

HumanCapital



REALISING BUSINESS STRATEGY THROUGH PEOPLE

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The Future Is Human!

INTERVIEW

Tech As An Engagement Partner

Saba Adil,
Chief People Officer and Operating Officer,
Aegon Life Insurance

CASE STUDY

Incentivising Employee Referrals

Dr. Santhi Perumal

PERSONA

A Reflection Of Serenity

Ajay Kumar,
Country HR Head, Continental AG

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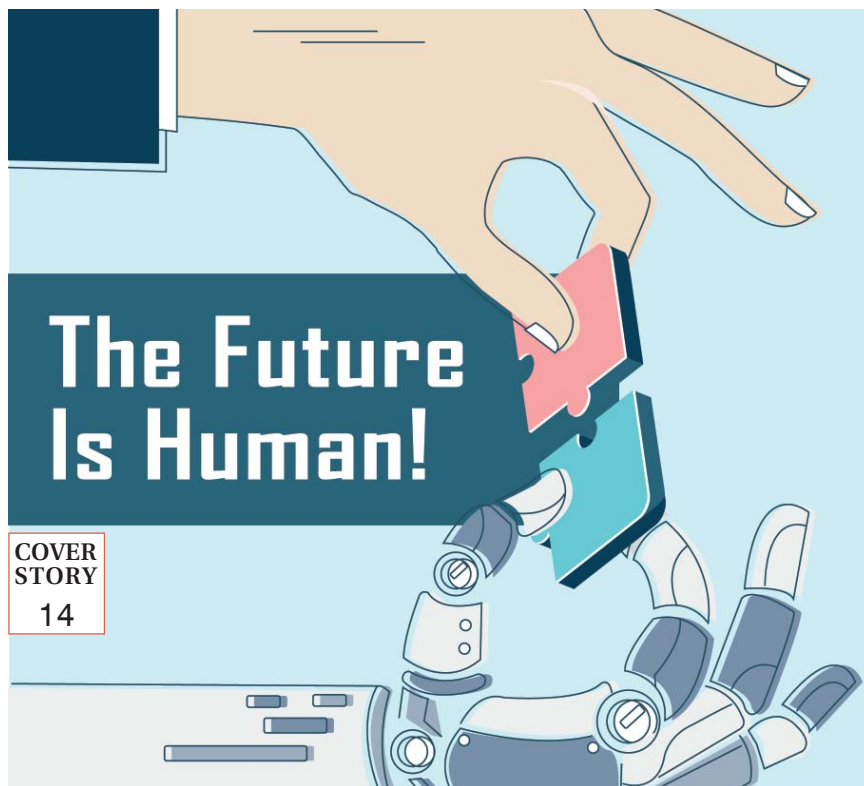
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This issue of **HUMAN CAPITAL** contains 76 pages including cover

From The Publisher's Desk



In the August edition, Human Capital explores the workplace of the future with an anecdote "The Future Is Human." This edition further endorses that irrespective of technology transformations such as AI in the workplace, the work culture will still remain to be human-driven.

Technology will always be an enabler in our society and cannot replace human beings. Humans need to develop skills to be able to leverage technology for bringing efficiency in the future world.

All these aspects make leeway for a lot of introspection. With each passing year, the number of graduates and engineers are increasing in India, however, there is not much improvement in terms of

their employability. Analysis by Accenture and Deloitte have been indicating that the upcoming job roles shall require niche skillsets. This is a signal that the workforce of the future need to upskill themselves on emerging trends and technologies.

Endorsing the same point of view Saba Adil, CHRO - Aegon Life Insurance, in an exclusive interview with Human Capital highlights the impact of technology on employee engagement and efficiency. Emerging technologies mark only the first step in creating the workforce of the future. But successful organisations empower their people by enriching innovation and creativity amongst their workforce.

The Case Study section lays further emphasis on the need of human connect in the recruitment process through employee referrals rather than technology interventions.

In the Persona Section, Ajay Kumar, Country HR Head, Continental AG, validates the belief that it is essential for employees to traverse the extra mile in order to excel in the technology driven world. And it is the job of the leaders to instil these values among the workforce and upskill them to be future ready.

Carpe Diem!

Neha Jain
Managing Partner

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BY GAUTAM BRAHMA

The business press often talks about good practices in companies that must be emulated by the government. It is widely believed that business organisations are better run, and are quicker to adopt innovative practices as has been demonstrated or distilled through academic research. This certainly is true, and government bodies have often benefited by learning from business organisations. The simpler ways of doing this are through training, engaging with consultants who advise businesses, and by bringing in business leaders to run government organisations. Occasionally, privatisation of government-run programmes has also led to increased efficiency and effectiveness.

However, there have been instances where this turns out to be untrue, and governments actually lead business organisations in assimilating management research and in adopting innovative practices. Two such recent instances have prominently been covered by the media.

In 2013, Carl Frey and Michael Osborne from Oxford University produced their short but seminal study on the future of work. They traced the history of work in the developed economies prior to the industrial revolution, right up to the twenty-first century, and concluded that mechanisation and automation had consistently improved

productivity, reduced headcounts, and eliminated certain skillsets completely. Thereafter, they studied more than seven hundred modern occupations in the US for their susceptibility to substitution by robots over the next ten years. They concluded that 47% of these professions were at high risk of elimination. And this was widely reported in the press. However, what the press did not dwell on was that this was merely ground zero. The percentage would be higher if medium risk occupations were included. Another insight that was ignored was that, unlike in the previous waves of mechanisation and automation, low-skill workers would come to face with increased demand for their services in certain new occupations, provided they reskilled. In a sense, the threat was bigger than reported, but so were the opportunities.

Most managers took the report as an interesting document, but one that did not warrant immediate assimilation and action. It was preposterous and difficult to imagine that so many occupations would simply evaporate. They probably did not notice that over the last decade-

- Robotic surgery had become commonplace in major hospitals in metro cities.
- Most of the electronic news feed relating to sports and business results were now generated by robots.

Two swallows do not make a summer, but it is clear that while the government has much to learn from the corporates, the latter needs to be prepared to learn from the government as well.

- The industry was becoming increasingly capital intensive, requiring fewer workers per unit of output.

A focused study of the report would have generated confidence in its methodology, and sparked the required managerial action. However, the report did get attention from certain political leaders who were alarmed at the devastating impact around the corner and were drumming up support for drastic action. Andrew Yang, a US Democrat, seeking nomination for the upcoming presidential election, is the best example. Yang collected significant reference material on his website to support the claim that a vast number of ordinary people will be left unemployed during the next decade, thanks to AI and robotics. He has become a votary of a Universal Basic Income to be paid out to each person, even as those affected reskill themselves to fill new requirements. It is certainly odd that businesses which should be worrying about issues like orderly retrenchment and selective reskilling have simply not been talking about this issue, far less making financial provisions for it. Thus, Yang assimilated the Frey and Osborne study better than any business leader. He was not nominated by his party, and was therefore unlikely to be the President, but he brought the entire discussion into the mainstream.

The second example comes from Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein's work on increasing the likelihood of desirable behaviour by well-designed and well-timed 'nudges' - subtle suggestions and work-design changes that ensure desired behaviour. Sometimes, the nudge can be as simple as a short communication, e.g., sharing the percentage of people who have completed a task that all are required to complete. At other times, the nudge can be a prefilled format that the person would otherwise have to fill entirely, populating the fields with values that are in the person's best interest. They have listed ten types of nudges in all, ranging from default rules, reminders, and simplifications, to the invocation of social norms. This was outlined in their eponymous book published in 2008, and detailed further in Sunstein's short guide released in 2014. The three key elements of well designed nudges are:

- They do not rely on economic incentives.

- They do not suppress or restrict the choices available to an individual.
- They are always in the best interest of the individual.

Apart from the systematic work in deploying this concept at Google, as documented by Laszlo Bock in his book 'Work Rules!', there has been little documentation of how businesses have built on Thaler and Sunstein's work. It is certain that companies are using nudges to get people to do what is desirable, but there is little evidence of formal focus on this tool. In contrast, the US President's office had put a Behavioural and Social Sciences team in place in 2014, as did the UK government through its Behavioural Insights Team (often called the 'Nudge Unit'). This year, the Economic Survey of India 2019 (released just before the Union Budget) has devoted space to a discussion over the effectiveness of nudges in obtaining desirable behaviour. The author of the document has been a student of Thaler and has been able to sell his ideas at the highest levels within the government. One noticed the Finance Minister's mention, in her budget speech, of prefilled income tax returns, a standard nudge type. One can reasonably expect more such initiatives during the next twelve months. The Indian industry is certainly lagging behind the government in the explicit recognition of this technique.

Two swallows do not make a summer, but it is clear that while the government has much to learn from the corporates, the latter needs to be prepared to learn from the government as well. Luckily, the present government's initiative of allowing lateral entry into senior executive positions, formerly reserved exclusively for those coming in through the civil services, will further facilitate this two-way learning. 

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Pacesetting Leadership Style



The ability to adapt to different leadership styles is one of the key traits of a successful manager, as it increases motivation among employees and ensures that the tasks are accomplished.

BY MANAVI PATHAK

An executive coach, during a coaching session with senior leaders, asked them their leadership style, while emphasising the fact that this has the power to make or break the success of an organisation. Daniel Goleman, the father of 'Emotional Intelligence', proposed six leadership styles in his book 'Primal Leadership' (2002). These styles are neither right nor wrong, and on the basis of the context, any of them may be suitable.

The six leadership styles identified by Goleman are:

- **Visionary:** This style is most

suitable when an organisation needs a new direction.

- **Coaching:** This one-on-one style focuses on developing individuals, showcasing them to improve their performance, and helping them to connect with individual and organisational goals.
- **Affiliative:** This style accentuates the importance of teamwork, and helps create harmony in a group by building interpersonal relationships.
- **Pacesetting:** In this style, the leader sets a high-performance benchmark. He or she is obsessive about doing things better and faster and expects the same from others.
- **Democratic:** This style appeals to people's knowledge and skills, and creates a group commitment to the resulting goals.
- **Commanding:** This is the classic model of the military style of leadership, probably the one used most often, but least effective.



Each of these styles has a place, and the object of leadership development is to provide the leader with versatile skills. Using these skills, they can choose an appropriate style for each situation, and switch between them whilst staying authentic and true to their values and principles.

Each of the leadership styles can be matched with a stage and phase of a project. This is a revealing generalisation and is the privilege of an employee as to which style he or she adopts in each phase. These styles affect the organisational climate and culture since commitment by the leadership and management directly translate to employee commitment, responsibility, task, goal orientation, and clarity of purpose. The ability to adapt to different leadership styles as needed is one of the key traits of a successful manager, as it increases motivation among employees and also ensures that the tasks are accomplished.

The essence of pacesetting

Goleman, in his theory of emotional intelligence, has illustrated the pacesetting style of leadership. Pacesetting leadership style is deployed

when a team is highly motivated and competent. This team may find the high standards challenging and exciting, needing little direction or coordination while trying to accomplish its goals. However, a constant enhancement in objectives previously met may leave the team drained and unmotivated from continuing further. It is perceived that a pacesetting leadership style destroys the organisational climate. Many employees feel overwhelmed by the pacesetter's demands for excellence, leading to a drop in their morale. The parameters for working may be clear from the leader's side, but he makes sure that the message is loud and clear. The leader expects employees to know what to do and even think. For instance, the leader may say, "If I have to tell you, you are the wrong person for the job."

A leader with a pacesetting leadership style illustrates high standards for performance. Jack Welch, the former CEO of General Electric, is an example of a successful pacesetter. As a leader, Welch despised micro-managing and needed thought leaders to focus more on setting examples and deadlines. That is the essence of a pacesetting leader. Such a leader is obsessive about doing things faster and better. They are prone to ask other team members to perform the task likewise. These are leaders who demand more from poor performers as well. They instruct the members by assigning responsibilities or tasks if the members are not performing well. They show slight empathy towards poor performers. Leaders who possess such a leadership style seek coordination with the members when they believe there is an impact on an immediate task. To seek development in the assigned task, leaders with a pacesetting leadership style show the members how to perform the assigned project. In order to grow as a leader, the pacesetters should often seek feedback from the team members, and provide them with the appropriate workspace. Instead of focusing on deadlines, they should focus on the process of attaining high quality output. The main drawback of such a leadership style is that the leadership becomes too predictable.

The pacesetting style is effective

“Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric is an example of a successful pacesetter. As a leader, Welch despised micro-managing and needed thought leaders to focus more on setting examples and deadlines.”

“Under the command of a pacesetter leader, there is a decline in employee commitment because members lack a sense of how their personal efforts fit into the big picture.”

when employees are highly motivated and competent and well-versed with their jobs. They need little coordination and direction. They are individual contributors. They demand quick results, for instance, as in a do or die situation. Pacesetter is least effective when a leader is unable to complete his or her work. An employee-requisite vision, individual development, and coordination among other team members and themselves are some key qualities expected of the leader. Employees look for a trustworthy relationship where they can influence how they deliver the objectives. Employees expect that the leader looks at them as individuals, not as a means to get things done. With reduced flexibility and responsibility, the assigned work becomes task-focused and monotonous, which leads to a lack of motivation. As for rewards, the pacesetter does not provide feedback on how the members of the team are performing, or attempt to take over when the leader thinks that the members are not up to the expected performing pace. When it comes to a situation that the leader has to leave, the members become directionless. In other words, they are highly dependent on their leader to provide them with hindsight. Under the command of a pacesetter leader, there is a decline in employee commitment, because members lack a sense of how their personal efforts fit into the big picture.

A leader should adapt a pacesetter style of leadership when one would develop his or her professional or technical expertise. The leader can lead by example, and be a model of behaviour one wishes to perceive. When a team member needs backing, a leader needs to instruct them on how one should handle the situation, and all possible obstacles must be foreseen, as also the ways of overcoming them. It needs to be explained to the team member exactly what they need to do in those circumstances. A leader should turn down the pacesetter style of leadership when he or she is introspecting on how it feels when a task is led by themselves. The pacesetter should ask others on how they feel when they are led by the leader and collect feedback. Being an expert in the field, the leader must resist answering queries which are brought by the members of the team. Instead, the

leader should ask their opinion on the strategy which is helping the team to achieve the task. The leader should keep in mind that there are alternative answers to each query. Support initiated by the leader will help the members to come with their own insights. Unleash the idea that you are the only one who can do things in an expected framework. A leader should acknowledge the members' insight instead of waiting for them to build an opinion, so that he or she can later bombard them with his or her comprehensions.

Effective leaders have to "bait the hook to suit the fish" or assess each situation to be flexible enough to meet certain goals. Leadership is a discipline that is always dynamic. To remain effective, you must evolve. The one-size-fits-all leadership approach is a thing of the past - flexibility and adaptability is now the key. Leadership in business is the capacity of a company's management to set and achieve challenging goals, take prompt decisions when necessary, surpass the competition, and inspire others to perform at the highest possible level. Leadership provides an organisation and its employees with an understanding. Employees need to recognise the direction in which the organisation is directed towards, and whom to follow to reach the goal. Leadership involves showing workers how to efficiently perform their responsibilities and regularly supervise the completion of the tasks. Leadership also helps in showcasing positive examples for employees to follow, by being excited about the work, being highly motivated to acquire new knowledge and ideas, and helping the goals at an individual and group level. 

About the Author

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Podcasts: A New Frontier For Employee Engagement

Once a niche medium, podcasts have now struck a chord in this brisk moving cosmos. A study by LinkedIn shows that on an average, 42% of people aged between 18-34 years listen to one podcast in a week. Podcasts are an interesting medium, as it allows companies to present their insights and stories to their employees in a user friendly manner and in lesser time.

Technological innovations, people's interest to reinvent existing methods, remote locations are some reasons for the popularity of Podcasts. Gen Z and millennials are hooked to their cell phones and smart devices, and hence, podcasts have emerged as a major internal communication platform in companies. Long e-mails and tedious means of employee engagement are now being replaced by digital and online modes.



Podcasts are trendy because of their story telling approach and techniques to build communities over niche topics, shaping a strong concord among the younger generations. Leadership corners, storytelling, virtual townhalls, instant messaging, and internet podcasts are the most favourable workplace communication tools. This also helps companies to reach out to the otherwise scattered workers. Distinct sectors like Agro, Education, Retail, and e-Commerce have been using this as a means to achieve effective employee engagement.

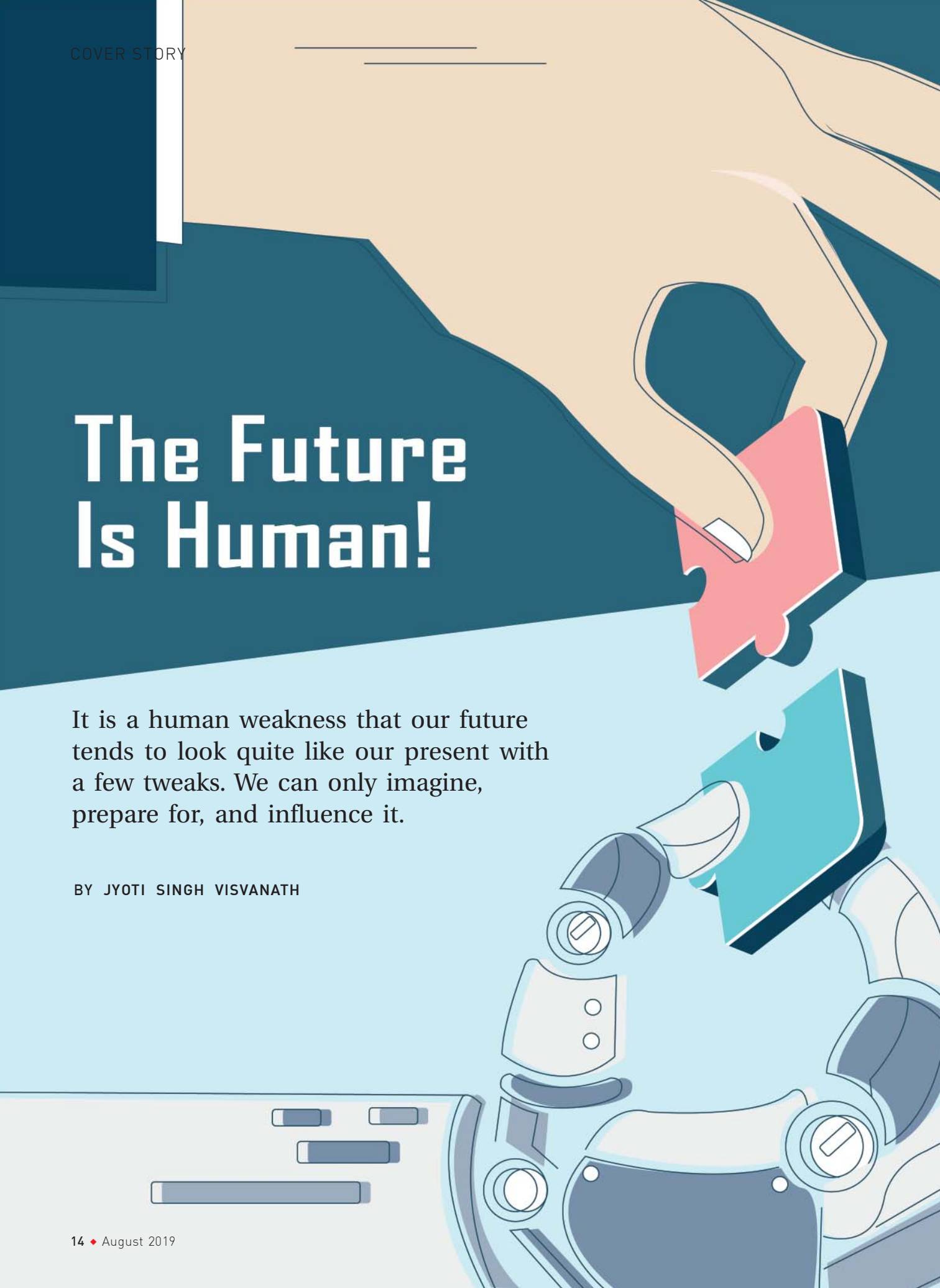
Employees need to easily move to connect with the executives of the company, its information, people, and procedures, making it easy for them to do their jobs. Podcasts are time-saving since they last for a maximum of 45 minutes, and can be tuned in anytime and anywhere. Through podcasts, an organisation is able to reach out to its employees by featuring them in the episodes - telling their own stories, and what they love about their jobs. This will ensure that they are super engaged, are appreciated, and valued. Organisations can also make use of metrics and analytics to ascertain the utility of the podcasts. Audio content has always been very enticing, and can grab the attention of the workforce as compared to face to face interactions.

According to a study by IAB Edison, around 68% people have stated that after listening to podcasts, they decided to consider products and services, and 63% of listeners said that it changed their opinion about a company. Several start-ups have begun providing content in the form of vlogs, blogs, podcasts, and publications. Hubhopper, based in Delhi, is India's largest podcast and audio on demand platform offering filtered podcasts and publications in uncomplicated pieces with a pan India presence. 

The Future Is Human!

It is a human weakness that our future tends to look quite like our present with a few tweaks. We can only imagine, prepare for, and influence it.

BY JYOTI SINGH VISVANATH





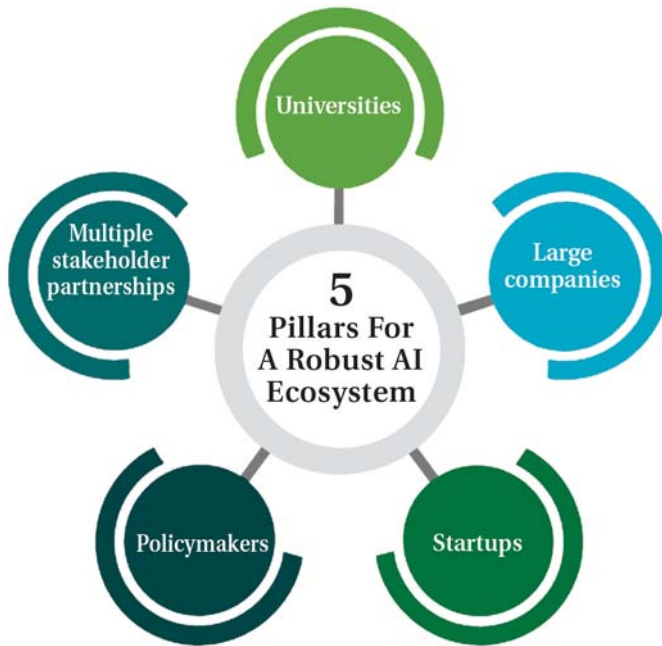
“Science fiction and popular cultural metaphors pit man against technology, while the truth is technology is a tool, which is only as good as the human who creates it.”

A healthy fear of the future is part of the human condition. But we do not have to see it as a monster knocking at our door. There is a lot of noise in the media about how man and machine will compete in a futuristic landscape and man will lose. It is more likely that man and machine will integrate. Technology will be embodied, not interfaced. Science fiction and popular cultural metaphors pit man against technology, while the truth is that technology is a tool, which is only as good as the human who creates it. What we should really be afraid of then is - how good is the human?

Somehow, despite all the technological advances we have seen, it is Artificial Intelligence (AI) that has captured the collective imagination. This is because it has already made inroads into e-commerce, finance, education, agriculture, healthcare, academia, transport, smart cities, and AI-based startups.

According to Accenture's recent report on 'AI and its future in India', AI can add up to USD 957 billion to India's economy by 2035.' The caveats are workforce readiness, language barriers, and socioeconomic issues. In 2016, India graduated 2.6 million students in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), but their level of employability and proficiency is low. Eighty percent of executives believe that the workforce is not ready, and companies need to invest in training and make major changes to performance and talent acquisition strategies. According to the report, five pillars are mandatory for a robust AI ecosystem:

- Universities
- Large companies
- Startups
- Policymakers
- Multiple stakeholder partnerships



'Future of Jobs,' the 2016 World Economic Forum's report, delineates eighteen drivers of change for our near future and how these will impact jobs. These include not just technological advances like AI, but also changing work environments and flexible working arrangements, socioeconomic, and demographic drivers of change in a VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous) environment. According

to this assessment, in barely three short years, the future will already be here.

The new normal

Robert Bolton, Partner, KPMG, UK, says, "Many businesses are exhibiting uncertainty and inertia. They apparently don't recognise what today's transformation trailblazers know and are clearly acting on - uncertainty is this era's new

normal." HR needs a paradigm shift to accommodate the accelerated pace of change as per the 2019 KPMG report, 'The Future of HR - In the Know or in the No.'

A future-proof HR will be flexible and agile, and social on intranets, with mobile-based apps offering fast and personalised information on a range of HR centric questions. These will be integrated into the business as it has a diversity of skills - tech-savvy, data scientists, connectors, brand editors - and will use big data to make the right decisions.

HR will make many shifts from its current role. Primarily, it will enable, empower, and create compelling employee experiences with investments in training, improving workspaces, and giving more rewards. It will embed culture and values in the workplace to recruit and retain hard-to-find talent. From the 'police' of the organisation, where it enforces rules, HR will move towards functioning as a coach, mentor, and thought leader. It will be the driving force for creating a cohesive work environment where employees can grow, by providing intelligent digital platforms that can create a Netflix-like experience for corporate learners.

Human vs. Machine Project Management

	Traditional Project Manager	Robot Project Manager
Staff Evaluation	Long project planning cycles involving budgeting and recruiting	Automated skill matching, candidate vetting, and team making
Work Assignment	Planning tools, long team meetings, strategic business alignment, and time-consuming on e-on-one meetings	Automated availability detection, tasks assigned as needed
Performance Monitoring	Qualitative and quantitative data for providing 360° feedback	Automated monitoring
Sanction Underperformers	Performance management plans and dismissal	Errors and automated warnings
Worker Grievances, Personal Issues, and Workplace Nuance	Issue identification, work with team member and HR on resolving issues	Errors and automated warnings

The image of being a luddite (a person opposed to technology) will be transformed as HR begins to use data and analytics to make strategic decisions at speed and in an unpredictable environment. It will have a key seat at the table, be a part of the decision making, and contribute to the strategy of the organisation. It will focus more on employee outputs, wherein they will encourage workers to produce the maximum value in their job, both for themselves and the organisation. In this larger and more integral role, HR will give real-time recognition to employees and unlock human potential by aligning positions with employee skills and interests. It will show agility to best meet the needs of the employees with fast design implementation and iteration to stay ahead of workplace trends like employee wellness and career mobility options. Job titles will reflect employees' talent and experience.

HR as an influencer

HR will act as an influencer beyond the organisation by helping to shape policies, regulations, and laws that support the new paradigm. It will be a culture advocate and a brand builder and connect the employee's and the company's purpose. It will be an expert in the new ways of working and talent transitions, a facilitator of virtual team effectiveness, developer of all types of leadership, and most importantly, communicator of values, norms, and beliefs through virtual and personal means. It will partner with real estate to create spaces that promote culture and apply a consumer marketing lens using tools like

“Many businesses are exhibiting uncertainty and inertia. They apparently don't recognise what today's transformation trailblazers know and are clearly acting on - uncertainty is this era's new normal.”

- Robert Bolton, Partner, KPMG



Anuja Ghosh

Head - HR, India Ratings and Research (Fitch Group)

“Interpersonal and intrapersonal skills have emerged as important constructs in today's business environment. EI is seen as more powerful than IQ to meet job demands and expectations. We need people who can work with multiple stakeholders, have the capacity to build long-term relationships, people who can lead with empathy, who are capable of establishing a connect with people to get the job done. EI not only helps in unfolding the potential within but also the potential in others who work with you. Even at the hiring stage, organisations are using various psychometric tools to map behaviour, traits, and competencies to the organisation culture and the requirements of the job.”

design thinking and sentiment analysis, allowing employees to rate the company's culture and management.

Disruptive technologies like big data, analytics, machine learning, and AI will be critical operational aspects of HR management. AI will be an ally that will provide assistance in recruitment and help prevent attrition. It will also solve problems related to gender-based wage differences and help in prediction. HR software will evolve into a smarter version, capable of handling complex tasks like employee satisfaction, review cycles, productivity, and performance evaluation. Empowerment and freedom in a diverse workplace will require HR to make lesser effort for greater impact. The use of wearable

devices, integration for time tracking, time-restricted email policies, workplace health, and encouragement of remote work will all fall under the gamut of HR responsibilities. In the future, HR will be defined by learning, risk-taking, and networking, as it manages a blended workforce of gig and permanent workers. It will need creative judgement, flexibility, and long-term relationship building.

Recipe for becoming future proof - the ingredients

In a world of 'minimal manning,' Deloitte Consultant, Erica Volini, says that in the next ten years, 70 to 90 percent of workers will be in so-called hybrid or super jobs, which will combine tasks once performed by people in two or more traditional jobs. A good example would be of startups, where a single employee may handle social media and marketing, while also doubling up as a coder. Specialised workers will slowly be replaced with problem-solving generalists, says Jerry Useem in an article in the Atlantic, 'At work, expertise is falling out of favour.' He adds that the half-life of skills is getting shorter, and the evolution of the economy basically needs a different kind of worker with not only different acquired

“HR will make many shifts from its current role. From the 'police' of the organisation, where it enforces rules, HR will move towards functioning as a coach, mentor, and thought leader.”

skills, but different inherent abilities. You have to be very adaptable, especially in an ambiguous and changing environment.

In such a landscape, the following uniquely human skills that work in confluence will be the secret sauce for becoming future-proof across all kinds of work.

Today, 2018	Trending, 2022
- Analytical thinking and innovation - Complex problem-solving - Critical thinking and analysis - Active learning and learning strategies - Creativity, originality and initiative - Attention to detail, trustworthiness - Emotional intelligence - Reasoning, problem-solving and ideation - Leadership and social influence - Coordination and time management	- Analytical thinking and innovation - Active learning and learning strategies - Creativity, originality and initiative - Technology design and programming - Critical thinking and analysis - Complex problem-solving - Leadership and social influence - Emotional intelligence - Reasoning, problem-solving and ideation - Systems analysis and evaluation

Source: Future of Jobs Survey 2018, World Economic Forum

Being a mental gymnast: Cognitive flexibility defines the speed and ease with which you can switch between different systems of thought. It is the ability to see new patterns, make unique associations between ideas, and to become a 'shallow expert' so that you can easily shift between software, platforms, and services.

Being a skilled negotiator: Humans are much better at negotiation than machines. You will be expected to show greater interpersonal skills and the ability to negotiate with colleagues, managers, clients, and teams.

Being service-oriented: The knack of looking for active ways to assist and anticipate the needs of customers and colleagues. Consumers are expressing concerns about issues such as carbon footprints, food safety, privacy, and ethics. The business needs to reflect these new values, translate them into product offerings and become conversant with the processes involved in meeting these demands.

Being a decision-maker and showing good judgement: The ability to make sound judgement calls and an aptitude for decision making is especially relevant in light of big data. You will need to mine data and find relevant and actionable insights that can direct business strategy. Data is also dry, and the talent to build a narrative or tell a good story with it will be a very handy skill. Being able to find

and assess the quality as well as the content of information will be an added bonus.

Being emotionally intelligent: The big kahuna of skills needed in the future. It refers to the overall social



Vijay Naugain

Director HR and IT, ChildFund India

“EI will continue to be a prominent driver in all people management and human relations management, particularly where empathy for people in the organisation and communities at large is a prerequisite to associate with a mission. With the wide range of mobile applications now available, videos are becoming key training and learning tools, replacing volumes of text and advancing from audio-based modules. Similarly, learning and development, exposure to external forums and international travels are now seen as more of a benefit and an investment on future skilling rather than only for the current role.”

skills - being able to relate to, persuade, and teach others. Travis Bradbury, co-author of 'Emotional Intelligence 2.0', calls emotional intelligence 'the other kind of smart.' It is intangible, informs every interaction we have, helps tune into the emotions of others and adjust behaviour in accordance with the mood of a colleague, partner, family member, or even our own feelings. An emotionally intelligent person can manage behaviour, regulate emotions, navigate social complexities, and make interpersonal decisions that achieve positive results.

Being able to coordinate with others: This requires strong interpersonal skills and the ability to collaborate. If you can play well with others, you will have a distinct advantage over both machines and those who are socially inept. Non-routine interactions like teamwork, playing off each other's strengths, and adapting to uncertain circumstances are particular to humans. In addition, the ability to handle diversity with cultural intelligence will be very important as team members may belong to different races and cultures and be of different ages and gender. To transcend geographical boundaries through digital platforms and be able to coordinate and collaborate across networks, you will need to build alliances and lead by influence.

Being able to manage people: This is a key skill because humans are more creative, better at reading each other, and able to bounce off each other's ideas and energy, but they get sick, demotivated and distracted. As a future manager and team leader, you will need to motivate teams, maximise productivity, and respond to their needs. This will be imperative given that contingent or gig workers will constitute up to 40 percent of an average company's workforce.

Being creative: This is the ability to connect the dots between seemingly disparate information and throw all ideas together to present something 'new.' As new products, technologies, and ways of working come into existence, creativity will

be a mandatory requirement.

Being able to think critically:

Critical thinking is the foundation of innovation. It means asking the right questions about the problem or issue, considering various solutions and weighing up the pros and cons through logic and reasoning to choose the most advantageous option.

Being able to solve complex problems:

A core skill of the future employee, it is the capacity to solve unusual, ill-defined problems in complex real-world settings. This requires mental plasticity to solve problems that have never been encountered previously, in an environment that is changing at warp speed and becoming progressively complex. Economists call them 'wicked' problems - problems nearly impossible to solve because of incomplete, contradictory, or ever-evolving requirements. These skills are built on experience and based on a strong foundation of critical and lateral thinking.

Being able to communicate effectively:

Effective oral and written communication represents the ability to think clearly, present arguments and information persuasively, inspire



Rashmi Agarwal

Vice President, HR, IDFC Asset Management Company

“With Artificial intelligence gradually taking over, IQ is going to fuel growth in AI. Only people with high EQ, who are able to understand and manage emotions, will be required at decision making positions as everything else will become redundant. AI will have the capability to take over decision making except for the human part.”

with passion, concisely capture highlights, and promote yourself. It is often neglected but will be very important in the context of digital communication where non-verbal cues are missing, and there is a high likelihood of being misunderstood.

Some other scenarios include the ability of employees to work without direct leadership in tight temporary organisations that act independently. This is premised on being able to build relationships quickly. For long term employment, employee-owned-and-operated companies like collectives or cooperatives could employ low-skilled people who lose their jobs to automation. These companies could provide niche services, which large organisations miss or ignore. In this case, all employees will need a good business sense. Future skills will also include man-machine interfaces, where they work in concert, not competition. The future will be connected, collaborative, and digital - predicated on unpredictable consequences of technological disruption, making lifelong learning and curiosity fundamentally necessary.

The future is human

So, the secret to becoming future proof is to be truly human. It is just that simple. But that is not the end of the story. It is just the beginning.

Yuval Noah Harari, author and historian, said in a lecture at Google, that emotional intelligence and mental stability are going to be necessary in a future where people will have to continuously reinvent themselves to adjust to the constantly changing landscape. Otherwise, the job market will create serious psychological problems for people unable to do so. The integration of man and machine may also have the unintended consequence of leaving behind the more benevolent characteristics of humanity like compassion, justice, resilience, and humility.

Engineers of driverless cars grappling with age-old questions of morality and ethics as they develop algorithms are just a manifestation of how the future will assimilate wide and disparate fields like science, spirituality, philosophy, and the whole human experience. However, we humans are not good at prediction or identifying the consequences of our actions. It is a human weakness that our future tends to look quite like our present with a few tweaks. We can only imagine, prepare for, and influence it. The rest will just have to be dealt with as it comes up. The most reassuring aspect of any projection into the future is that we are and will continue to remain relevant. The question is - how? **HC**

The Secret Sauce To Be Future-Proof

- Being a mental gymnast
- Being a skilled negotiator
- Being service-oriented
- Being a decision-maker and showing good judgement
- Being emotionally intelligent
- Being able to coordinate with others
- Being able to manage people
- Being creative
- Being able to think critically

About the Author

Jyoti Singh Visvanath is the former Managing Editor of SHRM India. As a communication specialist, she has worked in the corporate and development sectors for over 25 years.

Uber RISES With Pride Circle



Recently, Uber in collaboration with Price Circle, organised the RISE Career fair for the LGBTQI+ community in Bengaluru. Pride Circle, established in 2017, promotes inclusion of gay, bisexual, lesbian, intersex, and transsexual people in the workforce. The fair witnessed the participation of more than 500 candidates. And 200 candidates were offered jobs in around 35 companies. A special booth was also set up to encourage people to share their views on what "Equal opportunity means to them." Some of the companies that sponsored the Fair and also offered jobs to the participants included Goldman Sachs, Ford, PayPal, Uber, Intel, Accenture, Godrej, VIP Industries, Lowe's, Deutsche Bank, American Express, and JP Morgan.

Vishpala Reddy, Regional HR Director, APAC, Uber said, "In today's work environment, companies should focus on not only supporting, but actively implementing policies that promote diversity." She added, "We want to create

a workplace that is inclusive and reflects the diversity of communities we serve."

Job search is extremely challenging for the LGBTQI+ community. It is difficult for them to express themselves without any perceptions, and to be able find a job and to be able to work without being discriminated is a gap that was addressed by individuals and organisations. Vishpala says, "India's first LGBTI career fair is a strong fit with our commitment to create an environment that works for everyone and where people of every background can thrive." Speaking over the Diversity and Inclusion policy at Uber, she said, "At Uber, our diversity and inclusivity agenda is an organisational priority. We want to create a workplace that is inclusive and reflects the diversity of our employees as well as the cities we serve. We commend the efforts of Pride Circle in organising India's first ever inclusive career fair. We hope to see India move forward as a country that recognises talent and ensures a conducive work environment for all."

Such Initiatives provide opportunities to the community, and promote diversity and inclusion at the workplace. It opens arms for them to meet potential employers and build a network. Further, it will also help in collecting voices and efforts in order to make progress. It will open options for the human resource industry with a distinctive chance to acquire talent. The LGBTQI+ group also find possibilities of getting involved socially and securing an economic scope.

Soon after this event, Six Degrees, another LGBTQ group, is hosting a job fair "celebrating diversity across different genders, age brackets, disabilities and sexualities" in Mumbai. 

Well Being At The Workplace

BY R. ANAND

While identifying the causes for our unhappiness, "Happiness at Work: Mindfulness, Analysis and Well-Being," does not pretend that it is either internal or external. The reality of our observations is that both external and internal factors diminish our sense of happiness and add to our stress. There is no need to a priori value of one over the other. Toxic work environments, long commutes, lower support systems in caring for the elderly or bringing up our children, chronic health issues often caused by poor environments, unstable relationships, financial insecurity, deadline pressure, and an always-on lifestyle characterise our life setting.

Similarly, all of us - "the normal" - also struggle with anxieties about the future, grief from the past, or stressors that overwhelm the present moment.

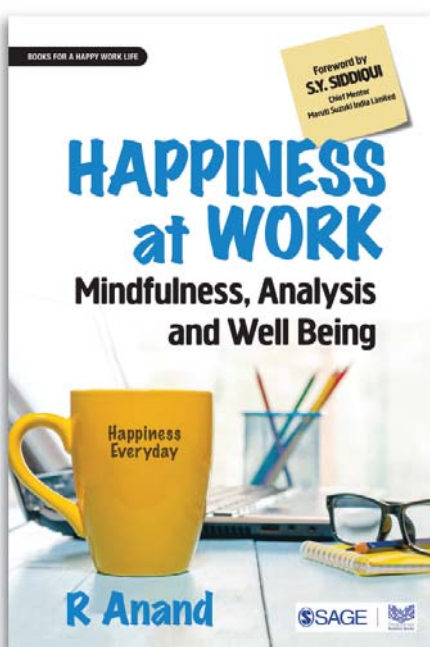
The book provides the tools to uncover how these factors have played out in our lives since childhood. We discover what has become our "default setting" of operation, and the ways in which they colour our experiences and thoughts, and invoke defensive reactions. We realise how they could make us value our life and experiences inappropriately. What symptoms will we exhibit when this happens to us? The tools of transactional analysis, error analysis, and dream analysis are used to illuminate our unconscious selves and examine our default settings. These tools have been in

existence for long, but this work brings them all together for the above described urban professional. It allows him/her to diagnose and cure. The book is replete with cases and instances and tips or happiness mantras that focus on applying to one's own self, in the here-and-now. While individual settings are a product of our own experiences and choices, behavioural economics reveals some interesting insights on the human condition itself. We have inappropriate architectures for valuing things and making decisions. Again, the book focuses on a few salient bugs and explores remedies to minimise their impact.

The book also deals with practices that have proved to be a tonic to our souls. The practise of mindfulness, a prosocial orientation, meditation, hobbies - all have the capacity to reset our defaults. This is now well backed up by research. They also give us the capacity to buffer our thoughtless instantaneous reactions to more thoughtful responses. The reasons we feel good when we practice them are explained. E.g. what do the happy and long-lived practice? This kind of scientific grounding helps us evaluate those ideas that are well-intentioned but do not work with myths floating around. 

About the Author

R Anand is the CEO and MD, Sage Publications.



Tech As An Engagement Partner

Human Capital spoke to Saba Adil, Chief People Officer and Operating Officer, Aegon Life Insurance, to understand the nuanced role being played by technology in Employee Engagement.

BY S. AJAY KUMAR

Technology has been functioning as an efficient partner in the business and has brought about path-breaking impacts in the workplace, for instance, enabling employees to work remotely. However, it is human nature to yearn for relations. Technology, in the form of high-resolution video conferences, is proving to be a catalyst in providing superior communications, thereby bringing humans closer to each other, albeit in a virtual environment.

Q While technology has been instrumental in transforming the relationship between companies and consumers, why are organisations reluctant to utilise the same for better engagement with employees?

A Be it customers or employees, they are one and the same people, and therefore the expectations! Expectations of convenience, flexibility, personalisation, enhanced value or meaning are becoming the basic essentials as people interact with a brand. Technology has disrupted several business models by solving a need or problem of the customer, leading to easier, quicker, and more optimum solutions. Such expectations are the new minimum, and they are percolating everywhere! With the rise of the new age employee of today, their needs, expectations, and the trend of moving towards the gig economy, an organisational experience becomes critical. And driven by this need, organisations are responding by engaging with employees in a meaningful way, either through human touch or through technology. Technology enables reach, flexibility, and overall experience. Therefore, they are being deployed in greater volume from the stage of employee pre-boarding to onboarding. They are also being utilised for doing your daily work to learning and engagement throughout the employee journey through some form or the other whether a device, app, system, etc.!

Q The intent behind incorporating technology into the workplace is to improve the experience. However, it

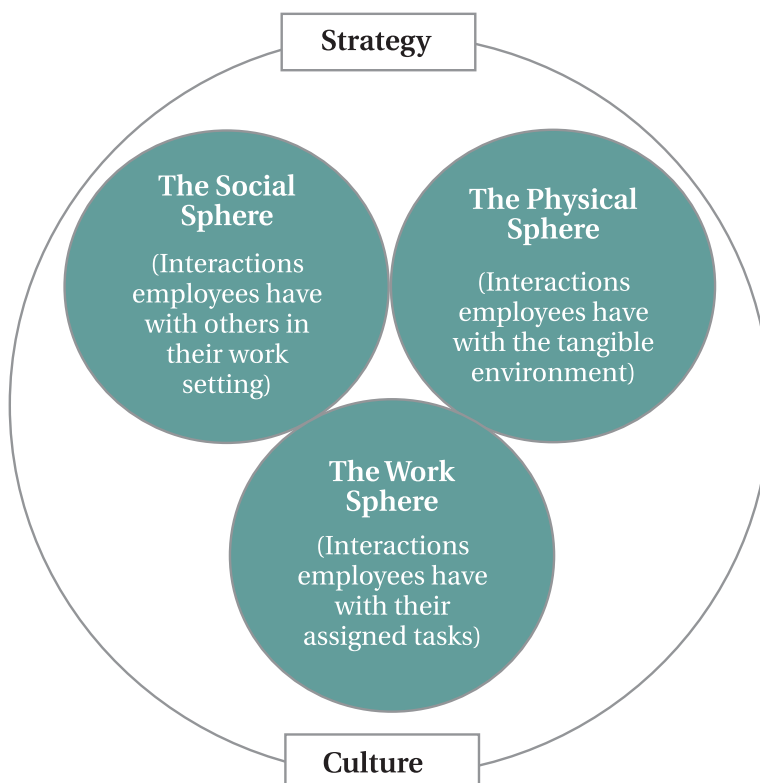
ends up creating insecurity and anxiety, in particular with communications technologies, creating an "always on" environment that can contribute to burnout, loneliness, and feelings of isolation. How does HR function as a buffer between technology and employees to ensure greater work-life balance?

A I would say, each in its own and balance it right! Organisations need to appreciate people's differences, wherein some people like to just cut off after office hours, whereas others like the flexibility of working. These days, I find more of the latter. Flexibility is always good, but if the expectation is to be connected at all times, it may prove to be counter-productive! Leaders set the culture, and if leaders switch off during certain hours in a day, so does the rest of the organisation! You can do system cut-offs, and that has been tried out at Aegon Life as well, but people develop other ways to work or stay connected to get the work done. Hence, the most effective aspect of driving culture or behaviour is leading by example. Organisations may be at various stages of growth

or maturity or a critical project to be delivered may need intense involvement of people, but they also do not wish to make a compromise in terms of quality, errors, low employee engagement, etc. What one has heard from most people is that they are very comfortable and on occasions enjoy a high connect period as long it is short-term and seasonal, since it maximises their learnings and contributions. However, once it becomes an everyday necessity, it leads to burnout. And this is where the need to strike a balance comes into play.

Q How best can organisations make use of predictive analytics to understand employees individually to diagnose and identify intervention situations? How do you believe it can be used in an organisation such as yours?

A Data is the new gold today, and it provides some great insights in understanding your employees or customers, personalising their problems or their experiences. For instance, at Aegon Life Insurance, we were experiencing high attrition



in one of our sales channels at the entry-level. Through predictive analytics, we were able to identify a 'look alike' profile from a behaviour perspective, which proved to be as successful from our context. Hence, we formulated a selection process that could identify a closer match to such a profile, as well as drivers that could retain this target segment. In another instance, we created employee personas using design thinking, to provide personalised hiring and onboarding experiences. Likewise, there are several other use cases where predictive analytics has been put to use, e.g., development interventions, identifying futuristic skills needed for the organisation to be future-ready etc.

Q How do you think an organisation can best leverage social media and various other digital tools to enhance employee experience? What are the tools that are in vogue in Aegon Life?

A At Aegon Life, we make use of social platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter to connect with employees and seek their feedback. We have an employee app called 'Tickle', through which people can connect with practically anyone in the organisation through a chat, form common groups of interest, see what is happening in the company

as well as use it for customised learning. Besides, Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI), Cloud Technology, etc., all make for an enhanced user experience! We have a new-age Human Resource Management System (HRMS) based on human-centric designs for people processes and employee needs.

Q New-age technology and communication tools have created avenues such as flexi-working, gig working, and remote working. Do you feel that the millennial workforce who prefer such a type of working would remain strongly engaged to the organisation?

A It is going to be an iterative process and we will learn as we go! We have to first understand that it is all about personalisation, so if the employee wants it that way, so be it! And if you align between what the new-age worker wants and the interests of the organisation, it is a win-win for both. In fact, when employees create their own models of engagement with that of the company, e.g., being a project-based gig worker, the engagement is even more, as the premise is that people want to learn and contribute to these projects so that they are better employable. After all, they are creating their own brand when they have more success stories to share.

Companies with high levels of employee engagement have:

21%
greater profitability

17%
higher productivity

20%
increase in sales

10%
Increase in customer ratings

24%-59%*
Less turnover

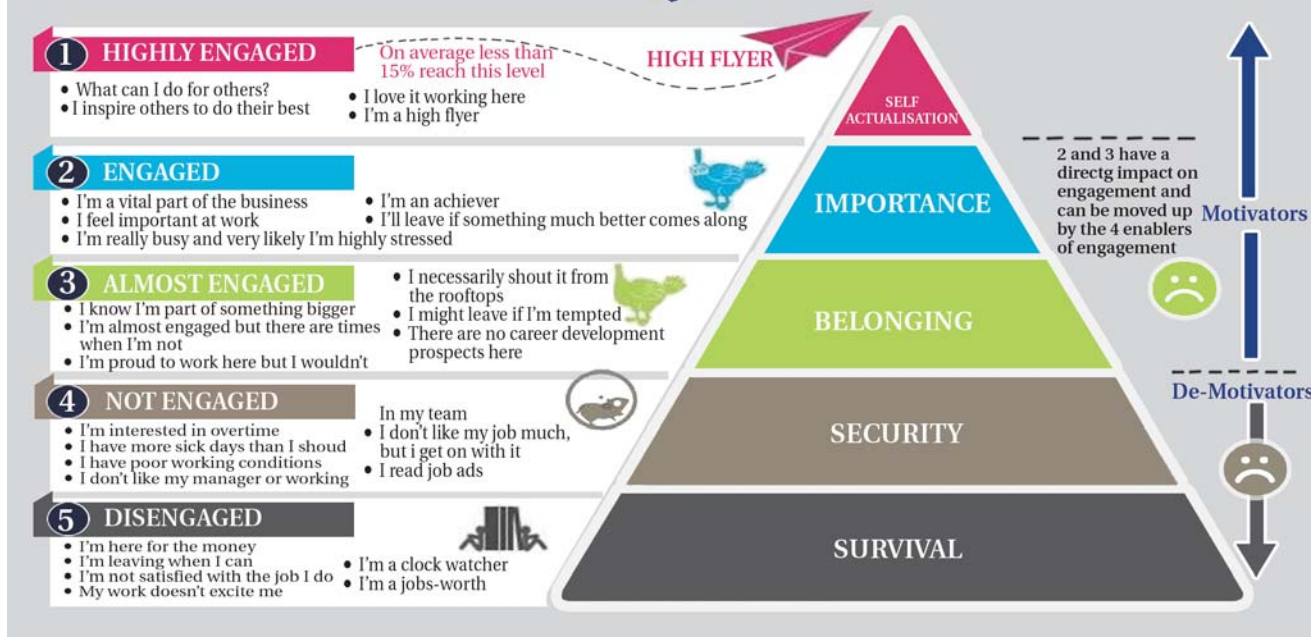
* high-turnover organizations vs low-turnover organizations

41%
reduction in employee absences

2019 Employee Engagement Trends



MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS APPLIED TO EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT



From an organisation standpoint, one has to create an ecosystem to make such arrangements work for both.

Q It is perceived that automation, AI/ML and IoT contribute to job losses in the coming days. How can you ensure that the employees will remain engaged in light of automation making headway within the organisation?

A It is about being future-ready from an organisation standpoint about which skills and capabilities will be needed on the basis of the business model, and then reskilling people to make them ready for it. Job losses or otherwise, as technologies evolve, new skills will be needed, and this will continue to be an iterative process. Therefore, organisations need to invest in people because it will be easier to 'build' than to 'buy'.

Q Video technology, webcasts, and pre-recorded videos can be created in a manner that is well suited to help reduce employee anxiety. As an HR, do you feel these alone would suffice for greater employee engagement or would it be necessary

to incorporate the human element as well?

A I do not believe that one approach will work over the other. It again comes down to what the situation is and what makes your people comfortable. Whether face-to-face connect or technology, both can be effective basis the situation. Our adoption to an agile way of working has been very recent, and I have seen people being highly comfortable talking to one another across locations using video technologies. However, if the message from the organisation is of utmost importance, the traditional town halls always work better since there is a face-to-face connect and people feel more encouraged to ask questions.

Q Workers beginning new roles or starting assignments in a new part of the organisation require learning courses, articles, and podcasts pushed to them to ensure success in the new role. How can HR make use of technology to ensure that these capsules are delivered to them at the right moment?

A I am a firm believer of customised learning pathways and outcome-based learning. In most situations,

we make use of blended learning programmes where one does have face-to-face connect as well as technology-based interventions. We use our own HR app 'Tikkle' for microlearning, mandated programmes, refreshers, etc. Relevant articles, podcasts, and more are shared on this platform.

Q Providing workers with the flexibility to form online communities organically based on shared interests, be it at the professional level or in the personal space, helps to achieve greater engagement. What are the ways in which an organisation can create avenues for the same? How have you been ensuring that such avenues are created at Aegon Life?

A We have groups and shared interest on several projects that run within the organisation, whether for professional purpose or common interests like Jira, Confluence, etc., where groups with a common objective as well as like-minded people come together and share information. Over the HR app, people form interest groups like treks, cooking, etc., to share experiences. **HC**

Removing Politics From Performance Management

Extensive use of the latest technological features has greatly impacted the evolution of performance management as a critical and integral process in any organisation.

BY DIGANTA CHAKRABARTI



Performance Appraisal Is Dead. Long Live Performance Management!" was the title of the article published in the Harvard Business Review two decades ago. Performance management has evolved significantly since then. Many organisations, including some of the largest, took decisive steps, which included:

- Replacing the annual performance review exercise with continuous performance development process
- Creating efficient systems for setting, monitoring, and evaluating targets
- Making the exercise more participative and decentralised

Many frameworks or templates (e.g. balanced scorecard, forced distribution, 360-degree review, etc.) were tested with varying degrees of success. Needless to say, extensive use of the latest technological features has greatly impacted the evolution of performance management as a critical and integral process in any organisation.

Despite the various forms which performance management has taken over the years, the one aspect that has impeded its effectiveness is the political behaviour of organisations. People are swayed by their own biases, status/reputation, insecurities - political considerations become important for self-protective reasons, and objectivity gets challenged. As opposed to being rational and aligned to organisational goals, people try to manipulate conditions in an attempt to achieve their individual objectives.

Any performance management process infected by high political interventions fails to objectively measure "true performance" not only of individuals as well as organisations. Academic researchers have established that perceived political interference can lead to low employee morale, lack of trust in organisational processes, drop in productivity, poor engagement, and heightened intention to quit. It cannot be good news when a substantial section of the talent pool perceives a lack of fairness present in the performance management system, which is so central to their career.

So, how can we get politics out of performance management? Is it not true that "politics is ubiquitous in organisations" - as many experts concede? Should we just accept its adverse effect on performance management processes? A three-pronged approach would be: -

- a) Effectively align performance management process with the organisation's objectives (vertical integration) and other people management functions (horizontal integration)

- b) Progressively reduce the chance of political interference by developing a work-culture which endorses transparent communication and constructive debate

- c) Successfully link the employee development initiatives with goals and outcomes of the performance management process

The proposed approach is difficult

to configure and even more difficult to execute successfully. These conditions, unless customised as per vital organisational characteristics, run the risk of being a failure. Execution of each of these conditions requires meticulous planning and critical introspection. Any major modification of the existing performance management process is a time taking, costly, and a potentially uncertain step.

Minimising political behaviour as an essential part of performance management will not only help in stamping out inherent weaknesses in the process, but also encourage the development of a high-performance work environment and help build a great place to work.

What is key in this effort is the positive and unwavering backing of the leadership of the organisation. Without positively-directed, resolute, and sustained backing from the top management, we cannot expect to create and nurture efficient processes unaffected by politics in organisations. It is a great challenge to accept and a worthy goal to set for ourselves! **HC**

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Views expressed by the author are personal

About the Author

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Leading The Way

Forming a strong leadership can be complicated. However, in this changing landscape, the only way for leaders to go forward is to continue to embody the spirit of positivity and change, and inspire the organisation do the same.

BY MANOJ AGARWAL

In a world where everyone wants to be a leader, what importance do business leaders hold? Especially when it comes to driving a company culture? Well, this is a significantly important role! We all know Steve Jobs and Mark Zuckerberg and their role in the growth of their organisations. Does not their success make you wonder why being a leader is so important, and what correlation it has with shaping an organisational culture?

A good leader lays down the fabric of organisational culture, and organisational culture is often the driving force behind any business success. Truth be told, leadership and culture are two different crosshairs. It is only when both are coordinated well that we get a well polished organisational culture. It is not something that can be done at one go; building an office culture is an ongoing process and needs constant reviewing.

Poor leadership can reinforce wrong values, behaviours, attitudes, and create a toxic culture leading to poor brand image and serious discord in the company's day-to-day function. Therefore, it is very important for a leader to define the prevailing business culture and shape it with behaviours and systems that their work promotes.

Hence, it is imperative that you, as a leader, align yourself with the culture you desire before telling your employees

to do this. A leader's behaviour sets the tone in any organisation, and their values, actions, and professional development will have a visible effect on the culture they are trying to reinforce. Your first step should be to set an example through word and action (on an everyday basis). And this will gradually gain momentum through structures and policies on which your employees operate.

The best way to shape office culture as per a leader's vision is by setting up an active engagement and reward system. Ways through which employees are treated in terms of imparting knowledge - providing feedback, recognition, and criticism - can tell what behaviours and actions your company likes to value. Forming a strong leadership can be complicated; however, in this changing landscape, the only way for leaders to go forward is to continue to embody the spirit of positivity and change, and inspire the organisation do the same. **HC**

About the Author

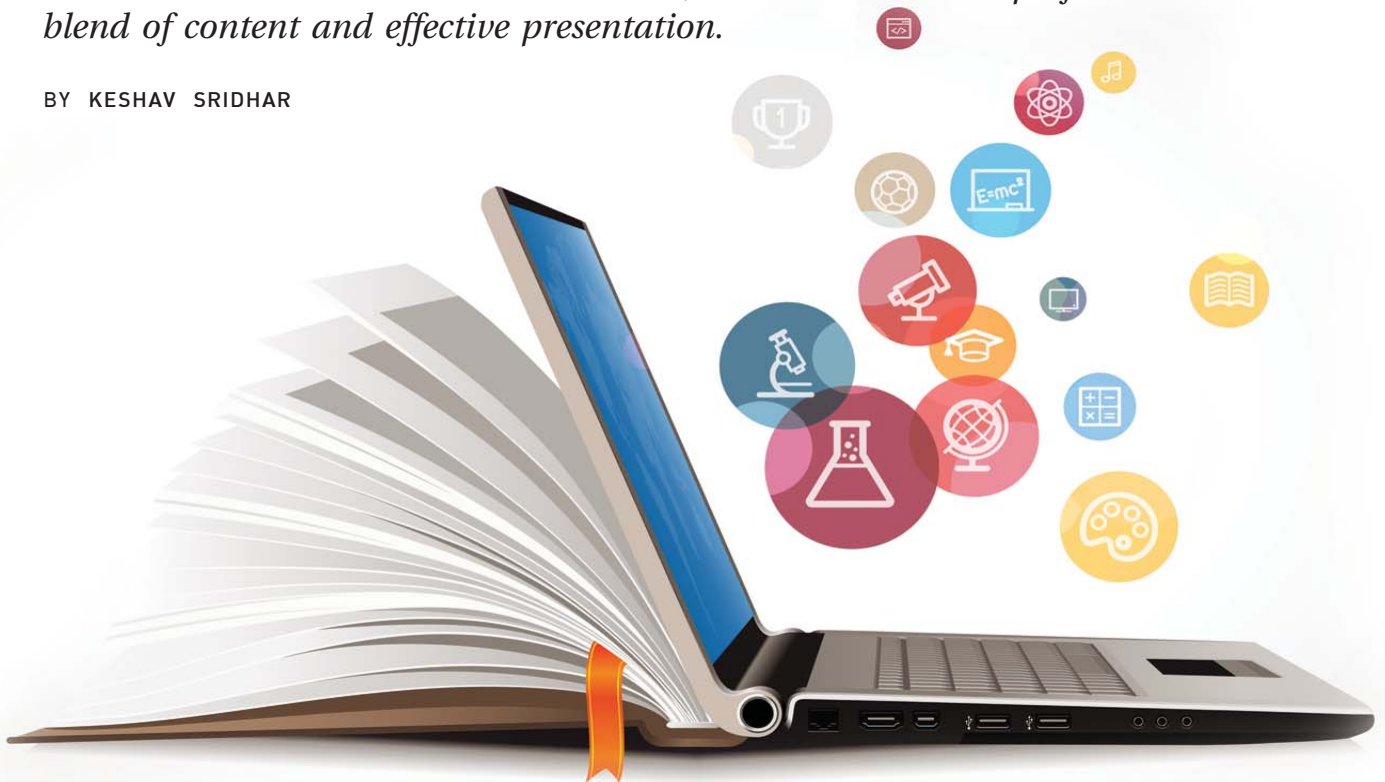
Manoj Agarwal is Co-Founder, Xoxoday. He brings over 12 years of experience in technology, product, marketing, and business excellence. He has worked with companies like Yahoo, Manipal Education, and Flipkart in various roles. Manoj is an MBA from IIM Kozhikode.

PROBE INTELLIGENCE SERVICES	EMPLOYMENT BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS			
	1 // CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS	4 // VERIFICATION OF EMPLOYMENT		
	2 // CREDIT RECORD CHECKS	5 // EDUCATIONAL RECORD CHECKS		
	3 // UNION AFFILIATION CHECKS	6 // NEIGHBOURHOOD REFERENCE INTERVIEW		
PH.: 011-25725603, 011-25758007 / AIRTEL: 9871007007 / TATA: 9210007007 / IDEA: 9990007007 / FAX: 011-25758007 GF 15, Padma Towers - II, 22- Rajendra Place, New Delhi - 110008 007@detective007.com www.jasoosi.com				

Challenges And Opportunities In Training & Development

Training is not merely about establishing a connect with the audience, whether online or in a classroom. Rather, there needs to be a perfect blend of content and effective presentation.

BY KESHAV SRIDHAR



The Training & Development industry in India is pegged to emerge as a 100+ billion USD market by the next decade. Interestingly, it stands at only around one billion USD at present, a far cry from the 100 billion market in the US. India is among the youngest countries - with over 50% of the population below the age of 25 and 65% of the population below 35 - and hence, the Training & Development space is poised for exponential growth in the years to come. And with 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) being permitted in this sector, a great deal of investment is anticipated in the near future.

In the case of Corporate Training and Skill Development, the training

programmes ideally need to be designed scientifically and delivered with a professional touch. There should be no room for deviations from the identified training need, and compromise on the quality of Training/Coaching. Professional Training and Development is a highly niche skill. It is more result-oriented, with utmost emphasis on ROI (Return On Investment). And it has been observed that not all Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in their respective domains are effective Trainers/Coaches. Also, training is not merely about establishing a connect with the audience, online or in a classroom. Rather, there needs to be a perfect blend of content and effective presentation.

“Running a business no longer remains the backyard of a select few. The success or failure of a business is largely dependent on the performance of the employees and the satisfaction of the customers/clients.”

“As the L&D resources are the mascots of continuous learning and change, it is natural that they would be envied and resisted by most in the organisation.”

The challenges in the Training industry

So, why is this industry still in a nascent phase in India as compared to the US, despite being the second most populated country and also one among the youngest nations? Well, the answer is easy to ponder. India is relatively new in the list of industrialised countries. The Indian economy has grown with a positive intent only after the economic liberalisation during the early 90s, and it has been on a booster growth mode only since the last decade or so, thanks to the multi-fold political and economic challenges, both internally and internationally.

A fair analogy would be that of a hungry hunter set free to explore and hunt down a bounty for himself and his family in an unfamiliar territory. The basic human instinct is to first safeguard one's survival, and thence focus on excellence. Hunger is one of the best teachers in life! Also, it is noteworthy that the need for a coach is generally more with folks who are not fighting for their existence. It is a service 'bought' by those who have the luxury to invest time and money for the greater well-being of others.

Similarly, in the Indian context, it was natural for companies to initially focus on the hunting business, and were forced to do so with local manpower that was not suitably trained. They had to get the maximum with minimum investment. With growing business came greater complexities and the need to equip the workforce to excel in their performance and project deliveries. Now, running a business no longer remains the backyard of a select few. The success or failure of a business is largely dependent on the performance of the employees and the satisfaction of the customers/clients. The dissatisfaction of either the internal or external stakeholders can throw a well-established company out of business.

The greater need

Taking such dynamics into consideration - and the growing expectations of every industry in the country - the need for professional Training & Development services was obviously natural. And this need is becoming bigger with every passing day, so much

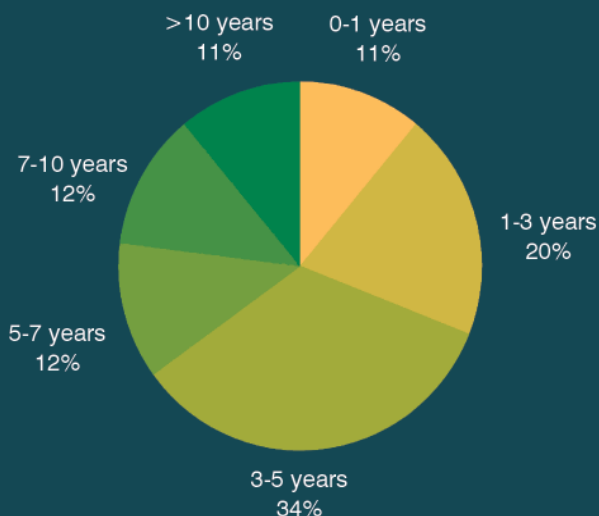
so that it has developed as an industry in itself. That said, the biggest challenge in the training industry is that skilled and highly effective trainers are unable to connect with the audience that really needs their service. The reason being that most of the organisations seek training services through a vendor (a company in the business of providing training services), and only a handful of them do not compromise on the quality of trainers. In order to make more profits, most of these training vendors deploy sub-standard/inexperienced trainers (so that they can be paid less) and somehow manage to get away with this by way of developing amicable relations with their client. This only results in resources getting wasted by the organisation who bought the training service. Also, a gross injustice is done to the audience who had participated in the programme with huge expectations to learn and develop themselves. No amount of innovation in technology can solve such a problem until there is a genuine shift in the attitude among the people who are in charge of conducting training programmes.

However, it is not all gloom and doom. The good part is that a majority of the companies have started to connect directly with the individual trainers when needed, instead of empanelling a training vendor. Minus the middlemen, it is a win-win work model for both the trainer and the organisation seeking the training. Hence, most of the companies now have an internal Learning & Development (L&D) team, specifically tasked to facilitate continuous learning for their folks, and also to ensure that a panel of quality trainers are always associated with them.

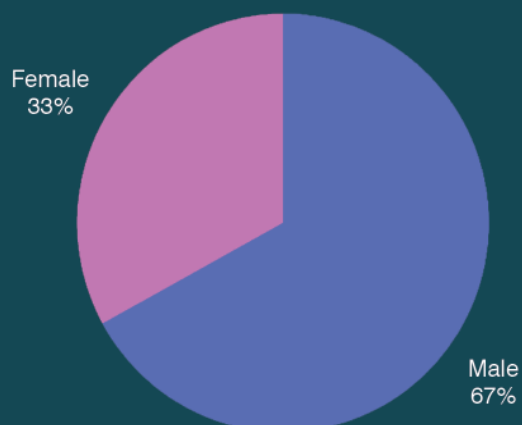
In the recent past, investment of resources on training was the last option in most organisations. It was seen as a way to only have some fun and entertainment, maybe once in a while. Most often, the HR Generalists of the organisation were also asked to don the hat of an L&D professional. But things have now begun to change rapidly, after a great deal of trial and error!

A point to note here for business leaders is that L&D resources in an organisation need an extra shield of

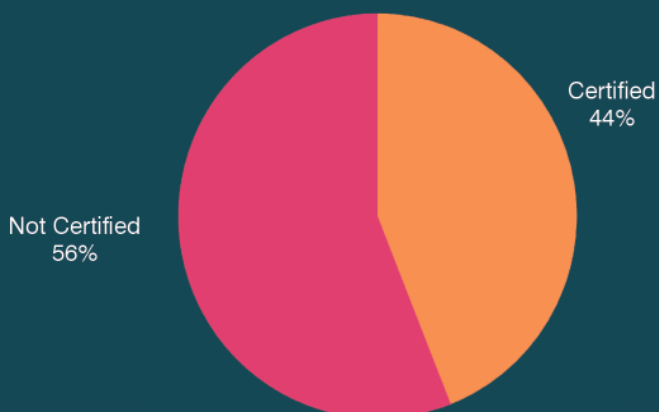
TRAINER'S EXPERIENCE



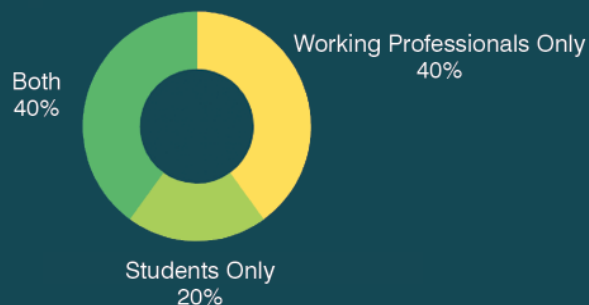
GENDER



CERTIFIED TRAINERS



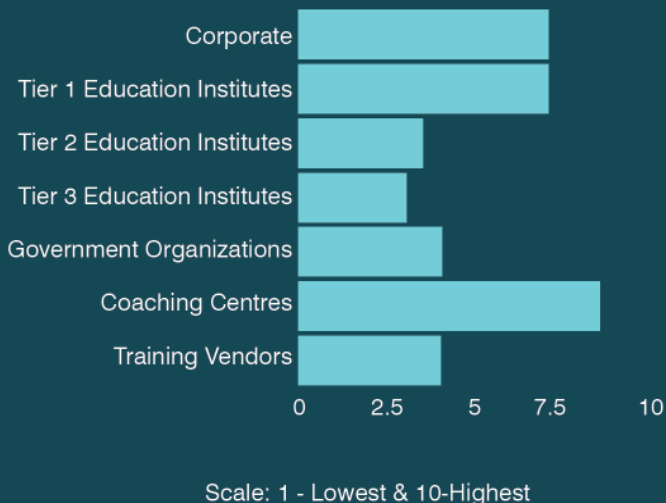
TARGET AUDIENCE



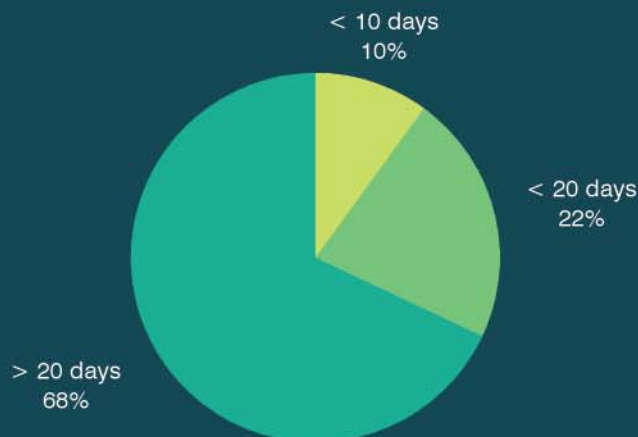
RATING OF OVERALL TRAINING EXPERIENCE



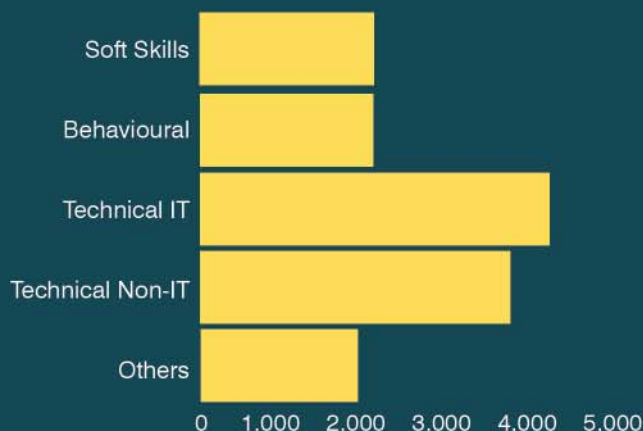
RATING OF RECEIVING PAYMENT ON TIME



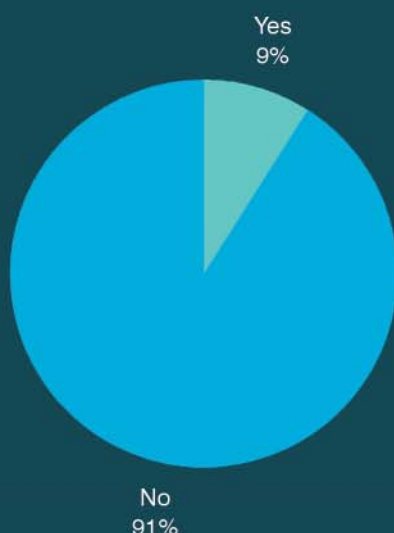
USUAL WAIT TIME TO RECEIVE PAYMENT POST TRAINING



AVERAGE PAYMENT PER DAY (INR)



ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH YOUR REMUNERATION



protection from the top management. As they are the mascots of continuous learning and change, it is natural that they would be envied and resisted by most in the organisation.

The onus on L & D Managers

The onus on the L & D Managers is that they have to be ruthless in terms of executing the developmental plans that have been envisioned for their people, come what may. Sometimes, it may even take multiple rounds of heated boardroom discussions to firstly get your L & D plan approved. Believe me, it is not easy to stand your ground, when all is said and done. Most heads of departments would still be wanting their folks to get on with the business, rather than attend a training programme. It takes a lot of moral courage and conviction to be an L&D professional. Apart from the trainees, the cynosure of this industry are the trainers. Hence, the success mantra for an L&D Manager and his organisation is, 'Empanel quality trainers and look after them really well.'

Snippets of a survey to understand the observations and feedback of freelance trainers:

- Around 1500 trainers from various major cities of India were approached with the survey
- Only 60% of them were comfortable to document their observations and feedback. And only 20% of them were comfortable to reveal their identity while documenting their feedback.
- The biggest pain point that almost all the trainers shared was regarding the delay in payments from their clients.
- Except for corporate companies and a few Tier 1 educational Institutes, none of their clients gives a 50% pre-training payment (Clientele category mentioned in the Survey infographic).
- Interestingly, a majority of them are not certified trainers and yet are associated with a few training vendors/coaching centres. 

(Survey performed by the author)

About the Author

Keshav Sridhar is a Business Consultant & OD Specialist. A seasoned HR Professional, he comes with an experience of 15 years and has worked with Google, Partygaming, BITS Pilani etc. and has been a Training Consultant for many Educational Institutes and Corporates. Keshav is an Engineer and has done the Certified Learning & Development Manager and Master Trainer & Facilitator programmes from Carlton Advanced Management Institute.

East Is East, West Is West...

As businesses are increasingly facing the fallout of a mindless chase for profits and the relentless stress of the pursuit of perfection, leaders are looking inward-towards India and its roots-to find answers.

BY KALPANA BANSAL



Rudyard Kipling had famously spoken about the divergent views of the East and the West, and nothing could be more descriptive of the philosophies and the practice of leadership in the Oriental and Occidental corporate culture.

The Leadership Development models of the west are person-centric, and strongly put the onus of character development on the individual, emphasising "free will" and the human ability to discern the right choice. These models are derived from the concept of instilling a "sense of goodness" in leaders, or in the belief that if people "know" the "right thing to do", they will enact it. Al Gini and Ronald Green, in their book, "Ten Virtues of Outstanding Leaders:

Leadership and Character," lay emphasis on the positive effects of experience and pain, and write that trial and error cannot be overlooked or underestimated in the formation of moral leadership, thereby highlighting the moral ingredient to good leadership.

The Indian reality

Contrast this approach with the reality in India and the Hindu concept of tolerance, humanity, and imperfection in existence. The basic premise of successive births, each eradicating or minimising prior "karma", is an integral part of the Indian construct and therefore embraces the "darker" side of the morally virtuous as a part of their Karmic penance. This is largely apparent in the folklore and myths about Hindu Gods. In the words of Salil Tripathi, "Hindu gods are imperfect, and act in morally ambiguous ways, using trickery, treachery, and subterfuge. They also show nobility, courage, and valour." ²

This has significant implications about the development of consciousness in leadership. The new trends of leadership are in favour of integrating spiritual consciousness with leadership thought, through increased self-awareness and embracing all aspects of the self, and integrating a spiritual consciousness with that thought.

The Mythology of Leadership Character Development

India has had a 3000-year-old tradition of developing Leaders. It was an integral part of the Guru Shishya

“The basic premise of successive births, each eradicating prior "karma", is an integral part of the Indian construct and embraces the "darker" side of the morally virtuous as a part of their Karmic penance.”

(teacher-student) culture that storytelling, sacrifice, and discipline were instilled among the offspring of the royalty and in saints and scholars, to build character and enhance resilience. Various Indian texts outline that the prototype of a good leader can be found in the ideals of Kshatra - being selfless, well learned (in subjects like statecraft, governance, and war-science), justice, commitment to dharma, ability to endure and face hardships, along with the attitude of being dispassionate and impersonal when functioning as a judge. Storytelling and folklore were used to differentiate the concept of good and bad, and human frailties were well fathomed. Leaders in Corporate India are increasingly embracing storytelling as a way of development.

The Bhagavad Gita as a Leadership Development Guide

It is believed that the Bhagavad Gita was composed more than 5000 years ago. The Gita occurs within the great Hindu epic, Mahabharata, in Bhishma Parva or The Book of Bhishma (chapters 25-42). The Bhagavad Gita contains 18 chapters, with a lesson for each day of the battle. It is astonishing that such an epic was narrated in the middle of strife and bloodshed, and "doing one's duty" was shown as the true path of a leader, disregarding morality and righteousness. The war itself was built on an artifice of deceit, treachery, and violence. And with the war as the backdrop, the Gita outlines

a path to higher spiritual consciousness of a leader. Companies such as the Piramal group have used the learnings from the Bhagavad Gita to promote Leadership Development.

The Gita postulates a simple three-fold structure of reality which every discerning person can relate to: the world (Jagat), the self (Jiva), and God (Paramatma or the Supreme Being/Consciousness) - and there is no other entity. Different schools of thought provide divergent opinions over these three subjects, providing ample scope for heated debates and discussions. The Gita stays clear of all such controversies and states in a straightforward manner that whatever we see right in front of our own eyes is the world - each of us carries a vivid experience of the world that is characterised by activities and objects. Similarly, everyone has a vivid experience of his or her being or existence or self.

Similarities with Western Thought

The Indian mythological text, as well as the Bible, make references to the powers of spiritual consciousness for better character development, self-control, and higher awareness. Leaders who form compelling visions based on serving a higher purpose while fulfilling organisational values provide the group members with direction, inspiration to achieve the worthy objective, and, most importantly, meaning to their work.

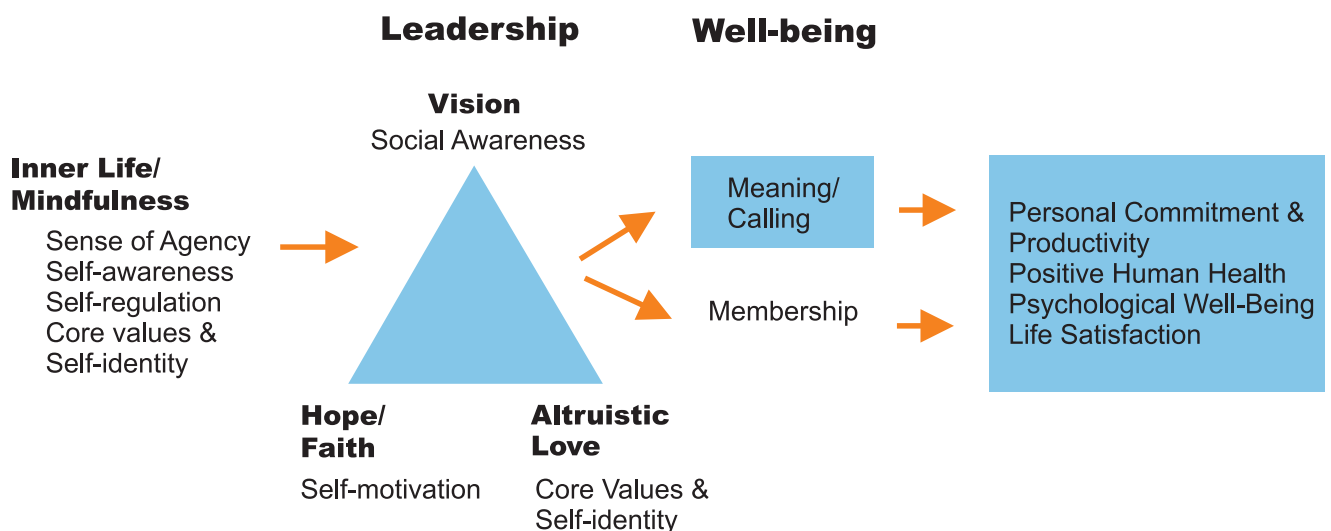


FIGURE 1

COMPARISON OF MAJOR FEATURES OF CHARACTER V. SITUATIONAL APPROACHES

Character Project-Person Centric	Situationist - System Centric
• Self-mastery and habituation to the higher good (Aristotle). Unethical behavior from weakness, pathology, or lack of moral fiber. • Moral philosophy. • Character development programs (indoctrination, exhortation, values). • Prominent in leader development and legalistic approaches. • Locus of control: Individual • Good apples and bad apples.	• Situations drive behavior. • Mid-twentieth century (Milgram, Zimbardo). • Unethical behavior is the product of psychological and social cues. • Social psychology. • Used as a defense or explanation. • Prominent in organizational climate and culture literature. • Locus of control: The system • Good barrels and bad barrels.

“Storytelling and folklore were used to differentiate the concept of good and bad, and the human frailties were well fathomed. Leaders in Corporate India are increasingly embracing storytelling as a way of development.”

Coupled with deep caring and concern for the group member's development and promoting their wellbeing, this helps leaders to foster trust and enhance employee motivation to perform (Sweeney, 2007; Sweeney, Thompson, & Blanton, 2009). Finally, leaders who are optimistic and provide group members with expectations of a brighter future for themselves and the organisation enhance employees' hope and faith.

Differences in the concepts of East and West

The concept of a Character Centric approach of Leadership and the Situationist Approach Leadership largely exemplifies the differences between the Western school of thought and the Indian belief system. The Western thought emphasises the concept of free will and self-development of character and righteousness and pins the onus on the individual. It could perhaps stem from the Greek system of rewarding individual accomplishment over everything else. The Indian belief system is based more on the concept of "dharma" or doing one's duty, irrespective of the situation. The concept of rebirth and death, one's "karma", explains the basic nature of a mixture of good and evil in every human being, and situations are opportunities to negate the collected "bad" karma of the past in a quest towards "moksha" or salvation.

Will the 'twain ever meet?

There are similarities and differences in the Indian thought process and the Western management models. Devdutt Pattanaik, the famous mythologist, in his book "Business Sutra," shows how, despite its veneer of objectivity, modern management is rooted in Western beliefs and obsessed with accomplishing rigid objectives and increasing shareholder value. By contrast, the Indian way of doing business- apparent in Indian mythology, but evidently not in practice-accommodates subjectivity and diversity, and offers an inclusive, more empathetic way of achieving success. Great value is placed on "darshan", i.e. on how we see the world and our relationship with Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth.

Companies such as Godrej, Vardhaman, Eicher, Indian Oil Corporation, and the Birla Group have demonstrated a higher level of conscious ground through tighter corporate governance and a focus on societal implications of their actions. Wipro and Infosys have demonstrated the value of integrity and sound governance. Indian corporates have come a long way and have moved from a paradigm of blindly embracing western thought to practising diligent self-consciousness. Mindfulness, yoga, pranayama, and such practices are being integrated into the regular leadership practice.

As businesses are increasingly facing the fallout of a mindless chase for profits and the relentless stress of the pursuit of perfection, leaders are looking inward-towards India and its roots-to find answers to the increasingly challenging dilemmas in uncertain times. It may be all for the better, for in the not too distant future, the Western management might borrow a few chapters from the Indian thought process. 

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.

Standing On The Shoulders Of Giants

More than fanciful philosophical debates around the 'destiny of humankind', we need to understand that as long as we rely on human expertise, it is absolutely essential to pass on the knowledge for posterity.

BY ANKITA SHARMA



and gravity was now seen as a 'curvature' of space-time.

So, did Einstein prove Newton 'wrong'? Newton's laws are still taught universally - his equations still find due relevance on a daily basis, and are applied even while sending space probes to celestial destinations. Einstein's theory extends to the regimes of high speeds (approaching that of light) and ultra-powerful gravity - where Newtonian mechanics breaks down. Thus, while Newton's work was foundational, Einstein stood on Newton's shoulders to view further, and decipher a deeper, broader, and a more profound understanding that encompassed those of Newton. More than 'right' or 'wrong', science marched forward. Modern-day science is the culmination of giants on the shoulders of giants and so on, ultimately leading us towards next-generation scientific breakthroughs.

Newtonian physics and its relevance to human capital

How is this relevant to 'human capital'? With red carpets being rolled out for the youngest crop of employees (Gen Z), today's workforce comprises of four distinct generations. Progress requires newer generations to benefit from the expertise and wisdom of the ones that precede them. Cutting edge technologies are yielding new forms of intelligence, but 'human intelligence' is not yet obsolete. What makes us uniquely human will remain special - at least, until the evolutionary torch is passed onto AI or another super-intelligent successor. More than

“If I have seen further, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants”

– Sir Isaac Newton

The above quote is from a letter written by Newton in 1675, one of the greatest scientists to have ever walked the face of the earth - who acknowledged that his contributions were possible owing to the great minds who blazed a trail of discoveries before him. The essence of this dictum is vivid even to this day. Arguably, Newton was himself a giant. His laws of motion and gravitation revolutionised the very concepts of science. Newtonian physics remained uncontested for more than two centuries until Einstein presented his gigantic theories of relativity - time and space were no longer absolute,

fanciful philosophical debates around the 'destiny of humankind', we need to understand that as long as we rely on human expertise, it is absolutely essential to pass on the knowledge for posterity.

Some key facts about millennials

- India boasts of over 440 million millennials – more than the total population of the United States
- The Gen Y segment accounts for a third of India's workforce
- By 2025, millennials will constitute 75 percent of the global workforce
- By 2027, Indian millennials will boost the country's workforce to become the world's largest

Undisputedly, Gen Y folks are set to become more pronounced in the world of work. Moreover, India has garnered the biggest slice of the pie by being home to the world's largest millennial cohort. With millennials eclipsing the older generations to represent the future of work, there are more than 440 million reasons as to why they matter more than ever. While the younger millennials and Gen Z are queuing in large numbers to board 'India Inc.', a mass exodus of workplace 'giants' is being witnessed simultaneously - many of whom are in the driver's seat. The youngest boomer is a quinquagenarian - turning 55 this year. The time is short and the need is critical - never before have we expected more of boomer leadership.

According to a recent survey by Deloitte, millennials expressed that employers are falling short in nurturing their 'soft' skills - an assortment of abilities ranging from interpersonal skills to emotional intelligence. Moreover, the World Economic Forum's 'Future of Jobs Report 2018' alerts us to the changing skill equation - by 2022, 'human' skills will retain or increase in value as technology advances. In fact, the warning signs are everywhere. Millennials seek to build these competencies not because they are impatient newbies who want to

microwave wisdom, but rather because now is the time to launch massive efforts in learning, practising, and improving these unique human skills which are anything but 'soft.'

Closing the skill gap

Who are the best people to help close the skill gap? The seasoned pros who have 'been there, done that.' While several attributes embody an exemplary leader, the one trait that stands out is a leader's passion for serving as a mentor in empowering budding experts to reach their full potential. Mentoring has the power to render the much-revered tacit knowledge explicit. In my career so far, I have had the good fortune of being mentored by 'giants' who chose to be great, rather than merely big. Like holding onto gold, some leaders tend to lock their knowledge repositories in a 'secret' deposit vault, tightly clutching the keys - thus depriving young talents of the necessary skills and support. Unjust to the team, organisation, and economy? In fact, it is an injustice to the human civilisation as well.

“Organisations are now looking at various rewards and recognition programmes to instil a knowledge-sharing culture - from rolling out cash incentives to entrenching mentoring in performance goals.”

One of the prime reasons for such a complex issue is obvious - knowledge is seen as a source of power, and is therefore hoarded. The Knowledge Management antidote to this problem is simple - a cultural shift from "knowledge is power" to "sharing knowledge is more powerful." While the principle of this proverb is easy to understand, ingraining it in everyday ethos is difficult and challenging. Organisations are now looking at various rewards and recognition programmes to instil a knowledge-sharing culture - from rolling out cash

“Like holding onto gold, some leaders tend to lock their knowledge repositories in a 'secret' deposit vault, tightly clutching the keys - thus depriving young talents of the necessary skills and support.”

incentives to entrenching mentoring in performance goals. To a great extent, such reinforcements are robust in stimulating knowledge flows. However, mentoring, be it formal or otherwise, starts at the heart of a leader with a core intrinsic desire to pass down the knowledge and leave a constructive legacy for future generations.

The legacy of leadership

In Your Leadership Legacy, a book from Harvard Business School, the authors convincingly argue that no matter how far you are from retirement, framing and shaping your legacy can help you to become a better leader today. 'Legacy Thinking' is a practical day-to-day tool through which leaders can consciously assess their daily decisions and actions. And these findings chime with several recent studies. More often, leaders find themselves choked by the sheer volume of business responsibilities. However, taking time to examine your desired legacy will make a difference in your everyday impact as a leader. It is an investment well worth making. After all, every leader needs a clock and a compass to balance both short term and long-term priorities. Let the legacy you wish to create serve as a compass to guide your leadership journey.

As a leader, the baton you are carrying is not a hollow cylinder passed from one relay runner to another. Wielding the baton is like wielding Mjolnir - Thor's mighty hammer. Every act of mentoring can uplift spirits and make young professionals capable of lifting the baton a little more, and eventually, enable them to fully wield it. It is my fond hope that leaders receive these words with an open heart and intentionally choose to invest their acquired wisdom into the lives of next-generation leaders who can build further on what you have created. 

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Ankita Sharma is a freelance writer in the HR domain. She has an experience of five years and has last worked as Deputy Manager (Human Resources) in Gujarat State Fertilizers & Chemicals Limited. She is presently located in Russia and is on a career break. Ankita is an MBA in Human Resources from the Institute of Management, Nirma University and is also undergoing ICF-accredited coach-specific training to become an ICF credentialed coach.

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The Mentoring Manager

Traditionally restricted to upskilling employees to meet the future needs of business and the industry, a development plan is all about carefully nurturing your human wealth with purpose and compassion.

BY GOPINATH PULLAIHGARI



With organisations evolving in the digital age, we have witnessed the vocabulary of the development plan expanding to reflect a much broader vision of people development. A simple 5-point plan mapping the organisation charter to training plans appears myopic when one looks at the changing ecosystem of today's workplace. Traditionally restricted to upskilling employees to meet the future needs of business and the industry, a development plan is all about carefully nurturing your human wealth with purpose and compassion.

If one were to examine the tech sector alone, the potential for growth is immense, especially with the proliferation of jobs around emerging

technology. While the workforce is prepared to take on these new roles head-on, it is interesting to see whether they are equipped physically, mentally, financially, and emotionally to meet the demands of the digital revolution. As people leaders, are we asking ourselves this before laying out development plans and mapping them to organisational needs? What does our organisational scorecard look like if we were to score ourselves as employers who empower employees in a holistic manner to be more effective at their jobs?

While skill changes as demanded by the business is one part of the equation, emotional intelligence, cultural adaptation, strategic intent, physical wellness, financial acumen, etc., all become a part of holistic people development and are infused into the plans, structured or otherwise. For such an approach to work, a people manager's role shall see a shift from being a supervisor to that of a coach/mentor. Such an approach to a development plan would also shift the onus of development from the manager to the employee. The key idea is not the organisation being prescriptive about one's development plans, but to create an enabling environment in which one identifies the development needs, both related to the core functional areas as well as personal attributes.

The 5-Point development charter

A well-defined and holistic development plan should ideally address the following factors that will connect to employees at all levels.



“The key to developing Emotional Intelligence (EI) lies with the manager's ability to show employees the larger picture, and how his or her behaviour is linked to their career trajectory.”

Emotional Intelligence: It will definitely take sustained efforts to modify intrinsic human behaviour. However difficult employee behaviour may be, when observed closely, it is the lack of exposure or the right information at the right time - or simply personal experiences - that dictate employee behaviour.

Perhaps no one has asked a withdrawn employee to come out of their shell or has tried to get to know them better. It is likely that they would like to change, but are unsure of the next move. But the key to developing Emotional Intelligence (EI) lies with the manager's ability to show employees the larger picture, and how his or her behaviour is linked to their career trajectory. The growth vision of an employee could be blurry, but you could mentor them to see a clearer picture of what will work best for his/her career in the long run.

Strategic alignment: People drive your business, and taking them along in your journey of transformation requires clarity in vision, which leads to actionable ideas. This is possible only when employees are aware of the organisation's mission and vision, and how their work plays a key role in the grand scheme of things. A mentor instils the values of the organisation in its people and makes them feel valued.

Inclusive culture: If a resounding "yes" answers all the questions mentioned below, then you, your team, and the organisation are working as a cohesive unit towards a unified goal!

- Is your organisation's long-term goal well-embraced throughout the organisation?
- Is your team with you at every step of the way as you work towards defining the organisation's growth path, with actionable items in the short term and planning and vision for the long term?
- Does your organisation make everyone involved and valued in their larger purpose?

Physical and mental wellness: Wellness at work is a rage now - and for good reason. Employees spend most of their waking hours at the office, which leaves them very little bandwidth to accommodate a schedule prioritising physical and mental health. Professional

development can only be realised when employees have a positive disposition affecting their physical and mental health. And it is not just a gym at the office that gets employees' motivation going. A well-rounded wellness programme should include regular wellness sessions, 24-hour availability of counsellors for employees who need support coping with pressure at work or outside of it, periodic health check-ups, or simply breaking the monotony of work with periodic floor exercises.

Financial wellness: Worrying about finances is known to adversely affect productivity. So, it is essential to have a programme in place that educates employees on all possible options to develop a sound financial plan. This is more important for those who are the sole providers for their family. Personal finance is and will continue to be a sensitive subject, but employees should be given the assurance that help is at hand for those who need assistance with savings and investments.

Adopting such an approach for People Development clearly cannot be handled unaided by technology. The various apps and tools available today help build and activate holistic development plans, starting with identifying the total human value and potential, and going all the way to fulfilling it with realistic, self-paced methods. It is not so much about what apps and tools one uses, but how the plan is laid out. And for this, the approach needs to be holistic, apart from leveraging enough digital tools. Such a development plan and a culture supporting it will be a strategic advantage for organisations in all industries. 

About the Author

Gopinath Pullaihgari is General Manager & Head-Human Resources, Verizon India. He comes with an experience of twenty years in managing human capital across HR roles and geographies. Prior to Verizon, he was working in JP Morgan. Gopinath graduated in Economics from Presidency College, Chennai and has a master's degree in Social Work from PSG College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore.

Incentivising Employee Referrals

Employee referrals are the means through which a company's existing social network is utilised for talent acquisition. The company's social network includes its current employees, past employees, vendors, customers, and other contacts to cast the widest possible net for attracting new talent into the organisation.

BY DR. SANTHI PERUMAL

Employee referrals are the means through which a company's existing social network is utilised for talent acquisition. The company's social network includes its current employees, past employees, vendors, customers, and other contacts to cast the widest possible net for attracting new talent into the organisation. Initially, the term denoted a recruitment method that encouraged existing employees to suggest potential hires for the company. The logic behind such an approach was that the existing employees are well versed with the culture and work ethic of their employer, and are also aware of what it takes to be successful in the company. So, when the existing high-performing employees suggest potential employees, it is more or less likely that these potential employees possess qualities similar to the current employees. Additionally, the referred employees having a "preview" of the company results in a faster onboarding process. The new "referred employees" are sooner to get into their job roles, are more productive, and are more likely to stay in the organisation than those recruited from job boards or career sites.

However, it requires ingenuity and commitment to successfully implement employee referral management systems in any organisation. The employee referral network rules have to be kept clear,



simple, and easy. To help in the implementation of the employee referral process, an organisation can either have a dedicated software platform, or it could be as simple as an applicant mentioning the employee's name with their application. Additionally, the involvement of the top management in educating the current employees about the importance of such a form of recruitment is important for the successful adoption and implementation of the employee referral programme. Keeping the existing employees committed to this programme by sharing details such as monthly updates on the programme implementation and special mentions and rewards to the

referral evangelists are important to ensure that this programme remains self-sustaining.

A case of implementation of the employee referral process at the company Alpha Private Limited is cited below. Alpha Private Limited is a small-sized consultancy firm providing end-to-end engineering solutions to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). It has its headquarters in Pune, Maharashtra. At present, the company has about 100 employees. Akash Kumar, the Founder-CEO of the company, was planning to expand Alpha's operations to two other cities, namely Chennai and Kolkata. The Chennai office was designated to serve clients in the southern region,



while the Kolkata office was to take care of the eastern region. He believed that hiring a diverse workforce would enable Alpha to make a name for itself as a consumer-centric and consumer-friendly company. The company's vision was to provide personalised experience and 24x7 customer support. Akash was thinking of his yesterday's meeting with Ram Kumar, the HR Manager. The meeting had been called to decide on the strategy and plan of action for recruitment to keep up with the expansions plans.

Ram Kumar had suggested that one of the ways to capitalise on the existing workforce was to involve them in the recruitment drive by encouraging them to provide referrals. This, he said, was a win-win situation. "This is a win-win for the company," he said, "as the current employees will serve as the first level of vetting, a kind of firewall, to prevent bad hiring choices, especially for lateral entries for mid and higher-level positions." He also added, "such a practice will increase the loyalty of the current employees and make them feel empowered. They will feel responsible and involved in the induction of the new recruit(s) they refer. They will make the new recruits feel welcome and help them learn the ropes quickly."

Akash Kumar had approved it as a great idea, and had tasked Ram Kumar to look into the existing practices at good companies, and

come up with an action plan for promoting referral-based recruitment at Alpha. Ram Kumar's presentation was to take place in three days' time.

Ram Kumar started his presentation with the advantages of using employee referrals. "The past research data based on studies worldwide," he said, "indicated that employee referrals result in the best applicant-to-hire ratio at 1 out of 10 versus 1 out of 18 from all the other sources. Making an offer for a new hire referred by an existing employee is on an average lesser by 20 days, versus 39 days for someone hired using other methods. Perhaps the best statistic of all is the employee retention rate - employees hired through referrals average 2.7 years, compared to 1.5 years for those hired otherwise." Then he presented what motivates employees to involve themselves in referrals. "Usually, employees are motivated to get involved in the referral process in order to help out a friend, work with friends they like, and also to help out the company they work for. Usually, a combination of such reasons motivate existing employees to engage in referrals," he said. He maintained that providing recognition and acknowledging the contribution of the employee are important ways of feedback essential for motivating employee referrals.

Thereafter, Ram Kumar described the employee referral practices followed by well-known companies. "In Accenture, employees are provided with a referral bonus. However, they adopt a unique practice and allow these employees to donate a part of the bonus to a charity of their choice, and Accenture would match that amount. In Google, another company where employee referral is used with great success, the method adopted for kick-starting employee referral is unique," he continued, "the Human Resources (HR) team involved with recruitment sits down with existing employees and ask them pointed questions like 'Who is the best product person you know in (New York) City?' While in Intel, a direct strategy of doubling the bonus of employees whenever they successfully referred to women or minorities

was adopted. This ensured diversity hiring in Intel," he added.

Ram Kumar also clarified that implementation of such referral practices provided both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation to employees. Employees became supercharged, which ensured the success of the referral programme in these companies. He also explained that the strategy adopted by Google is based on a method known as aided recall, where the involvement of the HR team helped the existing employees to suggest the best people. The meeting concluded after they decided to meet once again after five days to explore the ways of introducing and implementing the referral system at Alpha.

The meeting resulted in Akash Kumar pondering over the implementation strategy for the proposed employee referral programme. He was pre-occupied over some decisions that were essential for the implementation of the referral strategy at Alpha, such as: -

- The extent to which Alpha can depend on referrals as a method of recruitment.
- Whether referrals must be restricted to the current employees alone or should anybody associated with the company be involved in the programme.
- When and how to announce the proposal to the employees, so as to ensure its success?
- Which among the various practices adopted successfully by companies throughout the world, may be implemented at Alpha?
- Should Alpha design its own reward system for its employees, and what steps should those be in such a scenario? 

About the Author

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Analysis by Ravi Mishra



An employee referral programme is certainly a great initiative which has been successfully implemented by many companies. Considering the fact that the CEO of Alpha Private Limited (APL), Akash Kumar, is onboard with the referral programme, it is imminent that the initiative will savour success. A buy-in of the top leadership is essential for the high success rate of any initiative.

In APL's case, the proposal for the programme came forth in the wake of the company's expansion plans to two other major cities. It is noteworthy that Ram Kumar, the HR Manager, elucidated the success stories of global organisations to highlight the significance of the referral programmes.

However, it becomes important for Ram Kumar to: -

- Reassess every dimension of the programme with contextual perspectives
- Avoid mix and match by replicating policies from other organisations; rather, he should design the programme based on the understanding of what would work better in APL.
- Evaluate some of the critical factors such as the demographic challenges, skill sets, availability of talents in terms of demand and supply, and attrition rate associated with new sites viz. Chennai and Kolkata.

The success of a referral programme is very contextual, and it depends on various factors and adaptability of line functions. Else, it will lead to bigger problems than solutions for APL in the future. To achieve success in the referral programme, Ram Kumar must

firstly take the managers and the departmental heads on board by involving them in the process design. Thus, they become equal stakeholders with HR in rolling out the initiative. He also needs to share the purpose and intent of the scheme.

A referral programme -

- Is far more beneficial when the demand is greater than the supply for a given skill set
- Reduces the time delay and enables faster onboarding
- Provides longer tenure with higher chances of employee retention

At the same time, the CEO and HR Head need to take a policy call about the composition of the ratio of the candidates hired through the referral scheme and through external sources. Considering the nature of the business, APL should have a 40:60 (Referral: External sources) ratio. Moreover, the company needs to be transparent with its governance and policy details. Apart from helping the organisation and the individual, this programme also reflects the true engagement of the employees in terms of advocacy for the company. The process should be regularly monitored and audited to check if it involves a larger spread of employees or a clustered group and reasons thereof.

The challenges thrown by a referral programme must be communicated to the leadership at APL. And these anticipated challenges must be addressed through appropriate measures while drafting the policy. The company needs to authenticate the implementation without any favour or bias in the selection process. The leadership team owns the responsibility of creating a culture wherein selection

finds the most suitable talent without any compromise in quality or timeline. The company must design the programme in such a way that a multi-tier selection process through the support of technology/software can map the profile of prospective employees. Any influence on the selection panel (to be pushed up by employees) should find no space.

Another important factor of success lies with the approach of incentivising employees who connect as a bridge to support ownership. APL should have the provision of a mixed approach with monetary and non-monetary reward and recognition programmes. It helps the company to retain the new as well as the old employees. 

About the Author

Ravi Mishra is the Sr Vice President / Regional HR Head - Birla Carbon, South Asia and Middle East. He has worked in diversified organisations such as UltraTech Cement, Aditya Birla Chemicals, Nova Petrochemicals, Mardia Group of Industries, and Nicholas Piramal. Ravi has good exposure of working in a cross cultural environment, with capabilities of building teams and understanding business perspectives, linkages and strategic orientation with regard to people management.

Analysis by Rohit Hasteer

Employee referrals are a goldmine for scouting good talent. Some of the best companies close about 40-45% of their positions through employee referrals. Good companies create robust employee referral programmes that focus on augmenting and rewarding people for bringing their friends on board. For Alpha, considering that it is a close-knit unit of 100 people, referrals are an option worth considering. However, this comes with a caveat - since the employees are based out of Pune, they may or may not be professionally networked in Kolkata and Chennai, where Alpha plans to expand. In spite of this, involving employees in building organisational talent is always a great tool to make people feel included and valued.

A hybrid approach of external and internal sourcing will work better for Alpha, and ensure that they do not put all their eggs in one basket, leaving a big gap to be filled later. A survey can also be carried out within the organisation asking them about their network, and the ability to refer people in Chennai and Kolkata. This will give them a good sense of how much they can rely on referrals alone for expansion.

While references from any trusted partner (internal or external, or associated parties) is a good option to consider, commencing the initiative from the employees is a good head start. Involving anyone associated with the company also has the risk of creating a conflict of interest. Hence, it is always advised that the hiring manager and HR not be covered under the benefit (financial or otherwise) of the

employee referral programme/policy.

Involving people from the start is always a good idea. As soon as the business and expansion plans are firmed up, the time is apt to announce the same inviting employees to be a partner in the growth journey. Doing a small town hall meeting to take the people through the company's growth plans and following it up by announcing the employee referral policy is a good approach. This gives them an insight into what's in it for them (financial rewards and option to work with their friends).

The town hall meeting can be followed by email communication, posters, desktop wallpapers/screensavers, etc., around the Referral Policy. They can also make announcements post the selection/joining of people who have been hired through the referral channel. Many organisations also share the amounts that they have disbursed to people as a part of the employee referral programme.

Rewards as a part of the employee referral policy is an important element to start with, especially for Alpha at this juncture. Companies like Google, Facebook, or Amazon have been able to create strong advocates through strong employer branding, high engaging work culture, and most of all, great assignments and people to work with, which provides an added incentive to refer more people to the company. It creates an attractive virtuous loop, and hence people refer even without much incentivisation or reward. However, for Alpha, it may be a smart move to provide instant gratification by rewarding their people for successful



referrals through cash (paid along with salary) or give gift vouchers for each successful referral. Alpha also needs to make sure that they start small, effective, and scalable, rather than going overboard from the start. A smart way to arrive at the reward amount can be knowing what the company would have incurred had they sourced the candidates via consultants, external job portals, etc., and share a part of it with the people. This helps the company save costs and also reward people for their contributions. **HC**

About the Author

Rohit Hasteer is the Group CHRO for Housing.com, Prop Tiger.com and Makaan.com. He has an experience of more than 20 years in the domain on Compensation Benefits, Talent Acquisition and Talent Management, Training & Development. He has worked with companies like CITIBANK, Make My Trip, Aviva Life Insurance and UT WorldWide. He takes keen interest in building Organisation culture and People Development. He is an MBA from IMT, Ghaziabad.

Absenteeism In Training: The Unturned Stones

Addressing the issue of absenteeism becomes imperative to ensure that the workforce is consistently engaged, thoroughly prepared, and suitably agile to fulfil their individual roles.

BY RINITA LASKAR

Over the past decade, Learning & Development (L&D) has emerged as a function that warrants a strong discourse within the human resources space. Today's talent managers are devoting much of their time to developing various forms of training programmes for the workplace. And rightly so, since L&D features among the top three reasons for retention in stay interviews. The minds behind an L&D programme would agree that delivering a workshop reflects only 15% of the job. It is the planning, nominations, selection of training partners, methods, logistics and material management, budgets, feedback, effectiveness measures, and consistent communication that collectively cement the success of these programmes.

Correspondingly, the biggest disappointment for professionals responsible for L&D is 'last-minute dropouts' or 'absenteeism'. During the planning stages of an L&D session, HR managers take several elements into consideration - the cost of workshops is usually calculated on the basis of the number of participants. Interactive activities, roleplays, and case studies embedded to foster participation are designed taking into consideration team sizes and breakout groups. Nominations are made keeping in mind the diversity of thoughts, functions, and the capabilities of individuals. Arguably, unpredictable absence triggers unfavourable repercussions on the outcome. Simply put, absenteeism 'disrupts' the quality, cost, and effectiveness of the programme.



“HR managers should zoom out and observe the bigger picture - if absenteeism is a pattern, it indicates a long overdue introspection into the process.”

While several organisations may be able to draw parallels on the above, each of them has a different way to deal with such a 'disruption'. The obvious starting point may be to question the individuals who dropped out of the workshop at the last minute. But, HR managers should zoom out and observe the bigger picture - if absenteeism is a pattern, it indicates a long overdue introspection into the process. The starting point to securing employee engagement would be to pose questions to themselves: -

- Are the participants viewing training as a mandate?
- Do they know why they were nominated?

- Are they attending the programmes just because they were nominated, or do they see it as a doorway towards a successful career journey?

There are several factors that come to play when addressing absenteeism and its direct impact on the efficiency of L&D activities. Some of the probable areas of review are mentioned below.

Maximising efficiency through planning and organising

The most common reason cited by the absentees is that they were not informed of the workshop in advance

or some other work took priority. Mindful planning of the L&D programmes and preparing participants is critical. Care must be taken to nominate only those people who are most suited for the programme. As employees often seek to learn in a non-threatening environment amidst like-minded peers, the focus should also be to bring in diversity of thoughts and experiences for maximum learning. The timing of the training programme should also be taken into consideration. Scheduling a session towards the end of the month will lead to 'no-shows' from the finance and sales departments, as impending targets and closures take precedence.

Garnering interest through timely communication

Just as recruiters market job openings and brand teams advertise their products, 'selling' the idea of an L&D programme or workshop to employees has today become a necessity. It is vital to give potential participants the visibility of what they can expect in the programme, and more importantly, what they may lose out on should they choose not to attend. Taking advantage of the organisation's communication channels, or working with the communications team to help expand beyond mere emailers is something that the L&D team must look into. Peer testimonials must be used as 'social proof' to convince them that the programme is valuable. Promoting the programme addresses the question of 'what's in it for me?', and the right tools deployed at the right time can be astonishingly persuasive.

Reviewing the relevance

How often do we review the relevance of the training offered or the content? Learning how to make courses relevant to an individual's day-to-day work, figuring out ways to overcome the concerns of delegates, and making training fit into your wider learning strategy, all make a big difference to whether a course fills in a flash or is desperately seeking attendees. Hence, a thorough

process of Training Need Analysis is in order.

The training options would be required to cater to the dynamic needs and diverse skillsets, age groups, learning modes, geographic presence, languages, etc., based on acceptability and effectiveness. Programmes would vary in terms of duration, frequency, and the level of difficulty. While some would need to be classroom-style and instructor-led, some would be online learning options, customised for the organisation or off-the-shelf from third party providers. Considering these factors can reduce absenteeism significantly.

Additionally, the training calendar for the year needs to be designed to provide solutions in both the core areas of learning as well as development. The complete value of

“The commitment and drive for learning initiatives from the leadership add tremendous value that positively cascades down the organisation. It influences managers to invest in the efforts, in turn improving attendance manifold.”

the function is achieved when equal importance is given to both these aspects through the 70:20:10 model -

- 70% - Constitutes learning from on-the-job experiences
- 20% - Comes from the relationships and feedback received from mentors, managers, peers, and subordinates
- 10% - Achieved from focused training

Ensuring participation through leadership intervention

This is by far the most important aspect for the success of a Learning & Development strategy. Successful leaders use Learning & Development



as a proactive instrument to design the people capabilities of the organisation. The commitment and drive for learning initiatives from the leadership add tremendous value that positively cascades down the organisation. It influences managers to invest in the efforts, in turn improving attendance manifold. Often, trainers encounter situations where the manager expects a participant to be available for telephone calls during a workshop. This is the biggest reason for partial attendance, and directly affects the focus and involvement of the participant with an obvious lack of implementation in the post-training phase. Having a leader introduce the objective of a programme for a few minutes is known to reduce absenteeism significantly.

By developing comprehensive, all-inclusive L&D programmes, HR managers define the learning culture within an organisation. Then, addressing the issue of absenteeism becomes imperative to ensure that the workforce is consistently engaged, thoroughly prepared, and suitably agile to fulfil their individual roles and also solve the toughest business challenges that lie ahead. **HC**

About the Author

Rinita Laskar is Director, Human Resources, Emerson India. She wields an experience of around fifteen years and has spent almost all her career days at Emerson India. Rinita has a Masters in Personnel Management from Pune University and an Executive MBA from Washington University.

To Give And To Take

Feedback and feedforward are growth interventions. And in the context of performance enhancement and the larger canvas of life, feedback and feedforward are sine qua non to unleash human potential.

BY DR. K N VISWANATHAM



Primarily, Feedback and feedforward are growth interventions. And in the context of performance enhancement and the larger canvas of life, feedback and feedforward are sine qua non to unleash human potential. A huge knowledge base has been created in the public domain, and a simple click on Google leads us to an arena of massive information on feedback and feedforward.

In order to survive and prosper in the contemporary volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world, it is cardinal to make feedback and feedforward available across all levels viz. individual, team, and unit within the organisation. Feedback and feedforward are essentially about three processes, viz. learning, developing, and changing for better & growth.

One of the major grey areas is that the managers are not habituated

to and trained sufficiently to provide performance assessments. That managers are afraid could be one part of the reason, and the other part could be that the managers never thought about the possibility of achieving this smoothly. Organisations invest quality time arguing over the systematic metrics to assess manager performance without paying adequate attention to process implementation.

The need for introspection

Managers need to introspect and question themselves on the relation and equation between the amount of effort involved from their end, and the actual work output. The correlation between effort and result is complex and ambiguous. Two-by-two matrices, balanced score cards, and accurate metrics often leave the managers clueless over their next

steps. Therefore, it is an irrefutable fact that managers need continuous feedback and feedforward. What happens as a part of the performance management system in the context of Indian organisations is highly obvious. Lack of positive spirit, sufficient knowledge base, inadequate emphasis on training in the area of feedback and feedforward are some of the root causes.

The Giver and the Taker

The Feedback and feedforward loop is a dynamic attending and listening process between two individuals (Giver and Taker). The Giver must always be gentle and demonstrate unconditional positive regard. Whereas, the Taker should demonstrate a growth mindset and suspend his sensitivities. Human beings on this planet, irrespective of their credentials, have huge king sized egos! Feedback and feedforward should not be an egodystonic (ego alien) process, implying that it should not generate distress and

“Two-by-two matrices, balanced score cards, and accurate metrics often leave the managers clueless over their next steps. Therefore, it is an irrefutable fact that managers need continuous feedback and feedforward”



dissonance in the Taker. Instead, feedback must create hope and optimism. Therefore, it is essential to realise that feedback and feedforward meetings are critical and crucial conversations, rather than mechanical. Adequate time must therefore be invested for feedback and feedforward than conducting the same in a hurried and haphazard manner. Feedback and feedforward is a performance improvement and enhancement mechanism, and as has been aptly stated by Bill Gates, "We all need people who will give us feedback, that's how we improve."

Doing away with the noise

Feedback from toxic managers generates noise in the human system, and such feedback will damage the Taker, which ultimately results in him not learning anything. Hence, the best way forward for all; HR Professionals, other employees, and organisations as a whole, is

exploring performance issues and concerns in a subtle way is also key to effective feedback. When feedback (focus on the past) is done diligently, feedforward (focus on the future) is intertwined in the process. While feedback is about the activity and performance done, feedforward is about what an individual could possibly do about the goals set, and what could be the possible obstacles that s/he can foresee. Past, present, and future should not be viewed as discrete activities, since they are continuous. The synergy between feedback and feedforward results in a positive connect between the lessons learnt in the past to the future performance and potential. When feedback is done properly, the Takers are likely to view it as a gift rather than a slap in the face.

Several managers and leaders manage feedback very poorly, and focus on what has gone wrong, which results in employees developing an aversion towards feedback. And the reality is that many managers dislike providing feedback, and view it as the harsh reality of their work life. When feedback is only a part of performance analysis, it results in a psychological paralysis with abnormal reactions. Hence, criticism, which is often viewed as a feedback mechanism, needs to be carried out in a very delicate and gentle way so that it does not devastate an individual's well-being. Managers must themselves be equipped over the distinction between criticism and feedback.

Feedback	Criticism
Descriptive mechanism	Interpretative connotation
Value- neutral	Judgemental
Has no agenda	Has an agenda
Provides multiple options to grow	Reduces options to grow
Growth oriented intervention	Control affirmation intervention

greater emphasis on learning programmes in the area of feedback and feedforward.

Applied Psychologists carry out performance interventions wherein they train managers to focus on the tone and relationship skills. Further,

Therefore, there is a compelling case to learn and master the art and science of feedback and feedforward for all employees, since it is a very important area. The following pointers are noteworthy:

- Feedback and feedforward are

integral aspects of behavioural science and one needs to consciously develop an understanding.

- Conceptual basics, theoretical underpinnings, applications, and the practice of feedback and feedforward for managers and leaders must be given importance in organisations.
- Feedback and feedforward have psychological connotations and one has to be extremely careful in drawing inferences and conclusions about employees.
- Positive regard, open mind, curiosity instinct, and warmth are the basic characteristics of the Givers of feedback and feedforward. Spiritual outlook, inspirational orientation, dialogue with optimism need to be demonstrated genuinely by both the Givers and the Takers of feedback and feedforward. The Takers must understand the frame of mind of the Giver, and display sensitivity towards the Giver instead of labelling him. Feedback and feedforward is not about bosses passing or failing their subordinates. It is rather about empowering followers.
- Feedback and feedforward should be a continuous process rather than a single event, and it should be viewed as maturation and growth rather than passing or failing.
- Sound knowledge and training must be imparted to the employees so that they remain suitably equipped in the field. 

About the Author

Dr. K N Vishwanatham is Senior Faculty, State Bank Institute of Leadership, Kolkata. He comes with an experience of twenty years in teaching, training, consulting, and research. Dr. Viswanatham has a Master's degree in Psychology from Andhra University, and, an M. Phil & Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from NIMHANS. He can be reached at consultdrv@gmail.com.



We are an IT Company operating from a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Haryana. One of our employees has requested for 'work from home' for a period of six months on account of his wife's ill health. Is it possible to entertain the request?

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, vide its notification dated March 7, 2019, permitted the employees of Information Technology (IT) and Information Technology enabled Services (ITeS) SEZ units to avail the facility of 'work from home' or a place outside the SEZ subject to the following conditions: -

- a) A regular employee of the Special Economic Zone unit, who has been issued with an identity card under Rule 70 (2) shall be authorised by the Special Economic Zone unit to undertake the work pertaining to that unit.
- b) The work to be performed by the employee permitted to 'work from home' shall be as per the services approved for the SEZ unit, and the work is related to a project of the SEZ.
- c) For the purpose of 'work from home', the SEZ unit shall provide laptop or desktop and secured connectivity (viz. Virtual Private Network, Virtual Desktop Infrastructure) to establish a connection between the employee and the work related to the project of the Special Economic unit.
- d) The SEZ unit shall ensure export

revenue of the resultant products or services to be accounted for by that unit to which the employee is tagged, and at no given point shall the 'work from home' involve the export services from outside the SEZ unit.

- e) Once the employee ceases to be a part of the project of the SEZ unit, the employee shall be untagged from the respective unit, and the unit shall surrender the I-Card to the respective officer who issued the same.

We are a company based out of Mumbai. We have an employee who filed the nomination under EPF (Employees' Provident Fund Scheme, 1952) and EPS (Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995) in favour of her father in the year 2011. She got married in the year 2015 under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955. Thereafter, she passed away in the year 2019. Please advise whether the father or the husband is entitled to the amount of EPF/ EPS?

Paragraph 61(3) of the Employees' Provident Funds Scheme, 1952, provides that upon marriage, the nomination made by an employee prior to his/her marriage is deemed to be invalid and a fresh nomination is required to be made. Therefore, the nomination made by the deceased employee in favour of her father prior to the marriage is invalid for the purposes of EPF and EPS.

We understand that there is no general nomination made by the deceased employee in favour of any

person with respect to the final dues, insurance, etc. to be paid by your company. In the absence of such nomination and on account of the fact that the nomination made by her under EPF & EPS also became invalid upon her marriage, the amount should be paid to the husband of the deceased. In this regard, it is pertinent to note the provisions of Section 16 of the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 provides that upon the death of a female Hindu who has died intestate (i.e. without a will), her property devolves upon her sons and daughters and the husband. The parents of the deceased woman (dying intestate) become entitled to the property only if the sons, daughters, husband, and the other heirs of the husband have predeceased the woman. 

About the Author

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.

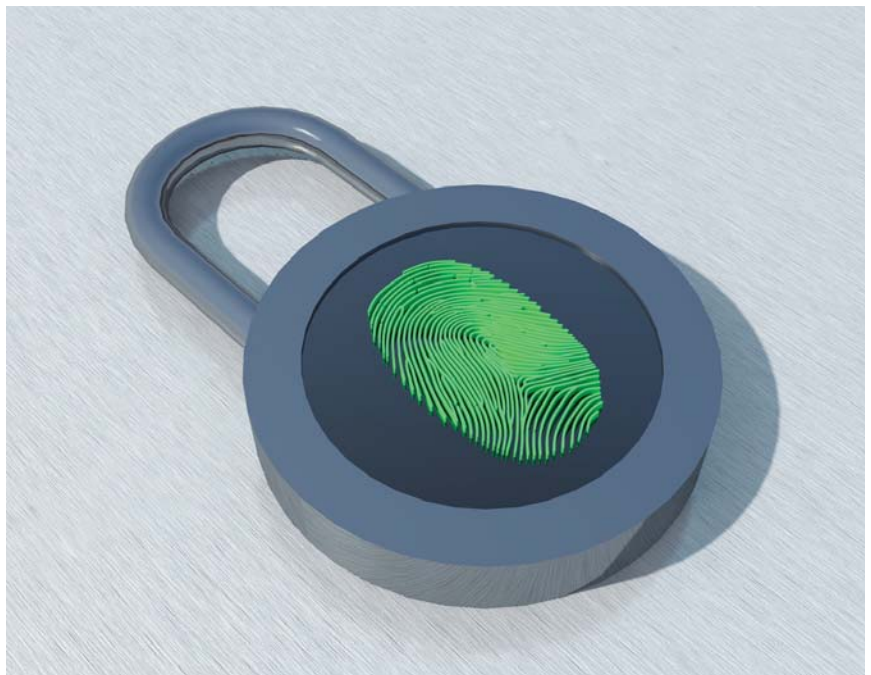
Does Illegal Appointment Qualify For Retrenchment?

BY K.V.SINGH AND NACHIKETA GOYAL

It is a commonly held belief that when an appointment is void ab initio, that is, invalid from the outset, the appointee would not be entitled to compensation provided by law on account of termination of service. For instance, if the appointment of a serving employee is found to be invalid, would the employer be required to follow due procedure for retrenchment while terminating his/her services?

For those who are not familiar with retrenchment, the same is defined under section 2(oo) of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 ("Act") as, "the termination of the service of a workman by an employer for any reason other than as a punishment inflicted by a disciplinary action, but does not include voluntary retirement of the workman; retirement of the workman on reaching the age of superannuation if the same is stated in the contract of employment between that of the employer and the employee; nonrenewal of contract of employment existing between the employer and the employee; and termination on grounds of continued illness."

In a recent judgment, the Supreme Court, in the matter of Bihar State Scheduled Caste Cooperative Development Ltd. & Anr. v. State of Bihar & Ors. (Civil Appeal Nos. 7340-7431/2013) observed that Section 25F of the Act is applicable even in cases of workmen terminated on the ground that their appointment was illegal. Section 25F of the Act deals with conditions precedent to retrenchment of workmen. According



to Section 25F of the Act, no workman employed in any industry, who has been in continuous service for not less than one year under an employer, shall be retrenched by that employer until -

- (a) The workman has been given one month's notice in writing indicating the reasons for retrenchment and the period of notice has expired, or the workman has been paid in lieu of such notice, wages for the period of the notice.
- (b) The workman has been paid, at the time of retrenchment, compensation equivalent to fifteen days' average pay for every completed year of continuous

service or any part thereof in excess of six months.

(c) Notice in the prescribed manner is served on the appropriate Government or such authority as may be specified by the appropriate Government by notification in the Official Gazette.

The judgment settles an important issue. In our view, it was not the intention that section 25F of the Act should be followed only if the appointment of the workman is valid. Validity or invalidity of the appointment has no correlation with applicability of section 25 of the Act, which provides for conditions to be met for retrenchment of an

employee, if he/she has completed a specified period of continuous service. Also, from a humanitarian perspective, if an employee has served an employer for a certain duration, the employee has done so assuming that in case the service is terminated, the procedure prescribed in law would be followed, and he or she will also have the compensation prescribed in law to enable him or her to meet his or her expenses until he or she finds another job or vocation. Hence, the employee should not be deprived of protective measures prescribed by law merely because the employee's appointment is found to be illegal.

The brief facts of the case are that certain workmen were appointed in 1991 by the Executive Officer/Administrator on a temporary basis in the Bihar State Scheduled Caste Corporation Ltd. ("Employer"). The services of the workmen was terminated by the Employer after continuous service of one year, and during that year, they had worked for more than 240 days. Their services were not confirmed despite their request since their employment was in violation of a circular (No. 526 dated February 9, 1989) issued by the Department of Co-operative, Government of Bihar. As per the above circular, a selection committee, headed by the members of the Board of Revenue, was to be constituted for selection and appointment to be made in any of the co-operative societies. The appointments, even though temporary in nature, were violative of the provisions of the circular. Therefore, the appointments were invalid.

The employees contended before the Labour Court that the retrenchment was illegal and they were entitled to reinstatement with full back wages. The Labour Court held that since the workmen had continuous service for a period of one year, their termination could be processed only after compliance with the procedures laid down under Section 25F of the Act, in consequence of which the retrenchment was illegal and liable to be set aside on grounds of being violative of Section 25F of the Act. Further, the Labour Court held that

full back wages could not be provided to the employees, but granted monetary relief equivalent to 3.33 years' salary, including the admissible allowances, on the basis of last pay and allowances drawn by the employees. The order was challenged by the employees as also the Employer before a single-judge bench of the Patna High Court, which referred it to a Division Bench. The Division Bench further referred it to a full bench of the Patna High Court.

The issue taken up by the full bench was whether termination of the services of an employee of whom the initial appointment was ruled to be void and non est would come within the scope of retrenchment as under Section 2(oo) of the Act, so as to compel the employer to comply with the provisions under Section 25F of the Act, merely because the employees had served continuously for a year. The full bench of Patna High Court held that such termination of service would not come within the scope of retrenchment. The Court observed that since the appointment itself was null and void, there was no requirement for issuance of termination orders in the first place. The Court further discussed Section 25H of the Act that is with respect to re-employment of retrenched workmen. The Court held that the question of re-employment could not be brought into the picture since the appointment of the workers were not valid in the first place. The Patna High Court held, "We are of the view that it cannot be stated that their termination of service is retrenchment and they are entitled to compensation. If their appointment itself is null and void, there is no necessity for issuing even a termination order and they cannot be reinstated in service also."

The Patna High Court held that termination on such grounds did not constitute retrenchment and held that the employees were not entitled to be reinstated with full back wages since their appointment itself was void. However, the High Court did not interfere with the decision of the Labour Court

awarding three and a half years' salary as compensation to the workmen.

Dissatisfied with the High Court's ruling on the refusal of recovery of compensation from the workmen, the management of the employer approached the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. It was contended that since the appointment of the employees was illegal in itself, Section 25F was not applicable. The appeal was rejected by the Supreme Court. The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India held that since the term 'invalid appointment' is not included in the exceptions under Section 2(oo) of the Act, clearly, Section 25F is applicable and retrenchment is rightly held to be illegal. The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India observed, "We are not able to accept the aforesaid submission as an invalid appointment is not covered in the Exceptions under section 2 (oo) of the ID Act. Thus, Section 25F of the ID Act is clearly applicable and is attracted..."

Consequently, the retrenchment has rightly been held to be illegal." 

About the Author

Nachiketa Goyal is a Senior Associate at Kochhar & Co. His practice areas include labour & employment, general corporate commercial, commercial litigation and arbitration and legal advisory work. Nachiketa was admitted to Bar Council of India in 2014 and is a member of Delhi Bar Council, Gurgaon District Bar Association and Delhi High Court Bar Association.

Augmenting Skills To Influence Recruitment

Students need tools that enable them to adapt, survive, and succeed in today's disruptive world. And institutes are bracing themselves to keep pace with these changes.

BY NILESH GAIKWAD

In her maiden budget speech, Nirmala Sitharaman, the Indian Finance Minister, laid significant emphasis on skill development. This comes as a welcome sign since academic learnings are hardly applicable in one's professional life. Companies are resorting to training the recruits, an unwanted investment in man-hours and money. The invasion of technology into our lives has, however, 'realigned' the professional arena. Today, companies are scouting for students who are skill-ready and adaptable to technology-enabled disruptions.

Colleges are mulling these changes and are modifying their curriculum to inculcate skilling among their students. New specialisations, keeping abreast with the technological acceptances have mushroomed in the last few years. Blockchain, Internet of Things, Big Data, AI, etc., are some of the most sought-after fields today, and these were non-existent five years ago. Institutions foresee a significant demand for these topics and are hence empowering students to be a step ahead. Even the legacy programmes like Marketing, HR, etc. are being upgraded in accordance with the changing dynamics of consumer requirements and technology.

The avenues for skill development can be classified as under: -

Gaining technical expertise: The notion that one has to acquire top grading in order to land a job is

falling apart. Alternatively, companies like to recruit students who have technical expertise. They are scouting for recruits with a focused mindset. In addition to clearing the exams, such students would pursue other avenues to gain more knowledge on the subject matter. Thus, collecting certifications during one's studies has become the norm. In fact, among the top institutions, it is a way to better one's profile in comparison to the rest of the class. On the other hand, companies are partnering with institutions to prepare specialised training programmes for their employees. These programmes are essential to keep these companies relevant, given the fast-paced changes in their industry. MOOCs and Online Courses are gaining rapid traction.

Investing in Behavioural readiness:

Students are generally unaware of the ground realities of various job profiles. E.g., a certain student might want to become a Marketing Manager, but may not really have the skillset to excel in marketing. In such cases, mock projects can help a student understand the ground realities. Institutes like EDHEC collaborate with many functional organisations to train their students in the finer qualities of various job profiles. The students work on real-life case studies offered by the companies, who roleplay as clients. Such an approach makes the students aware of the behavioural challenges within their roles, in

addition to the need of technical expertise.

Personal Branding: Today's students are trained to think of building a career rather than a job. It is a classic case of long-term vs short-term approach. This has put students on a path of personal branding instead of merely making ends meet. Colleges organise psychometric tests and interviews with career coaches to help students define their long-term goals. Alumni Associations of leading B-Schools mentor the Alumni in career mapping even several years after they have graduated.

The crux of the matter is that students need tools that enable them to adapt, survive, and succeed in today's disruptive world. And institutes are bracing themselves to keep pace with these changes. Traditional teaching has given way to experiential learning. Such students who work towards an extended self-development plan will succeed! 

About the Author

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Nurturing Giants Internally

BY CHANDAN CHATTARAJ

Culture is a nurturing habitat for success. And come rain or hay, an organisation that propagates the right kind of culture top-down is indeed blessed with good fortune.

David Ogilvy spoke about hiring giants to become a company of giants. While this phrase has never rung truer than it does today, I do believe in the power of not only hiring giants, but also in nurturing and growing them internally. Any organisation stands on two pillars - people and profit. While a strong focus on business strategy and the bottom line is imperative, culture is a nurturing habitat for success. And come rain or hay, an organisation that propagates the right kind of culture top-down is indeed blessed with good fortune.

Policies for the people, of the people, by the people

I have seen life as a leader in the Human Resources and People Practices

space - from the Tatas to Jubilant, and from the Oberois to Aircel. What I have noticed in the last 30 plus years of my experience is that policies evolve to cater to a diverse employee base, both geographically and in terms of age. Organisations such as the Tatas adopted and implemented the progressive concept of paternity leave very early on. Jubilant, on the other hand, constantly works on talent management and succession planning. At Aircel, we had an open-door policy, and the Oberois are known for their employee friendly culture.

Best Talent Management Practices

- **The Tatas:** Adopted and implemented the progressive concept of paternity leave very early on
- **Jubilant:** constantly works on talent management and succession planning
- **Aircel:** Maintained an open-door policy
- **The Oberois:** Have always been known for their employee-friendly culture

When I say 'growing a giant' what I essentially mean is building a high-

“As with every other sector and industry, human resources as a function is playing catch-up with technology, millennials, the start-up culture, and the continuously evolving market dynamics.”

performance culture through policies that encourage employees to not only work hard for remuneration, but also feel motivated to get out of bed and come to work every day. Imagine, if each person really took ownership of the business, there will not be one, but a hundred CEOs in each organisation.

Building a high-performance culture

Sustained business success requires high-performing organisations. The only way for an organisation to classify in that category is to build a high-performance culture. The question is, how?

Talent Management: While acquiring great talent is of course necessary, talent management is the key to maintaining the said talent. Organisations with a focus on talent management produce more engaged, skilled, and productive employees. What makes an individual stay in an organisation is not only the motivation of a handsome salary and an attractive appraisal, but also professional and personal development. A unified talent management strategy helps build and nurture talent through an organisational as also an individual growth perspective.

Manage culture, do not let it manage you: In organisations that are spread across the world, cultural differences gain critical importance. Organisational culture transcends boundaries. An excellent example of this would be Google. With offices in

almost every country in the world, the brand has been able to create a culture that signifies a sense of ownership and belonging. No matter the area, a Google employee, from the CEO to an executive, is a 'Googler'. This is what that makes Google, for a lot of people, a 'dream company' to work for. Geographical differences aside, when people from different states and countries come together to belong, it implies that the company has truly succeeded in creating and managing a unified culture. And it is this culture that eventually leads to high performing organisations.

From a facilitator to business partner: Today, the function of human resources is connected with every other function in an organisation. It is the very wheel around which the spindles rotate. HR has evolved and continues to evolve from being merely a facilitator for hiring to being a strategic business partner. It even defines the leadership style in an organisation. As with every other sector and industry, human resources as a function is playing catch-up with technology, millennials, the start-up culture, and the continuously evolving market dynamics. It is only when brands embrace this shift that the high-performance culture I have been raving about will come to be.

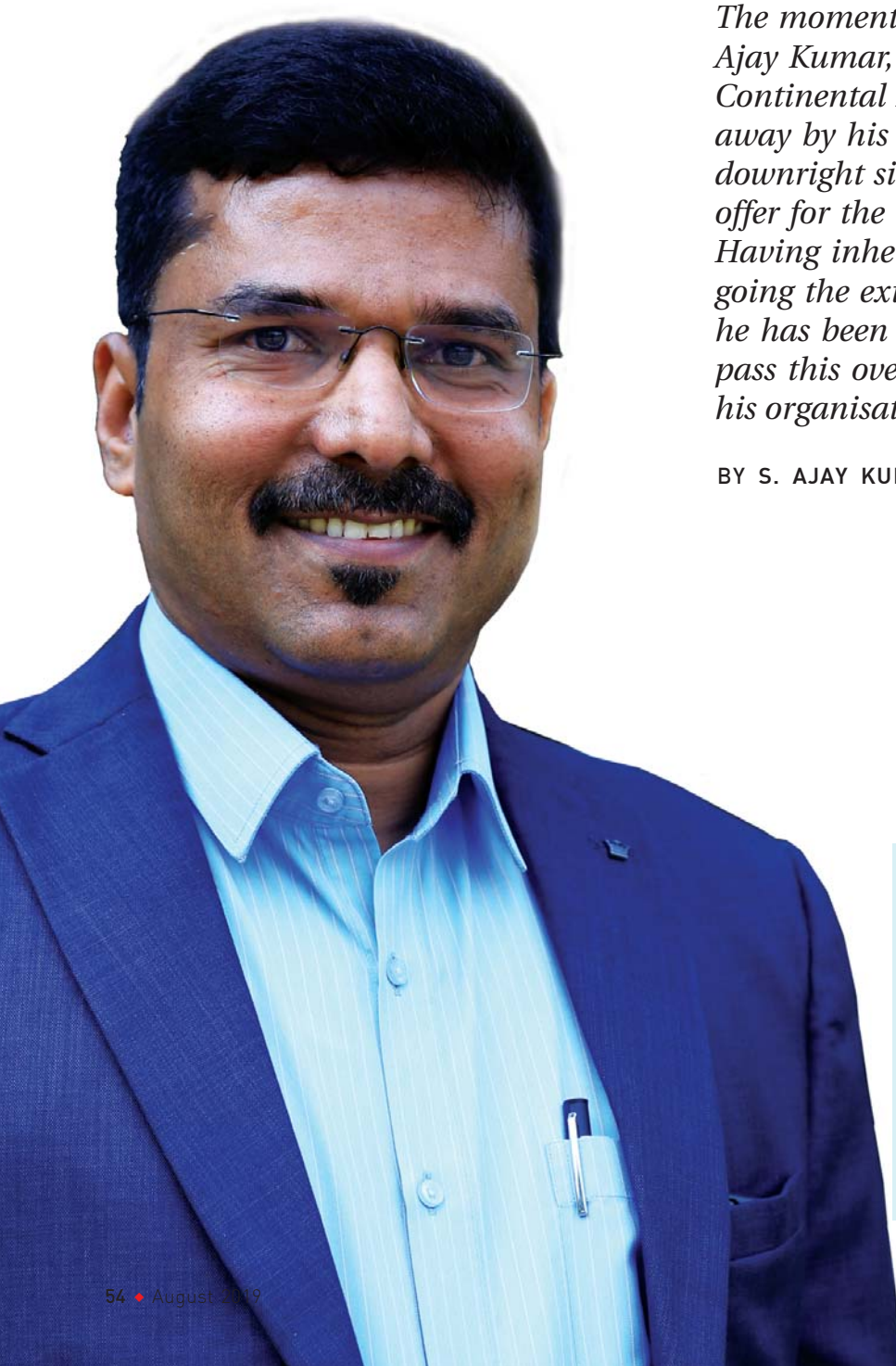
As the custodian of the organisation and its people, HR needs to not only hire giants but also grow them internally, using all possible tools at their disposal. Everything from mentorship, to succession planning, to career development, to L&D et al. - all the talent management tools - need to be deployed, along with a deep understanding of human behaviour and voila! We have the perfect recipe for building a high-performance culture. What more do we need as an organisation? 

About the Author

Chandan Chattaraj is President - Human Resources (India & Global), Uflex Limited. He has an enriching experience 30 years particularly in the field of Human Resources. Prior to Uflex, he worked with several reputed organisations such as Aircel and The Oberoi Group. Chandan is a Post Graduate in Industrial Relations & Personnel Management from XISS, Ranchi.



A Reflection Of Serenity



The moment you come face to face with Ajay Kumar, Country HR Head, Continental AG, you are simply swept away by his utmost modesty and the downright simplistic solutions he has on offer for the most complex of problems. Having inherited an orientation and going the extra mile every time to excel, he has been making earnest efforts to pass this over to the entire population in his organisation.

BY S. AJAY KUMAR

IN BRIEF

Name	: Ajay Kumar
Age	: Always young!
Title	: Country HR Head
Organisation	: Continental AG
Experience	: Relating with human talents
Years in HR	: 25 Years
Education	: Graduate in Economics & Statistics, Post Graduate in Personnel Management

How do you look back at the professional journey traversed thus far? Please share a few of the enriching experiences that you have come across.

The last two decades have witnessed disruptive changes in the field of HR. Thus far, I have had the opportunity to work with different businesses in different cities, varied cultures, and generations. And to be a part of this revolutionary transformation and contribute to the changes in various organisations with which I have worked has indeed been an exciting experience. From a broad perspective, I can summarise the changes as follows:

- **Communication:** A transition from "restricted access to information" to "information at will." Positioning communication to employees from a luxury to a hygiene factor.
- **Selection and hiring:** A changeover from traditional assessments to a multidimensional view of talent - increasing focus to behavioural traits rather than job-specific functional competencies. Organisations now realise that an

Rapid Fire

Favourite Quote: "Take pride in how far you have come, have faith in how far you can go."

Leadership style: Transformational while being inclusive

Current Professional Goal: To reflect on my learnings and share them with others

Favourite Book: Too many!

Favourite Movie: Taare Zameen Par

Favourite Music Artist: A.R. Rahman

Life is...? Good

Family is... A source of all inspiration and a sense of purpose

I strongly believe in.... Self

The most important thing I do on Sunday.... To live it without a pre-fixed schedule

I deal with setbacks by... Telling myself, 'there is a win in every loss too.' I have learnt the most from setbacks rather than wins.

3 Things I never leave home without... My cell phone, my sense of humour, and a passion to win

Up, Close and Personal

What inspired you to steer your career towards HR?

Ever since my childhood, I wanted to be a teacher who commands the respect of students and society. Eventually, this preference got converted into developing talent through people management in business.

How do you like to spend your free time?

I spend a good amount of my free time on staying fit through long-distance runs, apart from indoor sports. I also find time to engage in reverse mentoring with my kids, and I am amazed at their curiosity and elasticity in thinking every time.

Please share some of your experiences of travelling to different places. What have you gained from these experiences?

I had the opportunity to travel extensively to European countries. Every trip offers so much learning in terms of culture, ecosystem enablers, and differentiators that make social systems mature. My special interest in history makes me visit museums and places of historical importance which help me to appreciate the old versus the modern that prevails on this planet.

What was your learning from B-School?

While HR as a function is an art in the hands of the right

professionals, it has a strong element of science as well. It is very similar to the auto-translation that occurs in our brain while conversing in a less familiar language. Our mind travels to B-School learnings when faced with situations that require a balancing act between science and art. Furthermore, every opportunity to connect with peers from B-School breeds positive vibes and pride about the journey that has been covered so far.

Has someone from your family deeply inspired your values and growth as a human being?

I belong to a fairly well-off business family where achievement orientation and the habit of 'go-the-extra-mile-each-time' is the recipe for success. Over time, I inherited additional values from the ecosystem, but these were built over the foundations from my formative years, which remain a game-changer.

Who would you credit in your life as a great influence in shaping the man that you are today?

I would credit my family for being excessively tolerant and supportive to my habit of 'moving the goal post' every time. I would also credit it to my personal drivers - Self belief, hard work, looking for opportunities in difficulties, rather than the other way around.

HR Perspectives

Some gaps that HR Organisations need to bridge

- A sense of purpose from a business perspective
- An entrepreneurial mindset (with a focus on the future)
- Good business story-telling techniques: "communicate to connect"
- Hiding behind policies in the name of internal parity, rather than engaging with individual employees to make bold choices

Common errors companies commit while designing engagement practices

- Lack of relevance (one-size-fits-all practices)
- Decentralised way of thinking and acting
- Sustainability

inappropriate attitude is a flat tyre with which the business can go nowhere. The transition from paperwork to automation, and so on, the list is endless.

- **Benefits:** A simplified benefits structure, lean packages, merit-based (linked to delivered contributions) rather than tenure-linked. Additional focus towards non monetary benefits such as health, insurance, flexibility, vacation, flexible workplaces, etc. are trends that have outplaced the conventional packaging used to cover the direct salary and retiral benefits. Innovation shall prevail in offering a Total Rewards programme.
- **Discipline:** Redefined to go beyond the rule books, industrial relations to employee relations, compliance to engagement, and top-down monitoring to self restraint.
- **Sense of Purpose:** Redefined the existential purpose for HR in organisations to be responsible for managing the lifecycle of talent and leveraging it for business success. The function was restructured in terms of Centres of Expertise, besides partnering with business and operational topics. HR operations are almost completely automated and delivered through outsourced partners at a lower cost and higher efficiency,

reinforcing the principle that anything that can be automated will be automated.

- **Nature of employment:** No one in the corporate world would have ever imagined that life in the office would evolve in the manner it has. The basic structure and culture of workplaces has transformed significantly. Methods and methodologies of workplace engagement, organisational structure, workplace relationships, career anchors, performance, rewards, etc. have changed, leading to a great deal of transformation. The underlying difference being that both employees and employers are no longer a part of a lifelong employment relationship, rather the employability is based on current needs.
- **Managers:** The role of a manager has altered from being a supervisor to a mentor or a coach to encourage efforts, reward results, and celebrate successes. This has exerted pressure on the managerial staff to be always available and accessible to the team and continuously sharpen their skills to gain acceptance. With the advent of social media (internal or external), feedback on managers is shared at a faster rate than managers' feedback on employees - the current generation of employees often dare to share their feedback publicly to create a sense of urgency for managers to adopt role model behaviour.

Buzzer Round

A mysterious benefactor wrote you a check for 1,00,00,000 and said, "Help me solve a problem! What would you say?"

Every problem has a cost, every solution has a cost - in business, money can solve several problems, but it can create problems too!

What's the one thing you're deeply proud of but would never put on your resume?

That I am the face and voice of India in a global corporation.

What's the one dream that you've tucked away for the moment?

To climb Mt. Everest

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

My way of dealing with work-life balance

When was the last time you astonished yourself?

When I rode 380 KM non-stop on my bike recently.

What do you value most: free time, recognition, or money?

Recognition. Of course, if you have time in your favour, everything is possible!

Are you living your life purpose or still searching?

I am surely living my life's purpose, yet, in parallel, I continue to explore life's infinite opportunities.

How has working across industries made your professional journey more interesting?

I have had the opportunity to work with service providers in Pharma, Engineering, R&D, and IT. Each of these sectors provided me with a repository of opportunities to learn and be groomed for what lies ahead. Every industry has a diverse climate, but for HR, the constant focus is talent management, which brings infinite elasticity in terms of potential and the ability to contribute.

How different have the two experiences been for you - setting up HR from the scratch in an organisation, to managing well-established HR frameworks?

I have worked with organisations in a

Learning Points

- Do not let your job description confine you
- It is not my job to do your job
- When it comes to learning, steer from the driver's seat
- Take the initiative to make your initiatives a success
- Passion to win at work and play
- Real learning comes from mistakes. Using
#ReflectiveLearning to
#FailForward

(# - From Ajay Kumar's LinkedIn Page)

nascent stage in terms of maturity in people practices, as well as those with established practices. However, I am yet to work with or hear of an organisation where everything is set and defined. Rapid changes in the current workforce make it increasingly difficult to gauge and fulfil aspirations. Career anchors and motivators are changing at the speed of light. Hence, a condition such as an established HR management is non-existent. In fact, the higher the level of establishment, the greater the need to have agility in people practices. This calls for a startup mindset irrespective of the longevity in business. Little wonder that we at Continental are delighted to call ourselves a 149-year-old startup!

Having been long associated with the Automotive sector, what is your understanding of the business, and how big a role does HR play in this sector? Were there any sector-specific challenges and opportunities you experienced?

The automotive sector is one of the most interesting sectors today, especially in India. India is adopting several new policies related to safety and emissions, and there is considerable focus on the adoption of electric vehicles as well.

Mobility (previously called Automotive) is an evergreen business sector - since mobility is a basic requirement for mankind. It is a highly competitive business with unexpected competition entering at short or no notice, and disrupting the entire pattern of doing and offering business solutions. Boundaryless thinking is essential in retaining customer delight as every buyer is seeking high-end features for a safe, economical, and luxurious experience with their vehicle. Therefore, the talent pool engaged should bring and practice curiosity, connect with the bigger picture, ensure constant benchmarking, and have a solution mindset.

Who have been your figures of inspiration during the professional journey? What are some of the values and ideologies with regard to which you think leaders should definitely walk the talk to win

stakeholder confidence?

Figure of inspiration: Sachin Tendulkar for his high level of commitment, passion for winning, consistency, curiosity to learn, discipline, humility, and flexibility. Sachin made cricket a household phenomenon in India through sheer hard work and made India proud by raising the tricolour at the international level on innumerable occasions.

Common values leaders must display: Humility, future focus, intellectual curiosity, willingness to 'let go', inclusivity, emotional connect with the situation and with the affected people, and micro- sensing instead of micro-managing.

"Best HR practices are built on a futuristic vision." What are your views on the same, and how have you practised this during your stint with various organisations?

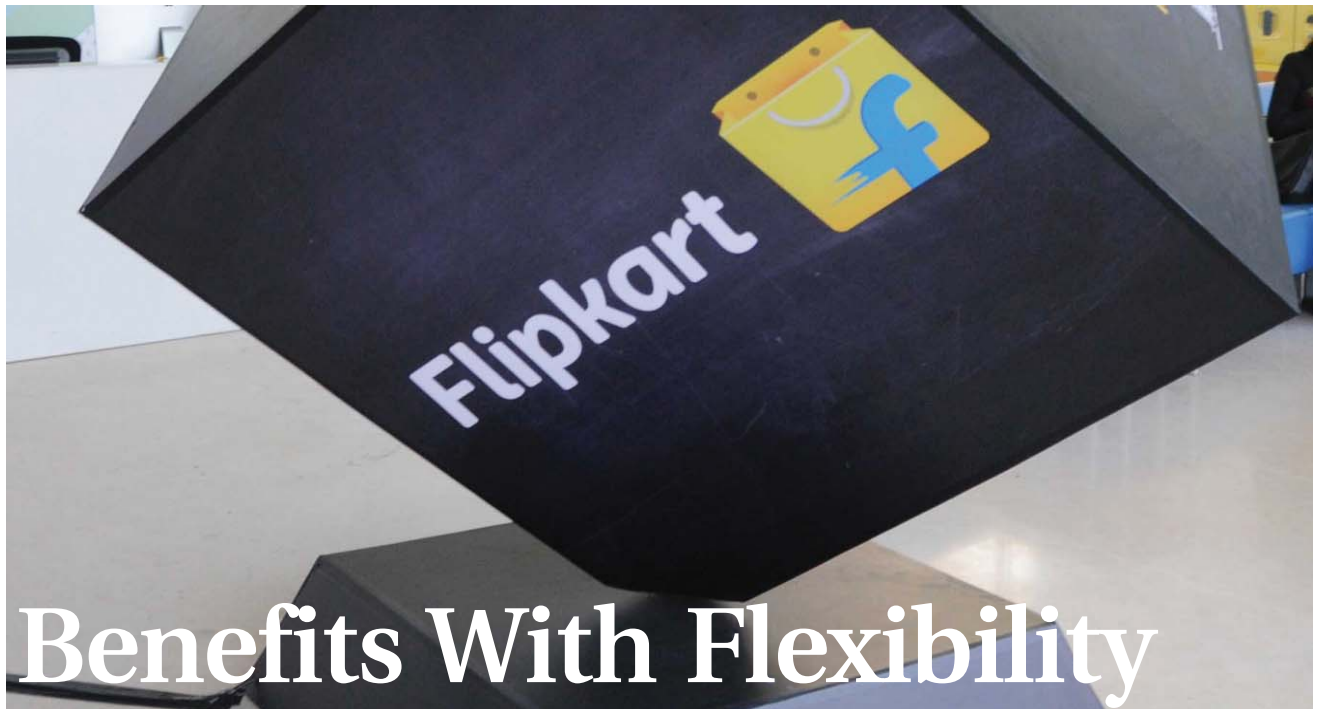
There is a fundamental variance between HR transactions and HR solutions. Transactional activities are managed with a short-term or instant service mindset, while HR solutions have a mid to long-term perspective. Any HR practice that one wants to pursue should be in line with the organisational business strategy to ensure business sense, people aspirations to ensure credibility, and cost implications to ensure affordability and sustainability.

As a part of the Continental family, what will be your focus for 2019? What are the organisational goals that have been set by you?

The focus is to establish HR as a strong business enabler in a partnership model rather than restricting it to be a support function. Secondly, to enable the HR organisation to drive our global vision to be the most progressive and attractive employer in our industry in India, and convert each employee to be a brand ambassador of the organisation to leverage the multiplier effect and its impact. Further, increasing HR competence, improving the employee experience design, enhancing engagement levels through a culture of continuous feedback, and finally, enabling all the people managers to be a change agent. 

Awards and Accolades

- Leadership in HR award by Dun & Bradstreet in 2015
- HR Leadership Excellence Award from Economic Times in 2016



Benefits With Flexibility

Flipkart has brought in an exciting benefit for its employees. Titled 'The FlexBen 2019', the scheme provides inclusive benefits for its distinct workforce. Flipkart is going through a transformational phase from one-size-fits-all to a flexible approach. And this step has been adapted following an engagement survey to understand employees' perspectives. The company is driving home the message that satisfying its employees is its ideology, with the belief that if the employees are content, it ultimately reflects on the business, and helps create a healthy working environment.

FlexBen will provide employees with the freedom to select their own benefit plan, acknowledging their dynamic needs and covering non-insurance and insurance benefits. This will also emphasise on the well-being and health policies for the employees. A recent study has highlighted that 50% of the employees feel that the benefits and policies of the company help in retaining the workforce.

Smriti Krishna Singh, Chief Human Resource Officer, Flipkart, said, "We know that our success as a company depends on the success and satisfaction of our employees. We recognise the fact that today's workforce is diverse and can have varied personal and professional needs. We have recently introduced the FlexBen programme which is specifically

crafted based on the feedback from our employees. The programme will offer greater flexibility and choice in selecting and funding employee benefits, allowing them to customise their benefits package based on their individual needs." She adds, "The FlexBen programme is universal and inclusive as it provides benefits coverage equally to all employees. This plan will provide coverage for LGBT couples, choice of additional childcare, parent care coverage, gender reassignment surgery, mental well being, surrogacy, and more options for single employees. Our FlexBen programme is designed to give each employee the freedom of choice and is another step forward in creating a diverse and inclusive workplace."

The scheme will provide a wide range of choices for distinct needs. Flexible plans will help employees to opt for packages as per their needs, aiding them to lead balanced personal and professional lives. This will lead to happy and content employees, eventually making them more productive, boost business, and enhance healthy working relationships and environment. Initiatives such as these will keep the workforce joyous, help retain the employees, increase goodwill in the market, and entice people to join the organisation. An environment that nurtures, motivates, and instils confidence in an individual brings out the best in them. 

404: Mistakes A Trump Card Against AI

We need to be cognisant of the fact that AI will never be able to match the human emotional connect and the errors. Committing mistakes is our trump card.

BY PROF. RAUL VILLAMARIN RODRIGUEZ

How many ones do you count? And how many twos? What about the nines?

You might have counted the numbers twice, or even thrice, just to crosscheck that you got the right count. The same would be the case if I were to ask you what you had for breakfast last Monday! There are various reasons due to which humans classify information in sectors and shelves, differentiating relevant and irrelevant data in order to ensure the preservation of the "fittest" details.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) on the other hand, can handle tremendous amounts of information that remains unmatched in speed or accuracy. Hence, AI could be seen as an enabler to humans when it comes to reducing administrative and clerical tasks. However, it is being claimed by many that machines are here to replace us and take away our jobs.

As a part of my PhD thesis, based on the influence of AI on HRM, I surveyed 147 people in Thane, and 253 in the metropolitan city of Mumbai, all on full-time employment. In general terms, 82% believe AI will surely substitute them in the coming years. But before arriving at a conclusion, and reassuring your apocalyptic beliefs, we need to be cognisant of the fact that AI will never be able to match the human emotional connect and the errors. Yes, you have read it

right. Committing mistakes is our trump card.

Human mistakes and "mistaken" discoveries

The human brain can be forgetful, imprecise, and distracted, giving us the chance to make mistakes, leading to unthinkable innovative discoveries that often take human existence to new heights. For instance, the "discovery of America" by Columbus, Penicillin by Fleming, or the unexpected discovery that Viagra - understanding that sildenafil originally developed by Pfizer for the treatment of hypertension (high blood pressure) and angina pectoris (chest pain due to a heart ailment) - could lead to a phallus.

The list of "mistaken" discoveries may be endless, but the essence of understanding as to why error is our salvation tool is in the fact that AI can achieve perfection, while the human brain cannot.

Beyond the pursuit of perfection

As has been said by Henning Beck, the German Neuroscientist, "silicon computer brains always follow the rules. They are unable to skip them because they lack the ability to improvise. There lies its weakness, and also our greatness. Computers learn, we understand."

Being mistaken has led us to adapt to changes without crashing, hence developing the most essential human characteristic - creativity. An AI-led mission to discover America in the 1400s would probably have been disastrous. It would have valued the risks of a trip to the unknown, understood the need of a diaphanous map, and built an unsinkable ship. "Doing something" with mistakes has much more value than the pursuit of perfection. The latest tech advancements assure AI will be able to understand and even resemble human emotions in the near future, but we need to be aware of a basic concept - no one can comprehend humans like humans do. 

About the Author

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



Finding The Right Fit

An increased demand for specialised skillsets, and the use of sophisticated Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools has enhanced the cost of talent hunt. The demand has also led to the creation of multiple opportunities for talent with niche skillsets who are undecided over their next move. Human Capital interacted with professionals in the HR space to get an understanding of the Talent Acquisition process in today's digital age.

BY S. AJAY KUMAR

In a digital economy, organisations are finding it increasingly difficult to access talent with specific skillsets, and are hence exceeding their hiring costs by nearly 20 percent. Do you believe that organisations still need to remain focused on digitisation when it comes to talent acquisition?

VIVIAN ALFRED: With the advent of technologies - ranging from cloud computing to Artificial Intelligence (AI) - digitisation is being viewed as a valuable differentiator to businesses, lending them a competitive edge. To help businesses win, it is imperative for business partners like HR and

Finance to also lend value through appropriate technological tools - both at the back-end and the front-end. Recruitment solutions, like Success Factors and Taleo, largely aid in automating the workflow to help reduce the hiring time and streamline the Recruitment function.

Advanced AI technologies save time for the recruiters by automating high-volume tasks. Manually screening resumes and scheduling interviews still remain that aspect of recruiting that consumes a lot of time, since the CVs received are not at par with the Job Descriptions (JDs) of the open positions. So, the best AI platforms

Our Expert Panel



Vivian Alfred S is the Vice President- Human Resources, Endress+Hauser India Pvt. Ltd. Vivian is a seasoned HR professional who has been building sustainable organizational capabilities to deliver business results for around 13 years in different industries and cultures. He is also a Neuro Linguistic Programme Master Practitioner, Success Behaviour Coach and a researcher in Positive Psychology.



Arif Khan is the Director of Human Resources India, Hyatt Hotels and Resorts. A seasoned HR professional with over a decade of experience, he joined the Hyatt family in 2017. He was previously associated with Berggruen Holdings, and The Taj Group of Hotels, India and has led the HR function in various hotels in India and abroad. Arif holds a Master in Business Administration from the University of Rajasthan, India.



Mohan Sitharam is the Chief Human Resources Officer, Subex. He has nearly two decades of global HR experience in leading human resources and organisational development initiatives aligned to strategic business results. He has worked in Mindtree, HCL, Mphasis, and ANZ. Mohan holds Senior Professional in HR (SPHR) and Global Professional in HR (GPHR) certifications from the HR Certification Institute, Virginia, US.



Devika Thorat is the Manager- Human Resources, IDEaS Revenue Solutions. She is responsible for heading the Talent Acquisition for the company and also leads initiatives for college connect programmes and placements. She has previously worked in the TMI Network, CIGNA Healthcare, IKON Office Solutions and Unison Software Consultancy. Devika has a Bachelor's degree in Commerce and a Master's in Computer Management from Bharati Vidyapeeth.



Abha Nair is Vice President - People, Spykar Lifestyles Pvt. Ltd. She is an accomplished HR professional with an experience of more than 18 years. She has worked in organisations such as IndusInd Bank, TNT India Ltd. and Essar. Abha is the Essar Global Award Winner for " Make it happen" in 2015.

can help businesses to improve the efficiency of recruiters by objectively assessing the skill sets and the candidates' ability; through intelligent screening, chatbots, and even digitised interviewing. This will only help the recruiters to think strategically towards a proactive talent acquisition approach rather than reactively filling up the roles. Furthermore, digitisation only aids the hiring managers to measure the quality of hire by way of using accurate data indicators.

ARIF KHAN: Yes, digitisation of the talent acquisition process can be seen as the way forward. Digitisation has played a massive role in the transformation of the talent recruitment process in the last few years. Organisations need to keep themselves updated with the changing recruitment processes, and

its implications on the business, their talent acquisition possibilities, and their reputation amongst the job seekers. Company strategies should be updated to take all these into account, and it must be ensured that they are geared towards welcoming the future of work. Digital hiring is eventually going to provide employers with choices and more information, and it will bring in more justification to the decision to hire or join the company.

While technology plays a key role in digital transformation, what remains unchanged is the integrity of the people, processes, and culture, along with priorities to have a measurable business impact. In order for the business to succeed, HR as a function must evolve to the next level and embrace a

transformational agenda, aligned with business goals. As we navigate the dynamic challenges of continual disruption all around us, it is also the right time to tap the infinite, intrinsic opportunities within. Sustaining employee morale through inspiring communication, people-centric processes, and a purpose driven approach will be vital to achieving the pursuit of excellence.

MOHAN SITHARAM: In my opinion, digitisation is actually improving access to talent because of the multiple avenues available today for interaction. This, in turn, is assisting organisations in making informed decisions. Implementation of technology has an initial investment. However, technology brings in efficiency and cost advantage, and its ROI gets realised sooner or later. Most of the start-ups in the HR



space are Recruitech. Technology has a huge scope to operate in high-volume and complex hiring. Technology advancements like AI, Machine Learning (ML), and RPA make time-consuming, labour intensive activities in talent acquisition more efficient. E.g., many administrative tasks around recruitment like pipelining candidates, sifting resumes for a skillset match, capturing data, transferring data from one application to another, processing documents, auto texting and scheduling capabilities, video interviews, etc., can easily be addressed through RPA. The bottom-line is, companies cannot shy away from digitisation in the recruitment process; they need to assess the level of digitisation they are willing to embrace, keeping complexity and budget in mind.

DEVIKA THORAT: Higher hiring cost should not be a cause for concern for organisations, especially with ongoing 'War for Talent'. It can only get worse, as talent acquisition will have to tap into various sources to find the right hire. The Talent Acquisition team needs to leverage technology to source, attract, assess, select, and hire the right candidates for open positions. In today's economy, making bad hires does not remain a viable option. Hence, companies need to invest time and money to attract, evaluate, and hire candidates with specific skillsets to gain a competitive advantage. You would want to be sure you are hiring someone who will fit in with your company culture, produce great work, and help in the growth of the business. Through information available on social media, recruiters and managers are able to find more about the candidates and their suitability for the role and organisation.

I do believe that organisations should stay invested in digitisation. Higher costs incurred at the time of hire to find the right candidate at the right time will eventually be offset with the candidate being on the job and proving to be productive. This is ultimately bound to have an impact on the bottom



Source: blog.tritonverify.com

line. Companies who lack innovation will lose out on attracting the best talent. Digital hiring is going to help employers tap a larger talent pool, provide more information about the candidate, thus leading the organisation in making the right hire.

ABHA NAIR: The focus on Digital Agenda will remain prime as the talent search engine needs to be aligned with the talent group who are members of this space. Even if it increases hiring costs, it impacts the overall efficiency and real business results, which nullifies the cost incurred. The world is going digital as it has given proven results, specifically in Talent Acquisition, where it helps you connect to a better and a bigger audience as technology links all your modes of acquisition, and helps you centralise the whole system. Thus, it functions to save precious time, and also adds quality and value to the entire exercise.

- (i) **Abundance of information has made it harder for candidates to choose the right employer.**
- (ii) **Ease of applying for jobs has**

led to delayed responses from employers, and

- (iii) **Demand for talent indicates increased opportunities, thus making candidates regret their decision to accept offers.**

As an HR person, how do you strike the right balance to ensure that the management, the candidate, and also the business are in a win-win situation?

VIVIAN ALFRED: With the large pool of available talent and the increased demand pool, ensuring the right candidates on the right job with the appropriate culture connect is more a need than a luxury in today's talent era. Apt talent acquisition will only lead to quality talent retention, and thus to the growth trajectory of a future-oriented organisation. Similar to a family thriving on its values, and looming over all the external and internal challenges, an organisation's core values helps it to thrive in the toughest of situations. HR has donned the role of a key business partner, providing strategic direction to the CEO and the Board.

Hence, it has become significantly important to get talent that can imbibe the values of the organisation and instil them into the organisational cultural framework. The 3Cs - Competence, Culture, and Commitment form the crux of any candidate's fitment to a role and the organisation. While competence plays a major role in the job fitment of a candidate, the drivers that influence a sustainable business and long-term vision accomplishment are still fixated on "Commitment" and "Culture." And one without the other can be equated to a horse missing one of its limbs. Therefore, HR must help nurture talent which can be synchronised with the culture of the organisation. Deploying the right psychometric tools or culture fitment tests will enable the HR professionals to create an engaged workforce, enhanced performance, reduced attrition, and ultimately promote a

sense of well-being for the entire organisation.

ARIF KHAN: The existence of these factors is undeniable. I believe that when one has the purpose of executing or connecting, they are better motivated and focused. Identifying candidates that connect to the organisation's core purpose, culture, and values is the key. This will not only ensure synergies, but will also keep the employees motivated towards achieving the end business result while following the organisation's philosophy.

Hyatt Talent Philosophy, 'When our colleagues are their best, our business succeeds' underscores the importance of our purpose and colleagues at their best, engaging in work in a meaningful way and driving business outcomes. Our search for talent has evolved and is guided by the belief that hiring individuals with tremendous passion about caring for others will produce

better results rather than simply focusing on prior experience.

Our career website is well-modernised, creating a clean, intuitive, and responsive design that works on any mobile device and browser. This implies that our potential hires have the appropriate information to take a measured decision for choosing Hyatt. We feel that offering insight into our culture, purpose, and values allows job seekers to determine if we are a good fit, thus eliminating the chance of regretting their decision. When we provide a candidate an experience that reflects our purpose and culture, we invest time and resources to develop them with the intention to create individualised opportunities and career growth. Thus, it is a win-win situation for the organisation, candidate, and the business!

MOHAN SITHARAM: Information can never be abundant if it is

7 NEW INSIGHTS ON TALENT ACQUISITION

38% believe the top hiring challenge is losing promising candidates during the process



A positive candidate experience results in 38% higher job offer acceptance



Candidates accept offers from competitors with a faster talent acquisition process



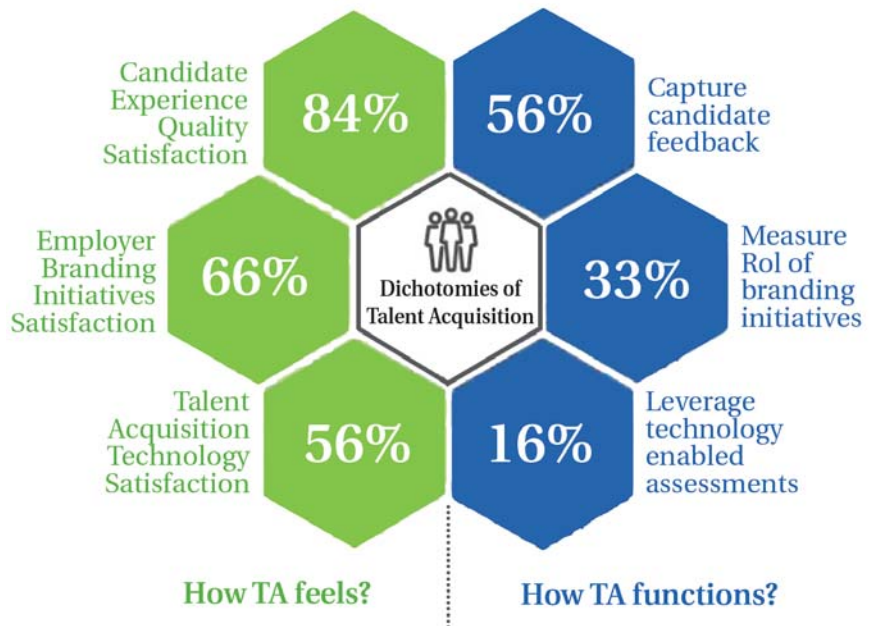
Screening and messaging needs to be more efficient and responsive

Source: forbesindia.com

consumed in a logical stream. The Tsunami of information is inevitable in today's social-media dominated world. Technology has ameliorated the ease of applying for the right jobs while also enabling employers to respond effectively and efficiently. Demand for niche skills has in fact given birth to new-age companies, and high-skilled talent has been in high demand for long now, with universal requirement of digital and analytical skills. Declining offers are seen to be on the rise because of two trends. The demand for high-skills is agnostic of both business and domain. For instance, a data scientist is valuable to a telecom company and an e-commerce company in equal measure. Juxtapose this phenomenon with the flourishing start-up ecosystem that offers a new set of options to a high-value talent. The parallel existence of these two trends has given rise to declining offers. A win-win situation can be derived by fostering an empowered culture in conjunction with providing cutting-edge technology work, which together boost innovation.

DEVIKA THORAT: It is easy for the candidates to learn about the companies and their culture even before they apply for the position. This information overload has its advantages and disadvantages. Such an amount of information can prove to be a disadvantage as it makes it hard for candidates to choose the right employer. Organisations that emerge as winners in this scenario are the ones who invest in employer branding. Employer branding involves the organisation's hiring plans and the management's reasons as to why an ideal candidate would want to choose them as a preferred employer as well as their employee value proposition.

One can easily apply for multiple jobs through online portals like Naukri, Monster, Times Jobs, and mobile apps such as LinkUp, JobAware, etc. The number of applications streaming in for open positions increases the pressure on recruiters to respond to applicants on time. Today, many organisations have resorted to automation to



Source: ideal.com

counter this problem. Introducing bots to screen resumes and chatbots to provide real-time feedback to applicants can help enhance the candidate experience.

Candidates have multiple opportunities to choose from and take their own time to decide on the offer. A drop-out at the last minute hits the business hard as the recruitment process as a whole would have to start again, affecting productivity. Hence, talent acquisition and managers must work together to make sure that the candidate experience during the entire recruitment process is perfect. The experience a candidate undergoes during the entire recruitment process gives him an insight into the company culture, which can be a major deciding factor for him as to whether to join the organisation.

ABHA NAIR: The digital world has created a reservoir of information around every sector and industry for a job seeker to manoeuvre. It no longer remains an employer's market. It has the power of guiding the candidates to choose their passion, and the type of organisation they wish to work for since the

emphasis is more on career than livelihood. From the perspectives of the employer as well as the employee, there are fewer chances of choosing a square peg for a round hole. It is a boon for the candidate as processes have become simpler, the opportunities are abundant, and employers are trying to woo candidates with perks and lucrative policies and experiences which they can offer to get them on board.

While innovation is the goal, the reality is that maintaining and modernising existing operations remain essential priorities for the management. As such, the key lies in finding the optimal mix of skills within the candidate - one that can integrate legacy systems with new technology to drive transformational outcomes, which is the final goal of the business. HR plays a key role in terms of diagnosing the current needs of the business and how the management is looking at prioritising the agenda. The candidates who can add value on the basis of the requirements specified are accordingly hired.

(To be continued....)

Strategising Training Effectiveness

It is essential that employees are nurtured, cultivated, and invested into strategically to achieve short- or long-term goals of the organisation, where training/organisational development interventions work as the heartbeat of the business strategy.

BY ABHIRUP BANERJEE



In the past, most training professionals saw the process of training effectiveness as merely an activity of documentation. It was either an objective or a subjective questionnaire that gets filled by the process owners and then recorded by HR for compliance for Audit purposes.

Today, we are well-versed with various models of training evaluation. And most of us have inculcated the Kirkpatrick Model of evaluation since this model has wide acceptance and has been found to be useful in deducing the effectiveness of training programmes as per the prevailing ISO standards.

But the main question is - to what extent is the training effectiveness tool creating an impact on productivity? How we can create a linkage to productivity so that the reliability of the effectiveness tool becomes apparent, as also the results complementing its productivity. In simple terms, the Return on Investment (ROI).

Before we ascertain the ROI of our training interventions, we need to understand the following basic fundamental principles -

1. Identifying specific training sessions whose ROI is required as per the time frame decided

by the functional heads or Management.

2. For which information is ROI to be furnished - be it in terms of reduction of NCR's, increased number of manufacturing products, decrease in time for moving materials, or improvement in the satisfaction/engagement surveys, etc.
3. How to communicate the expectations of ROI with stakeholders so that it becomes possible to achieve desired results in a defined timeframe.

Hence, conceptually, we may derive the understanding of measuring Training ROI as under:

Training ROI for a particular function= Enhancement in (Product or Service Quality * On-Time Delivery * Competency Enhancement)

Prior to holding a training session, we must strategise to define and tabulate the above deliverables from the respective stakeholders for the existing information. Further, reviewing the improvement with the defined time frame for assessing the respective training ROI in congruence with the functional heads.

Enhancement of employee engagement scores plays a pivotal role in determining the achievement

of business targets. Hence, the effectiveness of the behavioural trainings at various levels of the organisation may be assessed by the engagement scores and improvement of individual/functional KPI's.

Universally, employees are one's biggest assets. Therefore, it is essential that they are nurtured, cultivated, and invested strategically to achieve short-term/long-term goals of the organisation, where training/organisational development interventions works as the heartbeat of the business strategy. 

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).

Appointments



Adani Wilmar appoints new CHRO

Adani Wilmar Limited has appointed Sidhartha Ghosh as their new CHRO. He has an experience of over 32 years, and has worked with Reliance Industries, Jindal Steel & Power Ltd, Aditya Birla Group, and more. His core strengths is in different sectors like Coal, Steel, Chemical, Fertilizer, Insulator, Oil & Gas, CBM and Hydrocarbons.

Blue Dart appoints veteran Rajendra Ghag as CHRO

Blue Dart has appointed Rajendra Ghag as its new CHRO. With a combined industry experience of over 30 years, Ghag has worked with Cadbury, DHL, and HDFC. He graduated from Mumbai and Pune University, and also has a certification from XLRI in HR and Business Excellence. He was among the 100 most influential HR professionals in Asia as ranked by CHRO Asia.



Max Life Insurance onboards Prashant Khullar as new Senior VP HR

Max Life Insurance has named Prashant Khullar as its new Senior VP HR. He has over 21 years of work experience in the hospitality industry, having worked with ITC, Hyatt, and Taj Hotels Palaces Resorts. He is an alumnus of SP Jain Institute of Management & Research.



Planet Fitness appoints new Chief People Officer

Planet Fitness recently announced that Kathy Gentilozzi has been appointed Chief People Officer. She has over three decades of experience, and has worked with national retail brands including FULLBEAUTY Brands, Macy's, and Aéropostale. She graduated with a Bachelor's degree from Eastern Connecticut State University and is a certified Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR).





The Two Sides Of A Story

Although the product on offer is the core, success is equally dependent on how engaged and happy the workforce is, and how passionate they are about the success of the organisation.

BY POOJA NATH

A typical response to a typical question "What do you do"? has undergone a massive change from the yesteryears. It is no longer startling to receive the answer as, "I pursue my passion, and that is my career too." The arrival of innumerable startup organisations run by the young as well as the old - who are willing to take risks, follow their passion, and turn it as a career path for themselves - has come about as an emerging trend. Such is the speed of the trend that several minds are sure to be working on different ideas to come up with something new or a better version of the existing proposition even while this article is being penned. They are the entrepreneurs,

embarking on a journey of creating a unique path for themselves.

While all this sounds too simple and exciting, it is indeed true that running a business is too complex an affair. Because, it is not about a single individual following the passion, but also collaborating with others to make it happen. In an ideal scenario to achieve success, everyone associated with the startup should have the same passion as the owner/leader. But that hardly remains as true. Think of the time when the owners themselves were employed, how attached or engaged they were with their employer, and what drove them to work holds exactly the same for the people they employ in their team or their organisation.

Some of the basic people challenges that are faced by startups have been mentioned below.

The Employee Perspective

What am I doing here? Many employees feel that they are expected to do every little thing, irrespective of whether it is a part of their role or otherwise. Sailing with the wind and delivering the task as and when it comes has always been the need of the hour. While this seems like a fine deal, as the organisation grows, the lack of clarity to the role becomes one of the reasons for disengagement.

How am I Doing? This trickles down owing to the lack of clarity

over the role. Without knowing what an individual is expected to do, there cannot be a mechanism for measuring performance. Performance measurement helps in catalysing productivity: it gives a sense of achievement when accomplished, and a clear-cut indication of developmental areas when not. A gap in goal achievement can be bridged when taken in the right spirit and worked upon. Imagine, a ship sailing without a direction, unsure where will it lead. Aimless sailing leads to nowhere!

What's in it for me? The leaders are passionately working towards establishing a brand and generating business for the simple reason that they are the founders and it is their baby. However, the questions that keep popping up in the employee's mind are:-

- What's in it for me if I work here?
- What kind of growth can I see if I stick with the organisation?

And they are willing to put their heart and soul if they get an answer, and if not, they begin to explore outside.

What to do when I have a grievance? People and team challenges are not so much when the team is small as everyone is connected and bonded with the founders. But as the team grows, there seems to be a loss of frequent connect with the leaders for obvious reasons. Further, the time becomes limited, and the prime focus shifts towards organisational growth. This results in employees developing a feeling of disconnect. They may also feel lost when they have issues, which they would have

“High turnover reflects unstable functioning, negativity, loss of time, money and effort to hire a replacement, a negative brand image in the eyes of prospective employees, and/or external customers.”

otherwise shared with the leaders. They may refrain from doing so as the team grows, and this keeps building over a period of time, leading to an explosion in the form of attrition, conflict, low productivity, and/or disengagement.

From the Employer Perspective

Wrong hire: When an employer indulges in gut hiring, s/he gets a hold of the wrong people. Building a team of individuals with a similar mindset and technical expertise is not an easy task. Often, one hires on the basis of their gut instinct and a few basic attributes. However, the fact of the matter is that one size does not fit all. Every role requires different sets of competencies in order to be successful, and the prospective employee should be able to fit into the organisational culture seamlessly.

Why high Turnover: One of the frequently discussed aspects is the attrition level. The reasons could be varied starting from role specifications, culture fitment, workplace ethics, growth opportunity, and so on and so forth. High turnover reflects unstable functioning, negativity, loss of time, money and effort to hire a replacement, a negative brand image in the eyes of prospective employees, and/or external customers. This is a clear indication that there are gaps within the employee life cycle, and they need to be fixed.

Code of conduct: When the team is small, the flexibility is higher, and when the team grows, there is a need for discipline, punctuality, and adherence to the code of conduct laid down by the organisation. For the simplest of reasons, one needs to follow the leaders/owners, and let everyone know of what is acceptable and what is not. There is a thin gap between being flexible and accountable for what you do and being flexible and not accountable. It is the minor gap of "NOT" that alters the message completely. Hence, there needs to be a clear demarcation between the two.

Wrong people with higher responsibility: Wrong people getting



promoted or given additional responsibility sets a way for failure of both the individual and organisation. Often, the one closer to the founder/owner is able to better manage perception than those who do not have much interaction with them. The absence of a structured performance measurement/development mechanism makes way for doing perception-based promotion rather than performance-based promotion.

While the complete focus is to drive growth and revenue, the fact of the matter is that getting the right people and taking care of their well-being is equally important for the success and sustenance of any organisation in the making. Although the product on offer is the core, success is equally dependent on how engaged and happy the workforce is, and how passionate they are about the success of the organisation. **HC**

About the Author

Pooja Nath is a HR Transformation Consultant and a Certified Assessment Expert. She partners with Start-Ups and SME's on various organisational and people related interventions and helps them in transforming processes and bringing in efficiency in the organisation. Her areas of expertise include Organisation Design, Talent Management, Talent Development, Leadership Transformation, HR Systems & Processes and HR Advisory.

PAST EVENTS

Dale Carnegie 'Expert Forum 2019'

DATE : 19th July, 2019

VENUE: JW Marriot, Aerocity, New Delhi

ORGANISERS: Dale Carnegie of India

Dale Carnegie of India organised 'Expert Forum 2019' - a global thought leadership roundtable on July 19, 2019 at JW Marriot, Aerocity, New Delhi. The Forum brought together an esteemed group of top HR leaders in an exclusive group environment to discuss real issues and brainstorm solutions in the context of global L&D trends, future organisational challenges related to employee-engagement and share insights from around the world. The panel included eminent global Dale Carnegie leaders from UK, USA and Australia. The spokespersons from Dale Carnegie who attended this year's Expert Forum are: -

- Pallavi Jha, MD & Chairperson, Dale Carnegie of India
- Mark Marone, PhD, Director, Research & Thought Leadership, Dale Carnegie and Associates
- Juliette Dennett, Managing Director, Dale Carnegie Northern England
- Jordan Wang, Managing Director New South Wales, Dale Carnegie Australia



The HR experts who were a part of this forum were:

- Daljit Singh, President, Fortis Healthcare
- Ashok Kumar Balyan, CEO - Oil & Gas Business, Reliance
- RajKamal Vempati, Head, Human Resources, Axis Bank
- Indranil Roy, Global Head, Leadership and Professional Development, Accenture
- Carmistha Mitra, Vice President, Human Resources, Mahindra & Mahindra Limited

Some of the talk points that featured in the Forum were:-

- Assimilation of Artificial intelligence across industries
- Global reach and impact of Artificial Intelligence
- Artificial Intelligence solving geographical discrepancies
- Need for developing soft skills and how it is gaining prominence across the world
- Global learning trends, etc.

A whitepaper on the theme "Beyond Technology: Preparing People for Success in the Era of AI" was also launched during the Expert Forum.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Yukti : IIM Amritsar

DATE : 10th August, 2019

VENUE: Radisson Blu Amritsar

ORGANISERS: Industry Interaction Cell, IIM Amritsar

Indian Institute of Management of Amritsar is hosting the 4th edition of Yukti - The HR Conclave of IIM Amritsar to be held on 10th August 2019 at Radisson Blu, Amritsar. Yukti' 19 aims to provide a dais where the veterans from industry will interact and reflect with the budding managers on the recent trends and developments in the domain of Human Resource Management. This year's panel discussion would focus on the changing nature of the workforce and attitudes towards traditional work culture. The conclave aims to provide the student fraternity at IIM Amritsar a holistic view of how the field of HR is being re-conceptualised by the changing perceptions of both the employers and employees towards work, thus creating a generation of managers who will be equipped with a deep understanding that will help them navigate in the dynamic business scenario of today. The idea is to analyse these challenges and conclude with tangible solutions for the same.

The conclave is segregated into two panel discussions. The themes for the two panels are

Panel #1 Challenges and Opportunities in Employing Gig workforce in India

Panel #2 Accommodating Gen-Z in the modern workplace



JobBuzz #Workplace 2025 Conclave & Expo Den - 2019

DATE : August 31, 2019

VENUE : The Taj Palace, Diplomatic Enclave, Delhi

WEBSITE : www.workplace2025.in

- In the age of Technology, what could be the new-age Talent requirements?
- With Machines ruling the work floor, how much effort will Men spare to get tasks done?
- Will Human Resources function scale up to cater to Non-Human Resources too?

Times Internet proudly presents JobBuzz #Workplace2025 Conclave & Expo Den - 2019 Edition - a one day mega conference dedicated to answer these questions and discuss the future of work. In its second edition, the 2019 Forum of JobBuzz Workplace2025 event is India's largest gathering of C-Suite brass, CHROs, CIOs, CTOs and Digital Transformation Leaders to discuss the future of jobs. 'Technology' is drastically 'Transforming' workplaces and altering the 'Talent' needs of businesses. As automation dominates most known tasks, and men upskill to take on new roles at workplaces - will it become a relentless battle between the Technical Quotient and the Emotional Quotient?

NOW HIRING



HR Manager Darshan Foods

Looking for HR Manager who maintains the work structure by updating job requirements and job descriptions for all positions, maintains organisation staff by establishing a recruiting, testing, and interviewing programme, counselling managers on candidate selection, conducting and analysing exit interviews, and recommending changes. They should prepare employees for assignments by establishing and conducting orientation and training programs.

Experience : 7-12 Years
Location : Ludhiana
Job ID : 150619000061



Team Leader - HR Services METRO SERVICES

Looking for HR with Key responsibilities - processing accurate payroll with zero discrepancies, as it directly impacts employee motivation. Ensuring 100% statutory compliance within specified TAT. Improving employee experience and satisfaction by ensuring accuracy of data.

Experience : 7-10 Years
Location : Pune
Job ID : 30719900691



HR Manager -Generalist China Gate Restaurants Private Limited

Hiring for HR manager with responsibilities that include developing and implementing HR strategies and initiatives aligned with the overall business strategy. Bridging management and employee relations by addressing demands, grievances, or other issues, managing the recruitment and selection process, developing and implementing HR strategies and initiatives aligned with the overall business strategy.

Experience : 7-10 Years
Location : Mumbai
Job ID : 180619009658



Recruitment Manager Habsons Jobsup Limited

Looking for Recruitment 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 : 10-15 Years
Location : Delhi
Job ID : 20719001399



Manager- HR Operations Gartner India Research & Advisory Services Pvt Ltd

The newly-created role Manager, HR Operations, India, is responsible for managing a team of HR Associates (HRAs) who provide administrative HR and operational support for one of the fastest-growing offices of Gartner worldwide. This role will also partner with HR teams across the globe to ensure best-in-class service and operations, while also offering direct support to local HR teams in a variety of special projects and initiatives.

Experience : 8-10 Years
Location : Gurgaon
Job ID : 10719900383



HR Generalist / HR Executive Macon's Equipments Pvt. Ltd.

Looking for Recruitment with demonstrated expertise in Recruitment Payroll, HR Operations, Statutory Compliance (PF, ESIC, PT) IR/Legal Compliance, Staff Training

Employee Engagement and HR MIS.

Experience : 6-10 Years
Location : Ahmedabad
Job ID : 270918005800



HR Officer Eureka Forbes Ltd

Looking for a HR Officer experienced in Talent Acquisition, Induction, exit process, Onboarding, Appointment, Increment and Confirmation letter, Training Coordination, Timely KPI review, background verification, HR database management Compensation, Benefit Management Performance Appraisal Management System (Quarterly/Yearly) Coordinating for the statutory compliances Reward and Recognition Program Employee Engagement activities.

Experience : 5-9 Years
Location : Chennai
Job ID : 20719007792



Recruitment Manager Aegis Customer Support Services Private Limited.

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Narrating Your Story

Telling stories is not a strange thing for any human being. We use stories to reminiscence, convey ideas, cajole, to hurt or to heal, to sell, to laugh at or to create laughter.

BY SREEJA PILLAI

“Once upon a time”. . . sometimes, that is all that we need to hear to automatically follow that up with a ‘there was a. . .’

In all probability, there is no person who does not get transported through the tunnel of time who then wants to know the end of how this particular 'Once Upon A Time' flows. And that is the beauty of narrating a story- the ability to transport someone into a different realm, to help someone imagine a scene, to create an ending- all this lie in the way the story is told.

Telling stories is not a strange thing for any human being. We use stories to reminiscence, convey ideas, cajole, to hurt or to heal, to sell, to laugh at or to create laughter. However, all of this comes to a blinding stop when the story teller trips!

As an HR professional, I am no stranger to stories. People use stories to explain just about anything - the need for more budgets, the reason for their performance (or non performance), why they were compelled to abstain from work or stay back late and so forth. The stories maybe the same, the narrators different. Some maybe more compelling than the others, some more dramatic. It is very natural to feel the need to justify actions / reasons, and hence, whatever the reason, a story always follows.

Of all the stories that I have heard or hear, the ones that fascinate me the most are the ones that are narrated by candidates / potential employees. Very often, the stories revolve around similar themes of them seeking more money, looking

for better roles, wanting a better organisation, desperate to leave a boss / particular work environment, amongst scores of others. The most credible ones are the ones that embody the truth.

Many people believe that they know what a specific employer is seeking. Hence, prior to attending interviews, they speak to their friends, read whatever they can find on the organisation and on the interviewers, and prepare by fashioning their answers to hypothetical questions, assuming that is the way to best impress the interviewer(s). While all of these are commendable, fashionable answers do not always work unless they reflect who you are. Seasoned interviewers have enough experience to be able to discern this.

As people, we just need to realise that the world is large and diverse, made up of enough opportunities for everyone. The key is in keeping a lookout for the right one and waiting. When the stars align, and the doors open, the stories we tell will resonate in all the right corners and in the most optimal decibels. That is when our stories will find the value they possess - significance and relevance. That is the hope of every story teller - that his / her story is different enough to make a difference.

So how do I go about narrating a story?

1. The Right Story . . . or not? When based on what I have seen,

experienced, learnt, my story is mine and no one can (or should) tell me that it is wrong. This is how it will always be the Right Story.

2. The Right Time . . . or not? As thinking beings, we have the power to discern. I would look at the environment, the context, the time, the opportunity, the window, and then narrate the Right Story.
3. The Right Audience ... or not? Who matters? Who should matter? That is all I would look for before I share the Right Story at the Right Time.

In the end, every story teller lives with the hope that the story resonated somewhere. That is the best "Happily Ever After" 

About the Author

Sreeja Pillai is Head-HR at PAYBACK India. She is a result oriented professional with over 23 years of diverse experience in various industry sectors including Hospitality, IT, Hardware Distribution, Offshoring and Outsourcing. Sreeja holds a Bachelor's degree in Law and an MBA in HR & Marketing from Bharathiar University, Coimbatore. In addition, she has also done a PG Diploma in Advertising & PR.

The offices of the Human Capital have been receiving numerous queries related to HR from our valued customers, subscribers, HR professionals and students. We have therefore decided to introduce a Q and A column that will feature queries pertaining to Human Resources that shall be answered by Industry veterans.

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