

Human Capital

REALISING BUSINESS STRATEGY THROUGH PEOPLE

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The Digital Transformation Ecosystem

Dr. Moorthy Uppaluri

Digitalizing HR: A Journey of Transformation

Madhuparna Panigrahi

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Global Head Novartis Learning Institute, Regions
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Head of Novartis Learning Institute - India

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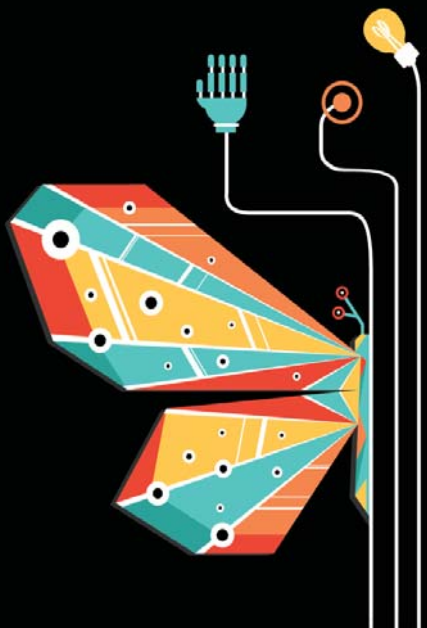
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This issue of **HUMAN CAPITAL**
contains 76 pages including cover

From The Publisher's Desk



In the October edition, Human Capital explores the phenomenon of 'Digital Fusion' in the world of work. Across the planet, businesses are no strangers to the paradigm shift sparked by technological disruptions. The much-heralded future of work where AI will work hand in glove with humans is currently underway, and thus, successfully navigating the transformational changes becomes more important than ever.

This edition covers pertinent industry practices, fascinating insights, and startling perspectives that illustrate the concepts and illuminate holistic strategies for businesses to thrive in a digitally powered economy. A central insight which has emerged is that digital transformation is not merely about upgrading the IT infrastructure - it is about developing

new ways of thinking to reimagine and reinvent core business paradigms. Also, it is primarily about people, as the 'human factor' will increase in importance. Hence, the edition focusses on improving both 'human' and 'digital' elements.

In this issue, we interacted with Brigitte Gubler and Sriram Rajan, Novartis Learning Institute's Global and India Heads, respectively, to understand about strategic deployment of corporate learning amid changes engendered by the digital era. The interview also takes an in-depth look at how the Swiss pharma giant is moving towards an 'unbossed' organisational culture.

In the Employee Wellness section, Vishal Nagda, Head-HR, Ozone Group, divulges the secrets of weaving engagement into the fabric of work.

The Expert Talk section features a varied collection of articles by eminent industry leaders, ranging from how digital aspirations sprout and flourish, cultivating curious learners, the art & science of retention, humanitarian exit strategies, to leading from the heart.

If you've been in the HR world for a while, you've probably heard of Josh Bersin, one of the world's leading industry analysts. His radical management innovations have taken the world by storm. Catch our exclusive conversation with Josh, wherein he shares data-driven insights in light of today's disruptive and dynamic world. Towards the end of our interaction with him, we also get up close and personal with the global thought leader.

Carpe Diem!

Neha Jain
Managing Partner



Language: Your Weapon in the Talent War

Language sets you in a corridor for life, but the usage of right words in the right place at the right time opens every door along the way.

According to LinkedIn's Language Matters gender diversity report 2019, the words different genders use to describe themselves impact their experiences throughout the hiring process and at work. For the study, over 15,000 employees and employers were examined worldwide including Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, the Netherlands, Singapore, the UK, and the US.

The report takes an in-depth look at the inadvertent language bias trends, to empower organizations in embracing a more gender-balanced workforce. In a bid to attract the most diverse pool of candidates, recruiters must know the words, terms and content that should be avoided.

The word "aggressive" was found to deter 44% of women and 33% of men from applying for the job role. The LinkedIn report noted that one

in four women would be discouraged from working where "demanding" is used in the job description as this word might reflect negatively on company culture or workload.

The report suggested that recruiters should consider using words like 'supportive', 'diligent', and 'confident' to describe their ideal candidate and always pay attention to describe the workplace atmosphere while sharing a job post. Also, words like 'fast-paced' should be used and avoid terms such as 'pressured' which suggest a negative working environment.

Both genders responded positively to job descriptors such as "powerful," "strong-willed" and "confident".

The study also revealed that the word 'likeable' is a preferred choice for 38% of women as compared to just 29% men, and the term 'supportive' is prioritized by 39% women and 32% men. Apart from this, both men and women see themselves as 'powerful' in the workplace, but in the media, assumptions about professional traits are often tied strongly to gender.

The top three words favoured by both genders to describe themselves in a job interview were: "hard-working" (58% of women and 49% of men), "good at my job" (48% of women and 42% of men) and "confident" (42% of women and 40% of men).

Interestingly, the word 'ambitious' is used by 35% of women and 32% of men during a job interview, whereas once in the role, the same word is used by just 26% of women and 28 % of men during a performance review.

Majority of hiring managers (92% of those surveyed) stated that 'soft skills' are more important than 'hard skills'. Over 60% of women perceived soft skills as being a female-gendered term, while 52% of men associated soft skills with the male gender. However, women are more likely to actively showcase soft skills on LinkedIn, whereas men their hard skills.

With this report, it is understood that the selection of appropriate language has a significant impact in the workplace as well as during hiring process. 

From The Esoteric To The Mundane

BY GAUTAM BRAHMA

It should be the sacred responsibility of HR managers to ensure as far as possible that the workplace is free of stalking and other threats to individual privacy.

Of late, the issue of data privacy and protection has been doing the rounds in the media. 'Data is the new oil' is the flavour of the day. Service providers catering to the western markets have been working hard to ensure that their data management complies with obligations such as the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and other equivalent governmental requirements.

The practice in India is, in fact, more or less casual. While we disapprove of data being used for purposes other than what it is intended for, and by unauthorised people, we hardly fuss over it. This is truly unfortunate and needs to change. One knows of people who change jobs and take company data along with them for using it in the new workplace. Sometimes, that includes personnel data drawn for building teams in their new setup. Shops and establishments sometimes share customer data with other service providers they do not compete with. It is common to receive calls where the telemarketer surprisingly has detailed knowledge of one's assets, e.g. cars to be exchanged, properties to be sold or leased, appliances to be serviced, cable connections to be upgraded, sim cards for upcoming overseas travel, insurance providers to be changed before due premium, and so on. Apart from being intrusive and irritating, such data leaks can be downright dangerous, because some of these details may form a part of identity authentication in internet-based service arrangements. Criminals can dredge through such data to establish linkages to other data like date of birth or complete address and patiently build capability for identity theft and access

to financial assets. Even academic researchers, who should be most sensitive to such issues, do not establish perpetual safeguards for individual data collected through surveys etc. for the paper, dissertation, or thesis that is being written by them.

Service providers who need customer data for internal planning sometimes 'anonymise' such data in case they are required to share it with internal functions and external agencies. For instance, a cab service provider may need to analyse data related to cab usage, user locations, frequency of usage, the time range, and the days of the week it was used. They may strip details such as precise address and phone number to ensure that precise details of customers are not made available to anyone in case of a data leak. This may appear as a reasonable measure. However, recent research suggests that new techniques of data aggregation and analysis can help reconstruct the identity of individuals. This is done by intelligently matching anonymised data from unrelated sources, e.g. travel data from a cab service provider (required for fleet planning) with telephone usage data from a telecom service provider (required for network planning). In July this year, in a paper published in Nature Communications, Luc Rochers and his colleagues have shown that identities of individuals can be reconstructed with 99.98% accuracy with access to just about fifteen attributes (not including names or other unique data). This suggests that the battle for data privacy has been lost for good in the face of interested parties with adequate computing resources.

Researchers will no doubt work on

About the Author

Gautam Brahma is a management consultant advising start-ups and SMEs, on strategy & operations including sales, HR & IT. He carries an experience of over four decades in the public, private and non-profit sectors, in telecommunications and IT industries. He has been an invited speaker on multiple industry forums and has been a monthly columnist on HR issues for close to two decades. Gautam is based out of Gurgaon and can be reached at gautam.brahma@bizmentor.in.

countering this with other measures to protect personal privacy, though given the rise of computing power, superior analytics, and AI, it is unclear what those could be. Meanwhile, closer home, we can hope for greater sensitisation through punitive legislation, to identify and protect individual data. In some cases, this protection could extend to certified destruction after use. This may seem as straightforward, but is devilishly complex. For instance, an alumni body preparing a yearbook with alumni details may be facilitating condensed access to a wealth of crucial data including photo-identity, address, year of qualification, and the nature of employment (which is a surrogate for income).

In fact, in our country, we have other more mundane and equally intractable privacy problems of a different kind. The rise of CCTV as a surveillance tool has been welcomed in companies and communities to monitor and investigate undesirable behaviour. Unfortunately, people who have access to footage from the ever-increasing number of CCTV cameras, some of which capable of being zoomed and panned remotely, are neither trained to be responsible nor held accountable. There have been cases of third party security staff in establishments, spending time in voyeuristic activities, and even downloading and circulating short video clips of unsuspecting individuals going about with their routine. With the advent of applications like TikTok, it is easy to edit such clips and overlay sounds to create mischievous content. CCTV cameras in public areas provide a similar potential for abuse. It is almost always unclear who has access to the CCTV footage, and how that access is being monitored and controlled. It is very hard to regulate

the misuse of CCTV facilities in small establishments, and in public domain. However, in large professionally managed establishments, HR managers must take the lead in establishing protocols for access, training for users, restricting the use of mobile devices and sanitising such devices to remove video editing apps. The workplace should be free of stalking and other threats to individual privacy as far as possible, and HR managers should see this as their sacred responsibility.

The threat from malicious use of mobile phones to record individuals in the workplace has been reported in the media, and there are well-publicised cases processed in courts as well. Most establishments with any documented service regulations handle this in one way or the other, including restrictions on the usage of phones. The threat from easily available, but unauthorised spy cameras, placed by rogue elements to record unsuspecting individuals in their private moments is also real and has been widely written about. This is undoubtedly criminal and requires no new regulation, and only warrants strict enforcement. However, the threat from officially approved CCTV cameras is under-appreciated and needs managerial attention. 

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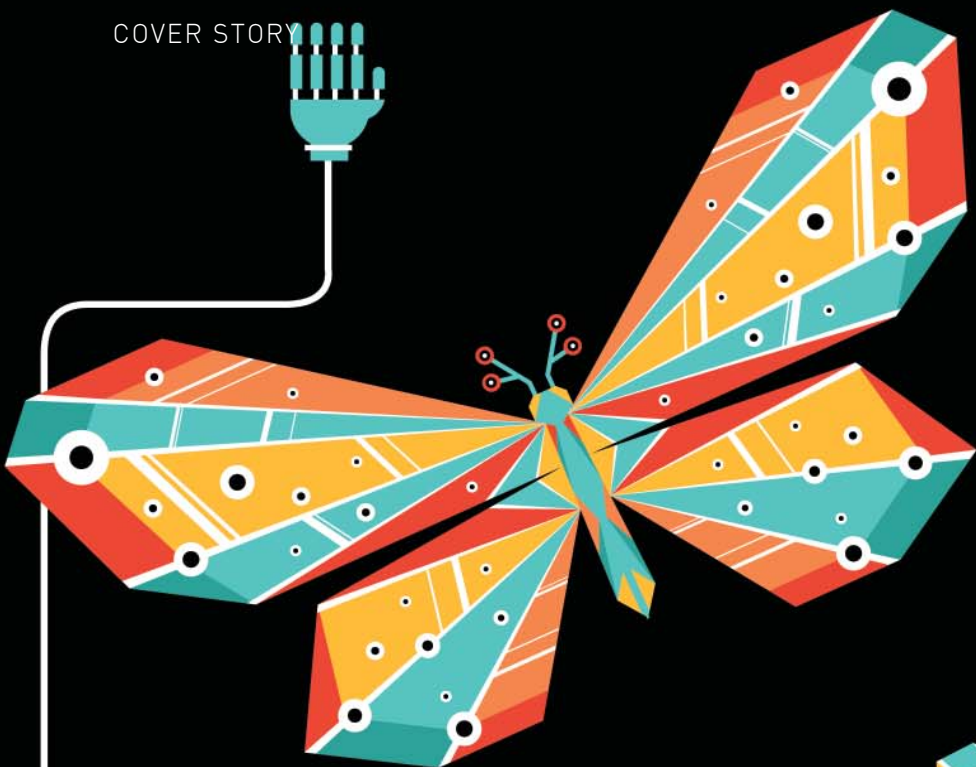
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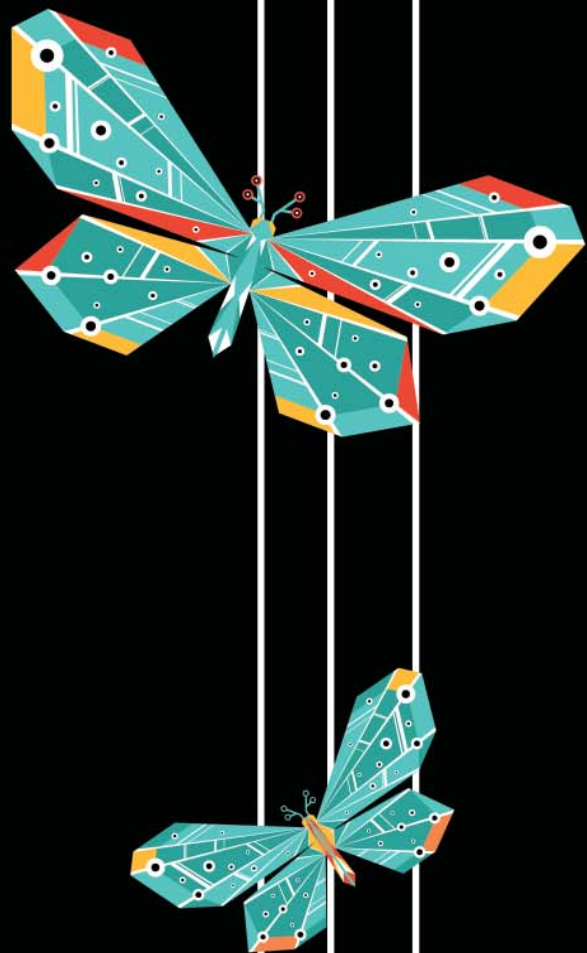
DIGITAL FUSION

Strategizing for Transformation

“It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change”

— Charles Darwin

BY MADHUPARNA PANIGRAHI



What is the difference between a chameleon and a caterpillar? You might wonder how they are even on the same plane of comparison. The question might sound banal and yet, these species are two of the most fascinating creatures of nature that have the power to change phenomenally. They prove Darwin's theory of adaptability on the point. But if you notice closely, a chameleon transitions from one color to another, depending on its environment. But a caterpillar transforms. While both the species are highly adaptable to changes in their respective environment, it is only a caterpillar that transforms into a whole new being.

Change is inevitable

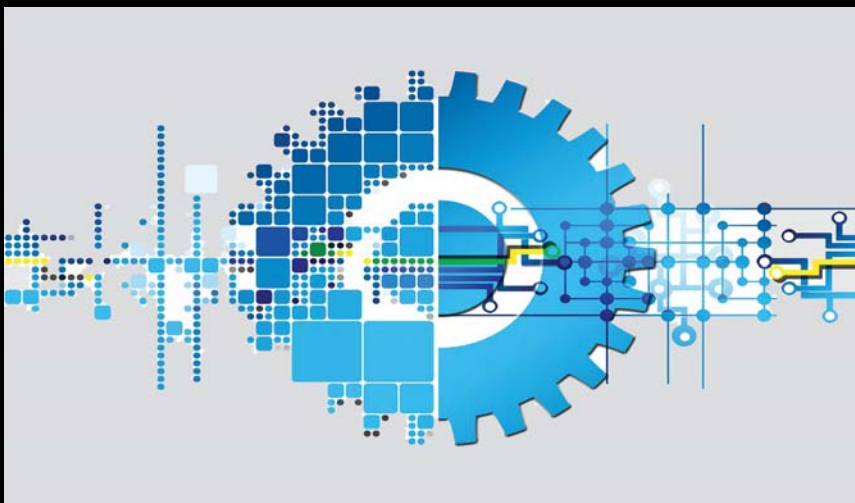
Whether it is in nature or our man-made world. It is more pertinent in the present day, when everything that we have known, seen, learned or heard is undergoing radical changes. From our lifestyles to work practices, we are at the juncture of serious transformations into the third industrial revolution. It is indeed a revolution of a sort when digital disruption has brought about phenomenal changes to every aspect of a business. Of all, human resources have been most affected. Why? Because, it deals with people; living, breathing, talking, thinking, people, and not automated, mechanical systems and processes. Perhaps that is why when HR seeks digital transformation within the definition of the buzzword, it appears overwhelming and daunting.

Let us back up a little and understand what digital transformation is all about. According to Salesforce and leading digital theorists,

Digital transformation is the process of using digital technologies to create new -- or modify existing-- business processes, culture, and customer experiences to meet changing business and market requirements. This reimagining of business in the digital age is digital transformation.

While we do know by now what it is, it is important to understand what it really means. Digital Transformation is not the process of digital changes or the tools used to implement such changes, but the journey and its outcome, which results in a whole new being of HR, just like a caterpillar turning into an incredible butterfly. It is an adaptation of a new work lifestyle and getting a fresh perspective on this integral part of an organization.

The essence of Digitization, digitalization, and digital transformation



Have you often noticed how more than most people blur the lines between digitization, digitalization, and digital transformation? They might sound similar, but they technically aren't. There is a thin line of differentiation between the three. It is more like phases of one journey, one leading to the other and not necessarily defining the entire journey.

Before we even talk about digital transformation in its real sense, we must clarify these three concepts for the sake of clarity.

These three terms, often used interchangeably, have subtle differences in meaning. Each step leads to the next. It is important to identify these differences to know where you stand in the digital transformation journey.

Digitization

It is a shift from analog systems. Digitization may or may not be all-encompassing and can be limited to specific work areas, or executed to

create a revamped organizational system.

Digitalization

It harnesses the power of digitization to bring holistic changes to a system or process. It uses all possible digital tools to transform business processes into something more efficient. It is pervasive and leads to a change in culture and practice of using technology at all levels. It is by and large prevalent across analytics, where large volumes of data cannot be manually managed or analyzed.

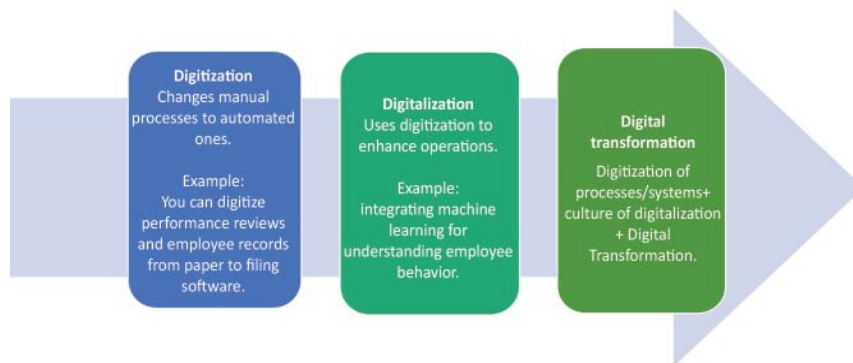
Digital transformation

It comprises both digitization and digitalization. It transforms the DNA of the organization using automated processes and developing a culture of adapting to automation. Above and beyond automation, it also helps to identify key concern areas that can be solved efficiently using technology tools, thus making organizations agile, and adaptable to the evolution.

In a way, digital transformation is a sum of digitization and digitalization.

You might consider it to be a revolutionary change, but, at the core, it is essentially an evolutionary event. While you are undergoing the process of transformation, it is also going to lead to a transition of business with technology and the tools thereof. This, eventually will invariably cause a shift in the organizational culture and approach to operations. The question, however, is that can you execute this successfully and balance it all out?

silos. For effective transformation to happen or reflect, it needs to start at the top, weave its way through different levels of administration and management, and trickle down to the bottom line. Those who are at the top of the HR ecosystem, have followed this formula of transformation and become drivers of the big change. Take the instances of some of the leading global organizations like CISCO, Unilever, and IBM, to name a few, who are harnessing the power of digital integration to



Transformation – The need of the hour

HR has shed its skin of a mere support function and become an essential tool to redefine the bottom line through digitalization. If you look around, you will hear the trending buzzword called 'Digital DNA'. It's like altering the genetic composition of the organization. Why? Because, like every other industry spaces, or any department within an organization, HR is also experiencing an intense, rapid, and radical change.

Changing market demands, evolved workforces, innovative technology, and so on, are making HR leaders arm themselves with the weapons of digital disruption to adapt to such changes through programs that foster productivity, wellness, engagement, and most importantly, a sense of purpose for the people.

Way to prominent, and pertinent changes

Change, especially in an organizational environment, cannot happen in

successfully enhance the human factor of human resources.

One of the major application of digitalization has been to transform rudimentary processes like hiring, appraisal, promotion, planning, etc. through analytics. So far finding the right people and optimizing the workforce strategically has been highly qualitative, but managing the same with hard number have made them more sophisticated.

Then, there is the use of mixed realities. Global businesses are implementing Augmented and Virtual Reality applications to improve productivity and provide new learning experiences like immersive training, improved collaboration, hand-free data access, and much more. Thus, transforming brick-and-mortar workplaces into tech-savvy and trendy environments that meet the new age workforce experience.

The Transformation Roadmap

No journey of transformation can be completed without a well laid

out plan because the experience of the journey will define the outcome. One needs a clear strategy to enable digital transformation and reach the ultimate goals, which is to say, is being a future-ready organization. The transformation strategy is derived out of the overarching HR strategy and poses some pertinent questions, albeit to be answered by the initiators of change. And, at every step, few significant questions need to be asked, to pave a clear way.

Define clear goals – *What do you want to achieve out of this transformation? Will it benefit those involved in the process? Will it positively impact the ultimate business goals? Is the goal measurable?*

At the end of it all, it should benefit the user with results they expect from this entire process and the goal has to be in sync with the ultimate business goal. Remember it is the outcome that matters and not the output.

Identify your resources– *Who will carry out the changes and in which order? What time frame should be given to each process/tool of change?*

Of course, to implement these changes in the right manner and at the right time, you will need to invest in certain resources and tools. Depending on the extent and intensity of change, these resources will vary. For example, if you are going to go AI integration for performance evaluation, you might need a data scientist and use the insights to improve overall employee strategy.

Prepare for change – *How will the change affect those involved? Is starting small an easier way to approach the transformation?*

Every journey needs some kind of preparation. When you are embarking on organizational changes, it will invariably raise questions, doubts, concerns, and expectations of people. The idea is to get them ready, emotionally first, and then function-wise.

Create a culture of digitalization – *What will it mean to everyone involved in the process? How do we*



30%
Improvement
in work cycle
of critical
processes
across
organizations



50%
Firms are
already using
data to
understand
attrition,
retention &
performance.



71%
Firms plan to
acquire
people
analytics in
immediate
future.

**Data source: CISCO, Workforce Experience 2020*

***Firms refer to global organizations and numbers represent global workforce.*

get them acquainted to the new systems?

As mentioned earlier, digital transformation requires a cultural transformation as well. Unless and until people are emotionally and physiologically driven, it gets difficult to get them acquainted to a new lifestyle. It's not just about what to use but how and why to use it. Only when people start using technology as a natural approach to any solution, will the entire exercise be successful.

Make room for fallbacks – What if it doesn't work?

A question that might be a concern to the decision-makers, but valid, nevertheless. It is quite likely that the process of transformation might not work for a certain organization

or even within a team. What do you do then? Like every journey has an alternative route, you can also revisit your approach and see what went missing and at what stage and take a different turn. It is possible that the timing might not have been right. Or, perhaps, you need more resources. Or maybe, you need to re-strategize. Sometimes, going back to the drawing board gives you the opportunity to do it all better.

It's not about 'doing digital, it's about 'being' so.

Being 'digital first' is the need of the hour. There is remotely no doubt that digital application can essentially make it faster, better, and easier to manage and build the humans of human resources. But

the real essence of being digital lies in a complete transformation of mindset and approach and not just mechanically adopting the tools of technology. That is why, apart from enhancing analog processes like recruiting, onboarding, and talent management, organizational HR should meet the employees' expectations from this changing environment. A refined HR-strategy that involves digitalization across different functions, using applications, analytics, digital platforms, and much more, lies at the heart of this journey. And most importantly, allow yourself, your people, and your systems ample time to adapt and adopt. It takes time to evolve and land in the future. Every level of change demands its own bandwidth and cannot be rushed. From the time you initiate changes to the stage where you have successfully changed yourself, requires a gestation period; quite like the caterpillar in the cocoon, awaiting quietly to break apart and spread its wings. **HC**



uses hackathons to create digital solutions like YouBelong@Cisco app and Ask Alex. YouBelong assists in onboarding processes and Ask Alex is a virtual assistance assigned for simple tasks like searching for HR queries.



had renamed its HR department to "People Operations". It is a data-driven function used to quantify decisions about hiring, promotion, training, and culture and is known to yield insights.



has launched a digital learning platform with a completely customizable experience for the employees.



uses a completely automated hiring process that gathers, sorts, and disseminates applicants' data. They are also exploring other tools like online games, social media, and AI at different levels of employee engagement, to understand and analyze behavior and performance.

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**Subhashini Sriram**

Senior Director - Human Resources, Unisys India

“Human genius lies in creativity, adaptability, and social intelligence. Digital transformation is yet another evidence of how humans advance in leveraging creative tools to better their lives. Digital will remain as an advanced supporting tool that will allow time for humans to move towards higher and better causes. In an organisational context, digital transformation revolutionises the company's internal operations and drives cost savings that could then be reinvested to accelerate faster growth and better business outcomes. An organisation can create an environment of technology leadership that co-exists with a sustainable HR model to keep the evolution going. Digital transformation will not replace the workforce but will in fact enhance human capability provided employees are provided with the right reskilling and upskilling programmes.”

Hemant Sethi

Country Head India, British Safety Council India

“Digital transformation has fundamentally altered the way we live, work, and relate to each another. The power of digital is immense and most organisations have realised that digital platforms have enabled and stimulated innovative forms of work and talent management. They are governing most sections- from productivity to workforce composition, hiring decisions to business analytics and performance management systems to learning content. However, organisations have to realise that digital transformation is not just about web and social media and there much more to it. At its heart, digital transformation is about changing minds as much as it is about replacing technologies”

**Jayati Roy**

Director HR, Barco India.

“HR transformation is here to stay and given the advent of technology, this transformation is being led by Digitisation of most HR processes. To enable this evolution in HR Digitisation, it is imperative that, like any transformation exercise, digital transformation is handled with a lot of care, keeping in mind the cascading impact technology can have on any process. Therefore, instead of going all out to change the entire workflow, it is prudent to look at a staged approach - where we plan and implement in the agile way of working and then keep improving post feedback from customers and internal customers.”

**Debashree Lad**

Head - Human Capital, CredAble

“The basic endeavour of the Human Capital function has not changed over the years. Its primary focus has been "to contribute to the organisational success by assuring that the right numbers of the right people are in the right places at the right times doing the right things in the right ways. Digital transformation is an enabler for this function which is an amalgamation of people, processes, and systems. The use of technological tools in managing processes like, performance management, employee feedback and time management raises the bar of expectations of the employees. Technology is a facilitator which further helps the evolution of Human resources, where people form the core of this function.”



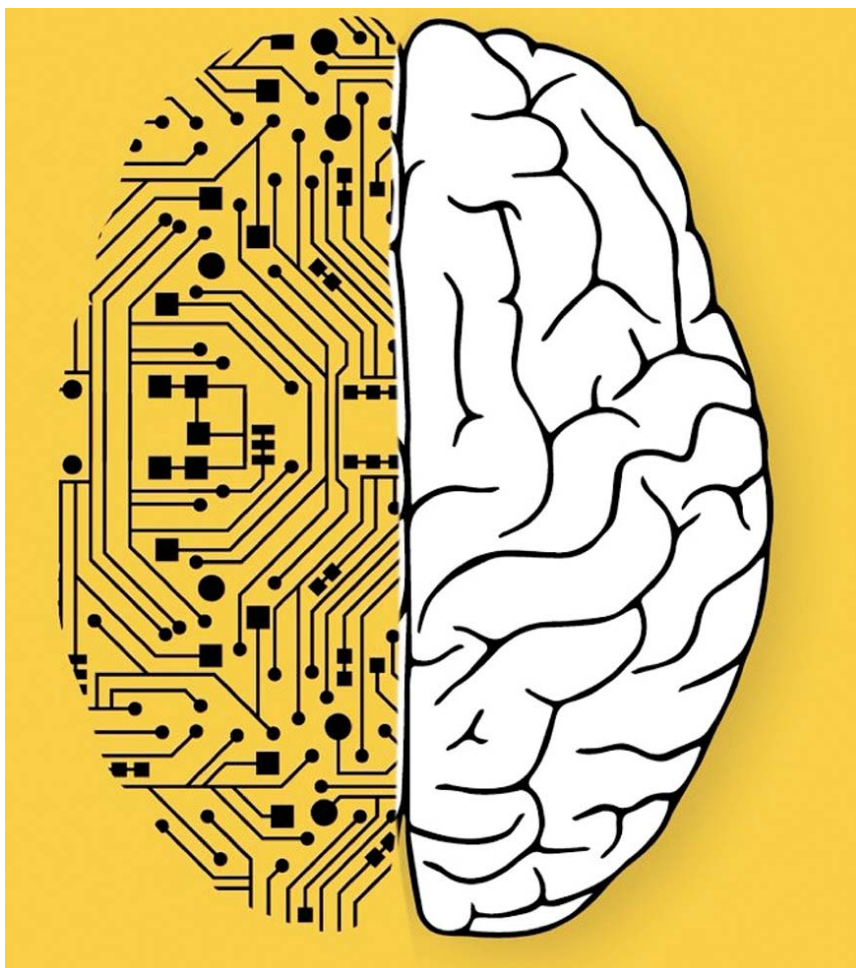
The Digital Transformation Ecosystem

BY DR. MOORTHY UPPALURI

Digital transformation, in simple terms, is the infusion of digital technology in all areas of business to enhance effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and stakeholder experience spanning across employees, customers, partners, suppliers, and shareholders. It's built upon a foundation of strong leadership, encouraging innovation in thinking, processes, and business models. It fundamentally requires the organizational culture to change and adapt - by challenging the status quo, experimenting with new ways of working, and accepting 'failing fast' as the new norms.

Business leaders expect their investments in IT to fuel revenue growth. The top operational priority which used to be "improving business processes for enhanced productivity", now is "developing innovative new products and business models to grow the top line". Embracing this shift requires everyone in the organization to rethink the role and impact of technology in their day-to-day experience, and harness the power of digital innovation. While the focus in the past was limited to improving data quality and hastening up the turn-around-time of various HR processes, application of digital in HR now extends beyond productivity to enhance recruitment success, employee engagement and retention.

Fostering digital collaboration, the virtual workforce, and partner ecosystem is key to drive inclusive growth. In this staged approach, 'digital' can be applied to any area of the HR function depending on the priorities and requirements of the business. For example, HR analytics in the talent acquisition



Credit: Gerd Leonhard/Flickr

domain can improve mapping and recruitment of the right talent for the right roles on right time. This improves employee productivity, engagement, and morale while reducing unwarranted attrition. Applying artificial intelligence and machine learning further sharpens the focus of such efforts. Similar technologies can help in customizing the employee, leadership and organizational development programs to create the required pull and traction. Digital technology enables 'anytime, anywhere' learning that is

cost-effective and customizable at the individual level.

Given that technology transformation is comprehensive, all-encompassing, and must be executed coherently to yield tangible results, it's vital to have a clear roadmap with a prioritized set of business objectives. HR is a critical function to help create an organization-wide impact, influencing the culture and behaviours of employees, systemically and consistently, particularly across geographically-



dispersed locations. It could bear evidence of demonstrating and measuring the business advantage through an inspired, well-aligned, and empowered workforce.

Well-defined and measurable metrics which help monitor and track the impact on the business parameters is essential to ensure that digital transformation is headed in the right direction. Tangible and clear metrics like reduction in recruiting costs, improvement in employee engagement, cutting down the turn-around-time for employee services, expansion in scope of the offerings for employee development, enhancing the quality and availability of employee data, insights on early warnings about potential attrition, etc. will help gain valuable insights and track the return on investments in digital technologies.

Digital transformation has different implications. It might make some of the prevailing business processes redundant and introduce new models that were non-existent. This not only improves the process agility and efficiency but also enhances its effectiveness. While it may seem like a logical evolution of some processes, it might disrupt many others. Digitizing the existing processes as-is might create no efficiency or competitive advantage. Re-engineering processes, by considering customer insights is a strategic opportunity that cannot be missed. It's both prudent and logical to presume that employee referral, talent mapping, assessment, interviewing, and background

verification processes as we know them will either get eliminated due to inherent data redundancy or get integrated with other elements of recruiting, making the quality go up while shrinking the overall cycle-time. A good example of such evolution is the 'live and dynamic' professional network platforms. The recommendations, references, ratings/assessments, verification of experiences and academic credentials, etc. as being claimed by the candidates can be both verified and validated online in real-time, even before the profile is referred or submitted to any prospective employer.

The 'human experience' is a great navigational tool to determine the extent to which the processes can be digitized. Application of technology might compromise the human element and thereby diminish the ability to create stickiness and

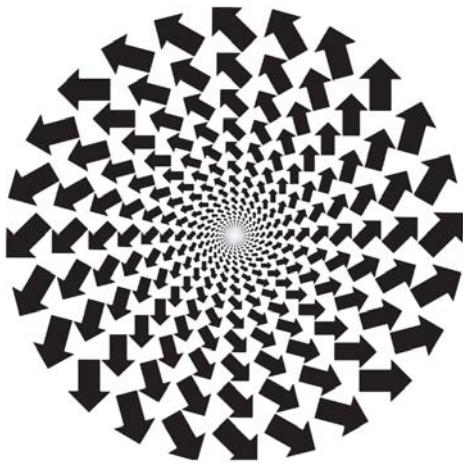
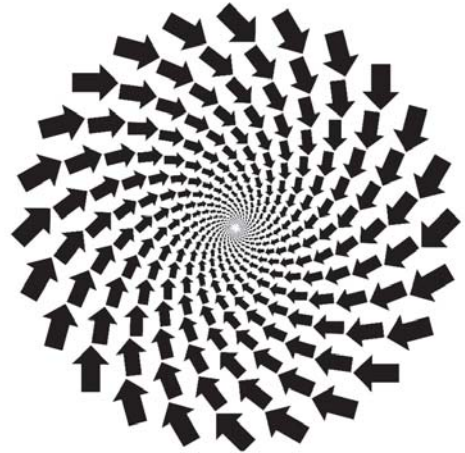
loyalty of the users. Modern technologies should help the user manoeuvre through a maze of options and optimize the overall experience. HR must be a conscience keeper and help protect the various aspects of culture and employee engagement while transforming the business through digitization so that the baby is not thrown away with the bathwater. Human experience as a strategic differentiator is critical throughout this journey of business transformation, and HR must enable that.

Redefining business models & methods is an ongoing process to remain relevant to the target market and stay ahead of the competition. Hence, there is no specific time to initiate the use of digital technologies. For some, this might mean challenges in terms of legacy platforms and overriding the sunk costs, while for others it might

Strategic dimensions to consider when embarking on the digital transformation journey



Businesses that have operational elasticity may choose to embark on the digital transformation journey ‘outside-in’, from customers to inside operations in order to prioritize revenue growth through enhanced customer reach, relevancy, stickiness, consumption, affinity, frequency of transactions and yield per transaction. This implies increased emphasis on digital marketing, omnichannel presence, and world-class customer experience through insights backed by deep analytics on customer acquisition, engagement, retention and loyalty.



Enterprises that must first derive efficiencies and build agility before responding to market stimuli and scaling-out must start digital transformation ‘inside-out’, from shop-floor operations to the markets outside. This implies focusing on anytime, anywhere, any device (mobile-first) for ease of doing business. It also includes connected products, pay as you go, and acute customization/personalization to the extent of one customer per segment to help the business expand to new markets.

be an advantage in terms of migration ease from one good technology platform to another or leapfrogging from nothing in technology to something great. The roadmap of going digital has to be architected, taking into consideration the organizational climate, culture, and business priorities. What worked in one company might be a complete failure in another.

Let there be no mistake in understanding who the sponsor of the digital transformation program is. It's not the IT department alone or the marketing department alone, but it's the business leadership in collaboration with cross-functional teams, supporting and empowering one another towards achieving the business goals. HR, as a business

partner, must keep the leadership honest at all times, uphold and balance the interests of both business and people during this strategic transformation.

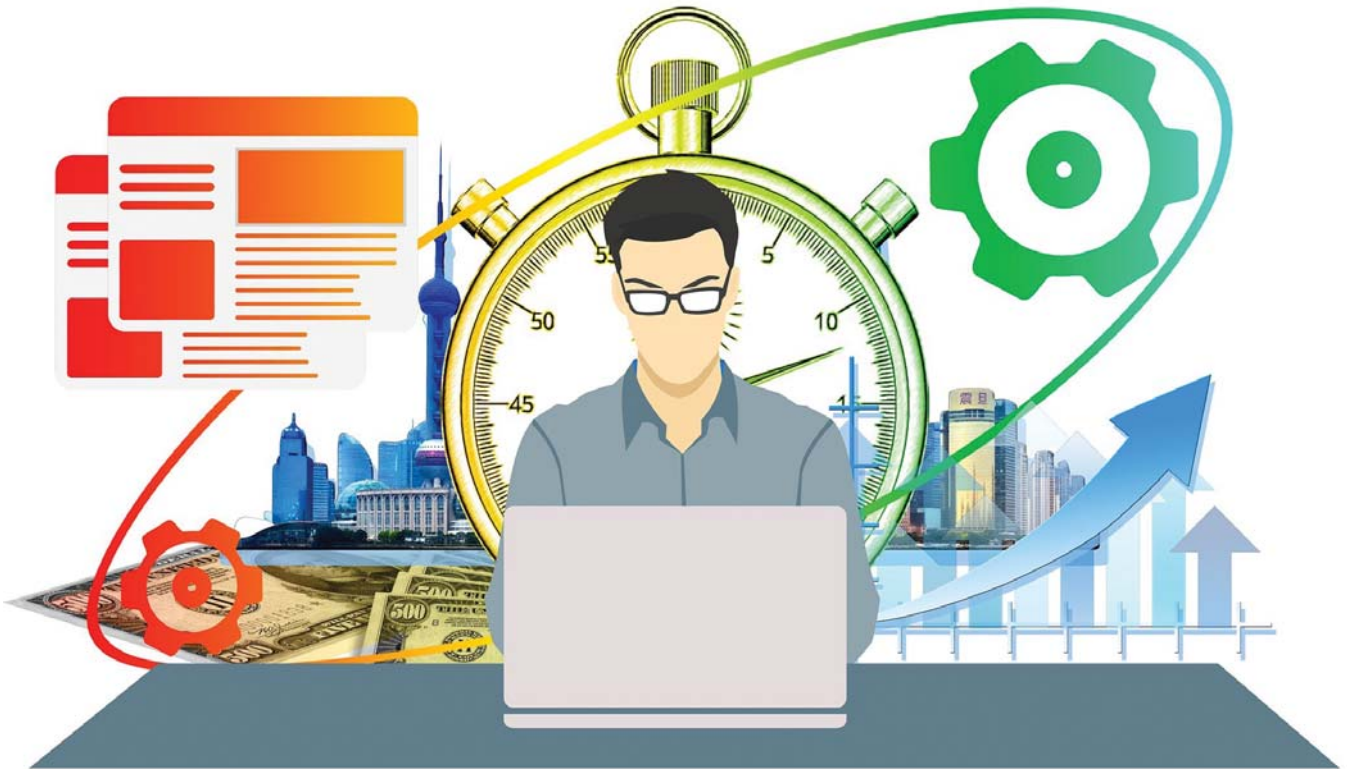
All along the journey of digital transformation, bear in mind that people are at the core of envisioning the strategy, designing the plan, implementing and operationalizing it. Moreover, HR is not the only custodian of talent, culture, and human capital. Accountability must be established throughout the organization, within and across functions, to achieve shared goals and ensure that the organization stays well-aligned over the long haul.

Finally, digital transformation requires users (both inside and outside the company) to be appraised,

upskilled, and enabled, just like in any other IT project implementation. HR, in conjunction with Marketing/ PR should lead the efforts of building up momentum to initiate and sustain this change. 

About the Author

Dr. Moorthy Uppaluri is the former CEO and MD - Randstad India, a global business leader, an angel investor and advisor to early-stage startups. With vast domestic and international experience across diverse sectors like IT, manufacturing, and professional services, Moorthy is credited with evolving business strategy, building brands, growing market share, improving operational excellence, driving innovation and fostering a people-centric culture. He is also a featured author and an eminent speaker.



Part-Time Gigs: The New Full-Time Reality

Year after year, the concept of work is changing across all sectors with the advancement of technologies, internet penetration and digitalisation. Among the key factors that are impacting the business culture is the rising trend of "gig economy or flex economy". It is a diverse ecosystem of talented workforce irrespective of their age, income levels, geographical locations, ethnicity and gender.

A recent Times Jobs report titled 'Is gig economy the future of India's workforce?' found that people prefer freelance jobs over full-time jobs. On average, almost 10-20 % of the current workforce in an organization are flexi staff. For this report, over 1,600 HR professionals across different industries were examined to understand perspectives around the gig economy.

"Most of the organisations, be it small or large are opting for a

contingent workforce when they have a clearly defined job role and responsibilities. While the services sector will be highly impacted by the alternative workforce, some overlapping functions of each sector like marketing, IT, client services, and consultancy services can be outsourced to freelancers. Apart from organised sectors, unorganised sectors will hire a lot of contingent blue collar workers", said Siddhartha Gupta, CEO, Mercer|Mettl.

Interestingly, about 45% of HR professionals revealed that more men are recruited as freelancers as compared to women, whereas, only 29% of respondents said that women are preferred. Also, around 36% of industry professionals stated that 20-30% of contingent workforce is hired by them at an average in a year.

The report also throws light on the top locations in India, where the growth and demand of freelance are on pace. About 48% of survey respondents revealed that Tier-1 cities like Bengaluru, Delhi and

Mumbai have the highest demand for contractual workers. In Tier-2 cities, the temp workforce is most in-demand at locations like Chandigarh, Lucknow, Jaipur and Nagpur. It was also discovered that the demand for gig workers is lower in Tier-3 cities. Start-ups and tech companies functioning in Tier-1 and Tier-2 cities are leveraging the benefits of the shared economy, making a dramatic shift in the existing talent requirements.

According to a report by the Indian Staffing Federation (ISF), India is at fifth position in terms of flexi-staffing. It has added about 1.2 million flexi-workers in the last three years, and this number is expected to multiply to 6.1 million over the upcoming three years, accelerating growth to 22.7% by 2021.

With this, it is clear that the future of 'gig economy' is bright in India as it is among the top 10 countries for freelancers in the world of work. And the significant contributors to this trend are start-ups, tech companies and Millennials. 

Navigating the Maze: How to Shape Your HR Role

“A combination of Operations and HR is important to create your niche and panache.”

How many HR leaders make it to the boardroom? Why do people from the HR fraternity fail to become CEOs? How many of us would even dare to dream about making our presence felt in the Fortune Top 20 and be what Bill Conaty was to Jack Welch? These were the thoughts that left me wondering when I kick-started writing "Walk Through HR Maze."

To answer the questions, it is imperative to understand the role of a CEO. In my view, it could be broadly looked at through three dimensions:

- 1) Generating profitable growth
- 2) People management
- 3) Creating a leadership pipeline

The experts in the latter two competencies are none other than WE, the people in HR fraternity. Now, if we look at the core competency that CFOs bring to the table, it is obviously not people management & their ability to create a leadership pipeline. The question we need to ask here is: "in how many organisations do HR leaders enjoy equivalent or more respect than the CFO?" I haven't seen many in my career so far.

We as HR professionals tend to spend the majority of our time in initiating and instituting a wide variety of innovative programmes covering employee relations, performance management and succession planning to drive organisational performance, build meritocracy culture and focus on growth from

within, resulting in enhanced employee satisfaction scorecards. Without doubt, this is essential, and the leaders in the past have done the same. However, even now, in the 21st century, many of us tend to follow the suite. Today, the context is changing, and expectations are rising - not mathematically but geometrically.

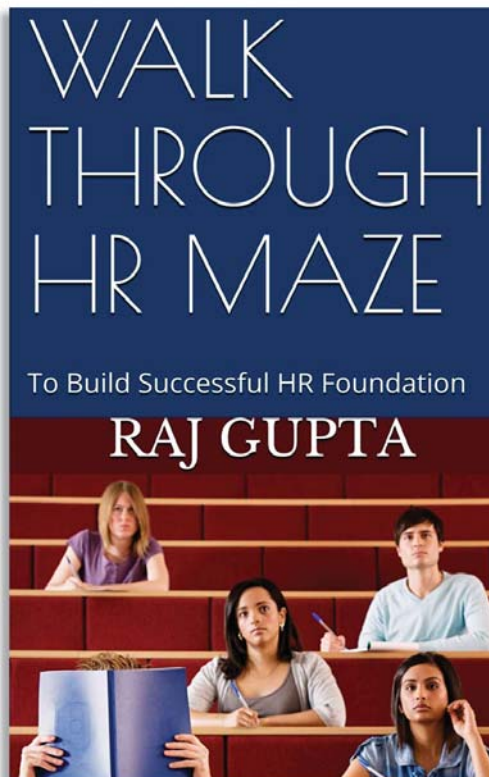
With the belief that HR has a significant role to play in shaping the corporate culture and provides a 'glue' that holds various organisational elements together, the book 'Walk Through the Maze' delves deeper into the role of HR and provides informative insights into HR functional expertise while also touching upon strategy and key goals. In a nutshell, the book helps:

- Readers get a conscious and objective overview of the entire HR value chain and its strands
- Management institutions to bring up HR Managers, thereby enhancing their success rate
- HR professionals to understand best practices and customise them to fit different business contexts.

The book caters to HR professionals of all ages and gives them a foundation oversight. It also guides budding experts and enables them to understand the nuances of the HR function and build requisite competencies. 

About the Author

Raj Gupta is an author and a senior HR professional. Bestowed with HR Super Achiever in India by World HRD Congress and Global HR Excellence Exemplary Leader Award at the Asia Pacific HRM Congress, Raj has 25 years of experience with US, UK, Europe and Indian Multinationals.



The Learning Makeover

Human Capital interacted with Brigitte E Gubler and Sriram Rajan, Novartis Learning Institute, Regions Global and India Heads, respectively, to understand the changing imperative of learning at work and discuss the breakthrough corporate learning initiatives that are driving strategic change and innovation at Novartis - one of the world's biggest pharma giants.

BY ANKITA SHARMA

“I cannot say whether things will get better if we change; what I can say is that they must change if they are to get better.”

– Georg Christoph Lichtenberg

It has become common sense that for competitive success and survival in today's fast-moving environment, learning must become an integral part of workplaces. We are witnessing a sharp rise in the importance and reputation of L&D that is now on equal footing with finance, marketing, and other high-priority departments.

Q Henry Ford once said, "Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty". What's your take on this quip?

Brigitte:

A Growing old is inevitable but stopping to learn is a self-inflicted poor choice. In a world where change is the one constant; continuous learning is what keeps you relevant. Seeing the world and every event as a learning opportunity means that you are growing. Age is a number given to you, but learning is the



'passport' to fulfilling your potential for every day you walk on this earth.

Q In the increasingly VUCA world, building a learning culture is not just a nice-to-have adjunct but a must-have necessity. What according to you, is the most significant shift in the L&D space?

Brigitte:

A Learning is power - to apply, push forward, adapt, reinvent and outperform. If you ignore learning and don't make it a priority, you are creating a 'reactive' organisation - one that is on the slide and then plays catch-up. The VUCA world is not an environment of catch-up.

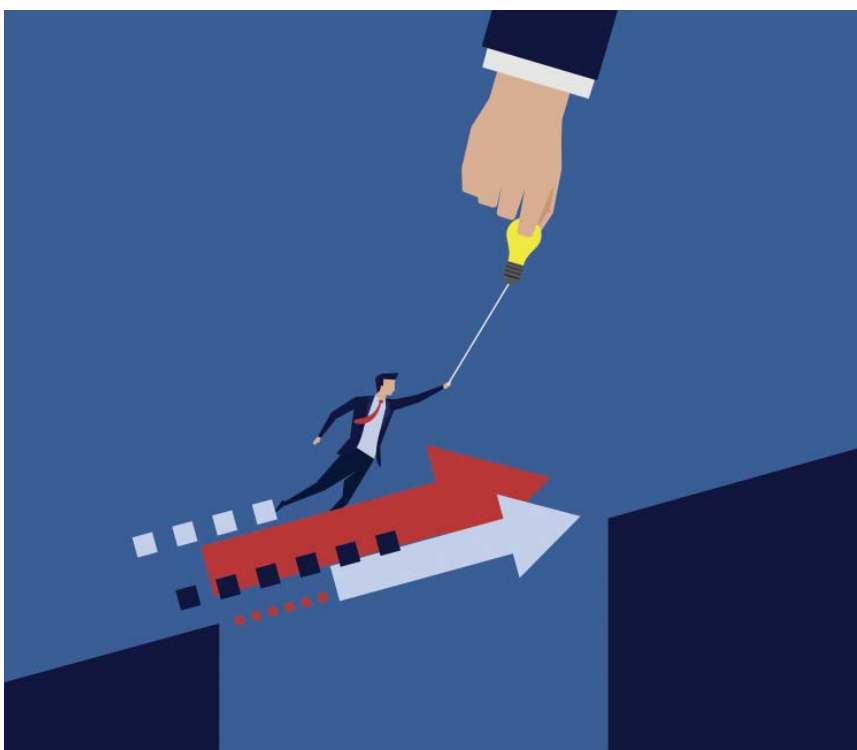
So learning is a must, and accessibility is critical. It has to be readily available at the learner's fingertips to help solve today's problems and explore tomorrow's options. This means that learning is at the centre of everyone's role. Organisations need to have learning integrated into associates' workflow to enable them to control their journey. So, learning is no longer a mere add-on to Performance Management System, but a system in itself that is pushing into new frontiers and challenging what we've done before - learning and unlearning.

Q Organisations are stepping away from traditional tick-in-the-box training and embracing learning that is engaging, relevant, and effective. At Novartis, how has the L&D function transformed over the last decade?

Brigitte:

A Transformation is the keyword here, whether it be from a business perspective where two powerhouses of the pharmaceutical industry (Ciba-Geigy & Sandoz) merged in 1996 to form Novartis, or from our continuous quest to "reimagine medicine" for our customers and patients. The process of transformation never stops, as learning has to adapt to enable associates in becoming the best versions of themselves.

Novartis is Latin, meaning "New



Arts/New Skills". So, transformation is at the heart of everything we do. For learning, the critical transformation is becoming agile and fluid. Even in a necessarily, heavily regulated industry, the learner has to be provided with the knowledge that can be applied - not just known. So, learning for our 108,000 associates is now going beyond an 'event' and taking shape as a 'lifelong endeavour'. Learning and the roles of associates are now merged as the L&D function is creating an environment where knowledge, development, and application are all the same. This is entirely different from what was ten years ago when associates were taken away from work to learn.

Q 'Continuous improvement' and 'life-long learning' are mantras for many organisations today. What is the learning approach at Novartis? Could you outline some examples of how you at Novartis provide modern learning solutions to employees?

Brigitte:

A At Novartis, we have cultural aspirations to be inspired, curious, and 'unbossed'. Led by our CEO Vas Narasimhan, our key focus is on

how can we 'unboss' learning by infusing 'inspiration & curiosity' amongst all our associates globally. This has led to reimagining the learning architecture at Novartis. In addition to existing relationships with Skillsoft & GetAbstract, some of the key initiatives are an enterprise-wide partnership with Coursera and LinkedIn. We've made learning available to all, by removing nominations and approvals. This is a demonstration of being 'unbossed' as the learner takes accountability (aligned with our business purpose), and their leaders remove the obstacles and share the accountability of their development. Our leaders are even compiling playlists of great learning books and resources. These are shared on our learning portal.

Q Today's complex and rapidly changing business environment requires a different approach to leadership development. How do you nurture existing and emerging leaders at Novartis?

Sriram:

A Given the cultural transformation that we are in the midst of, leadership development becomes a very critical component, and given

the fact that India is the next big story in terms of growth - it becomes even more important. At Novartis, we have an entire suite of leadership interventions tailored for associates in an individual contributor role, going all the way up to an enterprise-wide leadership level. Our focus is to provide high-touch and immersive developmental experiences where we leverage not just our leaders' skills, but also a range of tools that offer digital and social learning.

At the core of our developmental journey are leadership expectations and our values. Some of our journeys can extend up to and beyond 12 months. This is done to ensure that development is not seen as a 'one-time' activity but as a sustained intervention. We utilize the best from within our business and also have tie-ups with schools like Harvard to run some of our leadership programs. We also run a specific program that focuses on grooming our high-potential women leaders. When you speak of partnership, our CEO Vas Narasimhan is the sponsor of some of our programs. This allows participants to be mentored by the CEO himself.

Q The shrinking shelf-life of skills is one of the biggest challenges the world of work faces. The knowledge and skills that employees acquire are quickly becoming outdated. What are the new skills critically needed in a company like Novartis? Also, how do you tackle the upskilling and reskilling challenge?

Sriram:

A The skills required today will be redundant tomorrow is a saying I've heard. I recently heard from Professor Gary Bolles (Singularity University) that for children who are currently in elementary school, 65% of the jobs they will do, don't currently exist. So there's no reskilling, only upskilling, which will depend largely on the function and its required needs.

If you consider skills and behaviours, an area that needs ongoing attention is how adept our associates are with data and digital.

It's the one skill which I think will define success for most organisations in the near future. On the behavioural component, we have a strong focus on cultural transformation to build an empowered workforce. At Novartis, the culture is about values and behaviours as much as it is about performance - and that's where this piece becomes business-critical. Lastly, the medical landscape in India, like everything else, is changing too. So, we must focus on helping our associates in building a deeper scientific temper. This not just means building technical expertise, but getting them to see situations in a more empathetic/compassionate way, thereby helping associates to look at themselves as individuals who don't merely think 'prescription' but progress towards creating an entire 'ecosystem of care'.

Q Today, people are overwhelmed with content. Given the digital information bombardment in work environments, employees feel jaded by the information overload (an enormous amount of accessible information) and noise (relevant information getting crowded out by irrelevant information). How do you create personalized learning experiences at Novartis?

Sriram:

A Again, I'll introduce the word "unbossed". In today's world of information overload,

an empowered associate is in control, rather than being a victim of information bombardment. At Novartis, learners do not need line managers' approval to attend programs. This is powerful, as we have now empowered the learners to curate their own learning - and that is as personal as it can get. Each associate literally now has the opportunity to 'personalize' their development. The line manager and learning team have the responsibility to ensure that learning benefits the associate. All this is happening whilst learners can own their journey.



Additionally, the learning community needs to continue curating content that is available for both today's and tomorrow's needs.

Q Just like Rome was not built in a day, deep and sustained learning cannot be accomplished in a jiffy. Most organisations never know how much of the training has been absorbed and if the efforts have moved the needle on talent development. How do you approach integrated learning at Novartis? Also, how do you measure the business impact?

Sriram:

A For us, it's fairly clear that when we get to the drawing board - we begin with the end in mind. This helps us articulate clear business priorities/metrics we know we can impact. For example, a lot of our inputs come in from the insights we draw from engagement surveys. The skills that we then focus on are picked with the intent to move the needle on that metric. Some of the other tools we use to map the managerial/leadership effectiveness are 360-degree surveys and pre & post-program manager feedback. Our other key business driver is the social impact. One of our onboarding programs that won an award earlier this year at the ATD, now also requires our associates to work with non-profit organisations. So for us, the impact is not just what we do within Novartis, but also in the world around us.

Q Novartis is indeed going big on learning. What is your next frontier to explore in L&D?

Sriram:

A Innovation being key at Novartis, we recently concluded Phase 1 of the 'Future of Learning' research project. Being run globally, it meant we got inputs from multiple geographies and ethnic groups. Hence, we are focusing on four key themes around making learning more - Integrated, Contextualized, Personalized, and Socialized. This, in turn, will help us achieve our larger goal of identifying better ways of linking people to - (a) Knowledge (b) Learning (c) People.

Q Amid seismic shifts, the time to adapt is now. What are your tips to becoming an L&D pro?

Brigitte:

A Great question. It helps us end where we started. Be it L&D or any other line of work one chooses, more than becoming a pro - the key is asking "how does one stay relevant?" With almost a third of the people in most organisations learning at least one new skill in the last three years, having foresight on what's coming is no longer a differentiator - it's the bare minimum to survive. Also, L&D professionals must be able to use their insights and lead the business to keep learning. A colleague once told me that "you need to learn one new thing a day, that's 365 things a year. So be the leader of learning, not just the designer or deliverer." 

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An All-Encompassing Engagement

Human Capital spoke to Vishal Nagda, Head-HR, Ozone Group, who shared the Group's 15-year journey in the Real Estate space, and the reasons behind its astounding success. Espousing the irrefutable fact that the success of an organisation is determined by its employees' wellness, Vishal shared the employee wellness initiatives adopted by the company. He also shared some of the employee engagement initiatives being carried out by the company and the lasting impact it has had on the workforce.

Tell us about Ozone Group's journey and its business philosophy.

Established fifteen years ago, Ozone Group is one of the youngest and fastest growing Real Estate companies in South India. Headquartered in Bengaluru, Ozone Group has spread its presence across major cities in India within a short span of time. Ozone Group is committed to providing a higher quality of life and redefining the standard of living through innovative real estate products. We distinctively differentiate ourselves through our unvarying focus on 3 core values - Customer Centricity, Quality, and Transparency. We have consistently stood at the forefront of design, raising the bar on aesthetics, functionality, infrastructure, and eco-friendliness.

Ozone Group's key differentiator has been well-designed infrastructure in all its projects. We also invest significantly to make our projects environment friendly; through rain water harvesting, solar heating and lighting, waste management and other similar eco friendly features. We firmly believe that customer delight is our proudest outcome, not only in the environment created around them, but also in terms of the committed service provided by us.

The Group is a professionally managed organisation, and is ably supported by more than 400 people comprising of design, architecture, finance, engineering, legal, commercial, strategy, human resources, corporate communication, sales, marketing, customer relationship management, & facility management departments. We also outsource best in class expertise within and outside India, for specialised requirements of projects. The company's vision is 'Delivering value destinations to live, work and play through innovative concepts in real estate development, abundant infrastructure and sustainable eco-friendliness' and each of our employees works passionately towards fulfilling this vision.

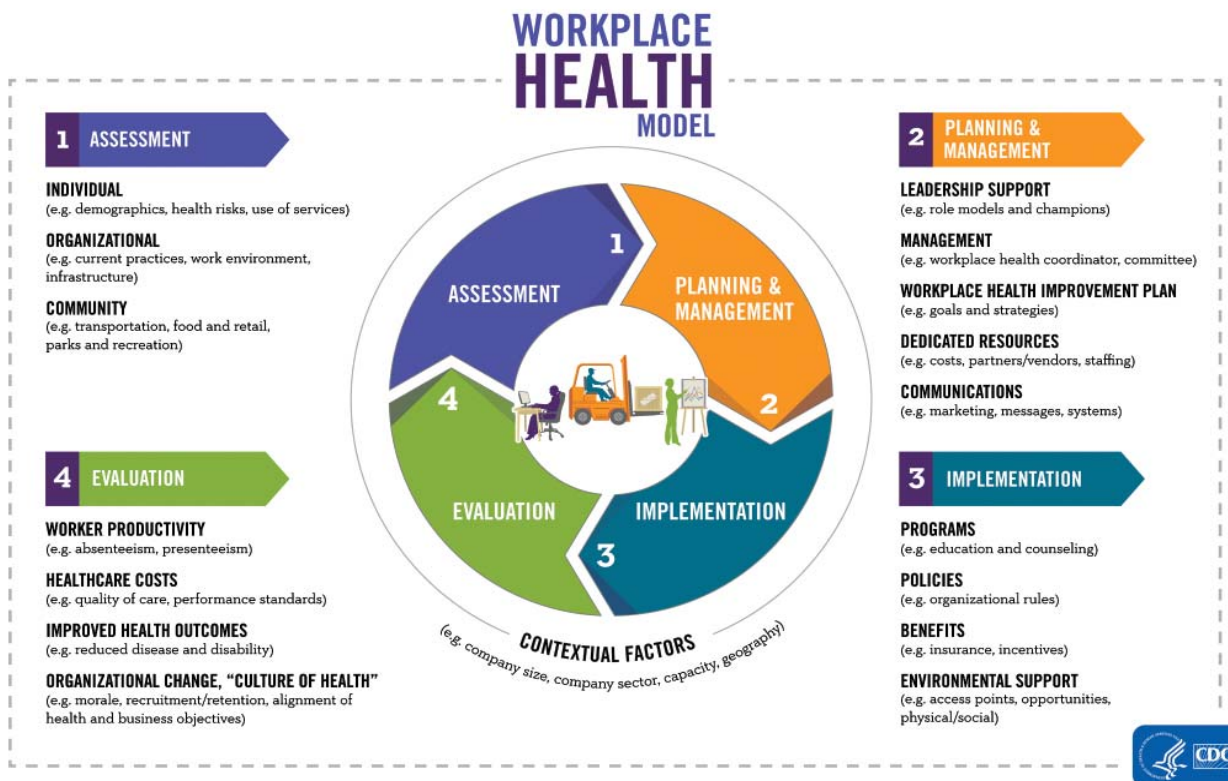
"An organisation's greatest asset is its people" has remained as a long standing thought. And the emergence of 'workplace health and wellbeing' is part of a narrative to take HR more seriously. How do you work towards elevating workplace wellness to the next level?

We believe that the wellness of our employees is key to the success of the organisation. We have created and successfully implemented an array of wellness initiatives to cater to the varying needs of individuals.

From running a 'Quit

Smoking Challenge' with a cash prize Rs. 50,000/- for everyone who quits, to 'H2O King & Queen Competition' for drinking more water at work, we spread our physical wellness initiatives to cater to every individual. Our 'Corporate Wellness Challenge' identified high risk employees and supported them





with a 6 month programme which included expert guidance on diet, exercise, and weight management. More than weight loss or monetary prizes, the focus of the initiative was to create habits leading to a healthy lifestyle to be adopted by the employees even after the challenge has ended. Each winner is recognised and rewarded by the Company to encourage others to follow suit the next time.

We also inculcate financial discipline among our employees by educating them about investment planning and assisting them during tax filing. We further support our employees by way of interest free loans for personal exigencies, scholarships for bright children, educational fees support by way of advances and ensure that the want for monetary resources never stresses our employees. Our special scheme supports employees to fund their self-contribution to buy an Ozone Home via EMI deductions from their salaries.

Our initiatives of employee well being are extended to their families as well. We conduct 'Margdarshan' career counselling sessions for

children studying in classes 8th to 12th. We provide Special Leave for employees to spend their Anniversary/ Birthday with their spouse/family members. Further, we have an assertive Leave Policy which ensures managers help employees to plan and take at least 18 leaves in a year to help them maintain a healthy work life balance.

We also conduct stress management workshops, laughter yoga sessions, parenting workshops, and provide transparent grievance redressal mechanisms to support the overall spiritual and emotional wellness of employees.

More and more employees want to work for organisations with a strong work culture and values, and getting this right is forever a

“CSR will only be impactful if you provide avenues for all employees to participate directly in it with a sense of 'giving back' to the society.”

challenge. On the employee engagement front, what common mistakes do you see organisations making? Also, could you share a few exciting developments at Ozone Group?

Employee engagement is an all-encompassing term which means different things for different organisations. At a base level, several organisations still misinterpret engagement with fun activities and assume that one fun or festive event is sufficient to ensure that the employees remain engaged.

What we fail to understand is that the levers of engagement are deep rooted in ensuring the all-round wellness of an employee. Only when you create an environment where everyone is aligned towards the company's vision and goals, and is motivated to achieve them, you can say that employees are truly engaged.

At Ozone Group, we have an annual Town Hall to ensure that all employees are in sync with the Company's goals. We have devised an Ozone Communication Matrix for all seniors to ensure that business

progress is regularly discussed with their teams. This enables a culture of transparency. We have an ongoing platform for employees to share their suggestions and feedback for improving the company processes. This is monitored directly by the CEO's office to ensure prompt action.

Trust forms an important aspect of work culture, and being meritocratic in all decisions related to performance appraisals has ensured that employees have a say in their own career growth. We capture career aspirations as part of our Performance Review process, and these are tracked by the HR with the functional heads. All new positions are first opened up for internal movements via our ASPIRE programme, which helps employees grow into roles which they aspire to be in. These are over and above team events, celebrations, and fun at work, which has simply become a way of life for everyone at the Ozone Group.

Could you outline some examples of how company policies and initiatives at the Ozone Group are aimed at supporting women employees and building a gender-balanced workforce?

In spite of being in the Real Estate sector, Ozone Group is proud to have a healthy female ratio comprising 17.5% of our workforce. We target to further increase the ratio to 20% by 2020 and 50% by 2025. We ensure that all our policies are gender agnostic. There are no gender biases against females at the time of hiring for any role in the Company. In fact, there are many roles which are specifically culled out for female employees in the front end sales and customer relations teams. We provide the required infrastructure at all our construction sites for our female employees to work comfortably from site locations.

We conducted self-defence sessions to train female employees and their daughters to protect themselves, wherein we also distributed pepper sprays to all the participants. Women who need to work late are provided with

appropriate safety measures like adequate security staff, surveillance and security within and around the office premises. We sensitise all employees about matters related to the Prevention of Sexual Harassment at workplace by conducting awareness sessions and also have a formal grievance redressal mechanism for all employees to notify any mental harassment faced by them.

During pregnancy, we sponsor female employees to take a second opinion from doctors in case there are any complications. And to encourage females to continue working after maternity, we provide them with flexible work options. Fathers are also provided with Paternity Leave on child birth to be with the new born.

“Only when you create an environment where everyone is aligned towards the company's vision and goals, and is motivated to achieve them, you can say that employees are truly engaged.”

In general, mothers and fathers are allowed to bring their kids to work on days where schools are off and both parents are working. Most importantly, to assist women in their growth, we ensure that there is parity in pay with their male counterparts and all decisions related to promotions are purely based on performance and potential without any bias on gender. This ensures a level playing field for females to grow in their respective functions.

What are the main focus areas of Ozone Group's CSR initiatives? Also, what suggestions would you give to corporates for making CSR spends more impactful?

At Ozone Group, we have always believed in sustainable development.

All our CSR development revolves around this focus area. We invest in our projects to be environment friendly by using the latest technologies in construction and resource management. As part of our CSR, we also reach out to a large community of construction workers and people staying around our projects to uplift the standards of their lives. When we adopted an island in the state of Goa, our first mission was to empower the local communities by way of education and self-help programmes. Employees are encouraged to take some time out during their working days, and spend it on training and monitoring the Self-Help Group operations on a rotation basis.

Ozone Group runs a special programme for all our blue collared employees to help them improve their English speaking and communication skills. This programme includes contractual staff like security and housekeeping as well. To show their support, employees actively converse with the support staff in English, thereby giving them a chance to put their classroom learning into practice. This has boosted the morale of all our support staff, while giving each and every employee a chance to participate in the programme.

Our employees at project sites are encouraged to interact with the construction workers and their families camping alongside to educate them on health, education, and safety aspects. We collect toys, books, and clothes, both new and used, which are then distributed among these families directly by the employees. This fosters trust and bonding between the contractual labour at the site and the Ozone Group engineers supervising their work.

In my view, running Charitable Trusts or funding NGOs as part of Corporate CSR does not create the required connect in the hearts of employees. CSR will only be impactful if you provide avenues for all employees to participate directly in it with a sense of 'giving back' to the society. 

‘Metaphormation’



Credit: Eyesplash/Flickr (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

BY ANKITA SHARMA

Portmanteaus are trending everywhere. Everything from politics, to couple names, to corporate activity, has been ‘portmanteaued’. Consider these: *NaMo*, *bromance*, *vlogging*, *hangry*, *Virushka*, *Pinterest*, and even ‘*healthymagination*’ at General Electric. It’s short, fun, and sounds fantastic. (*Shuntastic? Nope.*) I, too, have encapsulated the essence of my article in a portmanteau – *Metaphormation* (Metaphor + Transformation).

Just like portmanteaus, every realm of our daily life is rife with metaphors. However, metaphors are much powerful than portmanteaus—beyond compare. In the exploration of metaphors, one can go in many directions, from ordinary and poetic language, business and advertising, to science and technology. Consider these: feeling *heavy*, all the world’s a *stage*, *dynamic* organization, Amul: The *Taste* of India, the *fabric* of space time, and technology is a *double-edged sword*. Even a cursory glance at any of these (and many more) domains yields an astonishing array of examples.

Just like a ‘dash of coriander’ and a ‘tomato rose’ add a wow-factor to an otherwise bland dish, metaphors are often used to spruce up conversations. Beware, reader, of limiting the power of metaphor to a language of decoration. Ever since Lakoff and Johnson introduced the ground breaking ‘conceptual metaphor theory’ in 1980, the subject has been studied by many a

researcher, including scientists. From an ‘electron *cloud*’ to ‘gravity is the *curvature* of space-time’, the history of science is replete with metaphors. Its use, however, is not limited to descriptive purposes. Through extensive expositions, scientists of all stripes have addressed the role of metaphors in aiding exploration and discovery.

Across realms, metaphors are now seen as a powerful cognitive tool that has the potency to conceptualize abstract concepts. For instance, when there is no immediate literal description available to talk sense into complex notions of life, relationships, leadership, etc., we instinctively invoke metaphorical thinking. Though a metaphorical statement may be ‘literally’ false, it dislodges us from conventional thinking patterns and allows for analogical reasoning to prompt fresh ways of understanding and perceiving. In the very context, I now cite a profound quote that grows more relevant with every passing day:

“If you want to teach people a new way of thinking, don’t bother trying to teach them. Instead, give them a tool, the use of which will lead to new ways of thinking”

– Buckminster Fuller

These are just some of many, many extraordinary powers of this imaginative language.

The article’s focus is ‘*metaphormation*’ – a transformative process of thinking in metaphor to discover new ways of understanding ourselves, others, and the world we share. Think of this process, if not as a golden key, at least as a promising tool in triggering the ‘self-understanding’ process into motion. For me, at its simplest, a personal metaphor reformulates already ‘known’ aspects of self into interesting and easy to comprehend patterns. The more we explore our metaphor’s multifarious character and apply it to a range of situations, the more its significance emerges. Metaphors can plunge us into the depths of mystery, translating the ‘*unknowns*’ to ‘*knowns*’. Moreover, by instating a figurative perspective, we don’t only create new and enriching formations of thought, but also become aware of the creative side of our thinking.

Each one of us needs metaphors that fit our journey of life and match our various roles of manager, spouse, parent, and so forth. As expounded by the leading executive coach Eric Kaufmann in his book ‘*Four Virtues of a Leader*’, even leaders need a personal metaphor to articulate their self-concept and vision. Can you, in imagination, connect yourself to a metaphor? It can be anything: an animal, a comic character, an inanimate object, or nature – you decide. Your focus area might be an aspect of life or life itself. At first, working through a metaphor may perhaps seem cumbersome, but once your instincts take hold, you will be surprised by how powerfully the metaphor speaks to you.

A note of caution must be injected here: embrace a forward-looking metaphor that serves your future goals, hopes and dreams. Change is progressive, not regressive. Also, the value of your personal metaphor is not in whether it is right or wrong, but in whether it has helped some striking meaning and new salience to arise.

If you understand better by first seeing an example, visit www.humancapitalonline.com to meet my life metaphor, my personal life coach: **LIGHT** 



Creating High Performing Teams

BY ROHAN LELE

“As an individual contributor, you always look at solving problems on your own. As one moves up the ladder to become a 'people leader', many fail to transit mentally to a 'leadership role' and continue to be a solutions provider.”

Building a high-performance team is clearly not the easiest thing to do. While it is on every leaders' wish list, not everyone around can create one. A high-performance team is one which delivers consistent result every single time, ensuring 'customer delight', not just satisfaction!

Every leader must question whether their team really is high-performing. If we seek an honest reply, many of us would realize that our teams do not fit the definition.

Creating high-performance teams is the result, but the question is, how does a leader create one? The input to this desired output is creating an 'Eco-System' that acts as an enabler in building high performance teams.

Three Mantras for Creating High-Performance Teams:

Autonomy at work

This is the first step towards creating a high-performing team. Leaders must allow team members the freedom to express and approach tasks in ways that the individuals are most comfortable with, and works best for

them. They must realize that each individual brings their own strengths, perspectives, and approach at work.

Leaders, on many occasions, get into micromanaging and even defining the approach as to how the activity or task must be carried out. If individuals are not allowed to express and approach things the way they wish to, this often leads to a 'not so desirable output'. Besides, lack of autonomy at work also puts off many employees and becomes a primary concern for people to leave the company.

Here is what a leader should do -

- Co-create the purpose of why the team exists.
- Define the objective & scope of the project on hand.
- Define the expected result/outcome.

Once these three are defined, the leader should then leave it to individuals on how the task should be approached and completed.

While freedom is essential, leaders should also spend time reviewing/tapping upon the progress of the activity/task at mutually defined intervals.

Don't be a Solution Provider

As an individual contributor, you always look at solving problems on your own. As one moves up the ladder to become a 'people leader', many fail to transit mentally to a 'leadership role' and continue to be a solutions provider. Many leaders think being a 'solutions provider' is the primary job, and this is where they go wrong!

A key characteristic of high-performing teams is that every individual brings his/her own critical/analytical thinking to the table. These teams challenge the status quo and aren't afraid to question the leader if they believe they have a better idea/solution to a given problem.

As a leader, one must question, does the above happen in my team? Leaders must focus on creating an eco-system that allows and, in some instances, forces people to think and find their own solutions. They must also understand that while they bring wisdom and experience to the table, team members should be encouraged to challenge their opinions and views. It has been observed that many leaders aren't comfortable when their ideas and solutions are questioned, and this becomes an impediment in 'creating high-performing teams'.

Focus on Strengths & Address Fatal Weaknesses

India Inc. has always focused on addressing individual weakness, and we largely believe that this is the best way to help people improve and grow.

However, multiple research studies have proved the above hypothesis to be incorrect. It is time for leaders to change their perspective and start focusing on 'strength' of an individual rather than a 'weakness'. Moreover, focussing on 'fatal weaknesses' may hamper employee's growth within the organisation.

The Individual Development Plan (IDP) conversations should predominantly focus on the following questions:

- What are your individual strengths?
- Are you really utilizing your 'strengths' to your optimum? If yes, can you cite a few examples and if no, why not?



- Are there any specific 'fatal weaknesses' which we need to jointly address, which may stagnate or not allow you to grow further?
- What resources/training/coaching will you need to further capitalize on your 'strengths'?
- What resources/training/coaching will you need to address your 'fatal weaknesses'?

Leaders must ensure that every member of the team capitalizes his/her strengths to the optimum and addresses the 'Fatal Weakness'. Besides, they must also ensure that individuals in a group complement each other with their strengths and help the team deliver consistently, resulting in customer delight! 

About the Author

Rohan Lele is the Assistant Vice President -HR & Business Strategy at Zydex Industries. With over 14 years of experience across diverse sectors like petrochemicals, power transmission, automotive, and specialty chemicals, Rohan has worked in various HR roles in India and the Asia Pacific with Indian and global organisations. He has been recognised as one of the '101 Super HR Achievers in India' by World HRD Congress & Times Ascent. Rohan is also an eminent speaker, blogger, and a singer at heart.

“It is time for leaders to change their perspective and start focusing on 'strength' of an individual rather than a 'weakness'. Moreover, focussing on 'fatal weaknesses' may hamper employee's growth within the organisation.”



Gossip, Grapevine And Workplace

There are several interesting office discussions which are candid, and at the same time, highly insightful. One needs to fit in well with the group and ensure that free-flowing discussions happen.

BY KESHAV SRIDHAR

If you are on the lookout for some zest, then this should season your palate with an interesting flavour. What's life without that extra 'zing'? We would love to see it on our plate and in our workplace. However, we certainly would not like to overdo anything that disarrays our functioning. Many a time, we long for a Mocktail and life surprises us with a Cocktail! Life, as we know, is sinusoidal, a roller-coaster voyage with untold topsy-turvy experiences. And we are not completely in control of every situation that life sets up for us. Similarly, we do not enjoy the absolute choice on who our colleagues would be at our office either.

We usually invest around nine hours at work every day, and the time thus imparted predominantly decides

the material comforts and luxuries we would enjoy for the rest of the time. And with luxuries going hi-tech, the price that we pay for convenience is higher too. Higher the cost, greater the need for money. More the need for money, more is the drive to earn higher salaries, and more the pull towards higher salaries, more workplace competition to outclass each other.

In this race, irrespective of who shall emerge as the winner, the ingredients which make one triumphant are the same. The star performers of an organisation are the beholders of the 'glitterati', not merely for their domain expertise, but, by virtue of being able to communicate tactfully and to manoeuvre to get things done from various stake-

“We usually invest around nine hours at work every day, and the time thus imparted predominantly decides the material comforts and luxuries we would enjoy for the rest of the time.”

holders. Of course, it is about being smart, and wit is an invaluable ingredient in this process of winning accolades. For those who assume that they need to work on developing this quality, one of the best ways to do this is by throwing themselves amidst informal office discussions.

An interesting workplace discussion at lunchtime that spanned for around 30 minutes, right from the cubicles to the canteen to a walk around the office.

The characters: -

Amit: The party planner of the group. Fond of making short films. Dreams of making a commercial movie someday.

Vijay: The happy go lucky types. A reliable resource and the boss' eye candy.

Riyaz: An aspiring Entrepreneur, who wants to quit as soon as possible to start his own venture.

Stella: The HR Specialist and one of the most beautiful office divas

Amit: Guys, let's go to that new restaurant in Banjara Hills. It has been getting good reviews. And by the way, the treat is on Vijay for the promotion and pay hike.

Vijay: Yaar, it won't be possible today. I have a client call to attend along with the Boss. Let's plan it for next week. By then, I would have received the hike and I'll be super happy to buy you all a plate of Idly! Don't expect anything more from the increment that I'll be getting!

Riyaz: Arey Chindi, you will treat us with Idly? Have some shame, you have received an increment of 5000 rupees per month. I learnt this from the great Stella! (Grins at Vijay and Stella)

Stella: Oi! He is lying! He has sneaked into my mailbox and checked everyone's pay hike letter, while I was on a call with an Applicant.

Amit: Okay then, let's plan for next week, but, we will drive in your car. And, you will be paying for the fuel, and you will be chauffeuring us to the restaurant.

Vijay: Done dear. No big deal... But treat me today in the Canteen. I have to be available for the call in 45 minutes.

Riyaz: Arey Amit, when are you launching your new short film? Your previous film received only 15K views. Let me know if you want some help to increase the viewership.

Stella: Oh wow, Amit! Your second short film within a year. Kya baat hai... What's it all about?

Amit: I am yet to coin the title. But, it's about how bigger companies unknowingly are acting as incubators for startups. Let's take Riyaz's example, who is an aspiring Entrepreneur. He is being trained and mentored in this company and he would be starting his own venture very soon. So, he could be a competition for our company, which unknowingly, helped him to incubate his idea, by providing him with the tools to refine and reform himself and his idea.

Riyaz: Abey, all Entrepreneurs have used some platform or the other to launch themselves. Most of them have worked somewhere before they started something on their own. So, what's the big deal? That's how the world works. Frankly, your concept won't be liked by a majority of the people.

Vijay: I agree with Riyaz. What's the objective of this film? What message do you want to give to the world through it? I don't think whatever you are saying makes sense to most of the people. Let's say, if an Alumni of an Engineering college starts an Engineering college on his own sometime later in his career. And if that college becomes a competition to his Alma Mater, do you think the parent college would be worried or threatened? I don't think so. They, will in fact be proud of their Alumni, and in case they do get worried, then with such insecurities, they don't deserve to call themselves an Alma Mater.

Amit: Bhai log, you people are overreacting without even listening to me fully. Listen, I would be covering both sides of the coin, and would be painting the story in such a manner that it would encompass all the relevant shades. And then, it's for the people to decide. Let's leave it to their perception and judgment. What say?

Riyaz: I'm still not convinced. You better take some lighter subject and make a film. It's a short movie and people like it light yaar!

“The star performers are the beholders of the 'glitterati', not merely for their domain expertise, but, by the virtue of being able to communicate tactfully and to manoeuvre to get things done from various stakeholders.”

Stella: Guys, I think we shouldn't be interfering in his work. It's his passion and it's best if he expresses his ideas without any prejudices.

Amit: Okay, thanks for understanding Stella. I'll buy you a lassi for this! Hey, did you guys watch yesterday's News? Our PM has been given UAE's highest civilian award by their Government. He has been an amazing brand ambassador for our country. There is a genuine positive image which one can experience about India as a progressive society and an emerging economy. The thumping majority with which he won the recent elections is a testimony for his success. However, without mincing words, the Muslim community still seems to be polarized, and hence, can't accept him as their PM. What say Riyaz?

Riyaaz: Dekh bhai... My community is extremely defensive and possessive about anything remotely related to their religion. I've travelled the world and I understand what's what. I agree that my community requires a lot of re-education and re-learning. As a kid of the 90s, I've seen how most people from my community would taunt the country's majority population by comparing everything in our country with Muslim countries. It's not their fault. They were systematically brainwashed to think that way. It's only from the late 2000s that things have started changing. Thanks to social media, people from my community are now in-sync with the real world. People have understood how tolerant this country has been towards them, despite all their rants, including the latest intolerance rant. I don't want to comment anything about other communities when my own community requires lot of correction.

Vijay: That's a very frank admission buddy. All communities go through an evolution. It's a reality of life.

Stella: Guys, can you please change the topic! And, please don't be so philosophical. It doesn't suit you guys anyway.

Amit: Okay Ms Kerala. Hey, did you guys watch yesterday's cricket match? It was a cakewalk for the Indian team. I hate such matches. I couldn't enjoy my beer either. Felt as flat as the pitch.

Riyaz: What else do you expect? World

cricket is enjoying its glitter because of the Indian fans. Minus the Indian fans and the BCCI, world cricket would be struggling. Anyways, for most of us Indians, cricket is still the only sport that we truly enjoy watching.

Stella: That's not true ya. I enjoy watching Badminton. We are doing well in many other sports too. But, it would be an amazing moment for the nation, when we can be one of teams in the FIFA world cup.

Riyaz: That's a distant dream. But, I'm sure that it will happen one day. Hey, by the way, Mahek from the Finance department is coming to the Office Gym these days. I'll be joining the Gym from today. Amit, do you want to join me? (Winks at Amit, as Amit has a crush on Mahek)

Amit: No, you go ahead. I have joined the Guitar class where your girl comes. And, we have become great pals you know! I dropped her home last time after the class. (Chuckles back at Riyaz)

Stella: Guys, can you stop these silly PJ's please!

Vijay: Hey folks, I have to leave for the call. See you all later. (Chao from the group to Vijay)

And the discussion continued for few more minutes before they got back to work. There are numerous interesting office discussions like these, which are very candid and highly insightful. One needs to fit in well with the group and just allow a free-flowing discussion to happen. It is a wonderful tool to just vent out and refocus on your work. However, you need to be responsible enough to call the shots, and not allow discussions to be counterproductive. So, enjoy your workplace chit-chat! 

About the Author

Keshav Sridhar is an HR Consultant & OD Specialist. A seasoned HR Professional, he wields an experience of 15 years and has worked with Google, Partygaming, Aditya Birla Group, BITS Pilani University etc. Keshav holds a degree in Mechanical Engineering and a Post Graduate Diploma in Human Resource Management. He can be contacted at connect@keshavsridhar.com.



A Twist In The Tale

Storytelling provides people with an avenue to discover their personal beliefs, and find their internal anchors. It propels them on an inward journey to reflect and discover their own meaningful stories.

BY KALPANA BANSAL

Human beings are triggered by change, and instinctively, we avoid change and attempt to insulate ourselves from it. Change is an emotional experience based on logic. However, it requires some external triggers at an emotional or cognitive level to create paradigm shifts in human mindsets. The human mind is hardwired to respond to stories as they internalise change. Stories are evocative, and bring home possibilities and help us to reimagine our futures. Through the story we create about Change, we make an intellectual and emotional connect with the sensory inputs. We identify with the protagonists and share a journey with them, and at times, the journey serves to remind us of our foibles.

Storytelling is a useful tool for key organisational change initiatives. When used carefully, they can achieve change in a big way. Applying storytelling is helpful to the organisation in various ways. It offers benefits in terms of connecting with individuals in a highly personalised manner while maintaining a distance, and also in creating engagement and reinforcement of the messaging. As stories linger in our memories more vividly than mere numbers and statistics, they captivate, inspire, and persuade. By narrating stories of the innovations resulting from organisational change efforts, organisations can:

- Engage internal stakeholders in cultural transformation

“Change often involves sacrifices and trade-offs, and a belief in the promise of a new future. Impact stories help in selling that belief, as there is a larger good at the end.”

- Inform customers and external stakeholders about the organisational vision and the changes in effect
- Create a general awareness and interest in your expertise and experience
- Obtain feedback on the organisational transformation that can help your team revise and tweak your efforts into the future

For effective implementation of storytelling, organisations need to follow certain mechanisms to ensure that it happens so:

- Discuss the context of storytelling as today's audiences are grappling with attention-deficit from multiple sources of sensory overload
- Apply empathy mapping techniques to re-interpret an existing or proposed change narrative from a variety of diverse perspectives. The concept of narrative persona (identity or image) becomes critical at this stage
- Experiment with creative tools to re-imagine the change narrative as multi layered, collaborative, and inclusive
- Pilot the approach, receive feedback from colleagues, and develop a plan for the next steps

While writing a change narrative, it is important to have a general idea of your change story. In order to fill in the details, answer the following questions:

- What is the situation?
- Who (or what) is your protagonist?
- What is your protagonist's condition at the beginning of the story?
- What does the protagonist want?
- Who is the opponent/who or what stands in the way?
- How is the conflict resolved?

In a traditional narrative, this is far easier to do. However, it is a lot more difficult when it comes to organisational transformation. A protagonist can be an individual, but also an organisation, department, or a process. A "villain" can be a person, but also an inanimate concept like resistance, turnover, disorganisation, or *"the way we've always done things around here!"*

Within the context of organisational change, stories can typically be classified

into four broad categories, depending on the theme of the narrative:

- The challenge story: Used to inspire teams or leaders to tackle difficult situations
- The how-to story: Used to train or operationalise certain agendas
- The big idea story: Used for creative disruption, ideas, and big momentum changes
- The impact story: Used to sell a change or transition to stakeholders

Creating an intrinsic motivation

Personal stories are also important for learning and change in organisations. Personal stories create intrinsic motivation and push the change agenda. Change and learning are- by definition- HARD to achieve. Change often involves sacrifices and trade-offs, and a belief in the promise of a new future. Impact stories help in selling that belief, as there is a larger good at the end. The world at large, or the people you care for, will gain something in the long-term through a short-term sacrifice. Storytelling provides people with an avenue to discover their personal beliefs, and find their internal anchors. It propels them on an inward journey to reflect and discover their own meaningful stories. This will hopefully connect their personal values and goals to what they are doing at work.

Occasionally, organisations create room for collaborative storytelling, time for making sense about the vision and strategy, as it relates to everyday work. The more specialised and highly educated people are, wider the scope provided for doing so. Sometimes, hierarchies within the organisation interfere in this collaborative space, as people with more power often impose their beliefs and their versions of the story. Some would say that this freedom is earned by the responsibilities that come with filling important roles in the bigger picture. During times of economic uncertainty or turbulence, the co-creation of the story becomes somewhat problematic as the truth of YOUR story is tied closely with 'survival'.

Storytelling for a Change agenda can

be implemented using the following steps:

- Step 1.** Reflect and build the narrative.
- Step 2.** Identify the key audience, also check if further segmentation is required (i.e. the general public, social innovators, thought leaders, stakeholders)
- Step 3.** Select the core message - it needs to be simple and sticky.
- Step 4.** Choose your story type (i.e. challenge story, big idea, how-to, impact).
- Step 5.** Create your call to action (what do you want your audience to do?).
- Step 6.** Select the medium of the story. Multiple media are also effective (i.e. written, video, audio, spoken).
- Step 7.** Create an authentic and concrete story with all possible emotions.
- Step 8.** Optimise channels or mediums through which the story is distilled throughout the organisation.

If stories are allowed to be honest renditions of personal experiences in an organisation- without filters or blinders- then they will resonate with the true DNA of the change effort. However, there could be a rift between "on-stage" and "off-stage" behaviour, and the different "clouds of meaning" in the different mini-worlds are allowed to be bridged, even by a little bit.

A tale of hope and belief can be fabricated in terms of :-

- What the organisation is hoping to accomplish and contribute?
- How it is hoping to do it?
- Who in the world is it hoping to serve without denying the- existing but challenging - transitions that are waiting in the future in order to make this a reality?

Truth is stranger than fiction

Like any other Change management tool, storytelling is fraught with perils. Real change and real learning are complicated and uncertain. A lot of failed experiments also turn sour if they are not dealt with in the right manner. Dysfunctional change, rotten mini-worlds, and corrupting or untruthful stories that break an organisation down- slowly but surely -

are just as much a part of the reality in organisations as their uplifting counterparts that are capable of improving the organisation and ensure its growth.

A large pharmaceutical company once heralded an organisation change process with the screening of the movie "Sea Biscuit." Likewise, there is another how-to story of a market research firm that contextualised its Knowledge Management agenda with the launch of a spaceship. A leading conglomerate created a narrative around their chatbot persona to make it relatable and human for its employees.

Stories can heal, but they also wield an enormous power that can corrupt. The role of the storyteller is hard and laced with dangers and moral implications. When storytellers in the organisation act like truth seekers, researchers, and journalists, they CAN unearth the seeds for growth and change in both the failed and successful experiments, and tell their own stories. Storytellers in the organisation - when equipped with the right amount of freedom and responsibility - have the POTENTIAL to help the best stories spread and grow and become truer. They make organisations to be more aligned with the values and vision of its employees, and more in service of bringing an honest contribution to its customers and the world at large. If we can make this happen, then we hold a powerful agent to change for the better.

There is a twist in every tale... but if it ends well, it is all the more worthwhile.



About the Author

Kalpna Bansal manages the HR Analytics domain and the Employee Insights programme in the RPG Group. She has an experience of more than 20 years and has worked in organisations such as Tata Unisys, Star TV, IMRB, Mudra Communication and Watson Wyatt (I) Pvt. Ltd. Kalpna has an MBA and has completed her Executive Masters in Consulting & Coaching for Change from Said Business School, Oxford University.

“When storytellers in the organisation act like truth seekers, researchers, and journalists, they CAN unearth the seeds for growth and change in both the failed and the successful experiments, and tell their own stories.”

Recognition Is Powerful!

Recognition will convert more employees as your company promoters where they are proactive in talking about your employer brand, and function as enthusiastic ambassadors.

BY KENNETH W WHEELER

On 5th June 2015, I walked into my office with a troubled feeling since my monthly performance review had not gone particularly well the previous day. Half a day had passed, and nothing seemed to be going in my favour. I had a meeting at 10 AM which got cancelled, I was not focused, and sent out an email communication, but missed out on some key points. With such a mindset, it was just about seeing the day through and carrying myself home. With these thoughts, I got up to fetch myself a cup of coffee, and while passing one of my peers, things changed suddenly, and it lifted my spirits. This peer greeted me enthusiastically, and said, *"Hey Kenneth, I applied the conflict management technique you coached me on last week in my conversation with this tough client this morning, and it worked, I was able to convey my point in a mutually respectful way and he actually listened to me attentively for the first time ever – thanks a lot!"*

These lines of genuine, enthusiastic, and completely unexpected recognition expressed with high passion and emotion suddenly changed the way I was feeling. I could sense loads of dopamine being released into my brain. And as I walked back with my coffee, my physiology had changed, I was breathing better, the stride in my walk was back, and so was my smile. That is the immense influence a genuine recognition can have and positively transform others!

When was the last time you received genuine recognition? An enthusiastic praise that made you feel valuable. Something that was

said to make you feel like you really mattered. When did you last feel that your contribution was being noticed because your boss handed over an unexpected note of thank you? If you could recollect one such occasion instantly without having to scratch your head too much, you would have quickly relived that moment, because one of the most significant impacts of genuine recognition on us humans is that it creates a positive 'Memory' – the after effects of which stays with us long after the event has passed – **Recognition is Powerful!**

If recognition is indeed powerful, the question that needs to be asked – is it being used effectively by the reporting managers, leaders, peers, and the CEOs? A study conducted by KRC Research showed that almost nine out of ten middle management employees feel that they are unrecognised by their supervisors, while 88% feel that they are unrecognised by their co-workers. This begs an explanation since even though recognition is not rocket science, and despite the undeniable benefits, it remains a mystery that it is scarcely used, used badly, or worse, not used at all. The answer perhaps lies with the lack of awareness of what constitutes an effective recognition, or how should it be done? Or perhaps the uncertainty around the potential benefit it provides.

To seek answers for such questions, I want to highlight some of the key elements that form a compelling reason on why we must really care to practice and execute the power of recognition in its truest sense!

Robert McNamara, puts the influence of recognition in a simple yet meaningful way when he says, *"Brains, like hearts, go where they are appreciated."*

Building on that thought, I promote a culture of recognition for the following purpose.

Fuels Employee Engagement

"People work for money but go the extra mile for recognition, praise and rewards."

–Dale Carnegie, Leadership Training Guru

Gallup research states that employee engagement is increased by 35% if regular recognition is given to employees. Employees on receiving recognition feel appreciated and end up experiencing more self-worth, which improves their proactive engagement component, and with it their ability to make meaningful contribution to the organisation consistently.

Uplifts Employer Branding

Through recognition, the purpose to make employees feel good about their work and contribution is directly connected to how they promote their organisation as a great place to work. Recognition will convert more employees as your company promoters where they are proactive in talking about your employer brand, and function as enthusiastic ambassadors to share your brand story to the internal and external world in the most influential manner. Thus, they are working to enhance your count of candidate hires via employee referrals.

“A study by KRC Research showed that almost nine out of ten middle management employees feel that they are unrecognised by their supervisors, while 88% feel that they are unrecognised by their co workers.”

Influences Employee Experience

“Recognition is not a scarce resource. You can't use it up or run out of it.”

–Susan M. Heathfield, Human Resources Expert, About.com

A Gallup survey states that merely 9% of your employee strength is actively engaged at work, while 31% is actively disengaged. How much impact can be influenced on both sides by focusing on employee experience driven by ‘Recognition’? Of course, multiple factors contribute to an employee being actively engaged or disengaged. However, the power of recognition is generally underused and undervalued. Another element as a direct output of this influence is the positive contribution it has on your employee retention metric.

Promotes a Psychological Safe Work Environment

“There is more hunger for love and appreciation in this world than for bread.”

–Mother Teresa, Roman Catholic Religious Sister and Missionary

When you are regular in your employee recognition, you unlock a great tool that helps your employees to feel safe and comfortable in their work environment. When you put the spotlight on recognition even in small ways, you frame a pro-risk taking culture by default and employees are not worried about failing. This makes employees strive

to go above and beyond, and be more inclined to focus on intrinsic factors such as personal growth and long-term goals.

A few noticeable Recognition approaches

Below are some of the best practises on recognition.

- Appreciation email marked in the group to elevate the value of the task achieved and to establish peer visibility
- Give complete recognition - do not just say, ‘Well done, good job’ - make it detailed by saying ‘Faiz (take the name always) well done, good job...what you have achieved today makes a significant impact in telling our customers that we take our business commitments very seriously. Thank you for making the extra effort to close your customer's escalation as per the defined turnaround time’
- CEO/CTO Handwritten appreciation and thank you note sent to employee's parents!
- Peer to peer nominations for calling out recognition
- Displaying achievements on dashboards and visual displays in common areas like cafeteria or at the office reception
- When an employee does something noteworthy, share the story - it inspires engagement and learning for all those involved
- Keep a ‘gong bell’ in your office and call out key individual

“We must make it a point of being comfortable giving and receiving genuine recognition as we have significant outcome to gain at the cost of a very small investment.”



achievements on a real time basis and put out a loud cheer

- In a survey by BambooHR, almost a third of employees would prefer recognition in a company-wide email from an executive over a \$500 bonus
- Most employees would prefer a simple Recognition gesture of receiving ‘a pat on the back’ rather than a tangible reward

To bring it all together

We must make it a point of being comfortable giving and receiving genuine recognition as we have significant outcome to gain at the cost of a very small investment. We should constantly be aware and ask ourselves – Do we give enough thought and time to offer sincere employee recognition? Do we look for opportunity and celebrate every small success? Great Leaders celebrate team members success even more than their own and do it in a way that is real and heartfelt – Be A leader that is an Advocate of Recognition! **HC**

About the Author

Kenneth W Wheeler is VP Human Resources (L&D), LogiNext. He comes with 16 plus years of rich learning experience spread across industries. Awarded as 101 Top HR Minds (India) 2019 and a certified NLP coach, Kenneth is a well-rounded expert in Envisioning, Strategizing and Leading a robust gamut of HR and L&D framework, contributing to both MNC (Wipro) and the Start-up ecosystem (Ola, LogiNext).

Curious Learners are Happy People

BY DR. RAKSHITA SHARMA

Over the years, every individual develops their unique style of learning, influenced by their upbringing, social environment, schooling, and the evolved preferences on ways of learning. Usually, it is a combination of the seven learning styles as we know them to be:

Visual: Prefer using pictures, images, and spatial understanding.

Aural: Prefer using sound and music.

Verbal: Prefer using words both in speech and writing.

Physical: Prefer using the body, hands, and sense of touch.

Logical: Prefer logical reasoning and systems.

Social: Prefer to learn in groups or with people.

Interpersonal: Prefer to work alone or self-study.

Roles & jobs within an organisation require a combination of learning styles. For instance, design engineers could heavily depend on logical and/or visual learning style but might lack in social learning styles that could cause unease & pressure while working in groups. The elementary process of learning, such as "I can follow only when I see a process document or detail workflow", sometimes becomes a drag for the team trying to move at a fast pace and develop innovative ideas. While such an approach may not work across many industries, this would be perfectly fine in the manufacturing or logistics space. So, there is no perfect style of learning, but then learning is a mindset that is required by an individual to grow.

This mindset can be changed by taking deliberate, purposeful steps,



and practising in a way that helps imbibe new ways or add to one's capability to learn. The ability & willingness to learn and absorb information that comes from experiences, and apply it to new situations is defined as learning agility. While working with some highly innovative companies over the years, I have noticed that some individuals stand out in their ability to learn, apply, and come up with innovative ideas. When you look closely at them, they can be categorised as 'curious learners' - a trend that is commonly spotted in startup organisations and technology companies succeeding in innovation.

The key is to understand what this is and how to ingrain it in the organisational culture.

First, why be a curious learner? I recently read an interesting article on Science Daily that cited a research study about how piquing curiosity enhances learning and memory. Three startling findings stated by Dr. Matthias Gruber, lead author of the study were:

- "Curiosity may put the brain in a state that allows it to learn and retain any kind of information, like a vortex that sucks in what you are motivated to learn, and also everything around it."

- "Intrinsic motivation actually recruits the very same brain areas that are heavily involved in tangible, extrinsic motivation."
- "Curiosity recruits the reward system, and interactions between the reward system and the hippocampus seem to put the brain in a state in which you are more likely to learn and retain information."

As a non-expert, the way I understood was that a curious learner builds an enormous potential to learn & retain, and is also highly motivated because curiosity triggers the reward mechanism in one's brain. This was very much in line with the cultural foundation we are establishing at our organisation for cultivating 'happy employees'. While many direct and indirect motivators influence a 'happy employee,' the centre of it all is the curiosity of learning.

Now the question remains: how to make a person 'curious' at work while continuing to accomplish the mundane tasks of routine jobs, meeting project deadlines, and attending more meetings than there is time? This is what I call the 'crash zone' where good concepts meet with the reality of what is desired and what is practically possible. More often, I have seen many wonderful concepts crash due to the lack of a practical implementation plan. So, it's vital to take a step back and develop a creative plan on how

to develop 'curious learner' as a way of working.

'Curious learner' is a mindset, and to develop this we have adopted a two-fold strategy at our organisation: one is a conscious effort to understand learning styles and build 'learning agility', and the second is integrating 'design thinking'. This is a simple equation we have developed to drive a 'curious learner' culture for cultivating happy and innovative employees.

I am very fond of our Vedic heritage and try to derive inspiration from it all the time. Our Vedic literature is filled with narrations of characters, both young and old, who are all excellent illustrations of 'curious learners'. I am sure you can relate this trait to many legendary names we have heard growing up and are ingrained in our culture. One of the most prominent warriors and my favourite is Prince Arjuna, who was one of the greatest archers and an accomplished warrior of his times, but his curious learning style led to the exposition of Bhagwat Gita that helps millions of spiritual seekers today.

Similarly, there are other examples like Nachiketa's conversation with Lord Yama or Maitreyi as the wife of Sage Yajnavalkya. So, it doesn't matter if you are a super-expert, a successful professional, a child, a woman, or a successful leader, 'curious learner' is within the hearts - we just need to make that mindset



mainstream again. Quoting Einstein, "The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing". A culture of developing 'curious learners' is going to be a key driver and critical component of the future growth models supporting Artificial Intelligence to become an integrated part of our lives. 

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About the Author

Dr. Rakshita Sharma is Vice President - Human Capital at Bobble AI Technologies. With over 29 years of experience across diverse sectors like engineering, healthcare, oil & gas, automotive, consulting, IT, consumer durables, and education, she has worked with several multinational corporations and promoter-driven companies in the role of Chief Talent & Learning, CHRO, Angel Investor, Startup Mentor, IPO ready, M&A cultural integrator & certified Corporate Director. She is the ICC Chairperson for POSH and an external committee member for various organisations. Dr. Rakshita is a PhD in Organisational Behavior and also teaches OB & HRM at B-schools.



Where Did I Go Wrong?

BY DR. PRAGEETHA G RAJU AND PRITI BHAMA

The Managing Director of Shine and Spark Private Limited (S&S), an eyewear manufacturing company, was in deep thought - visibly worried and anxious. He was brooding, "How do I do it?" "Where could I go wrong?"

S&S, a family enterprise that was established in 1994, is in the business of manufacturing eyewear products such as frames, optical spares, display items, lenses and other optical accessories, and tinted sunglasses. The company is based in Hyderabad with an unlisted branch in Bengaluru. The Bengaluru branch of S&S was incorporated in 2009 with around 1000 employees. The company's operations commenced as a partnership in 1994, and was later established as a Private Limited company. S&S also markets international brands in India. The company has been growing at a healthy rate with a chain of retail stores. It has gained a strong position in the market in the eyewear space. S&S also enjoys the confidence of a number of internationally renowned fashion eyewear brands, whose products it markets in India. S&S is also known for pleasant customer and employee relations. It has two flagship brands, namely, "Panorama" and "Vista" that were launched in 1998. Licensed manufacturing commenced in the company in 2011.

The growth of S&S is largely due to the visionary leadership of its Managing Director Srikant Amanaganti (Srikant), an IITian and a graduate from IIM. Srikant's five brothers extended additional support to the business. The brothers who were graduates only abided by Srikant's instructions. In the last few years, the eyewear industry had shown tremendous growth, owing to factors such as rise in disposable

incomes, increase in the number of Indians who were required to use spectacles, etc. And with the fashion accessories space - wherein eyewear is an important component - opening up, S&S is poised to take a plunge to capture the opportunity to enter the international market. S&S and its ownership aspired to emerge as the market leader in the Indian Fashion Eyewear space.

S&S has a tall structure with multiple layers between the top management and the lower rungs in the organisation. Though S&S has the financial resources and goodwill in the market to go global, it does not possess the professional expertise or the global mindset among the employees as also Srikant's brothers. The brothers were entrusted with the responsibility of managing various functional units. As a family enterprise, the manager-employee relations were not rigidly defined, and hence, an enabling culture or leadership is non-existent in the organisation. For

instance, all the brothers are very loyal to Srikant, and are completely dependent on his decisions to act. They had hired many of their friends as employees, and Srikant welcomed it wholeheartedly. Srikant's brothers as well as the workers were forever willing to work overtime. The brothers ensured that they maintained a cordial relationship with the local politicians as well.

One day, Srikant called his brothers over and proposed the idea of taking the company global. He also elucidated on the opportunity that awaits them by doing so. The brothers gladly and unanimously accepted Srikant's proposal. They asked him to handover instructions as to what needs to be done and the way they need to manoeuvre. Srikant fell into deep thought and began to recall the manner in which he built S&S, and how he ignored professional expertise and several other related aspects in the organisation.



He suddenly snapped back to reality after a shrill ring of a telephone. He now observed that neither were his brothers capable to lead the international business nor were his employees exposed or trained to handle international customers and/or operations. While the time had indeed come for S&S to hire professionals, the nagging thought in Srikant's mind was whether it would be wise on his part to shift his brothers from leadership positions, and replace them with qualified professionals. Also, it was essential to get an understanding as to how the employees would respond to the compensation structures for the newly hired professionals, since they had remained loyal to the company ever since it was established. There had been no employee conflicts or issues till date, and employee policies had hardly been enforced



since most of them were his brothers' friends or were known to the family. He had never paid attention to Human Resource development or building an enabling culture. Barring Srikant, nobody ever took decisions nor was anyone empowered to do so. Decision making was simply never delegated



at S&S. Also, while S&S had a good sales team, it was highly doubtful that they could reach out to a global audience. Further, it was equally uncertain whether Srikant's brothers could perform Transcreation i.e. adapting S&S marketing content to a new foreign market. Everyone at S&S respected Srikant and addressed him as "bade bhaiyya" (elder brother). They simply executed whatever he said. Nobody was accountable for positive or negative outcomes because they never owned the decision or the outcome. It was blindly bade bhaiyya's instructions. What required to be mulled now was the structure of the organisation, and the changes that needed to be incorporated to accommodate a workforce that can handle international operations. All these things needed to be considered with the overbearing thought that this is a family-owned and a closely-held company. In a nut shell, what was worth considering is whether it is possible for a company that has no organisational DNA to emerge as a key player in the international eyewear market without undergoing a thorough revamp. **HC**

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Organisation Design

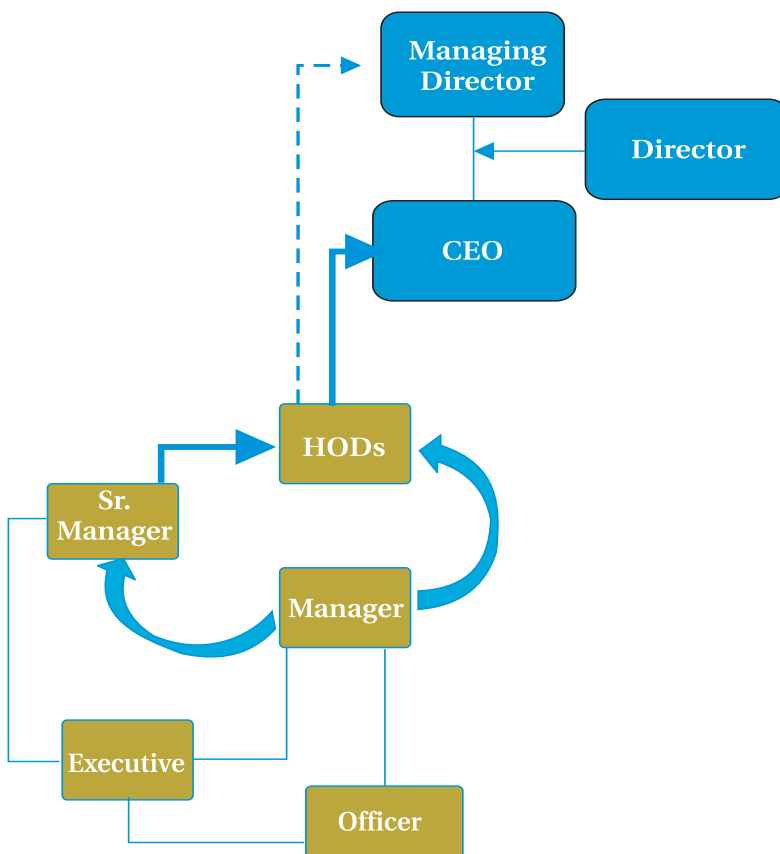


FIGURE 1: CURRENT REPORTING HIERARCHY STRUCTURE OF S&S

Analysis By Ravi Mishra

It is interesting to see the growth trajectory of Shine and Spark Private Limited (S&S), a company led from the front by Srikant, with no one else to support him in the leadership team. This is the beauty and the success story of a family-run business, where Srikant managed to create an army of dedicated soldiers with no rank and file. The one thing common in this coherent team is trust and respect for each other for a common cause; what we professionals term as Purpose. If we look at the organisation as a whole, it is all about Srikant. The organisation has been built on the basis of his professional qualifications and exposure to business acumen. When one sees the challenges confronting Srikant before jumping into the global market, one is forced to recall Marshall Goldsmith's book, "What got you here won't get you there."

The Eyewear sector had been small and not very competitive. It was therefore critical to ensure customer delight, which has been duly taken care of by the employees at S & S. Also, S&S ensured a greater choice of products at a single point of merchandise by marketing international brands apart from products from their own stable. This comes as a unique and successful model in terms of organisation structure and people management. Srikant need not worry to venture into the international market since his brothers are trustworthy and have reflected a strong bondage. They are attuned to the philosophy of Instructive Management and Paternal Ecosystem.

Going Forward

Srikant must connect with his key employees to win their confidence.

And subsequently, he should chart out a business plan and prioritise actions about his journey to go global. Firstly, he should strengthen the foundation of his current operations and hire professionals at different levels. He needs to engage a consultant to design the organisational structure so that his brothers are given key positions, while ensuring minimal disruption with the entry of professional managers. The new look organisation should develop the new system and processes and functions like Human Resources, Finance and Accounts, Sales and Marketing etc. Care must also be taken to avoid conflict between the professionals and the old guards. Srikant, along with his brothers, must mentor the older generation of employees in a sensible manner so that they can make a connect with the culture change. The role of HR is equally important and challenging to manage this successful transition.

Secondly, it is important to analyse the cost proposition of the initiative since it may have substantial impact on the profits in the domestic market. This needs robust financial analysis and planning to diffuse any plausible risk.

One of the competitive advantages of S&S is the confidence and support of those international brands to which it has provided a platform in India. S&S can use such stakeholders based in other countries to advance their products and services. This will also provide an advantage to the local vendors and suppliers to expand their business through global presence and branding. Companies based in different countries will try to get the advantage of contract manufacturing in a country like



India, where the cost of production is very low.

While, it looks challenging at the outset, Srikant and his team have always emerged strong in each of their ventures. One of S&S' biggest strengths is its people and their trust and engagement. At the end of day, it is always the people who make the biggest difference in the success of an organisation. **HC**

About the Author

Ravi Mishra is Head - Global HR Initiative, Birla Carbon. He had been associated with diversified organisations such as Nicholas Piramal, Mardia Group of Industries, Aditya Birla Chemicals, and UltraTech Cement in the past. He has good exposure of working in a cross-cultural environment with capabilities of building teams and getting the best out of it with maturity of understanding business perspectives, linkages and strategic orientation in actions with regard to people management.

Analysis By Shweta Kumar

Srikant Amanaganti's problem is hardly unusual. He has fallen into the classic trap of "I can do it all." And his problem is further intensified by the fact that it is a family-led business. All this implies that there is a need to balance strong family relationships with robust professional principles. The dilemma before Srikant is to try and maintain a balance between great execution in the present versus investment in the future. Many organisations grow rapidly when the market conditions are favourable, as in the case of Shine & Spark. While they grew in response to the phenomenon of overall growth in the eyewear sector, the organisation did not prepare itself for the unforeseen future. By taking care of everything himself, and not grooming next generation leaders in sufficient numbers, he did not make room for a sufficiently vibrant organisational culture so as to create new opportunities. And as he has begun to realise, hiring professional leaders from outside at this point is likely to create a whole set of issues.

In successful vibrant organisations, we find the top leadership focussed on not only the challenges being faced at the moment, but even those challenges that may emerge in the next five years. What trends do we need to plan for, and which are the ones that can be turned into an advantage or opportunity? What risks may disrupt the business? What capabilities do the leadership need to prepare for the times ahead?

Srikant should have implemented an organisational capability plan. This is seen as a very useful framework to ensure organisational success in the current AND in the future. A comprehensive organisational capability plan comprises of a few key steps:

- Mapping the key decision-making levels/ bands in the organisation (most organisations have no more than five levels).
- Each level is mapped with a time horizon e.g. the top leadership is mapped with a time horizon of 3 years and the lowermost level is mapped to a time horizon of 1 quarter. This is a critical step as most organisations end up in a situation where all levels in the organisation are only thinking 2 to 3 quarters or a year ahead at best.
- The next step is to do create a capability planning roadmap for the talent at each level to meet the challenges as per their time horizon. This requires implementing a robust learning and development plan to help the employees:-
 - a) Anticipate what challenges may disrupt the tasks, and as per their time horizon, and
 - b) Training them through a number of interventions to have them prepare for the challenges.

This means that the top leadership learning plan must be focussed towards preparing leaders to anticipate and face the challenges that will come in the next 3 to 5 years. The department/ functional heads are prepared for challenges (known and unknown) in the next 12 to 18 months and so on. This creates a strong vibrant culture of learning and reinventing in the organisation. The employees are attuned to doing their current role well, but also thinking about how to make themselves better and more prepared.

If S&S is truly committed to growing their operations, they will need to: -

- Implement an organisation



structure that meets the requirements of the new strategy

- Take some tough but necessary calls around what talent capabilities are needed to lead the new organisation, and
- Create a culture roadmap

I believe that if Srikant can bring his customary zeal into this project, he will be able to achieve the desired goal. 

About the Author

Shweta Kumar is the CEO of OD Alternatives and has worked extensively with clients and companies in multiple regions and industries in the areas of organisational transformation, team capability enhancement, leadership development and culture change. In her experience of more than 20 years, she has worked with organisations such as Naspers, Honeywell, Motorola and Intel - in addition to her consulting assignments. She holds a Masters in HRM from TISS and is currently pursuing her Masters in Management of Change from INSEAD.

Destination Digital : Key Lessons and Success Factors

When we think about technology, we always think linearly. We aspire to digitize current processes, overlooking the fact that technology can change the paradigm completely.

BY HARJEET KHANDUJA

Transformation is a phenomenon similar to metamorphosis, like a caterpillar growing wings and becoming a butterfly.

Transformation

A few years ago, Shyam bought an iPhone. Shyam was boasting about the features of his iPhone. All his friends were amazed and aspired to have an iPhone. A month later, another company launched a phone having most of the features of an iPhone, but at a fraction of the cost. Aspirations got wings, as they were affordable now. All his friends were now on the same upgraded platform. This opened the door to numerous possibilities, which led to transformation.

“Transformation happens when aspirations become affordable.”

What does transformation require?

However, getting an iPhone was not an actual transformation. It was only the beginning. The real transformation happened when public utility companies decided to adopt mobile billing solutions. The waiting lines vanished as people started paying their bills online.

This process was not easy, and it was not superficial. This was similar to the process of a child growing



up. A lot of internal processes had to change for it to happen. Any transformation requires innovation, process change, stakeholder education, addressing concerns, and breaking of myths.

How different is digital transformation?

Transformation is just the same. 'Digital' adds speed to transformation. Society is already experiencing a digital transformation. Organizations are yet to follow in a significant way.

A pizza gets delivered in 30 minutes, and you can track the order. You can also choose the

toppings for your pizza. However, can you similarly track your career? Can you choose your own toppings and can it happen as quickly?

If you are watching a cricket match, you can see the visual analysis of balls delivered by the bowler in the game. You can also see the entire career history of the bowler, without interrupting the flow of the match. Can you get the same analysis of your own performance in real-time instead of a quarterly or yearly feedback?

Another example is that your phone opens up when it 'looks' at your face. Facebook recognizes most

of your friends using face recognition. But can you enter your office using your face as your identity card?

Where do organizations stand?

Society has always been ahead of organizations due to the economies-of-scale advantage. Organizations still struggle with basic automation. Real-time visual analytics of performance and face recognition are still aspirations.

However, the situation is not as bad as it sounds. There are organizations that have invested in technology to create these experiences. They have built aspirations among their peers. Still, these aspirations need wings, which they will get as technology solutions become relatively affordable. This is just the beginning of the transformation.

Technology is not digital transformation

When we think about technology, we always think linearly. We aspire to digitize current processes. We overlook the fact that technology can change the paradigm completely.

Cricket used to be a five-day game, which was cut to one day to increase viewership. Then came the era of digital viewership. Options created by technology resulted in a reduction of people's attention spans. Cricket was competing with football (a 90-minute game) to get a larger share of digital viewership. T20 was born to offer a fast-paced and more dynamic watching experience. The paradigm changed!

Digital transformation is not a phenomenon of the future

I was travelling by Uber. An elderly gentleman drove the cab. He told me he retired from his previous company, but his responsibilities did not retire. He got a job with this cab platform company, Uber. They did not look at his age. They looked at his skills and gave him the job.

There are more and more platform companies fuelling the gig economy. The rules of the game are going to change.

Employment contracts will change, working hours will change, the retirement age will change, the focus will shift from educational degrees to practical skills, performance feedback will be real-time, methods of training will change, and much more will change beyond our imagination. Technology platforms are not digitizing processes; they are changing the paradigm. This is not going to happen in the future; this is happening right now!

Numerous organizations like Ola, Uber, Swiggy, Urban Clap, Toppr, Oyo, and Airbnb are using the technology platform approach to drive the change. Doctors, lawyers, and consultants are already working on these models.

You can't copy-paste, you must not copy-paste

Digital transformation looks good. It is just like maintaining a zero figure. However, attaining a zero figure is a tough process, and it is individual-specific. Everybody is different and needs customized diet & exercise plans according to their own body. You can't simply copy and paste the diet plan of someone else. Although processes in various organizations look similar, each organization has its own nuances. Copy-pasting can make the process defunct.

At the same time, if you plan based on your own organization, there is a possibility of creating a better solution, the way ISRO did in their "Mission Mangal" by using out-of-the-box thinking. ISRO refused to copy the NASA model. Instead, they came up with an indigenous and cost-efficient approach for Mission Mangal, and it worked for them.

How to start?

The first important thing for any business is to be aware of the environment. Awareness of technology and its usage in solving practical problems is a must in the current context. The next most important



thing is to understand your own business and its issues. Try to solve these problems in the context of technology. Doing this will not only give you a good start but ensure that you remain ahead of the curve.

It seems overwhelming at first, as there is a lot of hype around it. It looks costly, but it is not. It seems like a big change, but it is not. Any change is unsettling. Besides, many myths have been created around digital transformation. These myths are ten times bigger than the actual problems. Caterpillars just focus on building cocoons instead of flying. Transformations follow automatically!



About the Author

Harjeet Khanduja is an international speaker, writer, poet and an HR Leader. An alumnus of IIT Roorkee and INSEAD, he is currently working as VP-HR at Reliance Jio. He has been conferred with multiple awards including HR Leadership Award, Pride of the Nation Award, Global Learning Award, Top 100 HR Minds, and Top 50 HR Tech Leaders. Harjeet has been a LinkedIn power profile, Chicken Soup writer, TEDx speaker, guest faculty at IIM Ahmedabad, board member of Federation of World Academics and Co-Chair of Nasscom Diversity Committee.

Employee Rights In Insolvency

BY K V SINGH AND NACHIKETA GOYAL

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 ("IBC") was introduced for the purpose of consolidating the laws related to insolvency and bankruptcy in India. The intention to introduce IBC was to strike a balance between the creditors and the borrowers with regard to their rights and liabilities and to secure and strengthen the position of the creditors. With the introduction of IBC, the process of insolvency is conducted in a time-bound manner and the Resolution Professional aims at maximising the value of the assets of the Corporate Debtor, which subsequently benefits the creditors by maximising the recovery of their debt in a timebound manner.

The question that came up for determination in *Alchemist Asset*

Reconstruction Limited vs Moser Baer India Limited was whether pension fund, provident fund, and gratuity fund form a part of the liquidation estate. In other words, do these funds become a part of the distributable assets? It may be noted that section 36 of the IBC deals with the liquidation estate. Liquidation estate comprises of assets over which the Corporate Debtor has ownership rights. Section 53 of the IBC defines the priority and the timelines in the distribution of the assets.

In the aforesaid matter, *Alchemist Asset Reconstruction Limited vs Moser Baer India Limited*, the National Company Law Tribunal ("Tribunal") held that pension fund, provident fund, and gratuity fund cannot be included in the assets of the Corporate Debtor to be liquidated for settling the claims of the creditors as mentioned in Section 53 of the IBC, and the said funds have been excluded from the purview of Section 53 of the IBC.

The brief facts of the case are that *Alchemist Asset Reconstruction Limited*, being one of the financial creditors, filed an application under Section 7 of the IBC before the Tribunal for initiating Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process ("CIRP") against *Moser Baer*, and the same was admitted by the Tribunal. Thereafter, an Expression of Interest to put forward a Resolution Plan was invited. However, since no Resolution Plan was received, the Committee of Creditors ("COC"), by a 100% voting share, decided to liquidate *Moser Baer India Limited*. Thereafter, the liquidator filed an application before the Tribunal to bring on record the COC's decision of liquidating the Corporate Debtor. The





Tribunal, after taking on record the submission of the liquidator, passed an order of liquidation against the Corporate Debtor.

Subsequently, after the aforesaid order was passed by the Tribunal against the Corporate Debtor, the liquidator denied the preferential payment of the gratuity fund, provident fund, and pension fund to the workmen employed with the Corporate Debtor. By virtue of denying the preferential payment of the aforesaid funds to the workmen of the Corporate Debtor, the liquidator included the amounts which were due to the workmen towards their gratuity fund, provident fund and pension fund, within the purview of Section 53 of the IBC. Being aggrieved by the decision of the liquidator denying them their preferential payment of gratuity fund, provident fund and pension fund, the Moser Baer Karamchari Union i.e. the workmen, moved an application before the Tribunal, thereby, praying to exclude the amounts due to them towards their preferential payment of gratuity fund, provident fund and pension fund from the purview of Section 53 of the IBC.

The Tribunal, after hearing the application moved by the Moser Baer Karamchari Union at length, passed an order in favour of the Moser Baer Karamchari Union by excluding the preferential payment of gratuity fund, provident fund, and pension fund from the purview of Section 53 of the IBC. The Tribunal specifically specified in its order that the preferential payment of the aforesaid funds did not form a

part of the Liquidation Estate of the Corporate Debtor.

Subsequently, aggrieved by the order of the Tribunal, State Bank of India ("SBI"), which is also one of the secured creditors of the Corporate Debtor, filed an appeal before the Nation Company Law Appellate Tribunal ("Appellate Tribunal") against the order passed by the Tribunal, praying for including the aforesaid funds within the purview of Section 53 of the IBC. The Appellate Tribunal upheld the decision of the Tribunal, and further stated that since 'workmen's dues' is specifically mentioned in Section 53 (1)(b)(i) of the IBC as dues for the period of 24 months preceding the liquidation commencement date, its meaning could not be derived through Section 326 of the Companies Act, 2013. Since SBI argued that 'workmen's dues' as specified under Section 53(1)(c) shall have the same meaning as assigned to it under Section 326 of the Companies Act, 2013, the Appellate Tribunal provided a clarification that Section 326 of the Companies Act, 2013 is only relevant for the purpose of understanding 'workmen's dues' whereas Section 36(4)(a)(iii) of the IBC clearly states that all sums due to any workman or employee from the pension funds, gratuity fund and provident fund shall not be included in the liquidation estate assets.

While concluding the judgement, the NCLAT held that :

"..as the provisions of the IBC have overriding effect in case of inconsistency in any other law for the time being enforced, we hold that Section 53(1) (b) read with Section 36(4) of the IBC will have overriding effect on Section 326(1)(a) of the Companies Act, 2013, including the explanation (i) mentioned below Section 326 of the Companies Act, 2013".

The appeal filed by SBI before the Hon'ble NCLAT was dismissed. It has been held by the Hon'ble NCLAT that the gratuity fund, provident fund and pension fund do not fall within the meaning of 'liquidation estate' for the purpose of distribution of assets as specified under Section 53 of the IBC.





I am a former marketing and sales manager with a Company in Delhi. I joined in February 2016 and opened my Employees' Provident Fund Account. I worked there for around 3 years and thereafter left the job in April 2019. I am no longer employed and wish to withdraw the PF amount. Kindly confirm if the said PF amount will be a taxable income?

Please note that if the PF amount is withdrawn before 5 years of continuous service, the same becomes taxable as per the provisions of the Income Tax Act, 1961 and the Rules made thereunder. Continuous service would mean that a person shifts from one organisation to another without a gap in between and the new employer starts making payments towards PF immediately upon transfer of service. There should not be any gap in contribution of PF to avail the benefit of the continuous service clause. In the present case, if the period of 3 years was not preceded by 2 more years of service in continuity, the PF amount will be taxable.

I am a Manager with a multi-national company in Bengaluru. We had hired an employee on probation for 90 days. Is it possible for us to terminate his services without serving him with prior notice during the probation period?

Please note that termination of service during the probation period would depend on the terms of the appointment. In the event of the

appointment letter / employment contract states that a notice of certain days is to be provided to the employee, your organisation will be bound by the said contract, and will have to provide the notice period and/or payment in lieu of the notice period. However, in the event that there is no such requirement in the appointment letter / employment contract, your organisation may terminate the services without giving any notice. In this regard, reference may be drawn to the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in *Muir Mills v. Swayam Prakash Srivastava*, AIR 2007 SC 519, wherein it has been held that where the appointment letter is silent on the requirement for notice, the services of a probationer can be terminated without notice.

We are a company providing IT/ITES related services in Gurgaon, Haryana. We have 150 employees working out of our office. We have registered under the Punjab Shops & Establishments Act. Kindly let us know if Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946 are applicable to our establishment in Gurgaon.

Please note that Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946 are applicable on all the establishments in Haryana, which include establishments providing IT/ITES related services. The scope of the term 'establishment' was clarified at length by the Labour Commissioner, Haryana vide its letter no. 20934-70 dated 24.07.2019 to include all establishments covered under Punjab Shops &

Establishments Act. Separately, please note that Karnataka is the only state where the State Government has passed a notification specifically excluding establishments providing IT/ITES services from the gambit of Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946. 

About the Authors

Krishna Vijay Singh is a Senior Partner at Kochhar & Co., one of the leading and largest law firms in India with offices at New Delhi, Gurgaon, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Dubai, Riyadh, Jeddah, Singapore, Tokyo and Atlanta (USA). The firm represents some of the largest multinational corporations from North America, Europe, Japan and India (many of which are Fortune 500 companies) in diverse areas of corporate and commercial laws.

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The Art & Science Of Retention

The science of retention interventions does play a pivotal role in employee retention and engagement strategies. But these interventions need to continually strive all through the business cycle and possible unforeseen lean cycles.

BY ABHIROOP BANERJEE

Since time immemorial, the Indian culture has viewed marriage as a holistic institution that has a sacred blended essence of trust, mutual respect & responsibility, and soulful love between two individuals irrespective of the challenges that may arise. Today, we have marriage counsellors and relationship coaches who have mainly evolved owing to the western influence on our Indian values and ethos. This, in fact, has diluted the sanctity of the institution of marriage. Ancient wisdom from Sages have been a great pillar of strength in sustaining the Indian culture and ethos. This has had a magnetic effect for the outside world to experience the wisdom and quench their thirst for knowledge in Spiritualism and Meditation.

In the corporate world, however, talent acquisition can be imagined as though looking for the perfect bride for a family. This shall provide a greater dimension to the recruiters to explore and infuse the latest recruiting tools to hire the perfect bride, who can fit with the family culture, values, and ethics. However, at times, in spite of having the best of retention strategies, we fail to retain such talent in the long run. We remain clueless as to what might have gone wrong in spite of providing the best of facilities at the workplace and compensation packages. Creating a working environment of a happy family for the new entrant, and embracing him/her gradually into the system is the ideal phenomena.

Organisations invest in various retention strategies depending upon their budget and future profitability on making automated induction process, introduction of various awards and reward schemes, enriching the welfare facilities and resources.

The science of retention interventions does play a pivotal role in employee retention and engagement strategies. But these interventions need to continually strive all through the business cycle and possible unforeseen lean cycles. It becomes imperative to cut down on the budget invested on employee welfare, facilities, and retention interventions which leads to a fall in employee motivation and engagement levels. Hence, the science of retention strategies, similar to the laws of Newton, works as long as there is a driving force or momentum of a business growth cycle.

But the question is to understand the fundamental art of retention even when the science of retention strategies takes a back seat. The secret to the art of retention is to gradually infuse positivity into the system of the working environment by imbibing positive thoughts and actions, which shall enhance the immunity of the culture to face the challenges of the future. Honest responses/executions on a daily basis to the three powerful questions mentioned below by all the employees reinforces the Top Management as an integral part of performance management system which shall



synergise an environment of Trust, Appreciation & Development.

- 1) One Positive/ humanitarian activity which I did during the day ?
- 2) How many appreciations did I offer and receive today?
- 3) What new learnings/ knowledge did I learn and share today?

Practicing the powerful tool cited above shall surely make each individual a seeker of positivity even during times of uncertainty. The art and science of retention strategy together work miracles for creating a happy family work environment that makes for a stronger bond of unity and strength to overcome all challenges of life. 

About the Author

Abhiroop Banerjee is the Training Officer, Plasser India Pvt. Ltd. He wields an experience of more than 14 years in the manufacturing sector in both corporate as well as a Plant set-up. Abhiroop has an MBA in Human Resources and a Diploma from the Indian Society for Training and Development (ISTD).



The Critical Balance For Success

The ongoing conversation about a healthy balance between achieving and enjoying boils down to the camaraderie between an individual and the organisation that is mutually beneficial and a win win for all.

BY ADARSH MISHRA

Michelle Obama, the former First Lady, had said, "we need to do a better job of putting ourselves higher on our own 'to do' list." And this remains as extremely relevant when we talk about striking a work-life balance.

With technology taking over our lives, people are more hustle-minded than ever before. In this world of hyper-connectivity and 'always-on' culture, the line between work and life has grown extremely thin. Amidst such noise, the need to always be 'on top of our game' and to be driven, often pushes people to the point of exhaustion, leading to psychosomatic disorders, stress, anxiety, and depression, impacting individual efficiency and hence workforce productivity. According to a survey by Harvard Business School, 94% of service professionals work for more than 50 hours a week. And while it has been claimed by some

that long hours are necessary, research has been proven that striking a balance between self-growth and work is critical for one's mental well-being.

An important conversation

The rise of the millennial workforce is one of the biggest reasons for work-life balance to become such an important conversation. If reports are to be believed, millennials will comprise 50% of the total workforce by 2050 and 'work-life balance' would surely be one of the deciding factors for retention of good talent. Millennials and Gen Z wants to be recognised for their work, and are even willing to take a pay cut to join an organisation which is more rewarding and gives ample opportunities to learn and grow professionally and personally. Most young workers have varied interests, so they prefer taking up jobs that give them the freedom and time to explore different verticals. With work life balance becoming a priority, many organisations are offering flexibility in terms of work hours and locations to address this requirement.

Effective work-life integration is equally important for the employer as



it is for the employee. The ongoing conversation about a healthy balance between achieving and enjoying, it boils down to the camaraderie between an individual and the organisation that is mutually beneficial and a win win for all. With work-life balance being an important aspect of a healthy work environment, organisations are increasingly adopting new ways to ensure well-being of their employees.

Encouraging productivity through flexibility

Now-a-days, organisations are willing to go the extra mile to understand the needs of their employees and help them improve their quality of life. Working towards 'employee satisfaction' as a business goal, the 21st century workplaces are ensuring their people are happy and motivated at work, thereby increasing their productivity. To further this agenda, companies are doing away with the older models and adopting newer employee-friendly policies like flexi working hours, location agnostic roles, work from home facilities, maternity-paternity policies and four-day work-week. For instance, working from home a couple of times in a month helps in building a sense of trust between the employee and the employer, as they do not feel micro-managed. This leads to the development of an increased sense of accountability and responsibility.

It is also very important to create an environment of motivation at the workplace which helps to enhance employee productivity. For instance, at Panasonic, we have fun break-out zones for employees to take a break and refresh, we host state of the art in-house gym along with in-house chefs to ensure quality nutrition for our employees.

Making work fun

It is no longer all work and no play. Organisations have realised that motivated employees are the most productive. Companies are introducing fun learning activities and celebrating special-days like - Emoji day, International women's day, World Food Day, Family Day etc. - bringing the element of fun at work. Through such activities, companies are attempting

to build camaraderie and team spirit among employees, thus encouraging a healthy work environment. With the right mix of fun and engagement, employees feel more connected to their workplace, thus resulting in better productivity and in turn, business profitability. E.g. Organising International Yoga Day at workplace by engaging with employees and discussing the importance of mental health along with physical health for a healthy wellbeing.

Talk the talk - be more transparent

It is essential for organisations to regularly communicate with their employees, and constantly update them about the organisation's achievements, new initiatives, issues, future plans, etc., so that employees feel involved and trusted. After all, employees are the biggest advocates of one's brand. Involving employees and engaging with them to know their opinion/feedback on new developments, plans, etc. builds a strong sense of trust, which is critical for every organisation.

Workplaces have undergone drastic transformations since the last decade, which has redefined work life balance. Organisations are constantly introducing people friendly policies to have a positive impact on the lives of employees and help them deliver better results. At a time when work-related stress is becoming a growing concern, it is refreshing to see the needle move towards companies encouraging a healthy work-life balance by going out of the way to make their staff love the work they do. It is important to realise that people make a workplace great and a business profitable! **HC**

“Working towards 'employee satisfaction' as a business goal, the 21st century workplaces are ensuring their people are happy and motivated at work, thereby increasing their productivity.”

About the Author

Adarsh Mishra is Director and Chief Human Resource Officer, Panasonic India. With over 21 years of corporate experience under his fold, he has done extensive work in the area of talent management, leadership development, performance management, culture and change management. Adarsh holds a Master's degree in Industrial relations and Personnel Management.

A Thoughtful Architect Catalyzing Global HR Innovations

BY ANKITA SHARMA



Josh Bersin is an extremely rare combination of visionary and analyst. With a splendid ability to understand and analyse data, Josh powerfully weaves forward-looking insights that are actionable and generate business value. He is the Founder of Bersin by Deloitte and the Josh Bersin Academy. Lauded as one of the leading HR and industry experts, Josh radiates charisma and has an infectious optimism. As for influence, his novel solutions to seemingly intractable workplace problems are considered 'gold standard' and the world looks to him for guidance. Josh is vividly and convincingly sparking transformative improvements in the HR landscape. Open your heart and prepare to be inspired as the prolific influencer shares exclusive insights into the world of HR and gives us a scoop on his leadership style, core beliefs, and much more!

The Josh Bersin Academy is the world's first global development academy for HR and talent professionals at all levels and across all industries. With what vision was it founded? Also, what are some of the unique programs you offer?

In my meetings with hundreds of HR organizations, I've seen a tremendous need to transform "from the inside out." In other words, we as a profession need to reinvent our roles, capabilities, and skill, and that's the problem I'm trying to solve. Many companies have "HR for HR" programs, but they're very limited and can't keep up with all the innovation going on in the profession. Our goal with the Josh Bersin Academy is to be the world's professional development academy for HR and talent professionals at all levels across industry segments.

We already have a wide range of programs: People as Competitive Advantage, HR in the Age of AI, 21st Century Performance Management, Agile Learning and Development, and Wellbeing at Work. Three more are planned for this year, covering strategic business partner capabilities, the secrets to employee engagement, and people analytics.

A recent 'Global Human Capital Trends' report by Deloitte states: "Rather than an orderly, sequential progression from job to job, 21st-century careers can be viewed as a series of developmental experiences". You were one of the co-authors of this study. What does this evolving career model mean for organizations?

Yes, I actually wrote most of that report. This is a massive shift in HR, but one we all have likely experienced in our personal careers. We don't learn from development alone; we also learn from experience. So people today want more exposure to different jobs and business units, more project experience, and more opportunities to learn on the job. I call this "learning in the flow of work", but a lot of this means building an internal talent marketplace in your company so people can move from project to project and role to role, while they are advancing their careers. Rotational assignments, stretch assignments, and even external assignments are part of this, as is reverse mentoring.

It is undisputed that AI and machine learning are calling for new business models. How can HR professionals navigate the new

Rapid Fire

Favourite quote: "The best organizations find a way to let every employee fulfill their own personal and professional aspirations at work."

Leadership style: "Listening, thinking, and innovating as a team."

Favourite book: I read too many to have a favorite.

Favourite movie: I just watched "Bullit" with Steve McQueen. I also love all the John Candy comedy movies.

Life is...? "A wonderful adventure."

Family is... "My support system and what gives me the strength to do what I do."

I strongly believe in... "Making sense of the world and helping others bring context and value to their own careers and jobs."

The most important thing I do on Sunday... "Go for a long walk with my wife."

I deal with setbacks by... "Trying to get some sleep and get up the next day for a fresh perspective."

agendas that technology is triggering?

As we describe in the program 'HR in the Age of AI', the role of HR is going to change. You will not just be designing programs to roll out to employees - you will also be monitoring and training chatbots, analyzing data on employee sentiment, and delivering actionable data, recommendations and nudges to employees and leaders. We in HR will have to learn about bias, data quality, and natural language processing so that we select validated and high-quality tools. Most companies now need people analytics and AI expert or team to make this happen.

In a world undergoing continuous and multifaceted change, disruptions are sweeping businesses. In the very context, the term 'agile' is thrown around a lot these days. According to you, what might be a few trademarks of an agile enterprise?

Agile is a mindset and culture, not merely a set of tools. Agile companies move people from project to project; have flatter



Up Close and Personal

As a global industry analyst, author, educator, and thought leader you are an inspiration for many. Who inspires you?

My role models are the economists, business thinkers, and serious HR practitioners I meet all over the world. I believe the connection between our personal, business and economic lives is more important than ever, so I am particularly drawn to people like Fareed Zakaria from CNN and many other global economists who are trying to piece together this big transition from 'jobs of the past' to 'jobs and careers of the future'. I also greatly admire the CHROs and other HR domain experts I meet every day, as well as the incredibly innovative HR tech entrepreneurs our industry is lucky to have.

Is there something that people consistently ask for your advice on? What is it?

Many things, but perhaps the most prominent topics are how do we transform the HR function and tackle talent issues such as career, skills development, and rewards to grow our company and better engage our people in positive ways. The big problem we have right now is that our work lives and personal lives are going in different directions, and we need them to come back together. I see 'wellbeing' as a new concept that is

trying to bridge the gap between continuous business execution and holistic human and family lives.

When was the last time you astonished yourself?

I'm astonishing myself right now with the amount of fun and excitement I'm having building the Josh Bersin Academy. We are seeing interest from all over the world. It is perhaps becoming the most exciting time in my career.

How do you like spending your free time?

My number one priority at home is to be with my family. I have two grown children who live nearby, and my wife and I love having them around as much as possible. I also love to walk, bicycle, exercise, and spend time outside. The more I travel, the more I crave time with physical activity and being outdoors. I spend a lot of time writing, so I often need these focused times to get my thoughts together.

What would we be surprised to learn about you?

Maybe the fact that I'm an engineer and love to figure out how things work. It's the part of my personality that's never gone away. I drive my wife crazy asking her "why do you think this is happening" all the time because I'm always trying to piece things together and make sense of the world.

management models where leaders are hands-on project owners; and empower and reward people for expertise, not just for tenure. They also have leaders who think about employee growth, customer listening, continuous development and reflect on the lessons that can be learned from failure. Leaders in such companies are also curious and willing to tolerate uncertainty as products start small and grow.

Human Resource Management is somewhat unique and different in every country. In terms of adapting to HR technology, how does an emerging country like India compare with developed economies?

I love coming to India because the HR profession in India is particularly focused on internal development, academic and professional expertise, and collaboration. I think India, perhaps because its Hindu history, is strongly focused on employees as individuals, and companies invest very heavily in training, development, and career growth. Many of the organizations are conglomerates in many industries, so the HR and job models are very challenging - but there is an incredible passion for learning and trying new ideas. Companies in India are very comfortable with technology, data, and new innovative tools. I see India as one of the most powerful growing economies in the world. 

The Five Vs Of Big Data

HR departments need to make effective use of the available data, and structure and extract the data according to the company's objectives and mandate.

BY PROF. RAUL VILLAMARIN RODRIGUEZ

Big Data refers to the manner in which large or Metadata is manipulated and extracted in structured as well as unstructured manner, for analysis and to further utilise it to develop future business strategies. And for HR departments, Big Data can be useful in two ways—hiring good talent and improving the quality of work and workplace. However, some experts are of the opinion that Big Data is ineffective in HR since the information being handled is not very large. Therefore, HR departments need to make effective use of the available data, and structure and extract the data according to the company's objectives and mandate.

The Five Vs of Big Data

In order to contextualise Big Data in HR, we must highlight the elements that drive it through:

- **Volume:** Large amounts of data need to be processed in an appropriate manner. In fact, it is estimated that the data that must be handled will increase by 200 per cent every two years, and by 2020, this data will be around 40 Zettabytes (40 Billion TB).
- **Velocity:** A large volume of information will need to be handled in real-time. For instance, 500 hours of video are uploaded per minute on YouTube, and nearly 80,000 videos are viewed in one second.
- **Variety:** Analysed metrics originate from different sources; in a structured and unstructured way, although it is estimated that

90% is structured. Hence, it is essential to have a platform that can handle different types and sources of data.

- **Veracity:** It is imperative to determine beforehand if valuable references can be extracted from the raw data.

- **Value:** Since Big Data tools are expensive, it is essential to determine whether the tools used can actually perform. Big Data is changing the way HR works, and hence such professionals who are well versed with such applications prove to be an asset for companies.

The way Big Data works in HR

- Studying basic data and results of established metrics.
- Comparative analysis of KPIs, trends and benchmarking
- Multidimensional analysis and subsequent modelling (forecast regarding the levels of rotation, real-time talent management to give quick answers, chances of leaving talented workers, etc.).

Big Data can be applied during talent acquisition, providing important information when choosing profiles that fit the vision of the company. It provides HR with factors that increases the productivity of employees and their degree of satisfaction. For instance, it can be used to find out why an area of the company has a large turnover; or what are the benefits most valued by employees and act based on this information.

Advantages and disadvantages of Big Data in HR

Advantages

- HR departments will speak the language of the business. Measured and analysed data provided will be combined with the work performed by a department as a rule.
- Decision making will be based on data, so it will be less intuitive and more efficient.
- Data can help improve the search for talent, the training of employees, what motivates them, strengthen the retention of talent, among others.

Disadvantages

- The cost of training or hiring companies/personnel to analyse data is high.
- The cultural change that involves working with other types of procedures for HR departments.
- Handling data always involves a security and privacy risk, depending on the tools and forms used.
- Incorporating data analysis and treatment to improve processes is the great challenge of the Human Resources departments.



About the Author

Prof. Raul Villamarin Rodriguez is Assistant Professor, Universal Business School.

The Anatomy Of Organisational Culture

Personality renders a human element to the organisation, which brings life to the interactions and relationships between the associates and the organisation in itself.

BY SURESH DATLA



Individuals have personalities; groups have culture, and culture is the collective personality of a group of individuals. Without personality, every person is the same - an assortment of organs, activities, and soulless existence with no remarkable difference. Personality differentiates us from one another and gives us a unique identity. Similarly, an organisation is just an assortment of furniture, transactions, and a collection of people without a distinct identity in the absence of a collective personality i.e. Culture.

There are several reasons for an organisation to bear a personality of its own. One among them is that personality renders a human element to the organisation, which brings life to the interactions and relationships between the associates and the organisation in itself.

Culture settles in: Assuming that an organisation chooses not to have any specific culture. Culture however still settles in. In all of history, there

has been no instance of a group without a distinct culture.

If we are not mindful of culture, it would be left to chance. Culture and Sub-cultures would creep into each sub-group, depending on the leadership styles of the formal or informal leaders in each of these sub-groups. And it is likely for these fragmented group cultures to clash with each other, often resulting in office politics and frustrations for the members of the groups. Cultures so formed randomly tend to be very volatile and dissolve as

“Culture and Sub-cultures would creep into each sub-group depending on the leadership styles of the formal or informal leaders in each of these sub-groups.”

soon as the leader changes, giving way to a new culture based on the new leader's style.

Culture shapes behaviour: If you are a believer that Management is a lot about shaping the behaviour of your people and driving results by building synergy, there is a need to focus on the culture. A great culture can shift behaviour from mediocrity to virtuosity.

The virtues that are identified as distinctive cultural elements and promoted by the Leaders are the ones that would be practiced by the workforce. It provides clarity to associates on the behaviours that are valued and condemned. In the modern globalised world where people from diverse ethnic backgrounds work together, organisational culture supersedes ethnicity related cultural differences, and to a great extent, even blunts out office politics. This leads to associates getting along with each other with ease, and pulling in one direction. In essence, Culture matters! And in a big way! This also explains why associates in companies with a strong culture outperform their peers in other companies by about 20%.

Intensity of Culture - mild to strong: The intensity of Culture can be defined as the degree of consistency with which members of the group exhibit behavioural traits that are distinctive of that group's culture. High consistency with respect to a certain trait indicates high intensity. And as we move towards a scale of lower consistency, we gradually move towards mild cultures, and then gradually to non-

existence of that behavioural trait at a cultural level.

Mild cultures tend to get dissolved over a period of time and lose their cultural identity. This happens because conformity to cultural norms or the lack of it tends to be inconsequential for members of the group in low-intensity cultures. Organisations need to build enough intensity to create any impact of culture on results. Success through culture management is only possible when the intensity is high enough to impact the day to day thinking and behaviour of group members.

What kind of culture suits your organisation?

Purpose & Values: Ensure that those working for the organisation are aligned to the purpose. Without knowing or believing or living the purpose for which the organisation exists, people are never going to excel at creating products/services that serve the purpose for which the organisation exists. It is of paramount importance to ensure that the culture of the organisation is aligned to the purpose for which it exists.

“The true promise of a culture, argues influential venture capitalist Ben Horowitz, is to “be provocative enough to change what people do every day.”

Values are those that guide the interactions internally within employees, and externally with other stakeholders. Values provide clarity over what to or what not to expect from colleagues, and ensure that there are set standards for acceptable behaviour. Values also act as guidelines over the way in which the organisation expects employees to view the other stakeholders viz. customers, vendors, shareholders, society etc. Thus, values create a cultural

framework within which the employees tend to operate.

A competitive edge: The kind of culture that fits your organisation depends on the kind of business as also the organisational vision. It is important to identify the traits that would provide a competitive edge. For instance, if you build a business which has innovation as your competitive edge, it would be beneficial to have a culture which fosters innovation. If unmatched customer service is what the organisation aspires to build as the competitive edge to win over rival companies, you would like to build a culture which boosts customer service excellence as the paramount value.

How to build culture?

Dream and articulate your dream: Firstly, have a vivid vision of how the ideal culture would look like for your kind of business. Use the Purpose & Values framework and competitive edge of your business as flag-posts in building the vision. Envision how the framework translates into expected behaviours in real life situations. Prioritise and synchronise. It would be a great idea to invite contributions and thoughts from various sections of your employees to straight away start engaging them in the process of building a fabulous culture.

Communicate: No amount of communication is too much when it comes to communication about culture. Studies indicate that at least 22 percent of employees do not know core values or do not understand them. At least 25 percent of employees do not know their company's mission. This shows why communication is so very important. You can create a cult culture by being as creative and clear as possible while communicating. Do not just communicate what is expected out of them. Communicate what it would look like to possess the prized culture that you aspire to build. There is no end to the process of communication over culture. Reinforcement of communication must be done at regular intervals to keep the cultural traits prevalent.



Set an example: Senior leaders in the organisation need to first practice before preaching when it comes to setting up a great culture. Spot opportunities for yourself to demonstrate the behaviours you expect from your people. Do it time and again.

Reward: Idolise great behaviours. Celebrate and publicise any instances/individuals who have exemplified commitment to the culture you aspire to build. Remember Ivan Pavlov's experiment? You get more of what you reward more. Simultaneously, ensure to condemn any behaviour that work against your culture, even if such behaviours get you short term gains. Remember, no great culture happens without sacrifices.

Finally, remember to create a high intensity culture that makes a difference. Half measures do not lead to any results. The true promise of a culture, argues influential venture capitalist Ben Horowitz, is to “be provocative enough to change what people do every day.” 

About the Author

Suresh Datla leads HR for Tupperware India's Business Operations and is also actively involved in development of a few Worldwide HR projects for Tupperware Brands Inc. A keen enthusiast in Training & Development Initiatives, Organisational Culture & Behaviour sciences, he has a blend of experience both in Manufacturing and IT sectors. Suresh can be reached at dsuresh@tupperware.com

The Dynamics Of Success

While most challenges such as funding, market, and competition are usually taken care of by the startup ecosystem, it is equally important that they devote some time initially to develop a sound core team.

BY DR. NAMAN SHARMA

These are times when startups are continuously disrupting the space owned by companies for decades. And many of these startups are transforming into unicorns in a matter of a few years. The situation, however, is not that rosy since an estimated nine out of ten startups are still failing. According to a recent research[#], while the 'lack of market need' may be the topmost reason for the startups to fail, 'not having the right team' is an equally valid reason for such a failure (23%). Similar findings have been reported in various research studies in the past as well. When an idea is unique, and is understood only by a select few, due importance must be given to constitute a team which can identify the opportunity, and help your business to grow. Unfortunately, many startups are highly focused on market and finances that they overlook the importance of such talent that can be helpful in planning and executing better.

Many entrepreneurs prefer to start alone or may wish to do so with a couple of their friends. This is fine as long they are able to perform their primary job of evolving an idea to a tangible product. Entrepreneurship, however, demands certain competencies including attitudinal competencies, behavioural competencies, and managerial competencies for success. It is imperative for entrepreneurs to reflect on their competencies, and accordingly induct people or partners to overcome shortcomings that may hinder the growth of the startup.

Building a sound team and maintaining team dynamics

1. Analyse competencies and act:

Most startups are conceived from an idea, but real entrepreneurs understand that they have a long way to go from developing an idea to converting it into a profitable business activity. Not every inventor can be a marketer. Startups must realise the importance of the different roles that the team needs to play at different growth stages. It is ideally believed that startup teams must have competent people who can act as: -

- **Designer (D):** One who understands the actual customer needs and provide a blueprint to build marketable products/services
- **Hustler (H):** Ones who are the face of the startup, who sells the product, and directly interact with the market.

“When an idea is unique, and is understood only by a select few, due importance must be given to constitute a team which can identify the opportunity, and help your business to grow.”

- **Developer (D):** One who does the groundwork and builds products/services for the startup

Startups need to identify the above DHD gaps in their teams, and act accordingly by hiring competent people.

2. Hire diversity, not yourself:

Sitting in a room, interviewing candidates for your first hire is more of an emotional task. Entrepreneurs are often tempted to hire individuals who identify with their vision of the startup. This is where the hard choice must be made. It is imperative for startup success that people behind it must have some level of distinctiveness about their approach/opinions on making the idea/product work. This is what makes a startup special and disruptive to traditional business. Do not just hire a person who will fit well in the team, hire a person who may challenge the team to make it better.

3. Make sure to onboard a product manager:

One of the key roles that needs to be played in any business, irrespective of its size, type, and location is that of a product manager. A person who understand the titbits of the entire production cycle, and is able to manage it efficiently to deliver quality outputs on time. It is pertinent for every startup to have such persons on board. They could be one of the partners or an employee, but this responsibility is essential for continuous business growth.

4. Never outsource tech

development: This is one of the common mistakes made by many startups during their initial phase. People work on an idea, its minute details, its market, its profits margin, its competitors etc. and raise/invest funds to start the operations. In theory, this seems like a sound idea, but it does not work since the original thinkers are not developers. Therefore, they hire an outsider to deliver the necessary technology. This is a grave mistake on the part of the entrepreneurs which soon leads to their exit from the market. Often, these outsiders partner with other people or start delivering the



products/services by themselves to earn more profits leaving the initial startup with bitter despair.

5. Product development first, business development later: For a startup, anyone who is idle for even a day is a liability, not an asset. An idle workforce adds to the cost, something that an early stage business cannot afford. Business people or hustlers are important to sell your product/services once you

have a product/service to sell. It is best to remain content with one or two business guys to help you understand the market.

6. Wait before hiring experienced people: This could be a contradictory approach for some startups. But in most cases, it is advised not to be in a hurry to hire/induct an experience person from the industry early in your team (unless he/she is the founder/partner). The reason is simple and straightforward. Over time, experienced people are programmed to avoid risk (something a startup cannot afford), and a bold approach to a problem/challenge is imperative for a startup. Thus, it is important for a startup to first run its operations for a few years, attain a sizeable market growth, and then look for people who can help in maintaining this growth or avoid a decline.

The startup ecosystem has brought an exciting era of hopes and opportunities for the younger

generation. It is important for millennials to take a risk early on and try to make something big out of their lives, and rightly so, given the creative ideas they possess. While most challenges such as funding, market, and competition are usually taken care of by the startup ecosystem, it is equally important that they devote some time initially to develop a sound core team. **HC**

- www.cbinsights.com/research/startup-failure-reasons-top

About the Author

Dr. Naman Sharma is Assistant Professor, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, Kolkata. He has substantial research experience and his research has been published in ABDC ranked/Scopus Indexed journals and with other reputed publishers. Dr. Naman has also authored four books with publishers of International repute such as IGI-Global and is serving as guest editor for Scopus Indexed journals.

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Leading from the Heart

We have mastered our minds, but there is a greater need to train our hearts.

BY RICHARD REKHY

“People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care.” – John C. Maxwell



In today's time, when trust in leaders is at an all-time low, it has become even more critical for the leaders to be transparent, humane, and connect at an emotional level with the employees. The employees need to be valued, respected, involved, and their views should be heard. Leaders who lead with heart are generally better equipped as they have the wisdom and capacity to positively inspire people who transform any organisation towards the next level of growth. They commit themselves to make tomorrow a better day at work for their team members. They are genuine in their approach towards people which gets the team motivated to give their best.

We have mastered our minds, but there is a greater need to train our hearts. The world needs leaders who build value by leading from the heart and believe in connecting with people.

Field Marshall Ferdinand Foch had said, “The most powerful weapon is a human soul on fire”. The minds of great leaders are like smouldering pots on a fire that never dies. It is a passion and desire to do something extraordinary that drives them. This comes from the heart and not from any lesson learnt at management schools or training sessions. Wise authentic leaders demonstrate a passion for their dreams and purpose, practise their values consistently, and lead with their hearts as well as their heads. Nelson Mandela rightly said, “A good head and a good heart are always a formidable combination”. They establish long-term, meaningful relationships, and have the self-discipline to get results. They know who they are as a person both on the inside and the outside.

I have always believed that there is no alternative to the heart. Nothing great in life can be accomplished

unless there is a soul in it.

Mostly, we have been led to believe that being emotional means weak and that one will back away from hard decisions. I don't believe it to be true. It doesn't mean weak; rather, it is about caring even when you need to be authoritative, analytical, and hard-nosed. When you are compassionate, you support people through their struggles and difficulties. As a leader, you forgive them for their mistakes and miscalculations, giving them ground for learning through their mistakes and helping them evolve as better professionals.

As they transform enough to be a future leader, they would continue the practice of service that they have learnt. This makes you proud and celebrate their success, taking it as your success.

A true leader is able to change others' self-belief and impression of what they are capable of doing and

inspire them to go beyond. Leadership is about making people reach their true potential.

I would like to quote a story of inspiration from Nelson Mandela. When he became the President of South Africa, there was much strife in the country. He thought the best idea was to unite the country through sport. Little before the Rugby World Cup in 1995, there was a meeting between Dr Mandela and the then South Africa Captain Francois Pienaar. Later, on being asked what did the President tell him - he said, "Dr Mandela just spoke about leadership, etc. and while he did not say it, his eyes said that he wants us to win the World Cup." He also gave him a poem, *Invictus*, which Mandela read again and again while he was in captivity and told him that this poem inspired him. The last two lines of the poem read as :

"I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul."

This helped Francois guide a group of no-hopers into World Champions. He later mentioned that the moment of inspiration came from President Nelson Mandela. All through the team's practice stage and during the world cup match, Dr Mandela kept motivating the team, acknowledged their efforts, and thanked them for playing for the country. He further triggered the spark by wearing the Springbok jersey with no. 6 on his

back. The no. 6 jersey in the World Cup was Pienaar's. It was a great moment for the team, and they were overwhelmed. The team's morale was at the highest level.

Leading from the heart is about creating an environment where people can feel comfortable, safe, and can speak openly. When leaders support people through their personal challenges and stress, they win hearts. The people then are more than motivated to give their all for the leaders. People do not work for organisations; they work for their leaders. When you genuinely care about people, you are rooting for their success.

The most important thing is to approach the hearts of your teammates and stir them to action! The best results cannot be achieved by leaders who are aloof, distant, or stiff and who do not believe in purpose-led actions. You ask employees if they remember the bonus amount they got three years back and, in all probability, they will not remember it. However, you ask them about the appreciation they got ten years back, and they would vividly describe their experience with pride and satisfaction. Money brings instant gratification, but being of service lasts much longer. Leaders should make an effort to walk down the bay and connect with the team whenever possible. They need to express the appreciation they feel for the work which team members do to make them feel valued and inspired.

Make efforts to know your team. Encourage and support those who are struggling and having trouble mastering new tasks. When times get tough, people especially want to be led by people who care, and who make them feel like they count.

Push the boundaries of conventional methods. Encourage creativity and innovation in your team by improving their involvement and action. By providing freedom to innovate at each level of the organisation, you are building that much more confidence amongst the team members.

Leading from the heart means leading from that place of engaging with your purpose, taking responsibility



for your actions, and learning how to trust your heartfelt instincts in times of trouble.

When we become leaders, many of us set out to become famous and leave our legacy. Being famous is good, but it fades with time. However, when we are at the service of others, we can make a larger impact on the community and the world. It is about understanding how can we use our positions to become a force for good and bring positive change in the lives of those around us.

I would like to end by saying the leaders need to fulfil in their team the ability to achieve their truest potential, motivate them to have a strong sense of belief and purpose, which makes them the driver of their destiny and helps them in the service of others. 

About the Author

Richard Rekhy is the former CEO of KPMG in India. With over 30 years of experience in professional services, he is admired for his clinical approach towards corporate governance, enterprise risk management, internal controls and business processes, across multiple domains. Richard is presently a Board Member of KPMG Dubai. He is on the Board of Governors of the Management and Entrepreneurship and Professional Skills Council. He is also the Co-Chairman, CII NR Special Task Force on Manufacturing and Make in India initiative, and a member of the Advisory Committee Board of Smile Train India's. Richard is affiliated with leading business enterprises and is an active member of diverse industry associations.

“The minds of great leaders are like smouldering pots on a fire that never dies. It is a passion and desire to do something extraordinary that drives them. This comes from the heart and not from any lesson learnt at management schools or training sessions.”



Reimagining Recruitment: The Digital Way

To create a work atmosphere that is charged with meaning, insurance companies must ensure that every investment in technology and enablement is complemented by investment in talent and creativity.

BY SHAILESH SINGH

As an HR professional in the insurance industry, I have forever been advocating the belief that in spite of the recruiter's best strategy and vision, it can only be realised when the organisation synergises the hearts and minds of its most important asset - its employees.

A recent survey conducted by Korn Ferry Institute interestingly maps workforce challenges that insurance companies confront as they undergo digital transformation. Collecting employee engagement data from over 60,000 respondents in the industry, the survey found that it gets too overwhelming for the leaders to respond to workplace management changes - be it understanding employee motivation, or tailoring engagement to offer value-led propositions to your people. The reality is that the rapidly evolving digital economy can be weathered only by organisations that can completely understand and embrace the need of digital natives.

The future of the workforce: In the insurance industry, in particular, automation, technology shifts, and

innovation headways are expected to reduce the time and energies of those in the actuarial, underwriting, and claim adjustment business. In the backdrop of this transition, the recruiter will have to adapt in order to appeal to, engage with, and drive meaningful exchange at work with employees, to develop a high level of cognitive involvement.

Digital tools to the rescue: At an inflection point of technological innovation, the insurance industry today has a host of robust digital tools that are paving the way for

“In the insurance industry, in particular, automation, technology shifts, and innovation headways are expected to reduce the time and energies of those in the actuarial, underwriting, and claim adjustment business.”

employee progression. With traditional employee roles and workplace structures in transition, digital tools are constantly helping upgrade operations across the entire recruitment chain. From prospecting to onboarding, learning, and engagement, insurance companies are utilising an array of tools to empower the employees' presence in a dynamic ecosystem.

Elevating recruitment & onboarding: With greater technological intervention and automation in the picture, the time and energies of manual operations in business are expected to reduce significantly, increasing the demand for more strategic and cerebral skills. Employees will be expected to dedicate more of themselves towards ideation and thinking responsibilities as opposed to processing and demystifying. To create a work atmosphere that is charged with meaning, insurance companies must ensure that every investment in technology and enablement is complemented by investment in talent and creativity, and digital tools can be a catalyst to this drive.

Today, companies across the board have access to developed recruitment apps that are addressing this need. This provides managers with a variety of options to deliver value propositions. Creating requisitions, providing feedback on interviews, and reading feedback from other interviewers, these applications further allow recording interview feedback via text as well as voice. This can help candidates to effectively transition to the next phase of the process- onboarding.

Once hired, it is equally important to digitally leverage the onboarding experience for a new employee since a strong onboarding process forms the basis of higher retention and productivity. While this presents organisations with a huge opportunity to do better on that front, as per a survey by Gallup, nearly 88% employees feel their organisation does not do a superlative job when it comes to onboarding.

With new digital tools on the platter, companies today stand to merit in the said domain. This makes the onboarding experience smoother by allowing room to upload the required documents digitally. Further, it enhances the engagement levels at the onset, decreasing the time to proficiency ratio by making assessments such as 360 degree feedback and psychometric evaluation for effective development on digital work boards.

Driving digital learning and engagement

The workforce today is dynamic, inquisitive, intellectual, and culturally diverse. Keeping them anchored to a given place for long is a challenge as they demonstrate shifts from one job to another more regularly than their predecessors. On the back of a digital, data led economy, the millennials are expected to steer disruption across sectors and drive an exponential business growth. Studies indicate that by 2020,

Millennials or Gen Y are projected to be 50% of the workforce, and by 2025, are expected to constitute 75%, and unlocking the opportunity within this demographic is one area which cannot be overlooked. To be able to retain the so-called millennials in an organisation, new-age insurance companies need to recognise the power of digital capabilities in systematically addressing different predicaments at the workplace.

From peer-to-peer engagement through intranet or leadership engagement via quarterly business performance webcasts and informal interactions, digitisation is helping insurance companies maintain and grow a distinct culture across a wide geographical spread. These organisations are further developing a set of unified self-service offerings for their employees to create a simplified experience. From streamlining access to payslips and planning leaves to digital referral and recognition of colleagues, digital initiatives are enabling productivity by bringing about a remarkable reduction in queries raised via internal ticketing system and increase overall nimbleness.

Using apps and tools to attract, retain and lead talent

To build camaraderie within the workplace, insurance companies are experimenting with social apps. There has been a notable increase in leveraging digital solutions to resolve business problems which involve teams from multiple departments working in cohesion. A new class of HR products and solutions, many built around mobile apps, artificial intelligence (AI), and consumer-like experiences, are making their way to recruiters to enable HR to become near real-time. Insurance companies are evaluating multiple AI based solutions to onboard and engage with the distributed workforce real time. The objective is to enable



employees to have instant interactions on key life cycle processes and "moments of truth", driving accessibility of data with speed that enables performance, engagement and superior quality experience.

Promoting productivity

Lastly, when speaking about digital transformation, it is important to understand that having access to the right technology is only one part of the dynamics. But for organisations to efficiently leverage technology backed changes and build differentiated human resource solutions, it is important to first create a culture which welcomes digital metamorphosis.

Having motivated, digital-savvy leaders in place who are keen to internalise digital upgrade into day-to-day operations and communicate frequently about the benefits of digital methods can help employees embrace digital change effectively. To build a digital ready culture, one must invest in capabilities that empower the workforce of the future and become adept at unlocking power from working in newer, unconventional ways. 

About the Author

Shailesh Singh is Director & Chief People Officer at Max Life Insurance. With about 25 years of experience, Shailesh is responsible for developing and implementing successful Human Resources strategies that support long term growth and transformation of the organisation.

- 1 <https://www.the-digital-insurer.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/1067-InsuranceSummer2017.pdf>
- 2 <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/238085/state-american-workplace-report-2017.aspx>
- 3 <https://www.shrm.org/shrm-india/Documents/EMAW8.pdf>

From Idea To Action

Engaging employees at every level and from different backgrounds stands as the most effective way to communicate the importance of diversity and inclusion.

BY URVI ARADHYA

“Diversity is not merely about compliance, but inclusion. When it is indeed about an individual's development, everyone deserves a chance to grow and advance as a leader.”

“If you hire only those people you understand, the company will never get people better than you are. Always remember that you often find outstanding people among those you don't particularly like.” – Soichiro Honda

With diversity and inclusion emerging as the key area of focus among global companies, Indian companies have also caught on with the trend and are gradually maturing towards adopting the best practices at the workplace. Today, companies are developing programmes to identify talent irrespective of gender, and are grooming them for suitable roles across departments. It is also equally crucial to include employees in the decision making process. Employees today want that their voices are heard and their skills and abilities recognised. Diversity is not merely about compliance, but inclusion. When it is indeed about an individual's development, everyone deserves a

chance to grow and advance as a leader. Therefore, the selection of individuals for leadership training, education, and mentorship needs to be highly meticulous. Formulating a strategy in leadership development to explore the capabilities and talents of individuals across the company is critical for creating a culture of inclusiveness. And engaging employees at every level and from different backgrounds stands as the most effective way to communicate the importance of diversity and inclusion.

Ways of driving D & I initiatives

Here are some ways to drive the diversity and inclusion initiative across organisations and locations.

- **Women employees:** Companies should ideally have a workforce ratio of 3:5 among men and women employees, subject to the demands of the industry. However, functions that are gender agnostic such as HR, Accounts, Taxation, Legal etc. can aim for a higher ratio of women to occupy key positions in the respective departments. Women have been seen to excel in these functions in particular.
- **Generation Diversity:** Generation Y are the future of any organisation. Buzzing with new ideas, intrinsically motivated, competitive, collaborative by nature, eager to take on more





“Workplace Diversity is an asset for businesses as also the employees, to foster innovation, creativity, and empathy and have benefits that go beyond the optics.”

responsibilities and wanting to make a tangible difference, millennials should be a conscious part of the organisation's hiring process. From campus placements to social media outlets that witness a heavy footfall from the new generation, organisations can reach out to Gen Y, whom they perceive as a suitable fit for such job roles. Today, with millennials making for 60% of the annual hires, there is a growing percentage of such workforce within organisations.

- **The specially abled:** Organisations must work consciously to ensure that 2% of the workforce strength must be reserved for the differently abled. There are several individuals for whom their physical disabilities are not a hindrance to the job. These employees go through the same recruitment process, and their skill-sets are thoroughly evaluated like any other normal candidate.

- **Inclusion across geographies:** Indian companies with offices spread across geographies, employ personnel from different regions, religions, and cultures. This provides the company with a very diverse talent pool and a vivid workforce. When you have people with different backgrounds and perspectives working together, it increases the company's resilience and agility and boosts innovation and financial performance.

- **Inclusion through celebrations:** Celebrations witness the coming together of employees from different backgrounds during festivals and employee engagement events. Festivals and celebrations in India range from Christmas to Eid and from Diwali to Pongal, covering all religions, regions, and cultures. The Holiday calendar also needs to be well-planned, and the HR department should ensure that all the religious and cultural commitments are taken due care.

- **Inclusion of outsourced staff:** With diverse businesses and functions, there is a need for people to be outsourced in reasonable numbers. From facilities management to site supervisors, from retail technicians to support staff and housekeeping, companies outsource services from multiple providers. The idea should be to ensure that the outsourced employees get a feeling that they are

an integral part of the organisation. This ensures that these employees are happy and relevant as well. This can be achieved through rewards and recognitions events, training programmes to help them upgrade, and conduct health check up camps and so on.

- **Cultural Brand Ambassador:** To strengthen positive messaging within the organisation, it is imperative to identify Cultural Brand Ambassadors. These ambassadors exist amongst the employees across various levels. They are a core team of people who are positively engaged with the company, and through their actions and words, carry an affirmative vibe. Through conversations, mostly informal, these ambassadors seed in a positive and constructive feeling amongst employees.

Diversity brings in a wealth of opinions, thoughts, and values, and creates healthy conversations and debates to move forward. The coming together of people of different ethnicities with different experiences in cities and societies is the key driver to innovation. Workplace Diversity is an asset for businesses as also the employees, to foster innovation, creativity, and empathy and have benefits that go beyond the optics. Creating an environment where people can be who they are, and valuing their unique talents and perspectives, makes employees want to stay. The key to inclusion is understanding who your employees truly are through one-on-one conversations, feedback surveys etc. If you want to retain your employees, focus on inclusion and not just diversity. 

About the Author

Urvi Aradhya is the Chief Human Resource Officer at K Raheja Corp. She comes with an industry experience of 19 years in Human Resources and has previously worked in Parle Bisleri Pvt. Ltd. She has introduced a multichannel, innovative, technology driven recruitment approach whose benefits are seen at the bottom line. Urvi is a graduate in Statistics and a postgraduate in Human Resource Management.

Future Matters for Leaders And Organisations

While future imperfect is the new normal, it is pertinent to know whether organisations are preparing themselves to be future ready.

BY DR. K N VISWANATHAM

Swift changes, emerging technologies, innovations, and hyper-connectivity is leading to friction, and is driving the human psyche into disruption. While future imperfect is the new normal, it is pertinent to know whether organisations are preparing themselves to be future ready. Leaders, managers, and the entire organisational workforce are seen performing mundane activities from dawn to dusk. In other words, many organisations live in the present, and undertake assiduous efforts to make the present perfect. Ironically, the present lies against the backdrop of the past with organisations remaining oblivious of the future. Individuals demonstrate keenness and spend a huge amount of time in planning their finances. And organisations are involved in a similar process as well. However, it is time to ponder if organisations are future ready in a holistic sense.

Existentialist thinkers are of the opinion that: -

- (a) We are responsible for creating a meaningful life in an absurd and unfair world
- (b) We are clouded by a sense of disorientation and confusion as if we are standing on a cliff
- (c) We are afraid of falling, fear succumbing to the impulse of throwing us off
- (d) Nothing is holding us back

With fear, anguish, and perennial anxiety rising to the surface, it is difficult to have a clear vision. Organisations too are not an exception to such a phenomenon.

- How well do we understand the

imperfect future of organisations?

- Do we have a good grasp of reality?
- Ignoring the future is undermining the present when the world is falling apart. Can we afford not to spend our time thinking about future?

Hence, it is necessary to have Vision, Understanding, Clarity, and Agility (VUCA). Ongoing corporate wars, accelerating national economic challenges, and cascading environmental ruin do not allow us to think of the future. Rather, this pushes us to stay in the orbit of the present. Some experts are of the view that the future is not in our hands, and it is frivolous to keep worrying about it. At this juncture, understanding the scenario of Indigo and SpiceJet as illustrations is noteworthy.

The Current conundrum of Indigo and SpiceJet

As of August 31, 2019, SpiceJet has emerged as the new challenger to Indigo. SpiceJet was struggling for the last four years, and it is now trying to cement its position as India's second-largest airline in terms of market share. As per Directorate General of Civil Aviation's (DGCA) statistics, between April and June 2019, Indigo's market share slipped by 1.8 percent (by 180 basis points), while that of SpiceJet went up by 2.5 percent (by 250 basis points). Indigo and SpiceJet will increase their respective capacities in FY20 by 30 and 80 percent. It is reported that SpiceJet will get aggressive to enhance its market share, which can possibly lead to a price war. A focus on the present and eye on the future will certainly help organisations



“Futuristic thinking, building possible future scenarios for organisations, deliberately pushing organisational leaders and decision makers into the fundamental state of leadership is important, rather than living in a normal state of fire-fighting leadership.”

such as Indigo and SpiceJet.

Futuristic thinking, building possible future scenarios for organisations, deliberately pushing organisational leaders and decision-makers into the fundamental state of leadership is important, rather than living in a normal state of fire-fighting leadership. Carefully examining the implications and results of the steps we might take is the leadership's present-day need. Hence, the answer lies not in reflexive leadership, but in cognitive leadership with a focus on future.

The changing role of L&D

Employees who work in the space of learning and development must have a larger perspective about the organisation, and the global changes that are occurring with exponential speed. It is essential to redefine the competencies of the role. This role requires L&D leaders to be continuously engaged in crucial dialogue with other leaders of the organisation in terms of making leaders to be future ready to face unanticipated challenges. And that is how L&D creates value to the organisations. Creating a leadership engine to make the organisation future is cardinal. L&D must inspire and co create leaders to listen, observe, and implement innovative ways of working.

Martin Seligman, a renowned thinker and researcher in the field of Positive Psychology, has aptly stated, "Because neither future possibilities nor their estimated value can be seen, heard, felt, or smelled, these are not features of the world that are presented to the mind by perception, past or present. The mind must add them." Therefore, the conviction of looking at the past for answers will no longer help. What helps however is building the future with a newer potential, while focusing on the future.

Future matters involve structured thinking about the future in comprehending the problems that confront us today, and the possible solutions we could look at in the larger context. The three mechanisms involved in expanding the understanding are:-

- (a) The scope of the situation
- (b) The horizon of the situation

(c) The kind of world we want

In a nutshell, futurism and structured thinking about the future clarifies the leader's responsibility and capacity to create a tomorrow that is worth living. Once we begin such an exercise, the answer to the question on how can it be assumed that we can see the future, seems interesting. Royal Dutch Shell is one such organisation which executes scenario building exercises.

There is a compelling case to learn and master the science and art of conversations on the matters of the future. All Learning and Development leaders must keep the following pointers in their mind:

1. Future matters most to leaders and organisations
2. Top leaders must be necessarily involved in future matters in a structured fashion
3. Learning & Development must be proactive in building future scenarios of the organisations
4. The focus of L&D must be on futuristic leadership development matters
5. Trained organisational psychologists can hugely help organisations in building future scenarios
6. Investing in future matters discussions help the future of organisations 

About the Author

Dr. K N Viswanatham is the Senior Faculty Member, State Bank Institute of Leadership, Kolkata. He comes with an experience of more than two decades in teaching, training, consulting, and research. Dr. Vishwanatham has a Master's degree in Psychology from Andhra University, and an M. Phil & PhD in Clinical Psychology from NIMHANS. He can be reached on kn.viswanatham@sbi.co.in.

PAST EVENTS

JobBuzz Workplace 2025 Conclave & Expo Den

DATE : August 31, 2019

VENUE : Taj Palace, New Delhi

ORGANISERS : Times Internet

Media conglomerate Times Internet organised a day-long conclave titled 'JobBuzz Workplace 2025 Conclave & Expo Den' to provide an understanding as to how technology is transforming the talent needs at workplaces. The event was held on August 31, 2019 at the Taj Palace in New Delhi.

The second edition of the event ignited a dialogue on the changes expected at workplaces and the new-age skills that could become imperative requirement at workplaces. The event witnessed India's top CEOs, CHROs, CTOs and business leaders meet and discussion on the key changes coming in way of recruitment, work profiles, work scopes, modes of working, work cultures and workplaces over all.

Gautam Sinha, CEO, Times Internet kick started the event with his welcome speech, followed by the keynote address by industry veteran Ronnie Screwvala, co-founder and chairman, UpGrad and special industry address by HR thought leader Vineet Nayar, founder and chairman, Sampark Foundation.



The day-long conclave saw five major CXO-level panel discussions, three boardroom talk sessions, three breakout sessions, one author speak and an interactive talk on diversity and inclusion from Singapore-based HR leader.

Highlight of the event was an expansive demo zone where over 30 companies showcased their HR tech solutions to the audience. More than 300 companies and 728 delegates attended the conclave.

CII '6th edition of HR Conclave'

DATE : September 21, 2019

VENUE : Hotel Courtyard by Marriott, Ahmedabad

ORGANISERS : Confederation of Indian Industry

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Gujarat organised 6th edition of HR Conclave themed "Blending Hope & Trust in Work Culture - Neo Talent Agenda" on September 21 at Hotel Courtyard by Marriott in Ahmedabad.

The event focused on the vivacity of creating hope and trust to create a winning work culture within the



organization. It began with the welcome remark by Raju Shah, Chairman of CII Gujarat State and Council & Harsha Engineers Ltd and concluded with an interactive question and answer session followed by networking tea.

Eminent speakers across industry verticals addressed during the day on diverse range of topics that are redefining the workplace. Around 150+ HR professionals and industry leaders attended the conclave.

The day-long event witnessed four power packed panel discussion sessions on following topics- "The Rise of Social Enterprise: Changing role of HR in Managing Expectation", "Talent & Change", "Facets of Leadership - Trusting & Trustworthy: Why it matters", "Organization & Culture".

Key Speakers include Director HR of Adani Group Dr Malay Mahadevia, Former Chairman & Managing Director of Bank of Baroda & Dena Bank Dr Anil Khandelwal and Convener, CII HR/IR Panel Gujarat & Jt. President of HR, APSEZ Dr Jayant Kumar.

Prabandhan '19 : IIT Kanpur

DATE : September 27 - September 29

VENUE : IIT Kanpur Campus

ORGANISERS : IIT Kanpur

The Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, conducted eighth edition of its annual management fest "Prabandhan 19" from September 27 to September 29.

The event aimed to drive growth, change, and innovation in business and management.

The conclave saw academicians, industrialists, corporate professionals, research scholars and young management who shared their knowledge and experiences, on current and upcoming trends in the field of business management, and discussed the problems faced by the 21st century businesses.

Reflexions, a flagship event of Prabandhan bridging the business world complexities with real-world, witnessed eminent personalities and thought leaders across the industry. This year's panel discussion theme was "Tackling challenges of VUCA world".



Key panellists included Partner and Head- Capital Markets of KPMG Karan Marwah, Artificial Intelligence Head of YES Bank Utpal Chakraborty, Pepperfry.Com CEO Neelesh Talathi, HR head of Big Basket Hari T N and General Manager-HR of TCS Raj Gupta.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Erudition'19 : Delhi School Of Economics



DATE : October 4-5, 2019

VENUE : NDMC, Convention Centre

ORGANISERS : Department of Commerce, Delhi School Of Economics

The Department of Commerce, Delhi School Of Economics is hosting the 24th Annual Business Convention "Erudition'19" on October 4 and 5. It aims to provide a dais where industry stalwarts will shed light and offer enlightenment upon prevalent trends in the economy and the ever dynamic mannerisms of conducting business.

The theme for this year's edition is 'Convergence: Sustainability-Driven Innovation' that would cast the spotlight upon those innovators who changed their business models because of sustainability and have also been able to generate profits from sustainability related activities and decisions.

The two day event will witness six panel discussions, each day dedicated to Human Resources and International Business respectively. Themes for IB Panel Discussion - Behavioural Investments: Dealing with Hybrid Markets, Globalisation in Transition: The Future of Trade and Value Chain and Cause Marketing: Driving the Transformation.

Themes for HR panel discussion-The pursuit for Innovation: Putting Human Resources at the helm to lead change, The fall of boundaries: Do Organization Need to Rethink Hierarchy and Convergence of re-imagination and HR: the future of how work gets done.

UPCOMING EVENTS

ORATE Training & Placement Services to host “Recruitment Drive”

DATE : October 14 -24, 2019.

VENUE : Bengaluru

ORGANISERS : ORATE Training & Placement Services

ORATE Training & Placement Services will be hosting a recruitment drive for Non-Engineering Graduates with 0-2 years of work experience in Bengaluru from October 14 to October 24, 2019.

Interested candidates can register online through Townscript link. Venue and details of the interview will be shared with registered candidates.

A nominal one time registration fee will be charged from the candidates to participate in the drives. And, the candidates would be hand held till they get placed. It's a golden opportunity for candidates, as they would be able to choose the best suitable offer for themselves, among so many participating companies.

More than eight companies would be participating in this mega drive. Around 700+ job openings that would be filled in the salary range of INR 2 to 5 LPA.

ORATE is a trusted partner for Human Resource Development (HRD) Services for its clients in Corporate & Education space.

This hiring activity is a part of company's 'K2K 100K Job Placements' initiative aimed to provide minimum of 100,000 Job Placements by October 2020.

6th IAF India Facilitators Conference

DATE : November 15-16,2019

VENUE : The Umrao, New Delhi

ORGANISERS : International Association of Facilitators

International Association of Facilitators will be organising 6th edition of "India Facilitators Conference 2019".

The event is scheduled to be held from November 15 to November 16, 2019 at The Umrao in New Delhi.

The theme of the conclave is "Facilitation: Key to Engagement and Impact". Group Facilitation uses creative processes to engage individuals and groups to harness collective insights, enhancing their belief in the synergistic power of 'We! This powerful and immersive experience inspires commitment and ownership, resulting in performance and behaviours that can transform organizations and communities.

The event offers a unique platform, with a basket of 20 concurrent sessions, for delegates to engage and learn with more than 150 participants from across the country.

It will also provide an additional opportunity to build deeper interpersonal connections, if you choose so. Staying with a vibrant community of like-minded, yet diverse set of people will make for a unique experience for even the most seasoned facilitator.



Appointments



Hindustan Aeronautics Limited appoints Alok Verma as Director-HR

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited has appointed Alok Verma as Director-HR. He was previously working as the General Manager (HR) in the same organisation. Before joining the Navratna PSU under the Ministry of Defence, he was associated with National Fertilizer Limited. Verma holds a Post Graduate diploma in Computer Applications from Punjab Technical University, Jalandhar. He has completed Bachelor's in Law from Jiwaji University, Madhya Pradesh and Master in Arts from Patna University.

Metropolis Healthcare appoints Ishita Medhekar as HR head

Metropolis Healthcare has hired Ishita Medhekar as Head-HR. Prior to this, she was serving as Head-HR in Sterlite Power. Medhekar has an experience of 20 years in the HR industry and has worked with Bharti Airtel, Avaya Global Connect, AF Ferguson & Co. and JK Drugs and Pharmaceuticals.



KNOLSKAPE appoints Vijayaraghavan Pisharody VP and CHRO

KNOLSKAPE has appointed Vijayaraghavan Pisharody as the vice president and CHRO. Prior to this, he was the country manager-Sri Lanka of Manipal Group, for the education business. Pisharody was associated with numerous organizations, including the TATA group, The Oberoi Group, and Manipal Education and Medical Group, where he served various strategic roles spanning two decades.

Moody's Corporation appoints DK Bartley as Head of Diversity & Inclusion

Moody's Corporation has hired DK Bartley as Managing Director and Head of Diversity & Inclusion (D&I). Prior to this he was associated with Dentsu Aegis, where he served as Senior Vice President and Head of Diversity & Inclusion, and was responsible for the company's global D&I strategy and talent acquisition. He holds a B.A. in Political Science from SUNY at Stony Brook and an M.A. in Communications from the New York Institute of Technology.



Citibank elevates Arun Mirchandani as HR head

Citibank has elevated Arun Mirchandani as the head of HR, markets and securities services business, APAC. He has been associated with the same organisation for over nine years. Prior to this, he was working with HSBC, where he served as Associate VP of Human Resources. He pursued Masters from TISS, Mumbai in human resource management and labour relations.

NOW HIRING



Senior Manager Wipro GSH (A Division of Wipro Limited)

Hiring for Senior Manager where the role requires strong presentation skills with resilience for multi- tasking. Knowledge of BI and scenario planning tools will be an added advantage. A key expectation from the role holder would be to drive compliance and adherence to process through data analysis, and constantly explore avenues for automation through procurement / development of new tools and technologies.

Experience : 7-10 Years
Location : Bengaluru/Bangalore
Job ID : 280819001883



HR Officer Skandhanshi Infra Projects India Private Limited

Looking for HR Officer with expertise in General HR functions, end-to-end IT recruitment, negotiations and offer letters, onboarding, payroll, day-to-day office admin, facilities admin, petty cash, employee engagement, and employee relations. Real estate and Infra related experience also considered.

Experience : 5-10 Years
Location : Anantapur
Job ID : 030919007953



HR Manager McKinsey Global Services India Pvt Ltd.

Hiring for HR Manager where you will be responsible for managing HR-related risk issues in collaboration with leadership and GGN leaders, and with firm legal as necessary and personnel risk-related standards and processes. You will collaborate with the other people function colleagues on global and regional policy and process changes, benefits and compensation programs, and talent management.

Experience : 10-15 Years
Location : Gurgaon
Job ID : 300819003834



Recruitment Initiative Manager Accenture

Looking for a smart, ambitious, strategic, business transformation leader for our evolving HR tools and systems. In this role, you will develop deep expertise with HR Services and People Technology solutions and will work with business leaders, technologists, HR program leaders and delivery partners to develop and document new strategies, requirements and timelines taking full advantage of new technology platforms.

Experience : 8-12 Years
Location : Hyderabad / Secunderabad
Job ID : 170719008476



HR Business Partner Capgemini Technology Services India Limited

Hiring for HR Business Partner who has understanding of business strategies and promoting the effective implementation of HR strategies in business units responsible for all HR Activities / managing the employee life cycle for the Business Unit HR , which includes and not limited to Employee Engagement, Performance Management, L&D, Employee Relations etc .

Experience : 9-12 Years
Location : Mumbai
Job ID : 190819905027



SAP HCM Payroll-professional Accenture Solutions Private Limited

Looking for SAP HCM Payroll-professional who can Design, build and configure applications to meet business process and application requirements. Key Responsibilities: To work as a lead in SAP HR and responsible for delivering the complete payroll design, configure, map and implement the solution into SAPc , responsible for driving workshops, to prepare the functional specifications, master data templates, integration scripts.

Experience : 9-12 Years
Location : Gurgaon
Job ID : 200819910906



HR (South Region) PPN Solutions Private Limited

Looking for HR (South Region) with demonstrated expertise in end-to-end IT recruitment, negotiations and offer letters, onboarding, payroll, day-to-day office admin, facilities admin, petty cash, employee engagement, and employee relations.

Experience : 5-10 Years
Location : Bengaluru/Bangalore
Job ID : 210819001697



Principal TA Partner (IT Recruiter) Flipkart

Looking for Principal TA Partner experienced in sourcing, stakeholder management, hands on sourcing and end to end recruiting of high-tech talent. Must be able to understand how to source and recruit passive candidates and engage with them on a regular basis. Build and maintain network of potential candidates through pro-active market research and on-going relationship management.

Experience : 7-12 Years
Location : Bengaluru/Bangalore
Job ID : 280819010484



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The Humanitarian Exit Strategy

A humanitarian approach during the separation process of employees with a strategic orientation towards enhanced connectivity and communication channels shall act as an empathising booster dose for their mindset.

BY PRIYA MOHAN SHARMA



Executing the process of retrenchment is the toughest job ever for human resource professionals. Every organisation that fails to predict business uncertainties and the critical business risks involved, and abruptly plans investments and expansions is bound to face the brunt of manpower retrenchment. This may lead to acquisition by other organisations. Even premier organisations which have been certified as a "Great Place to work" will be forced to resort to retrenchment as per the needs of the business.

In the manner in which we have induction strategies like the buddy system to ensure that the new entrant is induced with the organisational culture and processes, we can also develop a specialised cell titled 'Humanitarian Exit Cell.' Exiting employees shall be counselled by outsourced NLP experts and supported by a specific team of HR professionals to ensure a smooth and healthy exit process. The employer can incorporate a special strategy to support them to explore job opportunities during the notice period or after, which shall soothe the aftermath of the avalanche effect of Retrenchment. Key employees within the organisation can be utilised to refer the retrenched employees for suitable jobs in the market, which shall act as a great humanitarian deed in terms of organisational strategy.

Special visits to the houses of retrenched employees by the HR professionals, and emotionally supporting them and their families

to overcome such a phase shall act as an empathiser on the organisation's behalf. Voluntary financial support by the company's employees through apps such as Paytm may be introduced for those affected by the sudden financial crisis as genuine support for being a true Samaritan. Employees, of their own volition, can go a step further and support in their monthly expenses of such financially affected families. The blessings and the appreciation shown shall have more self-actualisation than any form of rewards and appreciations, and the return shall be in many folds in terms of happiness, peace, and joy.

Every HR professional needs to start building the foundation of the Humanitarian Exit Strategy Cell as an organisational level initiative to support the retrenched and other exiting employees. These employees who failed to fit into the system and processes after several opportunities will become a part of the greatest branding strategy, where employees are taken care off during and after the exit process. This shall function as a pivotal factor to transform the organisation that shall now emerge as a "Great Place to Work."

Termination cases due to non-adherence to organisation values and ethics need to be exposed to all employees, which is generally done by most organisations covertly to prevent adverse impact. The transparency of strategic communication to all the exiting employees is vital. Employees who leave owing to their career progression or for external

factors must be captured in an exhaustive exit interview with both open and closed ended interviews with video recordings. A detailed analysis must be derived with action plans for implementation to retain talent who leave earlier than the predictive tenure of employment. The engagement level of an organisation can be known every day in defined intervals through an internal application, that seeks the motivation and engagement levels (1 to 5) for their respective functional units and the organisation as a whole.

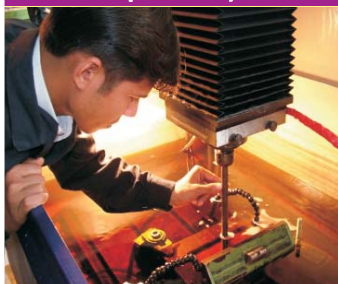
A 24*7 WhatsApp group must be formed for the exiting employees, whose queries must be resolved by a dedicated HR team to support them with a blend of emotional intelligence. A humanitarian approach during the separation process of employees with a strategic orientation towards enhanced connectivity and communication channels shall act as an empathising booster dose for their mindset. This works as a motivator so that they arise like Arjuna to combat for the Corporate World Arena. 

About the Author

Priya Mohan Sharma is Head-Human Resources (India Location), Plasser India Private Ltd. He has an enriching experience of 30 years in Human Resources and has worked in companies such as Andritz and General Motors. He has delivered implementation strategy roadmap on "Solution Focus Philosophy" in Oxford University and has also received the Plasser HR Excellence Award in T&D from Amity University.

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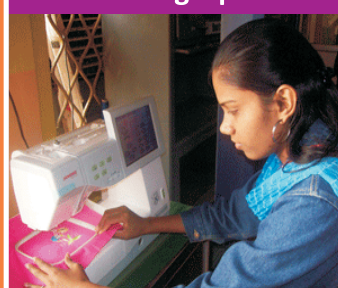
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