retain multidisciplinary talent?

A The idea is that while you have functional structures, you must have teams that are able to bring and assemble products and services in a way that renders a multidisciplinary perspective. Once you've hired the best multidisciplinary team, the key is to retain that talent. A major component of retaining and attracting people to an organization is to show them the future growth possibilities—not just in terms of how it would benefit the organization but how it would positively impact their personal career goals and growth as well. I think organizations need to share their vision for the department and how they see the employee's capabilities fitting into the existing framework and growing in the evolving workspace. That's how we




hire and retain the best faculty members — they need to be able to envision the prospect of expanding their capabilities.

## Q How can organizations ensure that their workforce management system remains agile?

A I strongly believe that it is up to the HR practitioners to create an environment of learning not just within their own departments but across the organization. The disconnect takes place when the employees are not able to catch up with the demands of the industry in order to find solutions to the challenges that a particular business might be facing. Training employees to be agile and constantly upskilling them for delivering on the needs of the world is crucial.

I personally have spent a lot of time and resources in taking courses on data analytics, data science, agile techniques, and design thinking to keep abreast with the latest trends and practices. This has helped me to keep up with the changes happening around me. Similarly, I encourage every person on my team to keep learning and to take advantage of the rich and diverse learning opportunities within a higher education environment.

## Q What would be your message for HR teams in their journey of reinvention?

A I would say that HR teams can definitely enhance their performance and expand their roles in the organization if they think about digital technologies as an evolving skillset. Information technology systems and data analytics are now instrumental in making HR teams more efficient and functional. Moreover, fields such as statistics and mathematics that were considered unrelated to HR have now become all the more relevant. It is the HR's responsibility to propel a cultural transformation within their respective organizations. 



# #Metoo Deserves More Than Me-too Solutions

- Effective Ways to Quickly End Sexual Harassment in Corporates

What can be done to change the behavior of the small but significant part of the male population that, when left unchecked, makes workplaces traumatic for women?

**W**hen I recently saw the narratives of the victims of sexual harassment on television, what came across strikingly in most cases despite the years that had elapsed since the attacks was the sense of unmitigated terror those women experienced. By contrast, the steps corporate India is taking to prevent the menace seem pathetically benign to me.<sup>1</sup> Leaping on to the sensitization bandwagon rapidly rolling across India's corporate horizon may give the CEOs an impression that their HR departments are doing everything possible to counter the sexual

harassment menace but such programs, by themselves, will achieve little.

What may be adequate for alleviating gender diversity issues (although even there mandatory training has been shown to have unintended consequences<sup>2</sup>) is unlikely to be more than homeopathic value in dealing with impulses that may have deep evolutionary origins. Kingsley Browne points out: "The Utopian workplace desired by some ... is not one likely to be created by our evolved minds. The ... view that sex is just a 'social construct' has encouraged many to believe that people (especially men) can simply be educated to leave their sexual psychologies behind them and enter a workplace in which they adopt 'work roles' that are largely independent of their psyches... An understanding of evolved sex differences in sexual psychologies is essential to the understanding of the behaviors produced by those psychologies and can assist in their management."<sup>3</sup>

Just because training is not the panacea for this problem doesn't mean nothing can be done. Browne himself goes on to say: "Recognition of the fact that sexual harassment is a manifestation of our evolved psychologies does not mean that sexual harassment is either good or inevitable. Many behaviors having origins in our evolved psychologies are recognized to be social pathologies even if they do not reflect psychological pathologies. Behaviors are susceptible of modification, even if our underlying psychologies are not, and it should be remembered that our evolved psychologies are not only the source of sexual harassment but also of our desire to combat it."<sup>3</sup>



The prevention (or, failing prevention, the punishment) of sexual harassment in the workplace depends on making it less traumatic and onerous for victims to complain, harnessing technology to make the establishment of what actually happened go beyond the "he-said-she-said" impasse, and meting out exemplary punishment where guilt is established

What can we do to change the behavior of the small but significant part of the male population that, when left unchecked, makes workplaces traumatic for women? Fifty years ago, Gary Becker proposed a model of criminal reasoning and disincentivization<sup>4</sup> that meets our present purpose well. According to a simplified version of Becker's argument, crime reduction can occur through reducing the benefits of crime, raising the probability of being caught or increasing the costs of punishment upon being caught. Preaching to potential sexual harassers will have minimal impact unless we can change the probability of their being caught and the quantum of punishment they suffer thereafter. The probability of sexual harassers being caught, in turn, depends on the likelihood of the victim making a complaint in a reasonable time span and then being able to prove the allegation. Thus, the prevention (or, failing prevention, the punishment) of sexual harassment in the workplace depends on:

- Making it less traumatic and onerous for victims to complain (without giving up the principles of natural justice)
- Harnessing technology to make the establishment of what actually happened go beyond the "he-said-she-said" impasse
- Meting out exemplary punishment where guilt is established.

Here are some quick ways for making each of these happen in the corporate world. Simply having these guards in place could hugely reduce the incidence of sexual harassment. Like speed cameras on highways, their presence (even if they are not triggered) may deter potential transgressors significantly.

### Ease of Making Complaints

Victims often blame the HR or the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) for moving slowly on their complaints of sexual harassment instead of taking their allegations at face value and proceeding on that basis. While there are some cases where the harasser's position in the organization may reduce the temperature of the feet of HR and the ICC by several degrees, we should not forget that both the HR and the ICC are meant to be neutral entities whose prime responsibility in this context is to see that justice is done.

The victim, however, may require much more support at this critical time than either the HR or the ICC can provide, especially given the need for impartiality as evidence is gathered and assessed. In the absence of such aid, a large proportion of victims may never raise complaints till they are safely out of the organization (and then we wonder why so many complaints come after decades) and are encouraged by movements like #MeToo.

It is, therefore, imperative for organizations that are serious about battling sexual harassment at the workplace to create additional support structures. Let's call them Friends-of-the-#Mes (or FoMs) for the time being. The FoMs must be independent of HR as well as the ICC and could report



Preaching to potential sexual harassers will have minimal impact unless we can change the probability of their being caught and the quantum of punishment they suffer thereafter

to the Chair of the Nominations and Remuneration Committee of the Board. Conflicts of interest may be further reduced by appointing specialized external service providers or non-profits (paid by the company) to provide FoM services.

What services should FoMs provide? Their services should essentially consist of advice and comfort of the kind that could be given by a legally savvy but caring friend so that the victim no longer feels alone or scared. After all, it is the additional trauma of frequently having to recount the horrible events, the repeated cross-questionings about them, and the headaches of following up until some action is taken that makes victims say: "The real harassment starts after the harassment episode!" To provide this support, the FoM must not only be resourced to run a hotline and counseling service for sexual harassment complaints but given access to records on behalf of the victim as well as accompanying privileges at hearings (and possibly even representational rights) which no work-friend of the victim is given today even if such a friend were available and had the time to pursue the victim's case. Engaging an FoM service could make a huge difference to the timeliness and courage with which women come out with their harassment stories and totally change the expectations perpetrators have about getting called out – which is obviously the first step before any conviction or punishment can take place.

While FoM is best placed outside the HR umbrella, HR can and should be vigilant for any signs of post-harassment victimization of the complainant. Besides being open to feedback from the individual or the FoM, HR should track sudden changes in ratings, assignment allocations, nominations, and career-plan trajectories. If any of these show signs of tapering off after a person speaks out, HR has a duty to establish that the decline is not linked to the complaint.

Another way in which HR can ease the challenges for a victim wanting to speak up is to give a prompt and sympathetic ear to the person's requests for a job transfer away from the environment where the harassment took or is taking place. These requests (and they should be actual requests – not prompted by HR just to close the complaint) could be accommodated without insisting on the higher standards of proof that are needed for taking action against alleged perpetrators. Victims can find it far easier to recover as well as plan their cases away from the atmosphere where the trauma occurred. Leave can play a similar role and could be granted on a special basis, if sought, just based on prima facie evidence of harassment. These concessions, together with FoM support, would go a long way to encouraging the more than three-quarters of the women who face sexual harassment today but remain quiet<sup>5</sup>, to come forward.

Ideally, we should identify harassers as early as possible. Even before an individual victim complains, there are pre-emptive steps organizations can take to target potential perpetrators. Most large organizations with mature HR practices have some form of a 360° feedback process. It

would require relatively minor tweaking to identify supervisors or peers who display behaviors that are more or less serious forms of sexual harassment. Depending on the degree of seriousness and consensus among raters, individuals could be counseled, cautioned, or cauterized. And all without a victim having to come forward, be identified, and go through a possibly traumatic process to see justice served.

### **She Said - and She Can Prove It**

Whether in the recently concluded confirmation hearings for Brett Kavanaugh by the US Senate or in the twitter wars of India's #MeToo moment, the final verdict often just hinges on a choice between what he-said-and-she-said. This gives everyone free reins to exercise their passions, prejudices, and powers of shouting. Whatever be the outcome, one can never be certain of its fairness.

Organizations wishing to preempt such situations today have the option to use technology for preserving incontrovertible evidence. While the prime goal would be to deter harassment in face-to-face interactions (since most perpetrators are now smart enough not to reveal themselves through e-mails, e-messages or phone calls), these steps would also discourage baseless complaints.

The actual measures can range from simply extending the coverage of the existing network of CCTV cameras to all employee interaction spaces (which, in terms of privacy, may be no different than an open office) through providing these cameras with audio feeds and finally going on to more portable (but not hidden) video-audio solutions which could also cover off-site interactions.

## The Utopian workplace desired by some ... is not one likely to be created by our evolved minds



I am sure more technologically savvy heads than mine can work out the most cost-effective solutions. What is more important at this stage is to stress the guidelines for making these devices effective in checking harassment without eroding the openness and trust necessary for normal business functioning. Here is a tentative list of guidelines and safeguards.

In the first place, to trigger retention of a particular time slice of the ongoing recording (whether by a fixed or portable device) to a central storage with an otherwise limited holding-period, one of the participants in an interaction would have to make a request in a specified time (say 24 or 48 hours) after it occurs. The handling of such requests would be automated and not alert anyone in the organization. Access to that retained segment would be provided only to a reviewing authority, like the ICC, if so requested by the victim within some reasonable time frame (say, up to a year after the event). These access requests would need to be authorized by both HR and the accused. One would assume most individuals, keen to clear their names, would be happy to grant the permission – or have the refusal factored against them in the proceedings. Most importantly, even to the reviewing authority, the audio component would be provided only as a transcript prepared by a confidentiality-bound service provider, after redacting all material that does not have relevance to the charge.

Far from providing managements with unrestricted surveillance access that most of us fear when we hear about recording devices (I have devoted an entire column to the topic<sup>6</sup>), with safeguards such the ones described, we would have rare instances of recording retention and even fewer cases of recording access being provided to a very restricted group, with nothing irrelevant to the investigation being revealed. In fact, we should see interactions revert back to normal from the disturbing recent trend of male executives avoiding one-to-one meetings with female employees or clients so as to preempt future complications.<sup>7</sup> The most important gain from simply having the possibility of calling for an unambiguous record could well be to minimize the number of occasions on which it is actually put into play.

I appreciate the aversion some organizations and people have about introducing technology into the prescribed prevention-mix. They are, of course, free to leave it out. Should they do so, they can still use the suggestions made in the previous section on reducing the fear and trauma of making complaints. However, they will be unable to gain the deterrent benefits proposed in the next section (on ratcheting up the pain of punishments) unless they can find equally robust evidence-gathering mechanisms to justify exemplary punishments.

### Hitting Where it Hurts

Presently, even for cases where sexual harassment is established by the ICC, the internal punishments (as distinct from the criminal cases or media coverage which select cases attract) are like the



Just the awareness of the punishments possible at the upper end of the scale will do more to 'de-ardor-ize' would-be perpetrators than days of sensitization seminars

lowest two speeds of a ceiling fan regulator. When the regulator is set on '1', the perpetrator is reprimanded or transferred and if it's pushed to '2', he is asked to give in his resignation, which is discreetly accepted. This flies in the face of the Becker paradigm<sup>4</sup> whose emphasis on the quantum of punishment has been demonstrated repeatedly.<sup>8</sup>

There is no doubt that there are differences of degree and kind in the varieties of sexual harassment men cause in organizations. Hence, the relatively light punishments at the lower end of the fan regulator do serve a purpose. The real deterrent effect will only emerge, however, from the option to have truly painful punishments for the most serious offenders. Resignations and even simple terminations leave most benefits intact. In fact, at senior levels, terminations can trigger a range of compensatory payments which make a mockery of deterrence – and this doesn't happen only in India.<sup>9</sup> Last I checked, laughing all the way to the bank wasn't a very onerous punishment. Such payment contracts, stock benefits, and medical insurance coverages should be voided and even past rewards clawed back when very serious sexual harassment charges (regulator scale of '6') are proved. Moreover, company policy should mandate honest responses to reference checks when separations are triggered by sexual harassment complaints. Just the awareness of the punishments possible at the upper end of the scale



## Perhaps the most challenging cases for CHROs will be when the sexual harassment allegations are against their own CEOs, at which point most ICCs and other internal checks tend to falter badly

will do more to 'de-arador-ize' would-be perpetrators than days of sensitization seminars.

### Every Future Case is Preventable

A cursory reading of the suggestions given in this column might give an impression that HR has little to contribute to or gain from the elimination of sexual harassment at the workplace. Nothing could be further from my intent. If I have given a little more space to FoM services and the use of technology for retaining evidence, it is because these are relatively novel ideas in this context. However, it is up to HR to drive their implementation and thus prevent (and, if necessary, penalize) sexual harassment by:

- Making it easier for victims to lodge and pursue complaints
- Recording evidence that either condemns or clears the accused
- Lifting punishment levels for the worst offenders to provide a real deterrent.

HR also has to review and, if necessary, reformulate policies that could indirectly have a bearing on sexual harassment. One such area relates to consensual relationships at the workplace. I must keep my policy suggestions about consensual rela-

tionships for another time but it is clear that while office romances will continue to bloom (regardless of the codes we impose), they will increasingly have to stay within boundaries where Kratos (the spirit of power) doesn't substitute Cupid.

Perhaps the most challenging cases for CHROs will be when the sexual harassment allegations are against their own CEOs, at which point most ICCs and other internal checks tend to falter badly. It is most useful in such situations, if the company is part of a larger group or overseas MNC, to have a standing policy for CEO-related complaints to be handled at the Group or Global/Regional head-quarter level. Standalone companies can substitute the Nomination and Remuneration Committees of their Boards for this purpose.

While HR is bound to take the practical steps suggested here (or any others that yield equivalent results) because they owe a safe working environment to women, it is not as if this will have no side benefits for HR's larger goals. At least for the first few corporates that adopt these measures, there should be perceptible improvement in their ability to attract quality women recruits.

I know I am disappointing some friends who were hoping I could suggest ways of transforming the nature of males or of corporate culture so that such atrocious behavior just didn't arise. My goal has had to be circumscribed both by the limits of my competence and my conviction that we owe it to potential victims to stop sexual harassment in the shortest time possible though that means its innate causes or cultural enablers are left to be tackled another day. Even one additional case of such predatory behavior is one too many and, therefore, what I have suggested are the most effective practical ideas for curtailing sexual harassment in the corporate environment as quickly as possible. 🍌

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# Shaping the future

Organizations and CHROs today have to be prepared and equip the organizational framework to identify and manage the right talent. But how can they do this?

**F**orecasting future has never been easy, but it is essential to identify and understand the social, demographical and technological trends which will disrupt and shape the nature of our businesses in next few years. CHRO's today are expected to play an organizational transformational role to help build new organization models with an agile workforce, which will be ready to imagine and deliver the challenges of future. They are entrusted with the responsibility of convincing and making significant investments in intelligent automation technologies to enable employees, ensure ease of execution, and essentially define the future of work. Adding a layer of complexity is the dynamic and demanding multi-generational and multi-cultural workforce that needs scaling up both in size and skill while retaining their uniqueness and voice.


With the dynamics of work itself changing, the known definitions of the worker and the workplace as we know are the remnants of a bygone era. Increasing instances of uberization at work has resulted in a mobile, global free floating workforce, leading to talent shortages and intense competition for the top talent. Organizations are responsible and held accountable for ensuring that the current workforce remains relevant and are prepared to navigate the future. As a part of TechM HRNxT strategy we have caught this trend head-on and have launched 'eXtra Mile', a platform for near-skilling. Associates across the globe based on their aspirations can sign up for shadowing and on-job assignments and build skills without having to leave their day jobs. Gap insights from skill adjacency matrix helps them upskill/reskill. Our associates are able to access 'in house' competency development programs and world class learning modules through EdX collaboration. This strategy has enabled our talent to imagine and shape their future with a click of button.



## Increasing instances of uberization at work has resulted in a mobile, global free floating workforce, leading to talent shortages and intense competition for the top talent

Automation and Artificial Intelligence is increasingly becoming a part of our lives in more ways than we can imagine. They are becoming the necessary tools that ease and ensure intelligent and informed decision-making. Alexa, an essential member most of our households giving us weather updates, headlines and playing music has also entered workplace. With help of UVO (Our Virtual Office Assistant – Inhouse Chat Bot) we are bringing analytics and information to all the sales and manager cadre at Tech M by responding to a simple voice based command. UVO-Alexa duo helps in making informed decisions, providing real-time updates, data and analytics to right people at the right time ensuring that there is no breach of data. AI enabled in-house developed platform, Talex is our market place for talent exchange pan organization that nudges passive talent

towards possible opportunities based on their inherent strengths and personalized career choices. Delivering customer grade and seamless employee experiences with help for AI are what every CHRO dreams of. With the help of facial recognition technology, not only have we been able to bring the delight to workplace eliminating the daily sign-in, sign-out swipes to record attendance, we have also been able to capture and measure their delight quotient and send Engagement Index to leadership and managers at locations daily to understand and course correct.

Organizations and CHROs today have to be prepared and equip the organizational framework to identify and manage the right talent. We are increasingly going to see organizations indulge in social web crawling to source out the passive candidates who ideally would not have applied those positions. Opinions, social media presence and feedback are increasingly going to play a role in determining the cultural fit of the candidature. Human Resources will actively be using workplace nudging to identify influencers and persuade people to exhibit desirable behaviors. Organization Network Analysis will help HR understand the dynamics and develop New Value Propositions, where meaning and purpose are more important than ever by aligning employment opportunities to their workforce' personal, social and charitable interests to attract and retain talent. Organizations will have to look at Diversity & Inclusion as a "competitive advantage" rather than good-to-have social responsibility. As talent exists everywhere irrespective of age, gender or ethnicity and they come together to weave the fabric which is unique and represents the heart/core of every firm, it is our responsibility to unleash the "power of I" (every individual). 

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**HARSHVENDRA SOIN** is the Chief People Officer at Tech Mahindra Ltd.



# Q & A Leading learning

Setting up his own startup in the learning technology space to highlighting the most relevant trends that will dominate the future of this industry, **David Yeo**, Founder and CEO of Kydon Group, Parentthesis, and LEARNTech Asia gives a glimpse on how he started out on the journey of entrepreneurship and his perspectives on transforming the learning technology space

By Yasmin Taj

**D**avid started his career in the military, winning a Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) award for his leadership skills and was well on his way to be a career soldier. But his inner calling to make an impact in the wider society of Southeast Asia led him to move into the learning technology space – with a vision to transform the industry landscape. Today, David leads Asia's leading Knowledge and Learning technology and services company, Kydon Group, to transform learning for 21st-century cities and workforce. As the Chief Learning Architect of Kydon, David also supports organizations to establish the core structure of their knowledge and learning systems. He is also a regular speaker and presenter in local and international conferences and workshops, and an active contributor to the global effort toward future skills and learning.

David holds an MSc in Instructional Systems from Florida State University under the first Instructional Technology Postgraduate Award, a Graduate Diploma in Leadership and Organizational Development, and a Certificate of Leadership in Education.

**Q From working in the military to launching a start-up, how has your journey been so far?**

**A** It has been a very exciting and rewarding journey. I treasure the experience gained in the military, where I earned a scholarship to learn

instructional and learning technologies. I had the opportunity of designing and implementing one of the overarching learning systems for an organization and gained a lot of experience from there which included the knowledge of design, development, systematic planning and implementation of learning technologies in organizations.

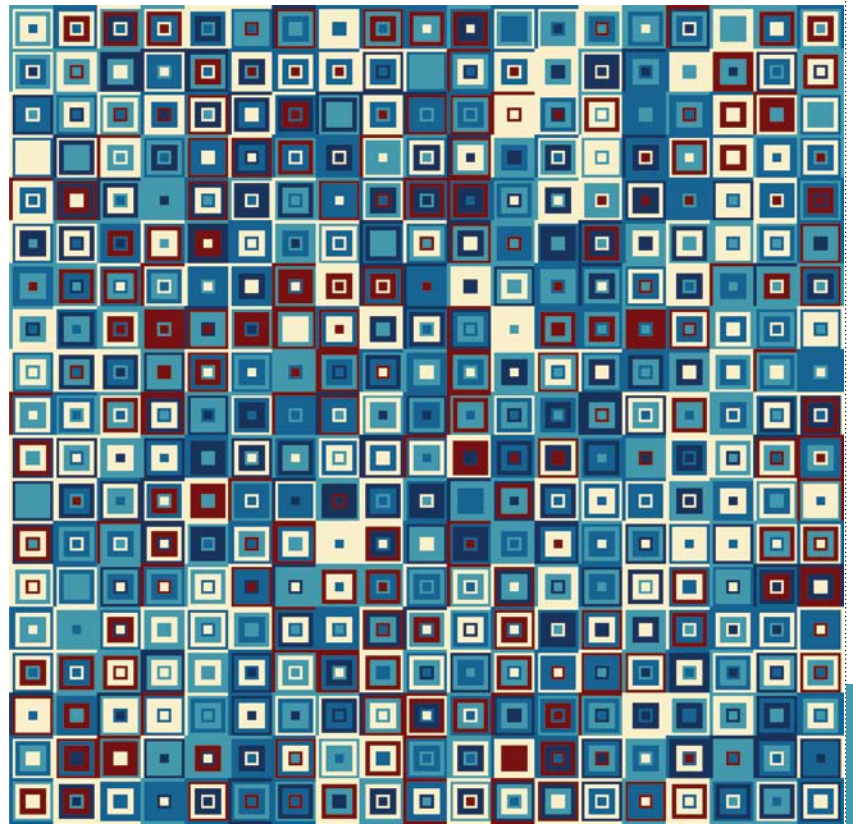
Around six years ago, I moved to the startup ecosystem which was another learning experience altogether. Here, I slowly built up the firm's core processes, governance, business development, etc. through experimentation. We have grown and progressed from the time we started and we continue to serve our clients well, which helps us scale and impact the community.

**Q Tell us about the challenges that you faced in this journey of entrepreneurship?**

**A** One of the biggest challenges was in understanding how the market works and making the first sale. When you start, you don't have refer-

**Millennials are not just the consumers of learning; they are also the co-creators**

Because of Millennials' desire to be more participative, they are now keener than ever in contributing to the process of learning. They are fast becoming the key pillars in organizations in building and sharing knowledge



ences or a track record, and although I had some experience, I was new in the startup space. This led me to believe that building an organization's credibility starts from within and each and every individual is important. With time, you weave them together and watch your firm's advocates and success stories grow.

The second challenge I faced was in dealing with the nitty-gritty of the business: in creating balance sheets, managing tax flow and things like that. These were new to me and I had to learn quickly. Hence, rapid learning is critical for the journey to be successful.

**Q What are some of the future trends you foresee in the learning technology industry?**

**A** This industry continues to have great potential because of the need of people to learn, either in corporate or educational settings. As complexities in organizations and products increase, people would need to learn and upgrade their skills which lead to progress and growth. The increase in Internet penetration, the pervasiveness of connectivity and smartphones will continue to be the motivating factors behind the immense growth of learning technologies.

Traditional methods of learning will not remain relevant for long and we will have to use technology to maximize the impact. We will have to think of different ways to make learning more effective and engaging at the same time. Content is key to learning and it has to be developed continuously to meet the changing needs of how people approach learning.

**Q As a learning technology leader and influencer, how do you foresee the role of millennials in the transformation of this industry?**

**A** Millennials will play a huge role in how learning will happen in the future. In the past, the industry was more unidirectional where the top echelons in both corporate organizations and educational institutes were responsible for dispersing knowledge to the ground level learners who were mostly passive in nature. Millennials are not just the consumers of learning; they are also the co-creators. Because of their desire to be more participative, they are now keener than ever in contributing to the process of learning. They are fast becoming the key pillars in organizations in building and sharing knowledge. What this means is we now have to adopt a different kind of thinking in organizational learning design – it will be less hierarchical and more collaborative, less top-down and more bottom-up.

**Q What are some of the major changes you predict in the learning technology space in the SEA market?**

**A** The learning technology industry is still fairly nascent in this region, although many institutions are now progressively using learning technologies. Corporates are not doing much in this region yet; but in the coming future, we will see many more starting to adopt learning technologies in order to improve their workforce. The result will be that educational institutions will explore more innovative technologies, while corporates will begin to adopt more in their learning ecosystem. **CM**

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# TIME TO RESPOND AGGRESSIVELY


## 2019 - A YEAR OF PRAGMATISM FOR HR

For HR, 2018 was about a lot of 'anticipation'. But what business trends and strategic priorities will most impact HR's agenda in 2019? What will it take to pioneer strategic change? This cover story compiles the biggest priorities for HR in 2019, and what HR professionals need to do to prove their worth!

By **Suparna Chawla Bhasin**

**H**R has consistently evolved, more so in the last few years. The status quo that it was in was disrupted in 2018 — gig workers, technology onslaught, automation, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, employee experience, and what not. HR moved to the Cloud, to Big Data, to understanding how other technologies could be integrated — and we have all been privy to its disruption and evolution. But the fact of the matter is that many of us were not ready for the changes — either because of organizational unpreparedness or they just simply miscalculated the real work that was needed to face the real world. 2018 was about gathering knowledge, familiarizing, observing, and planning.

And although HR has been consistently evolving and many successful businesses have optimized HR processes and their talent management strategies, the question we are asking is: Where will HR go from here? What will be 2019 like for the HR function?

Long story short — this is the time for HR to stop internalizing and start acting on what it has gathered over the years. And this means going aggressive and ambitious in converting efforts with the aim of putting the points on the board. For this cover story, we reached out to leaders and HR practitioners who gave us their views on what 2019 will be like for HR. 

# WILL HR DRIVE OR HINDER GROWTH IN 2019?

2019 will be a year of transition for HR leaders. The new technology will require new skills and planning for these changes will be of paramount importance. Will you be the kind of HR leader that makes the most of this?



**BRIAN SOMMER**  
Founder - TechVenture,  
& Technology  
Industry Expert

2019 will be an interesting year for HR leaders. Here are three major concerns any HR leader should note: 2019 will be an uncomfortable year for many HR leaders. Boards of Directors everywhere are clamoring for more organic growth. They aren't satisfied with the modest growth rates many companies have posted over the last several years. Many firms have barely managed to match GDP or inflation related growth rates. The board wants its executives to deliver out-sized growth and they want it now!

The problem with delivering this kind of growth is that most firms struggle to fill the open positions they already have. They can't add more staff and grow the business because they aren't being very successful in filling the never ending vacancies that keep cropping up.

For many HR/Recruiting organizations, the processes and technologies for

talent acquisition haven't changed much in a decade or more. Unfortunately, more progressive HR leaders have been acquiring and using newer technologies to hire great talent in quantity. These HR leaders have embraced big data solutions (e.g., Entelo), recruitment marketing solutions (e.g., Smashfly), video interviewing and more to create competitive advantage.

Other leaders have tackled softer-side issues like engagement, retention, flight risk and more to stem the outflow of talent. But great HR leaders will need to solve both sides of the growth equation. Will you continue to run in place for 2019 or will your firm leave its competitors behind?

## HR budgets & headcount won't grow but pressure to modernize HR will

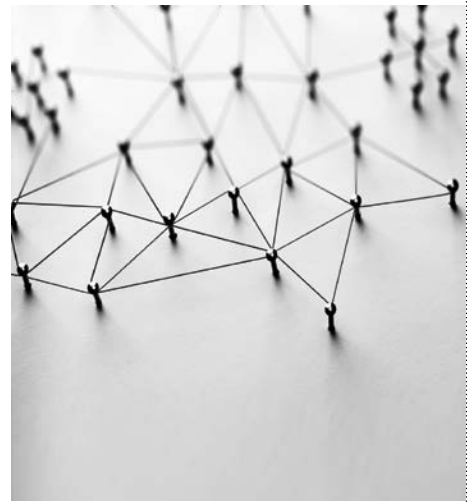
There has been an explosion of new HR technologies in recent years and even more are coming. We're seeing powerful new applications that use big data, machine learning, natural language processing, algorithms, analytics and more. And while all of this is really cool stuff, HR leaders cannot afford to buy, install or use these technologies unless they get new budget and new team members. Few business leaders are willing to give them the money to do so. They'll want to see HR modernize but to do so with the headcount and budget they already have.

If your HR group needs everyone to do the job of HR, then you have no capacity to add tools or people that exploit new technologies. In fact, your HR group may need to start with some technologies (e.g., robotic process automation) to free up HR team members from low-value-added or non-value-added tasks. Could you free up a person or two if a chatbot would handle all those routine calls to HR (e.g., *"How much vacation time do I have available?"*)?

Freeing up HR team members from the mundane will help but HR will also need to add skills it probably doesn't possess. Does your team have people with math, quant, statistics, machine learning, social science and other skillsets? HR leaders will need to rebalance the skills needed to deliver value going forward. You can't approach these new technologies the way you used to approach new releases of old-school HR products. These are radically different products that require very different skills. Great HR leaders will need to find a way to phase these technologies in while they re-work their teams and the way HR work is done.

## Every business is global - But HR Tech is less so for now

It used to be that HR technology provid-




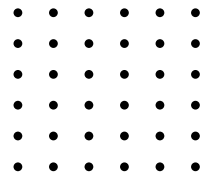
## HR LEADERS WILL NEED TO REBALANCE THE SKILLS NEEDED TO DELIVER VALUE GOING FORWARD

ers only added global capabilities to their software when they targeted very large enterprises. Unfortunately, that viewpoint is inconsistent with today's reality: most businesses are now global.

Only in the last year are we finally seeing payroll providers starting to roll-out a global payroll product. ADP should have one Payroll product that serves about 50 countries by the middle of 2019. Most payroll solutions will, sadly, be one country wonders. Some startups, like Papaya Global, are tackling these issues headlong and can now assist firms in over 100 countries. We need more firms like this. But the good news is that global HR is becoming a reality.

HR leaders will likely have to have a multitude of systems and processes to support their cross-border operations for the near-term. The old reality will likely continue for a bit still - but at least we're seeing a glimmer of hope, though.

2019 will be a year of transition for HR leaders. The new technology will require new skills and planning for these changes will be of paramount importance. Will you be the kind of HR leader that makes the most of this? 



**W**e live in paradoxical times. And I see 2019 being no different. There is hope and there is despair. There are businesses of resurgence and there is the reality of joblessness. There are growing examples of true leadership even as we battle increasing number of stories of #MeToo. There is growing belief in diversity and yet there is so much of insularity. There is so much of talent and yet the war for the right talent is incessant.

Let me articulate four top HR trends I visualize for the coming year.

Talent will remain the top most issue. There will be growing pressure on people productivity in many sectors. Organizational designs will go through versions to eke out margins. The talent needs will thus get redefined. Either this will lead to a major effort at reskilling or hunt for a better skill fit, or a major effort at rightsizing organizations, which will eventually have a ripple effect on talent engagement. There will be anxiety to manage while looking for talent beyond the obvious catchments. Reimagining talent acquisition, talent engagement, and talent productivity will take the center stage. Learning opportunities, both virtual and on the job, will demand creative HR focus. Micro-learning will intensify in response to specific talent needs. Agility to comprehend and support almost atomized and potentially conflicting talent demands will test HR in 2019.

HR Technology will be a huge thrust. Across segments, there will be growing adoption of various Social, Mobile, Analytics & Cloud (SMAC) solutions. HR will intensify its efforts to get digital and enhance both employee/ candidate experience as also improve people productivity. Big Data and Artificial Intelligence (AI) will work in tandem with the growing gig economy to move HR to a data-anchored business solution architect.

Leadership will be a priority in the 2019 bucket list. We will continue to see the concern on inadequate depth of leadership, across levels, functions and businesses. The contextual relevance of leadership is getting redefined. There will be the need to reimagine, support, and reinforce a value-based servant leadership culture that can be inclusive of varied workforce demographics. Changing times call for different nuances of leadership. HR will have to be the custodian of this very politically sensitive agenda.

Brand & Culture will be another priority for HR in 2019. HR will be under pressure to upgrade its own ability to stay relevant through the cross-hairs of hard business imperatives and the custodian of caring, empathetic workplaces. I see the need for a huge upgrade in HR's ability to be seen as the driver of an organizational agenda than a mere executor of business directives. While Brand HR will need polishing, it will also need to refresh organizational brands to attract the right

# HR SHOULD ANTICIPATE AND LEAD, NOT REACT AND FOLLOW!

2019 will be another year of opportunity, and much of what HR will focus on will flow from 2018 and go beyond 2019



**PRABIR JHA**


President &  
Global Chief People  
Officer, Cipla



**WHILE BRAND HR WILL NEED POLISHING, IT WILL ALSO NEED TO REFRESH ORGANIZATIONAL BRANDS TO ATTRACT THE RIGHT AND RELEVANT TALENT**



and relevant talent. The ability to market and champion the employer ride will need a lot of creative marketing thinking within HR. Apart from piggy backing about talent and leadership stories, it will need to nurture culture that will attract the new breed of talent. Creating environments of space, empowerment, trust, and ownership are easy to write about but not as easy to create. But as organizational transformation will intensify across, and HR will be called upon to play in the ring rather than just stay a cosmetic cheer leader.

Whichever way the cookie crumbles, I will stay as an eternal optimist for HR. 2019 will be another year of opportunity. Much of what we will focus on will flow from 2018 and go beyond 2019. HR should anticipate and lead rather than react and follow. It should not do things for what is trending but do what is apt for the operating context. It is this judgment, prioritizing, influencing and handholding the execution that will impact HR's strategic reputation in 2019. 

A lot has happened in recent years to change the shape of HR. People analytics, new digital platforms, flexible work arrangements, and other innovations have made the employee/employer relationship more agile and personal than ever before. And yet we haven't seen the half of it.

A central tenet of the revolution in human capital management is that anything that distracts employees from their work—especially their productivity—is to be avoided. The old ways, filled with procedures and requirements, are over. In their place is a new, emerging reality where workers are listened to, supported, trained, evaluated, and even compensated continually. Organizations today do not operate in a silo. Employees' voices are louder than ever, and so too are their expectations. Employers are typically expected to operate as a social enterprise, taking an

## A NEW KIND OF HR FOR THE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

As the function of HR becomes more fluid and intrinsic to the nature of work, meeting the workforce where they are will be fundamental to the creating a successful, modern social enterprise



**DAVID MALLON**  
Chief Analyst,  
Bersin, Deloitte  
Consulting LLP

“outside in” view, and to take a stand on issues that are important to their workforce to attract and retain the best talent.

To support this change, HR can and must become an ongoing, digital endeavor where the needs and wishes of the workforce are voiced, and in turn acknowledged and implemented by the employer. With digital HR, contact extends to the employee at the point of work, not the other way around. It doesn't distract; it enables. It is ubiquitous, integrated, and always on. Here is a partial look at how digital HR in the social enterprise can change the workplace, some of which will arrive in 2019:

**Continuous performance management.** Many employers are seeing the value in making Performance Management (PM) a continuous process. They're doing it by embedding it into the natural flow of work. PM is becoming digital, responsive, and real-time. Using design thinking and data to help employees become more productive as they work, companies are embedding goal setting, progress tracking, development and performance indicators, feedback, and performance assessment directly into the productivity and work systems employees use every day. Performance check-ins, through email, collaboration platforms, and sales enablement tools, are becoming more frequent and thereby, more useful.

**Invisible learning & development.** L&D has taken a huge leap with self-directed digital curricula, gamification, and social learning experiences continuing to proliferate. Yet the process remains stop-and-go. Employees must take themselves away from daily work activities to access learning modules, become proficient with the material, demonstrate their new knowledge—and then return to work. Moreover, L&D is often packaged as corporate learning, making employees forget their identities as workers and become students in a very clear way.

As a spur to innovation and leadership development, L&D performs a valuable function—but it shouldn't overshadow the urgent need for learning that supports performance improvement. In the social enterprise, learning is invisible; that is, it's built into work in ways that are embedded into everything employees do, and delivered wherever they are. Invisible L&D requires the creation and implementation of tools, systems, processes, information, platforms, and networks that are all driven by learners' needs. It also requires the adoption of new goals and metrics for employee development. Instead of focusing on course completions or return on investment, HR will need to start measuring the effectiveness of learning programs

by their impact on employee performance, productivity, and satisfaction.



**Personalized rewards.** Even as the variety of benefits that companies are able to offer employees expands, few employers have cracked the code for delivering the right rewards to individuals (and as appropriate, to teams) in a manner that is efficient, supportive of a productive employee experience, and of meaningful value to the employee. There is also a substantial lost opportunity to use an expanded, customer-centric view of rewards to augment the relationship between the organization and its workforce.

Digital HR that operates effectively in the social enterprise addresses both issues. It can utilize continuous listening to determine which benefits employees truly value; then, with the help of smart, intuitive digital platforms, it can empower employees to personalize and manage the tactical elements of the day-to-day employer/employee relationship. It can also intentionally curate health and



wellbeing offerings into key moments in the employee experience, seeing these offerings as a means to enhance the work itself—not simply as benefits.

Personalized rewards, when combined with continuous performance management, help closes the gap between performance and rewards. It also strengthens the linkage between the two. Employees know where they stand in terms of performance—and since compensation flows directly from performance, workers know what—and why—they are being compensated.

As of yet, no company has all the pieces in place for this new kind of HR. It will be a challenge to execute in full, but its implementation is inevitable—and its benefits will be substantial. As the function of HR becomes more fluid and intrinsic to the nature of work, meeting the workforce where they are will be fundamental to the creating a successful, modern social enterprise.  

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# PRIORITIZING AND BALANCING TECHNOLOGY FOR THE RIGHT USES

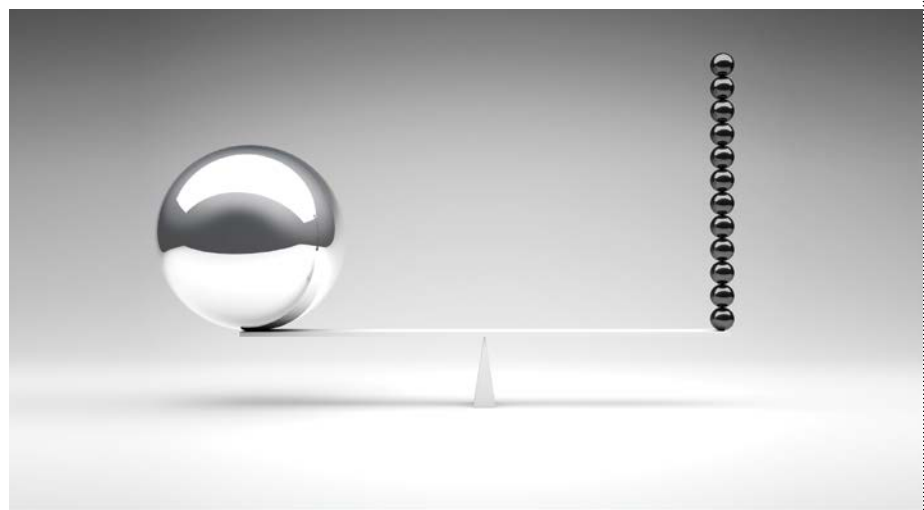
We all understand how a massive technological revolution is redefining the word ‘work’ and even though it is impossible to predict what the future holds, we must prepare for it



**PIYUSH MEHTA**  
CHRO, Genpact

Thinker and life enthusiast Mark Manson (also a New York Times bestselling author) has a peculiar way of explaining things. One of his many ideas is that “happiness comes from solving problems”. Just park that thought for a moment!

As I sat down to pen my thoughts on top HR trends for 2019, I realized two things. #1. Wow, another year comes to an end; and #2. Wow, what a year it has been! We all understand how a massive technological revolution is redefining the word ‘work’ and even though it is impossible to predict what the future holds, we must prepare for it. This is where we go back to Mark. You see, the keyword in his idea is “solving”. Solutions to today’s problems lay the foundation for tomorrow’s problems and so on. At my organization, we have been in the business of solving problems for our



## DIGITIZATION OF HR IS NOW A NECESSITY BUT IT IS IMPERATIVE TO CREATE AN ABILITY TO PRIORITIZE AND BALANCE TECHNOLOGY FOR THE RIGHT USES

clients — as well as the ever-evolving needs of our people — for the past twenty years. This is why this thought resonates deeply with me. So here, let’s look at these three trends that will help us solve for the new world of work.

### Leveraging technology. Not for technology’s sake

Digitization of HR is now a necessity but it is imperative to create an ability to prioritize and balance technology for the right uses. Not that we need numbers to establish the convergence of HR and technology but here goes. The global market for HR technology solutions is reportedly around \$400 billion globally and the Indian HR industry is estimated to be Rs 40,000 crores. While change is impossible without technology, it’s necessary to understand technology keeping in mind factors such as company culture, target audience, and timing. At Genpact, we have seen success with some thought through implementations resulting in smarter processes and more incisive decision-making, enabling effective recruitment and acquiring best talent through digitization. Our AI-enabled chatbots are transforming HR self-service and employee engagement, and our experiment with Organizational Network Analysis (ONA) is predicting performance and attrition by understanding communication patterns for talent analytics. Cutting-edge stuff happening there!

### Being a marketer. Thinking nuanced EVP

The demand for digital, analytics and automation talent is likely to exceed supply by

~4X in the next 3-5 years and as we enter the digital talent war, we have to arm ourselves with refreshed people strategy and effective recruiting methods. Nuanced employee value propositions that talk (and appeal) to exclusive talent pockets is the only way to attract, engage, interview, and onboard talent and equally importantly, develop and retain existing employees. In fact, we are seeing encouraging early responses to our recently launched digital EVP: ‘Dream in Digital. Dare in reality’. Digital employer brand reach and influence is going to be a norm in the future and the sooner we are on it, the better. An effective nuanced EVP that’s equal parts credible and aspirational is a great place to start.

### Living your culture. Learning with agility

Culture is often an unstated abstract concept. At Genpact, we have attempted to make it tangible by creating our culture framework (CI)2 that outlines behaviors that drive success for our people, and resonate with our strategy. (CI)2 stands for Curious, Incisive, Courageous. On a bedrock of Integrity. It ties together all our core beliefs... of continuous and pull-based learning, of linking talent to value and identifying top performers, of decentralizing by changing the way we work and institutionalizing improved knowledge access, social collaboration, virtual partnerships and smart org-redesign. (CI)2 is a blend of our brand and our personality — just how any culture framework should be!

On that note, cheers to a new year. And more transformation around us! 🍷

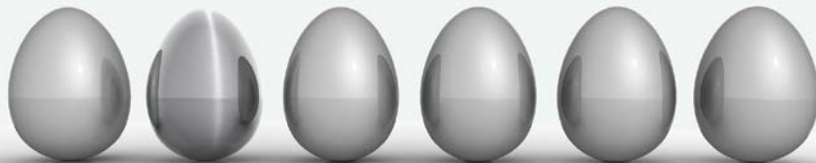
I was asked to write an article on the strategy and direction of employee engagement and HR for 2019 and how HR can prove its worth. To that end, the best I can offer is some encouragement and invitations to HR practitioners for 2019. Like any good invitation you are free to decline it and I trust your alternatives to accepting my invitations will take you to places you feel welcomed, connected, and that you can make a difference.

Here are my 8 invitations:

**Don't be anonymous and don't let employees be anonymous.** Sign your name to your work. Let your face be seen. Rip up anonymous surveys and ask for real feedback with names attached so conversations can begin, judgement can be diminished, and we can talk and work together. Of course, to do this you must contribute to organizational psychological safety by having employees know that you care about them and you care about what they are interested in. And you can't fake it because if you do you will only be making things worse than they already are.

**Never let an executive ever say, "It all comes down to the bottom line."** No, it doesn't. Standing below the bottom line are all the people holding it up. The bottom line is a false bottom while people are the living real vibrancy of this thing we call an organization that is always in a breathing and moving state of vibrancy and fluctuation.

THE BOTTOM LINE IS A FALSE BOTTOM WHILE PEOPLE ARE THE LIVING REAL VIBRANCY OF THIS THING WE CALL AN ORGANIZATION THAT IS ALWAYS IN A BREATHING AND MOVING STATE OF VIBRANCY AND FLUCTUATION



**Live in the moment not for the moment.** There is a big picture and what we do in the moment needs to connect to the big picture. Yet we can lose our experience of work when we focus too much on strategy and where we are headed. Be alive where you are and find energy and engagement in the moment. When you stop, and become fully aware, you realize the moment is all we ever have.

**You are a role model.** Like it or not, how you work and what you do is watched. Whatever you ask of the organization or employees ensure that you are doing that yourself. What you do speaks louder than any policy you could write or anything you might say.

**Weave everything into the tapestry of work.** Work can make us well and engagement is not something extra. Don't add programs or develop new initiatives to justify what you do. Look at how you can weave everything together so that performance management is engaging and engagement is a part of everything. We need to work on everything being "a part" not "apart." Silos are an anachronism in our 2019 organizations.

**Stop and determine what you can point to in work.** Look around and in 2019 do things you can point to that are meaningful and significant. Mostly I hope that you would point to people in the organization. Of course, remember, it can be rude

# ONE SMALL VOICE OF INVITATION & ENCOURAGEMENT TO HR IN 2019

We need to work on everything being "a part" not "apart." Silos are an anachronism in our 2019 organizations



**DAVID ZINGER**

Speaker, educator, author, & consultant

to point to people in public or in the lunch room. Ensure people "get the point" of what you are doing and why you are part of the organization.

**Be the fallible person that you already are.** You are not perfect, no one is. Bring your fallible humanity to work. That should be easy because it is what we are, but too often we think we should be something we are not. You don't need a book or a course on how to be human at work because you will always be a human at work, unless you are a robot and if you are a robot you are probably not reading this.

**Enjoy 2019.** Next year is 2020 so it may offer you a real opportunity for 20/20 vision. It is just one year away. Meanwhile, remember, if you laugh, you can last. When we put laughter into our days we stretch HR into HumoR, and playfulness will help us balance the demands and stress of work so that we can keep on working and have work make a difference for both the individual and the organization. 🍷

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# ENHANCING CAPABILITY OF PEOPLE MANAGERS WILL BE A SIGNIFICANT PRIORITY FOR HR

While we adjust to the new workplace dynamics, it essential for Human Resource managers to stay abreast of the changes to engage remote teams and encourage comprehensive growth of all employees



**ANUSHA SURYANARAYAN**  
CHRO, Signify India  
(formerly known as Philips Lighting India)

**T**echnology and communication tools have not just revamped the way modern corporate structures function but have also significantly influenced employee behavior. Over the past few years, ease of communication has further aided the transition towards a 'gig economy', allowing remote access and flexibility in working. Employees today are increasingly seeking opportunities for independent or contractual employment pertaining to their areas of interest and schedules. While this evolution in the workplace

culture has invariably led to a growth in the pool of applicants, it has also increased the attrition rate for companies, with several employees preferring 'contingent' jobs or 'alternative work arrangements'.

While we adjust to these new workplace dynamics, it essential for Human Resource managers to stay abreast of the changes to engage remote teams and encourage comprehensive growth of all employees. Keeping the same in mind, here are the top five trends that we believe will have the highest impact on HR's agenda in 2019:

**Employee engagement:** Better engagement leads to better productivity. Therefore, employee engagement continues to be critical in the upcoming year. Applying principles of design thinking to the topic has led to the emergence of the term 'employee experience'. A growing multi-generational and diverse workforce, along with the 'gig' economy has pushed several organizations to find creative and customized ways to create stickiness amongst employees and design a more engaging culture.

**Artificial Intelligence:** While we have been talking about Artificial Intelligence and the Internet of Things for a while now, next year will witness a deeper invasion of AI in all spheres of HR – starting from recruiting to learning, employee experience, and talent management.

AI consumes massive amounts of data, applies algorithms to find patterns, and uses these findings to draw correlations, make predictions and assist with decision making. Hence, we will observe a large amount of data and information related to employees being generated and HR teams will need to be upskilled and reskilled to understand and interpret the insights generated by this vast stream of information and use it in relevant ways to ultimately improve employee experience.

**Enhancing People-Manager Capability:** Generation X has higher expectations from their managers when compared to the previous generations. As a result, enhancing capability of people managers will become an area of significant priority for HR in the upcoming year. We also need to invest in people managers to become talent magnets that can not only keep their teams motivated and striving for better performance, but also attract external talent from the industry.

**Rise of the virtual workplace:** The ability to work from anywhere and staying connected through smartphones, tablets and other mobile devices has created a virtual workplace. Furthermore, with flexi-contracts and part-time working becoming the go-to-choice for the millennial



**WITH FLEXI-CONTRACTS AND PART-TIME WORKING BECOMING THE GO-TO-CHOICE FOR THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION, VIRTUAL WORKPLACE AND COLLABORATION TOOLS NEED TO BE DEPLOYED MORE FREQUENTLY ACROSS THE ORGANIZATION**

generation, virtual workplace and collaboration tools need to be deployed more frequently across the organization.

**Ring-fence critical leaders:** The leadership deficit and competition for premium leadership talent isn't going anywhere. As the market becomes more competitive, being able to ring-fence critical leaders in a blended approach remains as important as it always was. Beyond monetary compensation, it is crucial to provide growth opportunities and recognition to your top talent to ensure their longevity with your company.

These trends have incredible implications on the way our industry is set to function over the next few years and we're only just beginning to see their impact on our workplaces. Organizations that want to succeed and grow must adopt these new technologies and make swift changes in their organizational culture. It is also important to ensure that these changes are carried over to procurement and HR processes as well to create the foundations of a truly great workplace that is fit for future. 

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Analysts generally have a poor track record in forecasting economic outcomes; ask five analysts a question and you'll likely get at least six answers. However, there does seem to be a growing consensus around a few things that will affect us all in 2019:

- The Russian economy will continue to grow in size and global influence, but that this may falter as we approach 2020;
- The growth in the Chinese economy could slow down and even trigger a new global financial crisis;
- The oft projected growth in the African economy will continue to be inhibited by political and military instability, despite massive investments from China in particular;
- The Indian economy will continue to grow, probably in excess of 7 percent and expectations that it could enter into the top three economies are now viewed as realistic.

### So, what challenges does India itself face in 2019?

- Growth in the economy has still not led to enhanced living standards. Substantial population growth is sustaining high levels of poverty, malnutrition and inequality in general.
- Dependency on highly polluting power generation is having an adverse environmental impact;
- Risk that rising inflation, which may have to be controlled using interest rates, could have an adverse impact on economic growth;
- Rapid population growth and economic expansion is testing the infrastructure in all its forms;

- Many public and corporate sectors have yet to raise their standards of compliance, making trade and trade regulation difficult, even more so for international trade;
- High levels of unemployment are holding down wages and sustaining inequalities;
- High levels of illiteracy are hindering social mobility;
- Low utilization of contemporary technology, partly due to relatively low levels of capital investment, is hindering productivity improvement.

There are government plans to address these but those will take time to have an impact. In the meantime, population and business growth are likely to continue unabated. Significant trade increases are expected with the USA but these could also be matched with significant loss of top talent to the USA where highly educated business people, especially those in the technology sector, are still welcomed and awarded appropriate work visas. The growth in service industries is also likely to continue and to pull workers from the rural areas into urban centers, further straining the infrastructure. This latter trend will continue to be fuelled by low wage rates, compared to those in competitive countries, and high levels of proficiency in English, the most common business language for international trade.

### What are the implications for HR?

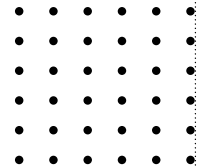
A global truth is that, "The caliber of management and leadership is the most significant differentiator of sustainably successful organizations." In a sustainably successful organization, leadership creates

## 2019, A CHALLENGE FOR HR

The most pressing challenge for HR will be to get the right people into management and leadership roles



**CLINTON WINGROVE**  
Director,  
WantToBeGreat



HR WILL BE CAUGHT BETWEEN INVESTORS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS ON ONE SIDE, ALL SEEKING ENHANCED PRODUCTIVITY AND PROFITABILITY, AND EMPLOYEES ON THE OTHER SIDE, SEEKING ENHANCED WAGES, JOB SECURITY, IMPROVED WORKING CONDITIONS, DEVELOPMENT, AND EVIDENCE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY



the organization's vision, brings it alive, and secures the commitment and resources to deliver it. Management optimizes the use of resources to deliver the vision; translates the vision, mission, values and strategy into practical plans, and then gets those implemented – it makes things happen.

Therefore, the most pressing challenge for HR will be to get the right people into management and leadership roles. Whilst high unemployment means that there will be plenty of people applying for jobs, there may be a shortage of those sufficiently educated and skilled in managing people and organizations.

Some tough decisions may need to be made and HR will face its common challenge — persuading line-management to adopt the longer-term view rather than the simplest short-term solution. Building a cadre of excellent managers and leaders takes time, persistence, and resilience.

The demand for excellence in management will be exacerbated by the side effects of the country's challenges — socio-economic pressures and the wide availability of social media will undoubtedly create or fuel increasing employee demands for:

**More and better jobs.** Current high unemployment rates may be suppressing staff movement. However, that is likely to be temporary. Skilled employees will start to understand their value and become more demanding. Competitors will seek to steal top talent, understanding that this can be cheaper than attempting to develop from within.

**Better working conditions.** Global emphasis on environmental issues and public sharing of work experiences through social media will lead to employee demands for enhanced working conditions.

**Increased corporate responsibility.** The dramatic increase in global attention to environmentally damaging factors such as global warming, plastic waste, use of pesticides and herbicides etc. will impact organizations through employee pressure. Global media attention to executive malpractices will also drive demands for improved corporate ethics and governance.

**Enhanced remuneration.** Population growth and high levels of unemployment have kept wages low. However, this can only be sustained for so long. Eventually, pressures will grow and wages will have to increase, unless there is another global financial crisis!

**Increased investment in employee development.** Development is not only needed for management and leadership but also to enable a transformation in productivity. Employee development will be needed to increase productivity and to

## SKILLED EMPLOYEES WILL START TO UNDERSTAND THEIR VALUE AND BECOME MORE DEMANDING WHILE COMPETITORS WILL SEEK TO STEAL TOP TALENT, UNDERSTANDING THAT THIS CAN BE CHEAPER THAN ATTEMPTING TO DEVELOP FROM WITHIN

achieve an increase in the use of technology as an enabler.

HR will be caught between investors and other stakeholders on one side, all seeking enhanced productivity and profitability, and employees on the other side, seeking enhanced wages, job security, improved working conditions, development, and evidence of corporate governance and environmental responsibility. HR will need to focus on delivering four critical contributions to the organization it serves:

**Increased productivity with prevailing capability.** This will come primarily through more effective processes for triggering, sustaining, and enhancing individual, team and organizational performance. It may also come from enhanced use of technology and from improved management/leadership capability.

**Increased capability.** This will come primarily through more effective processes for triggering, sustaining, and enhancing individual, team and organizational learning and development.

**A sustainable talent pipeline.** This will come primarily through more effective processes for attracting, selecting, onboarding, engaging, developing, deploying, retaining, and exiting appropriate talent.

**Regulatory and statutory compliance.** This will come primarily through more effective communications, training, and compliance monitoring as well as enhanced management capability with the organization.


HR will therefore need to focus sharply on three processes:

- Performance management – how the organization optimizes its productivity and thus the return on its investment in people;
- Development management – how



the organization ensures that each employee realizes their true potential;

- Talent management – how the organization ensures that it has the talent to meet its longer-term needs, not merely its short-term demands.

And, as I said earlier, all that can only be achieved if HR succeeds in ensuring excellence in management and leadership, selecting and promoting the right people into those roles as “The caliber of management and leadership is the most significant differentiator of sustainably successful organizations.” To achieve that, each HR professional will need courage and a higher degree of personal effectiveness. 2019 will be a challenging but exciting year. 

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# AGILITY WILL BE THE GAME-CHANGER

HR needs to shift to rapid prototyping and testing, changing on-the-go, and then starting all over again



**SUMIT MITRA**  
Head - Group Human Resources and Corporate Services, Godrej

rooted in the past, and the other searching for where to go to next. This curious dichotomy is how HR should approach the year(s) ahead. There are some things that will never go out of style — these ‘good’ things that make our companies who they are — like our values. Alongside that is the need for us to constantly change in sync with the times.

## My thoughts on what to look out for in 2019:

### *Discover your purpose*

People want to work at companies where they connect with a purpose and make meaningful contributions. It’s not just about a designation or paycheck for them. Also, interestingly, it’s not just the employees. There’s a perceptible shift in expectations of customers and investors too. They want companies to achieve their targets, while continuing to do good for their communities.

Your purpose must be central to decisions — grounding, inspiring and challenging. If you tap this, you will be able to solve ancillary aspects of engagement, retention, multi-generational and cross-cultural team dynamics.

### *Skill, skill, skill*

Jobs, we know today, will dramatically change. How we work and the skills we

need will be very different. So, we must learn to adapt faster; unlearn and relearn ways of doing our jobs, adapt our core skills to new opportunities, and be able to thrive in disruption and volatility. Companies have to start upskilling their people and encourage them to learn new things. We will have to reimagine learning and prepare for likely disruptions. Knowing the basics of digital, for example, will be a must across all roles; at the same time, the softer skills of management will become increasingly important.

### *Transform with technology*

Technology is transforming the ways in which we interact and feel, and also who we are. No surprise then that by extension, this is intricately linked to how we craft and deliver people experiences at the workplace. Big data opens up all kinds of insights on people and trends. This can help customize experiences and significantly transform engagement and productivity. Many of us have years of data accumulated in different places. But that’s not good enough; we need to get the data to “talk”. That’s when the magic happens. Increasing connectivity, smartphone usage, the Cloud and of course, AI, are all powerful, transformative aspects. While we have leveraged these aspects for Marketing and Supply Chain, we have just about started

## IF WE MUST FAIL, THEN WE HAVE TO DO IT FAST SO THAT THERE’S TIME TO FIX IT AND MOVE ON

The tricky thing about the future is that it’s already here. We are building our way into an AI controlled, IoT world, buzzing with conversations about robotics and the gig economy. Everyone is asking the same question: What happens to us? Will the robots really take over? If history is anything to go by, there’s no way to tell. Remember how the telephone, motor cars, television, personal computers, the internet, the iPhone and online shopping were all initially written off? Why am I referencing this? For two reasons. First, it doesn’t matter what the exact disruption is. Just that disruption is the new normal. Second, disruptions aren’t new. Much of what is debated today echoes similar conversations from the industrial revolutions. People didn’t go out of fashion then and I don’t believe they can now. If anything, they will only become more important.

At Godrej, we describe ourselves as ‘antevasin’ - Sanskrit for someone who lives at the border, with one foot firmly





scratching the surface of the possibilities in HR.

### **Tap the gig**

Traditional approaches to hiring are undergoing a dramatic shift. Companies are exploring the new free market systems for contractual talent. Enter, the gig worker, who, as the name suggests, steps in to perform a “gig”. Projections show that a significantly large part of the workforce by 2020 will be gig workers. This opens up the flexibility to hand-pick projects and people. Also, if you thought this was just something happening in the West or that this is just about millennials, think again. The gig economy is very much in India. It’s for anyone who wants flexibility, including people who have retired and are now reskilling themselves. Of all the shifts we are seeing, this probably requires HR to sit up and take notice the most. Imagine your company comprises people who move in and out on the basis of their gigs. Imagine what that does to engagement and team identity.

### **Embrace diversity**


Becoming more inclusive to stay competitive is increasingly critical. Becoming more global and diverse is key to our transformation at Godrej. Today, nearly half the revenue of our FMCG business comes from our international businesses. Our footprint extends to a variety of geographies; two-thirds of our team members and a significant number of our consumers are based outside of India. As a result, we are

navigating diverse geographies, cultures and brands.

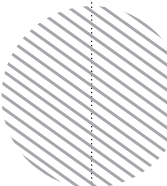
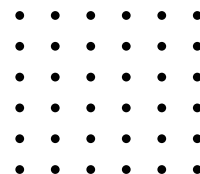
The other big piece we are grappling with is how to effectively bring together multi-generational team members. There’s as much to be valued in years of experience, as there is in the curious, experimental approach of newcomers. We have to engage, balance, and leverage these different styles and skills; and one size won’t fit all. Simultaneously, we need to find ways to create more awareness around issues of gender and sexuality and modify our major people policies to make them more inclusive for our LGBTQI team members.

### **Experiment much more**

We don’t, and to be fair, can’t have the answers simply because we are solving for something that is changing in ways that we don’t really understand. So if there’s one thing we must learn, it’s how to experiment. This can’t be a long, intricate process. We have to shift to rapid prototyping and testing, changing on-the-go, and then starting all over again. If we must fail, then we have to do it fast so that there’s time to fix it and move on. There are lots of great examples of how startups are using these approaches to test product ideas that we can borrow from. This agility will be the game-changer.

Abraham Lincoln once famously said that the best way to predict the future is to create it. That’s probably the best way to sum up the exciting opportunities we have today, to reimagine and build for the years ahead. 

**TECHNOLOGY IS TRANSFORMING THE WAYS IN WHICH WE INTERACT AND FEEL, AND ALSO WHO WE ARE. NO SURPRISE THEN THAT BY EXTENSION, THIS IS INTRICATELY LINKED TO HOW WE CRAFT AND DELIVER PEOPLE EXPERIENCES AT THE WORKPLACE**





# More than a game!

## - Team Sport & Its Influence on Corporate Business

'Sports' is becoming an industry while the corporate world is being asked to get 'sporty' in its strategies and operations. Here's a perspective on that!

**T**hink of a sport and one can imagine *action, excitement, challenge and result* ... if you are a follower! For the player, it means skilling and training, dedication and application, fitness, competitive performance and recognition. For the organizers and sponsors, 'sports' is a means of providing a memorable experience that's entertaining and commercially viable. 'Sports' has ceased to be just a game, it is an enterprise! It is an organization with mission and objectives; an organization whose ecosystem of specialized entities that provide necessary inputs and support is evolving; an organization that is in the process of offering its products in a commercially viable manner. Therefore, it is adopting practices, processes, and governance from the corporate world...just like an organization that creates world class products and services for its target audiences.

In India, 'sports' is a start-up enterprise. But for Cricket, all other sporting events are getting their initial funding through *'friends, family and*

*fools!* The success of cricket in its IPL format is the Unicorn that holds the beacon for all other games, especially for the team sports. 'Sports' is the new sunrise industry that is learning business techniques from existing industries while offering some very interesting pointers on how business needs to be done in future when technologies like AI and robotics would have caused an impact.

Strange as it may sound, 'sports' is getting business funding now to become an industry while the corporate world is being asked to get 'sporty' in its strategies and operations as machines start doing activities that human beings are currently performing. Here's a perspective on that.

Cricket and Football, the two leading sports in India, have some interesting aspects about them that stand out in similar and contrasting ways. Both are team sports with a structure – there's a captain followed by a list of players, organized in a manner that resembles a hierarchy. In cricket there's the batting order and in football there are

While it may be perceived that 'sports' is sponging on corporate practices, techniques and strategies, it is in fact offering some invaluable lessons to corporate honchos to enable them to deal with business situations once technologies like AI, Robotics, Virtual Reality and IoT start disrupting existing practices



the forwards, mid-fields, defenders and goal-keeper. Every player is highly skilled, knowledgeable of the rules and regulations, and obviously has prior experience of playing the game. There are specialist roles too that provide for some very distinct skills like wicket-keeping and goal-keeping. The players are all well trained (qualified), have played the game at different levels (experienced), yet take every game as a new event. No two games are identical for the players!

The teams are supported by coaches (masters of the game), support staff (who take care of the players' fitness), technicians (umpires, referees, interpreters of rules, etc.) and analysts (analyzing strengths and weakness of each player for various situations of the game). Career opportunities have got created for statisticians, data scientists, analysts, commentators, merchandise providers and for techies to develop gaming apps. 'Sports' has all the trappings of becoming an industry that provides employment and careers.

Cricket, the slower of the two games, has a distinct feature of 'flipping hierarchy'. At the time of toss, the hierarchy is that of the batting order, save the captain. If the team has to field, the hierarchy 'flips' to the bowling hierarchy, which invariably goes bottom-up. Depending on the decision to bat or bowl, the structure changes and the *operational responsibilities get reallocated!* Further, depending on the situation of the game, the initially 'well-defined roles' of players gets 'fuzzy' and the expectations on their performance also changes. The experts call this as 'adaptability' – a skill that can influence a player's career. So, in cricket, structure can flip, roles can get fuzzy and responsibilities can get reallocated and the players are 'trained' to perform and deliver results.

Football is the faster game and is played for a shorter span of time. The captain of the team is like any other player when the kick-off happens. The perceived hierarchy dissolves completely — the movement of the ball determines the most important player for that moment. Indeed, the one who is dribbling the ball or defending a hard strike by the opponent is the most responsible person, who assumes complete authority and takes a decision to act. What he does then is accepted by all other players as the best option possible. The game isn't paused for evaluating options or for seeking approvals or taking advice which may be coming from the screaming coach from the sidelines. During the game, there could be misses and mistakes by a player, but the team shows implicit trust and moves on.

In a recently conducted field-survey that I conducted, in which over 100 respondents at the CXO level were contacted, the following were the key findings in the context of how technologies are expected to impact organization structures and managerial roles:

- i. Top Management will automate their business processes in preference to hiring people;
- ii. Organization structure will be flatter and managerial roles will be fungible which will make the organization flexible and responsive.

- iii. Organization will be inclined towards contractual engagements with skilled resources than training in-house employees.
- iv. Problem-solving, creative thinking and communication skills are top three skills expected at managerial level to work in a VUCA world.
- v. While technology will perform functions that are repetitive and predictable, human roles will brace with uncertainty and ambiguity. Hence, job descriptions for human beings' roles will be fuzzy.

The similarities in the details between sports and the emerging corporate are therefore quite striking. For instance:

**Administrator's Role:** Investors will fund the business activities, provide expertise in creating a core team but will not be operationally involved. However, they will set the expectations of the outcomes. This is exactly how the sports' apex bodies operate.



The only striking dissimilarities are in the areas of training and bench-strength. Sports is in the process of building its bench-strength whereas organizations are eliminating this

**Organization Structure:** Very flat or even a circular structure will emerge. Circular structure – Holacracy – expects business expertise (multiple skills) to exist amongst all managers. They will be assisted by technology with context related data and details. Many of the existing 'specialist' roles like CFO, CHRO, CIO, will get subsumed into operational roles. New areas of specialization will emerge – data scientist is currently in vogue,



## Unpredictability and newness are key aspects of sports - each match is different - and thus provide some telling similarities about emerging business activities for CEO's to look into

behavioral science (study of brain), creativity and visualization. Like in a sports team where there's some degree of specialization while everyone else is pretty much expected to do everything else.

**CEO's Role:** The CEO is the captain who leads a highly resourceful team and is also fully involved in the operational aspects. The CEO will have discretionary powers just like the captain of the sports team does, and will have the responsibility of explaining the rationale of a decision taken. The responsibility of the performance of individual members rests on the CEO who would also ensure that outcomes comply with statutory requirements.

**Managerial Roles:** Potential employees, like players, will be skilled and will have a clear track record. Organizations will hire people with relevant skills rather than re-training an existing employee. Contract employment shall be the preferred option and hence capability (player's form in sport) will be the basis for negotiating compensation. Like players get tested every time on the field, employees too shall be tested by complex business problems and unprecedented situations in which their skills will be used. As technologies like AI and robotics develop expertise in doing tasks that tend to be repetitive, human skills will be used where uncertainty of outcome is very high - just like the result of the game.

**Work Environment:** The pace of work will be much faster; the diversity factor will be much higher and business processes will be much more transparent. Team members will see diversity in skills, language, beliefs, habits, culture, practices, etc. but will be unified by a common purpose. Their profiles will be known to all and their actions and decisions will become known to the stake holders through the transparency of business processes. Contributions made individually and collectively will be visible. In that sense, business will be mimicking the 'playing-in-front-of-the-audience' feature of sports.

**Entry Level Jobs:** The flat structure implies that the entry level jobs themselves will be at a much higher level than they currently are. Working to gain experience - as intern or on contract basis - shall happen along with academic pursuits. Hiring will happen on the basis of demonstrated capability than on academic credentials. The 'hackathons' in software industry is becoming a trend-setter for hiring for various kinds of roles.

The only striking dissimilarities are in the areas of training and bench-strength. Sports is in the process of building its bench-strength whereas organizations are eliminating this. Further, training is a very important aspect of sport - even the best player needs time to train and the board facilitates that at its cost - whereas in business, organizations of the future will expect the individual to train herself at her time and cost.

Speed as a factor draws parallels between sports and the emerging form of business. Like Cricket has witnessed transformations from test matches to T20 format, emerging businesses will be about machines speeding up operational activities while sharing the workload with human beings. Machines will perform predictable and repetitive tasks while human beings will perform tasks that have unpredictability in outcomes or newness in managing.

Unpredictability and newness are key aspects of sports - each match is different - and thus provide some telling similarities about emerging business activities for CEO's to look into. While it may be perceived that 'sports' is sponging on corporate practices, techniques and strategies, it is, in fact, offering some invaluable lessons to corporate honchos to enable them to deal with business situations once technologies like AI, Robotics, Virtual Reality and IoT start disrupting existing practices. The time is now for decision-makers to get on with their net-practice sessions! 🏏

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**SHEKAR** is an Executive Coach and a student of Research - researching on future of organization structures and nature of managerial roles. He is also a business consultant having over 3 decades of industry experience in the Information Technology vertical.



# The real shift – Agile leadership

Agile methodology became popular as an approach to software development. But the methodology has transcended to the realms of organizational leadership. A look at what Agile Leadership entails

**T**he world we live in today is characterized by increasing complexity and fast paced change. Whatever is the purpose of one's organization – whether a business enterprise, a non-profit or even government, one will find continuous disruption due to technology and other factors. And to be effective in this environment, leaders need to change their leadership styles so as to be nimble, scan the environment continuously for opportunities and risks, and pivot as frequently as needed.

The Agile method became popular as an approach to software development through collaboration between self-organizing and cross-functional teams and their customer/end user. Research reveals that it evolved as a response to the exceeding time and cost budgets of software projects. The methodology taught programmers to be flexible and accept changes during the development cycle and also brought in the functional users to work closely with the developers to ensure that they developed what the business needed. The benefits of Agile methodology are many but the most crucial aspects of it are: (i) A thinking that involves taking an end-to-end perspective; (ii) code releases in short sprints for users to see the progress periodically, and (iii) the comfortability with experimentation and failure. But Agile is not confined to software development anymore. The principles of the methodology have been transported to encompass organizational leadership as well. These principles enable a richer array of tools for leaders to use, tightly aligned to the needs of today's environment.

Agile leadership enables leaders to:

**Improve adaptability:** In an agile world, it is less about doing the right things and more about doing things right because priorities are a continuously shifting.

## Given the fluid expectations of the world today, being comfortable with starting what needs to be done even before the end goal is firmly established is crucial

*Create a culture of empowerment:* Leaders should be empowered to take decisions and stand by them.

*Demand continuous learning culture:* Unless leaders are empowered to improve their individual content and context quotient they will not be successful.

*Ability to communicate:* With 60 to 70 percent of our workforce going to be millennials in the future, it is imperative for leaders to have the presence and ability to communicate effectively across generations. Leaders need to make 1: Many and 1: 1 connects easily and early.

The Agile mindset not only includes Intellectual Agility that is to continuously ideate and collaborate to visualize multiple future scenarios with high tolerance of ambiguity, it also comprises Emotional Agility, i.e. to control, prioritize and ability to detach from failed ideas or traditional processes to quickly move on and adapt to what is needed and working now, and also Learning Agility that is focused on Mental, People, Results and Change Agility and brings action orientation to Intellectual and Emotional Agilities.

While failure is learning, success is an inspiration. Agile leaders demonstrate

rapid success stories converting failures into opportunities. It is important to continuously experiment but institutionalize success while moving along. Leadership success needs to be measured by outcomes, not efforts. Leadership exposure and experience create or changes mindsets. Rotation of responsibilities and stretch challenges provide the learning ground for leaders, and only an adaptive strategy is relevant in today's times.

Finally, the essence of Agile leadership is:

- Being open to experimentation and being comfortable with failure.
- Producing product in small batches, which means your customer can see continuous progress.
- Given the fluid expectations of the world today, being comfortable with starting what needs to be done even before the end goal is firmly established is crucial
- Recognizing that progress is more important than perfection. Speed to value is the key mantra – whether in business or non-profit or public service.
- Being comfortable with the realization that one cannot do everything – there will be limitations of time, physical resources, and team's capabilities among others. Given the scenario, leaders need to ruthlessly prioritize the actions that will give the highest impact in the shortest time.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

**ROSTOW RAVANAN** is the Chief Executive Officer & Managing Director at Mindtree



# A true democratization – L&D of the people, for the people, & by the people

Businesses are asking L&D functions to be hyper-agile in responding to the ever-changing demands, but in a dynamic environment where organizations themselves are not clear on what skills are required for the future, where does the L&D function stand?



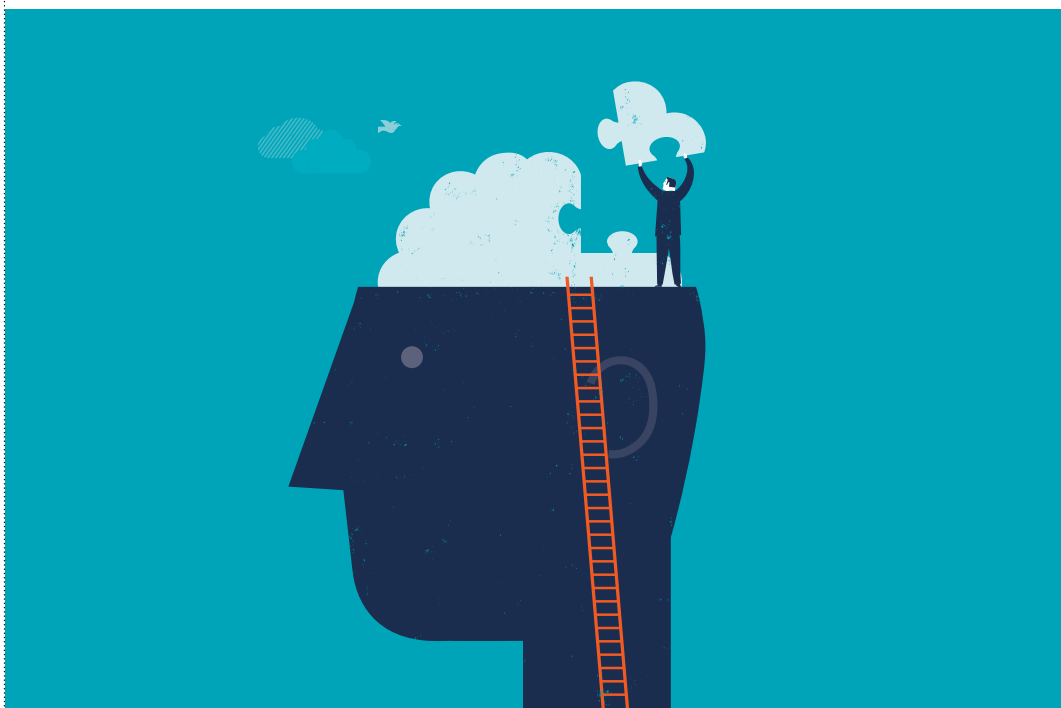
## A self-driven culture cannot be built by enforcing restrictions on access of content or choice of medium of learning

to prescribe and employees don't want to follow a set prescription, what exactly should the L&D function do?

At Nagarro we have had a very interesting journey over the past few years, scaling up at a breakneck pace. Our sweet spot has always been the use of technology to help change the way clients run their businesses. And while we have been early adopters of new technologies, getting people with the right amount of in-depth knowledge or domain knowledge is usually the key to success, which translates into the T-shaped profile requirement where people could use their cross functional knowledge along with in-depth knowledge of a specific area to serve business needs. However, we have taken this up a notch by building “bridge” shaped skillsets in employees. That is, employees having differing levels of knowledge in multiple areas like the vertical pillars of a bridge and a horizontal layer of knowledge across different streams, complementing the pillars of the bridge. For us, it is important that employees constantly embrace new skills and quickly master them. To enable this, we have been focusing on “Learnagility”, which is a learning mindset based on quick responsiveness and a willingness to try new things. This mindset shift forms the basis of a self-driven culture of learning which is aligned to our business goals but with an individualized learning approach. To help create this mindset while delivering business value, the following were the requirements from the L&D function:

**Build a learning marketplace:** A self-driven culture cannot be built by enforcing restrictions on access of content or choice of medium of learning. We therefore took a conscious decision to move

**T**he business environment has dramatically shifted from being ‘uncertain’ to almost impossible to predict. Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, and automation are rapidly transforming industries and creating types of challenges and demands that one can't even predict. Technology skills typically now have a shelf life of just two years. In such a scenario, organizations themselves are not clear on what skills are required for the future. Businesses are being forced to move away from prescribing skills to asking L&D to be hyper-agile in responding to the ever-changing demands. For employees too, the learning landscape has changed dramatically. From relying on organizations for dictating learning and career paths, employees now realize that they have an upper hand in creating their own learning paths and upskilling themselves through multiple sources of learning, many of which are freely available. In this dynamic environment, when organizations don't know what trainings



away from a push to pull model and rather than prescribing content, we used recommendations from SMEs and contributors to curate content and make it all available as a learning marketplace.


**Digital and not physical:** We realized the pace of learning is dramatically impacted if learning isn't on-demand. To enable this, we have promoted a digital learning marketplace for most trainings and only using workshops selectively for highly interactive innovation, soft skills, and leadership trainings.

**Guidance:** We also realized that while people can be nudged to a self-driven culture of learning, it works best when it is complemented with top-notch mentors, curated pathways, and continuous performance analysis. We have built a pool of active contributors who are voluntarily helping to keep the self-learning culture alive.

While employees are more than eager to embrace a high-level of autonomy in their learning, aligning it to the business interests by finding out what exactly they have learned is also imperative. We thus realized that as a business, we are keener on what a person knows rather than how much time they have spent on learning a skill. This led us to reimagine L&D as LEAD (Learning, Evaluation, and Development). And to help people voluntarily take assessments, we built our flagship program "LevelUp!", where users can earn badges by attempting skill assessments of their choice and only when their badges are unlocked, the information is made public. The validation of their skills is used as a valuable input to resourcing and helps people aspire for opportunities in their areas of interest. Also, rather than prescribing a syllabus and then testing if the person is aware of the contents, we moved the discussion to assessing the skills. The learning plans are provided only as a recommendation and the assessments are

## Mandates are a weak crutch and real success in today's dynamic environment is when organizations are able to build user-driven, intelligent, and democratized systems of learning

designed so that users who have practical knowledge in the topic don't really need to go through a separate syllabus to earn a badge. The right mix of gamification, content curation, and easy access to content can build a self-driven learning culture which not only promotes learning agility but also aligns the individual and business interests successfully.

L&D teams need to really understand business priorities and user interests deeply. Constantly engaging with the stakeholders is the key to rich insights. Mandates are a weak crutch and the real success in today's dynamic environment is when organizations are able to build user-driven, intelligent, and democratized systems of learning. 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**MUKUND NAIR** is Director at Nagarro

# There aren't enough matured tools available to manage talent in organizations

*"While the basic digitalization has been done, not many business and administration processes are digitalized end-to-end, and this is a big challenge. We are already finishing the second decade of the 21st century and many companies still rely on manual processes."* **Vaclav Koranda**, Vice President - Human Resources at T-Systems Malaysia shares his insights on talent management, leveraging predictive analytics, and new-age learning and development

By Mastufa Ahmed



**V**aclav Koranda, Vice President - Human Resources at T-Systems Malaysia is also a member of T-Systems' Board of Directors. Koranda has held executive roles in Human Resources in several companies. Previously, he was the Vice President of Human Resources at T-Systems Czech Republic. Koranda holds a Master's Degree in Work & Organizational Psychology from Charles' University in Prague and is also a certified PRINCE2 Practitioner and a SHRM Senior Certified Professional.

**A research by Gartner reveals that only 12 percent of organizations currently use talent data to make informed decisions.**

**How do you interpret this?**

Looking at what is available in the market, I don't see many matured tools available and ready for implementation. There are startups that are developing predictive analytics solutions based on big data and artificial intelligence. However, they still seem to be in the early development phase. I think we can expect them to be ready in 2-3 years and will be able to see the percentage of users growing.

**How do you think HR teams can deliver maximum value in the data-driven world?**

In HR, typically we accumulate a lot of data. It is very tempting to jump on the current trend and start to analyze all sorts of data in many different ways. However, in

order for it to be efficient and bring value to the company, analytics must be performed with a business-driven goal and ultimately linked to business KPIs. Another question is the quality of the data we try to analyze. It is not always easy to gather and analyze data regarding talent and skills.

**Do you think the SMEs and startups are actively adopting predictive analytics?**

I have had many discussions on this with my colleagues in SMEs and startups. They mostly feel that they are not mature enough for this kind of analytics and most don't even have enough data to base the analytics upon. So for them, it would be definitely wrong to jump on the bandwagon just because other people jump. They have to make their own decisions whether it can benefit their business or not.

**Is HR really ready to shift to the tech-based learning driven by AI-based systems and virtual reality?**

I believe what we should be asking is if the employees are ready? We have seen the hype about e-learning some 15 years ago. However, e-learning never really became the holy grail of corporate learning and its usage and popularity are still well behind expectations. I am afraid that the same can happen to the recent inventions in the corporate learning sphere. We must enable our employees to be ready to use the new learning platforms. Only then they will be able to use them effectively. 🍌

e-learning never really became the holy grail of corporate learning and its usage and popularity are still well behind expectations



# All 'movements' need a conscience

Movements become real movements only when those who are not benefiting from the fruits of the movement enroll themselves to the cause

I was an early adolescent when the reservation movement exploded on the educational campuses of India in the early nineties in India. I could make only so much sense of it then. I was too young, unexposed to the world of social change and its contours. It took almost another decade before I could synthesise my views on the subject – having swayed on all sides of the argument for or against the reservations multiple times over. It took me some effort to understand the genesis and history of the issue, the complexities of the solution offered the imperfections of the defenders of the cause and the blind obstinacy of the opposition. Finally, it took me almost a spiritual humility to acknowledge that my view after all this manthan may still not be perfectly objective or perfectly comprehensive or perfectly fair – there will be some constituent or the other who shall remain unattended or unsatisfied, either in theory or in practice. I have come to realize the above about all reform movements – environment, gender, identity, religion, caste, #MeToo so on and so forth.

My big lesson, however, from that early experience witnessing the process of social change was that movements which intend to create any kind of social change, or changes of perspectives or reforms or attitudes towards entrenched customs or practices, must also have a conscience. Let me elaborate.

Reformist movements accumulate over decades or even centuries. They lay low accumulating small splinters over time and one day when there is a sufficient critical mass, it explodes like a supernova. These are two different stages which have two different dynamics that govern them.

During the accumulation phase, the reformists are often sporadic and disintegrated. The efforts to call out the injustices are equally isolated, often experiencing roadblocks and suppression from the established order. Every effort in favor of social change is an act of courage – actu-



**Victory can be intoxicating and more importantly blinding. It can dull the instincts of sanity, fairness, and reason**

ally extreme courage. The injustices being fought have powerful defenders because that is the entrenched power of status quo – unwilling to relent. As the voice of reform grows, there is some discipline in the clamor. The organization of the reform is often led by people who are the voice of fairness – they exhort their own followers with the voice of reason, justice, and balance. It is this sanity that creates a groundswell of support for the reform.

Then the movement erupts – and as is the wont of any eruption, this stage begets some element of chaos. Eruptions are difficult to control. Victory can be intoxicating and more importantly blinding. It can dull the instincts of sanity, fairness, and reason. It does not take too long

before defenders acquire the language and methods of perpetrators – particularly if unchecked.

It is during this stage all movements must have a conscience. They must be watchful that a bursting supernova might have collateral damages – many unintentional and inadvertent but certainly regretful. These damages must be guarded against. Many fringe elements may even try to exploit the movement – they must be weeded out and publically called out. Inability or unwillingness to weed such elements dents the credibility of fairness that the reform movement stands on. Only a strong conscience separates a reform movement that will aid evolution and progress from those that will only cause disruption and some change.

There is nothing worse than one kind of injustice being replaced by injustice of another kind – often its mirror opposite. There are no averages in real life to fall back upon or give solace. Any extreme is unjust and will sow the seeds of its own reform. Conscience guards against that.

Movements become real movements only when those who are not benefiting from the fruits of the movement enroll themselves to the cause – they fight for the movement because, not only does the movement per se represents voice of reason, sanity and fairness, but equally the manner in which it is being run is fair, just and sane.

Every time I experience any reform movement either as a spectator, participant or an architect – I remind myself of a dire need to have a conscience. ☺

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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

# IN-FOCUS: LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

This special L&D feature profiles the People Matters L&D League Award Winners 2018 - organizations that have re-engineered their L&D interventions, spearheaded learning with innovation, and solved business-critical challenges by establishing a culture of self-learning

By Manav Seth

SPECIAL FEATURE




**W**e sign up for a lifetime of learning the moment we come into the world. After learning how to communicate, walk, and question, most of us go onto attaining formal education and leave the system as educated and skilled individuals. While many might assume that this is where 'learning' ceases and its application begins, the real learning journey actually begins here. For, the real test of learning isn't just in applying knowledge but constantly evolving by unlearning and relearning new information and contexts.

This is all the more relevant in today's disruptive world where the only way to gain an edge is to keep learning – about technology, the future, and the current business contexts and transitions. The People Matters L&D Annual Conference brought together leaders, experts, and businesses to enhance innovation in the learning and development domain and discuss the challenges and best practices. This Special Feature discusses the strategies and practices adopted by the People Matters L&D League Award Winners 2018 who successfully transformed their leadership to attain competitive edge, who made progress in

making their talent more agile and future-ready, who fostered a thriving culture of self-learning, who focused on building a smooth onboarding experience to engage employees and help them become productive, and who re-engineered L&D interventions using technology and analytics.

The People Matters L&D Awards 2018 considered more than 300 organizations contending for the top honors. All the applications were carefully examined and analyzed under different criteria laid down by leading L&D and HR experts for the following categories: Best in Onboarding Solution, Best in Future-Tech Skill Building, Best in Building Self-Learning Culture, Best in L&D Technology and Analytics, and Best in Leadership Transformation. Applicants were required to explain the business challenges they faced, the business metrics that were negatively impacted, the strategies that were deployed, challenges encountered, and the results. In each of the five categories, three best practices were anonymously shortlisted by the panel, and were further scrutinized on the basis of a presentation of their learning strategies and interventions. In the final round, one winner from each category was adjudged as the winner.

- The highest accolades went to the following organizations:
- **Best in Onboarding Solution:** India Infoline Finance Ltd.
- **Best in Future-Tech Skill Building:** Zensar
- **Best in Building Self-Learning Culture:** JLT India Pvt. Ltd.
- **Best in L&D Technology and Analytics:** Raymond
- **Best in Leadership Transformation:** [24]7.ai

It is interesting to note that although the programs designed by these organizations are inherently for different organizational outcomes, the ingredients of success are essentially the same: innovation, leadership buy-in, adoption of new-age digital tools, and a concerted effort to solve a critical business challenge. The approach and strategies adopted by the aforementioned companies might be varied but the benefits of a robust learning environment are similar: increased engagement, lower attrition, competitive edge, lower costs, and business growth. Let us take a closer look at the learning journeys of these organizations and understand what led to the success of the learning interventions made by them. 

### L&D Awards 2018 Jury Members

- **Alok Sheopurkar**, Executive Vice President & Head – HR, HDFC Asset Management
- **Anjali Byce**, Director – HR, SKF India
- **Anuranjita Kumar**, Managing Director – HR, RBS
- **Kedar Vashi**, Director of Learning & Development, The Coca-Cola Company
- **Madhavi Lall**, Managing Director, Head HR, Deutsche Bank
- **Raj Narayan**, SVP & CHRO, Titan Industries
- **Ratish Jha**, Business Head, Raychem RPG
- **Sandip Sen**, CEO, Litmus World
- **Smriti K Singh**, Former CHRO, Sony Pictures Networks India



RAYMOND

## One Button Connect – A mobile app for All Retail frontline Employees

Raymond has successfully leveraged the new age systems and technology to digitalize the process of learning & communication effectively for the frontend retail salesforce

As digital tools and systems increasingly overtake business processes and operations, it is a foregone conclusion that any effective digital L&D tool needs to be simple, convenient, and innovative. As an industry leader, Raymond realized that using technology and analytics was critical to drive its L&D initiatives and provide its employees with an edge.

### **The Objective: To redefine the way of communication, engagement & learning for our frontend staff**

Developing a cost-effective learning tool for frontend Retail employees that effectively uses technology to ensure high participation and engagement in addition to providing analytical insights was the overarching goal for the organization. In addition to facilitating a connection between different teams and departments within the Retail business, the tool was to act as an interface for sharing best practices and enhancing communication, learning, and performance.

### **The Intervention: One Button Connect App**

'One Button Connect' was developed as a mobile application by Raymond to digitalize the entire process of communication, learning and engagement for the frontend retail staff. Product presentations and videos, behavioral training videos, event invites, and company news were instantly broadcasted to the entire workforce. Points were awarded to employees for successfully completing modules and assessments, and a leaderboard to keep track of colleagues was a part of the dashboard. The first employees to reach pre-determined milestones of 500, 2000, and 5000 points were awarded a silver, golden, and platinum batch respectively. Additionally, the first employees in each of the four brands to reach these levels were also given a headphone, an iPod Shuffle, and an iPhone respectively as well.



Raymond has proven that intelligently using new age systems and technology can help employers not only drive engagement and support business growth, but also provide an efficient mechanism to effectively manage employee communication, training and learning

However, getting employees to use the app was a tough task. Since different stakeholders were habituated to different data points and access, there was no standardized process to facilitate the exchange of information like best performers and best practices. Customized processes were designed to get buy-ins and employees

were educated on the benefits of 'on-the-go' learning. For those who were used to instructor-led classes for Product trainings, adoption for mobile learning was initially a challenge. The Raymond team did various sessions educating the frontline staff and their managers to make them understand the benefits & features of the app. They also emphasized that some of the classroom training time will now be utilized for Capability building trainings which will help develop the frontliners.

### **The Impact: Impactful Learning with Analytical Insights**

The app has been downloaded over 10,000 times and its usage has increased significantly with time. By the third month of the app launch, it had become the most engaging app on most employee devices. While the cost of the Product & Seasonal trainings witnessed a reduction of 85 percent and came down from nearly 2 crores to 30 lakhs, the coverage of the training increased from approximately 3200 employees to nearly 4800. Furthermore, assessments and surveys provided rich data for analysis and best practices were easily shareable amongst different verticals. A transparent and objective performance and sales ranking platform was readily available to all employees through the app. Employees who read 95 percent or more of the app content achieved 96 percent of their sales target, and even those who read 40 percent or below were able to achieve 90 percent of their targets.

In creating an easy-to-use and instantly accessible platform, Raymond has ticked all the boxes. The app has become a valuable interface to disseminate information and there is a willingness to learn in the frontline employees. Raymond has proven that intelligently using new age systems and technology can help employers not only drive engagement and support business growth, but also provide an efficient mechanism to effectively manage employee communication, training and learning.



# An integrated Talent Development and Management approach

[24]7.ai's intervention makes a case for holistic leadership and management programs and proves their effectiveness in building a culture of leadership in the company

**H**ow does an organization align leadership development with organizational strategy and business goals to deliver maximum value to the organization? What are some of the ways in which HR can ensure that existing and potential leaders are future-ready and agile? [24]7.ai's integrated talent management framework hit all the nails on the head and successfully trained its leadership to support the business growth while improving other performance metrics.

## The Objective: Improving Efficiency and Performance

With increasing competition in the HR tech industry, it was imperative for [24]7.ai to improvise its offerings to maintain the 'industry leader' tag. And while it was critical to offer better products and services to clients and consistently exceed expectations, meeting the goal of increasing company revenues by 33 percent in both FY17-18 and FY 18-19 was the imperative and so was creating a new framework to refocus and re-channelize all efforts and resources to become more efficient and agile and improve performance. Making the most effective use of existing human resources to get more business from existing clients and also reach out to new clients was the business goal.

Once the objective was set, an intervention to enhance the efficiency and performance of all leaders and managers was designed through interviews and focus group discussions. The goal was to help leaders to improve their skills and enhance their productivity by taking a personalized approach.

## The Intervention: Integrated Talent Management Framework

An 'Integrated Talent Management Framework' that provided leaders and managers with personalized competency and behavioral training for upskilling them was designed. The goal was to develop and transition the top 40 percent of the agents in



the company to their first supervisory role. Furthermore, customized trainings for supervisors and managers were designed to enable them to excel in their roles and prepare them to take more ownership. Along with this, certification trainings for managerial and senior management level were also designed. The certification structure comprised the following components:

- Step 1: Development Center:** Interviews, group discussions, exercises, and evaluations were undertaken to assess current skill and competency levels and identify areas of improvement.
- Step 2: Boot Camp:** Participants underwent competency-based behavioral upskilling and operations management training for individual projects.
- Step 3: Certification:** Agents were invited to apply the learning by executing their projects and sharing results with a panel presentation.
- Step 4: Individual Development Plan:** Personalized training and development plans were devised for agents based on their results and presen-

tations in the previous stages, focusing on areas of weakness.

## Step 5: Development & Assessment

**Center:** At this stage, individual competencies and skill gaps were filled with coaching sessions and a comprehensive roadmap of career advancement or succession planning.

## The Impact: Improvement and Innovation

Post the implementation of the program, feedback and assessments were collected from the employees and supervisors and changes to the learning curve, team scores, and behaviors were also recorded. All those who were a part of the certificated training displayed more innovation, agility, and initiative and the selected parameters recorded positive improvement. For instance, while the improvement in quality, cross-selling, and reduction in absenteeism was above 8 percent, the average handle time, net promoter score, and investor relations were all up by over 5 percent. Similarly, conversions and login hours also witnessed a positive improvement. The total impact on the revenues was estimated to be around Rs. 83, 00,000.

A comprehensive talent development and management system not only ensured a steady pipeline of future leaders, but it also enabled high-potential employees to develop soft skills, emotional intelligence, and self-awareness. The exposure and guidance provided to employees, and the support extended to help them implement projects instilled a sense of confidence and ownership like no other. Furthermore, the opportunity to work on amplifying skills and professional development helped employees to feel more connected and valued, thus, in turn, ensuring better engagement and participation. [24]7.ai's intervention makes an unshakable case for holistic leadership and management programs and proves their effectiveness in building a culture of leadership in the company. 🌟



# Onboarding employees through RISE - Readiness for IIFL through Skill Enhancement

IIFL's RISE program has proved that a supportive on-boarding experience helps in accelerating employee productivity and enriches their journey on the learning curve

The on-boarding process is a critical part of the employee journey. It is essential that first impression given by an organization is of support, reaffirmation, and validation so as to make any new employee feel welcomed and comfortable. Elevating the onboarding experience alongside expediting employee-readiness and assimilating them into the company's culture is easier said than done for any organization. But, India Infoline Finance Limited (IIFL) overhauled its onboarding process to make it more efficient and accrued several benefits that came with.

## The Objective: Optimizing Onboarding and Increasing Productivity

IIFL envisioned an onboarding process that ensured Day 1 readiness for new employees and one which instantly acquainted them with their branch, product, company processes, and policies. Furthermore, the company wanted to cultivate an attitude and culture of 'learn, unlearn, and relearn', which had been a concern with existing and lateral hires. The reduction of turn-around time and minimization of business losses which prevailed through excess and spurious funding were also targeted. Ultimately, the goal was also to reduce attrition and managed forced exits due to non-compliance.

## The Intervention: RISE (Readiness for IIFL through Skill Enhancement)

A comprehensive onboarding program called RISE or Readiness for IIFL through Skill Enhancement was conceptualized and implemented for new employees. The prominent features of RISE were:

- **Training:** A 7-days residential workshop, followed by 2-weeks on-the-job training, two-days of Refresher training, and a certification process.
- **Blended Learning Immersion:** Use of live and virtual modes of learning, including classroom, video modules, mobile apps, tablets etc.

- **Practical Insights:** Ensuring adequate business and function level interactions and business process immersion through UAT experience
- **Industry-Specific Training:** MSME-led real-time gold valuation practical sessions and appraisal of frequently pledged gold ornaments
- **Compliance Sensitivity:** Using consequence grid familiarization and mandatory/regulatory modules
- **Behavioral & Sales Aptitude Assessment:** To validate role fitment and scope for change in profile
- **Reverse Feedback:** To gain insights on employee experience at branch; the program was constantly improved using attrition rates and exit interview feedback.

The implementation of RISE came with its own share of roadblocks. While front-line managers had rigid opinions on the capability of freshers and non-industry recruits, adequate levels of support had to be provided from the existing branch staff during the on-the-job Training phase. Additionally, several infrastructural and technological challenges were experienced while managing the scale of operations to realign the entire HR on-boarding process by ensuring a single-day joining and advanced recruitment planning.

## The Impact: Early Employee Readiness and Reduced Attrition

From the business perspective, new employees were able to generate business within one month of joining, as opposed to six months earlier. Additionally, the business was more compliant as valuation rights accesses were available within 30 days, which previously took over 60 days and better-trained employees were able to detect attempts to pledge spurious gold early. From the HR perspective, there was a reduced cost of attrition as the training program was supplemented by a work-contract for one year. Employees were able to connect with the company culture and values from the very first day and hence, were better engaged.

IIFL's RISE program has shown that a welcoming and enjoyable onboarding experience naturally contributes towards building a strong employer brand and in attracting top talent as well. In conclusion, a strategically business-aligned and well-designed onboarding program can have several benefits which help increasing employee engagement, lower attrition and hiring costs, and enhance efficiency and productivity. 🍌



A strategically business-aligned and well-designed onboarding program can have several benefits which help increasing employee engagement, lower attrition and hiring costs, and enhance efficiency and productivity



# A Digital Academy to Future-Proof Talent

The 'Digital Academy of Zensar' shows that new-age tools can successfully support the learning function and help the workforce develop digital skills

**P**reparing the workforce to face the challenges of the future is a tough task. For starters, no one knows exactly what challenges the future will bring. With disruption being the rule rather than an exception in today's world, organizations need to start future-proofing their workforce by imparting them with relevant digital and technical skills. Zensar did just that and created a digital academy to skill its workforce in emerging technologies and supported them while they updated their skills.

## The Objective: Skilling Employees in Emerging Digital Technologies

A research from Gartner, Forrester and Zensar's sales team predicts that the total digital business opportunity is expected to grow over 20 percent per year for the next 3 years and the demand for emerging skills is increasingly rapidly. Since meeting these skill requirements solely through the market is time-consuming and expensive, the need to skill existing employees in these domains is critical. All of these factors pointed to a need for an inclusive and wide-ranging learning solution that helps employees in their upskilling journey, as a result of which, the 'Digital Academy of Zensar' was born.

## The Intervention: Digital Academy of Zensar

The 'Digital Academy of Zensar' was launched with 5 levels of competencies and was curated and structured in various modules: e-learning, classroom, and blended. The levels of the academy were:

- **Level 1:** Digital Awareness: The first level was made mandatory for all associates, including support functions.
- **Level 2 and Level 3:** The next two levels were made mandatory for all technical on-site and off-shore associates.
- **Level 4 and Level 5:** The last two levels mandatory for all nominated associated and were a part of the personal growth plan of the associates. All employees had to clear one level in three months, or lesser. Constant support

Zensar's digital academy proved that new-age tools can readily support the learning function and help the workforce develop digital skills

from managers and leaders were provided to the employees to help them finish their levels on time, and regular events were held to encourage active participation and assessments.

## The Impact: Digital Business Growth and Positive Impact on Employer Brand

The following were some of the direct results of the 'Digital Academy of Zensar':

- As a result of the learning and training undertaken by the employees, 78 percent of the open positions related to digital skills were closed internally.
- A 100 percent achievement of the first three levels was achieved using events, gamification, and leadership support.
- Employees, newly equipped with digital skills, helped Zensar's digital business grow from 21 percent to 38 percent in FY18.
- The Digital Academy of Zensar has accelerated the process of making Zensar the first 100 percent living digital company by a higher adoption of digital processes.
- Employee satisfaction levels have notably increased and Zensar's Great Place to Work learning-related score has also gone up from 64 to 69 as employees have reacted positively to learning new and emerging skills.
- Additionally, these modules were added to the employability skill development program of engineering students from 38 colleges to equip them with in-demand digital skills and making them ready for providing services to other companies as well.



A critical ingredient in the success of the digital academy was that the senior leadership was onboard who provided support and guidance to the academy. Employees felt more valued and confident in their roles, and were able to work more efficiently. All in all, Zensar's digital academy proved that new-age tools can readily support the learning function and help the workforce develop digital skills. In addition to the direct benefit of building future tech skills, companies stand to benefit with better their growth, employee engagement, and enhance the employer brand. 🌟



## Challenging Employees to be their Best

JLT India's 'The Challenger' app has proved that, if done right, mobile apps and gamification can be potent tools that can be leveraged for building a culture of self-learning

It is a fact that that trainings and sessions don't inspire many employees who only attend them because they are mandatory, and it is no secret that fostering a self-learning culture to encourage collaboration, innovation, and competition is something that most organizations struggle with. JLT India Pvt. Ltd. managed to make learning participative and got its employees hooked to an app.

### The Objective: Making learning fun and addictive

In order to successfully evolve into a 'Knowledge Centre' by 2020 and help employees transition from their current generalist roles to future specialist roles, a coordinated effort comprising standardized learning and training was needed. However, the goal was to make this learning voluntary and addictive as opposed to simply being a company-mandated program. This also necessitated replacing instructor-led trainings with immersive byte-sized mobile-based learning in order to maximize retention and engagement.

### The Intervention: The Challenger mobile app

The objective of designing and creating a self-learning culture culminated in a mobile game called 'The Challenger' wherein the employees could play quizzes, earn points, and compete with each other. The Challenger mobile application was conceptualized, developed, and tested for nearly a year before being released. With an emphasis on user experience and interface, the focus was to ease employee's learning, make it attractive and use a pull mechanism to get people to learn serious and otherwise boring technical content in a fun way. The team used design thinking methodology extensively to create a simple yet effective user-centric application. After a few months of interaction, app evangelists were cultivated to drive the usage and build relevant and engaging learning content. To increase footfalls, the team promoted event based usage of 'The Challenger' App to drive large groups to



JLT India's 'The Challenger' app has shown that, if done right, mobile apps and gamification can be potent tools to drive employee learning and training

the application. One such organization-wide event was 'The learning Week'. Finally, after sustained usage from the employees, training was aligned with business needs and the emphasis on technical content was increased. Finally, the app was integrated with other critical processes like new hire training.

### The Impact: Improved Learning and Engagement Levels

Within 18 months of the launch, The Challenger was installed by more than 75 percent of employees. The learning uptake increased during the same period and jumped from 36 percent to 75 percent. A 25 percent increase in technical skills and a 35 percent increase in non-technical skills

were also witnessed in employees. The institutionalized learning, which focused on technical skills and competencies, achieved its goal of streamlining learning and training with the business objectives of the company. Employees engaged with the mobile app on their own accord and competed with each other.

The fact that the app had an easy and intuitive interface ensured that it was adopted swiftly. The leaderboard kept everyone updated regarding who is leading, and by how many points, thus driving a healthy competition between team-members and departments. It proved that simply providing training through an app or a game isn't likely to work, and adequate focus needs to be paid on the learner's experience, journey, motivation, and interaction with the learning tool.

JLT India's 'The Challenger' app has shown that, if done right, mobile apps and gamification can be potent tools to drive employee learning and training. Naturally, this also results in other peripheral benefits like improved employee engagement, healthier workplace culture, better alignment to organization's objectives and increased collaboration.

# Real Time Compliance Management

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

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

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

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

There are many more compliances which can be handled in an offline mode as well.

Labourworks™ is an Enterprise Contract Labour Management System which helps you streamline various processes using SPC Methodology™ . SPC Methodology™ are industry best practices in Security , Productivity & Compliances. Organizations have also observed up to 10%\* cost reduction on Contractor billing by implementing SPC Methodology™. There are more than 350 installations of Labourworks™.

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# A HIGH-IMPACT WORKPLACE LEARNING CULTURE


## L&D TRENDS STUDY 2018

A Research by People Matters and BITS Pilani

RESEARCH

To prepare employees for the future, organizations need to accept a learning system that favors continuous, individualized learning and a culture that encourages people to take responsibility of their own learning. People Matters and BITS Pilani research study “A High Impact Workplace Learning Culture” uncovers some of the most pertinent L&D trends while assessing how true the function has remained to its vision while digging deeper into the importance of a high-impact workplace learning culture

**By People Matters Editorial**



**I**n the book titled *The Fifth Discipline*, Peter Senge coined the word “Learning Organizations”. Learning organizations can be defined as a group of people who are continually enhancing their capabilities to create what they want to create. The basic rationale for such organizations is that in situations of rapid change, only those that are flexible, adaptive and productive will excel. In a hyper-competitive, complex, and volatile business environment, organizations are constantly pushing their employees to perform better and bring more to the table. But the same forces are disturbing the business ecosystem and are also overwhelming employees, driving up their fear of job-loss, and compromising their capacity. Hence, it becomes absolutely imperative for the C-Suite leaders to focus on building a high-impact workplace learning culture.

The People Matters and BITS Pilani WILP (Work Integrated Learning Programmes for Individuals) study is designed and conducted with the objective to understand how leading companies in India invest in regular upskilling, add value, and nurture the potential of employees and creating a high-impact learning culture. The survey saw the participation of 129 companies across industries and sectors. The study covers three broad points: (i) Top priorities and agenda — Recruitment priorities for the year 2018 and how the vision and capabilities of the function have evolved over the past two years. (ii) What defines a high-impact workplace learning culture? (iii) Building a high-impact workplace learning culture — What are organizations doing in building a high-impact workplace learning culture?

The research studied how organizations’ top learning priorities and agendas have evolved over the last two years; and while assessing how true the function has remained to last year’s vision for itself, the

research also attempted to dig deeper into the importance of a high-impact workplace learning culture; a culture that would be effective in navigating the future of work. In a high-impact learning culture, organizations make learning a part of their business success (69 percent); empower employees to take charge of their own learning (61 percent), and make knowledge sharing an organizational habit (54 percent). While most studies and leaders argue that companies should upend traditional models and empower employees by putting them in charge of their own learning, a key finding from the research found that only 2 percent of the organizations allow their employees to take the final decision on the domain and technology specific courses they want to pursue. 36 percent of the organizations shared that the CEO decided on the courses and training for an employee.

### Top L&D Priorities & Agenda

In 2016, People Matters first launched the survey in partnership with BITS Pilani to record the L&D Trends for the year 2016, which found that the L&D function had finally identified the building blocks for the success of the function. There existed a focused approach on converting these priorities into business outcomes as reflected by the synergy between the priorities, organization readiness levels, future areas of investments and the expectations from such investments.

Benchmarking the data of 2018 against the previous survey of 2016 and 2017, it was found that building skills and capabilities required for future across the organization continued being the top priority for the L&D function (57 percent). Similarly, like the previous two years, this year again, aligning L&D strategy to the business (46 percent) and improving employee productivity and perfor-

mance (43 percent) completes the suite of the top three priorities for the next 12-18 months.

In 2016, it was found that while organizations had a high level of leadership buy-in for these priorities, building a learning culture and enhancing capabilities of L&D team needs to be focused upon. This year, getting a leadership buy-in to take these priorities to business outcomes observed a dip from the previous year.

Investments in the L&D function have been going up year-on-year. 57 percent of the organizations said that their learning budgets are going up. And as the organizations prepare to invest their budgets in this direction, adopting innovative learning methodologies, creating new content, and building the learning culture of mentoring and coaching were rated as the top areas of investments by 69 percent, 54 percent and 49 percent respondents, respectively.

### **A High-Impact Workplace Learning Culture: What does it mean to business?**

The fourth industrial revolution, as some might call it, has disrupted industries across the world. The industries are experiencing rapid advancement in technologies, changing workforce demo-

graphics, job losses, and changes in global policies. This new age requires significant “right-skilling” – retraining the workforce and acquiring people with the right skills to fill the gaps. Rapid changes in the business ecosystem require different and new talent solutions and skill sets from employees. To prepare the workforce of the future, organizations need to have a strategic plan for talent to make the shift — a plan of building a high-impact workplace learning culture. A growing number of forward-thinking organizations (72 percent) concluded that a high-impact workplace learning culture is characterized by making learning a part of organization’s strategic success. The other attributes of a high-impact learning culture as defined by the respondents include empowering employees to take charge of their learning (63 percent) and making knowledge sharing an organizational habit (58 percent). It was found that businesses, leaders, and HR can improve the learning culture by aligning learning with business goals (77 percent), upskilling the existing workforce (68 percent), and formalizing continuous and informal learning (64 percent).

The challenges faced by organizations while building a high-impact workplace learning culture include non-involvement of key stakeholders (63 percent), inability to measure learning outcomes (51 percent), and learning not being recognized or rewarded (42 percent). It was also found that while the organizations face challenges in recognizing or rewarding employees’ learning, most organizations (79 percent) believe appreciating and recognizing employees can be a motivating force for employee learning. The other ways identified for motivating employees to learn consist of sponsoring a course (47 percent), and salary increment (22 percent).

To sustain a culture of high-impact workplace learning, organizations are adopting a number of ways like linking learning to career advancement opportunities (70 percent), encouraging active leadership participation (67 percent), and regular review of the strategy (51 percent).

### **Building a High-Impact Workplace Learning Culture**

How can organizations align people ecosystems with strategic and operational business plans? How can organizations prepare to address future learning needs of their workforce? How can companies leverage workforce planning processes to assess capability gaps and develop a strategic plan to address these gaps? While there is no one approach, having a strong learning culture can transform the organization for a future enabled by advancement in technologies, and policies. On being asked about how organizations identify employees that require upskilling, we found the most popular means adopted were performance ratings (79 percent), employees demonstrating interest in a new function (51 percent), and leadership interviews (47 percent).

To ensure the organizations are fostering a high-impact learning culture, companies are

**It was found that businesses, leaders, and HR can improve the learning culture by aligning learning with business goals, upskilling the existing workforce and formalizing continuous and informal learning**



investing in a number of formal and informal methodologies like job enrichment, mentoring and coaching, stretch assignments and projects, short-term courses and higher-education. Interacting with various experts from top organizations, we found that organizations are leveraging a number of online learning platforms to curate content, make learning faster, etc. However, the experts also feel that the importance of higher education to support a high-impact learning culture cannot be neglected. Prashant Khullar, CHRO, Mahindra Holidays and Resorts India Limited, shares, “Apart from these programs, we regularly partner with the best of the institutes to make, both online & blended courses available for our employees. We believe that business specific interventions should be wholly customized & therefore designed internally. Functional and leadership education through quality institutions provides the much-needed global perspective to our employees.”

We found that organizations also sponsor higher education and offer short-term courses to improve their learning culture. In fact, the survey reveals that 47 percent of the organizations sponsor employees’ course/learning as a means to motivate them for continuous learning and 75 percent of the participating organizations said that they sponsor 1-250 employees yearly for university courses to upskill them in the technical domain. While most studies and leaders argue that companies should upend traditional models and empower employees by putting them in charge of their own learning, a key finding from the research found that only two percent of the organizations allow their employees to take the final decision on the domain and technology specific courses they want to pursue. “Learning should be in the hands of the employees, they must have complete authority to define their learning paths i.e. what, when and how they want to learn.” says Janesh Kumar, CHRO, Airtel Payments Bank.

### Conclusion

The results of the current study and comparison of similar inputs from last year’s study indicate that the L&D leaders have been able to maintain their focus on aligning the function to business strategy and building/upgrading skills across functions in the organization. To compete with the ongoing disruption, having a high-impact workplace learning culture is a necessity. “A culture should be built on the pivot of allowing people to make decisions fast, be agile, be truly courageous to navigate complexities, drive change, take risks, and still manage to inspire people to achieve something successful,” says Shalu Manan, Global Capability Leader - Shared Services, Genpact.

Through the research, it was found that building or improving a learning culture requires involvement of the key stakeholders and HR leaders, and the L&D team can drive a high-impact workplace learning culture by formalizing continuous and informal learning, upskilling the existing workforce, and aligning learning with business goals. Prashant Khullar, CHRO, Mahindra Holi-



**A culture should be built on the pivot of allowing people to make decisions fast, be agile, be truly courageous to navigate complexities, drive change, take risks, and still manage to inspire people to achieve something successful**

**Shalu Manan**, Global Capability Leader - Shared Services, Genpact

days and Resorts India Limited, shares, “There is enormous ownership that lays on business, L&D and HR leaders in fostering a culture of learning. Business leaders being the end customer, provide the core purpose of initiating any learning events. Their involvement in the design & delivery process helps in bringing “Floor Expertise” to “Class-room”. HR leaders facilitate the learning culture through potential assessments and potential mapping. L&D leaders bring in the solution expertise, customized to the audience.”

The other key learning that was derived from this research was that a high-impact learning culture is sustainable until employees are empowered to take charge of their own learning. Goutami Dutt, Head of Learning and Development and HRBP, OLX India says, “Do not try to push people to learn. Create a pull so attractive and so much for them that if they come, you have done a good job. Today’s generation has a complete belief that if it is good for them, they will go. Provide the right value and you are doing the right thing that will benefit the employee and help create a sustainable high-impact workplace learning environment.”

# BUILDING A HIGH-IMPACT LEARNING CULTURE

In a hyper-competitive, complex, and volatile business environment, organizations are constantly pushing their employees to perform better and bring more to the table which necessitates a focus on building a high-impact workplace learning culture.



RESEARCH

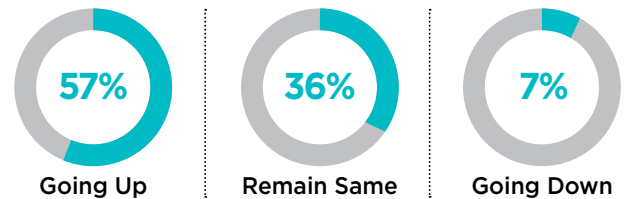
## TOP THREE PRIORITIES FOR THE L&D FUNCTION IN NEXT 12-18 MONTHS

Priorities	2018	2017	2016
Building skills and capabilities required for future across the organization	57%	52%	50%
Aligning L&D strategy to business	46%	53%	51%
Improving employee productivity & performance	43%	42%	41%

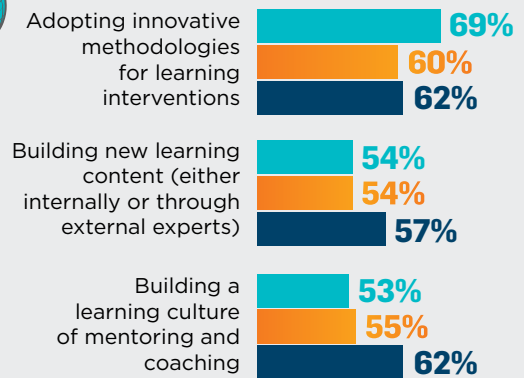
## READINESS OF ORGANIZATIONS TO ACHIEVE THE ABOVE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Readiness Level	2018	2017	2016
I have the leadership buy-in to take these priorities to business outcomes	3.8	3.8	4.0
My L&D team has the skills & capabilities to achieve these priorities	3.2	3.4	3.5
My organization culture is ready to implement actions required to achieve these priorities	3.2	3.9	3.4

## L&D BUDGETS TO INCREASE IN 2018-19



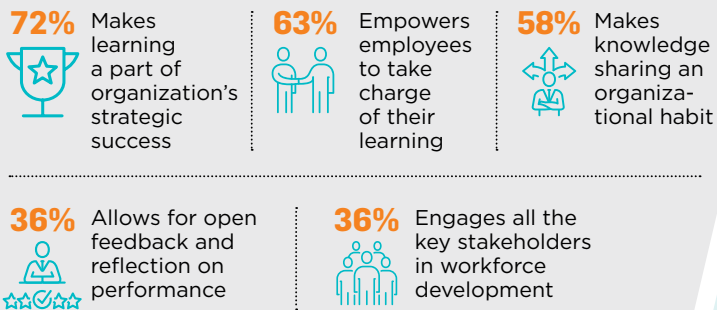
## TOP AREAS OF INVESTMENT IN L&D



## TOP THREE WAYS TO SUSTAIN A HIGH-IMPACT WORKPLACE LEARNING



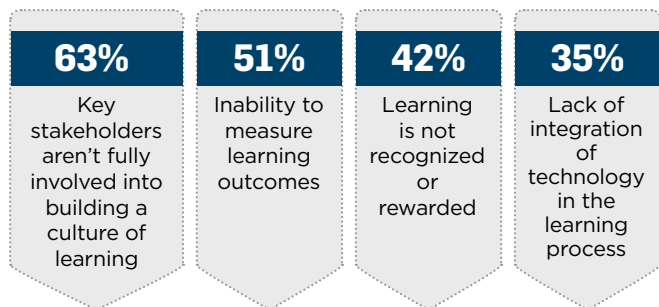
## ATTRIBUTES OF A HIGH-IMPACT WORKPLACE LEARNING CULTURE



## TOP WAYS TO IMPROVE A LEARNING CULTURE



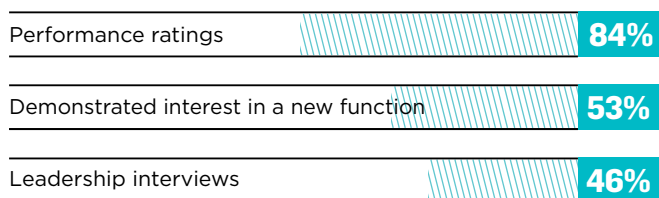
## TOP FIVE CHALLENGES WHILE CREATING A HIGH-IMPACT WORKPLACE LEARNING CULTURE



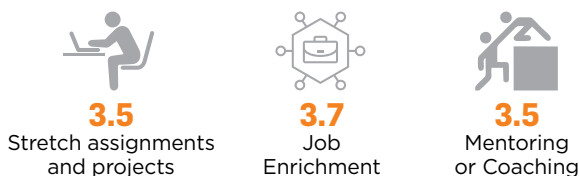
## TOP THREE WAYS TO MOTIVATE EMPLOYEES TOWARDS LEARNING



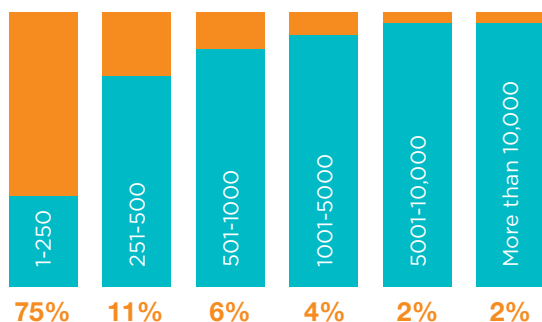
## TOP WAYS TO IDENTIFY EMPLOYEES FOR UPSKILLING



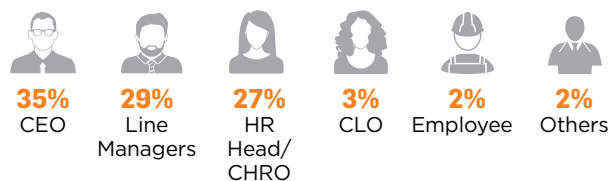
## TOP WAYS TO SUPPORT A HIGH-IMPACT WORKPLACE LEARNING CULTURE



## ORGANIZATIONS SPONSORING EMPLOYEES FOR UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS



## DECISION-MAKERS ON EMPLOYEES' LEARNING



## RESPONDENTS PROFILE



**H**ow people learn at work is drastically changing. The constant pace of change means the workplace should be so vibrant and conducive towards learning that people automatically adopt learning. High-impact workplace learning culture is about creating the right vibes and environment in the organization to encourage and support learning. For this, L&D must excite people and show them that they are as much into learning as the people themselves are. Only then can learning become a way of life at work.

### Critical Elements of a High-impact Workplace

Learning is a culture which must be thoughtfully built with active involvement of all necessary stakeholders.

**1. Involvement:** Business managers, HR and L&D all together need to drive the culture. Employees must be able to see that L&D partners are championing the cause themselves by learning themselves. For example, last month I did an online Stanford course on story-telling to learn and stay abreast, to be able to cultivate the right high-impact learning culture. The key is to get employees involved too. At OLX, we follow the concept of IDP, wherein employees share what they want to learn and L&D organizes the sessions.

**2. Continuity:** Learning must be made available on an ongoing basis rather than as sporadic sessions. This may mean tying up with institutes for pursuing learning opportunities such as an MBA post office hours to help people hone their life skills. The focus is on learning periods of six months to one year and part time options.

## A successful learning culture requires active involvement of key stakeholders

Provide the right value to your employees and help create a sustainable high-impact workplace learning environment



**Goutami Dutt**


*Head of Learning and Development and HRBP, OLX India*

**3. Impact:** Showing people that any learning they have done will impact them in their next work are important. For example, at OLX, L&D organized a 1-0-1 coaching for senior leaders on how to handle global calls. Leaders who attended the calls received great feedback from their global counterparts. They saw a real-world usage of the learning intervention, and kept coming back to learn more. Through an open learning approach, some employees from tech roles took up learning on BI insights and areas such as Big Data, etc. Their appreciation and understanding was enhanced, helping them in their current roles.

**4. Boundary-less learning:** Most important is to create a pull rather than a push mechanism. OLX makes learning available to learners in a boundary-less manner through its Online MyAcademy- a plethora of learning options on the web and desktop including Udemy, ThinkBig, CodeAcademy, Harvard management, etc. What is unique is that no learner is stopped, the entire learning arena is open and L&D follows a “You decide what you want to learn” approach. It is important to tell avid learners that, “If you are keen, do not stop yourselves, we will do what it takes.”

All stakeholders i.e. business leaders, HR professionals and L&D must be glued to making learning work. L&D must involve the business by working out well-meaning, relevant projects and showing them the results, so that they want more. For this, it is important to be very fluidic and flexible, so that leaders can quickly go back to

Creating the right change impact is all about catering to today's employees unique learning aspirations through different ways

the drawing board and change the approach. Perhaps, the most important challenge is not to try to push people to learn. Create a pull so attractive and so much for them that if they come, you have done a good job. Today's generation has a complete belief that if it is good for them, they will go. Provide the right value and you are doing the right thing that will benefit the employee and help create a sustainable high-impact workplace learning environment. 



Everyday learning becomes critical to success for new-age organizations. What matters more is how the daily learnings are impacting the business. The key questions leaders should ask are: “Are we applying learnings the right way?”, “Are we learning from mistakes?”, “Are we building the learnings as part of the knowledge system?” etc. The right answers will help build the right high-impact workplace learning culture i.e. a culture wherein learning directly impacts the business, empowers the people to think out-of-the-box, and actually starts contributing to the HR KPIs such as keeping employees motivated and engaged. Overall, it is about making the workplace a happier place with the right business impact.

### Critical Elements of a High-impact Workplace Learning Culture

**1. Empowerment:** A high-impact workplace learning culture is one with an empowering environment for employees to learn. It means creating the right resources, money, and even the extra time specially for learning interventions.

**2. Value for employee:** Employers often keep pushing people to do trainings, the key challenge is to make learning interventions attractive for employees by exhibiting the “What’s In It For Me (WIIFM)” for them. For example, at Airtel, the organization encourages trainings which may not be immediately linked to the business, but are meant to make people happy. L&D must showcase the “WIIFM” to employees, thereby making them happy, content and better contributors.

**3. Business impact:** People should be able to link the business impact to their learning. L&D and HR should help quantify the learning outcomes, so that employees realize the ROI they are getting from the learning culture. For example, Airtel faced a tough situation- they failed on compliance and business was put on hold. The L&D team took to training people on compliance and regulations and very soon even the business functions started proactively talking about compliance. The business impact was very visible, and therein the learning intervention succeeded. It is clear that the learning bouquet should reflect the impact and performance on business deliveries through a visible impact.

### Best Practices for a High-Impact Workplace

**1. Employee-driven learning:** Learning should be in the hands of the employees; they must have complete authority to define their learning paths i.e. what, when and how they want to learn. The organization must set the broad guidelines and

## Empower employees to build a high-impact workplace learning culture

Learning in itself is a business responsibility and the starting point of a high-impact workplace learning culture is the employee and not the employer



**Janesh Kumar**  
Chief Human Resources Officer,  
Airtel Payments Bank

### It is clear that the learning bouquet should reflect the impact and performance on business deliveries through a visible impact

suggestions for managers, but even these should make sense to the employee. This will create happy and responsible employees who will act as brand ambassadors for the organization, and deliver work better.

**2. Leader ownership:** Leaders must take responsibility for learning within their teams and functions, ensuring that there is sizeable improvement in the business skillsets. At Airtel, constant learning-related communication with business managers is a reality. L&D and HR encourage managers to plan for their successes, conduct learning interventions and

mandate that every team member must complete at least one online session per month. Further, managers are evaluated on their learning initiatives such as the learning-impact and growth of their people. This indirectly encourages managers to take on the onus of learning in their teams.

**3. Building the right environment:** HR and L&D must focus on controlling the larger ecosystem i.e. creating an environment which is empowered and has the right resources. Such resources can be special learning-time outside of working hours, online forums, on-the-go learning apps ((Lynda, Coursera, Pluralsight), workshops, knowledge sharing sessions, etc. L&D must constantly innovate to help employees get skilled so as to deliver on the business goals. For example, Airtel follows a Continued Education Program where people can opt for higher education in their chosen field to build expertise and confidence for further growth. The company bears the cost of getting these people ready for their next roles.

**4. Prioritizing knowledge management:** New ways of knowledge-sharing such as peer-to-peer sessions and employee-centric participation are a must. At Airtel Payments Bank, skills are often built via experience rather than ready programs. It therefore, becomes important to capture such learnings through effective knowledge management such as knowledge-sharing sessions. Airtel kicked off knowledge-sharing sessions through the right rewards and recognition, with participation centred on employee willingness. They started gifting a Kindle to those who were willing to share their experiences and knowledge. Thereafter, people started coming forth more openly saying, “I want to deliver knowledge sharing”. Maybe people initially came for the Kindle, but later on they realized that they gained knowledge, visibility and recognition for learning.

**5. Tie-in with PMS and Talent Management:** It is important to integrate learning as a part of the larger PMS and talent management design. For example, evaluating people on new skills learnt will encourage a culture where learning is appreciated. Policies and PMS ensure that managers are evaluated on their learning-initiatives. Learning-centred rewards and recognition go a long way. At Airtel, people are encouraged to do the unconventional; the organization celebrates even behavioral and non-business learnings.

L&D, HR and business must work together to overcome the core challenges such as lack of time, sharing of responsibility and making learning relevant to both the business scenario and to the millennial population. 🍌

The nature of L&D is evolving – it is moving beyond being just a training function and striving to secure its position as a business enabler. At Mahindra Holidays and Resort India Ltd. (MHRIL), the high-impact workplace learning culture can be defined as an organizational environment where learning is fostered by design and not as a byproduct of business as usual. Employees across levels have the visibility & freedom to choose their learning path.

The following elements elucidate our learning culture:

- Business managers are enabled and accountable for the learning of their teams.
- Active experimentation of learning through “Action Learning Projects”, etc. is a necessary part of all learning events.
- Reward and recognition platforms are designed to celebrate the sharing of knowledge.

Our key L&D priority for this year is threefold which includes creating pragmatic and customized learning paths that positively impact overall organizational goals, ensuring each L&D intervention reaches across all functions and levels, and setting clear effectiveness measures on pre-defined metrics. To align these priorities with the aim of creating a high-impact workplace learning culture, we have a host of programs catering to different verticals & levels. These interventions flow from the top with the senior business leaders actively engaging in design & delivery of programs. Learning & growth-related parameters constitute 15% of our overall company Balance Score Card, highlighting the importance of learning as a route to business growth. Some of the impactful programs that we have implemented in our organizations are:



## Learning should be fostered by design and not as a byproduct of business

It is essential for organizations to focus on creating a high-impact workplace learning culture, as both the business dynamics and employee engagement anchors are rapidly evolving



**Prashant Khullar**

*Chief Human Resources Officer, Mahindra Holidays and Resorts India Limited*

It is essential for organizations to focus on creating a high-impact workplace learning culture, as both the business dynamics & employee engagement anchors are rapidly evolving



- I-ExCEL-1: A two-day class room training program to enhance sales skills for sustainable change followed by coaching and mentoring of 90 days and impact measurement.
- I-ExCEL -2: A two-day class room training program to build service culture and improving the quality of sales conversations followed by 60 days of

on-the-job training and impact measurement.

- Center of Excellence: A ten-day classroom training program to create a talent pipeline of trained & certified sales professionals followed by 40 days of on-the-job training focused on service excellence.
- Mentorship Skills Training: This workshop created certified mentors to assist and help frontline sales team when their performance is down the spiral, with additional focus, support, and counseling.
- “I- Lead” program: This program again focusses upon front line managers and helps to understand the leadership style and how contextual team leadership applies while managing people. This was as a simulation-based exercise which helped the managers to implement the appropriate leadership style for individual and task groups.

Apart from these programs, we regularly partner with the best of the institutes to make, both online & blended courses available for our employees. We believe that business specific interventions should be wholly customized & therefore designed internally. Functional & leadership education through quality institutions provides the much-needed global perspective to our employees. There is enormous ownership that lays on business, L&D and HR leaders in fostering a culture of learning. Business leaders being the end customer, provide the core purpose of initiating any learning events. Their involvement in the design & delivery process helps in bringing “Floor Expertise” to “Classroom”. HR leaders facilitate the learning culture through potential assessments & potential mapping. L&D leaders bring in the solution expertise, customized to the audience. Though we have come a long way in our journey to create a high-impact workplace learning culture, sustaining the culture is also necessary. We adopt the following measures to sustain the learning culture:

- Ensuring ownership & involvement of business leaders in identifying, designing & delivery of the learning solutions.
- On the go, gamified learning platform to ensure learning is easy and fun.
- The ladder approach followed in program designs, aligned with the role requirements.
- Blended learning approach in collaboration with “the best in business” partners.

It is essential for organizations to focus on creating a high-impact workplace learning culture, as both the business dynamics & employee engagement anchors are rapidly evolving.  

Peter Drucker once said “culture eats strategy for breakfast”. If you think about it you might as well extend it to say “culture eats strategy for breakfast, lunch and dinner”. An organization’s biggest asset is its people and its culture determines how people work together, makes decisions, and conduct business. Any strategy is as good as the people executing it. Culture defines shared beliefs, accepted behaviors and unwritten norms that determine how work gets done.

At Genpact, we believe that recipe for high performance is built on a culture of continuous learning. Modern-day employee is learning differently, accessing information from various sources, collaborating more than before and has constantly globally accessible learning opportunities is essential.

Organizations that are successful in creating high performing learning cultures continue to focus on balancing experiential learning with structured learning interventions. It is also important that employees assess their current skills, develop them, and continue to invest in sharpen-

For a high performing learning culture, it is essential that we seed ongoing encouragement to energize people and inspire them to translate learning into performance

## Enable, Enforce, Encourage - 3 Es of enabling a high impact workplace learning culture

As organizations push for agility and digital led transformation cultural nuances are no longer static or fixed. A high performance culture is constantly thriving and evolving



**Shalu Manan**

*Global Capability Development Leader - Shared Services, Genpact*

ing them, all through the singular pivot of enabling organizational success.

There are the three Es that play a vital role in ensuring that a high performing culture is not just made but also sustained.

**1) Enable:** Enablement is about how the organization provides the right environment through infrastructure, systems, technology, learning options and job aids. The learning team’s responsibility is to provide avenues to assess employees’ current proficiency levels on critical skills and refine ways to build & develop them. An important aspect in this is to realize that the onus of learning is on the employee. The employee should be empowered to choose how they learn, what they learn and the pace at which they learn. Managers’ feedback and coaching helps employees on their journey to get better at what they do. Genpact constantly focuses on creating an enriching environment.

**2) Enforce:** It is important for us to understand that all learning priorities must be linked to performance success. Even when people are enabled to do something, unless we mandate some SMART goals, there is a high probability that what people learn, they don’t apply. The reality is that if people don’t use the skills they learn, on the job, they will be forgotten. For a thriving culture, leaders must make employees accountable to leverage their skills and they themselves must walk the talk. At Genpact, we link results and learning throughout our performance management systems.

**3) Encourage:** Even with the best learning options and linkage to performance, employees might still not demonstrate what they learn as they don’t feel encouraged and valued. It’s all about the motivational factors that inspire people to do the right things. For a high performing learning culture, it is essential that we seed ongoing encouragement to energize people and inspire them to translate learning into performance. At Genpact we provide intrinsic motivators by celebrating success, rewarding heroes and valuing diversity of ideas and thoughts.

These 3 Es help generate results from people. A culture that enables and builds on these will be high-impact and create a dynamic way of learning exponentially from successes and failures, introspecting and understanding insights, accepting realities, and thereby, succeeding.

Genpact’s culture framework of (CI)2, which is Curious, Incisive, Courageous, on a bed rock of integrity, inspires an attitude of high performance and innovation. Learning is a key component that lies at the core of each of our tenets. We make massive investments to enable, enforce, and encourage our employees to continuously reimagine and sharpen their skills for the future.

# Redesigning HR in the era of disruptive technologies

The third edition of FICCI HR Conference 2018 debated and reviewed as to 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 embrace the future looking technologies to successfully ride the wave of digitalization

**By People Matters Editorial**



**T**he digital age is moving at an unprecedented rate and is fundamentally transforming the way organizations operate while necessitating HR executives to embrace disruption and redesign their talent management strategies to succeed. Digitalization has fundamentally reshaped value chains and altered consumer behaviors and expectations be it defense, education, financial services, government services, healthcare, IT & ITES, manufacturing, oil and gas, retail, telecommunications – there is none who would, rather should be left behind. The payoffs arising out of it are phenomenal – from accelerated profitability, improved customer satisfaction to spikes in speed-to-market. But the most intriguing aspect is that this agenda is being driven from the top and is a top priority in most of the boardroom conversations.

However, it is equally important to note that any journey of successful digitalization in any organization goes beyond investment and technology. It actually rests on the most crucial function of the organization – the Human Resources. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) recently hosted its third edition of HR Conference 2018 on the theme of “Redesigning HR in the era of the disruptive technology.” The event began with an inaugural session which saw an eclectic mix of speakers includ-


## Digitalization has fundamentally reshaped value chains and altered consumer behaviors and expectations, and there is none who would, rather should be left behind

ing Anna Roy, Advisor (DM&A, Industry), NITI Aayog, Ranjan Mohapatra, Director HR, Indian Oil Corporation, and Sreekanth Arimanithaya, Senior Vice President, Integrated Workforce Management and India Co-Managing Director, DXC Technologies.

Speaking at the conference, Anna Roy stated that “Today the use of disruptive technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) is pervasive in all sectors and verticals. Human Resource, being one of most important vertical is bringing new opportunities to the fore and giving rise to new areas, leading to better results.” And this necessitates approaching and investing in new technologies as imperative to driving digital transformation. Experts attending the event also discussed the imperative to reskill the workforce and connect with the academia and other parts of the ecosystem to ensure that companies hire the right set of people to gain competitive advantage.

The conference also touched upon the various facets of digital transformation including how technologies like AI and Machine Learning are reshaping the

employee lifecycle- recruitment, workforce planning, performance management, rewards, and engagement while integrating these elements with the uberization of work. The event also saw the launch of the report titled, “Are we ready for future?” by FICCI in partnership with Helix, which highlighted HR readiness for the new digital wave. The report revealed that organizations are confident to take the digital challenge but need to put some building blocks in place to focus on strategic benefits. The report also mentioned that HR executives need to see Digital HR as a means to achieve operational efficiency and a tool for better decision making.

The third edition of FICCI HR Conference 2018 was filled with rich content mixed with power packed sessions with live examples, case studies involving practitioners, experts from across industry ensuring take away for everyone. The event reiterated the mantra that the cohesive and collective efforts of both Business and HR are crucial for transformation in the digital era. 

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**LAURA PUTNAM**  
Public Speaker, CEO,  
Motion Infusion & Author,  
Workplace Wellness  
That Works



**JEREMY SCRIVENS**  
Director,  
The Emotional Economy  
at Work



**SAMEER SOMAN**  
Managing Director  
Thoughtworks



**SHAMITA CHATTERJEE**  
Senior VP & Global Head -  
Total Rewards, Infosys



**ASHISH ANAND**  
Group Head - HR  
Religare



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For partnership enquiries, contact Saloni Gulati +91 7409 2702 70 | +91 124 4841 224 | [saloni.gulati@peplematters.in](mailto:saloni.gulati@peplematters.in)

Jobs of the week



**Capgemini Technology Services India Limited**  
Learning & Development  
**Location:** Pune  
**Job ID:** 23020225  
**Description:** Manage learning for global practice i.e. Analyze, plan and execute practice learning, Periodic planning of practice learning - Calendars.



**Shortlist Professional Services Private Limited**  
Manager/Sr. Manager - HR Advisory  
**Location:** Delhi  
**Job ID:** 23000585  
**Description:** Minimum 7 years of experience out of which should have spent at least 5 years in HR Advisory role.



**Cynosure Corporate Solutions**  
Human Resources & General Administration(HR&GA)  
**Location:** Chennai  
**Job ID:** 23002969  
**Description:** Maintain H.R records of all employees, Creating Human Resource policy and compliance to the policy at the Bank level.



**Superior Talent Resources, Inc.**  
Head /Director-HR  
**Location:** Bengaluru / Bangalore  
**Job ID:** 23004852  
**Description:** Lot of experience in playing a Senior HR Manager / Director role with at least 15 years of relevant experience in HR space.



**Talent Corner Hr Services Private Limited**  
Team Leader Human Resources  
**Location:** Kolkata  
**Job ID:** 23014584  
**Description:** Candidate should have good communication skill and command on English language. Should also have a leadership skill.



**Roljobs Technology Services Private Limited**  
HR Generalist  
**Location:** Pune  
**Job ID:** 23013045  
**Description:** Responsible for HR Systems for the Recruitment process, monthly HR reporting.



**Quess Corp Limited**  
HR Manager  
**Location:** Chennai  
**Job ID:** 23001778  
**Description:** Should have experience in handling Labour welfare Management Contract Labour Management.



**Golden Opportunities Private Limited**  
Australian Payrol - Manager  
**Location:** Kolkata  
**Job ID:** 23016237  
**Description:** Lead the offshore teams to deliver accurate and timely Payroll processing & support services Manage risk through appropriate controls.

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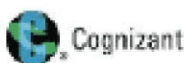
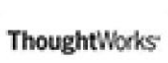


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# Past Month's events

## Impact of #MeToo on Indian Workplaces - How Should You Respond?

**ORGANIZER:** People Matters and KelpHR

**DATE:** 1st November 2018

**VENUE:** Online

**KEY TAKEAWAYS:** The recent #MeToo movement has sparked a movement of transparency across industries. But what does this really mean for businesses? How can companies, boards, and leaders become more focused on the organizational culture and ensure a safer work environment for all their employees, especially women? In the webcast by People Matters and KelpHR, Viji Hari, CEO & co-founder, KelpHR and Smita C Kapoor, co-founder, KelpHR, shared some best practices to ensure safer workplaces and talked about how POSH internal committee can be strengthened by the management to prevent harassment.

## People Matters TV: HR Analytics - From Descriptive To Predictive

**ORGANIZER:** People Matters

**DATE:** 2nd November 2018

**VENUE:** Online

**KEY TAKEAWAYS:** For decades, HR has been described as a people's function with a majority holding the myth that HR has nothing to do with numbers. But this perception has gradually shifted with the advent of people analytics and its increased use in talent decisions. From recruitment to retention, predictive analytics is helping HR leaders formulate relevant and effective people strategies. While the benefits that HR can derive from people analytics are clear, how do they adopt these available tools and put them to use remains a challenge. Fermin Diez, Deputy CEO & Group Director, National Council for Social Service and Leong Chee Tung, CEO, EngageRocket together addressed this challenge and threw some light on how HR can utilize analytics and transform their decision-making processes in a session moderated by Ester Martinez, CEO & Editor-in-Chief, People Matters Media.

## Kick Some Glass: How Women Can Succeed At Work On Their Own Terms

**ORGANIZER:** People Matters and Center for Creative Leadership

**DATE:** 16th November 2018

**VENUE:** Online

**KEY TAKEAWAYS:** A World Bank report on Female Labor Force Participation (FLFP) ranks India on the 121st place out of 131 countries for many varied and complex reasons, while another study by McKinsey notes that India's GDP could improve by 16-60% by 2025 by enabling women to participate in the economy. Evidently, female participation is good for businesses but India falls back when it comes to driving this opportunity. In a high-energy presentation, Jennifer Martineau of the Center for Creative Leadership shared some scientific tips and research-based lessons from the book- Kick Some Glass: 10 Ways Women Succeed at Work on Their Own Terms. Jennifer highlighted strategies for advancement one can apply personally or as a mentor, sponsor, or women's initiative leader.

## From 'Structured' to 'agile' - How should HR navigate shifting expectations?

**ORGANIZER:** People Matters & Oracle

**DATE:** 20th November 2018

**VENUE:** Online

**KEY TAKEAWAYS:** The 2018 India CEO Outlook report by KPMG says that 86% of the CEOs consider 'agility' to be the new business currency. They believe attaining organizational agility is pivotal for their companies to thrive and evolve in the current market. So what is the role of HR in meeting this new expectation? To answer this question and to map how progressive organizations are in identifying ways to structure themselves to future-proof themselves, People Matters and Oracle as part

of the Let's Talk Talent Week organized an online session with Shakun Khanna, Head of Human Capital Management Applications, APAC Oracle Corporation and Swati Anuj Rustagi, Director & Chief People Officer, Max Healthcare. The webcast focused on the need for organizations and HR to move from 'point in time supply and demand' analyses of the workforce to 'continuous analysis of workforce and skills', from 'year-end appraisals' to 'continuous performance reviews', and from 'pyramid hierarchies' to 'team-based agile structures' with value addition at the center. The speakers shared the key drivers changing the HR organization and gave tips on how HR can navigate the multiple shifts towards agility.

# Upcoming events

## Lead For Change: Leadership Conference

**ORGANIZER:** Coacharya

**DATE:** 19th December 2018

**VENUE:** Taj, MG Road, Bangalore

**THEME:** With change accelerated by cultural and generational shifts, the leadership development space has become far too complex to be managed through just traditional training and coaching methods. A systemic approach that aligns individuals and teams to a larger perspective of organizational needs has become critical and now coaching needs to adapt to this need. To address the emerging coaching challenges and to have discussions around how organizations can create a cultural shift in organizations, Coacharya has organized a one-day leadership conference. Through dialogues, talks, conversations and large-scale interactive process (LSIP), the important elements of transforming leadership development space will be discussed and some best practices will be highlighted.

**HOW TO REGISTER:**

<https://coacharya.com/bangalore-2018/>



## Breakfast RoundTable: How Trust Fosters Success in Your Organization

**ORGANIZER:** People Matters and C2C-OD

**DATE:** 24th January 2019

**VENUE:** Grand Hyatt, Mumbai

**THEME:** Relationship building is paramount to fuel exceptional teamwork and performance. However, they are based upon a foundation of trust. While many realize the importance of building trust, how can one do that remains unknown. People Matters and C2C Organizational Development in partnership with Reina – A Trust Building® Consultancy, is conducting an exclusive, invite-only Roundtable wherein HR Heads, Business Heads & L&D Leaders can come some ways from. In this interactive roundtable, Jawad will share research-based Three Dimensions of Trust: The Three Cs® and behaviors that help in building trust at work. Some successful trust-building best practices will also be shared.

**HOW TO REGISTER:**

By invite only.

## Total Rewards and Wellness Conclave 2019

**ORGANIZER:** People Matters

**DATE:** 16th January 2019

**VENUE:** The Leela, Gurugram

**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. For every rupee that is spent on employee wellness, employers get Rs.132.33 as savings on absenteeism costs, and Rs. 6.62 back as reduced health care costs. It further revealed that 83 percent of the respondents of the study are willing to contribute a percentage of their salary in company-sponsored wellness programs. In this fast-paced business environment, fatigue or burnout is inevitable. While many organizations and employers are realizing the importance of a healthy, happy and stress-free workforce and are deploying creative strategies and 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. Beyond compensation and benefits, organizations today need to focus on employee wellness and health to create a holistic employee experience. To help HR and business leaders build the most compelling and powerful rewards offering with a strong wellness strategy, People Matters organizes a one day event to bring together thoughts, ideas, solution and best practices at one place. In the sixth Total Rewards and Wellness Conclave, 700+ leaders and functional heads managing the rewards, benefits, culture, employee engagement and service providers will come together to lead the discussion around the rewards and wellness trends which will be prominent in 2019.

**HOW TO REGISTER:**

<https://www.totalrewardsconclave.com/>



## 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/>



As the world remembers Stan Lee for his great creations like Iron Man, Hulk, Spider-Man, The X-Men, The Avengers, Fantastic Four, here are some reflections on what we can learn from the unique management style that Lee co-created called the Marvel Method

## Stan Lee Obituary: The Marvel Method of Collaboration

**S**tan Lee, executive vice president and publisher of Marvel Comics & co-creator of Iron Man, Hulk, Spider-Man, The X-Men, The Avengers, Fantastic Four, died a couple of weeks ago at the age of 95.

Besides the mark that Lee left on the so-called modern pop culture and the world of superhero comic books and entertainment, Lee was also a fantastic example of collaborative work. Lee co-created most of his work with other artists and brought about a unique management style that included teams working together on the same project. He called it the “Marvel Method”.

Lee joined Magazine Management in 1939. The firm was later sold to Perfect Film & Chemical, which after changes, mergers, and acquisitions became the 21st-century corporation Marvel Entertainment Group. In mid-1961, following rivals’ successful revival of superheroes a few years earlier, the company assigned Stan Lee the task to follow the trend again. The pressure to deliver several titles in a month became a challenge and Lee came up with a streamlined creative production process: the Marvel Method. The Marvel Method breaks the traditional approach of comic writing, where the scriptwriter creates the whole plot and dialogues for each scene, and then the artist draws it consequently; Instead, Lee would give an outline of the story and then the artist would draw each scene visualizing that plot himself. He would tell the artists, “go ahead and draw it any way you want, it does not matter; I will put in the words later and tie it all together.” Once the artist completed the pages, Lee would then add the dialogues,



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the sound effects and captions. This method was not only more efficient regarding utilization of time and resources but also increased innovation in the creative process, because there was more than one mind working on the story.

As we remember Lee for his great creations, here is our reflection on what we can learn from the Marvel Method:

### **Hire diverse & passionate talent.**

The Marvel Method required Lee to choose team members who complimented his skills so they could add to each other’s

work. Hiring for diverse skillsets is critical to adding more efficiency in teams. Additionally, hire “owners” not “employees”; Lee’s method will only work when people in your team see themselves as owners of the outcome. Experience may not matter; such team members understand the big picture and work towards giving their best and to fill the gaps on their own. That is the difference between the attitude “doing as you are told” and “doing what’s needed for the outcome”.

**Be a leader and a team player.** Lee saw himself as one more person in the team. If you hire the best talent, then you need to position them as partners in the journey of creation and not subordinates. Lee shared that, “I loved working that way. If the illustration was beautiful, then I will put very little or no dialogue, because wanted the illustration to show.” Marvel method allowed for the best work from each team player.

**Let go, and see what happens.** Innovation is the need of the hour in businesses today, which means that leaders need to tap into the untapped potential of their team. Creating guidelines and direction for the team to align is critical, but after that, promote responsibility and accountability of every single person in the team rather than a culture of dependency and micromanagement.

Management is about ‘achieving’ as one team and not an individual journey. Lee received credit for his brilliant storytelling and ability to engage with millions of readers, but he always attributed his success to his team of artists and the unique process of collaboration he created. **em**



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