

indian management

The Journal of
AIMA
ALL INDIA MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

APRIL 2025

VOLUME 64 ISSUE 4 PAGES 52

₹60

A SPENTA MULTIMEDIA PUBLICATION

AI UPSKILLING

The key to workplace success



A STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE
MICHAEL WADE AND AMIT JOSHI

5th CASE WRITING COMPETITION AND CONFERENCE

29-31 May, 2025 | New Delhi



OVERVIEW

The AIMA - India Case Research Centre (ICRC) is excited to announce the 5th Edition of the Case Writing Competition & Conference (ICRC- CWCC). With significant changes in the business landscape, particularly after the pandemic, this competition seeks to support the creation of quality teaching cases that focuses on India, highlighting the Indian ethos in business management. The Case Writing Competition also seeks to capture these evolving industry trends, technological advancements, the digital economy, sustainability, organisational dynamics, talent requirements, and various other market demands through well-crafted teaching cases.

Submission Opens :	28th February 2025
Submission Deadline:	30th April 2025
Notification of Selected Cases:	3rd May 2025
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COVER STORY
A STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE

12

The smartest investment your company can make.

- MICHAEL WADE AND AMIT JOSHI

MYTH BUSTER
LEGACY LEADERSHIP

16

Timeless leadership principals.

- MARK C FAVA

LEADERSHIP
A MANAGER'S FIRST STEPS

20

Transitioning to leadership?

- SANJAY KOUL

MANAGEMENT
RAISING THE BAR

30

How to assess and benchmark governance performance.

- DIDIER COSSIN

TECHNOLOGY

DIGITAL GOVERNANCE IN THE AI AGE

36

The evolving AI landscape.

- DR ABHISHEK N SINGH

MANAGEMENT

MANAGING TALENT GLOBALLY

40

Emerging challenges for regions, companies, and leaders.

- PROF RASHMI BHATIA

HR

NEURODIVERSE TALENT

46

Where do employers go wrong on workplace diversity?

- LEANNE MASKELL



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Skilling employees for AI transition

Suneeta Reddy is Managing Director, Apollo Hospitals Enterprise Ltd.

Business leaders need to identify the most suitable models and applications for their enterprises and get employees to use those tools to create and communicate faster and better

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is dominating conversations in boardrooms as well as workplaces. Business leaders are trying to figure out ways to use this transformative technology to increase scale, efficiency, and profits, while workers are concerned about how it will impact their employment and skill requirements.

This technological shift is similar to previous transitions, such as moving from paper to computers, from desktops to handheld computing, and the rise of the internet. Everyone realises that resistance or hesitation will be costly, and the quicker the transition to AI, the better the chances of both enterprises and employees surviving in the AI age.

AI has already started changing the way work and business are done. With digitalisation turning everything and everyone into data, there is no escaping algorithms that mine and analyse business and personal data to determine options and decisions. Internet searches are replaced by suggested research, customers and employees are talking to chatbots, business communication and content are shaped by generative AI tools, products and equipment are getting digital twins for servicing and innovation, and much more. Employees need to familiarise themselves with all this to ensure that they and their employers remain relevant amid the growing onslaught of AI-

enabled disruptors.

Training machines is central to AI, and training employees to feed generative and predictive algorithms is the starting point for using AI productively. While AI creators design the capabilities of AI models and AI application developers make these models usable for different tasks, it remains the responsibility of the enterprise to adapt the model and the applications to their specific needs. Business leaders must invest in the necessary computing hardware and software, and establish suitable workflows for generating the required data for AI augmentation and automation. Employees must learn to produce the right kind and quality of data for the machine to learn and deliver results that help them and their employers perform better.

Generative AI has created the most excitement in the past couple of years, and there has been a proliferation of off-the-shelf AI models and applications for business and entertainment. Business leaders need to identify the most suitable models and applications for their enterprises and get employees to use those tools to create and communicate faster and better. Tech-savvy employees are already using public AI apps for research, writing business emails and marketing content, creating presentations, and coding, with or without permission. Typically, organisations are unaware of AI usage capacity, policies, and practices. Once AI adoption is made official, business leaders should encourage employees to experiment with AI tools to become

Employees must be constantly reminded that AI is only a machine that works by calculating sequences of digital signals and engineering those into patterned sets. They must not surrender their scepticism and judgement

comfortable with the technology. When PCs first arrived in offices in the 1980s, many leaders allowed and encouraged employees to play computer games to ease the resistance to new technology and tools.

Beyond fun and games with AI, business leaders must establish AI use cases within the organisation and train employees to transition from traditional software-based processes to AI-augmented and automated processes. Training employees to use AI for emails, reports, presentations, coding, research, and evaluation is the basic familiarisation step. As employees begin trusting AI to produce useful and credible output, they need to be encouraged to use AI for deeper thinking. AI models are learning machines, and after ingesting enough data about a

task or process, they can discuss, debate, and offer solutions.

However, employees must be constantly reminded that AI is only a machine that works by calculating sequences of digital signals and engineering those into patterned sets. They must not surrender their scepticism and judgement. AI only collects information at a scale that is humanly impossible and correlates its granular pieces at the speed of light. The usefulness of its output depends on the kind and quality of data fed to it by the user. The

prompts or the questions posed by the user are key building blocks of AI.

It is critical to train employees in modular thinking, encouraging them to ask the right questions and prompt the machine piece by piece. While humans develop intuition from experience and take shortcuts to understanding and decision-making, machines process data dataset by dataset. As employees become advanced users, they can create their own personal AI assistants for different tasks, such as project-specific research and reporting, business communication, social media posts, idea validation, new idea generation, and more.

AI can be a powerful tool in enhancing enterprises, but only if employees are trained and retrained to use AI tools effectively, turning them into collaborators and consultants. AI is not magic that can be delivered ready-made by vendors, and only AI-trained employees can make it work to improve enterprise productivity and profitability. 

The opinion expressed is personal.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers,

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming the way we work, making AI upskilling essential for career advancement and workplace success. As automation and intelligent systems take over repetitive tasks, the demand for human roles is shifting toward creativity, problem-solving, and AI collaboration.

AI upskilling involves acquiring knowledge and competencies in areas like machine learning, data analysis, AI ethics, and the use of AI-powered tools. This doesn't mean everyone must become a data scientist; rather, professionals across all industries—from marketing and HR to finance and healthcare—can benefit from understanding how to work with AI systems to enhance productivity and decision-making.

Organisations that prioritise AI upskilling empower their employees to adapt to technological changes, increase operational efficiency, and drive innovation. Upskilled employees are better equipped to analyse data, forecast trends, and make data-driven decisions, giving companies a competitive edge.

For individuals, AI literacy opens doors to new job opportunities, enhances job security, and promotes continuous personal development. Whether through online courses, workshops, or certifications, ongoing learning in AI is becoming a crucial element of professional growth.

Ultimately, AI upskilling isn't just a trend—it's a strategic necessity. Embracing AI as a partner in the workplace, rather than a threat, enables both individuals and organizations to thrive in the future of work. Investing in AI skills today ensures long-term success and resilience in tomorrow's tech-driven economy.

Do write in with your views to imeditorial@spentamultimedia.com

Maneck Davar
Maneck Davar

**indian
management** THE JOURNAL OF THE
ALL INDIA MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

A SPENTA MULTIMEDIA PVT LTD PUBLICATION

APRIL 2025 VOLUME 64 ISSUE 4

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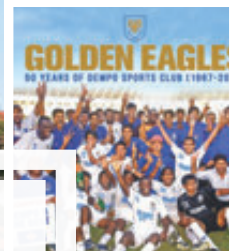
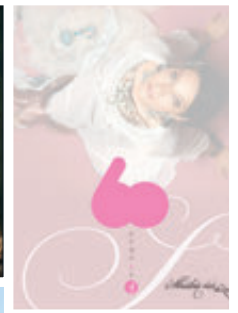
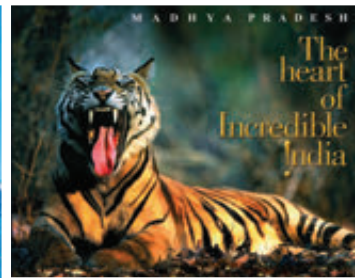
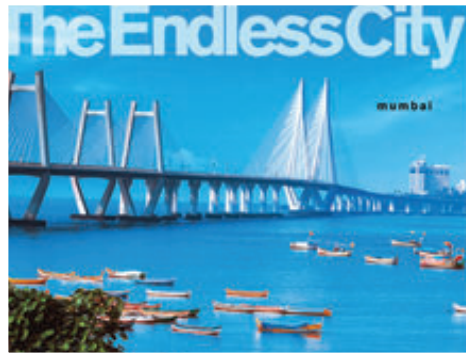
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Indian Management, the monthly magazine of Spenta Multimedia Private Limited, is published and printed by Mr Maneck E. Davar on behalf of Spenta Multimedia Private Limited. Printed at Spenta Multimedia Private Limited, Plot 15, 16 & 21/1, Village – Chikoli, Morivali, MIDC, Ambarnath (West), District-Thane. Published from 1102, Akashdeep Building, Barakhamba Road, New Delhi – 110001. Editor – Maneck E. Davar

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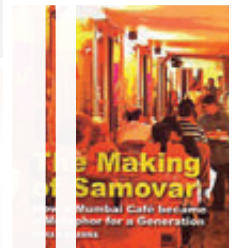
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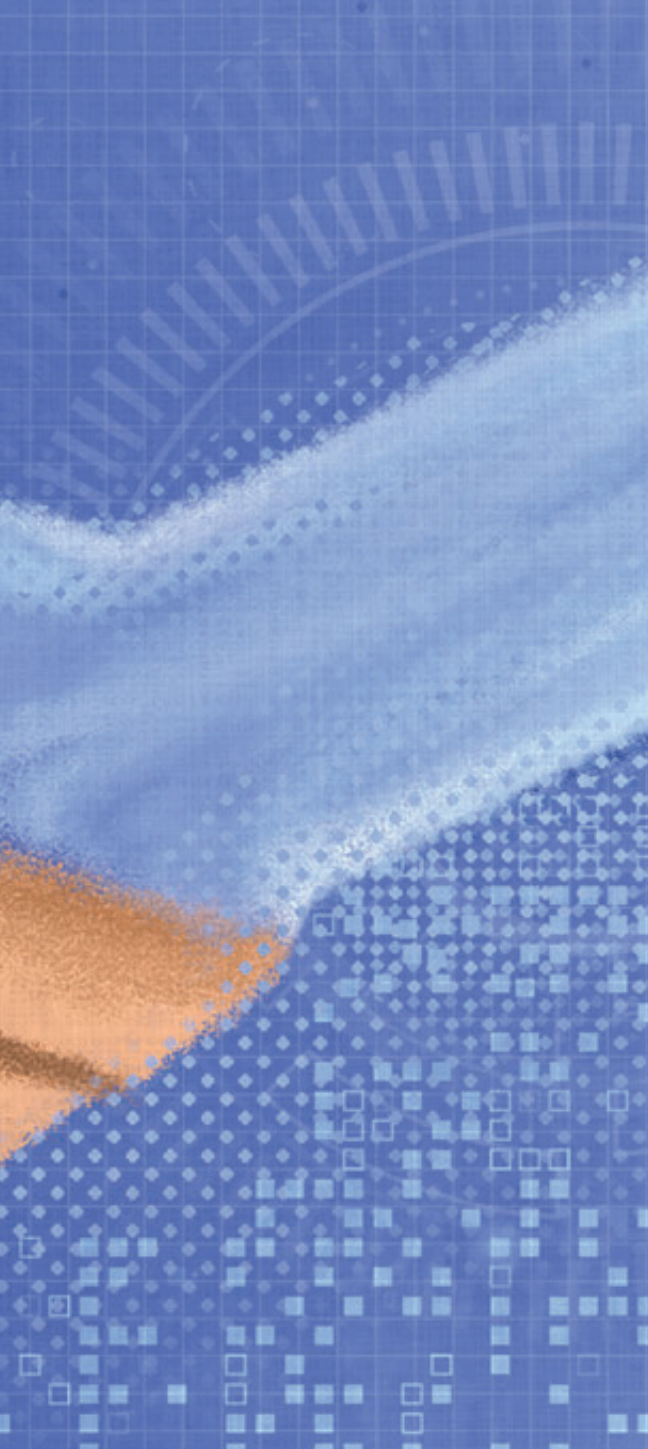


Tushar Dey

A strategic imperative

Organisations that recognise human capability as the linchpin of AI success can build workforces equipped to drive innovation in an AI-augmented future.

◆ MICHAEL WADE AND AMIT JOSHI, CO-AUTHORS, *GAIN*



In today's rapidly evolving technological landscape, artificial intelligence is both a transformative force and a significant challenge for businesses across all sectors. Companies are pouring billions into AI technologies, yet many neglect the key to successful integration: equipping their workforce with the necessary skills.

Train people, not models

The assumption that employees will “figure

out” AI on their own is proving to be a costly miscalculation. Despite growing up in a digital era, most workers lack the specialised knowledge needed to effectively leverage AI in professional settings. This gap between AI investment and workforce preparedness creates a significant barrier to realising AI's full potential. For example, a 2024 survey found that while 75 per cent of workers have adopted AI tools, a significant portion feel they lack sufficient training to use these technologies effectively. This gap in preparedness hampers the full potential of AI integration within organisations.

Furthermore, lack of formal training means that employees are unclear about the capabilities as well as drawbacks with this technology, often leading to costly mistakes. Employees thus need structured guidance, practical education, and ongoing support to seamlessly integrate AI tools into their workflow. Without proper training, even the most advanced AI solutions can fail to deliver meaningful value, or even lead to negative outcomes at times.

Regulatory pressures are mounting

The urgency for AI upskilling is intensifying as regulatory frameworks take shape. The European Union AI Act, for instance, mandates that organisations ensure personnel working with high-risk AI systems receive appropriate training to develop competence and confidence in using these tools, and that these trainings are documented.

This trend is not confined to Europe. Countries such as Canada, Australia, and Singapore are developing similar frameworks, signaling a global shift toward AI workforce regulation. Companies that proactively invest in upskilling will not only gain a competitive advantage but will also be better prepared to meet emerging compliance requirements.

Beyond knowledge: Addressing AI anxiety

Effective AI upskilling extends beyond technical training. It must also address the fear and uncertainty employees feel about AI's impact on their professional future.

“It is not just about providing knowledge,” explains David De Cremer, founder of the Centre on AI Technology for Humankind at NUS Business School. “It's about demystifying AI and transforming fear into enthusiasm. When employees understand how AI can enhance rather than replace their work, adoption accelerates dramatically.”

Comprehensive upskilling programs that focus on both technical competencies and emotional barriers lead to significantly

better adoption rates than purely technical approaches. By fostering psychological safety around AI, organisations can transform resistance into innovation.

The economics of AI upskilling

The demand for AI-related skills is growing exponentially. A 2024 report from McKinsey found that 47 per cent of employees expect to use AI for at least 30 per cent of their daily work within a year, yet only 20 per cent of executives believe their workforce is prepared. This discrepancy underscores the urgent need for upskilling initiatives to close the gap and ensure AI investments generate maximum value.

The financial case for AI upskilling is compelling. According to IDC, organisations worldwide are projected to spend over \$632 billion on AI technologies by 2028. However, many will see disappointing returns without corresponding investments in human capital. The equation is straightforward: An AI platform costing millions delivers little value if employees under-utilise it, misapply it, or avoid it altogether. Conversely, our research from the IMD Business School indicates that organisations investing in upskilling realise significantly better returns from AI investments, often more than covering the costs of training.

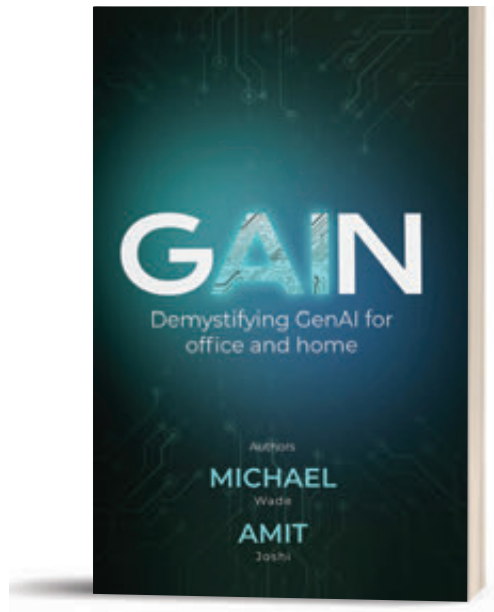


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Michael Wade is TONOMUS Professor of Digital and AI Transformation, IMD Business School. Michael is also co-author, *GAIN: Demystifying GenAI for office and home*.

From low-hanging fruit to transformative value

The value AI delivers in organisations typically follows a predictable trajectory. Early deployments focus on efficiency and productivity gains — the ‘low-hanging fruit’ of AI adoption. While valuable, these initial improvements represent only a fraction of AI’s potential. Nonetheless, this may be a good starting point for most legacy organisations in order to learn and establish confidence internally.

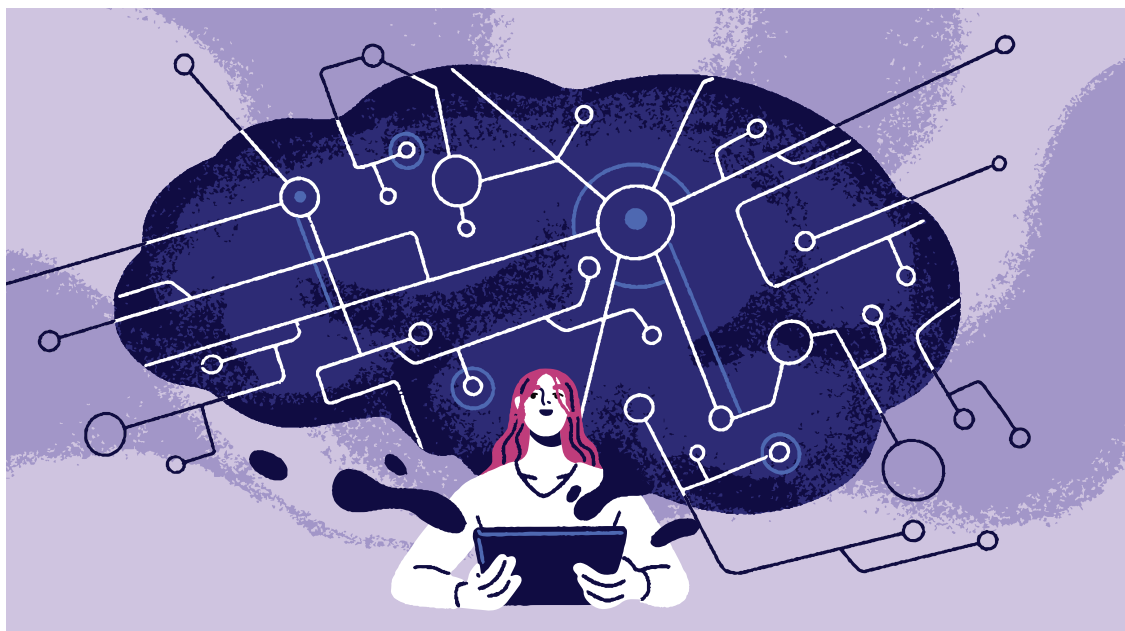


Higher-order benefits — such as quality improvements, innovative product development, enhanced customer experiences, and breakthrough creativity — only emerge when employees develop sophisticated AI literacy and application skills. Mayo Clinic provides a compelling example of AI upskilling success. Initially, AI was deployed to streamline administrative tasks and operational efficiencies. However, after investing in comprehensive AI training for their clinical staff, Mayo Clinic expanded AI use to diagnostics and personalised medicine. Their AI-enabled ECG system, for example, can detect heart weaknesses undetectable to human readers, delivering far greater value than their initial efficiency-driven applications.

Building effective AI upskilling programs

Creating impactful AI upskilling initiatives requires a thoughtful approach. Key components include:

1. Start with literacy fundamentals: Ensure all employees understand AI basics, capabilities, and limitations.



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2. Develop role-specific learning pathways: Different job roles require different AI skills and levels of expertise.
3. Balance theory with practical learning: Effective programs combine conceptual understanding with hands-on application.
4. Create safe spaces for experimentation: Employees need opportunities to test AI tools without fear of failure.
5. Establish continuous learning structures: AI evolves rapidly, necessitating ongoing education rather than one-time training. This includes a sharing of best practices as well as failures.

Conclusion: A competitive necessity

As AI reshapes industries, upskilling is no longer optional — it is a strategic imperative. Organisations that treat workforce development as an afterthought will struggle to realise AI's full potential. Those that recognise human capability as the linchpin of AI success will not only maximise their technology investments but will also build

workforces equipped to drive innovation in an AI-augmented future.

AI upskilling isn't just a good HR policy; it drives higher employee engagement, maximises AI adoption, and ensures a competitive edge in an evolving market. It's the most strategic investment a forward-thinking company can make. **IM**

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Legacy leadership

The best way to learn leadership is first to be a follower. In *Lessons from the Admiral*, I chronicle my eighteen months as an aide to a US Navy Admiral. The lessons I learned from the Admiral, and in that job, have been incorporated into my leadership style over the past thirty years.

I use the phrase 'legacy leadership' to describe the Admiral's impact on me and many others during his career. His leadership principles have long outlasted his career and are now multi-generational. They have become a part of my leadership fabric ... long after he retired, I am using them and teaching them to others.

MYTH 1: Nothing can be gained from working for a bad leader.

Since graduating from college 40 years ago, I have worked in the military, law firms, and major corporations. I have observed admirals, judges, general counsel lawyers, senior operational vice presidents, and CEOs. I have seen and worked for both good and bad leaders. How I lead today mainly reflects what I have picked up from others as a follower and observer.

While working for a bad leader can be a miserable experience, I have tried to adopt the 'survivor' mentality and 'outlive, outlast' the lousy leader. I have emulated good leaders' practices, but have greatly benefited from being subject to bad leaders' practices and behaviour. From the bad leaders, I have learned how not to act and what not to become.

When you work for a bad leader, you have two choices: to remain in the position or leave. In every circumstance, I have outlived and outlasted the bad ones. I have chosen to stay and have become better.

MYTH 2: When an employee leaves you, it is a sign of failure and a poor reflection on your retention ability.

Employment transitions happen at a much greater rate today than I first entered the job market. It is rare to meet an employee who has been at a company longer than ten to fifteen years. Most in Generation X and Generation Y are quick to move on and up when offered better pay. I review resumes where an employee has been in the workforce for less than ten years and has changed jobs every two years. That's a lot of transitions in a short period. It can be a head-scratcher, causing a potential future employer to pause and wonder, how long will

As a senior leader responsible for ranking those who report to me, I always looked for team members who were both competitive and cooperative. I thought highly of the person who helped others improve and, in so doing, contributed to the overall effectiveness of the greater team

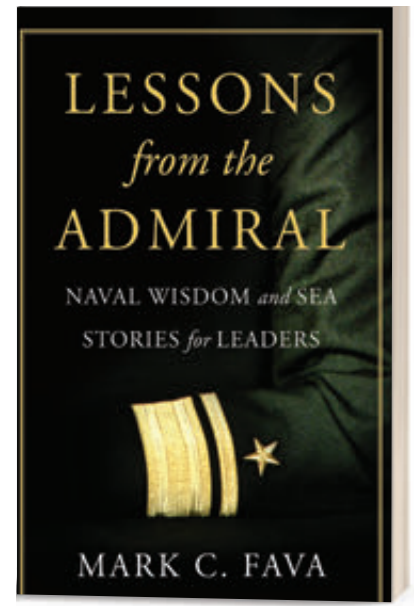
this employee be with me?

However, I have learned that one should welcome and treat well any employee who honourably announces their intention to move on. You should do whatever you can to make the transition easy and positive for their departure. Even workplaces with high morale will experience some healthy levels of attrition.

So, don't always assume that a departing employee equates to a failure in leadership or retention.

MYTHS 3: In a competitive workplace, peers who are ranked against each other need to compete aggressively for the win and top ranking.

I spoke to a senior US Marine Corps officer recently. He told me that as a junior officer in a competitive field of other highly motivated



young Marines, he thought it was his job to do all he could to outperform and, in effect, 'take out' his competitors. This meant not sharing best practices with them and not offering to help others when he saw them failing.

On the other hand, as a senior leader responsible for ranking those who report to



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me, I always looked for team members who were both competitive and cooperative. I thought highly of the person who helped others improve and, in so doing, contributed to the overall effectiveness of the greater team. Hiding information from others, passive inaction not to help others, and negative commentary about others are not attributes of a future leader.

As a boss, I liked to promote team players and make them team leaders. They contributed to the organisation's overall performance, morale, and efficiency.

MYTHS 4: When faced with a difficult situation or a crisis, a leader must be firm and resolute in speech and appearance, showing no emotion and expressing no sympathy.

The true test of a leader is how they operate in a crisis situation: What do they say and do when things go wrong? Today, the public expects the leader to be on the scene and visible front and centre. They cannot hide in their office or behind a communications spokesperson or legal counsel. The days of saying, "No comment" are over. Leaders must speak, and they must do so quickly and truthfully with compassion and empathy.

It is okay to express such sympathy and emotion. That is what the public expects. It can be done without an admission of liability and based on the facts known at the time. It is just fine to say: "I'm sorry for what occurred," or "We are doing everything we can to find out what happened and why it happened. We don't have all the answers yet."

Take the time to find out as much information as possible. But don't be paralysed into inaction and non-communication. Others will fill the void and create the narrative for you. At some point, their narrative can become unrecoverable.



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MYTHS 5: Sometimes, you must raise your voice as a leader to get other people's attention.

Years ago, as a young naval flight officer in flight school, I had flight instructors who were well-known as screamers. All the students knew who they were. We dreaded getting assigned to fly with them. They would yell, rant, and rave when we made mistakes.

While I thought that unprofessional and sophomoric behaviour would be limited to flight school, I saw it repeat itself over the years in military and civilian workplaces. I must admit, I suffered from the same screamer malaise a few times in my career.

Here is what I have learned from the best leaders. When they calmly looked me in the eye and said, "Mark, this is incredibly disappointing. Don't ever let this happen again," that was so much more impactful than a screamer. No one likes a screamer, and although you may experience one at your workplace today, they are not true leaders. Leaders are not screamers.

Remember these and the other timeless leadership concepts I discuss in *Lesson from the Admiral*. You will benefit from the wisdom I have learned through my successes and failures and continue to use today. **IM**



Tushar Dey

Each of us has a responsibility to cultivate a habit of continuous learning, which will not only prepare us for emerging challenges but also strengthen our ability to effectively navigate and overcome them.

LEADERSHIP

♦ SANJAY KOUL, CONSULTANT, ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING DESIGN

A manager's first steps

The survival and sustained success of any organisation depends on managers having a combination of leadership skills, good judgment based on knowledge and information, and a reasonable

ability to steer a business in the right direction.

The first step to become a really great manager is simply, common sense. This article focuses on some common-sense ideas on the subject of great management and helps readers understand the role of the team leader, acquire the skills needed to manage at a level of high performance and enable them to effectively communicate these responsibilities in order to create an environment of shared values and minimum conflict.

Mostly managers are never formally trained to be managers. However, if we hold a management position, we were probably selected because we proved ourselves to be very skilled in the areas that we are now responsible for managing. For many, management is just something that's added to the job description. Earlier, we were expected only to show up to work and create a deliverable. Now we are expected to lead and motivate a group of employees towards a common goal. Sure, we may get paid more to do the job, but the only training we may get for the task is in the school of hard knocks.

The major problem when we start to manage is that we do not actually think about management issues; because we do not recognise them. Things normally go wrong because we have never thought about it. Management is about pausing to ask ourselves the right questions so that our common sense can provide the answers.

When we become a manager, we gain control over some of our own work. We can change things. We can do things differently. We actually have the authority to make a huge impact upon the way in which our staff works. We can shape your own work environment.

The work of a manager encompasses a variety of activities and behaviours. While every management role is different, there is generally a core group of behaviours that defines what it means to be a manager. To be effective, the manager must achieve mastery over these behaviours through a continual process of on-the-job application and professional development. The extent to which a manager is required to engage in any one of these behaviours at any time will depend upon the level of responsibility and authority the manager has within the organisation, as well as the nature and duties of his or her management role. These behaviours are not innate and no manager can be expected to have achieved absolute mastery over all them even after years of experience. The process of individual

growth and development never ends. But each manager, and particularly the manager who is newer to the field of supervision, must identify those behaviours over which she has achieved some command and those behaviours she must continue to develop to meet the needs of her current role and/or to advance to the next opportunity.

Self-assessment

Whether you are in transition, considering a career or job change, or simply exploring your options, it is a good idea to conduct a self-assessment. This is a process of identifying your interests, skills, values, and personality preferences in order to make an informed career decision.

Managers (or managers-to-be) can easily discover how to become good managers by following the recommendations in the sections that follow. No one way is absolutely right or absolutely wrong; each has its pluses and minuses.

The assessment is an extensive but not exhaustive inventory of skills you may need, in varying degrees, in your position as a supervisor. Skill attainment is a lifelong process. The following assessment will give you a snapshot of where you are today.

Know your strengths and weaknesses

Self-monitor your behaviour and its outcomes. Be receptive to feedback. Take advantage of assessment opportunities through training, mentoring and coaching, and self-assessment tools. Learn about the key traits and skills necessary for the type of managerial position you hold or aspire.

Develop relevant skills that are deficient

Once you've identified skills that need to be developed, seek opportunities for additional training and coaching. Seek diverse assignments which will challenge you and help you develop new skills.

Compensate for weaknesses

While development of many of the skills and competencies needed for success in a position will depend on the individual's prior experience and background as well as training on the job, participating in the appropriate training programs can provide structure and support to the process.

Benefits

Fulfilling career growth
Job satisfaction/achievement
More responsibilities/prestigious job
Higher income/financial security

Role of a manager

Becoming a successful manager requires that you help your employees shift from an individual mindset to thinking and operating as part of a high functioning team. One of the most cited characteristics of successful managers is that of vision. Of all the concepts in modern management, this is the one about which the most has been written.

The meaning of vision which concerns you as a manager is: a vivid idea of what the future should be. This has nothing to do with prediction but everything to do with hope. It is a focus for the team's activity, which provides sustained, long-term motivation and which unites your team. A vision has to be something sufficiently exciting to bind your team with you in common purpose.

This implies two things: 1) you need to decide where your team is headed and 2) you have to communicate that vision to them.

Competencies

Role model demonstrate high moral standards
High moral standards frequently distinguish effective leaders from manipulative, scare-crow-type leaders who tend to use flattery, compliance, confrontation, indirect threats, and positions to manipulate subordinates.

Positive attitude

Attitude, simply put, is the way you look at things

mentally. Attitude is never static and is about making right choices. A positive attitude provides courage to gain control over situations no matter how tough they are.

Inspire others

Effective leaders exude personal influence and are able to inspire—not demand—the respect and loyalty of others. They understand that all people want to be successful at what they do, and thus encourage others to do their best, and as much as possible, actually show them how. They realise that to breed success in others, ultimately breeds success for their company.

Keep up-to-date

Effective leaders refine and hone their understandings and skills by constantly reading up on current literature in their field. They also keep close to the pulse of their company by staying in daily contact with supervisors, employees and customers.

Never abuse power

Effective leaders know that the corrupt use of power creates a vile corporate poison that can quickly spread throughout an entire organisation

and paralyse it. They also realise how little courage it takes to criticise the decisions of subordinates rather than stand by the ones own. Effective managers thus practice humility and refrain from using their position to intimidate others.

Adapt your leadership style to suit a variety of situations

Effective leaders can define and manage each situation or person with an appropriate leadership style. For example, they tend to treat their vice-presidents and line workers with the same level of respect, but through different approaches.

Stay focused

Effective leaders choose a priority and clearly, repeatedly, religiously, urgently, attentively, and passionately focus all their discussion and energy on that priority. They realise that focus is critical to decisiveness, and that without it, they would lose the support of their workers in challenging situations

Stick up for others

Effective leaders exude a feeling of mutual respect and never let their followers feel degraded or worthless. Because of this, many of their workers



feel, "Since the boss goes to bat for me, I'll go to bat for him."

Take action

When faced with a crisis, effective leaders don't just sit around and twiddle their thumbs. They solve the problem themselves or get someone who can.

Assertiveness

Learn about the difference between aggressive, assertive and passive communication styles. Discover how communicating in an assertive way can help you to get more of what you want and lead to better decision-making and at the same time build relationships with others. Find out about steps you can take to improve your assertiveness.

Understand the penalty of leadership

Effective leaders understand the pressures of being first and know how to handle it once they get there. In every field of human endeavour, he that is first must perpetually live in the white light of publicity. Whether the leadership be vested in a man or in a manufactured product, emulation and envy are ever at work. In art, in literature, in music, in industry, the reward and the punishment are always the same. The reward is widespread recognition; the punishment, fierce denial and detraction. When a man's work becomes a standard for the whole world, it also becomes a target for the shafts of the envious few. Use your imagination to solve problems. The ability of a leader to lead depends highly on the respect subordinates have for their leader's ability to originate ideas, suggest solutions to problems, and above all, translate visions into far-reaching goals. In other words, the substance of business — making products and going to market — and the art of leadership is imagination.

Flexibility

One of the main challenges in management is

in avoiding pat answers to everyday questions. There is nothing so dull, for you and your team, as you pulling out the same answer to every situation. It is also wrong. Each situation, and each person, is unique and no text-book answer will be able to embrace that uniqueness - except one: you are the manager, you have to judge each situation with a fresh eye, and you have to create the response. Your common sense and experience are your best guide in analysing the problem and in evolving your response. This deliberate flexibility is not just an academic exercise to find the best answer. The point is that the situation and the environment are continually changing; and the rate of change is generally increasing with advancing technology. If you do not continually adapt (through experimentation) to accommodate these changes, then the solution which used to work (and which you still habitually apply) will no longer be appropriate. You will become the dodo. A lack of flexibility will cause stagnation and inertia. Not only do you not adapt, but the whole excitement of your work and your team diminish as fresh ideas are lacking or lost.

Work hard

Effective leaders realise that success in their organisation will depend largely upon their own sustained willingness to work hard. They know that sweat rules over inspiration.

Professionalism in the workplace and Beyond

The difference between a worker and a professional is a combination of personal confidence, polished skills, and a "big picture" perspective, rather than a task-oriented approach to each day's work.

Other factors

Level of Motivation, Proactive approach, Initiative, Self Esteem, Willingness to learn, Humility, Confidence, Character, Accepts responsibility

Managing work

As a manager, you can't do everything required by your organisation or program. In large part, you must learn to do your job by getting your members/volunteers and agency partners to do the work. You are not expected to know all the answers, but you should learn where in your team, organisation, or community you can go to find them.

Plan and organise

A Manager has to take a long-term view; indeed, the higher you rise, the further you will have to look. While a team member will be working towards known and established goals, the manager must look further ahead so that these goals are selected wisely. By thinking about the eventual consequences of different plans, the manager selects the optimal plan for the team and implements it. By taking account of the needs not only of the next project but the project after that, the manager ensures that work is not repeated nor problems tackled too late, and that the necessary resources are allocated and arranged.

Informing roles and responsibilities

The responsibility of manager is to make role and responsibilities of each team member clear and known to everyone to avoid any ambiguity and to help maintain healthy work environment.

Time and priority management

You have as much time as you're going to get. The solution isn't the need for more time or to work harder. It's effectively managing your time by managing events, setting goals, and prioritising. The more effective you are at managing time means the more effective you'll be at managing people. This session will examine strategies for increasing productivity, controlling your schedule, and eliminating time wasters and distractions.

Information handling

The Manager has access to information and

materials which the team needs. Often he/she has the authority or influence to acquire things which no one else in the team could. This role for the manager is important simply because no one else can do the job; there is some authority which the manager holds uniquely within the team, and the manager must exercise this to help the team to work.

Technical skill

The technical skill implies an understanding of and proficiency in a specific kind of activity, particularly one involving methods, processes, procedures, or techniques; it involves specialised knowledge, analytical ability within that specialty, and facility in the use of the tools and techniques of the specific discipline. Vocational and on-the-job training programmes largely do a good job in developing this skill.

Managing people

A manager's real job is to inspire employees to do their best and establish a working environment that allows them to reach their goals. The best managers make every possible effort to remove the organisational obstacles that prevent employees from doing their jobs and to obtain the resources and training that employees need to do their jobs effectively.

Management is an attitude — a way of life. Management is a very real desire to work with people and help them succeed, as well as a desire to help your organisation succeed. Management is a people job. If you're not up to the task of working with people — helping them, listening to them, encouraging them, and guiding them — then you shouldn't be a manager. Because management is such a challenge, an entire management training industry has sprung up, ready to help managers find out how to solve their problems. Unfortunately, trainers often focus on creating instant gratification among course attendees, many of whom have spent hundreds and even thousands of dollars to be there. "Let's give them so much stuff to use that it will be their



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fault if they never use any of it!”

Perhaps you’re familiar with this old saying (attributed to Lao Tze): Give a man a fish, and he eats for a day, Teach a man to fish, and he eats for a lifetime. Such is the nature of managing employees. If you make all the decisions, do the work that your employees are able to do given the chance, and try to carry the entire organisation on your own shoulders, you’re harming your employees and your organisation far more than you can imagine. Your employees never find out how to succeed on their own, and after a while, they quit trying. In your sincere efforts to bring success to your organisation, you stunt the growth of your employees and make your organisation less effective and vital.

Delegation

Delegation is about teaching people to perform and about managing your time in order to have time for those top priority items. Participants will learn the critical components of effective delegation, what to delegate and what not to

delegate, helpful hints to give others the authority to perform a task and not simply the responsibility to perform the task, the link between time management and delegation, and a simple yet comprehensive process for effective delegation.

Despite rumours to the contrary, when you empower your employees, you do not stop managing. What changes is the way you manage. Managers still provide vision, establish organisational goals, and determine shared values.

However, managers must establish a corporate infrastructure — skills training, teams, and so on — that supports empowerment.

The key to creating a supportive environment is establishing trust or openness throughout an organisation. In an open environment, employees can bring up questions and concerns.

Protector

The team needs security from the vagaries of less enlightened managers. In any company, there are short-term excitements which can deflect

the work-force from the important issues. The manager should be there to guard against these and to protect the team. If a new project emerges which is to be given to your team, you are responsible for costing it (especially in terms of time) so that your team is not given an impossible deadline. If someone in your team brings forward a good plan, you must ensure that it receives a fair hearing and that your team knows and understands the outcome. If someone in your team has a problem at work, you have to deal with it.

Achievement

As the manager, you set the targets - and in selecting these targets, you have a dramatic effect upon your team's sense of achievement. If you make them too hard, the team will feel failure; if too easy, the team feels little. Ideally, you should provide a series of targets which are easily recognised as stages towards the ultimate completion of the task. Thus progress is punctuated and celebrated with small but marked achievements. If you stretch your staff, they know you know they can meet that challenge.

Recognition

Recognition is about feeling appreciated. It is knowing that what you do is seen and noted, and preferably by the whole team as well as by you, the manager. In opposite terms, if people do something well and then feel it is ignored - they will not bother to do it so well next time (because "no one cares").

The feedback you give your team about their work is fundamental to their motivation. They should know what they do well (be positive), what needs improving (be constructive) and what is expected of them in the future (something to aim at). And while this is common sense, ask yourself how many on your team know these things, right now? Perhaps more importantly, for which of your team could you write these down now (try it)?

Your staff need to know where they stand, and how they are performing against your (reasonable) expectations. You can achieve this through a structured review system, but such systems often become banal formalities with little or no communication. The best time to give feedback is when the event occurs. Since it can impact greatly, the feedback should be honest, simple, and always constructive. If in doubt, follow the simple formula of:

- highlight something good,
- point out what needs improving,
- suggest how to improve

You must always look for something positive to say, if only to offer some recognition of the effort which has been put into the work. When talking about improvements, be specific: this is what is wrong, this is what I want/need, this is how you should work towards it. Never say anything as unhelpful or uninformative as "do better" or "shape up" - if you cannot be specific and say how, then keep quiet. While your team will soon realise that this IS a formula, they will still enjoy the benefits of the information (and training). You must not stint in praising good work. If you do not acknowledge it, it may not be repeated simply because no one knew you approved.

Coaching

This session promotes the need for supervisors to adopt a more coaching style of leadership, explores the reasons for this change, defines this style of leadership, and focuses on ways to become a successful "coach."

SOFT SKILLS

Communication

Without a doubt, communication is the life blood of any organisation, and managers are the common element that connects different levels of employees with one another. Communication has positive effects on a business and its employees of managers who communicate, and the negative effects on a business and its employees of

managers who don't. Managers who don't communicate effectively are missing out on a vital role of management.

Communication is a key function for managers today. Information is power, and as the speed of business accelerates, information must be communicated to employees faster than ever. Constant change and increasing turbulence in the business environment necessitate more communication, not less.

Leadership

You do not have the power to execute, nor even to banish. The workforce is rapidly gaining in sophistication as the world grows more complex. You cannot effectively control through fear, so you must try another route. You could possibly gain compliance and rule your team through edict; but you would lose their input and experience, and gain only the burdens of greater decision making. You do not have the right environment to be a despot; you gain advantage by being a team leader.

A common mistake about the image of a manager is that they must be loud, flamboyant, and a great drinker or golfer or racket player or a great something social to draw people to

them. This is wrong. In any company, if you look hard enough, you will find quiet modest people who manage teams with great personal success. If you are quiet and modest, fear not; all you need is to talk clearly to the people who matter (your team) and they will hear you.

The great managers are the ones who challenge the existing complacency and who are prepared to lead their teams forward towards a personal vision. They are the ones who recognise problems, seize opportunities, and create their own future. Ultimately, they are the ones who stop to think where they want to go and then have the shameless audacity to set out.

Team work

No man is an island. Teamwork is an essential operational tool that is now more crucial to producing results than ever before. As organisations within the public and private sectors continue to restructure in favour of work teams, teams are being used more than ever as an effective and beneficial method of managing employees and doing business. This leads to more attention and resources being allocated to the development and leadership of teams.



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As the focus tightens on teams, team-building activities and leadership processes are gaining momentum as vital management activities. Consequently, team leaders and managers must stay on top of the latest in team training and development to leverage this increase in opportunities and responsibilities.

Within most organisations, team excellence is an absolute prerequisite to organisational excellence, since much of the day-to-day work is accomplished at the team level. Organisational excellence can only be defined in the context of individual excellence and team excellence. Team building is the process of leading an average, or even inferior, team into the realm of high performance. It is a systematic way to enhance a group's ability to execute and achieve at consistently high levels. Using team building techniques, an effective team leader can guide his team from mediocrity to excellence in teamwork.

For a tangible depiction of the range of teamwork, it is helpful to lay out a teamwork continuum. In this example, the negative end of the continuum is defined as mediocrity in teamwork and the positive end as high-performance teamwork.

The challenge for every team is to improve their ability to function at the positive end of the continuum, and to continuously accomplish higher and higher levels of performance. To do this, every member of the team must strive to continually improve their team skills and their ability to add to the whole of the group.

Change is usually inconvenient and often uncomfortable. But a forward thinking leader will embrace change as a path to an increasingly higher functioning team.

Conflict resolution

One advantage a team has over an individual is diversity of knowledge and ideas. However, with diversity comes differences, and differences can lead to conflict. A substantial amount of a manager's time is spent dealing with conflict, ranging from unhappy clients and disgruntled

employees to daily disagreements and tensions. Although most managers are aware of and have received conflict-resolution training, they fail to give sufficient priority to resolving conflicts.

Conflict arises from differences in opinions, backgrounds, values, attitudes and experiences. Destructive conflict often stems from factors such as poor planning, faulty communication, vague objectives and expectations, a climate of distrust or disrespect within a team, undue pressure to meet deadlines, budgets or responsibilities, personality conflicts, resentment and competition. In order to deal with conflict effectively, you'll need to understand the causes of conflict and the impact of conflict on individuals and on the team as a whole. As team leader, you must recognise conditions for potential conflict, try to derail conflicts before they escalate, and manage situations when and if they arise.

Feedback/performance evaluation 360 degree

An important step is finding out whether our perceptions about our self is consistent with what our supervisor, peers, clients or people who work with us have to say regarding our competencies, behavior, improvements by adopting new skills from our learning plan.

The people that we choose to give us feedback should know us well enough to be able to provide us with relevant feedback. We may choose people like our supervisor who has observed a broad range of our behaviour and skills, or we may approach someone we have worked with on a narrower scope who can provide feedback on one or two competency areas. We may receive more effective feedback if we gather the data on a confidential basis.

SHARPEN THE SAW

It is the responsibility of each one of us to develop a habit of continuous learning and updating with the developments in the area of our work. This keeps us prepared for the upcoming new challenges and enhances our ability to deal with them. 



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Information

Structures and Processes

People

Group Dynamics



To raise the bar in governance, organisations should adopt a systematic approach to evaluating performance in each of these areas.

♦ DIDIER COSSIN, AUTHOR, *HIGH PERFORMANCE BOARDS*

MANAGEMENT

Raising the bar

Today, governance is more important than ever. According to the latest World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report, nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) of respondents anticipate a stormy or turbulent global order over the next decade. In this increasingly challenging corporate environment, governance systems are under significant pressure. To enhance governance performance, it is essential to first evaluate your existing governance framework. But how can organisations effectively assess and benchmark their governance performance to ensure that they remain competitive and resilient?

At IMD, one of the leading business schools in Europe, we provide the world's top executive education programs, including custom-tailored programs for board members. With decades of experience working with directors from around the globe, we've gained unique insights that strengthen board performance.

We have identified four essential pillars that form the foundation of governance excellence: People, Information, Structures and Processes, and Group Dynamics. These pillars offer a comprehensive framework to assess and benchmark governance performance, providing

boards with the tools they need to drive long-term success. This article will explore the four pillars, drawing on key insights and survey results from our participants to effectively evaluate and improve your governance practices.

The Four Pillars of Governance Performance **1st Pillar: People—the foundation of governance excellence**

The quality and dedication of individuals on the board are central to governance effectiveness. As boards shape the direction of an organisation, the skills, focus, and diversity of the people involved significantly impact governance outcomes. An effective board must balance experience with diversity, bringing together directors with a range of competencies and perspectives. True diversity goes beyond gender and ethnicity, encompassing skills, experience, and different thinking styles.

Despite the growing recognition of diversity's importance, many boards still fall short in practice. Our survey data shows that while board members increasingly acknowledge the need for diverse skills, the majority of boards continue to rate themselves as merely 'good' or 'average', with only 5 per cent considering their boards as highly effective in leveraging diverse skills.

Preparation is crucial to the effectiveness of board meetings. Alarming, more than half of surveyed board members come to meetings with minimal preparation, and only 24 per cent are viewed as fully prepared with outside sources and in-depth analysis. This lack of preparation can significantly undermine governance effectiveness, limiting the board's capacity to engage in meaningful, strategic discussions.

For governance to truly excel, board members must not only bring diverse perspectives but also demonstrate deep commitment to their roles. They must arrive at meetings fully prepared; otherwise, gaps in readiness and expertise can hinder the board's ability to make well-informed, strategic decisions.

2nd Pillar: Information—designing the board's intelligence framework

For a board to function effectively, it must rely on high-quality, timely information. This goes beyond traditional management briefings, which typically focus on internal data such as financial

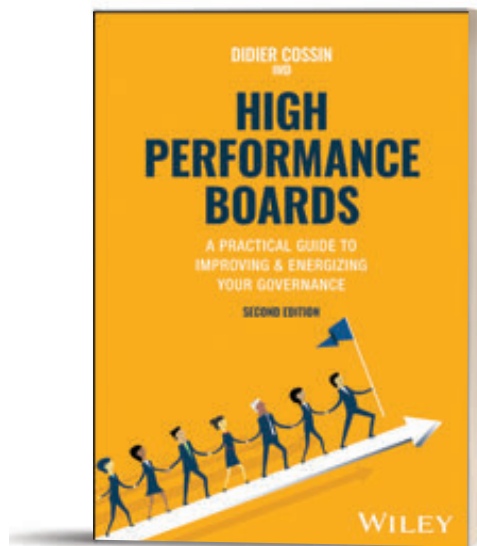
reports and CEO updates. Effective boards require access to both internal and external data sources, leveraging digital tools and analytics for real-time insights into market trends, regulatory changes, and stakeholder concerns.

Drawing from our extensive experience with board members, we have observed that the gaps in information—the second pillar—are widening more than in any other pillars. Survey results show increasing dissatisfaction among board members regarding the design and focus of information packages;

37 per cent expressed dissatisfaction

in 2023, a rise from the decade average of 29 per cent. To meet these evolving needs, boards must co-design their information packages with management to ensure that data is comprehensive, actionable, and adaptable to changing conditions.

Nearly 60 per cent of surveyed board members reported inadequate data on external matters, highlighting the critical need to refine strategies for collecting and utilising external information



One emerging trend is the need for boards to integrate external information sources, especially in areas such as regulatory changes and technological development. Nearly 60 per cent of surveyed board members reported inadequate data on external matters, highlighting the critical need to refine strategies for collecting and utilising external information. Boards must ensure they are fully informed of the external dynamics that influence their strategic decisions.

3rd Pillar: Structures and Processes—the backbone of effective governance

Governance structures and processes are the backbone of effective board operations. They define roles, responsibilities, and decision-making pathways, ensuring that the board's work is aligned with the organisation's strategic objectives. These structures include board size, composition, and the roles of its committees, which should be tailored to the organisation's current needs and strategic directions. Similarly, the processes for setting

agendas, monitoring performance, and managing risks need to be robust yet adaptable to changing circumstances.

Benchmarking governance structures entails evaluating whether the board has the right committees, decision-making processes, and risk management frameworks in place. According to survey data, only 31 per cent of boards are rated as having a good process for risk

identification, while 25 per cent are rated as poor. Leading boards are increasingly adopting innovative structures, such as technology and innovation committees, particularly in industries facing disruption, as well as introducing geopolitical or sustainability committees to focus on long-term risks and opportunities.

Effective involvement in strategy is at the heart of a board's role, which includes collaboration with management, oversight, and support. While our survey results show that boards see themselves as effective in this area, they often fail to adopt

forward-looking perspectives that would allow them to consistently address strategic issues.

4th Pillar: Group Dynamics—cultivating a culture of high performance

The final pillar of effective governance is the strength of group dynamics. Strong group dynamics are built on trust, mutual respect, and constructive dissent, and the ability to challenge management when necessary. Achieving this requires a healthy board culture where all members feel empowered to express their views openly.

Assessing group dynamics involves evaluating the board's culture and interaction patterns. According to our survey, 44 per cent of boards report having productive relationships between board members and management, but 31 per cent acknowledge there is still room for improvement.

The survey results also highlight key opportunities for enhancing board effectiveness. The most significant issue identified by board members is the failure to discuss strategies for improving board performance. This was followed by concerns over inefficient meeting time management and the impact of political sensitivities within the boardroom. Addressing these challenges requires strong leadership, particularly from the board chair.

For optimal group dynamics, it is crucial that board members be willing to challenge one another's assumptions, while also being open to receiving challenges themselves. This dynamic tension, when well-managed, can lead to better decision-making and stronger governance performance overall.

Assessing governance performance—framework with the Four Pillars

To raise the bar in governance, organisations should adopt a systematic approach to evaluating performance in each of these areas. Regular self-assessments and external evaluations can offer valuable insights into the board's strengths and weaknesses.

Benchmarking governance performance against these four pillars provides boards with a practical framework for continuous improvement. Table 1 offers diagnostic questions to assess your board's effectiveness. By identifying gaps in the four areas, boards can take steps to address them and enhance governance practices that drive the organisation's strategic objectives.

In today's business environment, effective governance is a key differentiator that can help organisations navigate uncertainty, manage risk, and create long-term value. The four-pillar framework enables organisations to benchmark their governance performance more effectively, ensuring they are resilient in the face of change and positioning them for sustained success in the years ahead.

For optimal group dynamics, it is crucial that board members be willing to challenge one another's assumptions, while also being open to receiving challenges themselves

Table 1. Governance Performance Assessment Framework

1 st Pillar. People	- Is the company a priority for every board member? - In what ways do you add value to the board? - Is there confidence that the board will guide the company in the right direction? - Does the board reflect a diverse range of skills, personalities, and expertise? - Is the board's role clearly defined? - Are the roles of each committee well understood? - Does the agenda adequately address future-focused topics? - Is your knowledge comparable to that of an ideal board member for the company?	3 rd Pillar. Structures and Processes	- How effectively are the following processes managed for the board? a. strategy b. risk management c. stakeholder engagement d. evaluation e. auditing f. CEO succession g. regulatory compliance h. onboarding / offboarding i. board education - Is there a comprehensive understanding of each of these processes? - Do the committees have the right structure and members? - Are the reporting lines reliable and clear?
2 nd Pillar. Information Architecture	- Is there a strong understanding of the business and its key values? - Are competitive trends, regulatory changes, and shifts in technology and stakeholders well tracked? - Is sufficient independent information available for decision-making? - Do you have effective informal channels of information? - Were you and other board members involved in shaping the information architecture?	4 th Pillar. Group Dynamics	- Is your board energetic? - Are the board members contributing strongly? - Does the board's culture ensure well-managed meetings and equal participation? - Are others' opinions listened to and respectfully challenged while maintaining relationships? - Are concise points made when relevant input is offered? - Can areas for improvement, including the chair's role, be discussed? 



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Digital governance in the AI age

Across the globe, not only businesses but also governments have recently increased their spending on artificial intelligence (AI). This is primarily to drive efficiency and replace humans with sophisticated machines for doing mundane and repetitive tasks. The move is welcomed by businesses and governments alike due to its cost advantages and promises of improved efficiency. The most recent example of the same is from the USA, where the newly elected government has created DOGE (Department of Government Efficiency) to cut down unnecessary government expenses and drive efficiency in government departments. And who better than Elon Musk—than the person who best understands technology and its application to derive growth and business—to lead such an initiative?

If we look at some current statistics, according to a recent report by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), AI could contribute USD 15.7 trillion to the global economy, which is more than the present combined output of India and China put together. The European Union has recently announced an AI Innovation Strategy that includes public as well as private AI investment to the tune of 4 billion Euros, emphasising the focus

on generative AI. As per a report by Wired.com, the UAE has committed to spending a significant pie of USD 1.5 trillion sovereign wealth fund to transform Abu Dhabi into a leading AI hub in the Middle East. As far as India is concerned, in the Union Budget of 2025, India's Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a new Centre of Excellence (CoE) in AI being set up with a capital of ₹500 crore. This is in tune with the Government of India's IndiaAI Mission to give a boost to the nation's AI ecosystem which is seeing an investment of USD 1.25 billion to promote advanced computing infrastructure and also to finance startups in the AI space. And a similar trend is followed elsewhere around the globe including South Korea, Japan, China, and other countries.

Let us look at several advantages and benefits of digital governance that AI can augment:

1. **Enhanced efficiency and transparency:** Automation and digital-powered decision-making can streamline bureaucratic processes by significantly reducing delays and inefficiencies in process flow and government operations. On the other hand, digital systems can enable real-time monitoring and access to open government data, which has the potential to improve transparency in government functioning.

Training AI models involves complex data sovereignty issues, such as data governance, regulations pertaining to cross-border data flow, conflicting global trade policies, to name a few. Biases and ethical concerns add to these growing challenges

2. Improved public service delivery:

E-governance platforms have the capability to improve public service delivery through automation and reduced need to visit government offices to avail various government schemes and services. We have seen some excellent examples in the Indian context, such as Passport Seva, DigiLocker, FASTag, DigiYatra, and many more. AI-powered chatbots are the recent additions in this context.

3. Interoperability, integration, and cost reduction: By its very nature, digital technologies enable interoperability among various systems and processes, if designed carefully. Data sharing and coordination among different government departments and agencies becomes easier with the adoption of technology in governance. This, in turn, improves the overall functioning

of the government, making it cost-effective and efficient in its operations.

4. Citizen engagement and participation:

Digital technologies and channels provide an alternate and easily accessible medium for citizens as well as governments to connect and communicate with each other. Now the popularity of elected representatives is also measured by looking at the follower counts on their social media platforms. Digital presence provides easy and direct access to connect and communicate that enables citizen engagement and participation in the process of governance.

5. Innovation and environmental benefits:

Use of digital technologies by governments promotes innovation that also leads to unique and out-of-the-box solutions by startups and businesses. Such public-private partnerships promote cooperation and coordination among various stakeholders that drive the

overall innovation ecosystem in any economy. AI-enabled automation and technological innovations lead to sustainable solutions development.

The evolving AI landscape also poses various concerns and challenges for governments across the globe. This is primarily because technological advancements often outpace legislative policies and regulatory frameworks. This is also due to the lack of global consensus regarding different nations' AI policies, which creates inconsistencies and adds to the complexity to digital global governance issues. There is also a need to balance the pace of innovation with the evolving regulatory environment. Over-regulation may choke AI progress (developments), while under-regulation may lead to unauthorised access or misuse of users' data. Training AI models involves complex data sovereignty issues, such as data governance, regulations pertaining to cross-border data flow, conflicting global trade policies, to name a few. Biases and ethical concerns add to these growing challenges. Rapid AI advancements and their applications pose a challenge for industry standards and regulatory frameworks.

Following are some suggested strategies for effective digital governance in the AI age:

- **Public private partnership:** Digital governance in AI age requires collaboration between governments, technology companies, academia and civil society. Such collaboration and partnerships are needed not only at national-level, but at a global scale, which will facilitate global knowledge exchange and transfer (and use) of best practices.
- **Developing global (and national-level) AI ethics and auditing mechanisms:** Independent AI ethics bodies, having diverse representation from tech companies, governments, academia and civil society, to oversee development, deployment, and ensure compliance with local as well as global laws, regulations and standards. Such bodies can prepare auditing mechanisms to



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detect biases, security vulnerabilities, and unethical practices in AI development and implementation.

- **International cooperation and standardisation:** Digital and AI governance in the current connected world is not limited to the geographical boundaries of nations. Given the global impact of AI capabilities, international cooperation is essential to build harmonised AI and digital governance frameworks that are acceptable to all.
- **Legislative and regulatory frameworks:** Governments worldwide recognise the challenges posed by the AI capabilities if not used in a sensible manner. AI regulations and legislative policies are needed at the national level which will provide a fertile ground for AI development (and deployment) and also controls it against any unethical usage. The European Union's AI Act published in the year 2024 is one such example for others to follow.
- **Digital literacy and citizen participation:** Public involvement in digital governance is pivotal for its success. Digital literacy initiatives with AI capabilities, such

as digital content in vernacular languages, real-time speech recognition and translation, automated chatbots in native languages are excellent examples that can bridge the digital literacy gap and enable enhanced citizen participation in governance.

From ChatGPT to DeepSeek, AI advancements and capabilities of large language models are revolutionising the applications and business use cases across industries. Most of us have experienced some common examples of automated chatbots, graphic media and content creation, messaging apps, etc., in this regard. Highlighting a recent example, Satya Nadela, the CEO of Microsoft, shared a story (on X) of a small-town sugarcane farmer from Baramati co-operative from Maharashtra (India) who could enhance crop yields, reduce chemical usage and optimise water consumption due to integration of AI technology in agriculture. To this, the tech billionaire, Elon Musk commented, "AI will improve everything." As we see, AI applications in digital governance have a huge scope, and experts believe that this is just the beginning. 



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The globalisation of markets and the increasing importance of talent management are interrelated phenomena that require a strategic and integrated approach.

♦ PROF RASHMI BHATIA, JAIPURIA INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT, GHAZIABAD.

MANAGEMENT

Managing talent globally

The world has undergone profound transformations over the past decade, marked by the diminishing importance of borders and the easing of barriers to the movement of people and goods. This shift has been driven by advances in technology, trade agreements, and changes in global economic policies. Despite these rapid changes, local cultures, traditions, and historical roots continue to play a vital role in shaping the identity and values of communities around the globe.

The importance of adaptation in a global environment

The concept of talent management has gained immense popularity worldwide, despite being a relatively recent development in the field of management. However, the diversity of management approaches and practices across the globe has led to varying manifestations of talent management in different organisations. This has resulted in multiple meanings and interpretations of the concept, creating challenges and divergent perspectives on its development. From a business and economic standpoint, the ability to attract, develop, and retain talented employees has become crucial for companies to maintain

their competitiveness in both domestic and international markets.

The forces driving companies to develop their talent management strategies and practices are not limited to national boundaries. Instead, they are influenced by global factors such as increasing competition, the emergence of new economic systems, industry consolidation, and the rise of multinational enterprises operating in various markets worldwide. These factors have significant consequences for a company's talent management, as they must adapt to the changing landscape to remain competitive. The trend of talent mobility has also become a critical aspect of talent management, as talented individuals are no longer confined to their home locations and are sought after by companies globally. This has made talent management strategies, approaches, and practices extremely important for the long-term survival of not only individual companies but also regions and countries.

As a result, there is a growing need to focus on talent management and its practices, which must reflect global experience while being integrated and embedded in local contextual specificity. The role of talent management in organisational success cannot be overstated, as economic dynamics, regional-level competition, and talent mobility across countries have transformed it into a vitally global issue for companies and

As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, companies must be able to attract and retain talent from a diverse range of backgrounds and locations

countries. This has led researchers, organisations, and managers to discuss the key internal and external factors affecting talent management systems in different countries. They are also seeking to find adequate mechanisms for adapting talent management to existing national cultures, building talent attraction and retention tools, and striking a balance between advanced talent management practices developed by developed market firms and those aligned with a country-specific environment.

From a global perspective, the demand and competition for talent are becoming increasingly

intense. This makes it essential for companies to develop sophisticated talent management systems that can operate across geographical and cultural barriers. These systems should be able to convert global challenges into opportunities for innovation and creativity, ultimately contributing to the long-term success of a firm. In this context, talent management can be seen as a mechanism and enabler of a firm's long-term success. By developing effective talent management strategies, companies can navigate

the complexities of the global market, attract and retain top talent, and drive innovation and growth. Ultimately, the ability to manage talent effectively will be a key differentiator for companies seeking to succeed in an increasingly competitive and globalised business environment.

The importance of talent management is further underscored by the need for companies to adapt to changing global dynamics. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, companies must be able to attract and retain talent from a diverse range of backgrounds and locations. This requires a deep understanding of the global talent market, as well as the ability to develop talent management strategies that are tailored to the specific needs of the organisation. By doing so, companies can ensure that they have the skills and

expertise needed to compete in an increasingly complex and competitive global market. Furthermore, effective talent management can also contribute to the development of a company's competitive advantage, as it enables the organisation to innovate, adapt, and respond to changing market conditions more quickly and effectively.

Talent management has become a critical aspect of business strategy, and its importance will only continue to grow as the global market becomes increasingly competitive. Companies that are able to develop effective talent management strategies will be better positioned to succeed in the long term, as they will be able to attract and retain top talent, drive innovation and growth, and navigate the complexities of the global market. As such, it is essential for companies to prioritise talent management and develop strategies that are tailored to their specific needs and goals. By doing so, they can ensure that they have the skills and expertise needed to compete in an increasingly complex and competitive global market, and ultimately achieve long-term success.

In this rapidly evolving global landscape, regions and countries face significant challenges in adapting to the processes of globalisation. The ability to adjust and respond to these changes is crucial for survival, competition, and leadership in an environment characterised by turbulent and overwhelming transformations. Effective adaptation requires a deep understanding of global trends, the ability to innovate, and the capacity to develop strategies that leverage local strengths while embracing global opportunities.

Talent management: A strategic imperative

The primary responsibilities of global talent management encompass a broad range of activities, including recruitment, selection, training and development, performance evaluation, compensation, labour relations, and career advancement for future leaders. To effectively execute these tasks, it is essential to delve deeper into the nuances



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of culturally, historically, and economically diverse environments. Traditionally, talent management has been touched upon in human resource management and leadership textbooks, as well as organisational behaviour literature, with a primary focus on the practices of companies in developed economies. While some textbooks, handbooks, and edited volumes have explored the strategic aspects of talent management, highlighting its significance and providing examples from developed countries, there is a notable lack of representation from emerging markets. This oversight underscores the need for a more comprehensive understanding of talent management that accounts for the unique challenges and opportunities presented by diverse global contexts. By broadening the scope of talent management to include examples and insights from emerging markets, organisations can better navigate the complexities of a globalised workforce and develop more effective strategies for attracting, retaining, and developing top talent.

Talent management has emerged as a strategic imperative in the global environment, focusing on the development of the most effective configurations of managerial practices

Talent management has emerged as a strategic imperative in the global environment,

focusing on the development of the most effective configurations of managerial practices. The primary goal of talent management is to ensure a constant flow of talent into and within organisations, enabling them to sustain competitive advantages in both domestic and international markets. This involves a range of activities, including:

- **Talent attraction:** Developing strategies to attract the best talent from around the world, including international recruitment, employer branding, and competitive compensation packages.
- **Talent development:** Implementing programs to develop the skills and competencies of existing employees, such as training, mentoring, and leadership development initiatives.
- **Talent retention:** Creating an environment that retains top talent, including opportunities for career advancement, flexible work arrangements, and a positive work culture.
- **Talent deployment:** Ensuring that the right talent is in the right place at the right time, through effective succession planning, job rotation, and project assignment.

Benefits of effective talent management

Companies that have successfully designed,

Companies that have successfully designed, implemented, and systematically developed their talent management practices have consistently achieved high efficiency and effectiveness in their operations.

implemented, and systematically developed their talent management practices have consistently achieved high efficiency and effectiveness in their operations. The benefits of effective talent management include:

- **Improved competitiveness:** Access to a global talent pool and the ability to attract and retain the best talent, enabling companies to compete more effectively.
- **Enhanced innovation:** A diverse and skilled workforce that can drive innovation and respond to changing market conditions.
- **Increased efficiency:** Better alignment of talent with business objectives, leading to improved productivity and reduced costs.
- **Better decision making:** A deeper understanding of global markets and trends, enabling more informed decision making.

Case study: Infosys

Infosys, a large Indian multinational corporation, offers end-to-end business solutions, including IT services, engineering, consulting, and business process outsourcing business consulting to clients worldwide. It has a global presence, serving customers in over 50 countries, and is committed to providing innovative technologies to help clients generate value through transformation and renovation. To achieve its strategic objectives, Infosys prioritises the principles of 'new' and 'renew' for all its businesses, focusing on developing solutions and service offerings, client and employee engagement processes, and operational processes.

The company's talent management strategy is a key aspect of its success, with a focus on attracting, developing,



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and retaining high-performing and talented employees. Infosys has a hybrid talent definition and treats talent in a universalistic and individual-based way, aiming to create a pool of future leaders. The company has introduced various programs, such as the Fast Track Program, to identify high performers and provide them with challenging opportunities to grow within the organisation. Infosys also creates an entrepreneurial environment to empower talent, recognising and rewarding performance, providing opportunities for knowledge and skill acquisition, and prioritising openness, integrity, and respect for employees.

Infosys' recruitment process is targeted at top Indian universities, as well as campuses in the US, UK, Australia, and China, with a rigorous multi-level selection process to find the best talent. The company strives to be an 'employer of choice' by attracting high-performers who can support its competitive position in the global technology services industry. Infosys has launched several programs with academic institutions to build a partnership model that enhances the competences of a pool of highly capable talent, especially in the IT area.

The company's leadership and succession planning are implemented through the Infosys Leadership Institute, which identifies high-potential performers and assists them in developing and executing their personal development plans. Infosys has also invested in training and development programs, including a corporate university and continuous education programs, to keep employees' competences up-to-date and relevant for its fast-changing operational requirements.

Infosys has a strong commitment to open appraisal systems, gathering 360-degree feedback, which serves as a basis for

performance appraisal and innovation. The company empowers employees through trust and accountability, with measures such as overhauling its performance management system, creating an internal marketplace for employees to work on challenging assignments, and strengthening its focus on providing a transparent and safe working environment. Infosys trains its employees to think like designers, using rationality and creativity to design software, processes, and strategies, and implements a five-step approach to understand customer needs and create innovative solutions.

In terms of mobility, Infosys enables multiple job choices for talent within the company, providing information on positions and developmental opportunities through the "Learn, Practice, Apply" framework. The company's goal is to enhance employee expertise in the current position and ensure an employee's capacity to perform in another role through up-skilling or cross-skilling. Overall, Infosys recognises the crucial role of human capital in its survival and prosperity and invests heavily in creating favourable conditions for its employees to attract, develop, and retain top talent in the competitive IT industry.

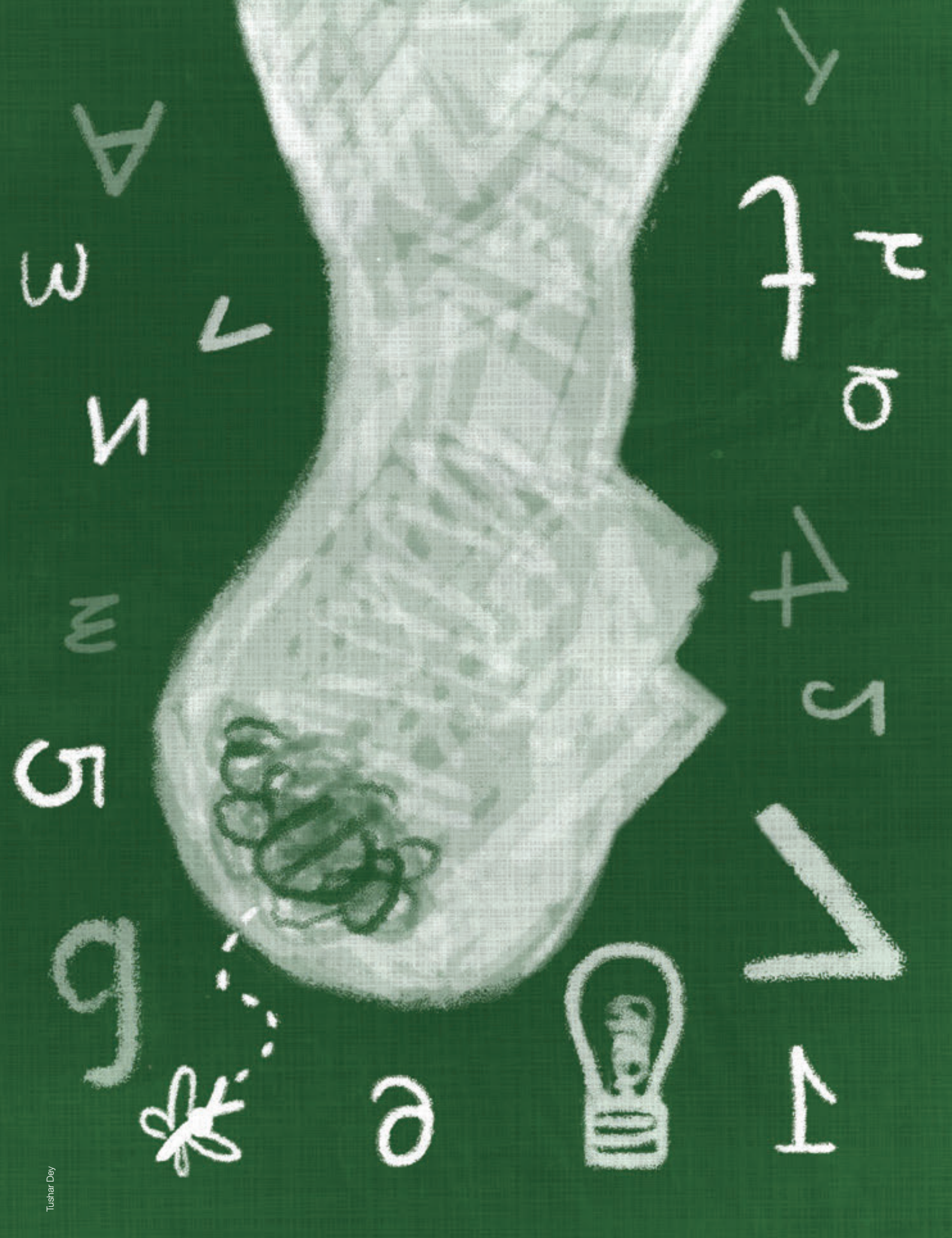
Conclusion

In conclusion, the globalisation of markets and the increasing importance of talent management are interrelated phenomena that require a strategic and integrated approach. By understanding the implications of globalisation and developing effective talent management practices, organisations can position themselves for success in a rapidly changing world. This involves not only attracting and retaining top talent but also creating an environment that fosters innovation, diversity, and continuous learning, ultimately driving competitiveness and sustainability in the global marketplace. ■



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To create a truly inclusive workplace, organisations must become neuro-affirmative, requiring genuine respect in how individuals think and function, creating environments that accommodate all, and thrive on innovation.

◆ LEANNE MASKELL, AUTHOR, *AUDHD: BLOOMING DIFFERENTLY*

HR

Neurodiverse talent

In recent years, the conversation around diversity and inclusion in the workplace has expanded beyond race, gender, and sexual orientation to include neurodiversity. Neurodivergent individuals—those with conditions such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and dyspraxia (which can be disabilities in law)—represent around 20 per cent of the global population. Despite this, they remain significantly under-represented in employment.

Recent statistics show that half of neurodivergent adults have experienced discrimination when looking for a job. One in five neurodivergent employees report experiencing harassment or discrimination at work, and only half feel safe disclosing their neurodivergence within their organisation.

The employment rates for neurodivergent individuals are alarmingly low, with just 29 per cent of autistic adults in the UK currently in work, and 85 per cent of autistic individuals in the United States being unemployed. These figures highlight a critical gap in workplace diversity efforts.

This is extremely important for employers, because not only do they have legal duties to support workers with disabilities in the workplace, but also because they miss out on exceptional, much-needed cognitive talent.

Why are neurodivergent individuals overlooked?

Despite increased awareness of diversity, many companies still struggle to integrate neurodivergent talent into their workforce effectively. There are several reasons why neurodivergent individuals remain excluded or face significant challenges in professional environments:

Rigid hiring processes. Traditional hiring processes often disadvantage neurodivergent individuals. Standard interview formats typically rely on strong social skills, eye contact, and quick responses—traits that may not align with neurodivergent communication styles. In many cases, highly qualified neurodivergent candidates are overlooked simply because they do not conform to neurotypical social expectations, despite these not being relevant to the job itself.

Employers who fail to offer alternative hiring methods, such as work trials, project-based assessments, or structured interviews with clear expectations, risk missing out on innovative talent. By prioritising social norms over skill sets, organisations exclude individuals who may have the precise analytical, creative, or problem-solving abilities they need.

Lack of disclosure or adjustments processes. Although many employers will ask

Neurodivergent employees may struggle in standardised workplaces that are not designed for their needs. Open-plan offices, excessive noise, and constant interruptions can be overwhelming for individuals with sensory sensitivities

job applicants to state whether they require reasonable adjustments at interview stages, what happens next is out of their control.

Many people may choose not to disclose their neurodivergence, as the risks of stigma and discrimination outweigh the potential benefits.

Too often, this continues into formal employment, with no clear or accessible policies in place for disclosure or accessing tailored support. As employees navigate the pressures of probation periods, it can be extremely vulnerable to seek help, especially when it's unclear whether this will be provided.

Following probation, employees may feel awkward about disclosing, based on the fact that they didn't do so earlier.

As a result, neurodivergence is often only identified when performance issues arise. This places employers in a legally grey area,

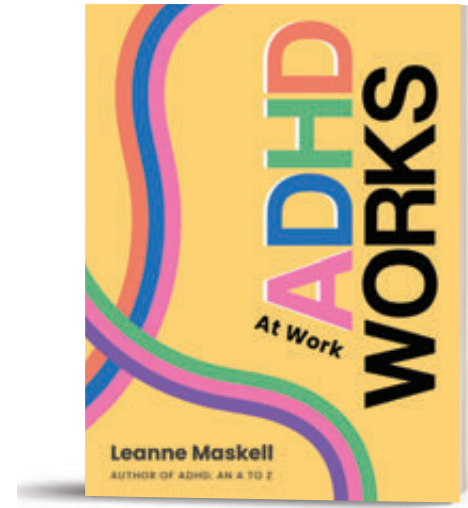
especially as it's possible that they should have recognised signs of disability, even without disclosure.

This cycle means that neurodiversity is often linked with fear and stigma for employers and employees alike, resulting in a lack of psychological safety, stifling innovation and contributions.

Lack of workplace accommodations.

Neurodivergent employees may struggle in standardised workplaces that are not designed for their needs. Open-plan offices, excessive noise, and constant interruptions can be overwhelming for individuals with sensory sensitivities.

Without appropriate accommodations, such as noise-canceling headphones, quiet workspaces, or flexible working arrangements, many neurodivergent employees experience burnout and decreased productivity. As the



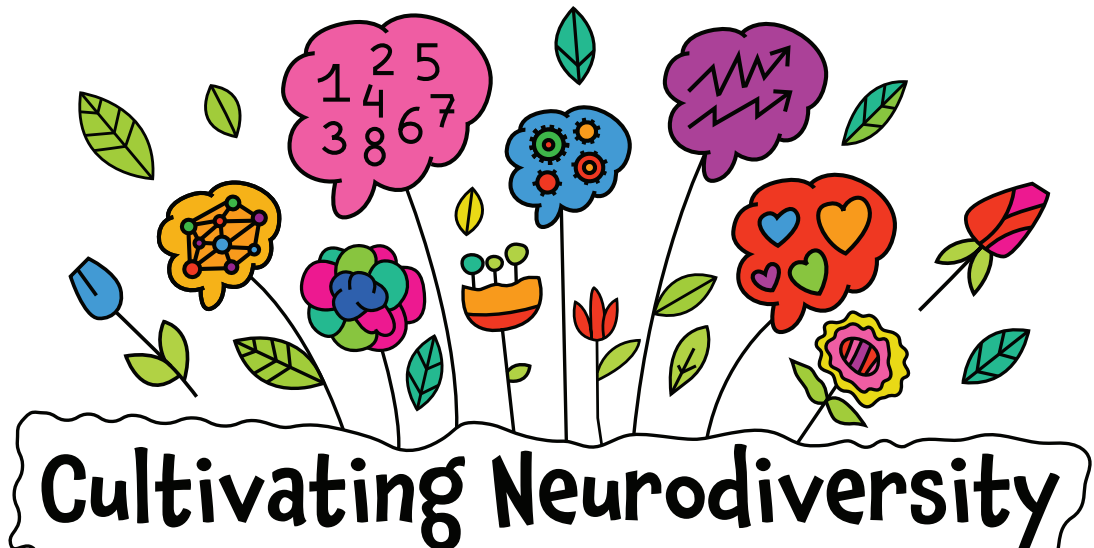
support an individual requires will be individual to their conditions and needs, this can be confusing for employers to navigate, often fearing 'setting an example' to other employees who may seek help.

Employers may also perceive accommodations as costly or inconvenient. However, the majority of adjustments are simple and free, such as offering remote work options, flexible hours, or written instructions instead of verbal. Implementing these accommodations can drastically improve job satisfaction and retention for neurodivergent employees.

Making this support available to everyone will help employers to go above and beyond their legal obligations to provide a genuinely neuro-affirmative working environment, where employees can reach their full potential.

Unconscious bias and stigma. As public awareness of neurodivergence has skyrocketed in recent years, many employees may hold misconceptions about this, leading to unintentional discrimination. This could range from misunderstanding the nature of a disability in law, to making assumptions about a neurodivergent employee's competence, for example.

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As this behaviour can result in discrimination within the workplace, it's absolutely crucial for employers to ensure employees are equipped with the skills and knowledge to embrace difference, rather than stigmatise it.

Lack of leadership representation.

When neurodivergent professionals struggle to advance in their careers due to systemic barriers, organisations lose out on diverse perspectives at decision-making levels. Without representation, companies may remain unaware of the specific challenges neurodivergent employees face, particularly in relation to career progression, leading to policies that fail to address real concerns.

How employers can bridge the inclusion gap

To create a truly inclusive workplace, organisations must become neuro-affirmative, requiring genuine respect in how individuals think and function, creating environments that

accommodate all, and thrive on innovation. Here is how companies can close the inclusion gap:

Create a neuro-affirmative foundation

Having policies and procedures in place that are representative of the diverse needs of a workforce, recognising that everybody thinks differently and may require support, is key for employers to build psychological safety.

Policies on topics such as workplace accommodations and disclosure of neurodivergence should be easily accessible and relevant to a range of audiences, including HR, managers, and employees. Providing guidance on talking about neurodivergence can be extremely helpful for everybody, ensuring that they are literally on the same page.

It's very important that such policies are cross-organisational, created with input from HR, employee resource groups, and senior

leaders, ensuring that it is representative of the reality of an organisation.

Provide neuro-affirmative training

With policies in place, it is vital to ensure that employees feel safe and confident in using these. As fear of vulnerability can often result in

a lack of conversations all together, equipping employees with the tools to acknowledge difference, collaborate empathetically, and communicate clearly, will help foster stronger connections throughout an organisation.

It is also important to tailor training to certain groups as may be needed, such as ensuring HR and managers understand their legal duties in relation to disability and workplace accommodations. Making such training mandatory is important to minimise risk—neurodiversity affects everybody at work.

Create adaptable workplaces that support everybody

Although neurodivergent people may require certain adjustments to working environments,

such as working from a quiet environment, such measures can also help everybody else—regardless of neurotype!

The COVID pandemic demonstrated the ability for many workplaces to adapt working cultures, and flexibility within the workplace benefits everyone, such as parents and those with caring responsibilities.

To do so also enables employers to avoid potentially uncomfortable conversations about medical conditions, and to instead focus on support.

Ultimately, neurodivergence is about trust, because it is invisible. It is about trusting neurodivergent employees to be able to advocate for their needs at work, and trusting their colleagues to treat them with respect and dignity. Creating a culture of trusting all employees will empower them to be loyal, productive, and supportive, in the ways that work for them.

Employers ultimately have the choice—enjoy the benefits of a cognitively diverse workforce, or battle against it, harming everybody. In our fast-moving world, adapting the workplace to the individual enables everybody to work together as a team. **IM**

Neurodivergence is about trusting neurodivergent employees to be able to advocate for their needs at work, and trusting their colleagues to treat them with respect and dignity



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