

people matters

VOL X / ISSUE 3 / MARCH 2019

₹150

BIG INTERVIEW

Aadesh Goyal
CHRO at Tata
Communications



What women leaders
think about success,
empowering themselves,
and enabling other women

WOMEN
For **WOMEN**

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The journey ahead
- The state of HR tech
startups in 2019



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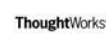
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The onus is on us

Well, I personally don't believe in the battle of the sexes. Especially in the business context and at the workplace, I feel it all comes down to platforms, opportunities, prospects, and sponsorships — and obviously, the capabilities of men and women, both, to leverage them to reach the next level. And while some men and women are carpetbaggers and take risks, some are just not ready for the gamble. Men and women equally fail at it. However, the number of women who leverage opportunities and take risks is lower than men. Why?

I think here is the core issue but it is not a workplace issue. Do organizations post jobs with the caveat "Only for Men"? No!

So, it's not obviously a problem at the workplace, but a problem at the level of the thinking we all have, and the perceptions we all have been fed — the hidden biases, prejudices, intolerance, and narrow-mindedness, the impression that we can't do it, that our first priority is our family, that it's our job to maintain a work-life balance — all this thinking is the challenge, and more so to women themselves because we harbor a majority of these perceptions.

We have been told time and again that we cannot do it. Our mothers have taught us to prioritize our families over our careers. And we all know it. We just don't want to admit.

So whose responsibility is it to change this?

It's our own problem to solve. The onus is on us to change. Yes, organizations must create an environment that empowers all employees (men and women) to proactively seek objective, specific and actionable tasks, but it's more about changing perspectives and inducing newer ways of thinking, and this change starts with us.

Women need to change the dialogue, the intolerant, conservative, rigid, dogmatic and parochial narrative that has been written for them. And this sentiment has been shared unanimously by all the women leaders who have participated in our cover story "Women for Women" — people will expect women to "slow down" to take care of the family but women need to stop internalizing these scenarios and redefine their own selves and take part on an equal footing to men.

For the Big Interview this time, we have Aadesh Goyal, Chief Human Resources Officer at Tata Communications who shares his perspectives on how AI will not replace but augment human intelligence, and how business success will increasingly depend on machines and humans collaborating rather than competing with each other. With this, we also have Dorien Herremans, Assistant Professor, Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD) who lends her perspectives to us on how technologies will assist us in achieving our goals.

The edition also features the state of HR tech startups in 2019 and the journey ahead for them in terms of the challenges being faced when it comes to adoption and expectations, and RPG Group's case study on the digitization of their HR processes.

We are proud to say that People Matters TechHR Conference in Singapore was a success and we want to thank our partners, speakers and delegates who made this an awesome event.

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

Happy Reading!

Esther Martinez Hernandez EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

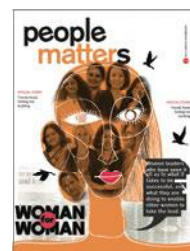
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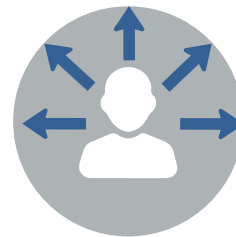
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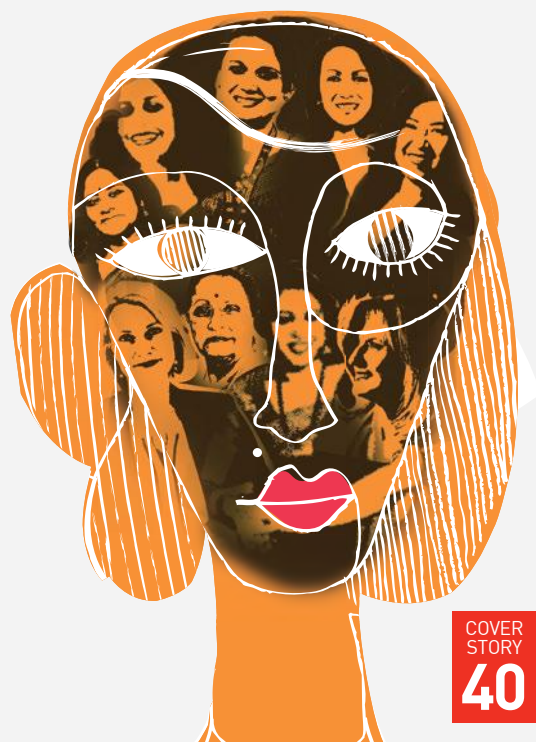
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Navigating a new skills economy

The cover story on how organizations can navigate the new skills economy is a must-read for all HR leaders and professionals because it provides a clear roadmap of what lies ahead and what organizations can do to plan their journeys ahead. All the experts who contributed to the cover story raised extremely relevant and vital issues on how to create ecosystems that make the best use of human skills and machine capabilities. What I particularly liked is the fact that all of them also listed actionable steps to help organizations gear up for the future and plan the transformation which, in many ways, is already underway. In order to keep up with the hastening pace of change, we need to collaborate across industries and disciplines. However, as the authors suggest, the only way to sustain and thrive in this new paradigm is to focus on developing talent and skills as a differentiator and use this as a foundation to drive innovation and transform business models.

- SUKRUT SRUTHI

Gearing up for an accelerated pace of change

I feel that companies need to start remodeling their core business practices and processes and make the best use of intelligent tools and technologies. In addition to overhauling traditional people practices, this

will help both, employees and employers to lay a solid foundation for the future as well. I welcome the fact that this year, businesses and organizations will gather pace in their journey to use make the best use of the knowledge, skills, and lessons that have been learned in the past few years.

- RANJAN TALWAR

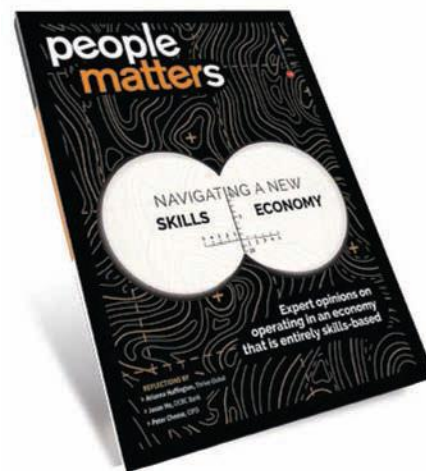


Give up the delusion that burnout is the inevitable cost of success

interview!

Her observation that working to exhaustion and subsequently burning out is unquestioningly assumed to be a milestone on the road to success is very relatable. I really hope that more influential leaders prioritize the well-being of their teams and help change the existing culture of overworking. I also really liked the concept of 'Microsteps' and will surely try to incorporate it in my daily routine. Arianna's journey and story is an inspiration to countless women, like myself, and I am confident that she has many more impressive achievements ahead. Thank you People Matters, for giving us access to one of the most successful female leaders in the world.

- SAKSHITA MONANGI



FEBRUARY 2019 ISSUE

The anatomy of fights

We all have been privy to conflicts in our workplaces, whether in teams or between individuals – and that is why Gurucharan Singh Gandhi's column is appealing. His description of such conflicts or 'fights' pretty much encompass the length and breadth of all work conversations – ranging from light banter to critical feedback. In my experience, differences in opinions are healthy and also indispensable for individuals and teams to work together efficiently. However, things tend to go south when one, or more, individuals associate critique or opposition with a personal vendetta. Naturally, navigating this is a tough task, but those who learn to master this 'sheer artistry' can diffuse even the most serious conflicts. And Mr. Gandhi is absolutely right when he says that a bit of humor always helps!

- ANUAR VERMA





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ideas at editorial@peoplesmatters.in

Experimentation is crucial for growth

Jason Ho's take on how HR can help businesses strengthen their competitive edge and why experimentation is critical made for a delightful read. As an experienced HR practitioner myself, I have come across organizations that pay undue attention to the implementation of redundant and obsolete practices and policies. We need to do away with restrictive and limiting people practices in order to let the collective innovation and creativity of a diverse workforce solve pressing business challenges. The importance of building a creative and progressive ecosystem and work culture for employees cannot be emphasized adequately, particularly in today's disruptive environment. I am really glad to know that banks like OCBC are working passionately towards creating a future-ready, skilled, and intelligent workforce. The 'HR In Your Pocket' app sounds like a great idea to make HR information instantly accessible to all employees.

- VALLABH SETHI

Non-profits don't have to be non-people

It is true that most NGOs and NPOs are unable to engage their employees and do little to ensure their well-being – which is rather disheartening because most of these organizations are able to achieve their objectives by relying on their employees' drive, passion, and dedication. I agree with Visty Banaji that in addition to a lack of motivated quality HR managers, the development sector has no significant HR model that caters to its needs. I have been a part of the developmental sector for over a decade, and although change is slowly taking place, I think we need to expedite it. I implore leaders and professionals in the sector to pay close attention to Visty Banaji's insights on how to get the best out of their people. I would also like to thank Mr. Banaji for shining the light on this issue and initiating a dialogue.

- ANEETA BANERJEE

A big ask

I am sure that Clinton Wingrove's article where he states that employees need to take ownership of their careers and learning must have touched a chord with a lot of readers. Our generation is experiencing the evolution of work first-hand and there is a general feeling of uncertainty that has enamored us. Clinton rightly states that "As we enter a period of increasing uncertainty, accelerating change, and increasing complexity, every single employee needs to take control of their own development and careers; and they need to be conscious of their total skillset, the skills they are currently depending on, and the ones that might prove beneficial in the future". My belief is that by focusing on the practical application of skills rather than theoretical knowledge can help individuals become more self-aware and apply themselves better. Being self-aware, seeking and using feedback, acquiring new skills, and managing the personal brand can help professionals achieve long-term success and create resilient careers.

- MEGHANA NIGWEKAR

It is an exciting time to be in the people profession

As a young HR professional who has recently joined the industry, it was humbling to read Peter Cheese endorse the values and potential that HR stands for. His analysis of upcoming challenges and trends in the HR industry has reiterated the reason why I chose this career – to create a positive impact in the business world and the society at large. As businesses become more conscious of their impact on the society and the lives of their employees, I believe HR can serve as a positive influence in formulating meaningful and impactful business policies. And I am really excited to be in the profession and participate in the process. I also look forward to learning from the guidance of experts and leaders in the industry and would like to thank the People Matters team for the same.

- TAVISHI PATIL



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The story of #HRtech has been one of evolution. @PeopleMatters2 explains how HR tech has evolved along with the funding and acquisitions. Learn about the future of HR #tech via ow.ly/WrMN30nspyw @DhruvMukerjee

Aadil Bandukwala@aadil Jan 16

Fab start to the day with the @BelongCo #CHRO Breakfast Roundtable at @PeopleMatters2 #PMTRWC at @TheLeelaHotels Ambiance Gurgaon. Fascinating discussion on all things #AI and talent! pic.twitter.com/PtKaRh7JDo

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Mohammad Mohsin @mohsincool20

@Pavan_Soni the way you have explained the importance of Delegation @PeopleMatters2 January 2019 Edition is really excellent. I am sure people will find worth reading it.

jiyothi dass @journesh

Understanding trust behaviours #C2CODRT @PeopleMatters2 #trust #trustconversations #trustmatters @DrDennisReina @DrMichelleReina @JawadAhmed_AJ

Pankaj Bansal @PankajBansalPB

Shukriya @tanvi_gautam for joining and making the conversation so meaningful. Your inputs will be visible at #TechHR in #Singapore by @PeopleMatters2 ... do visit us at @peoplestrong booth.

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WELLNESS

Combating employee stress is a key focus area for Indian employers

A recent report by Willis Towers Watson reveals that a lack of physical activity in employees (62 percent) and stress (55 percent) are the top lifestyle risks identified by Indian employers. The other lifestyle risk factors include obesity (43 percent), followed by poor financial wellbeing (27 percent) and tobacco use (25 percent). The study revealed that combating employee stress appears to be a key focus area for India Inc. and about 80 percent of the organizations have taken at least one



action to manage employee stress and mental health in 2018. 89 percent of organizations selected “identify and manage stress and behavioral health issues across the workforce” as a top priority. The various steps taken by India Inc. to manage the employee stress include providing flexible working options (68 percent), onsite stress management interventions (46 percent), employee assistance programs (40 percent), stress management and resilience training (38 percent), and employee education and training (38 percent).

WORKPLACE TRENDS

48 percent of employees consider switching jobs for flexibility



Job site Indeed that conducted a survey of employees and employers across industrial sectors in India in order to gauge their

views on remote work policies, found that an overwhelming majority of job seekers feel that flexibility is a key aspect of work, which has, in turn, spurred employers to offer remote work options to their workforce. According to the survey findings, 83 percent of employees feel that a company's remote work policy is important when searching for a job. Almost half (48 percent) of employees surveyed agreed that they would consider changing their jobs if their current workplace eliminated their remote work policy. Further, 73 percent of employees whose current workplace does not offer remote work options would like their companies to offer the alternative, and 53 percent would even consider taking a pay cut if they could have the option.



FUNDING

HR tech firm Shortlist raises \$2 mn in Series A funding

Shortlist, the online platform connecting African and Indian employers to top talent, has raised \$2 mn in a round of Series A financing led by Blue Haven Ventures, with participation from Zephyr Acorn, Compass Venture Capital, Potencia Ventures, and others. Shortlist combines technology and human touch to understand job-seekers' skills, attitude, and motivation, fueling better hiring outcomes for employers across East Africa and India. With this round of funding, they will work towards their vision to help companies in Africa and India build their teams, grounded in the belief that potential and motivation matter more than a CV, and that both companies and job-seekers deserve better than the status quo. Launched in 2016, Shortlist has screened over 400,000 candidates for over 300 clients ranging from startups to international corporations, including DHL, M-KOPA, Shell, Sula Vineyards, and Uber Eats.

WORKFORCE

50 percent of India's working-age population out of labor force

According to the National Sample Survey Office's (NSSO) latest jobs survey, half of India's working-age population (15 years and above) is not contributing to any economic activity. The survey revealed that the labor force participation rate (LFPR) stood at 49.8 percent in 2017-18, falling sharply from 55.9 percent in 2011-12. The report also reveals that the proportion of the active women led labor force declined twice for women between 2011-12 and 2017-18. Compared to 2011-12, the LFPR for women fell by 8 points to 23.3 percent in 2017-18 whereas



the LFPR for men dipped by 4 points to 75.8 percent, which makes only a quarter of the females in the country were either working or seeking jobs. The fall in the LFPR was estimated to be higher in rural areas than urban areas, falling to 58.7 percent from 67.7 percent. In urban areas, the rate fell from 49.3 percent to 47.6 percent.



ACQUISITION

Intel buys Ineda Systems

American Multinational Corporation and technology company, Intel Corporation has acquired Hyderabad-based semiconductor startup Ineda Systems for an undisclosed amount. As part of the acquisition, Intel has also acquired around 100 engineers of Ineda for their skills in graphics. Intel has ambitious plans in the area of graphics and has been working towards building a stronger team to scale its business and strengthen its current products and solutions. And instead of only focusing on acquiring businesses for their products and services, Intel is adding more people capabilities. Set up in 2010-11 by Hyderabad-based serial entrepreneur Dasaradha Gude, Ineda operates in the sphere of autonomous driving, artificial intelligence and IoT. In the past, it has raised over \$60 mn from big-ticket inves-



tors, including Samsung Catalyst Fund, Qualcomm Ventures, Walden-Riverwood Ventures, Imagination Technologies, among others. Currently, Intel has a few hundred engineers engaged in software development in Hyderabad, but with this acquisition, this transaction provides Intel with an experienced SOC (system on chip) team to help build a world class discrete GPU business. While Intel is continuously working on increasing its workforce and building its capabilities, time will tell how they will help in accelerating the business.

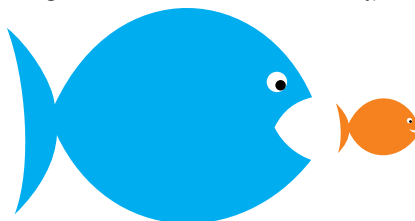


TeamLease to acquire IT staffing arm of eCentric

TeamLease Services is eyeing to tap into a larger share of organized staffing for the technology sector. In this endeavor, it is acquiring Hyderabad-based eCentric Solutions, a staffing business. TeamLease Digital, a wholly owned subsidiary of TeamLease and eCentric Solutions agreed through an agreement that TeamLease Digital will purchase the IT staffing business of eCentric through business transfer or slump sale arrangement. The deal value will be equivalent to 4.5 times the proportionate profit before tax of the target business and the amount will be paid in two tranches—85 percent on transfer of clients and the remaining after six months of transition support.

Culture Amp acquires Zugata for an undisclosed amount

Employee feedback company, Culture Amp has acquired Zugata, a company dedicated to performance management to bridge the gap from knowledge to action by connecting all of the feedback at the individual and organizational level. After pioneering real-time employee engagement feedback, Zugata's acquisition will allow Culture Amp to bring an increasingly sophisticated use of data across the employee lifecycle. Culture Amp launched the world's first on-demand employee feedback platform in 2012, while Zugata was founded in December 2014 with a vision to use data to understand employees and to use those insights to empower employees to reach their fullest potential. Together, they will now leverage each other's solutions and capabilities to connect the dots under one integrated solution at scale. Currently,



Cloud-based HRM software company Ultimate Software acquired in \$11 bn deal

Ultimate Software, which makes cloud-based human resources management software has been acquired by Hellman & Friedman Capital Partners in an \$11 bn deal. The cash deal will enable the HRM software company to invest in innovative products and services and also reward deserving employees. The Florida-based HRM software company was founded in 1990 by Scott Scherr who will continue in his existing role along with the rest of the senior management team. As cloud-based solutions to managing human capital resources become the coveted solutions for HR



professionals across the board, payroll tools such as Ultimate Software are more likely to evolve and increase their reach as compared to non-cloud based solutions. Popular brands such as Subway Restaurants and Red Roof Inns are using this software to manage their payroll and benefits. The software package now also includes analytics tools which help in tracking and monitoring the performance of employees.

Culture Amp has a user base of about 2,000 and Zugata has 1,000 customers. However, the two firms already have had some joint customers, and while they will continue to sell the tools separately, as a merged entity one of the key improvements that users of both tools will see is deeper analytics. Industry followers and customers consider this acquisition and how Culture Amp is leading the conversation within the category to be a groundbreaking development for advancing the future of managing people analytics and ultimately improving workplace dynamics.

THE FUTURE OF HR IN INDIA IN 2019:

IN THE KNOW OR IN THE NO

Human resources will no longer be an enabling function. It will be the driver of business success and sustenance in these volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) times. The Indian segment of KPMG International's latest global future of HR survey, 2018 indicates that HR leaders in India today, exhibit better acknowledgement and recognition of the need for change in HR vis-à-vis their global counterparts; and that Human resources management is soon going to be known as "the linchpin of business success and differentiation".



RESPOND TO CHANGE

Align with changing times

87% of HR leaders in India believe that there is a need to transform the workforce

ANTICIPATE CHANGE

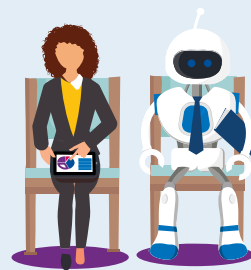
Thrive in the digital era

60% of HR leaders in India are very confident in HR's ability to transform the workforce and themselves



HR Growth and Excellence

Common characteristics:



- Delivering predictive insights
- Believing in, and driving, digital agenda
- Reshaping the workforce
- Enhancing the employee experience

IGNORE CHANGE

Struggle to adapt to digital era

7% of HR leaders in India are less or not confident in their ability to transform the workforce and themselves



Common characteristics:

HR not seen as value driver

Generally apprehensive of AI



HR not using predictive insights

No digital plan in place (and not planning to).

HR extinction

KEY FINDINGS



A little more than **two-thirds** of HR executives agree that HR has undergone or is undergoing a digital transformation.

But only **47%** of HR leaders said they have a digital workplan in place at the enterprise or HR level.



recognize the need for workforce transformation.

MOST HR EXECUTIVES



feel 'very confident' about HR's actual ability to transform and move them forward via key capabilities like analytics and AI.

Workplace culture is considered a top barrier to digital transformation for

60% of the respondents.

37% said their current culture is more task-oriented rather than innovative or experimental.



HR execs who believe HR has a strategic role in their business are more likely to be pursuing digital transformation

67% compared to

48% who view the HR role as unchanged.

Despite data's remarkable ability to deliver new insights and enhanced decision-making, the critical focus area for HR Leaders still vests with a traditional process.

47% of HR leaders in India believe talent management will be the primary HR initiative for them over the next one to two years.



Recent and projected technology investment has been the highest for cloud and human capital management software:



59%

of HR executives invested in India in human capital management over the past two years

38%

in cloud capabilities

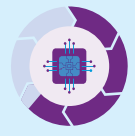
HR Leaders have however, expressed deep interest to invest in analytics and newer technology linked interventions over the coming next year or two



Predictive analytics



Enhanced process automation



Artificial Intelligence

Those leading the pack on transformation recognize how AI and machine learning can drive significant value for HR but they are in the minority by far.

Only **50%** of HR functions have started to introduce AI

But just **26%** have invested in AI in the past, over the last two years.



Of organizations yet to adopt AI within HR, half remain uncertain that they will do so in the next year or two.

36% admit to being 'not at all prepared' to respond strategically as AI and machine learning emerge.

Among those who have invested in AI to date, the vast majority



call the investment worthwhile, with the focus primarily on learning at



and employee experience & management of legalities at



and analytics at



THE FUTURE OF HR IS NOW

Changing and aligning with the changing business landscape. While working hand in hand with emerging Technologies and humans will really bring the wave of change for HR.



NEWSMAKER OF THE MONTH

Real change happens now!

The end of forced arbitration at Google

QUICK READS



Google earlier had dropped forced arbitration requirements in sexual harassment cases but has now exempted all its employees and direct contractors from forced arbitration requirements

It's collective action. Worker Power. A monumental win. But it's just the start. Google ended the long practice of forced arbitration of employment and worker disputes. Now its employees will have the option of seeking judicial assistance, suing the company through class action lawsuits, and also have an appeal process for issues pertaining to sexual harassment, any form of discrimination, dispute or violations. Google took the initiative to end this practice after a sustained effort of thousands of Google employees who walked out last year to protest Google's handling of sexual harassment controversies particularly the case of \$90 million payout given to Android mobile software creator Andy Rubin after sexual harassment allegations surfaced against him. And although Google was able to keep the allegations buttoned up, a New York Times report exposed the payout.

In view of this, Google earlier had dropped forced arbitration requirements in sexual harassment cases but has now exempted all its employees and direct contractors from forced arbitration requirements although the temps, vendors and contractors, who make up around 50 percent of the organization's total workforce, are excluded.

Just like the #MeToo movement, this too is a start for employees aiming to get a fair and transparent representation at the workplace, and also voice their stance. The decision by Google to end this practice not only signals employees getting more aware about their rights but it also highlights the need for other organizations to realize that allowing employees to appeal and protest their issues is only ethical.

Whether this will propel more conversations on other critical aspects that companies need to consider like employee representation on the company's board, it still remains to be seen how other organizations will follow suit to change their workplace practices. 🍷

APPOINTMENTS



CENTUM LEARNING APPOINTS RAJEEV VASUDEVA AS CHAIRMAN

Centum Learning has appointed Rajeev Vasudeva as Chairman. Rajeev Vasudeva was previously the Chief Executive of Egon Zehnder, a global executive search firm and has also worked as a management consultant with Touche Ross and Price Waterhouse in the US and in India.



DISCOVERY APPOINTS MEGHA TATA AS MD FOR INDIA & SOUTH ASIA

Discovery Asia Pacific has appointed Megha Tata as Managing Director – South Asia, Discovery Communications India. Megha Tata joins Discovery from Business Television India (BTVI) where she was spearheading India business. Tata has previously held leadership positions across broadcast platforms such as HBO, Turner International and STAR TV.



CORPORATION BANK APPOINTS PV BHARATHI AS MD & CEO

Corporation Bank has appointed PV Bharathi as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of bank. Bharathi has been executive director of Canara Bank and served as the firm's general manager in the risk management wing.



AMBUJA CEMENT APPOINTS BIMLENDRA JHA AS MD & CEO

Ambuja Cement has appointed Bimlendra Jha as the Managing Director & CEO of Ambuja Cement. Jha joins Ambuja Cement from Tata Steel Ltd. where he spent nearly three decades and held multiple leadership roles.



FLEX APPOINTS REVATHI ADVAITHI AS CEO AND BOARD MEMBER

Flex, a Singapore-headquartered manufacturer of design-first products, has appointed Revathi Advaiti as the Chief Executive Officer and also to the Board of Directors. Prior to Flex, Advaiti was President and Chief Operating Officer for the electrical sector of Eaton, a power management company.



INDEED APPOINTS CHRIS HYAMS AS CEO

Global job portal Indeed has appointed Chris Hyams as its Chief Executive Officer. Chris has served as the President of Indeed. Previously, he served as Senior Vice President of Product at Indeed and was responsible for Indeed's product and operations.



COGNIZANT APPOINTS BRIAN HUMPHRIES AS CEO

Cognizant has appointed Brian Humphries as the Chief Executive Officer and a member of the Board of Directors. Brian is currently the CEO of Vodafone business and joined from Dell where he most recently held the position of President and Chief Operating Officer of its Infrastructure Solutions Group.



SODEXO APPOINTS ANISH SARKAR AS CEO

Sodexo BRS India has appointed Anish Sarkar as the Chief Executive Officer. Anish joined Sodexo from Mercer India where he was the CEO. Before Mercer, Anish spent 16 years with the Capgemini group in several different roles.



PAYU INDIA APPOINTS ANIRBAN MUKHERJEE AS CEO

PayU has appointed Anirban Mukherjee as India Chief Executive Officer. Previously, Mukherjee was with Reliance Payments as the Co-Chief Executive, and has also worked with Standard Chartered Bank and Capital One in the past.



LOWE LINTAS APPOINTS NAVEEN GAUR AS DEPUTY CEO

Lowe Lintas has appointed Naveen Gaur as the Deputy Chief Executive Officer. In his previous role, he was overseeing the North, East and South regions for Lintas as Chief Operating Officer. Gaur has also been the Chief Growth Officer at McCann Worldgroup India previously.



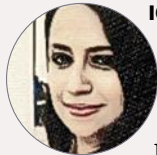
FISERV APPOINTS MEGHA GUPTA AS HR DIRECTOR

Fiserv has appointed Megha Gupta as the HR Director. Gupta was earlier associated with Sapient as HR Business Partner. Before joining Sapient, she worked with HCL Infosystems and Tata Teleservices Ltd in various HR roles.



ABC CONSULTANTS APPOINTS RACHNA SAXENA AS CHRO

ABC Consultants has appointed senior industry leader Rachna Saxena as the Chief Human Resources Officer. Before joining ABC Consultants, she was working with Prevolve as Managing Director where she led various projects such as BOT for HR (Build, Own, Operate and Transfer).



ICRA APPOINTS SHEETAL SANDHU AS GROUP CHRO

ICRA Limited has appointed Sheetal Sandhu as the company's Group CHRO. In her previous role, she was the HR Head of Evalueserve. Prior to Evalueserve, Sandhu worked with companies like Aricent and Cadence Design System.



ITC LTD APPOINTS AMITAV MUKHERJI AS CORPORATE HR HEAD

ITC Ltd has appointed Amitav Mukherji as Head, Corporate HR. Mukherji has previously worked in multiple functions such as marketing, sales and managing people and was appointed as Vice President, HR in January 2006.



ADANI APPOINTS DR. JAYANT KUMAR AS HEAD - HR FOR PORTS & LOGISTICS

Adani has appointed Dr. Jayant Kumar as Head - HR for Ports & Logistics business. Prior to joining Adani, Kumar was Chief Human Resources Officer for Tata Power and its group entities.

Changing workplace dynamics

The impact of the Global Talent Trends

LinkedIn's 'Global Talent Trends 2019' report analyzes the changing employee-employer dynamics and identifies four critical workplace trends that are changing the way we work. Let's take a closer look

By **Manav Seth**

There is no denying the fact that the concept of workplace, as we know it, is undergoing a dramatic evolution. This expansion of the workspace that goes beyond the 'norm' to incorporate a diverse, talented, global, and multi-generational workforce has also facilitated a shift in what employees and employers expect from each other. LinkedIn's 'Global Talent Trends 2019' report explores this changing employee-employer dynamic and dives deep into the trends that are transforming the workplace. Based on a survey of over 5,000 talent professionals in 35 countries, the report presents globally diverse and actionable insights on the most pressing contemporary talent trends. Let us take a closer look at the findings of the report, and analyze the four trends that are changing the way we work:

Soft Skills

In an age where machines and Artificial Intelligence (AI) are quickly taking over repetitive human jobs, the skills that are innately human will naturally be the most sought-after. With 91 percent of the respondents in the survey attesting to the rising importance of such skills, soft skills are rising as the most important skill trend that



is changing the way we work. India is among the top countries where 95 percent talent professionals believe that soft skills are critical to the future of recruitment and HR.

While soft skills have always been important, they are indispensable in today's age. This is not to say that the significance of technical skills is any lesser, but simply, that both will be on an equal footing. The same is evident from the fact that 92 percent of the respondents believe that soft skills are as much, or more, important than hard skills and 89 percent affirm that bad hires typically lack soft skills. Skills like creativity, persuasion, collaboration, adaptability, and time management are the most in demand, according to the report.

However, the biggest challenge faced by organizations today is their ability to assess and identify the right soft skills. While only 41 percent report having a formal process for soft skill assessment, as much as 68 percent of the talent professionals state that the primary method to assess soft skills in an interview is by picking up on social cues. So, how do HR professionals and recruiters then go about hiring the right candidate? The report suggests identifying specific skills needed for a role, using online tools to prescreen candidates, being conscious of the human bias in the hiring process, standardizing interview questions, and posing more problem-solving questions to allow candidates to demonstrate the application of their soft skills.

Work Flexibility

The number of LinkedIn users who consider flexible work arrangements as 'very important' when considering a job has been steadily rising over the past few years with employers equally recognizing this. Since 2016, there has been a 78 percent increase in the number of job posts that mention 'work flexibility'. The sentiment is particularly noticeable in Northern Europe and Australia, where 85 percent and 84 percent of the talent professionals, respectively, surveyed say that work flexibility is essential to the future of recruiting and HR. In contrast, 67 percent of the Indian talent professionals and recruiters believe the same. Companies in the tech industry are offering the maximum workplace flexibility and those in manufacturing and healthcare are least flexible – primarily due to the nature of the job.

The report suggests that organizations have already started reaping the benefits of allowing workplace flexibility to their employees. While helping employees improve work-life balance is the most obvious advantage (77 percent), others include improved retention (54 percent), attracting talent (51 percent), increased productivity (42 percent), and expansion of talent pool (38 percent). But how does one solve the challenges that comes with increasing work flexibility, like team bonding, collaboration, and work oversight? While there are several tools that maintain a constant connection between teams in different locations, the report

suggests that understanding the kind of flexibility that is desired by employees is the first step towards designing effective workplace flexibility policies. Using the right tools to connect with flexible workers, setting the right expectations, and training managers to lead flexible teams are other critical steps in the process.

Anti-Harassment

Sexual harassment at the workplace is a serious issue that has only started getting its due ever since the #MeToo movement began dominating the public discourse. In addition to helping individuals tell their stories, the movement has also put pressure on organizations irrespective of industries and sectors to prevent harassment by building a safe workplace culture that mandates respect for everyone.

Employees, too, it seems have realized that business cannot go on as usual as the talent professionals who were a part of the survey state that employees in their organization are speaking up more on uncomfortable social issues, calling out bad behavior, cutting down on insensitive and inappropriate jokes, and most importantly, are willing to listen and learn. There has been a 71 percent year-on-year rise in the workplace harassment related content shared on LinkedIn. In India, harassment in the workplace has become a significant issue as 87 percent of the Indian respondents

There has been a 71 percent year-on-year rise in the workplace harassment related content shared on LinkedIn





Skills like creativity, persuasion, collaboration, adaptability, and time management are the most in demand

agree that harassment prevention is critical for the future of recruitment and HR – compared to 71 percent globally. However, the survey also found that men are less likely to believe that anti-harassment policies are effective at building a safe workplace environment and culture.

While there is an increased awareness and the need for urgent action has been rightly identified, most organizations aren't approaching the problem with significant solutions. For instance, highlighting existing policies on harassment has been the most followed course of action taken over the last few years, followed by promotion of ways to safely file complaints and reports. Companies are yet to "adopt systemic changes to their workplace, like increasing their gender diversity or revamping their investigative procedures." Similarly, while all the respondents in the survey agreed that there is a need to add more ways to safely report harassment, only 25 percent admitted that their organizations are doing so.

Experts in the report suggest that objectively assessing present training methods, understanding how harassment is currently reported and responded to, and analyzing employee experiences with regard to harassment is the foremost step any organization should take to create a more respectful and safer workplace. This should be followed by updating current policies and mechanisms, incorporating relevant issues, expanding the scope of training, educating employees, and ensuring that harassment is responded with real and public action.

Pay Transparency

In what would seem like a dramatic shift from traditional pay practices, employees are expecting pay transparency from their employers. Conventionally, employee salaries have been kept confidential to prevent any disputes within the company and discourage poaching of talent. However, lately, leaders have noticed that transparency results in a more trusted and loyal relationship between the employee and the company. Organizations fear that sharing salary information with employees will create salary disputes (75 percent), limit negotiation (34 percent), would make the interview all about the pay (31 percent). However, the benefits of pay transparency, which include streamlining negotiation (57 percent), ensuring fair pay (55 percent), filtering out candidates who will decline at a later stage (54 percent), and allowing the interviewer to discuss other things confidently (51 percent) are beginning to outweigh these fears.

Since pay transparency isn't a common practice yet, 51 percent of the respondents in the report state that their organization doesn't share salary ranges and aren't likely to start; 22 percent stated that while salary information isn't shared currently, it is likely to start; and, 27 percent said that their company is already sharing salary ranges. For those willing to establish pay transparency in their organizations, the report suggests to first conduct an audit to determine how their salaries stack up against their competitors and if there are any pay gaps within the organizations in similar roles. Next, leaders can choose to disclose salary ranges in job posts, or directly with employees, or even the exact amount. Involving employees in the process and setting up mechanisms to answer queries and garner feedback is also a crucial part of the process. Organizations willing to implement pay transparency should also have clearly-defined answers that explain what factors determine an individual's pay, train managers to discuss salaries within their teams, and communicate the need to be transparent while rolling out the policy.

In order to sustain and engage a workforce that can help solve critical business challenges in the future, organizations need to make an earnest effort to accommodate the changing needs and expectations of employees. The 'Global Talent Trends 2019' report can serve as a great starting point for talent and HR professionals who are working towards making their companies future-ready. By future-proofing the workforce and investing in soft skills, providing great flexibility, creating a safe and respectful work culture, and championing pay transparency, employers stand to gain a lot. As the report sums up, employers need to consider what is right for their organization and lay the foundation for change thoughtfully and at a steady pace. 



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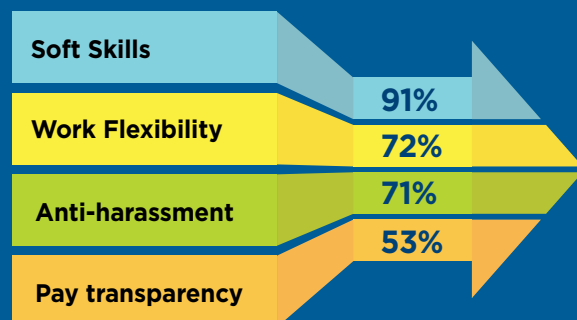
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TRENDS TRANSFORMING THE WORKPLACE

Employers traditionally hold the position of power in the workplace: they decide where people work, at what cost, and how much information is shared. But this dynamic is changing. As technology empowers employees to share and access more information, employers are being held to a higher standard. LinkedIn's Global Talent Trends identifies the four trends that demonstrate this emerging dynamic where companies are starting to embrace a more equal employer-employee relationship—not just because it looks good, but because it's good for business.

4 TRENDS TRANSFORMING YOUR WORKPLACE

Percentage of talent professionals who agree these trends are very important to the future of recruiting and HR



SOFT SKILLS

Where machines can't compete

80% say soft skills are increasingly important to 80% company success



Creativity



Persuasion



Collaboration

Soft skills companies need, but have a hard time finding

Soft skills in high demand relative to their supply, based on LinkedIn data



Adaptability



Time Management

It's more important to hire for



92% say soft skills matter as much or more than hard skills

Bad hires usually lack



89% say bad hires typically lack soft skills

Companies struggle to assess soft skills without a formal process



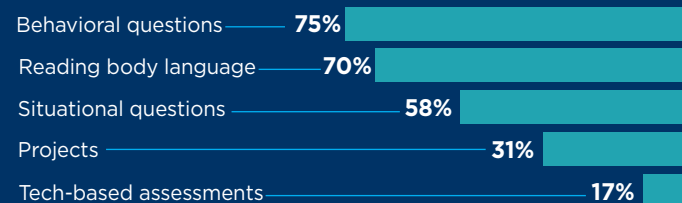
41% have a formal process to assess soft skills

57% struggle to assess soft skills accurately

The go-to assessment methods don't measure up

Percentage of talent professionals who say their company uses the following methods to assess soft skills

The most common ways to assess soft skills



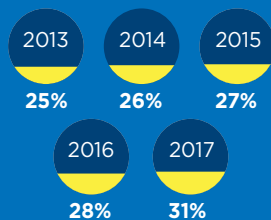
WORK FLEXIBILITY

Empowering employees to work when and where they want



More employees want flexibility

Percentage of LinkedIn members who say flexible work arrangements are very important when considering a job

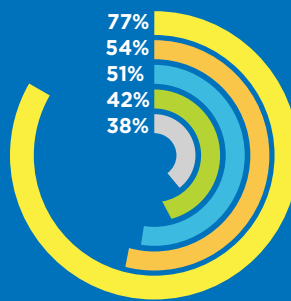


+78% increase in job posts on LinkedIn that mention work flexibility since 2016

Flexibility varies by industry, with tech leading the way

Top benefits of work flexibility

Percentage of talent professionals who say the following are among the main benefits of work flexibility



- Improves employee work-life balance
- Encourages retention
- Attracts candidates
- Increases productivity
- Expands available talent pool

Greater flexibility can lead to greater diversity

Flexibility matters when choosing a job Percentage of LinkedIn members who say flexible work arrangements are very important when considering a job



ANTI-HARASSMENT

Establishing a culture of respect

There's a new light shining on sexual harassment

+71% YoY increase in workplace harassment content shared on LinkedIn



Small employee actions add up to big cultural change.

How employee anti-harassment behavior has changed?

Talent professionals say they've noticed the following behavioral changes among employees over the last two years

Speaking up more when uncomfortable	Discussing social issues more openly	Calling out bad behavior more	Telling fewer insensitive jokes	Willing to listen more
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Employers are taking action, but have a long way to go

Most common anti-harassment tactics

Percentage of talent professionals saying their company started taking the following actions over the last year



PAY TRANSPARENCY

Breaking the taboo to build trust

Pay transparency instills trust

+136% increase in pay transparency content shared on LinkedIn since 2014



Early adopters are leading the way Businesses are split on transparency

Percentage of talent professionals who say their company shares salary ranges with employees or early-stage candidates, or is likely/unlikely to start sharing in the next 5 years



Companies fear disputes, but those who share salaries see benefits

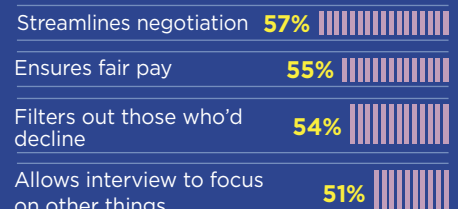
Reasons for not sharing salary ranges

Talent professionals who don't share salary ranges with candidates or employees cite the following reasons why



Benefits of sharing salary ranges

Talent professionals who don't share salary ranges with candidates or employees cite the following reasons why



Budget 2019: A Crowd-Pleaser!

In hopes of securing another term, the current government has tried to play Santa to a variety of diverse sections of the society. However, the spotlight on the rural and unorganized sector was hard to miss

By People Matters Editorial



Considering that the proposals in the interim budget were to set the tone for the impending general elections, it was naturally expected to be a crowd-pleaser. However, the government went one step ahead to ensure that the hero of this budget was the common man, particularly in the rural and unorganized economy. The interim finance minister, Piyush Goyal, who presented the budget stated that a foundation to sustainable has already been laid in the country and that the country's poor have the first right over the nation's national resources. Let us take a look at some of the highlights of the budget that elicited maximum attention:

Taxation and Rebates

In a headline-grabbing announcement, the government announced that there will be a full rebate of income tax for individuals with a taxable income up to Rs. 5,00,000 per year – a move intended to benefit nearly 30 million taxpayers. While other tax rates have been left unchanged, the standard deduction has been revised up from Rs. 40,000 to Rs. 50,000. Furthermore, the limit for levying Tax

Deducted at Source (TDS) for term deposits has been increased to Rs. 40,000 from Rs. 10,000. Investments under 80C (up to Rs. 1,50,000) and interest up to Rs. 2,00,000 on home loans continue to tax-free and unchanged.

The income tax rebate has been increased from the existing Rs. 2,500 to Rs. 12,500 for individual tax payers, which might help all taxpayers save a small amount. The limit for tax-free gratuity has been raised from Rs. 10,00,000 to Rs. 30,00,000 as well. According to one calculation, an individual earning nearly Rs. 10,00,000 per year can also pay no taxes by carefully choosing existing rebates and deductions on investments and loans. The government also promised that IT refunds will be processed within 24 hours, and within two years, all tax assessments and verification will be undertaken electronically.

Industry Incentives

While India Inc. rallied behind the budget proposals, the only immediate benefit for manufactures

Individual taxpayers with annual income up to Rs. 5 lakh rupees will get full tax rebate

and service providers at large is the uptick in consumption due to lower taxes. Although no changes were announced in the corporate tax rates, the budget clearly aimed at simplifying compliance and credit approval for small and medium businesses. Businesses with a turnover lower than Rs. 5 crore – nearly 90 percent of the GST payers – will now have to file quarterly returns. Furthermore, a 2 percent interest rebate on loans of Rs. 10,00,000 for GST registered MSMEs has been proposed. What's more, a scheme that provides loans up to Rs. 10,00,000 in 59 minutes will also be implemented.

Important Highlights

The budget was crafted to benefit as many diverse sections and communities of the country as possible, and the same intention is visible in the following as well:

Social Security

- In a bid to regularize pension for the unorganized sector, the government has announced the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM), a voluntary scheme in which each subscriber shall receive minimum assured pension of Rs. 3,000 per month after attaining the age of 60 years.
- Depending on the age of joining, a subscriber is required to contribute a monthly amount (between Rs. 55 and Rs. 100) till the age of 60

years and the same amount will be contributed by the government as well.

- The website of the Ministry of Labour & Employment of India states that the scheme is intended for unorganized workers, whose monthly income is Rs. 15,000 per month or less; belong to the age group of 18-40 years; are not covered under existing pension schemes and do not pay income tax.
- Expected to benefit nearly 10 crore workers, the government has set aside Rs. 500 crore for the scheme. "It may become the world's biggest pension scheme for unorganized sector in five years." Goyal said.

Agriculture

- The minimum support price (MSP) for all 22 crops has been fixed at a minimum of 50 per cent more than the cost.
- The government also announced the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana (PM-

for exemption for 'income from house property', as the tax on notional rent from second house has been scrapped.

- The TDS threshold for income from rent has been raised to Rs. 2,40,000 from Rs. 1,80,000.
- The limit for ESI eligibility has been revised from Rs. 15,000 per month to Rs. 21,000 per month.
- The minimum pension for every laborer has been fixed at Rs. 1,000 per month.
- The amount paid by Employee Provident Fund Organization (EPFO), in the event of a death of a laborer during service, has been increased from Rs. 2,50,000 to Rs. 6,00,000.
- Rs. 60,000 crore has been earmarked for the MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) scheme in 2019-20.
- Over Rs. 35,000 crore has been allocated under the 'One Rank One Pension' scheme for Defence Personnel.

Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM) is a voluntary pension scheme in which each subscriber shall receive a minimum assured pension of Rs. 3,000 per month after attaining the age of 60 years



Kisan) for small farmers owing up to 2 hectares of land. Under the scheme, nearly 12 crore farmers will receive Rs. 6,000 per year, in three installments, directly in their bank accounts.

Technology and Digital Push

- The government proposed setting up a national program on Artificial Intelligence (AI) under the establishment of National Centre of AI as a hub, alongside centers of excellence. In addition to identifying nine priority areas, a national AI portal has also been proposed.
- A commitment to set up one lakh 'digital villages' over the next five years has also been announced.

Others

- The government's contribution to the New Pension Scheme (NPS) has been increased by 4 percent (from 10 percent to 14 percent), while that of the employee has been kept the same at 10 percent.
- Two house properties can now be considered

- The government stated that the fiscal deficit for FY' 19 to be 3.4 percent (against estimated 3.3 percent) and also 3.4 percent (against estimated 3.1 percent), taking into account the launch of new schemes. It also stated its commitment to restrict the fiscal deficit to 3 percent by 2021.

This year, the budget has been framed on a ten-point dimension, which includes social and physical infrastructure, digital technologies, energy security and pollution control, education, healthcare, space program, food self-sufficiency among others, to ensure that the country transforms into a \$10 trillion economy in the near future. It remains to be seen if the interim budget, being touted as one of the most populist ever, will appeal to the masses and secure a victory for the government in the upcoming elections. 🇮🇳

Sources:

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Q & A

AI WILL OPEN MORE DOORS THAN IT WILL CLOSE

In a special interaction with People Matters, **AADESH GOYAL**, Chief Human Resources Officer at Tata Communications shares his perspectives on how AI will not replace but augment human intelligence, and how business success will increasingly depend on machines and humans collaborating rather than competing with each other

By Yasmin Taj

A adesh Goyal is the Chief Human Resources Officer at Tata Communications. He has over 25 years of experience in P&L Management, Human Resources, Operations, Information Technology, Corporate Communications and Program Management, and has held global leadership roles in these functions across multiple geographies. He has played a key role in the M&A and integration of many organizations across multiple countries.

In this exclusive interview, Goyal shares his insights on the opportunities that human-machine collaboration present, how this will determine the future of work and drive the digital revolution, and why it is imperative to train employees in new skills not only to be future relevant, but also to leverage such technologies for increased productivity and efficiency.

Q Will humans get replaced or shaped by AI?

A Artificial Intelligence (AI) is evolving rapidly and is bringing in a paradigm shift in the existing industry landscape. And although the anxiety levels related to automation threatening the existing workforce are intensifying, the outlook for the future is bright as AI will open more doors than it

will close. A testimony to this is our recent report, 'AI & The Future of Work' — a pioneering study on how technologies such as AI and Machine Learning will augment rather than replace human intelligence. The so called "singularity" approach is a hypothetical point in time when AI and robots will surpass humans in terms of intelligence and take over their jobs. This theory is somewhat speculative as AI is extremely far from achieving human-level general intelligence. Instead of fearing automation, it is imperative to train the employees in new skills not only to be future relevant, but also to leverage such technologies for increased productivity and efficiency. Technologies such as AI and machine learning will help eliminate mundane and repetitive tasks and give more visibility to the unique human traits like high-level thinking, strategizing, and innovating.

Q What do you think about the human-machine collaboration? How do you see the workforces or even businesses getting reinvented or reimaged in view of this?

A "Multiplicity" is a realistic, inclusive alternative to singularity, one where humans and machines collaborate to innovate and respond rapidly to complex problems. The impact of technology on the workforce is not new. In the last few decades, we have witnessed the creation of scores of new jobs/roles that never existed and also saw the evolution of many existing roles. In the future too, business success will increasingly depend on humans and machines collaborating rather than competing with each other. Our recently commissioned 'Cognitive Diversity: AI & The Future of Work Study' is consistent with the theme of multiplicity and suggests that AI's role in supporting humans at work could be truly transformational and can enhance cognitive diversity while combining categories of intelligence in new ways to benefit the workforce and the organizations.

To exploit technology's maximum potential, businesses first need to make their employees understand why digitization is imperative and how it will enhance their work and result in greater organizational efficiency.

Q How do you see job roles shaping up after the third category of AI-based workforce getting emerged (the first two being full-time employees and gig workers)?

A We foresee a shift in the core nature of the job roles. Roles will grow from being purely task-based to more strategic in nature, and will support maximum curiosity and innovative thinking. By automating the administrative tasks, higher-value roles will be available to enhance the employee experience and productivity. For example, a role could be scoped for a specific period of time allowing the employees to define their duration of service



and chart out the next steps within the company. Instead of having a dedicated job role, they could be plotted across multiple projects concurrently, based on their skills and interests.

Q How do you see collaborative intelligence (human + machine) driving the digital revolution?

A AI and robots can inspire us to think deeply about the kind of work we really want to do, how we can change the way we learn, and how we can embrace diversity to create a myriad of new partnerships. This positive view of automation focuses on how certain tasks can be replaced, freeing workers to focus on other tasks. AI has the potential to enhance unique human abilities like judgment, empathy, creativity, communication and insight. These are the qualities that machines are not close to acquiring but can support humans with effective data to take better decisions.

For instance, at Tata Communications, we have installed AI and machine learning tools for recruiting candidates for select roles that require systematic search or the right skill match. We are

embrace change and be future-ready. Accenture's Research 'Reworking the Revolution' shows employers underestimate the willingness of employees to acquire the relevant skills and only 3 percent of executives say they intend to significantly increase investment in training and reskilling programs in the next three years. This poses the potential challenge of skills gap emerging that slows down the adoption of AI.


Awareness and understanding is the other key challenge. When preparing humans to work alongside AI, the natural inclination is to think of coding, data science and the STEM subjects. But the human skills like creativity, people management, entrepreneurialism will shape a significant proportion of the future workforce and these skills are what AI and machines are less effective at — there needs to be clarity on this across all levels of the organization.

Another challenge is the disparity in the views of decision makers in the organization. Our 'The Cycle of Progress' study rings the warning bell for the board members and C-level executives who have drastically different views from the rest of their organizations with regards to the maturity of the implementation of new technologies. It was found that 41 percent of board members and 33 percent of C-level executives believe that they are leading their industry in adopting new technologies, in comparison to just 18 percent of Directors and 14 percent of department heads.

Q In your opinion, what is the best approach that organizations can use to adopt AI?

A As businesses increasingly become more diverse and widespread, the adoption of new-age technologies will also gain momentum. Integration of AI into the workforce will require an upgradation of the skills set within the organization, because the way that people think will be just as important as the skills they have. This people-centric approach will encourage curiosity and experimentation both at a personal and organizational level. As AI frees up time from mundane tasks, stronger teams will be formed as employees will have more time to innovate new ways to add value, spend more time with colleagues, and build deeper relationships.

At Tata Communications, we have already commenced work on building a talent base that is equipped to be relevant and ready for future needs. We encourage a culture of learning and curiosity. Employees have the opportunity to learn new skills, upskill or learn supplementary skills through a broad range of training courses offered through various training partners.

We have also launched 'Virtual Tata Communications Academy' as a part of the company's skilling initiative to prepare the workforce for the skills of tomorrow. We are developing in-house content for niche certifications that suit the company's requirements and the changing processes. It has machine-learning algorithms that search the right content for employees, allowing them to build skills in the areas they want and start from the level where they are. 

convinced that AI will serve as the assisting tool across all levels in the organization. For example, a CXO's primary role is to make the right decision after considering all aspects of the situation, avoiding any kind of bias. An AI-based system could support this working as an 'AI-based devil's advocate' that challenges decisions with insightful questions, exposing the CXO with alternative viewpoints, throwing 'high-quality curve balls' to enable more creative and critical thinking.

The impact of AI is no longer a theory; it is soon becoming a reality. The efficiencies and other economic advantages of machine intelligence will continue to disrupt all aspects of human work.

Q What does it take for organizations and workforces to accept technology or automation at the workplace?

A Skills, culture, processes, and technology are the four key pillars for embracing automation at work. With rapidly growing technologies, the foremost requirement for organizations is to ensure that their employees have the right skills to

AI and robots can inspire us to think deeply about the kind of work we really want to do, how we can change the way we learn, and how we can embrace diversity to create a myriad of new partnerships

WHY AND HOW TO HIRE FOR CULTURAL FIT



Company culture, also called corporate culture, is defined as the underlying beliefs, assumptions, values and ways of interacting that contribute to the unique social and psychological environment of an organization. Corporate culture is rarely explicitly defined, and it emerges from the ways of being, acting and thinking of each individual that forms part of the group. External influences such as socio-cultural changes in the environment also impact the corporate culture.

Corporate culture is shaped by the success of projects – internal practices, individual and collective habits, ways of thinking, stereotypes, as well as the company's public image. Changes in the culture can be promoted by different individuals – from the people who founded the company to the junior level employees.

Every company has a culture; SMEs as well as multinationals, start-ups, and even well-established companies. Each organization is unique, and therefore, have their own signature corporate culture that is difficult to imitate.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CORPORATE CULTURE

A company's culture works like glue; it holds the entire organization together. It helps guide employees on how to behave with colleagues and customers, as well as set guidelines as to how to make decisions on a daily basis. Corporate culture also sets a common framework which represents the lifestyle within the company. When employees share collective values and the company's vision they develop a sense of belonging, which promotes their well-being and serves as a source of motivation. Last but not least, corporate culture helps define the direction of the company guiding everyone in a way that promotes productivity and efficiency.

A company's culture also influences its communication strategy. It can help reach different target audiences as well as form part of their wider HR strategy helping attract the right candidates. If we take the example of Coca Cola and Pepsi, we all know they both sell soft drinks with similar flavors and product range, however,

we personally hold very different images of both companies for better or worse.

WHAT IS CULTURAL FIT?

Cultural fit refers to the degree to which the candidate has the attitudes, values, and beliefs of the organization. Finding a candidate who aligns with the company's culture is just as important as finding someone with the qualifications to 'get the job done' and may be the key to your hiring success. A study by Monster.com showed that companies that have considered cultural fit in their recruitment process have 30 percent less employee turnover than companies that do not consider it at all. Another study by Vadequa found that 36 percent of hiring failures largely result from issues regarding the incompatibility between the new employee and the company values. We can conclude that cultural fit is an important factor in determining if the candidate will be able to effectively thrive in the company.

HOW TO ASSESS A CANDIDATE FOR CULTURE?

The match between a candidate and the company should be based on shared values. This way, you can measure the candidate's potential to adapt and fit into the company. You can look at this in two ways: first, we can measure what is called the supplementary fit. This is when the individual and the company already share the same values. We can also look at the complementary fit, which is when a company hires candidates that hold values that the company does not have but would like to have more of.

The match between a candidate and company should be based on the complementary and supplementary fit of shared values.

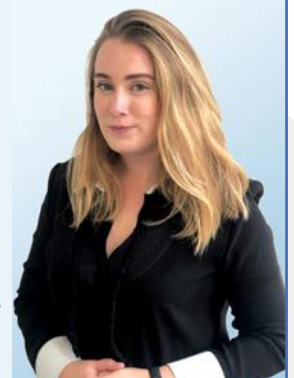
Central Test has created a Corporate Values Framework model that reveals the candidate's culture fit for 12 distinct corporate values. The framework can also be customized with specific values of the organization.

We have seen that cultural fit can impact company performance, employee well-being as well as important factors in human resource management. Ensuring organizational values match your employees' will increase job satisfaction and promote a healthy work environment.

LAURA BRADY

*Psychometrician & Consultant
Psychologist, MBPsS at Central Test*

Laura specialises in the linguistic and cultural adaptation of psychometric tools, and has partnered with researchers in Latin America, Portugal and the UK. She is an in-house psychometrician at Central Test London's office, she participates in developing and designing state-of-the art assessment solutions to identify people's capabilities and personality characteristics.





Trust in a Hyperconnected World

Reputation is what people say about you when you are not in the room. In a hyperconnected world, it matters more than ever before

When we live in a closed community, we are observed by others living in it. Our reputation is built on what they believe about us or say to the other members of the community. And their beliefs are based on snippets of our behaviors that generate small signals which in turn make our trust quotient go up or down — for example, someone seeing us yelling at a kid plucking flowers might be seen negatively or helping in a community celebration might be seen positively. However, trust is not a simple mathematical equation — it depends on how much the two behaviors are valued by the members of a community. If the community believes that plucking flowers is an acceptable behavior, admonishing the kid will be inexcusable.

Trust - the first emotion

Call it reputation or personal brand, trust is hard to manage if you don't understand how it works. Our life experiences lead us to conclude whether we largely trust others or we do not, which actually starts from the first six months of being born.

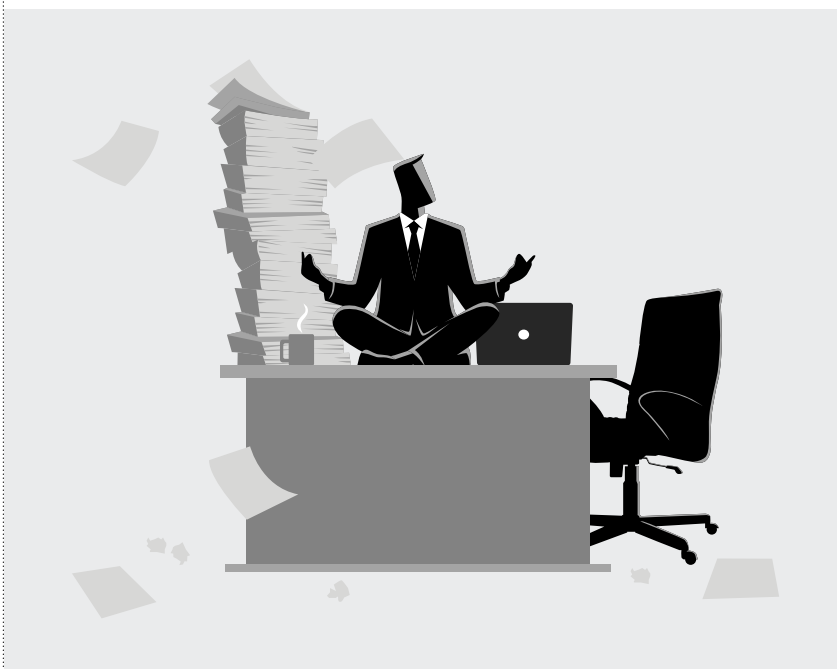
It is about the first opinions we make of others. A startup must be trusted by VCs to get funded. A potential employee must trust the employer to sign up. The employer must trust the candidate's responses to decide to employ the person. When team members stop trusting each other, the relationship becomes toxic and work suffers.

Trust leads us to believe others' intentions when the path ahead is unclear. When we trust someone enough, we do not need to fact-check everything in real-time. When we are reassured about the competence of the other person (in a work setting), it builds a certain degree of predictability. The combination of expertise and predictability creates trust, and expertise actually becomes the defining factor. I may not trust a friend to do brain surgery (unless he or she is a brain surgeon) but may trust the person with money. Trust takes a long time to build but also takes one instance to get destroyed.

Stranger to trust strangers

In a hyperconnected world, our actions get familiarized to strangers due to our online presence through our social posts etc. One of the most amazing things that technology has done is made us comfortable in sharing our personal moments with strangers. We post our preferences in everything from food to romantic partners online. Airbnb

The real test of 'trust' lies in learning how a stressful situation is handled. How a person handles an unanticipated stressful scenario often reveals an aspect of the personality that makes us see a person in new light



made us trust strangers enough to open up our homes to them. These are all behaviors that have got social acceptance that would have been impossible to expect even a few years back.

These new behaviors that are part of our everyday life are all driven by trust. We rely on the reputation of the person we seek to engage with and look at how other strangers have rated their experiences of dealing with that person and then decide to follow. When a cab driver comes with a perfect rating we sit back, relax and even indulge in small talk. Our comfort comes in numbers when we decide to buy things from a seller on an e-commerce site based on the feedback that is visible. You can buy anything on Amazon, but can you buy good reviews? Yes, some people buy the good reviews. There are algorithms that can help you discover who is trying to fool you. There are websites that will show you how to legally buy positive endorsements on Amazon. It is clearly a cat-and-mouse game with people trying to figure out who to trust and who not to. On LinkedIn, people get endorsements to reassure future job seekers about their skills.

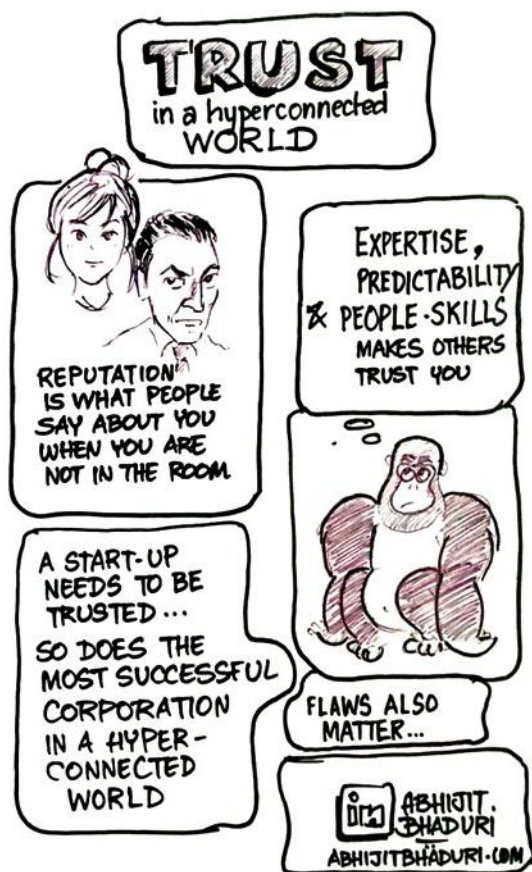
Why celebrities have fans not friends

The real test of 'trust' lies in learning how a stressful situation is handled. How a person handles an unanticipated stressful scenario often reveals an aspect of the personality that makes us see a person in new light. Trust in a brand is built not when everything is working well but when the service breaks down or the customer feels aggrieved.

When a machine is able to use predictive analytics to anticipate what a customer wants, it does not delight but comes across as creepy. Machines need data to personalize but too much of personalization can be weird. When you speak to a colleague about your favorite song and then see your music app recommending it, it can startle more than delight. When we ask someone to weigh in on a dilemma and we get an instantaneous response, we feel that the response has not been thought-through. The same response given after a pause can reassure the other person that their dilemma deserves deep thought. Human beings have an instinctive way of knowing how much time a thoughtful response takes.

When people put up videos that are slickly edited to leave out flaws and pauses, they convince us that they are not being authentic. It is your flaws – not your perfect self that makes you trustworthy. Perfect human beings are admired but it is hard to be friends and trust someone you admire. Celebrities crave for genuine friends (not fans) but their success and achievements make it hard for us to trust them. You cannot be friends with a fan.

The digital winners are all gathering data about us constantly. Every click, every choice, every decision tells them something that even your loved ones may not know about you. Our social media posts can often reveal our deepest biases and insecurities. Your search history could tell a stranger far more about you than you may



It is your flaws – not your perfect self that makes you trustworthy. Perfect human beings are admired but it is hard to be friends and trust someone you admire

wish to reveal. But that is not a choice we have any more. Initially we searched Google. Now Google searches us to know more and yet its business model depends on being able to retain our trust. In a hyperconnected world, trust is currency. You have to know enough about me for me to know that you can be trusted. When you know too many secrets of mine, I become vulnerable and afraid of being betrayed. The “market shaping” companies have to understand ‘trust’, else they become celebrities we admire but never trust enough to be friends with. @m

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

With more than 800,000 followers on social media, **ABHIJIT BHADURI** is a top HR influencer. He is a popular columnist, author and advisor on leadership development and culture.



Do you seriously want to achieve gender diversity?

Ensuring gender diversity is far more than merely affirmative action and getting the numbers correct – it's not a simple problem and therefore there isn't a simple solution

First, an admission of bias – I am an elderly, post graduate, white male, with extensive international management and leadership experience.

Second, an admission that much of what I read and hear about diversity makes me really angry!

Third, a statement of fact – during my career, I have recruited more females than males, and more individuals with different ethnic origins than me.

So, why does diversity talk make me so angry? If you can bear to keep reading, I'll explain just four of my reasons.

Lose Respect, Lose Power – Earn Respect, Gain Followers

I had the privilege to work with Dr. Paul Marciano, a clinical psychologist who authored, “Carrots and sticks don't work”, and we then co-authored the book, *“SuperTeams: Using the principles of RESPECT to unleash explosive business performance”*.

The common theme is that respect is a major driver of trust, teamwork, productivity, ... all characteristics of successful organizations. But, our research identified that in most organizations, disrespectful behaviors are prevalent.

Here are a few of the top 25:

1. Not listening to or considering others' opinions and perspectives
2. Making discriminatory comments or innuendos
3. Speaking negatively about others, especially when they are not around
4. Ignoring, excluding, and ostracizing others



Many disrespectful behaviors are directed towards females and inhibit them from wanting to progress. Thus, until we achieve truly respectful working relationships, attempts to resolving diversity issues will be draining, ineffective, and unsustainable.

Do you listen to the ones you have?

About two years ago, I was helping a company with their strategic talent management. One day, I attended a Senior Management Forum, at which, their process was being reviewed when the head of a Division said, “We really must focus on getting more women into senior roles.”

There were many sage nods and grunts around the table. Then, quite suddenly, the chairman banged the table and demanded, “Why the heck would we want any more when most of you don't listen to the ones we already have?”

The truth was that, until that intervention, diversity had been merely a numbers

game. That was a long, long meeting! Let me share three example actions that came out of it, and which proved to be fundamentally important:

1. Meetings are the scourge of most organizations, major contributors to low productivity, and primarily where females (and other minorities) feel ignored and ostracized. In that organization, meetings were poorly run:
 - the most extravert (mostly men) got most air-time and “sucked the air out of the rooms;”
 - questions like, “Has anyone else got any ideas?” were asked in a way that sent the message, “but we don't really want to hear them,” so females in particular kept quiet;
 - action points were assigned to volunteers (to ensure inclusion) but, of course, the males typically volunteered first, alleviating the chairmen of any culpability.

If you have an organization attempting to redress any form of diversity balance, meetings are where the efforts will succeed or, most likely, be undermined. In that organization, managers had to be trained in contemporary meeting management skills including how to:

- decide whether to hold a meeting or to use asynchronous means including virtual whiteboards and one-to-one discussions, to elicit more diverse inputs;
- ensure balanced and diverse input during discussions – actively seeking contra ideas, and using crediting and building techniques to encourage diverse inputs e.g., from the females.

2. The purpose of wanting to increase diversity and inclusion is not to win a numerical competition, but to enhance the quality of decisions that are made by increasing the variety of perspectives and ideas.

In that organization, some decisions were taken by those in authority and most were made in meetings. This meant that, despite adding more females, little changed. Males were still in the majority so made more of the sole decision-maker decisions, and males dominated the meetings! An effective decision-making process had to be developed including, structured steps to ensure diverse inputs. This was then implemented with comprehensive skill training.

3. Managers had to be shown the importance of day to day diversity.

The intent of working towards a more diverse workforce had to be explained well, repeated and repeated, and then role modeled until people believed it. The old adages, “People respect what you inspect, not what you expect,” and “People do as you do, not as you say” could never have been truer.

A workshop was run including an explanation of the “Broken glass syndrome” — in simple terms, if you set out your values and then ignore any deviations from them, the frequency of those deviations occurring will increase. If you call out deviations promptly and visibly, the frequency of their occurrence will decrease.

Is gender the key promotion criteria?

The next diversity issue that makes me angry is addressing the symptom, not the cause. I believe that most people will accept that, “Everyone should be promoted based on their capability to do the job or task in hand.” If applied effectively, this will ensure gender diversity. And yet, in most organizations, we still:



The purpose of wanting to increase diversity and inclusion is not to win a numerical competition, but to enhance the quality of decisions that are made by increasing the variety of perspectives and ideas

- Promote individuals into people management positions based largely on achievements in another discipline, not on their people management skill or potential;
- Reward people managers with recurring salary increases based on cumulative short-term results, not on their contribution to organizational sustainability;
- Do not hold people managers accountable for their compliance with selection processes or the diversity (gender, race, religion, age, skills) of their workforce.

The caliber of management and leadership is the most significant differentiator of sustainably successful organizations. If we propagate a process that does not maximize management capability, the managers appointed will continue to promote similarity and diversity will be jeopardized.

We must find more effective ways (a) to manage the selection of those to whom

we give people-management responsibility, and (b) to reward and recognize those who are not best suited to people management, but who make contributions over and above those expected.

Can Females Count?

It has often been said that, “HR should not count people, rather make people count.” That is so true, AND ... HR must be sufficiently numerate to know what can be achieved in terms of diversity metrics.

Last year, I worked with an organization that addressed many of the issues raised above. The executives and senior managers were all aligned, well trained, and committed. Then, they decided to set 5 year goals for diversity. Each division set its goals for diversity representation at various levels. Everyone was excited ... until we studied the data on:

- Attrition rates
(Noting that actions were in place to increase top talent retention);
- Recruitment rates
(They were seeking to recruit at lower levels and promote from within);
- Workforce plans
(Predictions of staffing levels, based on projected business).
And, the diversity goals could only be achieved if:
- There was a massive and exceedingly unlikely explosion in sales, needing more staff thus more managers
- Many 10's of male senior managers resigned;
- The organization sacked many 10's of male senior managers.
Their goals were statistically impossible to achieve!

Bottom Line?

Ensuring gender diversity is far more than merely affirmative action and getting the numbers correct. It's not a simple problem and therefore there isn't a simple solution. First and numerically, its achievement may take you longer than you think. Second, unless you take aggressive and prompt action to enhance the caliber of management and leadership, your efforts will come to little.

Diversity and active inclusion must go together, and when that happens, organizations can reap a well-earned success. 🌟

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LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN FOCUS

India is a major growth economy and Indian organizations are quickly becoming global, making it imperative to understand leadership from the Indian and Asian perspective. Since 2006, CCL has sought to understand the leadership needs of this region, and the unique perspectives that have a bearing on how leaders are developed in India and the Asia Pacific region.

There has never been a more pressing need than now for developing leaders in India & South Asia region. The rapid pace of growth, uncertain and fast-changing global economic conditions, and the persisting ambiguity of doing business has made strengthening the leadership pipeline a critical success factor for any organization considering how leadership development has grown beyond technical and functional expertise to more strategic interventions shaped by organization's context.

CCL's ability to work along the leadership pipeline from early to C-Suite leaders makes them an ideal partner for clients. Through a combination of leadership program offerings, client-centred & co-created custom solutions, and executive leadership coaching services, CCL provides its clients with a great opportunity to create a portfolio of leadership development initiatives that serve the specific needs of their organization. Many clients have judiciously used a mix of these offerings to create a tiered learning architecture across leadership levels. For each client, CCL's approach is consistent but the outcome is one of a kind, aligned to their business needs & realities

The custom initiatives enable an organization to:

Latest Leadership Research and News

Another key differentiator for CCL is its continued focus on research. The more CCL engages with Indian leaders through our work and research, the more their breadth and depth of insights about leadership grows. Regional and India-based initiatives now complement the CCL's global research projects to create a new wealth of understanding and knowledge, which in turn informs their work with clients in India. CCL is home to the world's largest research database on leadership development accumulated over its rich history of 50 years. Some of the key focus areas of research are – women leadership, developing next-generation leaders, identifying drivers of change within the HR function in India

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Rajesh Uppal (Executive Director)

- IT, CIO and Chief of HR, Maruti Suzuki India Ltd

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It is important to integrate technology in the way we perform our jobs

While we would definitely not like to go to a concert where a computer is playing music, yet AI and ML has given us the power to take music to the next level. **Dorien Herremans**, Assistant Professor, Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD), lends her perspectives to People Matters in a candid conversation

By Shweta Modgil

Music and Machine Learning – sounds not so musical? Maybe not. Just like everywhere, Artificial Intelligence has also pervaded the world of music. Spotify, Groovespark, Pandora, and others can today recommend music based on our listening habits and moods. What does this mean for the music industry? Will AI take away jobs in the industry? Or create new opportunities? In future, will we be going to concerts where a computer is playing music?

These are some of the questions that Dr. Dorien Herremans, Assistant Professor, Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD) and a certified instructor for the NVIDIA Deep Learning Institute answers in this interview. Drawing examples from her research that are at the intersection of machine learning and music, Dr. Herremans shares how AI, cloud computing, and many more emerging technologies are radically changing the music industry and how will they impact jobs and skillsets required in this industry.



Q How are technologies like Machine Learning, AI cloud computing changing the music industry?

A The music industry has continuously evolved through the emergence of new technologies. Even before AI, we saw an evolution from listening to music at live performances (in the days before technology), to listening to music at home through LPs, cassette tapes, and digitally recorded CDs. Cloud computing has made it possible for us to stream our favorite music on any type of mobile device, through Bluetooth connected 3D sound systems. What's more, companies like Spotify, Gracenote, Pandora intensely invest in new technologies such as AI, which in turn has allowed them to predict what we will want to listen to at any time of the day. It has allowed them to create new radio stations, on the fly, with music similar to the song we picked out. These sorts of technologies drastically change the way we listen to music.

In terms of making music, technologies have now empowered creative people around the world to record their own professionally-sounding tracks, and sell them online. Through semi-automated production software, AI computer-assisted composing tools, and cheap home recording equipment, any motivated hobbyist can produce professionally sounding music. Through cloud services such as ReverbNation, Spotify, Deezer, etc. they can also skip record company completely, by directly bringing their music to the masses. This has created a direct channel from the artists to the masses.

I don't believe this means the end of the traditional music industry, as the marketing efforts, professional recording support, and concert tour organization skills of traditional record companies remain important to artists who don't want to self-publish.

Q How will these technologies affect the music industry as far as the context of work is concerned?

A The landscape in which we live and work is constantly evolving through new technologies. The music industry is no exception to this. While artists and composers will still need their musical skills to do their job, additional knowledge of new technologies, e.g. new electronic instruments, new production software could leverage their creative power and result in higher output quality.

Record companies will most definitely need to attune to the new distribution channels so that they can keep up with newcomers such as Spotify. Across all jobs in the music industry, an increased presence of technology can be used to leverage creativity, create new distribution channels, and new ways in which people interact with music. Any company would be wise to hire an expert in music and AI to advice on how to keep up and not miss the boat in their respective business.

Q How will these technologies impact the jobs in this industry? Will new jobs be created as a result or will some of the current jobs disappear in the future?

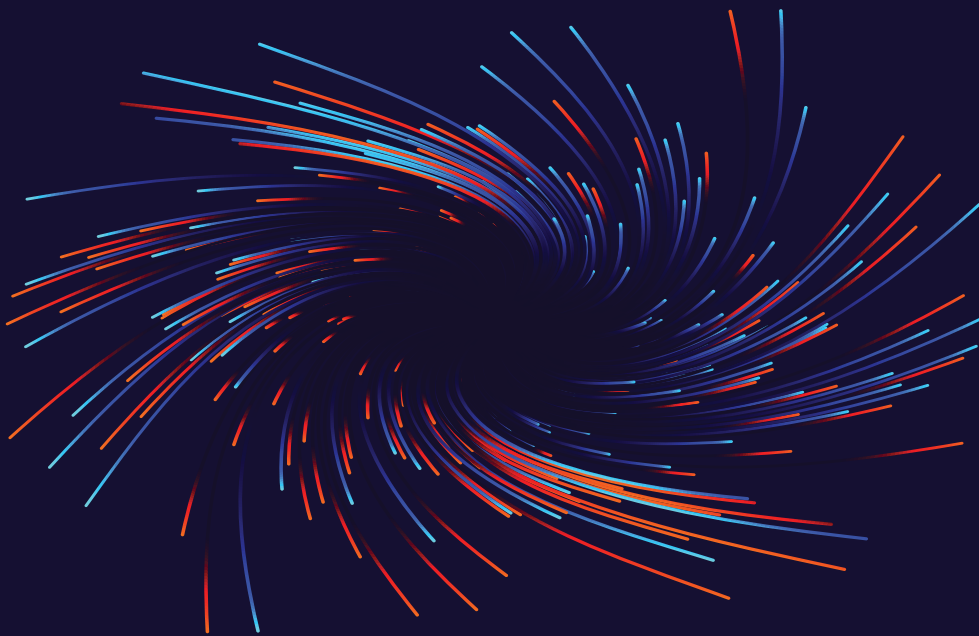
A The global recorded music market is rising each year, with an increase of 8.1 percent in 2017 alone. That same year, digital music revenues rose by 19.1 percent. I don't expect to see musicians being replaced by machines anytime soon, especially not given the growth the industry is currently experiencing. Skills like music performance, composition, business management, representation (agents), will always be needed. We are definitely not at a stage where computers can replace humans. Would you go to a concert where a computer is playing music? That being said, AI and machine learning have given us the power to take music listening and music making to the next level. Electronic dance music can now be easily produced from one's laptop, by using built-in automatic effects processing and a range of smart tools. DJ software can recommend matching songs to the DJ by automatically analyzing music and retrieving matching audio files in huge collections. Composers can get melody recommenda-

While current jobs are not disappearing, it is becoming more and more important to integrate technology in the way we perform our jobs. In addition, a range of new engineering and research jobs are created, to support the new distribution channels and music AI software

tions that fit their current chord structure. And, we at home, can open a playlist that tries to match our current mood. However, in all of the above, the human artist is still plays a critical role, not only as the content creator or performer, but also as our idol and role model. It is unlikely that a human AI would have the same effect on teenage girls, as boy bands do now. While current jobs are not disappearing, it is becoming more and more important to integrate technology in the way we perform our jobs. In addition, a range of new engineering and research jobs are created, to support the new distribution channels and music AI software.

Q How are these technologies going to impact the requisite skill sets in this industry?

A The music industry, which is ever growing, will always need people, be it performers, composers, instrument makers, business people in the record industry, concert organizers, educators, music therapists, audio engineers, etc. Within these jobs, like in any other industry, it will become neces-



In order to keep up with the competition, who may be offering all these new AI-powered services to users, I think the most important thing is to stay up to date on the available technologies

sary to embrace new technologies. For instance, composers will use new software to create their scores, and may even use AI inspired algorithms to aid in their composition. Marketers will branch out into the area of streaming music and social media to promote artists and songs.

Some of the emerging career paths specifically related to novel technologies include engineers and researchers that build/invent streaming music technologies, cloud platforms, AI-inspired composition tools, music recommendation tools, sound effects, etc. Most of these novel technologies fall within the domain of the Music Information Retrieval (MIR) research community (ISMIR), of which I am an active member. It should be noted that the new jobs go beyond just the record business. New opportunities are arising in the field of MedTech, e.g. we see that doctors are incorporating technology in music therapy sessions, and new apps such as Yousician are facilitating music education at home.

Q What do you think are the pros and the cons of the application of AI technologies in the music industry?

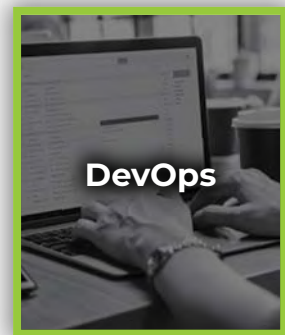
A I think it's amazing that the music industry

has become so accessible through these new technologies. I don't see AI replacing jobs in the music industry, but rather augmenting existing jobs and even creating new ones for engineers and MIR researchers. While companies such as Jukedeck offer basic music generation solutions, I believe the future lies in technologies that assist us in achieving our goals. For instance, a film score composer may get a suggestion of the next notes to come that may match the video, which he/she can then choose to accept or alter. In this way, technologies can support our creativity. Radio station DJs may go to Spotify, to find songs that match their current song, which they can then choose to play or opt to go for their own option.

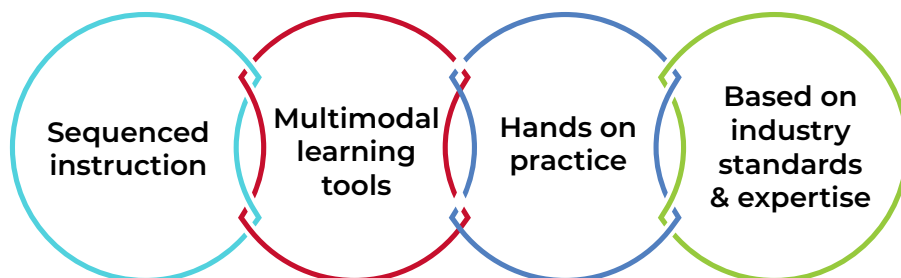
Q What is your one piece of advice to people who want to future proof their jobs in the changing music industry?

A In order to keep up with the competition, who may be offering all these new AI-powered services to users, I think the most important thing is to stay up to date on the available technologies. It is not necessary for managers or composers to learn how to code, but attending conferences such as ISMIR will give you an insight into what is currently possible with technology in music, and which challenges researchers are facing. Bigger music industry firms may want to invest in an R&D department or MIR technology team so that they can offer these services as well. More and more schools are offering sound and music computing degrees. Graduates of these types of degrees (MSc or PhD) would make perfect additions to such a team. For the enthusiast interested in actual technologies, mentoring programs such as the one offered by WIMIR (women in MIR) offer a great way to get in touch with industry professionals and researchers for advice on how to get started in music & AI technology. **CM**

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WOMEN *For* WOMEN

From breaking the glass ceilings and successfully handling the glass cliffs, get to know from women leaders who have seen it all — their own success stories, what it really takes for women to be successful, and how they are enabling other women to take the lead!

By **Suparna Chawla Bhasin**

While a World Bank research reveals that eliminating discrimination against working women has increased labor productivity by as much as 25 percent across countries, a report by McKinsey finds that \$12 trillion could be added to global GDP by 2025 by advancing women's equality. However, despite such optimistic statistics regarding women in the labor force, women are, on average, less likely to participate in the labor force than men, according to Catalyst. Today, very few women are CEOs of the world's largest corporations, and as of the 2018 Fortune list, only 24 women (4.8 percent) were CEOs of Fortune 500 companies. All this just highlights the fact that from entry-level to the C-suite, women are underrepresented in organizations, have lesser opportunities to advance than men, face more barriers to senior leadership like biases and stereotypes, experience an uneven playing field and fight issues related to balancing work and family, see a lack of senior or visibly

successful female role models and not enough leaders sponsoring highly qualified women, the reasons that hold women back are many. Corroborating this is the fact that women don't take risks at the workplace when it comes to leveraging opportunities. A study by KPMG that surveyed over 2000 professional women reveals that when it comes to risk-taking in the workplace, seven in ten (69 percent) women are open to taking small risks to further their career, but far fewer (43 percent) are open to taking bigger risks that may be associated with career advancement.

We know the reasons but we wanted to know how women leaders who have "been there, done that" think about what holds women back, how they can level the playing field, their perspectives on gender biases and stereotypes, and what they are doing for other women in the supposedly male-dominated digital era and in the world of #MeToo movement? This cover story brings to you what women leaders think about success, empowerment, and enabling other women at the workplace. 

BLINDNESS TO GENDER BIAS

From a variety of literature to conversations and discussions, a lot has been and is being said about building and fostering gender-balanced organizations and workplaces. But what is the reality? Are we doing what it really takes to eliminate gender bias in organizations and bridging the gap between words and action at an industry level?

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION



Globally, the Percentage of Women Participating in the Labor Force is Declining

For both women and men, the global labor force participation rate is declining. However, women are, on average, less likely to participate in the labor force than men.



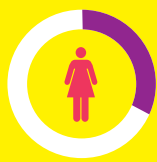
Globally, in 2018:
Women's labor force participation rate is
48.5%
a decrease from 51.4% in 1990.



Men's labor force participation rate is
75%
down from 80% in 1990.

Many factors contribute to this gender gap, including:

- Structural barriers and cultural restrictions.
- An increase in the number of years women spend in school.
- Lack of employment opportunities, particularly for young women.



28.5%

In India, the labor force participation rate for women is one of the lowest in the world

Despite educational gains, the labor force participation rate for women in 2017 was 28.5% (compared to 82% for men).



Increasing women's labor force participation by 10 percentage points could add \$700 billion to India's GDP by 2025 (or a 1.4% increase).

Reaching gender parity would have a bigger impact in India than in any other region in the world.

LEADERSHIP

Despite Progress, Women Are Scarce Among Senior Leaders. Very few women are CEOs of the world's largest corporations.

As of the 2018 Fortune list, only

**24 women
(4.8%)**

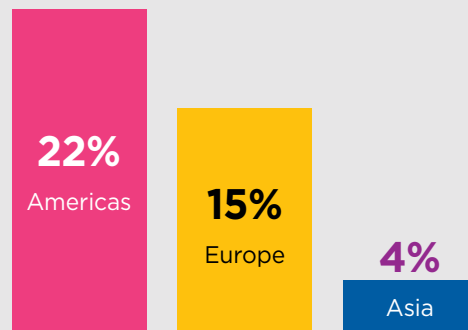
were CEOs of Fortune 500 companies.



Women account for less than a quarter (24%) of senior roles globally.

Women are gradually gaining representation among Executive Committees (ECs) in Fortune Global 100 companies, but are still a small minority.

In 2017, women accounted for 22% of EC roles in the Americas, 15% in Europe, and only 4% in Asia.



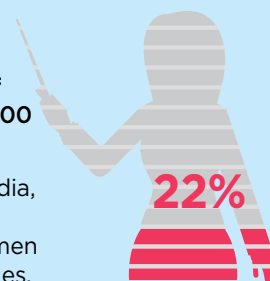
Some Countries Use Quotas to Increase Women on Corporate Boards

Women held only 15% of board director seats worldwide in 2017, a small increase from 12% in 2015.



Less than a quarter (22%) of board directors in the S&P 500 were women in 2017.

Finland, France, Germany, India, Italy, the Netherlands, and Norway have quotas for women on boards of public companies.



THE PAY GAP

The Global Pay Gap Between Women and Men Is Widening

In 2017, the global average annual earnings for women were

\$12,000

compared to men's earnings of \$21,000.

In many countries (including India, Mexico, and Spain), more women are working in the informal economy than men.

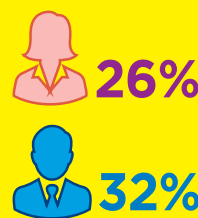


Informal employment, lower levels of labor force participation, gender pay gaps, and interrupted careers contributes to **women's lack of access to social protections like pensions, which leads to higher rates of poverty among older women as compared to older men.**

Even in the gig economy, women face a pay gap.

Women are less likely to participate in the gig economy.

26% of women do, compared to 32% of men.



One study of a global online platform for task-based work found that women earn, on average

37% less than men in hourly wage rates.



The Pipeline for Women Starts Small and Continues to Shrink

140 women held 12.4% of board seats and just

3.2% of board chairs in 2017.



Source: Catalyst

NOT LEVERAGING AND VALUING DIFFERENCES IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST BARRIERS



In the midst of the #MeToo movement, how are female leaders helping other women break the glass ceiling in the digital era? Here are two women leaders, **Peta Latimer**, CEO of Mercer, Singapore, and **Sonia Bate**, Managing Director of EDIT Development, supporting diversity and inclusive leadership efforts across UK & Global clients, who share their observations on cultural trends, what it takes to be successful, and how they are enabling other women to take the lead.



Peta Latimer



Sonia Bate

Q In what ways has the #MeToo movement shaken up the corporate culture for women?

A Peta Latimer (PT): The awareness and courage to speak up has been nothing short of spectacular, affording many people a voice. And it has been made even better with the #heforshe movement, which is a true demonstration of what an inclusive society stands for.

Q In the context of career trajectories, how would you characterize the “women in leadership” progression?

A Sonia Bate (SB): The first issue is knowing your personal value proposition — early on, I knew I was being paid less than my male colleagues but didn’t believe enough in my ability to fight for parity. I now know my value and worth. Another issue is labels and stereotypes. Some people expect a woman will “slow down” to have a family or that when she has one she won’t be able to work as hard. Women need to stop internalizing these scenarios. Finally, networks and support are vital — from my early career days I have invested a great deal of energy in supporting my professional and personal network. My clients, colleagues and sounding boards lean on me as much as I lean on them.

A PL: On a recent all-female panel with a mostly female audience, one question about “bad bosses” provoked an overwhelming cry from the audience that the worst bosses they ever had were female. The audience was asking why — are women so competitive that they can’t help each other?

I believe multiple things are in play. Firstly, confirmatory bias — we’ve heard that women are competitive and don’t help others up the ladder, so we are more sensitive to behavior that confirms this. Secondly, unconscious bias — we tend to be more lenient, sympathetic or even explicitly biased towards people within our “group”, so if a female has a bad experience with another female, it is likely to sting more than a negative experience with a male boss. Finally, higher standards — since it’s difficult to break through the glass ceiling, those who succeed tend to have high expectations. Many women had to fight for their leadership roles and may expect greater things of those coming up the ladder.

But we should have the same expectations of bosses of any gender: to provide direction, strategy, remove any obstacles that may hinder our ability to perform our work, and understand our strengths and development areas to guide us into successful career paths. A good boss knows our motivations and is prepared to back us — giving difficult and necessary feedback where appropriate — and knows having the strongest and most empowered team will help everyone.

Q The “old-boy network” mentality is still in play, defined by money and power. It’s who plays golf with you — business is still very much done that way. Why are things not changing?

A SB: I actually think things are changing. The old-boy networks still exist, but I get frustrated when I see women forming new “clubs” that mirror these archaic networks and are just as exclusive. The answer for me is not more “clubs” but inviting difference into your decision-making.... Can we change it all tomorrow? No. Can you take action to engage your male colleagues in conversation? Can you actively build sponsorship without playing golf? Of course you can.

Q What are the biggest challenges or barriers to success for women in leadership?

A SB: Not leveraging and valuing differences is one of the biggest barriers, not just for women but for all humans who don’t “fit” the mold. Maybe we could reverse this conversation and talk about enablers of difference.

Some women may not ask for help or invest in their professional networks. Sponsorship is the game-changer for career progression, yet many women are focused on mentorship. The bedrock of sponsorship is visibility — building trust and deep relationships with people who have your back. Thus, sponsorship is the dialogue we should be having and will be the disruptor for inclusion.

Q How can employers address the underlying prejudices and beliefs that drive the “glass cliff” phenomenon?

A SB: We know women face greater challenges than men in their attempts to climb to the top — going back to a time when I was told not to wear trousers to work. Even when women move into senior roles, they are likely to receive greater scrutiny and criticism than men and to secure less-positive evaluations, even when performing the same roles. Company culture is the first part of the solution.

Companies need a growth mindset in which making mistakes isn’t frowned upon but is seen as a way to learn and move forward. Tackling institutional bias and having zero tolerance for bad behavior is also essential. The language you use to package your ideas and build support is key — whether you are male or female.

A PL: If we’re challenging power bases, we also need to think about how to support the current “in-power group”. It is frustrating that conversations regarding women in leadership and gender diversity are often one-sided. We ask men to speak up and fight for equal opportunity in the workplace, but for centuries society has branded them ‘breadwinners’, ‘hunters’ and ‘protectors’. If women are now taking more of this responsibility, how do we help men redefine what it means to be a man? Where are the conversations about men taking greater responsibility with child care and caregiving? Why do we still laugh at men who cry? What support is there for men who are trailing spouses? Why do most organizations only give two weeks of paternity leave? This is where I think the conversation needs to be taken — otherwise, one group will remain pitted against the other.

Q What are female leaders doing for other women in the supposedly male-dominated digital era?

A SB: I am seeing more community creation through digital tools — development programs use tech to enable accelerated connectivity, and social media has influenced economic empowerment of women in certain demographic groups. I think we need to create even-more-diverse communities including both men and women. It is not about men versus women but about high performance and better decision-making.

A PL: The best thing about the changes we’re seeing at the geo-political level and with the expansion of entrepreneurship and digital trans-

TIPS FOR WOMEN TAKING A LEADERSHIP ROLE

- Be yourself
- Build strong networks.
- Have a voice
- Be clear on what you want
- Make sure stake-holders understand your ambition and strengths
- Be clear on your non-negotiables
- Don’t try to be perfect



SPONSORSHIP IS THE GAME-CHANGER FOR CAREER PROGRESSION, YET MANY WOMEN ARE FOCUSED ON MENTORSHIP. THE BEDROCK OF SPONSORSHIP IS VISIBILITY — BUILDING TRUST AND DEEP RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE WHO HAVE YOUR BACK

formation is a natural leveling of the playing field. So much wonderful work continues to take place in STEM for women, and the tech world offers an opportunity for anyone with the skills and an idea to change the game completely.

Whilst some of the downstream efforts like capital-raising continues to suffer from issues like bias & power-mix, there is definitely more of an opportunity to break the glass ceiling in the new world that challenges the very heart of traditional corporate structures.

Q What advice would you give women who are interested in taking on a leadership role?

A PL: Women who take leadership roles do not have an obligation to help other women but to espouse the value of diversity and foster cultures of equal opportunity regardless of gender, background, etc. As a group moving into a position of power, it is up to us to break this cycle — and this will work only if we understand the benefits of diversity and drive a meritocracy built on inclusion.

A SB: No woman makes her decisions based on a single set of criteria. Some people thrive on risk; others don’t. Some are in a financial position that allows them to take risks; others aren’t. Some people have encouragement and support from family and networks; others get their confidence knocked and are encouraged to play it safe.

I ask people to ask themselves three questions when a new role is on the table: What is the worst that can happen? Will I regret not saying yes? Is someone else more qualified for the role? 🍷

OWN YOUR AMBITION

In a one of a kind interaction with People Matters, **Renu Sud Karnad**, Managing Director of HDFC Ltd. talks about women and leadership, barriers to success in a male-dominated workplace, what it takes to “own ambition”, and her advice to women aspiring to be leaders.

Renu Sud Karnad, Managing Director of HDFC Ltd. joined HDFC Ltd. in 1978 and was inducted onto its Board as Executive Director in 2000. She became the Joint Managing Director in 2007 and has been the Managing Director of HDFC Ltd. since 2010. Karnad is in-charge of the lending operations of the company and is responsible for spearheading HDFC's expansion and under her leadership, HDFC has grown consistently in its lending business assisting over 5.8 million families own a home of their own. Apart from being HDFC's brand custodian, Karnad is the guiding force behind formulation of the organization's communication strategy and public image. Owing to her successful spell with the mortgage sector, Ms. Karnad has also served as the President of the International Union for Housing Finance (IUHF), an association of housing finance firms present across the globe. She has also served as Director, Asian Real Estate Society. Besides being on the Board of several HDFC Group Companies, she is on the boards of ABB Ltd, Bosch Ltd, Feedback Ventures Limited, Indraprastha Medical Corporation Ltd, Maruti Suzuki India and international board of WNS.

Below are her thoughts on:

The Balancing Act – Women, Work, and Family

I've indeed been fortunate in having spent my career in an organization like HDFC that has both, meritocracy and highly evolved value systems towards all employees irrespective of their gender.

But from all that I've seen across society, I feel that a critical factor for a woman to achieve a top leadership position is her ability to own her ambition. She has to start seeing and acknowledging herself as a leader, which is often a bit complex given the circumstances that surround women. Women need to recognize the complexities, the work-life compromises that are involved, and the barriers that might come up. Success comes with perseverance, the ability to see off challenges and continuing on the path to achieve what you desire despite adversities. And in all this, honesty, hard work, persistence, being the best at what you do matters the most.

Historically, the workplace was built around the set-up of nuclear families where the male members worked while the women stayed at home. However today, society has changed substantially and we see a large numbers of women already in the workplace. Yet, the biggest challenge for women in leadership roles remains prioritizing between the home and the work-front. There can be moments when the home takes precedence, and vice versa,



OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN ARE CERTAINLY RISING AND IT'S NOW UP TO WOMEN TO BREAK THE AGE OLD STEREOTYPICAL “NETWORKS”. AND THIS CAN HAPPEN ONLY WHEN WOMEN “OWN THEIR AMBITION” AND ACTIVELY SEEK OPPORTUNITIES

but for a professional woman, the essential desire still is that neither should suffer inordinately. As one grows older and moves up the ladder, professional responsibilities increase. But correspondingly as children grow older, the ‘home’ becomes less of a pressure.

Honestly, I believe I've been better at managing my professional time far better than my personal time, but that, I guess, is true for many other women in leadership positions. Family can clearly play a pivotal role in women assuming top leadership professional roles, and in my case, for instance, both my parents and my husband were very supportive of my career choices and offered me all the support and encouragement that I needed. That was essential and vital in my being able to grow to achieve my potential as a business leader.

Women in leadership roles

One major challenge that women face pertains to maintaining 'Work-Life Balance'. In this context, managing expectations at home can be the biggest challenge — women are expected to be "super women". It's been observed that women often tend to drop out at mid-management levels because that's when the pressures of the home and work become a bit difficult to balance. The key is making the best of any situation that one is confronted with, and responding to challenges with both empathy and firmness. Women have the innate strength and ability to do that. And as more and more women choose professional careers, as trends clearly show, they're getting better at maintaining the balance and organizations are getting better at managing diverse employee needs across both gender and age.

The 'Old Boy Network'

We have to accept the fact that historically, the corporate organization has been a male-orientated and male-dominated workplace. So, any social networks within the workplace have essentially comprised of male friendships. In our society, we find that power is often derived and driven by social networks which offer the chance of recognition, sometimes to the detriment of outsiders (for example women) and exclusion from the advantages of being a part of the 'circle'. In many organizations, mentoring networks that are crucial for growth still appear to be a male preserve.

But women aspiring to top management positions now need to manage their own mentoring networks, involving both male and female colleagues, and actively seek out growth. Networks in the workplace are completely professional and are about extending both knowledge and who you know. Women need to connect with people they can learn from and ones who can help and mentor. It is worth remembering that things are changing; the success of many women CEOs worldwide in recent years across diverse industries proves that the 'old boy network' as you call it is, indeed, is now far more accepting of meritocracy than it ever was. Opportunities for women are certainly rising and it's now up to women to break the age old stereotypical "networks". And this can happen only when women "own their ambition" and actively seek opportunities.

Managing Challenges at the Workplace

I don't believe that women have limited opportunities for promotion or may not get another chance. You are only as good as what you bring to the table; your work has to speak for itself. I don't see why women should shy away from risky or precarious positions. It's a challenge to be faced. Managing risk effectively is a part of growth. I would encourage women to embrace risk, look for a variety of tasks and roles and proactively seek out stretch assignments in the workplace. Women need to be confident in their abilities and exhibit the confidence to jump in to deliver. Taking on challenging roles is always an opportunity which might open

up a series of other opportunities. I truly believe that women have innate strengths of being nurturing, communicative, and empathetic. Women are perfectly placed to create a well-rounded and distinctive blend of leadership styles that are innately successful.

The Glass Cliff Phenomenon

The 'glass cliff' is a new jargon. The psychology underlying this jargon assumes that women are great leaders because of their unique skill sets during times of crisis, turnaround and challenge but are not required, or pushed aside, once the crisis is over. A woman is assumed to be more participative, democratic, and consensus seeking, which might be assumed to be the 'right' sets of skills in a crisis situation or a turnaround. However, recent studies in the Harvard Business Review have argued that the phenomenon does not apply to organizations with a history of female leaders. It goes on to state that the more women are seen at the topmost levels of management, the more likely they are to be seen as running organizations that are highly successful, not just during a time of a crisis or a turnaround.

I think there are enough examples today of women disproving the glass cliff theory. It's simply a matter of more and more women coming into leadership positions, accepting the challenges,

IT IS CRUCIAL FOR WOMEN LEADERS TO ENCOURAGE OTHER WOMEN TO LOOK BEYOND A MALE VALUES-ORIENTATED WORKING ENVIRONMENT, SELF-MOTIVATE, ENLIST A MENTOR AND SOLICIT FEEDBACK ON LEADERSHIP TECHNIQUES





ORGANIZATIONS TODAY ARE INCREASINGLY RECOGNIZING WOMEN AND SUPPORTING THEM BETTER. THE CURRENT TRENDS SHOW THAT THE NUMBER OF WOMEN ON THE BOARDS OF COMPANIES AND IN THE C-SUITE IS GOING UP ACROSS THE GLOBE

driving forward to accept inherent risks, and proving themselves with the hard work necessary both within the workplace and in terms of the so-called “networks” to change any perceptions related to the “glass cliff” phenomenon.

Women for Women

Women leaders should be prepared to be mentors and create networks for other women in the workplace. It is crucial for women leaders to encourage other women to look beyond a male values-orientated working environment, self-motivate, enlist a mentor and solicit feedback on leadership techniques.

Business leaders need to embrace differences and advance careers in a way that is truly merit-oriented and considerate of diversities. Women who are at the leadership helm today can play a big role in doing that. Having said all that, I firmly believe gender shouldn't be a parameter to decide whether a person can be a great leader or not— a person's leadership skills should depend on their respective strengths and personality traits, not their gender or age.

Things are changing

Organizations today are increasingly recognizing

women and supporting them better. The current trends show that the number of women on the Boards of companies and in the C-suite is going up across the globe. Although in countries like India, the scale is still tilted against women, we are starting to see the evidence of change coming in.

Organizations today are providing longer maternity leaves, crèches, flexible working hours and also offer a second career option if women take a break from their full-time careers. Even on the policy front, India's Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017 which has increased the duration of paid maternity leave available to working mothers from 12 weeks to 26 weeks and mandates having a crèche facility in any establishment which has 50 or more employees, has been incredibly motivating for women. The introduction of the Paternity Benefits Bill in the Indian Parliament is certainly a welcome development. Paternity leaves have also encouraged equal participation of both parents in childcare thereby giving women the latitude and scope to focus on their career. The Indian Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act now enshrines protections under the law and this is a big step. Most organizations have implemented stringent policies around sexual harassment which will also provide a secure environment for women.

Success Advice for Women

Women need to have a clear vision of the future, stay focused, have faith in their abilities and trust their instincts. They need to embrace risk, empower other, build relationships and networks, and not get bogged down by criticism but overcome it. A demonstrable focus on the career and the business should be the main objective — owning the ambition as I said. Above all, they should not let emotions get in the way. 🙌

CREATING WORKPLACES THAT TRULY WORK FOR WOMEN

How much we change our culture so that all women can thrive is up to us, and the great thing is that the systemic changes we need to make will make the workplace work for everybody

By **Arianna Huffington**,
Founder & CEO of
Thrive Global



The #MeToo moment has been more than a moment. In just over a year, it has transformed the global conversation about the ‘workplace’. It’s an illustration of how quickly change can happen. Society accepts the status quo – until it doesn’t. The speed of change can be breathtaking as it has been with #MeToo and companies are innovating in different ways to make the most of this moment. KPMG, for example, has added men to the advisory boards of their women’s networks, bringing men into the process, creating allies, and making the point that the response to #MeToo has to involve everybody.

But mentorship and sponsorship, as important as they’ll always be, are not enough. The task now is not only to extend what has been achieved, but to broaden it. Yes, it’s great that instances of unacceptable conduct are being uncovered, rooted out, and declared no longer acceptable; yes, we absolutely need to continue to address all past abuses and bring justice for any victims; and yes, we need to be explicit and deliberate about creating, reinforcing and expanding mentorship programs — but while we’re rethinking the rules and conventions of the workplace and the assumptions that underlie them, we need to go upstream. #MeToo isn’t just about shining a light on the worst examples of sexual harassment, it’s also about creating a workplace that truly works for women, one that allows women

to reach their full potential; and to do that, we need to look at some of the factors that help create conditions that lead to ways of working that advantage women in more subtle but systemic ways.

Far too many workplaces are fueled by a culture of machismo and burnout. And it’s the women who pay the highest price at workplaces in which sleep deprivation and exhaustion are taken as proxies for dedication to the job. Given that even when they’re working, women are usually doing the lion’s share of the work keeping up the household, becomes a backdoor way of excluding women, or at least making it harder for them to have their voices heard or to advance. Not only does this keep women out, it makes their day-to-day experiences worse. When people are burnt out, they lash out and act out. And unprofessional behavior inevitably includes sexist behavior.

We can – and should – talk about gender parity and how there should be more women at the top of every profession, but change has been slow. And we’re never going to truly move the needle if we don’t change the day-to-day experiences of women at every level. Stressed out, burnt-out work cultures locked in a state of perpetual ‘fight or flight’ mode are more likely to be fertile breeding grounds not just for harassment but for the idea that it’s okay to talk over women, devalue them, ignore their contributions, and silence their voices in ways big and small.

We need diverse and inclusive workplace cultures that allow everybody to unlock their full potential and realize their talents and goals; and this starts with leaders who model a way of working that acknowledges that we bring our whole selves to work. It’s not about work-life balance – which was always a losing game for women – but about work-life integration. Maintaining a healthy workplace culture is also about surfacing problems immediately. At Thrive Global, it’s one of our core values and we call it “compassionate directness.” Employees are empowered to speak up and raise problems as they arise, which enables continuous course-correction and rooting out not just misbehavior – including sexual harassment – but any challenges or obstacles to someone’s voice being heard. Another way to create a healthier culture for women, and one not fueled by burnout, is to be comfortable with incompleteness. This means realizing that there isn’t anybody in any demanding job who can complete everything on their to-do list each day. So people should be encouraged to prioritize their tasks and structure their day so they’re able to declare an end to it, knowing that they’ve handled the essential priorities – but also knowing that they’ll arrive back at work the next day recharged, refreshed, and ready to tackle challenges and seize opportunities. 🍷

IT’S THE WOMEN WHO PAY THE HIGHEST PRICE AT WORKPLACES IN WHICH SLEEP DEPRIVATION AND EXHAUSTION ARE TAKEN AS PROXIES FOR DEDICATION TO THE JOB

WORKPLACES NEED TO BE INCLUSIVE

Why are there so few women in senior leadership positions despite a highly talented pool being available?

By **Carolyn Chin-Parry**,
Chief Digital Officer,
Prism



The topic of breaking the glass ceiling is not a new one, yet it is still very much on the agenda of many industries to the point that some organizations have imposed a quota to encourage women into leadership positions. Whilst I am always supportive of promoting gender equality, I disagree with quotas as the means to that end. In fact, quotas may even hurt women as people may view them as unqualified – even if they genuinely deserve. This is because the best person should get the job regardless of gender. I have come across so many talented women in the course of my career and I know from my own experience that the talent pool is there, hence quotas are not needed.

I have been fortunate to work for most parts of my career as a management consultant in over a dozen different industries which exposed me to the reality that there is still insufficient female representation at the top of most organizations. By this, I am especially referring to the C-suite and Board levels. And even at the board level, it appears that many women board directors tend to be the same ones being “circulated” across different boards and in some cases, are only selected due to being a family member of a family-run business.

So why are there so few women in senior leadership positions despite a highly talented pool being available? There are some who believe that it is due to the “boys club” mentality, where men will only promote fellow men who are similar to them in educational background or share common interests in and outside of the workplace. I feel that it

WOMEN ARE LESS LIKELY TO ASK FOR PROMOTIONS AND RAISES, AND ALSO AT TIMES, LACK THE ABILITY TO INTERNALIZE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

is perhaps this very reason —women have fewer alliances with decision makers which impact their journeys to securing senior leadership positions. “Who you know” still makes a difference in the world of business and politics.

Another challenge that women face in their careers is managing the demands of motherhood. Being a mother myself and having undergone two rounds of maternity leaves, I will admit that it is not a simple one-size-fits-all when it comes to juggling the needs associated with motherhood. A mother’s ability to have a proper career is dependent on: (i) different children having different needs; (ii) the level of support available to the mother/parent; (iii) how flexible the employer is willing to be; and (iv) the governmental regulations in place to support families. The same considerations apply to those who are caring for ailing parents. By no means is a person less capable as a result of family obligations, and quite often supportive employers

benefit from high staff morale, higher productivity levels and better retention.

In addition to the “boys club” and motherhood, other challenges that women often face in their quest for successful careers may include the “imposter syndrome”, with the hesitation of speaking up and sharing their accomplishments. Women are widely reported to be less likely to ask for promotions and raises, and also at times lack the ability to internalize accomplishments in order to become more confident leaders. Many studies indicate that women choose to exclude themselves from jobs if they feel that they meet only 80 percent of requirements, whereas men will think they can “wing it” even if they don’t meet the job requirements.

When I reflect on the last 20 years of my career, it is definitely one that started with many bumps and challenges. I was a Singaporean studying in Australia who graduated with a Bachelor degree during the height of the Asian Financial Crisis. With very limited employment options, I deferred my career to be a Master of Commerce and then Master of eCommerce, to then be met by the Dot.Com crash. As my initial job offer with a Big 4 consulting firm was retracted due to the economic downturn, I started off as an IT business analyst in a Utilities company in Australia. The combination of IT and Utilities clearly meant that there were hardly any females in top management. However, I was lucky to come across a female mentor in this organization who held a middle management role. She explained to me that it is possible to remain feminine and yet be a respected professional in a male environment. She encouraged me to always dress professionally and not to feel a need to behave like a man to feel accepted. At that time, I was not always comfortable in my own skin, because I was a young female Asian migrant in an Australian male dominated industry. Moreover, the lack of female representation at the top made me wonder if I needed to be like “one of the boys” to get recognized and promoted in a workplace.

After 3 years with the Utilities company, I joined a management consulting firm to get back on the original career path I was after with the recovery of the IT industry. I had the privilege to gain experience in a diverse range of industries in Asia Pacific, and with this vast exposure, I came to the conclusion that for most industries, not only was there a significant lack of female representation at the senior leadership levels, but I also realized that women can be best friends or worst enemies in a work environment. I experienced “Queen Bees” who are very much the heartless, bullish ice queens, to the other polar extreme with the wonderfully kind and supportive female colleagues. The “Queen Bees” seem to want to be the only female in the room and work to harm any other females. From the kind and nurturing female colleagues, who helped mentor me, encouraged my ideas, and supported my career aspirations, I learnt who I wanted to be and what I needed to become.



IT IS MY HOPE THAT WE CONTINUE TO SUPPORT OTHER WOMEN IN AND OUTSIDE OF THE WORKPLACE. LET’S CELEBRATE DIVERSITY AND WOMANHOOD, AND PAVE THE WAY TO HAVE INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES

There are two key ingredients that I feel are truly necessary to be successful as a professional regardless of gender. The first is far too underutilized by women — professional networking that can help with identifying new opportunities, broadening perspectives and strengthening relationships for a more even plain field. In times of economic uncertainty, having a strong network always helps. The other ingredient is to never compromise on your own integrity, no matter how appealing an opportunity might be when it arises. Reputation is everything, especially in the ever connected digital world.

As women, we are naturally better at building relationships, seeing things holistically, recognizing non-verbal cues in communication, and being nurturing to those around us; and I value providing a different perspective in a male-dominated boardroom and strive to lead by example as a woman leader to both my male and female colleagues. I mention male colleagues, as some of whom already in leadership positions have the ability to recognize contribution women make and promote deserving women. It is my hope that we continue to support other women in and outside of the workplace. Let’s celebrate diversity and womanhood, and pave the way to have inclusive workplaces. 🐝

AS LONG AS YOU'RE DOING YOUR BEST, YOU WILL BREAK ALL BARRIERS & GROW



Lavanya Shrinagesh is the Global CSR and Diversity & Inclusion leader for Genpact. As a CSR leader, she leads programs that harness the energy and talent of our employees for the economic, social, and environmental betterment of the communities we live and work in. Her role as a D&I leader involves steering initiatives to create a gender balanced organization with 50% representation of women across all levels.

Prior to her current role, Lavanya designed and implemented Genpact's Contact Center Eco System, creating 'I speak', CAC and developed the training contact center model. She has more than 18 years of work experience across Hiring, HR and Learning and Development domain. She specialized in creating hiring tools that map to job competencies; building Learning and Development plans to bridge the skill gap. In addition to this, Lavanya has also worked in the Luxury Retail and Education sector.



Q What are your thoughts on the issue of women and leadership in the context of your own career trajectory?

A Gender bias has never been a barrier in my career journey. If anything, I faced 'age' barrier as I started out young — I was 19 when I joined GE as a trainer! Different jobs and industries later, I am now pursuing my passion of corporate social responsibility at Genpact. And here's my learning, because Genpact is such a people-centric and result-oriented organization, there's no room for any perception to trickle in. As long as you're doing your best, you will break all barriers and grow. That's inherent in our culture.

Q What do you think are the biggest challenges for women in leadership roles or barriers to success?

A More often than not, challenges present themselves in the form of a mindset — for

both women and men. Many people are not able to gain the right exposure at the right time and I do believe this inherent fear of failure, brought on by stiff competition, can be a barrier to one's success. At Genpact, we encourage certain behavioral attributes that push people to be their best version. Our culture celebrates "Curious, Incisive, and Courageous behavior on a bed rock of Integrity." While we call it (C1)2, our people call it a game changer. It's important for organizations to define and deploy enablers of growth for their people... and for people to have the drive and passion to grow.

Q Businesses still have this mentality of an "old-boys' club" where money and power define everything. It's about who "plays golf with you" and business at the top level is still very much done that way. Why are things not changing?

A From my experience, I believe that things are changing and changing dramatically. Let's look at the numbers from my organization. The number of women on our Board has gone up from 6 percent in

2015 to 27 percent in 2018. Female representation on our Global Leadership Council has increased from 9 percent in 2015 to 24 percent in 2018. The percentage of women with the title 'Senior Vice President' has increased from 18 percent in 2015 to 23 percent in 2018.

We have strong examples of women in key leadership roles. Our Chief Strategy Officer, our Global Business Leader for Insurance, Diversity and CSR, our Chief Marketing Officer, our General Counsel and our Digital Solutioning Leader—all are women. The sentiment of a 'boys club' does not have any room to percolate down. In fact, personally speaking, my support system at work is a network of strong women leaders.

Q Given the statistics, many women may feel that they have limited opportunities for promotion and may not get another chance. How do you think women can ascertain if they are being offered a risky or precarious position?

A The very definition of the word 'work' is changing radically. Transformation and disruption are the undisputed buzzwords and in this context, any role that's offered to anyone (man or woman) in any industry or organization is new and comes with a unique set of opportunities and risks. My personal mantra is to have tremendous willingness to learn and take on new challenges — irrespective of the area of work or gender.

Q What advice would you give women that are taking on leadership roles?

A In today's world, with the changing environment, I believe that leaders need to be evolve as fast as the world around them. There is a need to constantly learn, unlearn, and relearn. For women leaders in particular, I believe they need to take more risks without the fear of losing.

Q What are women leaders doing for women in the supposedly male-dominated digital era?

A I don't believe the digital era is entirely male-dominated. You see, digital is not equal to tech and coding. It's time we change this notion. There are enough and more examples of women who are leading in the digital world and the industry is realizing how women matter in the world of digital transformation. **em**

WOMEN UNDERESTIMATE THEIR LEADERSHIP CAPABILITIES

Roopa Kudva is the Managing Director of Omidyar Network India, an investment firm focused on social impact. She leads the overall investment strategy, operations and portfolio development of Omidyar Network and manages and develops the India-based portfolio across core initiatives. Prior to joining Omidyar Network, Roopa spent 23 years with CRISIL, and was its Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer from 2007. She led CRISIL's transformation from being India's premier ratings agency into a diversified global analytical company. Under her leadership the company's market capitalization grew four-fold and revenues tripled. She led the company's expansion plans and CRISIL now has a presence in 150 cities across India and research centers in Argentina, Poland and China. Its client base includes some of the largest global investment banks and as well as tens of thousands of small firms and enterprises in India. Roopa has served as a member of several policy-level committees relating to the Indian financial system, and is an independent director on the board of Infosys and Tata AIA Life Insurance Company, and a member of the Banks Board Bureau.

Below are her thoughts on themes related to women and leadership.



My Leadership Journey

I entered the workforce when the liberalization process was getting under way in India. My own career (and that of several others) benefitted tremendously from the rapid growth of the Indian economy and the opportunities it created for new organizations to innovate and grow. The last few decades have also generated unprecedented opportunities for women in the workforce. Today, in urban India, there is a far greater support for working women professionals from their families. Overall, I believe that women are in a considerably better position across the professional spectrum, although there are still several issues to address.

Surmounting Barriers to Success

While the proportion of women in middle management is increasing in the private sector, women are still severely under-represented at senior leadership levels. One big barrier is that women hold back from raising their hand/asking for the top jobs, reflecting social conditioning. I consistently see women underestimating their leadership capabilities. As aspirants for the top jobs, the onus of managing one's career and communicating what we want lies on oneself — and this is applicable to both women and men. Also, as women seek leadership roles, it's important to be self-aware, particularly about what they can do better than others in the organization and

their unique strengths, and build on them to seek leadership roles.

The representation of women in middle management is perceptibly increasing, as attitudes are changing. So statistics in middle management will considerably improve 5 years down the line. As for the top management roles, these roles are always tough and there are risks involved. It is hard to get the top jobs and stay at the top, whether you are a woman or a man. Women naturally have strong skills to lead. They can multi-task and handle diverse stakeholders very well

Breaking the 'Old Boys' Club'

Things are certainly changing, though an accelerated pace of change is desirable. At Omidyar Network India, we meet and engage with strong women entrepreneurs leading organizations both in the for-profit as well as in the non-profit sectors. While the 'old-boy network' does exist, there are plenty of examples of women leaders rising above that clique.

Fighting the glass cliff phenomenon

To begin with, employers need to signal gender neutrality — that being a man or woman doesn't matter from a career development perspective. The tone set by top leadership is critical. Also, when women start a family, supporting them should not be signaled as "special

privileges" but having good policies that make it easy for women to be effective contributors when they have young children makes good business sense. Organizations are realizing that it pays to invest in women. There will be a phase when companies need to be supportive but it is well worth the effort. Despite well-known instances, research has yet to conclusively establish that the glass cliff exits — that women executives are consistently more likely to be selected for difficult/ precarious leadership positions than men.

Women empowering Women

Women leaders need to be supportive of other upcoming women leaders and need to reach out and help other deserving ones up the ladder. I also believe that there is merit in organizations having conscious and well-articulated goals around having women in leadership positions. Women leaders can play an important role in driving this. Having goals will also push organizations to actively go out and seek women in leadership positions. We have seen that mandating women on corporate boards has pushed companies to seek out diverse talent. It is interesting that once companies hire a search firm to look for board candidates, many strong women show up on the list of contenders as compared to what happens when boards rely on their own networks. 

WOMEN ARE CHANGE AGENTS



Sangeeta Prasad is Managing Director & CEO, Mahindra Lifespace Developers Ltd. She is also a Member of the Group Executive Board, Mahindra Group and Co-Chairperson, Group Diversity Council, Mahindra Group. Sangeeta started her career with Tata Steel, where she gained valuable experience across businesses, and via interactions with external stakeholders and various forums. She holds a degree in Electrical Engineering from Jadavpur University and an MBA from IIM Lucknow. A Chevening scholar, she has to her credit a General Management Programme at INSEAD, Fountainebleu, and has also attended programmes at Harvard University.

Sangeeta has addressed audiences at multiple editions of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos, where she spoke on trends, challenges and opportunities in urbanization; business and people strategy in the digital era, and action on climate change. She was also a speaker at the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference, or 'COP 21', in Paris, and at the eighth Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM8) held in Beijing in 2017. Sangeeta was part of the FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry) delegation to Hannover Messe in 2015 and a panelist at the FICCI Seminar on 'Smart Cities - the Urban Challenge', at the same forum. She has been a member of the Board of Governors, IIM Lucknow, between 2012 and 2018. Sangeeta is also an active member of the FICCI Smart Cities Committee.

Diversity and Inclusion

It is heartening to see that the percentage of organizations with women in senior management roles is rising globally. However, there continues to be room for improvement in the representation of women in leadership positions. Some of the key barriers for women in senior roles tend to be deep-rooted stereotypes, unsupportive business cultures, and societal and/or familial restraints.

Human capital is a competitive advantage for any business. Companies with diverse teams can understand and serve customer markets better, while leveraging varied experiences, perspectives and approaches to solve new-age business problems. I believe organizations must adopt diversity and inclusion as core values, rather than checkbox items. However, diversity does not necessarily imply inclusion. Rather, diversity is all about ensuring a balance of voices, while inclusion is about making sure those voices are heard and acted upon. Fast-growing economies such as India can drive positive change at the workplace, provided businesses are adaptable and open to leveraging our inherent demographic advantage.

At Mahindra, diversity means embracing the uniqueness in every individual. We respect and nurture the ideas, opinions and experiences of everyone. Diversity and Inclusion has become a key employee lever across the Mahindra Group, with initiatives that are spread across sectors and thought leadership is provided by the Sector & Group level Diversity Councils. Our Group Diversity Council is committed to creating an ecosystem that encourages women to reach senior leadership positions within the organization. We launched our Women Leaders Program (WLP) in 2016 that is focused on developing a pipeline of female leaders and change agents. Till date, more than 50 women have been trained under the aegis of this program. Several women leaders from the batch are investing in building lateral skills and pitching for next-level roles; individual coaching sessions have proved to be an important differentiator in this aspect.

A Diversity Roadmap

Specific to India, things are slowly but steadily changing for the better. India's gender diversity ranking has improved over the last few years and the representation of women in top leadership positions has also been growing. However, the ratio of women to men at the workplace is still skewed towards men, as are senior decision-making networks, which provide professional mentoring opportunities. This can partially be attributed to historical structures, with men traditionally driving corporate power networks.

An effective way to deal with closed power systems is to navigate around them and create

one's own. Budding women leaders can build strong professional networks of both men and women, and not be cynical about the scope for progress in the corporate world. Optimism, team-building ability and empathy are critical skills for growth, as are persistence and a willingness to take calculated risks. Also, with more millennials and Gen Z professionals coming into the workforce, organizations are bound to become more inclusive as the younger generation is far more gender-neutral and open-minded.

This is the approach we have adopted at the Mahindra Group. Women feature prominently in the Mahindra growth journey. When we started our gender diversity journey, women constituted 16% of our total workforce. Today, 26 percent of our new hires are women. We have introduced multiple initiatives to ensure equal opportunities for women to progress in their careers, including second career internships & full-time employment programs. Policies have been modified to appreciate and help women employees balance family and work.

The diversity roadmap of Mahindra Lifespace Developers Ltd., the real estate and infrastructure development arm of the Mahindra Group, includes mentoring programs and online networks for women. Mahindra Lifespaces been ranked as the 13th best company for women in India by Working Mother and AVTAR. Mahindra Susten (our solar business) trains women in retail solar panel fixing, keeping in mind the fact that women are more likely to be allowed into rural households. Similarly, women employees on the shop floor in our automotive manufacturing facilities are at par with their male peers when it comes to upskilling dexterity. More than 100 women employees work on the shop floor in our automotive plants.

Outshining as leaders

Women must seek challenges for fast-tracked career progression. Leaders, irrespective of gender, tend to seek out difficult (and often unpredictable) projects to drive positive shifts within organizations. That said, it is critical to assess if a role offers the opportunity to positively impact the larger community, including customers, employees, shareholders and other stakeholders. Roles that are less than defined and unpredictable can sometimes potentially offer higher professional returns. However, a little bit of 'strategic 'asking around' certainly helps. Also, compromising on one's values or vision is not advisable under any circumstances.

Managing underlying prejudices

It is important to avoid using alarmist language when discussing a phenomenon that creates deterrents for women to aim for top corporate jobs. The 'glass cliff' reaffirms that there is nothing to be learned from less-than-successful ventures and women should stay away from challenging roles; or, worse still, that women cannot lead. Instead, all companies can acknowledge/investigate any subconscious bias; and successful ones should

push for more women to take on leadership roles. Positive change should begin with awareness and acknowledgement of (even) subtle gender stereotypes and be followed by quantified equality targets and a supportive work environment.

Do not proceed with the belief that gender determines outcome and do not get bogged down by bias. Both effort and environment are equal determinants for success and there is absolutely no room for self-doubt. It is important that women remain focused and push for entry into top level jobs. However, define success before taking on a role. Leverage your individuality and be clear about the professional strengths and skills that will help you achieve your goals.

Also, being part of a company's long-term vision means that you must invest in internal and external networking skills, and in staying ahead of the curve on knowledge of your industry.

Women for Women

There are several women-led initiatives worldwide across industries to support, mentor, and promote leadership and careers for women. These

SUSTAINABLE AND WIDESPREAD SUCCESS FOR WOMEN LEADERS REQUIRES ACTION, ADVOCACY AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS — FROM POLICYMAKERS TO EDUCATION PROVIDERS, AND PUBLIC & PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYERS TO EACH ONE OF US!

include online and offline networking groups. In India, there exist organizations that educate, train, support and motivate women entrepreneurs from across the country. These organizations are focused on supporting the ventures and ideas of women both from rural and urban India, thus making a deeper impact. They do this through innovative business ideas, startup funding avenues, marketing support and mentor connects.

India can accelerate its growth by encouraging greater economic participation by women (the IMF puts this figure at a 27 percent boost of India's GDP, provided women's labor force participation is raised to that of men). While creating an enabling environment for women in corporate circles is important, changing traditional norms around marriage, work and household duties will also have to be a part of the larger agenda. Families need to see girls as capable professionals of the future and equally able. Sustainable and widespread success for women leaders requires action, advocacy and collaboration between multiple stakeholders - from policymakers to education providers, and public & private sector employers to each one of us! 🌟

PAY IT FORWARD!

Leaders need to use their positions as platforms to drive change and make their work environments inclusive and diverse

By **Grace Kerrison**

Managing Director,
Pymetrics - Asia-Pacific



I have been fortunate enough to have supportive managers early in my career who coached and mentored me well on how to think about future roles. Today, the notion of 'jungle gym' is one I share with those I coach or mentor, using my own career path as an example. I call it the 'jungle gym' because of a number of roles I took upon while establishing my career, where I deliberately took lateral moves over upward to gain experiences in different disciplines. Doing so gave me the opportunity to learn, challenge myself, expand, and acquire new skills — all of which have enabled me to build acumen, choose better career options, and ensure career longevity. This also allowed me to navigate the glass cliffs and the glass ceilings in my career.

Working in the IT&T industry especially a decade ago meant that I was often the only one woman in client presentations or meetings. And when I first switched from marketing to sales, I experienced first-hand having to act in a certain way or be excluded or overlooked, and the disappointment when I found out that my salary was less than my male co-workers who were doing the same job. However, despite this, I was grateful for

having worked for leaders (both female and male) who were also role models, and who became my sponsors and mentors. These leaders used their positions as platforms to drive change and make their work environments inclusive and diverse.

Leaders cast a long shadow and to me, paying it forward in supporting female talent to advance their careers or enabling them to lead has been a long-term personal and professional commitment — it is also deliberate and purposeful on my part and I do this through:

Coaching: I make the time for informal/formal coaching/mentoring female talent that is focused on a goal or a specific situation.

Advocacy: Over the years, I have developed an informal network of talented women leaders and IC's that I connect with. Whenever I can or have the opportunity, I advocate for them may it be career or business opportunities, or a public recognition of what they do or their contributions.

Practice and discipline: Diversity of thought is a lens my team and I consistently pivot on whether we are recruiting or brainstorming while we actively challenge each other on potential bias(es) in our thinking.

With the rate of technology innovation, there has never been a better time to be in the field of HR and Talent Acquisition than now. Processes that have not evolved for decades such as CV screening which have been fraught with bias can now leverage leading edge technologies that make talent assessment (external or internal) fair and bias-free. I am very fortunate and grateful that I work for a company whose mission is to move the needle across all areas of diversity (gender, race, social economic, etc.) and in helping everyone find their place in the right company and the right role — in a fair manner. 

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WOMEN NEED TO OVERCOME SELF-LIMITING BELIEFS

The need for progressive male leaders who recognize the value that a diverse leadership board brings is crucial in today's times

By **Carmen Wee**,
Group CHRO, Surbana Jurong

I have been in the HR domain for more than 25 years and have worked with the government and in a variety of sectors like the FMCG, telecommunications, and technology industries.

My career has been a lot about learning, whether professional or personal. I have had three distinct phases of learning in my career — the first one was about learning the basics of HR, understanding the field, learning how to recruit, setting up L&D systems, and ensuring that I had technically sound knowledge and skills. The second phase was about learning to be a strategic business partner to teams, using HR solutions to achieve business success, and establishing strong people practices. In the third phase, as HR delivery models became more global and transformative in nature, I took on global responsibilities to partner with business leadership to drive business success globally.

Today, I am responsible for the global HR strategy in Surbana Jurong to ensure that we help the organization and employees be successful.

Most of the companies and industries I have worked in have been male-dominated, particularly the leadership. When I started out, I felt that while many women took themselves out of the race because they did not have the time, energy, or commitment for a hectic and fast-paced job, others chose not to work with the expectation of always being 'available'. And I believe this is still prevalent today and particularly more so in the Asian region. I do feel that Asian women have to fight harder for opportunities as they get restricted to regional leadership most of the times. At the same time, women leaders need to take it upon themselves to create avenues that promote other women talent on the global platform.


In organizations, policies to have more women leaders need to be driven from the top, along with the need for progressive male leaders who recognize the value that a diverse leadership brings, is crucial in today's times. Women leaders, on the other hand, need to continually perform and maintain their credibility by being experts in their fields and demonstrating commitment.

I also feel that while men usually grab larger roles with both hands, women don't and usually hesitate. We need to change this. Women should



WOMEN LEADERS, ON THE OTHER HAND, NEED TO CONTINUALLY PERFORM AND MAINTAIN THEIR CREDIBILITY BY BEING EXPERTS IN THEIR FIELDS AND DEMONSTRATING COMMITMENT

consider the approach men use, say 'yes' to the opportunities that come their way, and figure out the details later. I am aware that this is a massive mindset shift and change to take on, and won't be an easy one, but it will ensure that women overcome self-limiting beliefs and doubts so that they can propel themselves and their organizations towards global success.

At every stage of the HR policy intervention, there needs to be an intentional look at objective numbers for gender parity. For instance, ensuring that at least 50% of the applications received from recruiters are that of women. Similarly, a gender pay gap analysis should be undertaken for roles as well. It is important to identify the driving forces behind D&I policies and measure them, track their growth, set goals, and hold people accountable to reach these goals. These numbers need to be tracked much like margins and profits, because they ensure that women leaders and employees – the intangible assets – are given their due. 

BE THERE FOR OTHER WOMEN!

The business world is filled with intelligent, driven, and smart women who persevere and break many a taboo and ceilings along the way, but the irony is that when they succeed, they attribute their success to either luck or their husband, and when they fail, they place the blame squarely on themselves

By **Priya Krishnan**, Founder & CEO, Founding Years Learning Solutions



Less than 10 percent of venture-backed companies have a female founder. The most favored explanation for this chasm is that it is a pipeline problem.

Not many of us grew up dreaming and determined to build billion-dollar businesses or becoming the CEO of a fortune 500 company. Yet the business world is filled with intelligent, driven and smart women who persevere and break many a taboo and ceilings along the way. The irony is that when they succeed, they attribute their success to either luck or their husband. And when they fail, they place the blame squarely on themselves.

I know this from personal experience, from having close women friends who have built successful businesses and from being on scores of panels at conferences on women entrepreneurship. I also know firsthand about a lot of other self-limiting beliefs and habits that hold women back or cause them to quit — be it the imposter syndrome or financial literacy or risk-taking.

One obvious outcome of this cultural and societal upbringing is the enormous gender wealth gap. According to a joint study by Merrill Lynch and Age Wave, a single woman's net worth is three

times smaller compared to the average single man. Pay equity is part of this equation combined with the career break that many women take for birthing and raising children and the fatigue that sets in while consistently trying to conform to the corporate world designed by and for men.

Thanks to democratization of information, 2018 proved to be a year when women's stories of harassment and discrimination found validation not only in India but across the world. And the validation came because of the number of women who stood together under the hashtag of #MeToo exposing the extent and depth of abuse women face at workplace and disproving the claim that it is an isolated problem once and for all. However, while on the one hand, there is a double standard in the industry and workplaces are rife with subtle and direct discrimination, on the other is the woman's conditioning such that they do not feel entitled to succeed, compete, and win.


So what can we do to fix this fabled pipeline problem?

As a Woman be there for other Women who are battling in the trenches.

For the:

- Woman Entrepreneur who comes back angry from an investor meeting because the discussion was laced with gender stereotyping — provide a listening ear and brainstorm ideas on how to counter it in the next meeting.
- Woman Professional who is getting ready to return to work after the maternity break and is ridden with guilt — gently nudge her to take one step at a time and at least present an alternative world view in which balancing home and work gets slightly easier after the couple of years.
- Woman Employee who gets 20 percent less salary because she does not know how to negotiate — provide guidance on how to ask for what she deserves.
- Woman Journalist who is being brutally trolled on Twitter — retweet with the necessary hashtags to show your support when she decides to speak up.
- Woman Scientist who has not been acknowledged for her contributions — educate yourself on the immense contributions by the women in science and speak about them.
- Woman Fresher who gets volunteered for all the 'fun' unpaid projects at work — coach her on the Power of 'No' and how to say it.

And most importantly, make it a priority.

There is tremendous power in networks that become support systems and help women find mentors and role models because the much-needed guidance at the right time from someone who has been there and prevailed can make all the difference not only in the life of that one woman professional but in fixing the Pipeline Problem. 

WORKPLACES ARE RIFE WITH
SUBTLE OR DIRECT DISCRIMINATION
AGAINST WOMEN

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.

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Feedback – the pursuit of holy grail

Employee development literature is driven by the basic and profound assumption that 'everyone can change provided sufficient, timely and effective feedback is provided'; and if we could easily know our own failings on our own devices, the feedback industry would crumble under the weight of its own irrelevance

Feedback in the employee development is a holy grail – there is faith about it with little evidence at best and none at worst.

First a few words about the holy grail itself and later about its pursuit. Employee development literature is driven by the basic and profound assumption that 'everyone can change provided sufficient, timely and effective feedback is provided'. Nothing wrong with the assumption because if indeed human beings possessed the rare capacity to figure out what is missing or deficient in them on their own, the world would be a very different and happy place. It is true indeed that we have our rough edges, blind spots and the whole nine yards about the difference of what 'should' be and what 'is'. Like the Newtonian recourse to an external source of force to put a body at rest into motion, human beings need to

be given feedback to put into motion the journey of improvement. Left to his or her own, that capacity is either non-existent or poorly evolved – or so is the belief.

The cottage industry of feedback rests on that foundation. Another way of saying it is that if we could easily know our own failings on our own devices, the feedback industry would crumble under the weight of its own irrelevance. Supervisors would be robbed of their biggest role.

Another underlying assumption is that human beings in general indeed want to become better – that a desire of self-improvement is a core human motivation over and above the instinct for survival, need for empathy et al. The assumption also is that they have a desire to confront their failings, imperfections and deficiencies, howsoever painful that confrontation is – and the entire process of feedback is nothing, but a help rendered to them to undergo the process of that confrontation.

Inherent again in this narrative is the assumption that human beings have the fundamental ability/courage to squarely face their demons, have the large heartedness to accept the image in the mirror once shown (by the process of feedback) and have the resilience required to bounce back from the hit on their self-image when that feedback dents that self-image. The process of feedback makes all these giant assumptions and one more.

The last and in some ways a giant assumption it makes is that even if the process of feedback dents the self-image and confidence of the person who is given the feedback, and sometimes to disas-

Human beings don't basically like to be corrected; they are what they are and any serious questioning about them and their methods are not taken kindly



trous and permanent damages, it is still worth it, because it is driven the cause of the larger good. Let the road to hell be paved with good intentions! Gosh – too many assumptions!

So here is an additional narrative for the sake of provocation. Human beings don't basically like to be corrected. Human beings are what they are and any serious questioning about them and their methods are not taken kindly. Beneath all the right noises they make about how open they are to feedback and how serious they are about their personal change, they resist change until they recognize their survival is at stake. Finally, if there is a choice between accepting a self-image/confidence denting feedback versus continuing with the current way of working/living that is fetching them their daily wage, my wager is that they will choose the latter, impulsively. They may make the right noises about it – but they find it extremely difficult to accept and change their methods.

Let me clarify – we do want to become better and improve. It's just that the process of that change is inherently difficult. Change requires self-confidence – and if the feedback itself hits that confidence then the change that the feedback is attempting to elicit, instead of doing good ends up doing much harm. You end up with an employee more shattered than raring to go.

This narrative, if it is true – brings me to the second aspect of the holy grail. The systemic pursuit of providing feedback as an institutional framework. The foremost recognition about feedback must be that it is a very painful process for most. Hence, it must be delivered delicately. Secondly, since it has the potential to do damage, it must be delivered by steady hands – surgeons' scalpel in untrained hands will do a butcher's job. Thirdly, once a serious feedback is given – back off. Give it time, allow the medicine to work, provide space for it to be assimilated and internalized.

Finally, two words eventually determine whether feedback will indeed stand a good chance to work for improvement or end up seriously harming the self-esteem and confidence of the employee – Trust and Security. It is intuitively known that we are willing to consider feedback from people whom we trust and respect. Same or similar feedback from people we do not like, respect, trust or even love is resisted and rubbished. Hence, to the notorious tribe of obsessive-compulsive-feedback givers, a word of advice – first built trust and respect before you claim the entitlement of giving feedback. Otherwise your words are falling on deaf ears if you are lucky or causing serious damage if you are unlucky. Secondly, once a serious and deeply transformative feedback is given – the employee is unsettled and even scared. A thousand thoughts are running in the employee's mind about the ramifications of the feedback, generating anxiety, fear and insecurity. That is the time to put an arm around him/her and provide a safe period so that the correction is actioned upon. A fearful



Change requires self-confidence – and if the feedback itself hits that confidence, then the change that the feedback is attempting to elicit ends up doing much harm instead of doing good

employee is very unlikely be motivated to change — chances are that performance will only suffer.

A final word on the holy grail and its pursuit – I don't know how effective all the deluge of feedback is — whether it indeed is unleashing the improvement that it is purported to unleash. However, I would like to believe that it is indeed making the world a better place. Like God, if He does not exist – we would have to invent him. So it is for feedback. 🙏

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

A focus on purpose

In an exclusive interview with People Matters, **Willy Saelan**, Vice President - Human Resources, PT Unilever Indonesia, shares how Unilever is leveraging technology to support diversity and inclusion, the importance of self-learning, and his thoughts on the future of work

By : Yasmin Taj

Willy Saelan is the Vice President - Human Resources, PT Unilever Indonesia. In a career spanning over two decades, he has worked across multiple HR functions – from managing employee relations in a factory to a role in leadership development and organizational effectiveness. Willy joined Unilever Indonesia in 1995 and was appointed as a Director by the Extraordinary General Meeting of Shareholders in 2015, and has served as Director, Human Resources since that date. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Social and Political Sciences from Padjadjaran University and a Master of Arts in Human Resources Management, University of Leeds, UK.

Q How do you think organizational learning has changed in the past decade?

A There has been a significant change. In the past, learning was heavily focused on classroom based learning and there was little emphasis on self-learning. But employees today need to know their own learning needs. They need to work with the line manager; they can't just expect to be sent to courses by the organization. They need to ask themselves 'Where do I see myself in the next 5 years? What are the gaps that need to be bridged? And what development do I need?'

We really encourage the use of online learning platforms because everyone has a smartphone. With a good internet allowance, they can learn directly from YouTube, through which many courses are linked. Classroom is still relevant for leadership training and for specific skills which are difficult to master online. Also, a majority of learning is done on the job. So we need to have a clear understanding with the line manager as to the specific skills that he or she will develop on the job itself and the skills to develop outside of the core job.

Q What is the biggest challenge according to you in talent management?

A In the Indonesian context, we are still growing in terms of investments. A lot of companies are still starting up and therefore, a high quality of talent is always being sought after. We're seeing a bigger challenge in attrition at the Assistant Manager and above levels. About a decade ago, attrition rates were

We want our employees to have a purpose and we want to help them to live and achieve it



close to 2 percent. Nowadays, double digital attrition is common. The key priority is of building the right pipeline and identifying the right person for the role, especially in the context when our employees are getting offers from other organizations. Alternately, lateral entry from other industries is a challenge because the skillsets are different. So the core challenge pertains to engaging, retaining, and motivating employees.

Q How do you go about solving this challenge of engaging, retaining and motivating employees?

A Money is not going to be the main method of motivating people to stay back. Theoretically too, it is not proven that money will retain people. Money, benefits, and salary must be hygiene factors, and we need to be super-competitive in those areas. But we know we can't be the highest paymasters. And that's not our employee value proposition either. The way we position ourselves as premium in the market is to focus on purpose. This means thinking about how can that the vision be translated into actions and how can we encourage employees to have their own purpose. We want our employees to have a purpose and we want to help them to live and achieve it.

There are two times in our lives when there's a major milestone. The first is when we are born and the second is when we know why we were born. And employees are engaged when they work on something that's greater and closer to the heart, and at a company, that resonates with their own personal purpose.

Q What are the values that you strive to inculcate in your employees?

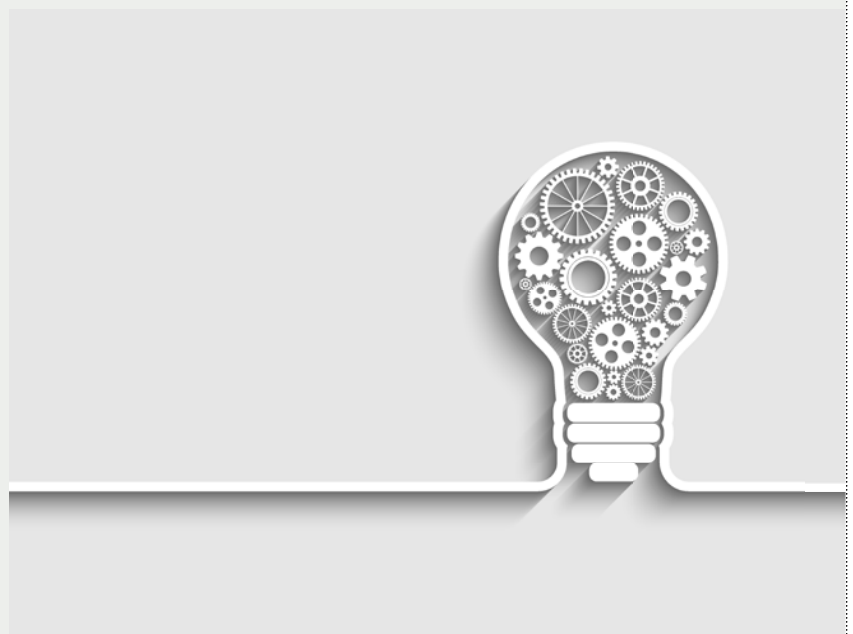
A Integrity, accountability, team work, responsibility to the environment, and continuous experimentation – which instills the pioneer in all of us. What we produce is not rocket science. We can be easily replaced by other companies, therefore, if we are not ahead in terms of our innovation, then we will be left behind.

Q Unilever has been a top employer brand in FMCG for many years. How do you drive the employer branding efforts?

A There's a detailed process year-on-year, where we assess our learnings from the previous year. We make sure we survey the right target population, and we really make use of the data with the aim of understanding what can we do differently in terms of our offerings that other companies don't have? At a time when media is expensive, we need to make sure our budgets are optimized, and we leverage digital platforms and crowd source ideas. We really look at what ticks candidates, we plan and work towards it.

Q Diversity and Inclusion has become a key focus area for companies. How is Unilever Indonesia working towards this goal?

A We celebrate diversity. About 10 years ago, we started to specifically target gender diversity. The company is at 50 percent gender balance in South



We can be easily replaced by other companies, therefore, if we are not ahead in terms of our innovation, then we will be left behind

East Asia among assistant managers and above, not including factory workers. In Indonesia, it's still at 40 percent. So there's still a long way to go. Ensuring that we retain talent and ensuring that we replace vacant positions with more women will be important. Within Unilever, the HR function leverages analytics to support diversity. When it comes to appraisals, we capture data on whether we differentiate women when it comes to their appraisal. Are there any differences in ratings? How do the numbers compare with global ratings by grade and gender? Do men benefit more than women? Facts are important to assess unconscious biases. We teach managers about the danger of unconscious bias and we check the process and look at the implementation.

Q What are your thoughts on the future of work?

A I foresee that people will work in smaller teams, but they would need to be flexible and empowered. People will work based on projects or initiatives and will expand their networks within the company and beyond. This network of people will have similar interests and will gain benefit through this collaboration. As a result, people will double and triple their capacity without adding permanent resources as crowdsourcing underpins their activities. They would need to be more technical and digitally savvy in order to accomplish their tasks. **cm**



Help! The CHRO I Picked is a Lemon

How CEOs Can Choose Better HR Heads

Not all CHRO selections handled solely by CEOs go wrong but it is matter of chance when they do turn out right. This open letter is to explain how CEOs add themselves the list of lemon-picking leaders and what they and their fellow CEOs might do differently when the next occasion arises

Dear CEO,

I sympathize with your sour face but life didn't give you this lemon. You picked it yourself with open eyes and eager hands.

Naturally you were keen to fill the gap created by your suddenly departing CHRO and didn't have any internal candidate who fit the bill. It can happen to the best of us – especially those of us who are perfunctory about succession planning for critical positions. But then you chose to make the selection yourself, aided solely by your executive search partner, and without the benefit of the advice contained in this column. What could possibly go wrong? Nothing more than if you brought a knife to a gunfight. Of course, not all CHRO selections handled solely by CEOs go wrong but it's matter of chance when they do turn out right. Let me use this open letter to explain how you added yourself to the list of lemon-picking leaders and what you and your fellow CEOs might do differently when the next occasion arises.

DIY Can Be Dangerous

When you started drawing up the requirements for your replacement CHRO, you acted like a spoiled kid in a candy-store and asked for every competency under the sun (and a few from the dark side as well). The resulting spec list was so tall that

the friendly neighborhood head hunter just used it to rest (this is a column you can read to your family) his backside and produced the people he had planned on short-listing anyway.

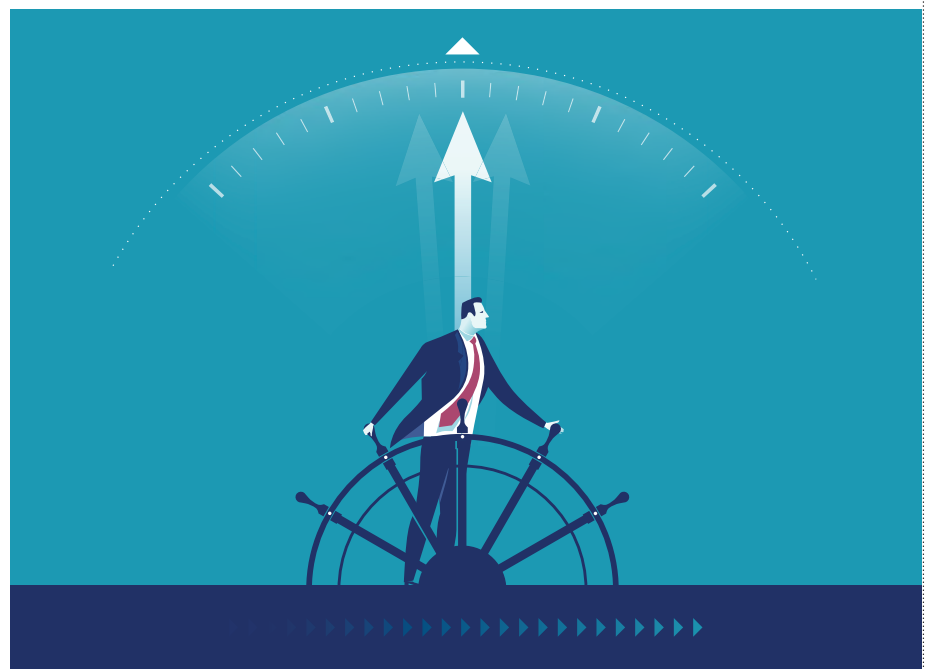
Speaking of head-hunters, you were probably unaware of the nexus your search partner had with some of the CHRO profiles s/he presented to you. As a result, you didn't realize that several HR heads who were conspicuous by their mediocrity or even made a regular dog's dinner of their jobs, ranked high on the shortlist the executive search firm sent to you.

Instead of focusing on how the candidates' competencies met your requirements, the search partner dazzled you with the impeccable ii-vy school background (in India the most elite schools sport two Ts

though some are 'X' rated too!), the professional awards and glowing media accolades (especially while changing jobs) that the recommended candidates possessed. Of course, there are awards and media adulation that are rightly deserved but you didn't check their provenance for your candidates and were impressed enough by some of the 'paid' (how these payments work – without any cost to the awardee – must remain for a future column to expose) awards that are increasingly available these days, to call a couple of the most 'decorated' candidates for interviews with you.

Effectively, this meant that your interviewing skill was among the last barriers that stood in the way of your making the wrong choice. There is no doubt that you are sharp and capable of sizing up people in

No HR leader on earth has all the competencies that you can wish for



brief interactions – you wouldn't have been a CEO otherwise – but you did not (nor are you expected to) have the ability to judge advanced functional competencies in HR. Moreover, you shortchanged your ability to assess by occupying most of the interview time (after a little skillful prompting) with what you had achieved, what further ambitions you had for the company and what specifically a CHRO could do to contribute to them. Understandably so, since you were faced with a master of interviews, who had honed to perfection the fine art of finding out what seniors expected and then making it appear his sole reason for existence was to make just that hope into a reality. To add to it, the candidate you plumped for was a certified Four Cheek Kisser (4CK). The label comes from an anecdote about Churchill, recently repeated by James Barr: "When, at the armistice in 1918, Churchill's private secretary declared he was so grateful for the American contribution to the victory that he wanted to kiss Uncle Sam 'on both cheeks', Churchill had retorted, 'But not on all four'."¹ It was all done more subtly than I have described it, of course, and your gulling was complete.

One more check could have prevented woolen curtains from covering your vision: a thorough and independent reference and track record check. By this time, however, you were already imagining walking down the mine-is-better-than-yours aisle, hand-in-hand with your media-feted, trophy CHRO. And so you fatally compromised the reference check by leaving it to the same search firm that brought you the candidate. After that it was inevitable that you would acquire a citrus fruit rather than a CHRO.

The rest of this communication will make suggestions about what you could have done differently.

Pick Your Serving With Care

Some people, when faced with a large choice of dishes at a buffet, insist on lading as many of them as they can in their plates and end up with waste or severe indigestion. Savvier diners pick the dishes they expect to like and, if necessary, go for seconds of the same. No HR leader on earth has all the competencies that you can wish for at the highest level of proficiency in each. Here's how you could have picked only the ones you absolutely needed.

To start with you could have looked up a specialized HR competency directory such as the one developed by the National HRD Network. A simplified version of it is available in the chapter I contributed to 'HRD, OD and Institution Building'.² To save time, you could have used someone familiar with the framework (NHRDN has several trained facilitators) to help you parsimoniously



There is a fine line between deception and attempting to redress the information asymmetry that exists between a candidate and an interviewer

pick the appropriate proficiency levels of each competency for your present and likely future CHRO requirement.

You should also have delineated the prospective size of your canvas to avoid acquiring a Michelangelo to paint a miniature or a figurine sculptor to carve out Rushmore. The size and complexity of a CHRO's job doesn't depend only on the number and diversity of employees s/he oversees. It is also a function of the geographies (ranging from single-location to global), industrial variety (from just one type of product to multi-sector presence) and organizational complexity (starting with single-unit functional structures to complex group-level matrices) the CHRO has to cope with. It was rash of you to have expected your choice to have made single or double leaps in all four of these dimensions. Incidentally, it would have been as bad, if not worse, had you chosen someone who needed to scale down considerably from what she or he was doing earlier.³

These would have been sufficient for your search partner to swing into focused action. By limiting the must-have competencies on your list and doing away with demands for elite colleges attended and qualifications acquired decades earlier, you would have vastly expanded the field of talent for initial shortlisting. Before you

met shortlisted candidates, however, you should have carried out one more analysis just for your use. One that I find very useful, in selecting both CEOs and CHROs, is to figure out whether their inclinations, capabilities, and experiences match the predominant demands the organization has for the foreseeable future. Over the decades that I have been involved in senior-level recruitment, I have built a schema for making such a congruency match. A few years back I found that the STARS model⁴ developed by Michael Watkins not only closely approximated what I had evolved but had a nifty acronym going for it. As Watkins explains: "STARS is an acronym for five common business situations leaders may find themselves moving into: Start-up, Turnaround, Accelerated growth, Realignment, and Sustaining success. The STARS model outlines the characteristics and challenges of, respectively, launching a venture; getting one back on track; dealing with rapid expansion; re-energizing a once-leading business that is now facing serious problems; and inheriting an organization that is performing well and then taking it to the next level."⁴ It is the rare CHRO (or CEO, for that matter) who has the proven experience to perform optimally in more than two or, at best, three of these stages of organizational evolution. Incidentally,

this is also the reason an HR Head who was perfect for one phase of an organization's existence can be a misfit at another. In any case, it is important to figure where your organization is placed in this framework and how each candidate's competency-set measures up to it. The costs of a mismatch between the type needed and the type positioned can be severe, as you found out to your cost when you demanded rapid turnaround results from the HR head you recruited from a prestigious MNC who had, by and large, only been used to sailing serenely in a sea of sustained success.

Interview the Candidate - Not Yourself

Great judge of people that you (think you) are, this was one occasion where you needed a supplementary check. You should have had at least one more interview independently conducted by an HR expert who was not beholden enough to you simply to ditto your approbation, especially after s/he too received the aforementioned 4CK treatment from the candidate. Here is where you could have pressed into service

the experienced HR practitioner who you were urged to induct as an Independent Director on your Board more than a year ago in this very column.⁵ Since you hadn't taken that advice, it would have been worth your while to pay top dollar to a seasoned practitioner (not linked to any search firm) to help with the final interview. This would have provided you with an unbiased view of how well the candidate measured up against the functional competencies that had been identified as being critical for your CHRO role. Equally importantly, you could have received feedback on the highest level of intentionality at which the candidate was capable of functioning creatively. To get an idea of how HR leaders can be measured on the intentionality dimension, look under the sub-head 'The Intentionality of Great HR Leaders' in the earlier column referenced here.⁶

Of course, you would still have needed to hold an interview with the candidate yourself. What it shouldn't have degenerated into (which the one you conducted unfortunately did) was a lecture from you about the history of your company, your

unique contribution to its success, your screwy opinions on the secret to managing people and an induction briefing on what you wanted the CHRO to do right away. My own thumb-rule is, unless candidate talk-time is an hour plus of relevant, focused, responses, you don't have sufficient material for evaluation.

So what should the focus of your interview have been on? Assuming the earlier stages of the shortlisting process or the preliminary parts of your own interview had established fit relative to the competencies and STARS profile mentioned in the previous section, the core of your interview should have proceeded to apply the same Competency Based Interview techniques for judging the candidate's:

- approach to resolving value conflicts
- compatibility with your organization's culture
- personal chemistry with you

Throughout this process, it would have been important for you not to leave a trail of clues or provide verbal and non-verbal cues in real-time about where you wanted the answers to go. You might even have

The size and complexity of a CHRO's job doesn't depend only on the number and diversity of employees s/he oversees; it is also a function of the geographies (ranging from single-location to global), industrial variety (from just one type of product to multi-sector presence) and organizational complexity (starting with single-unit functional structures to complex group-level matrices) the CHRO has to cope with



considered laying a dissimulative smoke-screen by appearing to favor one end of where a virtue shades into excess' whereas actually value, culture and chemistry congruence demanded the other side. For instance, you could have hinted at admiring an almost recklessly brave bent for action when you actually required a more prudently courageous profile. There is a fine line between deception and attempting to redress the information asymmetry that exists between a candidate and an interviewer. You would have needed to tread it with care.

Post-production is just as important

When your CHRO appointment made it to the press (which the appointee made sure it did) several senior HR colleagues on restricted-membership WhatsApp groups expressed amazement, amusement and even some admiration at the ease with which such mediocre talent had conned



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another corporate chieftain. After all, the individual's track record of non-performance (and even damage) was well known both in professional circles and in the companies he had abandoned.

With so much information virtually in the public domain, even if you got taken in by the interview-con you stepped into, matters need not have ended disastrously if a half-good reference checking process had been in place. Unfortunately, most senior-level reference checks are worse than useless because they lull recruiters into a false sense of confidence in the choices they have made. In your case, simply taking the checking activity away from the search firm (which, obviously, had a vested interest in providing a clean chit) would not have been sufficient to provide you with valid findings. Changes would have been necessary in what was asked and who was asked – apart from who did the asking – if the findings of the check were to pack a punch.

Reference checks that simply follow a standard form are incapable of eliciting relevant information even if the person being asked were willing to give it. For this position, you needed to use the responses to the Competency Based Interview (both those relating to achievements and the value-culture-chemistry checks) to craft a custom-made check-list. Additionally, for all CHROs, estimating the AQ (Asterisk7 Quotient) is even more important than judging their IQ and EQ. Had your reference check done so, the AQ score of the candidate you ended up recruiting, specifically on the Cuckoo-of-Passage Asterisk (CoP*) dimension⁸, would have been an obvious red light to proceeding further.

To get somewhere close to honest responses, you should have gone beyond the references provided by the candidate but not just limited your checks to previous supervisors. In fact, to be truly effective, the respondents to reference checks for critical positions, like the CHRO's, should be planned like a 360° feedback exercise. As such, you should have approached a sampling of seniors, peers, team members, some non-HR employees and, if possible, a union leader. Admittedly, for some of these respondents, it may have been inadvisable to share the purpose of the questioning. If an alternate or vague reason was to have been used, simply using internal company resources (to substitute the search firm) for the reference checks would not have worked. Once again, the Independent HR Director on your Board could have provided a convenient foil by virtue of her or his involvement on various industry bodies and juries where invitations to join or receive awards are



Reference checks that simply follow a standard form are incapable of eliciting relevant information even if the person being asked were willing to give it

often preceded by checking out the candidate's perceived image and reputation. Once again, since you had yet to action that suggestion, you would have needed to engage such an HR *éminence grise* externally. Without the intermediation of such a person, the likelihood of your being able to tap into the real opinions of professional peers about your candidate became negligible.

It Goes Better With Gin

At this stage, paradoxically, your best hope may be that the misfit is a genuinely transient CoP* who chooses to fly off before causing too much damage to your organization and to your personal reputation. After all, bad-mouthing his temporary nest and boss (who could do no wrong till the moment the CoP*'s departure was imminent) is a striking characteristic of this sub-species of cuckoo. If you trigger the termination clause, you stand to pay out the eye-watering sums you blithely included in the employment contract when you thought it was essential for attracting the best thing that happened to HR since sliced bread.

Don't feel too bitter, though. You are not the only CEO with lemon-puckered lips. At a recent CEO gathering I was intrigued to see the queue for gin outstrip all the others by far. Turned out they were all CEOs disappointed with their recent HR Head picks. Why gin? It went best with the lemon they had picked and the bitters that followed in its aftermath. Gin – of a different variety – brings me to the invocation you will need to make (with apologies to Edward FitzGerald⁹) to the spirit of luck, before you embark on your next CHRO selection:

*Oh, Thou, who didst with lemons & with gin
Jinx the HR Head selection I was in,
At least save me the next time round
From another choice fit only for the bin!*

With every good wish and best regards,
Yours sincerely,

Visty Banaji 🍷

PS: You can prevent such problems from souring the sweet tenor of your existence in future by developing a well-primed pipeline for growing and supplying CXO talent internally. Watch this space for how you can build one.

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9. From Edward FitzGerald's masterly translation (1859) of the *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*. Verse LXXX, which I have butchered, actually reads:

*Oh, Thou, who didst with pitfall and with gin
Beset the Road I was to wander in,
Thou wilt not with Predestined Evil round
Enmesh, and then impute my Fall to Sin!*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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THE JOURNEY AHEAD

THE STATE OF HR TECH STARTUPS IN 2019

What are the challenges being faced by startups in the HR tech space in India when it comes to adoption and expectations? What is the state of HR Tech going to be this year? Read on to find out.

By **Shweta Modgil**

Startups in the HR tech space in the year 2018 shared a unanimous sentiment — it was a good year. From the degree of HR tech adoption to the amount of funds that were allocated for HR tech, the startup space saw and is increasingly experiencing accelerated acceptance in the business ecosystem. Wherein the first quarter of 2018, Degreed, a global platform for discovery, learning & certification of skills, made news by raising \$42 mn in a funding round; back home, in the second quarter, Indian corporate social responsibility and sustainability management technology platform, Goodera raised around \$12 mn. Following suit was the employee-focused HR tech app Hush that raised multiple funding rounds in the year, termed as major thumbs-up for employee engagement apps. The space also saw significant consolidations taking place. Globally, US-based job review and job hunting website Glassdoor was acquired by a Japanese human-resources and consumer-information provider, Recruit Holdings Co. Similarly, global consulting firm Mercer acquired India based HR tech startup Mettl.

A good year for Indian HR Tech - More awareness, more funds

Over the year, we have talked to a number of startups in the HR Tech space such as game-based learning platform Quodeck, employee engagement startup Hush, sustainable credit provider SalaryFits, engagement startup ZoomLearn, HRMS provider Zimyo, recruitment startups Hyreo, MeraHunar, and HireXP, talent discovery platform Vyre, on-demand video platform Monjin, Zeta which digitizes employee benefits, HR talent marketplace Noble House, among others — A majority of the startups agree that globally as well as in India, there has been a huge spike in interest and fund-flow into the HR tech space. Most of them agree that there has been a marked increase in technology-enabled employee engagement tools amongst the HR community and companies.

In addition, major acquisitions in India and globally point towards interest as well as consolidation in the space. For instance, from Recruit's \$1.2 bn acquisition of Glassdoor to Mercer's \$40.5 mn acquisition of Mettl in the Indian subcontinent, HR tech is now drawing the long due attention it deserved. Incidentally, Mettl's acquisition is not only one of the biggest HR tech acquisitions from the country but also one of the biggest SaaS acquisitions too, that has drawn international investors' attention to Indian SaaS startups.

Aye for adoption, aye for technology

Early-stage startups too have been quite successful in making inroads to mainstream HR with many

of them raking in early customers and investments. From an adoption perspective, a large number of high-growth organizations are exhibiting a larger appetite to try out newer HR tech solutions to support rapid business growth and efficiencies. Moreover, HR tech is gaining importance for domains like recruitment, employee management services, screening and assessing candidates, shortlist resumes, online assessments, and video interviews. Similarly, there has been a significant uptick in interest shown by large organizations and SMEs including startups for simple, attractively priced and quick to deploy Learning Management Systems. Organizations are also relying on HR tech to enhance engagement and productivity

Companies in India, view HR tech as a service rather than a product, which leads to delays in deployment due to discussions on feature additions and customizations.

ity in the workplace as a retention tool. Similarly, adoption of video in hiring, learning and engagement has significantly increased and will increase significantly in the next couple of years. This leveraging of technology is only going to ramp up as the volume and quality of data increases and AI improves.

Challenges ahead: A dearth of talent, funds and market access

Notwithstanding how highly hopeful and happening the year 2018 was for HR tech startups, there are still many significant barriers they have to cross before they can scale greater heights of success. For instance, hiring talent itself in the space is a problem, especially at senior levels. There seems to be a scarcity of talent in the market, across all functions, technology, sales, operations etc. In addition, price realization continues to be a big challenge for most HR tech startups.

Another major challenge with HR tech companies is that the user interface has mostly not been built from the standpoint of easy adoption, which is what makes ready adoption difficult. Notwithstanding the uptick in adoption of HR tech, creat-



2019 will see some consolidations in the HR tech market – either tools will get consolidated or there would be models of collaboration that will emerge between different tools, leading to more value creation

ing that HR tech mindset among companies where the goal is beyond managing operations all the way to empowering and enabling people to be their best is still a challenge in India.

Unavailability of a ready-market they can sell their business to is another challenge. For instance, for SaaS based HR tech startups, it is the lack of cloud adoption in the Indian subcontinent; for niche HR tech startups like compensation and benefits, it is the lack of domain knowledge. While the market is there, startups in the space find it difficult to get across to potential customers as they are not great at selling the product or even marketing or engaging customers. What further complicates this is the fact that HR departments in companies face hurdles in getting business buy-in for tech products. A significant percentage of product/service acquisitions are led by the business teams rather than the HR team. Moreover, companies in India, view HR tech as a service rather than a product, which leads to delays in deployment due to discussions on feature additions and customizations.

And like other industries, there are big global incumbents in this space which makes it difficult for startups to compete.

So most startups work on niche areas that can make them an acquisition target for the behemoths. Interestingly, though the year 2018 saw a lot of funds pour in, yet the number of VCs interested in investing in HR tech startups are still far and few. Hopefully, the startups believe that in the next 1-2 years, HR tech will hit the tipping point where investor users and businesses will invest significantly in HR tech.

There is a definite need to have more cost-effective platforms where startups can come together, meet, learn and share experiences, and build an ecosystem that supports startups at the fledgling stage.

The road ahead for HR tech startups in 2019

One thing for sure is that continuing from the momentum of 2018, in 2019 too, HR tech is predicted to move up the value chain and help improve productivity, team and work management, and engagement. There will be an increase in the use of AI and technology enabled methods of screening, assessing, and hiring talent and a greater emphasis will be on developing personalized career paths for employees. Tech will also come back handy to reduce attrition while improving employee wellness and

output as in 2019, more employers everywhere will be focusing on employee engagement and productivity. Investors too feel the same positive sentiment when it comes to the HR tech space in 2019. Rajul Garg, Founder, and Managing Partner Leo Capital shared that: *“With the advent of Cloud, three things are happening and these will accelerate in 2019. Firstly companies are able to offer solutions for a low incremental cost and easy to adopt - this expands target market. Secondly, the productivity needs for workforce keep going up, thereby increasing the need for monitoring and investment. And finally, Indian HR Tech companies are looking more broadly at Asia.”*

Another important shift will be that HR tech itself will move from employer-first to employee-first. Right now all HR Tech is built employer first. However eventually, the trend will move to employee-first in order to keep the new breed of millennial employees engaged.

The year 2019 will see more growth organizations opening up to experimenting and experiencing new HR tech products to enable quick and efficient growth. AI & Analytics enriched products with Blockchain in assessments, skill certification, and educational qualifications will start appearing which will prove to be useful in verification and validation of candidate details. Also, predictive analytics with respect to culture, engagement, skills will see significant uptake. Adoption of cloud/SaaS not only by corporates but SMEs is also expected to grow.

HR tech will need to continuously create value

While it is a given that most of the transactional interactions involving HR will gradually move to technology, HR tech companies will continuously need to work on creating value for the user through their platforms. In this direction, 2019 will see some consolidations in the HR tech market — either tools will get consolidated or there would be models of collaboration that will emerge between different tools, leading to more value creation. In addition, there will also be a move from generalization to specialization i.e. to more specialized HR tech companies focusing on fulfilling one specific function. While the real growth spurt in HR tech is still a few years away given that smaller companies in non-tech industries are still warming up to it, 2019 is expected to take the HR tech ecosystem a notch higher. Technology will definitely push up adoption and increased interest from both buyers and investors up the ante for HR tech startups; however we will have to wait to see if the dreams and hopes of HR tech startups will materialize this year. 🍌



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Keeping the prospect hires engaged throughout the hiring cycle is very tough !

— Almost every Recruitment Manager

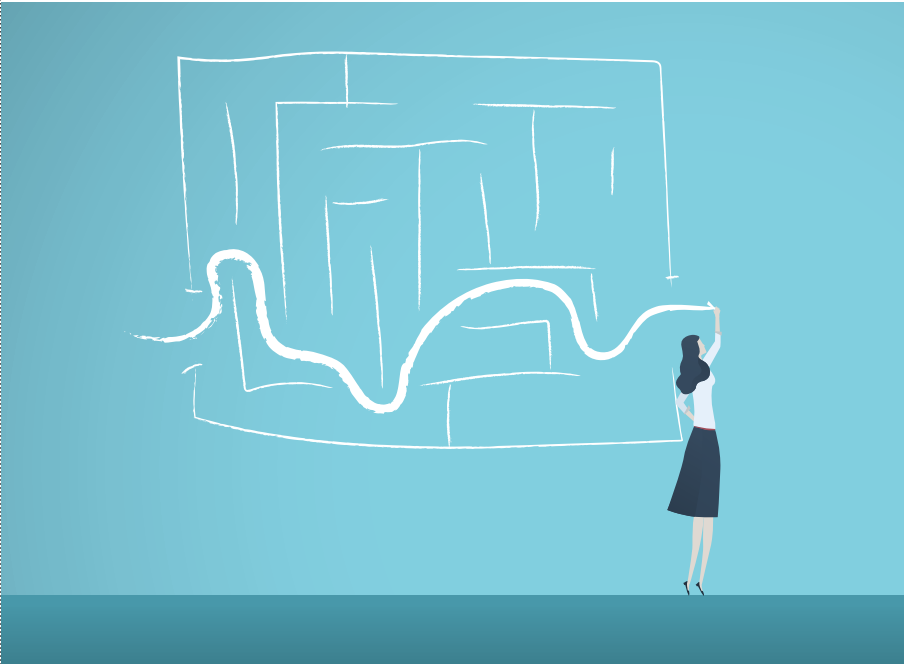
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Going Beyond Gender

Many organizations are setting workforce gender balance targets, quotas on corporate boards or expanding family-focused policies. But, is diversity and inclusion more than just setting quotas and targets?

DIVERSITY



While men are keen to debate and score points off each other and where possible, demolish the points made by the opposing side, women are more interested in finding solutions and in accommodating the viewpoints of others

I was sitting at a dinner table with the CEO of one of the largest German firms with his wife and mine, and I thought this could make for an interesting evening. However, just at the serving of the dessert, before my dinner speech, the CEO's wife asked: "And Mrs. Trompenaars what are you doing during a normal day. Her response was so fast that I knew trouble would be the result: "Oh after our third daughter, I decided to stop with my work at Armani as an Italian interpreter and focused on filling the gaps that my husband created with his continuous travel. So now, I educate myself in Spanish and Hebrew, tennis, the making of fashion hats and playing bridge. So much more fun than these boring jobs in business." It was so silent afterwards that I decided to start my dinner speech a little earlier. Never heard back from this client.

This incident made me aware of the fact that if you are in the luxurious situation of having more choices than looking for a

paying job in business, you might end up somewhere else. Dutch women have been privileged in many ways. They have had more choices than women in many other countries. A recent OECD publication stated that female employment in the Netherlands has doubled from 35 percent in the early 1980s to 70 percent in 2016. However, much of this increase has been in part-time employment, as almost 60 percent of the employed women in the Netherlands are in paid employment for fewer than 30 hours per week. Working part-time can add to job satisfaction of workers, freeing up time for childcare or leisure activities, but it also means that women's education and skills are not leveraged to their full potential in the Dutch labor market. Furthermore, the publication assumes that most educational processes we go through are there for a labor market, not others. I want to challenge this assumption for the sake of opening a new discussion about the lack of females in the top of most businesses. I

would argue that in healthy societies, we need to create choices for men and women to work in such a way that gives them the meaningful activities. For some, it is money, for others, it is power and again for another group, it is about learning or social relationships or contributions to society. And these meanings are not only found in business but far often beyond.

But from the perspective of business, I fully understand the drive for a more equal distribution between the genders. All research done in that direction points in the same direction. There is a high correlation between the percentage females in the top and the financial success of an organization. In their working paper "Is Gender Diversity Profitable? Evidence from a Global Survey," Marcus Noland, Tyler Moran and Barbara Kotschwar argue, much in line with the results of the McKinsey Global Institute (2015) that a scenario in which women achieved complete gender parity with men could increase global

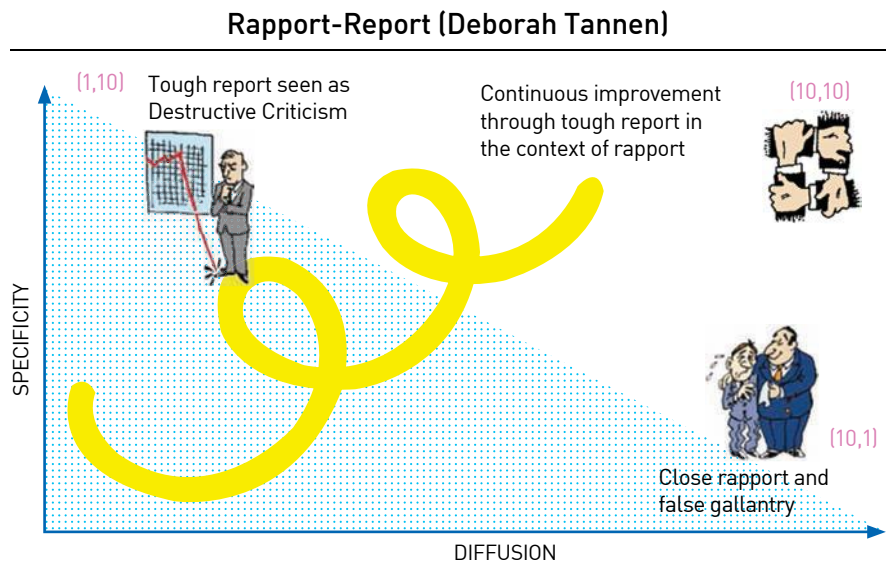
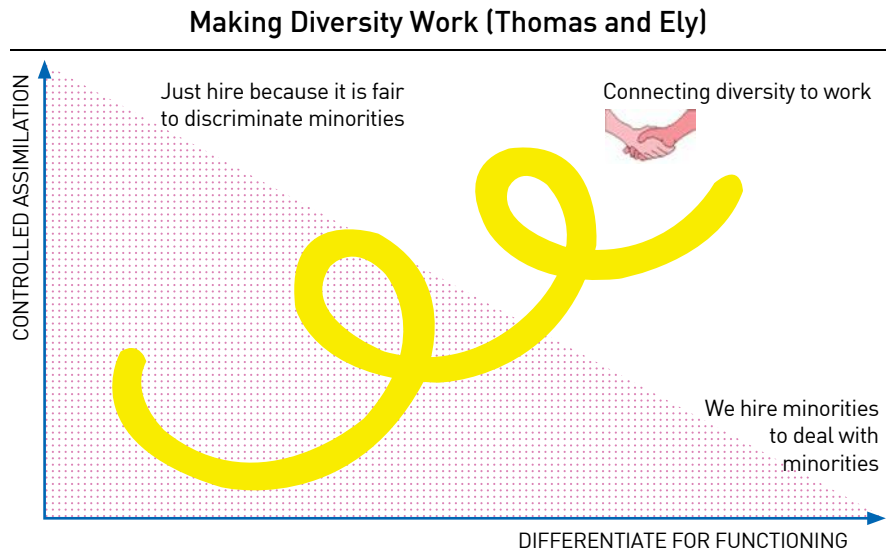
output by more than one-quarter relative to a business-as-usual scenario. This correlation could reflect either the payoff to nondiscrimination or the fact that women increase a firm's skill diversity.¹ A number of countries, including France, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Spain, have gone so far as to mandate female representation on corporate boards, and other countries are considering following suit. Several Asian countries are adopting similar policy responses, setting workforce gender balance targets, quotas on corporate boards and political leadership roles, or expanding family-focused policies. Unfortunately, it doesn't seem to work if you stop after quotas and targets. In fact, it might lead to the opposite. The more the organization achieves parity at the top, the lower are the results. Obviously, because you should never hire people on a non-functional characteristic only, like gender, ethnic background or sexual orientation. But there is a basic dilemma at stake here. If we don't hire on the basis of quotas, how do we get them in alternatively?

Three stages

Thomas and Ely² suggested that if you stop after sheer quotas, you set the minority group up for failure. But it is obvious that if you don't have quotas, status quo is prolonged forever. Once you get the new "identity groups" in, successful organizations need to make sure that the individuals are hired for jobs in which they can excel. So you put Japanese on jobs that help stimulate exports to Japan, young people in testing your newly launched digital products, and females in jobs where relationships are crucial for business. In short, the second step is making those you hired successful. But another problem emerges. The authors observed that the mobility of the successful individuals is decreasing because people cannot be transferred to another job that easily. In the long run, this creates a big problem. So what's next? In several different types of US companies, the researchers looked into what makes sustainable success when dealing with a diverse workforce. In fact, it is the combination of linking the need for a diverse workforce with a key business challenge like innovation or internationalization with the quality of leaders to execute this properly.

Rapport vs. Report: Equal Opportunity versus Positive Discrimination

Deborah Tannen, the American anthropologist has made much play with the fact that men seek to report specific facts, while women seek to diffuse relationships of rapport with others. This is as simple as driving down the road and the woman



passenger asking her partner, "Do you want to stop for a cup of coffee?" The man answers "no" and drives past the coffee shop. She is annoyed. She would not have asked him if she did not want to stop. Her question was an invitation to negotiate. His answer was strictly factual. She asked him what he wanted. He told her. Note how tacit is the rapport sought by the woman, while his answer is explicit.

In her later book *"The Argument Culture"*, Deborah points out that while men are keen to debate and score points off each other and where possible demolish the points made by the opposing side, women are more interested in solutions and in the two parties accommodating each other. In practice both are needed, initial conflict to clarify the choice followed by negotiated consensus between these complementary values. If this is true, then businesses too need solutions

rather than adversarial stand-offs, verbal jousting, and doubtful victories over rivals — we can gain insights by cross-connecting these value dimensions. In dealing with the diversity issue more effectively, Tannen argues that it is best to first go for positive discrimination like hiring minorities by complying to numbers but after that, to go for harsh and honest criticism. So report within the context of rapport.

After reconciling Report with Rapport and Equal opportunities with Positive discrimination, it is time to link diverse viewpoints with a business challenge like innovation or customer orientation. What are these differences that need to be combined?

Brain differences. A recent study by Israeli researchers examined male and female brains and revealed distinct differences in developing fetuses at just 26 weeks of pregnancy. The corpus callosum — the

bridge of nerve tissue that connects the right and left sides of the brain — had a thicker measurement in female fetuses than in male fetuses and observations of adult brains show that this area may remain stronger in females. Men rather go for specific areas in either left or right brain, while women, in the use of language seem to use both sides simultaneously.³

Females and males maintain unique brain characteristics throughout life. Male brains, for instance, are about 10 percent larger than female brains. But bigger doesn't necessarily mean smarter; and no differences have been found in men and women's IQs, regardless of brain size says Daniel Amen, MD, author of *Unleash the Power of the Female Brain*.

Disparities in how certain brain substances are distributed may be more revealing. Notably, male brains contain about 6.5 times more gray matter, sometimes called "thinking matter", than women. Female brains have more than 9.5 times as much white matter, the stuff that connects various parts of the brain, than male brains. That's not all. The frontal area of the cortex and the temporal area of the cortex are more precisely organized in women, and are bigger in volume. This may explain a lasting functional advantage that females seem to have over males in language skills. Women have more connections going left and right across the two halves of the brain. This could give them an advantage in pulling together information from different sources and drawing conclusions. The left half of the brain handles logical thinking, and the right is associated with intuition. Men's brains have more connections from front to back, which may heighten their perception. They may be more attuned to what's going on around them so they can take action.

We could go on much longer. And obviously these characteristics are found in both categories. There are males that outperform females on language and females outperforming males on spatial tasks. But much of the dominant research gradually comes to the conclusion that to increase the likelihood of high performance, it is about the dynamics between diverse talents. Some talents seem to be better developed than others if we cross gender. And the difference is made by leadership again.

Diversity and performance. In this context, it is worthwhile to quote the work of Di Stefano and Maznevski,⁴ who developed a model based on Bridging, Mapping and Integrating (BMI) differences between diverse team members in order to enhance their performance. In the first Mapping phase, team members are encouraged to

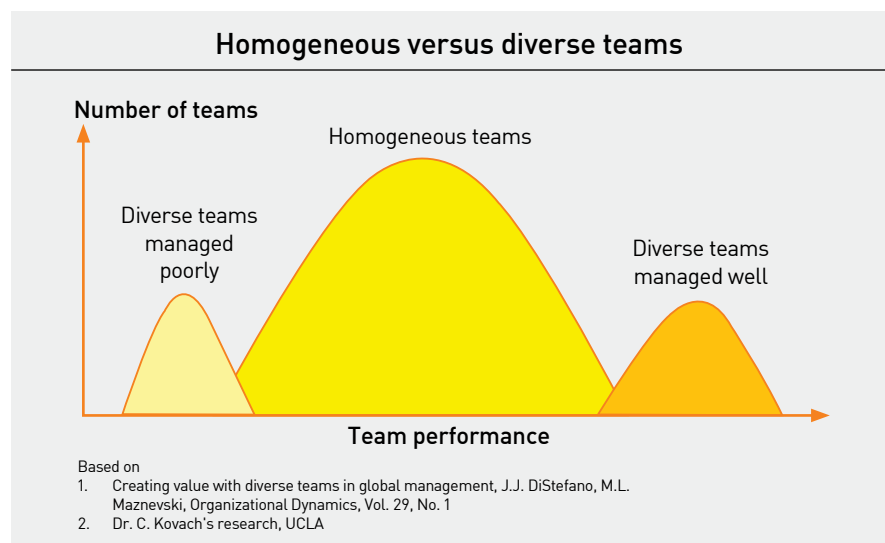
define the differences and similarities between the team members and how it may benefit team processes and performance. It ranges from differences in leadership style, personality, thinking style, gender, etc. During the second Bridging phase, there is a focus on the integrity of the communication process since many misunderstandings are caused by misinterpreting information by all parties involved. Understanding and a willingness to communicate from a neutral position can "bridge differences" and lead to positive decision-making. During the last phase of Integration, one assumes awareness of the differences and the importance of the communication bridges. Only then it is assumed that the team members can integrate the clear differences and work them to their advantage. This is done by keeping the differences intact and using them to achieve the similarities in goals. The organization can support this process by developing the right leaders who can guide this process effectively. An interesting finding in their research is if the leadership role is not done properly, the performance of a diverse team leads to lower than average performance. But when done properly, it exceeds the performance of homogeneous teams.

Quite recent research from Daniel Coyle, as published in "The Culture Code", reveals additional insights in what makes teams effective. In "The Culture Code"

Daniel Coyle explores and concludes that "While successful cultures can look and feel like magic, the truth is that they are not. A Culture is a set of living relationships working towards a shared goal. It's not something you are. It's something you do." In the beginning of his book, Coyle relates the fascinating research story about four person groups tasked to build the tallest possible structure using marshmallows, a yard each of string and transparent tape, and 20 uncooked spaghetti. Surprisingly counter-intuitively, kindergarten teams dramatically and consistently outperformed groups of lawyers, CEOs, and business school students.

Business students prioritized what "psychologists call 'status management,' they are figuring out where they fit into the larger picture . . . their interactions appear smooth, but their underlying behaviors are riddled with inefficiency, hesitation and subtle, competition." All of this distracts from the task at hand. By contrast, "the kindergarteners' actions appear disorganized on the surface, but when you view them as a single entity, their behaviors are efficient and effective. They are not competing for status. They stand shoulder to shoulder and work energetically together. They move quickly, spotting problems and offering help. They experiment, take risks, and notice outcomes, which guides them towards effective solutions." As Coyle observes, "The kindergarteners

All research points to the same direction: gender diversity is good for business when it is directed and believed in from the very top



succeed not because they are smarter, but because they work together in a smarter way. They are tapping into a simple and powerful method in which a group of ordinary people can create a performance far beyond the sum of their parts.”

In short. We have argued that both males and females need to have a choice where to be included as a diverse input into the process. And we truly hope that the choice, at least for some, will lead to joining the tops of business organizations. All research points to the same direction: gender diversity is good for business when it is directed and believed in from the very top of the house. We also argued that there is abundant scientific evidence that males and females are significantly different in both functional structure and behavior. But the difference in performance can only be made through great leadership synergizing between the differences. So what needs to be done?

Actions to be taken

To conclude this paper, here are some guidelines to follow through:

Focus on the diversity of diversity rather than purely gender

When setting targets (highly recommended!), make sure that the selection criterion is not only one category of diversity like gender, generation or ethnic background. In the recruitment process, focus on the diversity you need for the business case and accordingly select people on that criterion. A diverse selection panel will get the unconscious bias out of the way. And by doing that you will see many more women will be selected.

Commitment of the top of the organization

Like most change processes, diversity needs to be directed by the top of the house. Role modeling in particular the middle management can boost the efforts. Hold the executives and managers accountable for delivery and monitor and communicate progress. In terms of leadership, lots of attention needs to be given to basic principles like dilemma reconciliation and servant leadership. These are approaches to take advantage of diversity and by the process make people more inclusive.

Link gender diversity strategy to a business issue

It is crucial that a gender diversity strategy is not happening in a false politically correct environment. At the end, people will commit themselves to it only when it helps them to improve their business imperatives. We need diversity for innovation. We need more females so we get a



There is abundant scientific evidence that males and females are significantly different in both functional structure and behavior. But the difference in performance can only be made through great leadership synergizing between the differences

better grip on our advertising message for half of the market. We need more ethnic diversity because we want to globalize. These are the statements to be made.

Localize your gender diversity efforts

It becomes very important to have a diversity agenda that is linked to the purpose and core values of the organization. Within that framework there needs to be ample room for local differentiation. If you are in the Netherlands, it is important to know that the preference for many females is to work part-time. And in other societies, it is not normal to put males or females in certain jobs, like the shift system or nursing – it is fine as long as the values of the organization and its strategy for success are not jeopardized.

Start with yourself

We have acknowledged the importance of leadership in this process. But it should not be a claim to divert everything out of your own sphere of influence. There are multiple levels of leadership in any organization of a decent size. Start with yourself to see what you can do and communicate the great results you have achieved in that arena. ☺

Notes

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Navigating the New Skills Economy

– Gradual Adaptation or Reinvention?



Sambhav Rakyan



Saurabh Parashar

The new skills economy has already started challenging the ways in which work gets done, and navigating this megatrend is only possible through agile measures and future-ready skills frameworks that will enable organizations to thrive in the future

By **Sambhav Rakyan & Saurabh Parashar**

A couple of decades ago, organizations focused on 'jobs' as the primary means of value enablement for the individual, companies, and the society at large. Management curricula were laced with case studies and artifacts of successful business transformations, campuses negotiating with companies visiting their placement weeks, and budding aspirants competing for day zero offers to land 'settled jobs'. While the process hasn't changed radically, the mindset and philosophy of how jobs are viewed by jobseekers and job creators has evolved. Today, jobs are getting deconstructed, there is higher emphasis on skills than ever before and organizations are moving towards alternate employment channels, challenging the ways in which talent is procured and assembled. This is causing workflows to get realigned, triggering a debate on the new employment models for the fourth industrial revolution, and their effectiveness and impact on business performance.

The last decade was a witness to technology making a significant impact on our lives and the workplace through digitization, innovation, and artificial intelligence, although in its infancy. Largely defined as 'uberization', this wave of change has and is blurring the lines between the physical, digital, and biological spheres. As we apply this to the workplace, automation is substituting human labor for some tasks while augmenting others and creating new types of work. The use of workplace automation is expected to nearly double in the next three years in India according to Willis Towers Watson's Future of Work survey. The survey found that in India, 12 percent of work is currently being done using AI and robotics versus just 7 percent three years ago and this figure is expected to rise to 22 percent in the next three years. Further, 54 percent employers believe there would be increased work flexibility in terms of the what, how, and where work gets done. Consequent to these developments, there is a demand for newer capabilities and new jobs that are emerging in some sectors that are quite different from traditional roles. This is resulting in the demand for newer skills and competencies, and a shift towards open-talent or 'gig workforce' in some economies with varying degrees of adoption.

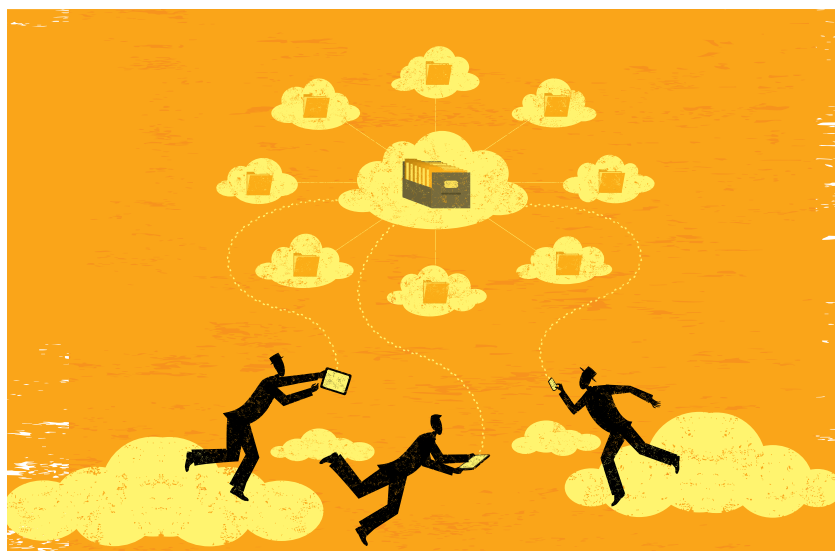
On the other hand, only 12 percent companies in India believe their HR functions are fully prepared for the changing requirements of automation. While gig work has understandable benefits in terms of economizing human resource costs and traditional mindsets, legal and culture issues are posing a challenge in some economies. Further, the lack of networking platforms, varying commercial frameworks and the absence of a direct 'stake' of these workers in the organizations success is also a challenge. There is a school of thought that suggests that gig was always partially embedded in our ecosystem for generations with consultants being hired in technical, medical and engineering field; and the concept just got tipped off due to presumed financial benefits but practical difficulties. In India, over half the employers surveyed in our

Future of Work survey suggest that the key goal of automation is to basically augment and not directly replace human effort. Traditional experience, sound business judgment, empathy, and discretion are human abilities that are likely to be irreplaceable till artificial intelligence gains singularity, which is a long way off.

It can be safely said that automation will result in new combinations of work and skill requirements, and while some sectors will be affected more than others, the new skills economy is likely to call for a continuous adaptation model aligned to core purpose and not necessarily reinvention. At the cusp of emerging realities and current readiness are certain defining steps that organizations need to take.

The first is to create an agile skills framework that is built to accommodate change, than just back-filling today's needs. Focus needs to be on skills that make a job and not the other way around. While there is a wave of digitalization all over, 77 percent organizations globally list missing skills as the single biggest impediment to digital transformation. An evolving skills model would comprise of technical and functional skills in a matrix format that would also feature expertise and competencies of applying these skills. This framework would then get tagged to an opportunity arena with built-in algorithms for commercial matching of these skills. Organizations would need to constantly revisit this framework to upgrade for the future and review these skills with predictive scenarios to ensure fitment. This will drive employees to adopt a constant learning and development curve. Research suggests that today's most in-demand occupations or specialties did not exist 10 or even five years ago. Organizations would prioritize upskilling their workforces today and to stay abreast of the developments in the digital revolution. Continuous learning and job design improvements will ensure that traditional employees will remain relevant and competent in the new landscape. On the demand side, employers would deploy highly effective assessments to gauge elements of culture, behaviors, judgment, aptitude and attributes that would make potential hires with these skills scientifically effective in their new roles.


The next is to create an integrated talent ecosystem that focuses on how people will be connected to work and themselves. HR would get increasingly tasked with creating employee experiences at scale that mirror the organization's customer experiences. Besides the need to manage permanent employees in roles that require business decision, strategy and client orientation, they are likely to get tasked with understanding policies and regulations impacting independent workers. This complexity is likely to increase as additional channels of skills on the supply slide besides permanent employees set in. Often called 'plurality of work', there is likely to be a network of alliances, crowd labor platforms, talent platforms and volunteers over time changing the employment relationship. Besides culture readiness, workforce plans would need to be broadened, traditional hiring chan-



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nels tweaked along with new age definitions of career frameworks and pathing. Given that there are likely to be locational differences and virtual offices, governance standards will pushed upwards. Investments in creating a talent infrastructure are likely to prove effective in transforming businesses regardless of the pace of change in the skills economy.

Another implication would be to plan and design the organization of the future. Although a continuing debate, hiring for specific skills and automation is also likely to have an impact on future organizational structures as formal processes of integrating people, information, technology and formal authorities are likely to undergo changes. While structural boundaries of management are likely to stay to drive governance, there would be greater emphasis on fostering creativity and expanding the entrepreneurial role of employees. This is likely to lead to a more effective shared vision and greater transparency in metrics as these network organizations get synergized through a well-established culture that aligns to its core values.

The new skills economy has already started challenging the ways in which work gets done and how skills are augmented. Navigating this megatrend is only possible through agile measures and future-ready skill frameworks that will enable companies to thrive in the future. 

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Responsible Technology

Whatever the human mind can think, technology will do! But responsible technology starts with its creators indicating the intended good and anticipated ill-effects in terms of its usage and experience

"How will you feel if your refrigerator gave you an emotional hug?"

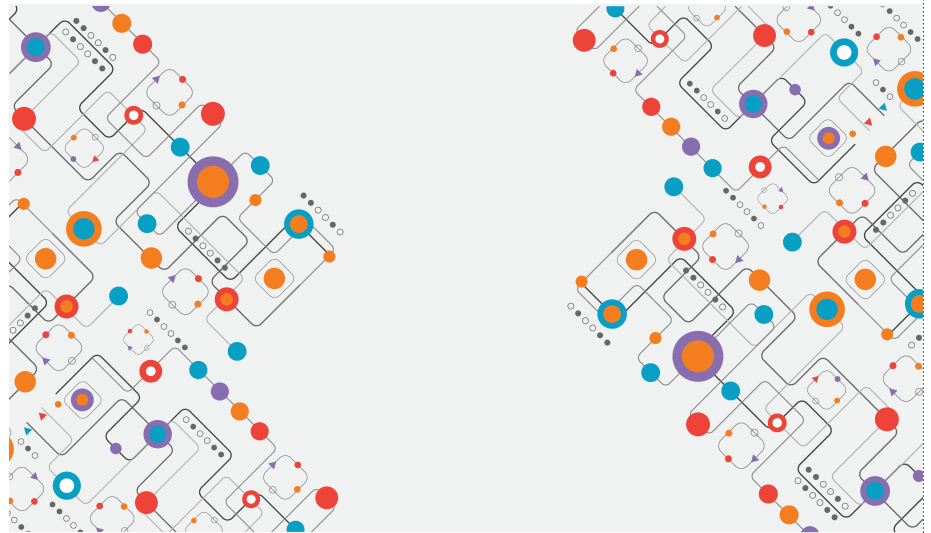
Marc Teyssier, a French researcher is working on a technology that provides a robotic finger to the mobile phone that can evoke the sense of touch during a call. A pat, caress, hug, or a touch to comfort...can be extended over a mobile call enabled by the robotic finger, patented as 'MobiLimb'. How cool is this technology?

Similarly, what's your feeling when the garbage-can calls up or sends a reminder message on your phone that it needs to be emptied out! Are you already wondering about the 'can' of technology or simply wish to trash it?

Scientists working on such technologies believe that whatever the human mind can think, technology will do them in future! Is that the future now?

These are all real developments happening around us and they will be available for trial and commercial uses in the near future. Much of the new things happening are in the areas of Artificial Intelligence, Robotics and IoT (Internet of Things), which can do the chores as well as the challenging tasks, efficaciously. Further, these technologies can learn and update themselves of the developments around, can be trained on the nuances, and understand and interact coherently with human beings. These technologies can be for industrial, environmental, and personal use and healthcare, fintech, agriculture, and education are at the forefront of adopting such technologies.

The collective human knowledge injected into a robot makes it a powerful object. A robot can 'think' as well as 'do' any task assigned to it better than human beings. It is presumed that thinking robots are also obedient and therefore will never step out of line. The opposite is the narrative about human beings, which is a reason why repetitive jobs will be assigned to tech-



Technology is meant for convenience and not for the replacement of human beings; it should be developed and used in a manner that augments and enriches human beings and not displace them

nologies in future; a fear about job losses has therefore set in.

Creators of technologies believe that technology should never be curbed. Technology injects life even into the lifeless, and is therefore very 'humane'. It is the creative spirit of the technologists like those of artistes, poets and writers, who have the creative license to express themselves that allows technologists to 'create' new things to help the human race to progress. The freedom to create things that can alter the way we are living and experiencing life is the purpose of technology – it takes away the problems, miseries, and drudgery of the mundane, and makes life simpler, easier, and comfortable to live. *But, does this actually happen? With our*

collective experience and knowledge of over 100 years since the industrial revolution, is there empirical data validating the thoughts of the technologists?

There's another view that is equally strong and valid and its premise is that technology is meant for convenience and not for the replacement of human beings. Therefore, technology should be developed and used in a manner that augments and enriches human beings and not displace them. How pragmatic is this thinking?

Social Media technology digitally connected people and was considered to be one of the best technologies for human beings. Discovering old friends and making new ones, connecting with family and relatives and bonding with

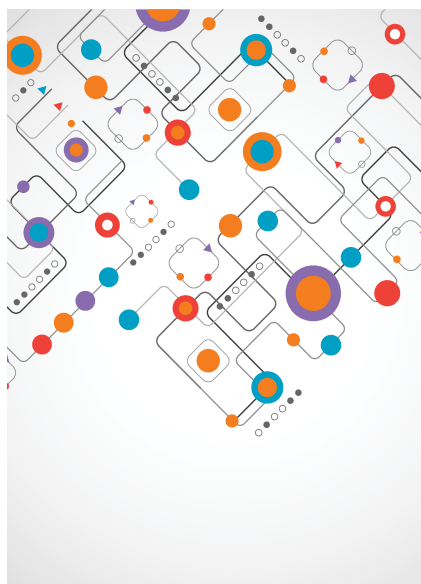
them once again were the virtues of social media. The most significant impact was in the formation of 'active groups' that intended to serve a cause. There are plenty of positive examples of social media like connecting the grandparents with their grandchildren, which many feared was waning on account of physical displacements and disintegrating family structures. People in need of support during emergencies could easily get help from those they had never met before, thanks to the social connects. Similarly, AI is helping detect skin cancer far before it can be detected by doctors, enabling early treatment. Robotic technology is enabling warehouse management by intelligently and accurately picking and stacking up items for each customer order. Virtual Reality is enabling education by creating digital classrooms that provide a better learning experience to all age groups. IoT is enabling service engineers to diagnose problems remotely and provide solutions more accurately, much faster than before.

When the technologies get used at individual levels, for need or convenience, the impact and perceptions become quite different. In case of the robotic finger being used with the mobile phone, the feedback was 'creepy' – that's how people felt about this technology. Does the dustbin really need to communicate with human beings to let them know when it needs to be emptied? Does it help an individual to know what is her blood pressure or sugar level on an hourly basis through the use of a gadget? Will a child get better education without human interaction or supervision? Are autonomous cars the need of the hour? There are many questions that arise when we look at applying technology. In fact, the examples and events occurring don't augur well for such applications. Like, analyzing social media profiles to bombard targeted messages that are curated to appear realistic wasn't a great application of analytics, AI, and Virtual Reality. Using AI to study the gene patterns and then altering them so as to influence the characteristics of a new-born seems ominous. Addicting children to gadgets by providing games that are very 'sticky' (Blue Whale, Go, etc.), thus robbing them of their social skills and all-round development, are just bad examples of use of technology. Are we letting technologies impact our common sense?

Clearly, there's a need to draw a line that separates the benefits and the potential harms of technology in the short or long terms. Enthusiastic software engineers developing technologies on machine learning language must realize that the machines that use such software will take

away such development jobs in future. This is akin to cutting the branch on which one is sitting! Likewise with the autonomous cars – the disruption it can cause outweighs the benefits it can bring in.


In the industrial revolution era, we missed out on identifying the ill-effects of large-scale automation. Much later we discovered the problems of pollution, global warming, and general decay of the environment. Although industrial revolution helped the human race make great progress, its side effects were not seen early and hence, as a world, we are creating initiatives in green revolution, putting laws around pollutants, creating awareness amongst people so that the society acts in a responsible manner. Industries benefitted from the industrial revolution but the environment took a beating.



With industrialization and awareness, the world is now engaged in curbing carbon emission, introducing statutes on tobacco, liquor, drug consumption, and making people aware of activities that are in the wrong side of law. There needs to be a similar initiative for technology too, like 'Responsible Technology'. It is well understood that technologies will disrupt jobs, opportunities, outlooks, behaviors etc. and if these changes happen gradually, coping mechanisms to deal with the impacts can be worked out. But if such changes happen too fast and there are too many of them, then the society will simply disintegrate. If millions of people across the globe suddenly lose their jobs to technologies, no country will be able to deal with the unemployment situation. While automation will benefit industries, businesses need to act in a responsible manner so that the effects of technology are gradually absorbed by those who are affected. Similarly, technol-

ogy allows creation and manipulation of information which have the potential to impact beliefs, values, customs and traditions of a society. In such cases, creation and manipulation need to be monitored and governed by a central authority.

Responsible technology starts with the creators indicating the intended good and anticipated ill-effects of their proposed technologies, in terms of their usage and experience. A global body needs to assess and advise on how such technologies will be permitted to function by introducing caveats that are legally and socially supported. For instance, if smoking is banned in public places because it is hazardous to others, can the use of mobile phones while walking on the roads also be banned? Can the screen of a mobile phone not freeze when the user is walking? Such a technology would be amazingly useful! Can technology be used to stop manual scavenging, an occupation that is legally banned but is still practiced rampantly in India? It will do good to the society even though it robs the scavengers of their daily earnings – a case also for applying common sense over cold logic.

Forthcoming technologies that influence human minds must be allowed only if they are beneficial to the larger society, and not a select few. The business approach of customer segmentation, which allows businesses to discriminate offerings and services between the creamy layer and those at bottom of the pyramid cannot become the norm for use of technology for social needs. Technologies must be allowed only to the extent of their positive impact to the society. Frameworks for regulating and verifying content on social platforms or enabling human decisions to prevail over actions suggested by technologies (in case of healthcare – trust the doctor), and a belief that technologies are not meant to command over human beings, must happen soon. Else, not only will the jobs be taken away by these technologies but the term 'progress' will mean its exact opposite for human beings! 

(Views expressed are personal)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Y. SHEKAR is a tech-industry veteran who's researching on Impact of Digitalization on organization structures and future of managerial roles. He is currently enabling one of the leading IIMs to put a Digital Centre of Excellence that'll connect industry, technology players and management students for experiential learning and solving real-life business challenges of digital transformation. He is also a certified Executive Coach preferring to coach mid-management level executives.



An exemplar of HR transformation

RPG Group's HR transformation journey

The RPG Group began a mammoth exercise of digitizing their HR processes across the Group's spectrum of companies. After facing some hiccups, the company rebooted its implementation journey, reorganized the teams, and drove the digital agenda

By **Jerry Moses & Yasmin Taj**

The Beginning

Rama Prasad Goenka established RPG Enterprises in 1979 with Phillips Carbon Black, Asian Cables, Agartara Jute, and Murphy India as its constituents. The 1980's saw further acquisitions by the RPG group, the first being CEAT Tyres of India in 1981. The group then went on to acquire KEC (1982), Searle India, now RPG Life Sciences (1983), Dunlop (1984), Gramophone Company of India Ltd, now Saregama India (1986) and finally CESC, Harrisons Malayalam, Spencer & Co. and ICIM (1989). Today, Harsh Goenka, the current chairman of RPG Group conglomerate leads the Mumbai head-quartered RPG Enterprises, which consists of over fifteen companies across core sectors of the economy and has a turnover of more than US \$3 billion.

RPG Group has a rich history of enabling people practices, for which, it has stood out amongst its peers over the years. HR digitization was one such initiative that was taken up in the year 2013-14 to drive both, employee experience and HR efficiencies.

HR Digitization: A tale of two journeys

Over the last few years, RPG group went through significant transformation as it attempted to digitize its HR processes across its Group companies. In September 2013, RPG signed a contract with SuccessFactors for the talent solutions, and in the year 2014, successfully launched the Goal module and SAP Jam. In December 2014, KEC International, an RPG Group Company and the manufacturer of electric power transmission towers and one of the largest Power Transmission Engineering, Procurement & Construction (EPC) companies took the decision to implement Employee Central (Core HRIS). However, in mid-April 2015, the launch of the Performance Module (PMS) ran into trouble and had to be scuttled while the overall implementation of SuccessFactors (SF) came to a halt. The implementation team took this as a challenge to fix, and they wanted to migrate to a more evolved mechanism for appraisals management than the tradi-

tional paper and pen exercise. In a week's time, the team found a fix for a majority of the issues in the PMS module working with SuccessFactors and the implementation partner whom they had engaged for Employee Central implementation and delivered a seamless digital experience.

The first attempt

A key reason for the failure of the initiative was attributed to

- The incapability of the implementation partner in terms of gauging and catering to RPG's requirements and implementation of new modules.
- All modules were launched simultaneously, they reached an impasse at different stages. Hence, it was challenging to identify and rectify the loopholes that led to each of the modules being stuck. Eventually, the team could launch only the Goal Module.

- Capability of the Implementation partners

The RPG Group went from a red carpet opening to failure in less than 2 years!

The Strategy: Change as an Organizational Development Intervention

Harsh Goenka, the Chairman of RPG group asked for a review of SF Implementation and the way forward with all CEOs, CFOs, and CHROs of Group Companies. A new strategy was presented by Vasudevan Narasimha (Vasu), former Executive Director Human Resources, KEC International Ltd. and S Venkatesh (Venky), President - Group Human Resources, RPG Group. It was decided to launch one module every 45 days.

This decision was a critical turning point in the sponsorship for the HR digitization initiative. A team was tasked with driving Employee Central and manage the

The best practices from RPG companies were propagated to the global configuration so that other companies could benefit from the same, which really helped the overall value proposition

Lessons learned from such a failure proved to be a guiding force for creating change that can be today termed as one of the most successful digital transformations at such a large scale.

The pain points stemmed from:

- Weak change management
- Low engagement with the HR teams of the Group companies, resulting in low adoption by group companies
- Ownership for implementation was more with Group office rather than individual companies
- Replication of existing processes without re-engineering
- High levels of customization limited the ability to scale

implementation of the Talent Management modules

The team commenced the re-Implementation of the Talent Management suite christened *RPG TalentOne* in August 2015. Their credibility hinged on delivering the PMS Module as mid-year appraisal exercise was due in October 2015. The team completed the configuration in 24 days and it was launched in mid-September because of which the mid-year appraisals went without a hitch.

The team was implementing Employee Central in KEC with a go live date of February 2016 globally in English, Portuguese and Mexican Spanish. In parallel, between October 2015 and March 2016, the team launched 5 Modules consisting of



Having reviewed the potential of SuccessFactors Employee Central, I gave the approval for its implementation in Dec 2014. The team has performed creditably in taking us up the digital curve in HR. I am proud to say that today KEC has significantly digitised HR processes and is poised to leverage the digital possibilities. For a traditional EPC company to have significantly digitised HR processes is a credible achievement. Congratulations to the HR digitisation team for seamless implementation and the continuous improvements!"

Vimal Kejriwal,
Managing Director & CEO,
KEC International Limited

- Module-wise implementation with workshops to build knowledge, understanding of platform, finalizing scope & configuration – to execute swiftly.

Consolidation, Stabilization and Adoption: 2016-17

Post the implementation, the team embarked upon consolidation and adoption of these modules across RPG Group. This involved the adoption of modules and special functionalities which were not used during the implementation earlier. The team ensured that new features and releases of SuccessFactors were communicated and implemented so that there was better adoption and utilization of the system. The team worked with the group companies to co-create better versions of the modules to enhance overall functionality and experience. The best practices from RPG companies (e.g. LMS module UI for Zensar) were propagated to the global configuration so that other companies could benefit from the same, which really helped the overall value proposition.

The Central team now had a bigger scope with increasing adoption amongst companies, hence it was decided to onboard Nikhil Shembekar as Head, HR Digitization who brought with him exten-



Implementation of SuccessFactors (known as RPG TalentOne) has led to standardization of all signature talent processes across the Group, a first for any diversified conglomerate. It has brought in a culture of process orientation and led to empowerment of People Managers. For employees, it has ensured transparency of processes, particularly performance management. Quality of discussions around talent reviews has enhanced significantly due to availability of relevant data points. We have also succeeded in providing a much better user experience for all our employees. We intend to leverage this platform for providing us better insights into people data and help us make better decisions."

S Venkatesh,
President Group HR, RPG

For a better future, the next goal is to make 'digital' a natural process for employees where analytics will play a major role in listening to the voice of employees and giving them a personalized HR experience in their journey

PMS, LMS, RCM, 360, Succession. Further, the compensation module followed suit in June 2016. The team succeeded in launching one module every 40 days.

The reasons for the success this time were:

- Sponsorship from the Chairman and Company CEOs.
- The implementation accountability with Company HR Heads.
- Strengthened Project Leadership for execution
- Defined roles, responsibilities & accountabilities for Project team and Company SPOCs
- Enhanced engagement of nominated SPOC and Product owners from each company – Co creation
- Putting in place the right implementation partner

sive experience in Digital transformation. Soon the team set about devising an HR Digitization roadmap for the next three years which would make RPG one of the best in the industry in terms of the deployment of HR digitization. Various initiatives were planned to create awareness amongst HR fraternity and senior leadership as change champions.

Enhanced Partner Ecosystem

With a significant set of modules being adopted by the 7 group companies, the overall maintenance and implementation of newer requirements, the team set about evaluating the capabilities of the support infrastructure. Support for various modules of SF was given to different SF vendors based on assessment of their expertise and capabilities. SF support

services were also used extensively to help and debug issues. This multi-fold support ecosystem helped in finding quick resolution to many issues and helped in increasing customer delight.

Training

Training programs were organized monthly to improve awareness amongst module administrators and best practices were shared in these sessions. The administrators were trained and certified internally on various modules which helped them gain confidence about the system and become independent. All these initiatives helped in driving adoption across the respective companies

Beyond SF: Driving Employee Experience, Analytics and Employee In-sighting

With the nuts and bolts now in place, the team now wanted to move from the mere automation of existing process to going "Digital". Going Digital essentially required the Group to re-imagine the HR processes and leverage digital capabilities to enhance employee experience. With this understanding, it was decided to initiate HR Digital Labs. The objective of this lab

was to look at various cutting-edge solutions which would help enhance employee experience and HR productivity.

The team conducted various POCs, demos and trials for new technologies. Some of them are adopted and are now an integral part of the overall HR Digitization architecture within RPG. These solutions have complemented the overall offerings of RPGTalentOne, which in turn, have enabled a superior employee experience. In early 2018, a broad strategy was drafted for the HR digital agenda and is now pivoted on three broad areas i.e. HR Analytics, Improving Employee experience using digital technologies and Employee Insighting.

The team has launched a company-wide analytics program which will enable HR to glean insights from employee data. In addition, Bots have been deployed to streamline HR service delivery. In 2018, with a move to gain deeper employee insights, just like customer insights, an employee in-sighting program was launched which was dedicated to developing insights into the programs and products in human resources, provide a data-based view of what's working well and what is not while laying out the intervention options for leading and creating lasting change.

Impact

Today the RPG Group has a single instance implementation across all 7 companies, 15 legal entities, 40 countries and 3 different languages. HR digitization across all group companies has given a complete view of the organization to the leadership team.



At RPGLS, implementation of Success Factors Employee Central (EC) has enabled us in streamlining HR analytics and build more accuracy in HR reporting. We have been able to see a steady increase in adoption of Learning Management Systems across the organization with on an average every employee accessing 2-3 courses in a year, which has enabled us in strengthening our skill building interventions."

Tushar Joshi,
HR Head, RPGLS

The HR Business Partners' administrative burden has been reduced by 15 percent and the Group has achieved 100 percent governance of signature HR processes while the best practices are being exchanged on the collaborative platform called RPG Hub (SAP JAM) by COEs across RPG Companies.

Managers and HR functionaries have access to employee data through one-click which ensures transparency in both data and processes which has led to a significant improvement in data integrity. Globally, employees and managers across 40 countries have access to data in their respective languages and People Managers have access to all the data related to the teams they work with and support which has improved transparency and facilitated better decision-making.

E-learning courses have improved learning man-hours by 50 percent. All compliance related courses are now accessible on mobile and have resulted in improved learnability and compliance. 80

Persistence is the key to bringing about a significant transformation, and that has been a key ingredient in RPG's journey towards digitization and success

percent of the courses are mobile-enabled thereby helping to capture feedback for instructor-led courses. Assignment of courses based on competency rating and job roles of employee have also led to a more personalized approach to learning. Internal job postings have improved the visibility of vacancies across RPG group and there is a significant increase in the number of vacancies filled internally, as high as 65 percent in some of our companies.

Key positions within the organization are identified and future leaders are equipped for such roles. Having a completely digitized line of sight for succession plans across RPG companies has ensured business continuity where around 10 percent of the employee population is equipped and has the potential to move to the next grade.

Transparency of performance appraisals, improved employee self-service, better collaboration across teams and pay for performance culture has significantly helped in increasing employee morale, reducing attrition and higher levels of engagement.




Today, we are proud of the HR digital journey at RPG, we have come a long way in "digitizing" people processes & putting the power of technology in the hands of the employee and manager. Our digital journey has just begun and I foresee a bright future as we embark on the 2nd phase of digital where we invoke the power of data, analytics and insights to enhance the employee experience at RPG."

Nikhil Shembekar,
Head HR, Digitization,
RPG Enterprises

The mantra for success at RPG Group was in managing change through inclusion, collaboration, communication, creating ownership and trusting people. HR business partners knew the pain points in and out and had an exceptional zeal to make things better by simplifying the processes and adding value to employees.

Destination is a journey

From the first failure to deploying digital systems across major group companies, RPG has come a long way in this journey. RPG successfully implemented and got employees to adopt the digital way. For a better future, the next goal is to make 'digital' a natural process for employees where analytics will play a major role in listening to the voice of employees and giving them a personalized HR experience in their journey.

While transformation at scale is a story worth sharing, embarking on a journey across multiple companies within a group cannot be taken for granted. Persistence is the key to bringing about a significant transformation, and that has been a key ingredient in RPG's journey towards digitization and success. 

Jobs of the week



2COMS Consulting Private Limited
Human Resource Executive
Location: Mumbai
Job ID: 23237367
Description: Experienced in mediation and conflict resolution processes, expert stress management skills, effective communicator, both verbally and written.



Infosource Consulting Private Limited
Hr Executive
Location: Bengaluru / Bangalore
Job ID: 23336837
Description: Screening, sourcing, recruitment, head hunting, shortlisting etc.



Arise Solution
Recruitment Executive
Location: Ahmedabad
Job ID: 23315773
Description: Responsible for hiring non IT professionals, responsible for understanding the requirement and their skill-set, sourcing profiles through various job sites etc.



HeadHunters HR Private Limited
HR Recruiter
Location: Mumbai
Job ID: 23289659
Description: Sourcing through various job boards, social networking sites, short listing the candidates through various modes, follow-up with selected candidates.



Black & White Business Solutions
HR Recuriter
Location: Bengaluru / Bangalore
Job ID: 23387514
Description: Sourcing candidates from various job portals, screening resumes and contacting relevant candidates, assess knowledge, skills, aptitudes and experience of the applicant.



Avionic Consulting Solutions
Hr Executive
Location: Ahmedabad
Job ID: 23359978
Description: Coordinating with technical panel, defining job positions, resourcing, screening and shortlisting resumes etc.



Diraa HR Services
HR Admin
Location: Coimbatore
Job ID: 23355135
Description: Organize and maintain personnel records, update internal databases prepare HR documents, hireguides etc.



Voltech HR Services Private Limited
HR Recruiter
Location: Chennai
Job ID: 23350251
Description: Excellent communication in english, end-end recruitment process.



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Past Month's events

People Matters TechHR Singapore

ORGANIZER: People Matters

DATE: 28th February 2019

VENUE: Marina Bay Sands, Singapore

KEY TAKEAWAYS: The best of businesses, HR Leaders, HR Product & Service experts and HR Technology partners & startups from around the globe came together to raise the bar for talent transformation and HR technology at TechHR Singapore. From speakers like Jason Averbook CEO and Co-Founder, Leapgen and Ray Wang, Principal Analyst & Founder, Constellation Research Inc. Asian HR leaders like Aileen Tan, Group CHRO, Singtel; Kulshaan Singh, Chief People Officer, Charoen Pokphand Group; Elaine Lin, VP HR, APAC, Baxter and Merianna Lok, SVP, Regional Head - HR, APAC, MetLife Asia, many other personalities came together to brainstorm ways of solving the most pertinent challenges related to talent, work and the workplace.

Building a culture of transparency - Let's begin with compensation

ORGANIZER: People Matters and SAP SuccessFactors

DATE: 14th February 2019

VENUE: Online

KEY TAKEAWAYS: When employees don't know how their pay compares to their peers', they are more likely to feel underpaid and maybe even discriminated. The popular opinion is that compensation transparency is a means to curb this challenge. To highlight the need for an organization to have a transparent compensation system, People Matters hosted a webinar in association with SAP SuccessFactors. Varsha Kotdiya, Country Head - Compensation & Benefits, Capgemini and Alok Sheopurkar, EVP and Head HR, HDFC discussed the dynamics of pay transparency and highlighted its pros and cons. They also shared how organizations can become more transparent about their employee pay and pay decisions. They also shared some strategies about how leaders can shape up the manager's capability to enable them to have better compensation conversation with the employees.

Balancing personal and professional life- - HR's role in supporting employees

ORGANIZER: People Matters and Right Selection

DATE: 13th February 2019

VENUE: Online

KEY TAKEAWAYS: Today's employees are swamped with work. In an always-connected environment, they are glued to their digital devices most of the time. Whether they are at the office, home or any other remote location, they are under pressure to communicate and deliver as and when the need arises. The always-connected environment has changed the definition of work-life balance and working professionals today are facing a lot of challenge in striking a balance in their personal and professional life. In this webcast by People Matters and Right Selection, Marshall Goldsmith, Executive Coach, Speaker, Author, Professor of Management Practice shared some tools employees can use to match talent, efforts, and investments to enhance their efficiency without the cost of their personal time. He gave some practical daily tips that can help employees and discussed models that can help employees frame long and short term goals.

Driving digital learning - How to strategize for success?

ORGANIZER: People Matters and Center for Creative Leadership

DATE: 12th February 2019

VENUE: Online

KEY TAKEAWAYS: Digital learning is one of the most widely adopted modes of learning and unlike classroom learning, it is premised on self-learning with an 'anytime, anywhere' interface. However, HR professionals face challenge in executing digital learning and deriving maximum output from it. Samir Mehta, Blended Learning Leader, Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) in this online session hosted by People Matters and CCL shared how companies can plan for success. He shared six strategies for digital learning success and also explained how organizations can put these strategies to practice.

Creating Great Place to Work: Lessons from Building a Service Excellence Culture

ORGANIZER: People Matters and Right Selection

DATE: 31st January 2019

VENUE: Online

KEY TAKEAWAYS: Motivational Customer Service Speaker, Independent Consultant, Ron Kaufman shared strategies to sustain the momentum of best HR initiatives and discussed how HR professionals can engage multiple stakeholders to build a culture that attracts and retains the greatest talent. He also talked about the role of the CEO and other senior leaders in building a sustainable culture. Drawing references from delivering great customer experiences Kaufman shared how HR professionals can work towards delivering great employee service experiences.

holders to build a culture that attracts and retains the greatest talent. He also talked about the role of the CEO and other senior leaders in building a sustainable culture. Drawing references from delivering great customer experiences Kaufman shared how HR professionals can work towards delivering great employee service experiences.

Upcoming events

Learn how to apply "nudging" to leadership development

ORGANIZER: People Matters and Center for Creative Leadership

DATE: 6th March 2019

VENUE: Online

THEME: Amid a variety of new approaches, nudging is emerging as an effective method of training the next generation of leaders. 'Nudge' is a concept in behavioral science which introduces positive reinforcement and indirect suggestions as a way to influence behavior. Introduced by the Nobel Prize winning economist Richard Thaler, the nudging approach can directly impact blended and purely digital leadership development. In this webcast, Samir Mehta, Blended Learning Leader, Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) will delve into how to apply this concept in your workplace and in your own worklife. He will illustrate how to use tools like i-Dev, a nudging app by CCL and Jombay and also share some tips with L&D Heads and HR Heads for measuring learning initiative effectiveness.

HOW TO REGISTER:

<https://bit.ly/2SQTXIF>



Strategize to Reskill: How L&D Can Help Building the Right Capabilities for Organizational Success

ORGANIZER: People Matters and Degreed

DATE: 13th March 2019

VENUE: Bangalore

THEME: New technologies and a vastly diverse workforce are fundamentally changing the role of L&D professionals and changing their priorities. As organizations become more intent on adaptable and innovative workforces, leadership must evolve from 'doing' to 'influencing.' People Matters and Degreed bring an exciting discussion where Degreed CEO, Chris McCarthy, and Ajay Sridharan, Degreed's Country Manager (India)/ Head APAC lead the discussion on the value of understanding skills. Senior HR leaders from different organizations will come together to share the experiences and brainstorm ideas on how to solve the learning challenges in their company and learn from each other. The discussion will also highlight how progressive companies are navigating the challenges of reskilling.

HOW TO REGISTER: By invite only

Bridging the communication gap: Designing the right digital strategy to engage employees

ORGANIZER: People Matters and Fountainhead

DATE: 13th, 18th and 26th March 2019

VENUE: Mumbai, Bangalore and Gurgaon

THEME: Research suggests that nearly \$650 Bn per year is lost due to unnecessary emails. In fact, 92% of employees delete internal emails without opening or reading. In this context, how should HR leaders design engaging campaigns and make these communications inclusive. About 15 to 18 Senior HR Leaders from leading organizations will reflect on the challenges and opportunities in leveraging technologies to bridge the communication gap, in this forward-looking & fascinating conversation hosted by People Matters in collaboration with Fountainhead Digital MKTG (a Dentsu Aegis Network Company).

HOW TO REGISTER: By invite only

Oracle OpenWorld Asia

ORGANIZER: Oracle

DATE: 26th & 27th March 2019

VENUE: Marina Bay Sands, Singapore

THEME: Success today requires resiliency, reinvention and thinking ahead. To bring the future into focus Oracle hosts Oracle OpenWorld Asia in Singapore in 2019 and bring a platform for professionals to gain enterprise expertise and start-up ingenuity directly from experts across retail, manufacturing, financial services, technology, the public sector, and more. Join innovators as they challenge assumptions, design for better outcomes, and leverage transformational technologies to create future possibilities now.

HOW TO REGISTER:

<https://bit.ly/2rJPlxN>



Design a future-ready wellness strategy - The missing piece of preventive healthcare

ORGANIZER: People Matters and Sanofi

DATE: 19th March

VENUE: Taj Coromandel, Chennai

THEME: While leading companies continue to implement a variety of wellness strategies and policies, there is a need to focus on impactful measures like healthcare costs, claim ratio and engagement. An effective preventive healthcare approach would enable companies to save healthcare costs and reduce insurance claim ratio. This executive roundtable will bring together

leading experts who will discuss how to mitigate challenges and make the most out of the wellness strategy. The roundtable will also reveal the findings of the People Matters- Sanofi Research on 'Contemporary trends in wellness', which benchmarks data on Corporate India's wellness programs. HR leaders will also share their ideas and experience on designing a result oriented wellness program and share how they gauge the effectiveness of these programs.

HOW TO REGISTER: By invite only

Treading the talent tightrope

The case of the Indian auto industry

India is expected to emerge as the world's third-largest passenger-vehicle market by 2021. However, to propel this growth, organizations in the automobile sector will have to reimagine their investments in talent. In a round table hosted by Lee Hecht Harrison under the "LEAGUE OF LEADERS" initiative, industry leaders from the sector shared their insights on the many talent challenges besetting the automobile industry in India and the ways to overcome them

By Shweta Modgil



The automobile industry contributes almost 7 percent to India's GDP, and as per the automotive mission plan 2026, the sector aims to increase its contribution to over 12 percent by 2026. Concurrent with this jump, 16 mn jobs are to be created in this sector while the automotive mission plan aims to generate another 65 mn jobs by 2026. To add to that, authorities predict that India is expected to be the world's third largest passenger vehicle market in 2021.

While all these statistics appear copacetic, the auto market is afflicted with its own set of disruptions and changing norms. Right from a jump from BSIV norms to BSVI norms as well as in terms of FAME for electric vehicles, multiple disruptions have come into play such as autonomous vehicles, shared mobility, and the new skills requirements proficient in the application of mechatronics, AI, and robotics. The question that then arises is that: Is the sector ready for the new unanticipated challenges thrown by unprecedented disruptions and their subsequent effects on the talent market? Does it have the requisite talent or talent management strategies to brace for the coming changes?

Through the initiative "LEAGUE OF LEADERS", the world's leading integrated talent development and transition company, Lee Hecht Harrison (LHH), has embarked on a series of round table discussions with leaders from 4 core industries of auto, pharma, retail, and manufacturing to find the answers to such and many other questions. The series kicked off with the first round table in Pune and saw the participation of leaders like Rajesh Nair, GM- HR Commercial Sales & Mktg, Tata Motors; Giovanni Sois, Head-HR, Piaggio Vehicles; Hyder Khan Ali, Vice President, Kinetic India; Tom Verghese, Head Talent Development, Fiat Chrysler; Nipun J Mahajan, VP- Sales, Fiat Chrysler; and Riya Arora, President, NHRD — who came together to identify their sector's specific business challenges, drawing correlations with other industries and working towards ideating innovative talent management practices.

Talent Challenges: From a skewed playing field to stretched margins

The discussion was moderated by Ankush Puri, Director – India, LHH, who invited leaders to share the profound talent challenges currently being faced by the auto industry. During discussions, one of the foremost challenges that emerged was that while India is poised to become the third largest industry in the world, it is still far away from it. This is because compared to the size of the market leaders like the US and China where the total volume of the industry is almost 10 times the size of the Indian market, India has a long way to catch up. Moreover, 50 percent of the Indian market

is dominated by 1 single company, which means an uneven playing field where remaining 10-11 players are struggling for the remaining 50 percent pie. This in turn results in the remaining organizations facing challenges of breaking even which puts limits their growth externally and internally. As a result, it limits what such organizations can provide to their employees, stunt the talent management initiatives and caps the remuneration they can provide to the talent. In such a scenario, keeping employees engaged becomes a daunting task. "How do you retain your talented people given that you can't change the somewhat skewed scenario of market share and profits?" is a stark reality staring in the face of the sector.

Rising input costs and the challenges to talent retention

While the manufacturing portion of the auto industry consumes the maximum resources of an organization, the commercial/operational/revenue generation gets a smaller share of the resource pie. When it comes to the commercial team, the remuneration and the opportunities are very less. In most sectors, the share of resource sharing between manufacturing and commercial is 50-50. But in the auto industry, it is skewed at 80-20. Thus, there is a need to focus more on the commercial part of the team so that the ones delivering the goods are engaged, involved, and feel a part of the organization.

The rising input costs have a direct bearing on the retention problems in the industry. The input costs have risen at a consistent rate but the output/selling costs have not increased at a similar pace because of the competitive pressure. With already stretched margins, auto companies find it difficult to compensate employees, which is one of the main reasons for attrition in this sector. Added to this is the fact that while the products have a long development cycle of about 24-48 months, the products get outdated in six months. This facet of the industry again puts it at a disadvantage compared to industries such as the mobile or white goods where the development cycle is shorter.

Another challenge that the sector faces when it comes to retention is that in the prevailing uncertainty, auto companies are increasingly finding it difficult to predict who to retain or when to retain. Analyzing the market trends alone is not enough — the industry needs to enhance its understanding of the components that needs to be developed. The industry need to look at talent that can adapt to the growing competitiveness of the market and also look at gender inclusive practices.

While there are demands for niche skills in the market, the Indian market lacks skilled people amidst the prevalent talent poaching practices that have increased the talent management and retention challenges. Particularly in the automobile sector, campus hiring has not been able to solve this problem as many campus hires who get sponsored for higher education leave after spending 3-4 years in the company. This again highlights the conundrum that companies find

themselves in —of whether to care more for the 30 percent of the people who run the show or care for the remaining 70 percent? Another challenge here also pertains to the objective identification of these 30 of percent people.

In order to solve the problem of identification and retention of the 30 percent of people who make the difference, an assessment program is needed that would not only identify the right talent for hiring but will also enable the development of that talent. One way to do this as suggested by the leaders was through quantifiable goal setting so that subjectivity in assessing talent can be removed. By setting targets objectively and measuring them objectively, organizations can ensure that the 30 percent comprising excellent performers are separated from the 70 percent of average performers. Simultaneously, the importance of creating a culture of open communication and constant feedback needs to be stressed so that there is no need for annual appraisals. Managers need to be more of coaches than just be operational managers who give operational feedback, which only channels incremental improvement.

While there are demands for niche skills in the market, the Indian market lacks skilled people amidst the prevalent talent poaching practices that have increased the talent management and retention challenges





Though lakhs of engineers make their way out of colleges, the industry still struggles to find good engineering talent that is above being functionally capable



The skills gap and the pay gap

Another inherent challenge that was discussed in the Round Table was the inability of the technical talent to become successful people managers. From issues related to the lack of leadership qualities and a lack of feedback, developing leadership skills is a big challenge. To compound matters further, though lakhs of engineers make their way out of colleges, the industry still struggles to find good engineering talent that is above being functionally capable. Added to this is the short shelf-life of skills, which further contributes to the skills gap in this sector and the pay gap which is reflected in the fact that the compensation levels in the industry have not gone up when compared to other sectors.

Talent development at the channel level

The challenges at the channel level, often known as the dealer level also pose another set of challenges.

Dealerships that have low conversion ratios are most vulnerable and feel most pressurized. Profitability at the dealership level is also a challenge for most auto companies for which they need to own a part of the responsibility of the people working at the channels, and engage and enable them better. This can be indirectly managed through recruitment and performance management systems. Helping dealerships in sourcing candidates is one way to help the channels in addition to providing subsidized insurance coverage to the talent at the dealerships.

While a lot was deliberated upon, it is clear there is much more that needs to be done to tackle the challenges that were brought forth in the first part of the discussion. The next chapter at Chennai of the series will further probe into what more can be done to solve the talent challenges of the auto industry.  

(This article is based on the first round table conducted under the "LEAGUE OF LEADERS" initiative by Lee Hecht Harrison (LHH) with People Matters as their Media Partner, in Pune on 29th January, 2019.)

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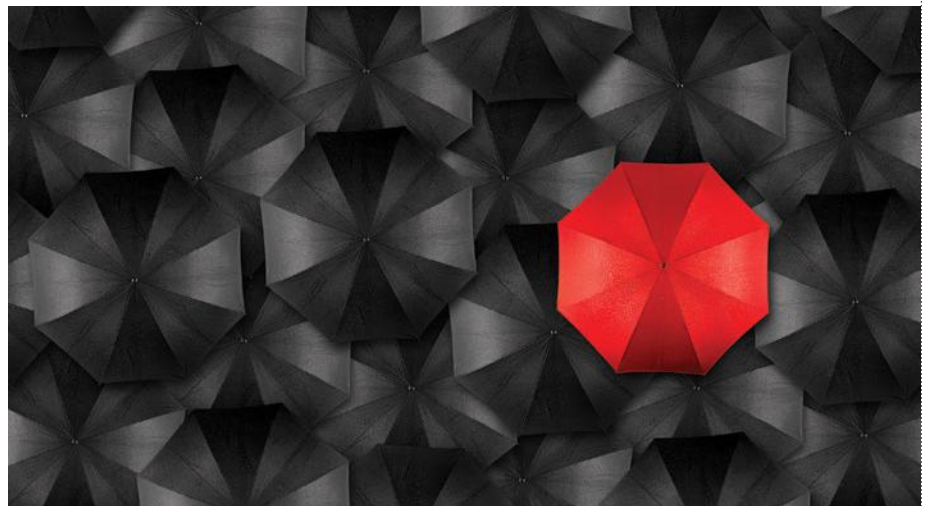
Most mainstream management techniques were developed in North-Atlantic English-speaking cultures. Could it be that pragmatic managerial tools such as the bonus may be relatively alien to other cultures, and consequently failed to achieve similar following?

Would a bonus steer a saint?

That a bonus is considered an incentive presumes that people are moved by material gains. Yet, a bonus might not work everywhere with the same intensity. Sainthood acts as a gravitational force in the Iberian culture — admiring saints not least for their refusal of material comforts, occasionally to the point of martyrdom. One could hardly take a bullfighter for a saint, and yet, one finds a similar sense of sainthood in the bullfighter's acceptance of the challenge to put his life at stake for what would seem a pittance to the pragmatist. For whatever reasons, impractical bullfighters and saints are admired in the Iberian Peninsula. Both express a quality called *desapego* in Iberian cultures. *Desapego* is hard to translate into English. Dictionaries will usually translate *desapego* as detachment. However, it is closer to separation than to lack of considerations of personal advantage.

The difficulty to translate *desapego* into English happens partly because conceptual refinement expresses a culture's interest on what concepts to refine and associate words to. Lack of interest in personal advantage, conceptualized as in *desapego*, might be more intensely cherished in Iberian cultures than in English-speaking ones that are so steeped in British pragmatism. However, most mainstream management techniques were developed in North-Atlantic English-speaking cultures. Could it be that pragmatic managerial tools such as the bonus, may be relatively alien to Iberian cultures, and consequently failed to achieve similar following in Iberia? Worse, could it be that bonus-oriented behavior helps rise to the top managers with only reluctant followership in Iberia?

Yet, what is particular to Iberia is Christianity, with its Catholic avowed proclivity to renunciation, which suggests that a culture of renunciation ought to be acceptable to about 1.4 billion Catholics,




I am not suggesting throwing the baby out with the water, but I am inviting you to meditate on the effectiveness across the world of the mainstream management toolkit

Orthodox or Romans. Furthermore, there is enough evidence to accept Buddhist and Hindu influences into early Christianity, denounced as from about the second century after the birth of Christ, but familiar enough to the point that Portuguese explorers when arriving in India twelve centuries later took Hinduism for a stray Catholic religion.

A bonus is not more likely to steer a saint than it is to steer a sadhu. Hinduism and Jainism also have an ascetic orientation and have close to one billion adherents. Buddhism also shares a similar orientation to renunciation, and there are about half a billion Buddhists in the world. One could go on adding people who share a favorable view on renunciation, but we already are

at close to 3 billion people who may see no harm in accepting a bonus but might not relate it as quickly to an incentive to work, at least not as readily as presumed to be the case in conventional management.

I am not suggesting throwing the baby out with the water, but I am inviting you to meditate on the effectiveness across the world of the mainstream management toolkit. 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DR. ALFREDO BEHRENS lectures with Harvard Business School Publishing and coordinates subject areas at the IME Business School, with the Universidad de Salamanca, Spain. His most recent book, *Gaucha Dialogues on Leadership and Management*, Anthem Press, 2018, was nominated to be turned into a TV series.



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