



Human Capital

REALISING BUSINESS STRATEGY THROUGH PEOPLE

Vol. 23 Issue No. 2 JULY 2019 ₹100

ATYPICAL Plasticity of Work

INTERVIEW

Realising The Future Of Work

Indrajit Belgundi,
PLM, APJ, Dell Technologies

PERSONA

The Disciplined Captain

Niketh Sundar,
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CASE STUDY

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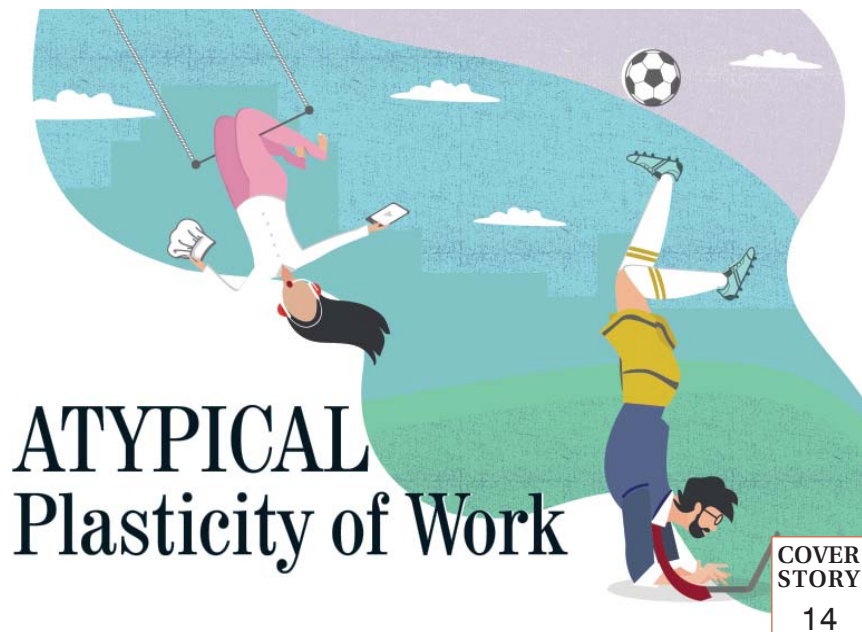
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From The Publisher's Desk



Our July edition of Human Capital explores the world of Atypical or Gig working with a unique title, "The Atypical...Plasticity Of Work." The article draws inspiration from the famous lines, "Our lives are defined by opportunities, even the ones we miss," from the movie, "The Curious Case Of Benjamin Button." The story established a connect with the millennials and the Gen Z, making use of insights from studies carried out by leading organisations such as Ernst & Young, Deloitte, and McKinsey. The emphasis on India making incisive headway in the gig working space at a global level has been keenly impressed upon in this edition.

Globally, India has the highest number of under 25's. And this generation is credited the most with disrupting everything, and gravitating towards gig

work for the promise of greater work-life balance. And recent technologies like Skype, Slack, LinkedIn, and Dropbox have made gig life a reality.

This month's edition will talk about today's evolution of the Gig Economy. And in order to draw conclusions, numerous journals and publications have been referred. Industry leaders and scholars have also participated in the growing debate on the 'new world of work'. While 'Gig economy' came about as a terminology only recently, it has been in existence, albeit in an unrefined form, since ages.

This issue delves into the challenges posed by atypical working and the need to streamline processes within organisations to make Gig working a norm in the coming days. The Interview section by Indrajit Belgundi, Dell Technologies highlights the impact of Artificial Intelligence and Internet of Things on work and life in the future. He also discusses industry specific significance role that shall be assayed by technology and the growing importance of gig working in the future.

Further, the edition discovers the growing importance of effective communication in a modern-day organisation. The manner in which technology and automation has been used to empower the 'human' element in an establishment is indeed a food for thought.

Carpe Diem!

Neha Jain
Managing Partner

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The Gig Affair

A nuanced approach is required to manage the complexity of the gig economy.

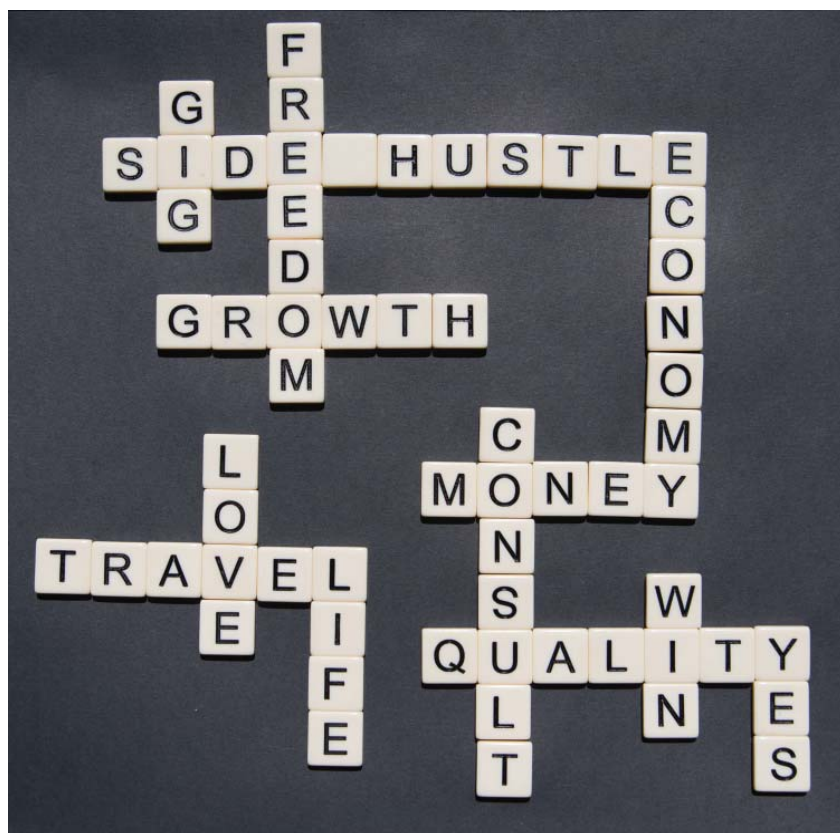
BY JYOTI SINGH VISVANATH

Working in the gig economy has been likened to having an affair instead of a meaningful relationship. The precarious nature of work, the lack of scaffolding by an organisation, the transience accompanied by intensity, all point in the direction of an affair that is not meant to last. But is that really true? The term gig work maybe new and trending, but the nature of work has been in existence for centuries. It was only after the industrial revolution that organisations were formed and

necessitated workers to be in a seat for a fixed part of the day.

A confluence of factors gave rise to the current wave of the gig economy - the recession of 2007-08, which made companies seek cost-cutting measures through employee redundancies and replacement with contractual workers on assignment, the influx of millennials and generation Z into the workforce, technological advances like smartphones and app-based platforms, the start-up culture, and a shift towards aggregation of both services and those who provide the service. To unpack the psychological impact of these factors on both employers and gig workers is harder than one thinks. This is largely because the data and information are sourced from more mature western markets, despite the fact that India's highly unregulated, informal sector has been surviving and thriving on the gig economy through the ages. Take for instance, the cook who earns a living by cooking in four or more houses on a daily basis or the migrant worker who works on a farm in another state during the harvest season or even the teacher working in a school during the day but taking tuitions at home in the evening.

According to the McKinsey Global Institute Report (2016), the gig economy encompasses many kinds of casual work for hire - from those doing precarious work to supplement meagre incomes, freelancers using apps and online platforms to source work and other more financially comfortable workers. Basically, the gig economy provides services that are easy to access, on demand. Currently unregulated and relying on the good



offices of the organisation and the gig worker, a nuanced approach is required to manage the complexity of the gig economy.

Gig workers are expected to constitute half the workforce by 2020 and 80 percent by 2030. According to PayPal's 2018 report, one fourth of global freelancers are from India. Of the two to three billion USD global freelancer market, India has a share of one billion. Among start-ups, 70 percent of firms use gig workers for non-core jobs.

The gig work debate

Organisations relying on gig workers can hire without the fear of attrition, spend less on training overheads, and save on office costs. They also benefit from reduced liability and the cost of providing resources as most gig workers use their own equipment.

The benefits of gig work are many. They give freedom to workers to choose projects as per their own schedules - to take on as much or as little work as they need, on hours that suit them and their lifestyle. Businesses, on the other hand, especially where demand for labour fluctuates, can access a good-sized workforce which can fill in when needed. Gig workers can work for many organisations at the same time and experience no gender difference in terms of assignment sharing and payment. People who are averse and often suffer negative health and well-being to the enforced need of being physically present at work also benefit from this flexibility. This is especially true of millennials and generation Z, who do not like to be tied to a routine, and older workers, who need to take time to look after children or care for aging parents. Employees facing a mid-career crisis treat gig work as an opportunity to lengthen their earning years by making use of their skills in a disparate manner.

However, it does not always translate as such. Gig workers are neither employees nor self-employed and may be exploited by businesses through worker misclassification, information asymmetry, surveillance, and wage theft. They may have a flexible schedule, but end up working intensely

long hours, often afraid to take time off even when they are ill, because their income is tied to their personal delivery of work. In addition, the work itself is uncertain and insecure, which leads to a constant hustle. What could be a tsunami one month could easily turn into a drought the very next. The lack of safety nets like paid leave, the backing of an organisation, law and regulation in turn create greater stress for the already stressed workers. On freelancing sites, algorithms create an unrelenting pattern of overwork. Freelancers may have to charge lower rates to seem attractive to clients and beat global competition. The psychological risks are exacerbated by isolation and a lack of belonging to an organisation.

From an organisational perspective, gig workers have poor identification with normative behaviour and the company culture. Their presence tends to dilute the culture by creating silos. When teamwork is necessary, this can quickly become dysfunctional. In addition, organisations need to constantly upgrade and create new tech platforms, which is very expensive.

The psychological impact of gig work

Management theory differentiates between legal and psychological contracts in employment. The latter are the unwritten agreements, either explicit or implicit regarding the scope of work, use of initiative, evolution of roles and rewards for loyalty.

Gigs are essentially transactional not relational. There is limited commitment on the part of the organisation, which can make workers unhappy. Especially, when they feel that the psychological contract has not been honoured. The organisation may respond that the worker consented to the work conditions. This issue with consent is a grey area because a worker may agree to work under Dickensian conditions of low quality and poorly paid gig work when there is a lack of jobs and there are no options available.

Furthermore, perceptions of the worker and organisation may not be aligned. As in the eye of the beholder, one party can believe the other is

“Gig workers are neither employees nor self-employed and may be exploited by businesses. Also, they end up working intensely long hours because their income is tied to their personal delivery of work.”

“The financial insecurity and uncertainty of gig work also leaves an imprint at the community level through increased individuation and isolation resulting in an inability to contribute.”

failing to live up to the promises that have not been articulated. The social context within which this happens creates a power imbalance. Gig workers need trust and reciprocity from the organisations they work for, along with a sense of fairness. For instance, drivers of app based platforms are sometimes deactivated for poor ratings without an opportunity to state their case.

Workers on app-based platforms often ask for operational costs, which might include maintenance of their vehicle and data for their phones. Some view gig work as being chained to an app, running across town in the hope of good ratings so that they are not deactivated. The inability to negotiate rates or bargain collectively is an added constraint.

Gig work is often associated with the young, who have limited professional experience and are willing to work for inadequate security. They carry the obligations of employees without the commensurate benefits and would prefer to be treated like humans and not algorithms.

A gig worker needs to constantly reinvest in their skills, upgrading or expanding as necessary. This expense is drawn from a variable cash flow and can drain already stressed financial resources. Taxation poses another problem when the earnings are unstable and pay outs have to be made on a regular basis, in advance. Financial anxiety related to payments and debt can lead to a poverty consciousness that results in an inability to prioritise other needs.

The high autonomy and responsibility in gig work can often lead to a bad work-life balance and feelings of guilt. In addition, the stress of always being 'on call' can lead to physiological effects in the body that can result in chronic disease like hypertension and type 2 diabetes in susceptible workers.

Overcoming stress and burnout is a growing challenge for gig workers. The 24/7 nature of tech work can result in poor memory and concentration, fatigue, moodiness, feeling like they are 'running on empty' added to frustration, discontentment and anxiety. There is also the issue of ambiguity and maintaining boundaries as sometimes friendships and professional relationships can overlap as in the case of musicians

and other creative arts.

In a country like India, personal safety is also an important consideration for female gig workers who enter the premises of the client to provide a service through an app based platform.

The impact of gig work on family and community is an oft neglected area of concern. Young people end up living at home longer because they cannot afford to leave or support themselves. This increases the burden on parents, who might also be taking care of their aging parents. The financial insecurity and uncertainty of gig work also leaves an imprint at the community level through increased individuation and isolation resulting in an inability to contribute.

End of the affair

Despite its growing pains, the gig economy has itself become a platform for the expression of passion and dreams. The percolation upwards from the lower and middle income groups to white collar workers is organically giving birth to new and cutting-edge ways for individuals to come together and create in a manner that has never been explored before. An example of which are collaborative working spaces, where professionals can work in an environment that allows for both individual creativity and the opportunity to work with others on passion projects. This may well be the future of organisations.

On the other hand, most of the highest paying gig work is currently in the area of artificial intelligence, especially deep learning. It would be wise to consider if we are not actually creating, through gig work, the very means by which it can be eliminated. 

About the Author

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

Humanoid: A New Human Or A New Robot?

The term 'Humanoid' is derived from the English word 'Human'. It has the appearance of a human, but is not exactly human! Then what is it? A Robot!

Tech Mahindra, one of the market leaders in IT services introduces the first Human Resource Humanoid 'K2', for its Noida Special Economic Zone campus. K2 will support all HR transactions and provide constant assistance to the HR team in delivering an enhanced employee experience.

In conversation with Human Capital, Harshvendra Soin, Chief People Officer, Tech Mahindra, said, it is imperative to use data analytics in today's scenario. "There are many tools available today, which can talk to us about which candidates should be shortlisted, which candidates are likely to have longevity in the organization and which candidates are likely to be more successful. And over the period of time, we have realized that AI tools have 85% of accuracy. Hence, all our hiring decision making process is taken



through intense data analysis at every stage." He also believes that in today's digital era, the changing talent landscape is making organisations to focus on a human-centric experience. They are focused on leveraging technology to enhance this experience by making it more meaningful and personalised. K2 has been designed in a such a way that it would add value to the complete employee lifecycle across various touchpoints.

The above process will also help in reinforcing diversity to the organisation. Mr. Soin said that Tech Mahindra heavily endorses policies related to diversity and inclusion. There are people from 71 countries working across their offices in 95 countries. And they have their first robot as an employee with a proper employee code in their organisation. K2 will also cater to the needs of the specially-abled employees since it is able to respond with text display along with speech. K2 can address general and specific HR related employee queries and will help HR team to focus on other important areas for employee development. **HC**



More A Necessity, Less A Fad

Getting people to become more productive and committed to the organisation is always an issue of concern.

BY GAUTAM BRAHMA

The changing trends in fashion are vastly evident, with certain designs gaining popularity for a period of time, and this style being made a part of nearly every one's wardrobe. After a while, when a new style makes its entry, these clothes seem old-fashioned and odd on anyone adorning them. Sometimes, we see the old-style reemerging after a few years, albeit with a small tweak that distinguishes it from its older version. A similar pattern in discussions around management is also apparent. Certain concerns gain precedence for a while, and then vanish into the background, while other issues emerge, and are discussed and written about. Often, the older concerns reappear, but get discussed under a new nomenclature. New solutions provided for older problems do make a comeback, at least to certain practitioners, as old wine in new bottles. A case in point is the path from Management By Objectives (MBO) through Hoshin Kanri to Objectives and Key Results (OKR) management.

Literature on management, unlike the garment industry, has always been indicating certain issues which never go out of fashion. One of the things that gets highlighted is getting people to become more productive and committed to the organisation. While there is a broad body of consensus around key practices here, research continues to generate new insights and validate old ones at the same time.

Right from 1887, when the late

William Procter, the famed founder of Procter and Gamble, introduced a profit-sharing scheme for his workers, it has become evident that this is a very dependable way of increasing engagement. Profit sharing evolved into employee stock ownership programmes. Most progressive companies give shares to employees to align their priorities with those of the company, and also to help share profits. Close to 40% of all workers in the US benefit from some kind of profit-sharing scheme at work. Many start-ups, including those in India, have Employee Stock Option Plans (ESOP). In fact, LetsVenture, an Indian platform for angel investing, has announced that it is building a standard framework to help start-ups issue and manage ESOPs. Apart from helping companies, there are many ways in which ESOPs help employees. A 2017 National Center For Employee Ownership (NCEO) study showed that across industries, employees who owned company stocks had a higher income and a longer tenure. The nuance here is the obvious concentration of risk. If the valuation of the company dwindles after issuing shares, not only do the employees experience a drop in their salaries, they also see their wealth reducing. Moreover, when there are no clear avenues for monetisation, mergers and acquisitions pose an imminent risk to the employees. Thus, beyond a point, ESOPs lose their charm as an element for employee engagement.

Another commonly accepted route to engagement is through providing

employees an opportunity to directly contribute to society, by offering their time and labour to nonprofit organisations. At times, employees are allowed to do this during working days. More often than not, such work happens outside of the working hours, but employees are offered freebies such as travel, hospitality, and recognition. Companies that do this meet their legal corporate social responsibility, make themselves attractive to such potential hires who see this as a virtue, and satisfy existing employees who see value in such work.

Certain researched findings have come forth with interesting nuances.

- People who value doing work that is good for society often do it for free
- At times, there is an inverse correlation between blood donation and money
- Men are less motivated by altruism than women

In the light of such insights, companies will be required to tread carefully. If they incentivise nonprofit developmental activity beyond a point, they may meet their PR goals, but not build employee engagement. Moreover, incentivisation has gender and cultural sensitivities. This calls for a sound Judgement to match horses for courses.

Effective deployment of an inspirational company mission also helps in building engagement, and there is general consensus that this works. However, the nuance here is that unless conformance to the mission and values is made apparent in practice by the senior management, not only does the mission building and communication effort get futile, employees become cynical towards all future attempts to inspire them to put in greater effort as well. Amnesty International, the well-known International NGO that monitors human rights across the world, was recently in the news for losing employees through exits, and two suicides, owing to a number of poor management practices, including public bullying by senior managers in the workplace. In short, the company did not practice what it preached. To be fair, the organisation had responded through a comprehensive enquiry and course correction, including disciplinary

action. However, it will take a while for the internal and external image to be restored.

Interestingly, some emerging drivers for enhancing engagement are totally beyond the control of the employer. For instance, it was found that in the US, employees who are better-off work longer hours than those who are not. The conventional wisdom was that after people manage to reach a level of compensation, beyond a point, they lose the urge to work. While the issue is complex, it can be speculated that social media promotes images of conspicuous consumption of status goods. By definition, there is no satiation to this need. There will always be consumer goods and services that are just beyond reach to ensure perpetual dissatisfaction, and enhance the determination to do more to earn more. Here, the trade-off is truly between high engagement and the risk of total burnout.

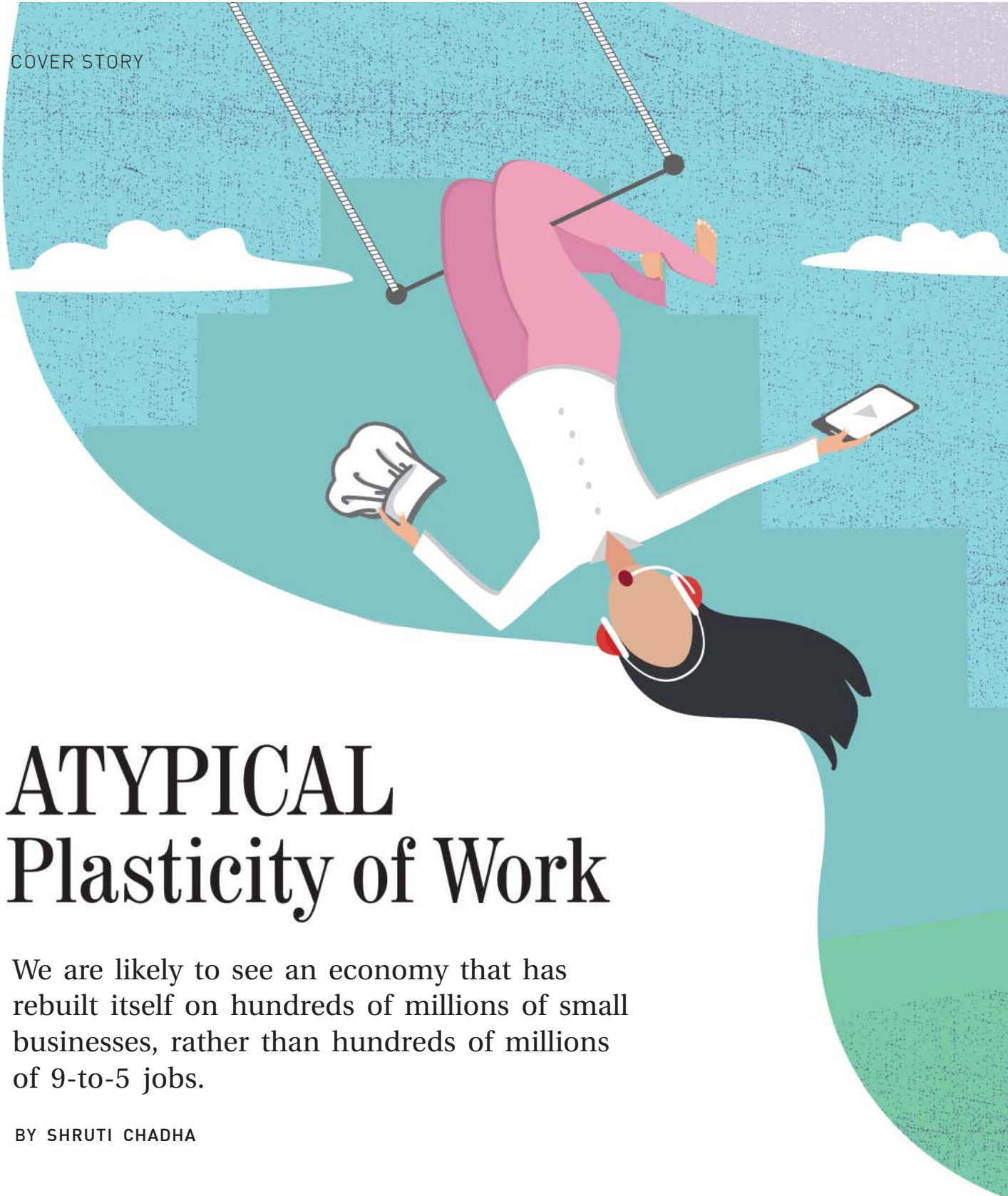
Organisations continue to flatten, thanks to IT, and managers have an ever-increasing number of direct reports. At the same time, workplaces have become complex, with remote workers and contract employees increasingly working alongside those on rolls. Also, mergers and acquisitions continue to disrupt employee relationships with peers and managers. With all this, the issue of employee engagement will continue to be centre stage. We will keep returning to discuss new insights and the nuances emerging in deploying best practices. 

About the Author

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

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ATYPICAL Plasticity of Work

We are likely to see an economy that has rebuilt itself on hundreds of millions of small businesses, rather than hundreds of millions of 9-to-5 jobs.

BY SHRUTI CHADHA

“Our lives are defined by opportunities, even the ones we miss.”

- From the movie, *The Curious Case Of Benjamin Button* (2008).



I was born under unusual circumstances, on 11th November, 1918, the last day of World War I," says the background voice while the screen shows a shocked doctor holding a shrivelled baby boy in his hand. The doctor describes this strange little creature, "He has all the deterioration, the infirmities, not of a new born, but of a man well in his 80s on the way to his grave." And so begins *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, adapted from the 1920s story by F. Scott Fitzgerald, about a man who is born in his eighties and ages backwards. A man, like any of us, who is unable to stop time. As the viewer follows this unusual story, set in New Orleans, from the end of World War I in 1918 going into the 21st century, it gives a unique lens into how our choices shape us and our future: to do and undo are rare opportunities that shape our lives. It is a grand tale of a not-so-ordinary man and the people and places he discovers along the way, the loves he finds, the joys of life and the sadness of death, and what lasts beyond time. As the Journey unfolds, one of Button's line, "Our lives are defined by opportunities, even the ones we miss," becomes the parables of success and happiness.

The millennials and the Gen Z could not agree more with this. Gen Z is here to make the right choices at the right time, and maximise on all possible opportunities. Savvy and practical, the skills and attitudes acquired by them in their brief life span are impacting the present and the future of work. Responding to a recent survey by Ernst & Young, only 15% chose financial security over job satisfaction. Furthermore, 50% of these respondents cited flexibility as a key priority when looking for an employer, and 73% cited a good work-life balance as the biggest measure of success. The respondents also said that the most important trait for a good boss is respect for work hours.

As the use of technology becomes ubiquitous, the traditional form of employment is also undergoing a massive change. Terms

like 'Uberisation' of the workforce are gaining currency. An atypical workforce, also called Shared Economy, open talent, freelancers, on demand economy, or the Gig economy represents the new paradigm of work. Atypical work refers to employment relationships that do not conform to the standard or 'typical' model of full time, regular, open-ended employment with a single employer over a long-time span. Gig economy is characterised by the prevalence of short-term contracts or freelance work as opposed to permanent jobs.

A Global Contingent Workforce Study by Ernst & Young revealed that 20 percent of organisations with more than 1,000 employees globally have a workforce that comprises of 30 per cent or more contingent workers. Currently, freelancing is the hottest trend in India. According to a PayPal report, India accounts for 50% of the global freelancers, and a majority of them are less than 40 years, and it has the potential to grow as a \$20-30 Billion industry by 2025.

According to a report by McKinsey Global Institute, 20 to 30% of the working age population in developed countries is engaged in independent work. The Gig economy has allowed organisations to engage

"India accounts for 50% of the global freelancers, a majority of them are under the age of 40 and it has the potential to grow up to \$20-30 billion industry by 2025."

– PayPal Report, 2018

the best talent including skilled individuals in mid-to-senior level positions for specific value-add tasks in a cost-effective manner. The emergence of crowdsourcing and freelancing platforms is revolutionising the work landscape in India and overseas to a large extent. This resonates with a famous

Top self-employed countries in Asia

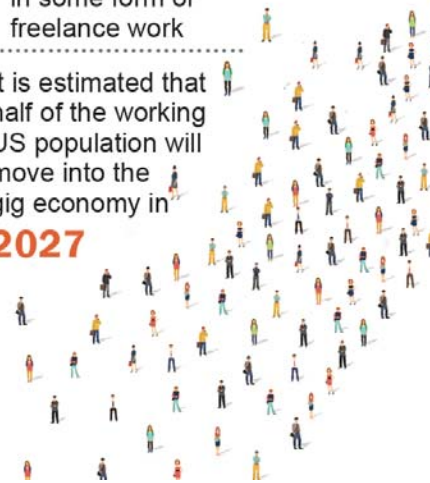
United States stats



Freelancers contribute about
US\$1.4 trillion
to the US economy

About
57 million
Americans participate
in some form of
freelance work

It is estimated that
half of the working
US population will
move into the
gig economy in
2027



dialogue from a 1986 teen Hollywood drama, *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, where a teenager faking an illness to stay off from college says, "Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it," which carries a profound meaning in today's VUCA world.

For Generation Z, the line between work and play has blurred.



79%
INDIA



59%
VIETNAM



50.9%
INDONESIA



36.3%
CHINA



“8 million jobs are required every year for India to keep its employment rate constant, as its unemployed number is increasing by 1.3 million every month.”

– World Bank report

They are never offline and all they know is an always-available workplace. Given their always-on approach to life, millennials and Gen Z see no problem with blending work and life. Checking email even before they get out of bed in the morning, shopping online while at work, exchanging texts and taking conference calls with co-workers after office hours, and then catching up with office mail on a weekend is native to them. Therefore, blending

multiple professions into a working week and balancing their passions while they pay their bills, is not a challenge for this agile generation. We can almost hear them say, “Why are you trying so hard to fit in, when you were born to stand out,” the very lines from *What A Girl Wants*, the Hollywood comedy.

Types of Atypical Workers

Atypical workers cover a large and growing variety of forms of work

and employment characterised by flexibility and reduced security. The forms include part-time work, casual and seasonal work, job sharing, fixed-term contracts, temporary agency work, home-based work, remote working, self-employment, and the work of unpaid spouses or family members in small family-run enterprises. Here is a quick look at each of these.

- **Agency workers:** The term Agency worker is used to describe an individual engaged by a business to perform work for one of the employment business clients (often referred to as an end-user or hirer). Agency workers are often used to cover staff shortages owing to illness, holidays, sabbaticals, or maternity leave, in industries such as construction, in order to meet fluctuating demands.
- **Apprentices:** An apprenticeship involves on-the-job training for the apprentice over a fixed term, during which they also undertake work for their employer.
- **Casual workers:** They provide their labour or services in irregular or informal working arrangements under which there is no obligation to provide or accept work. The flexibility in such arrangements may suit both employer and worker, and often takes the form of one-off tasks or events or being available on an on-call basis. However, there is no obligation on the worker to accept the work. The most spoken of category are those working under

a zero hour contract, wherein the employer does not guarantee to provide work and pays only for the work actually performed. Casual workers are often used in seasonal industries such as agriculture and tourism, or to meet fluctuating demand such as in the construction industry.

- **Consultants and self-employed contractors:** Many self-employed workers are engaged on a consultancy basis. However, a person who works in a consultancy or in an advisory capacity may be an employee. Whether an individual is self-employed or is an employee will depend on the circumstances and the application of relevant case law.
- **Fixed-term workers:** The Fixed-term employees regulations apply only to employees and not to

“Zomato works with 25,000 blue-collar workers every day, while Ola has close to 5.5 lakh driver partners.”

workers. A fixed-term contract therefore refers to a contract of employment that will provide for termination on the expiry of a fixed term or the completion of a particular task.

- **Flexible working:** The statutory right to request flexible working extends to all employees with 26 weeks of continuous service. Employers are under a duty to consider requests reasonably, and to notify employees of a final decision within a three-month decision period.
- **Homeworkers:** There is no statutory definition of a homeworker, and unlike the traditional image of someone with little job security doing tasks on piecemeal basis, a majority of homeworkers are now managerial, professional, technical, or skilled workers. Homeworking is also more common among the self-employed.
- **Part-time workers:** The

“The gig economy is generating 56 percent employment in India and going to grow 25-30 percent per annum.”

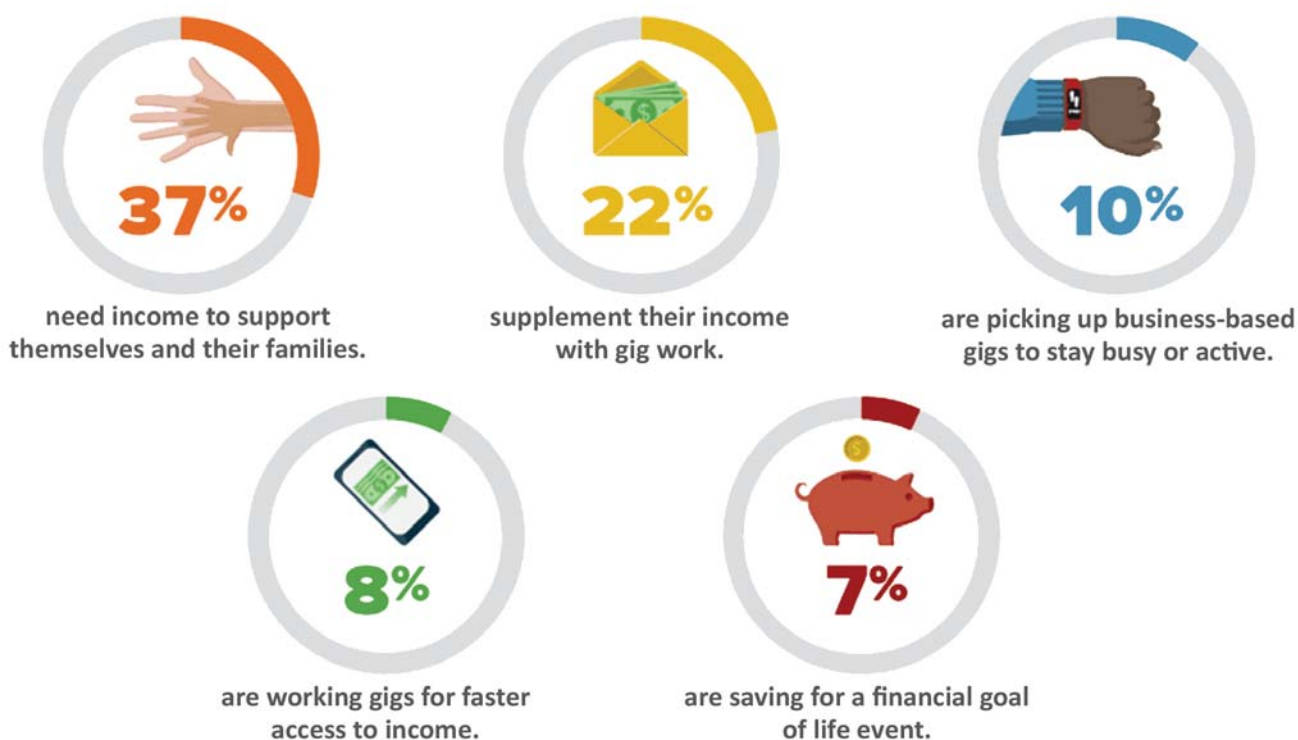
regulations applicable to this area apply to all workers and not just employees. They do not give full-time workers the right to switch to part-time work or vice versa. However, employees in certain circumstances have the right to request flexible working including a change to their working patterns, such as their working hours.

- **Gig Workers:** There is a strange, almost surreal backdrop to the current Gig economy - Gig workers who do not have human bosses. They work for apps and this has been in practice for a while, for e.g., delivery services, services for personal errands etc., and the market is getting richer and more complex. And the complexity is being fuelled by something called the shut-in economy. There are indications that the shut-in economy will continue to grow as the younger, tech-immersed generations age, and we continue to wall ourselves off within our urban centres, ordering, and receiving everything from our lunches to our medications.

Revolutionising employment patterns In India

According to the IMF, at an estimated 30 percent, youth inactivity is highest in India as compared to other emerging and developing countries. Recent data compiled by Mumbai-based Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy has stated that the unemployment rate rose to 7.2 per cent in February 2019. Exactly a year ago, in February 2018, the unemployment rate in India was hovering around 5.9%. In

“About 40 percent of the people in the gig economy have more than 20 years of experience and another 38 percent have an experience ranging between 11 and 20 years.”



the last 12 months, the number of employed people in India has gone down to 400 million from 406 million in February 2018. Against such a backdrop, Gig economy offers the prospect of improving unemployment trends in India. With a young population geared to join the workforce every year, Indian employers are seeking to embrace the atypical workforce and hop on to the bandwagon. Here are some significant changes in the employment patterns that are making India lead in its gig economy.

- **Emerging job roles:** With Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation invariably at the forefront of altering job roles, companies will seek freelancers for various new roles. For instance, there will be increased contracts for deep learning, analytics, blockchain architecture, SEO strategies and social media marketing. In addition, app development, finance, auditing, content writing/blogging, web development, virtual assistance, and graphic designing are expected to widen the Gig economy.
- **Hyper specialisation:** Increased outsourcing in hyperspecialised jobs and esteemed projects of various

companies has been and continues to be in existence. Even large organisations will seek hyper specialisation and niche skill sets, which are considered imperative to building a core team and potential leadership talent. Freelancers will focus on very niche skills.

Co-working in collaborative spaces

The Gig economy has led to the establishment of an entire industry called co-working, where physical facilities and shared work spaces are dedicated to house various freelancers. Independent workers seek flexibility, extroversion, and liberty while developing and marketing their personal skills at the same time. Hence, co-working hubs and spaces will observe increased collaboration with start-ups and freelancers in particular, and thereby contribute to the expansion of the gig-economy.

FlexJobs is a talent sourcing site for those seeking telecommuting, flexible schedule, part-time, and freelance jobs in the US and in other parts of the world. FlexJobs created a list of top 125 companies that almost or completely operate

remotely. Some of the companies that made it to this list are AgileBits, Aha!, AppendTo and many others. When it comes to the top industries for virtual companies, the list indicates that computer/IT, HR/recruiting, and education have the most virtual companies. A myriad of other industries such as accounting, health, law, marketing, not-for-profit, news/media, sports, travel, and others are included.

A research by Noble house, an Indian entity, has found that a large segment of about 81% has joined the Gig bandwagon in the last five years. Data from such consultants suggests that the organised segment is seeing greater interest across the metros. Delhi NCR, at 43 percent, emerged as the biggest Gig hub, followed by Mumbai at 19 percent and Bangalore at 18 percent.

The Union government has also provided support to the Gig economy. It has extended the facility of hiring workers on fixed-term employment to all sectors for improving the ease of doing business for players intending to hire people for completing specified projects, tasks, and orders. Under

fixed-term employment, working conditions in terms of working hours, wages, allowances, and statutory dues of a fixed-term employee are at par with permanent workmen. Traditional workplace gender clichés continue to stay intransigent even in the Gig age as well.

With social proof, everybody wins

What would Amazon be without ratings and reviews? Social proof is a powerful psychological and social phenomenon visible everywhere. Smart business owners, marketers, and project managers build social proof into their communication and products. How does this apply to the Gig economy? As one performs a candidate search, a whole range of metrics will become apparent. Star ratings, comments, being tagged as "Top Sellers" etc., are all key ways to find the right person for our needs. Often, this cannot be easily duplicated through traditional resume, and moreover, no one has the time to make all those recommendation calls.

It pays to be flexible

Nobody wants to get into the position

of being understaffed - which is money on the table. A prepared business knows better and has contingencies for such situations. Accessing the Gig economy facilitates better management to solve issues related to unexpected turnover and no shows. Apologising to customers is not the solution. Being ready to take that risk in today's unforgiving world of laser fast consumer feedback, provides the organisation with a competitive advantage. Hence, tapping into the Gig economy today seems to be an absolute necessity.

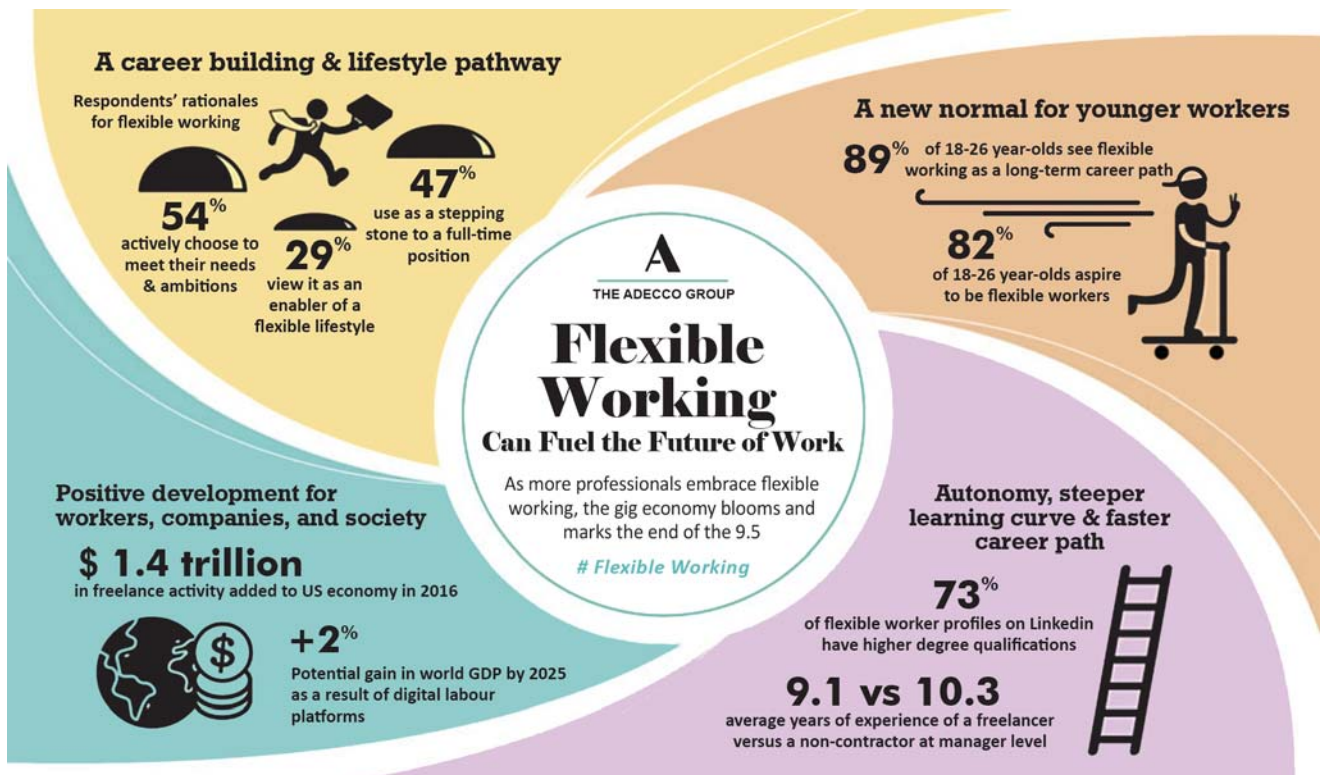
5 Challenges of the Atypical Workforce

With the increase in the usage of contingent workers, the risks and challenges have risen as well. According to the 2018 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends report, in spite of the anticipated growth in the Gig economy, only 16% organisations worldwide have an established set of policies and practices to effectively manage different types of workers. Such an enormous gap in capabilities right from hiring to employee management needs to be addressed

and aligned to the company's overall strategy. It is critical to have all processes enabled digitally for remote or virtual employees.

Some of the issues that should be on the top of one's mind when working with a contingent workforce, and some recommendations on addressing them have been cited below: -

- **Access to Information:** A contingent workforce needs to have access to all the necessary information required to do their jobs. Yet, only a few of these workers have the required knowledge to search and locate information scattered across the organisation in multiple repositories, databases, and file shares. This can lead to poor business decisions being made with less than optimal information.
- **Solution:** Organisations need to establish a single point of access to information regardless of where it resides across the enterprise, taking the guesswork out of locating and retrieving critical business information needed to do the job.
- **Accountability:** Because of the temporary nature of a contingent workforce, it is important that



organisations are able to account for the actions of these employees, even after they have moved on to other endeavours. Being able to defend business decisions and explain why those decisions are made is critical to any regulatory compliance.

- **Solution:** Organisations need a solution that can create an audit trail of all the activities of a contingent workforce, such as capturing an employee identifier, date and time stamp, and the action taken by that employee. The tool should also create their audit record automatically, associate it with the particular piece of information that has been accessed by that employee, and maintain that audit record for a long time.

- **Virtual Training:** Contingent employees are not equipped with the many years of training possessed by experienced full-time employees, and knowledge-ready workers may not always be present or available to provide solutions. This could result in workers indulging in guesswork about the correct policy or procedure to perform a task.

- **Solution:** Organisations need a solution capable of storing and managing not only traditional documents, but also videos and other rich content that can be leveraged for training by a contingent workforce as needed.

- **Structured Work Processes:** A contingent workforce may lack the detailed knowledge of internal business process and procedures possessed by experienced full-time employees. Individual tasks can fall through the cracks or processing steps can be missed, leading to less than optimal business outcomes.

- **Solution:** Organisations need a solution that can provide structured automated workflows to ensure that critical processing steps are not missed, all relevant documentation is collected and filed appropriately, deadlines are adhered to, and that appropriate supervision or peer reviews are incorporated in the day-to-day assignments.

- **Need for portability:** When contingent employees leave an organisation, others are often called

upon to take up their assignments. If information collected during the course of employment is scattered across various systems and devices, this transition can be difficult to accomplish.

- **Solution:** Organisations need a solution that allows discrete information to be moved quickly or reassigned to other individuals or organisations, or to be accessed in its native location via a centralised information hub. Speed, accuracy, and completeness are necessary to ensure that no delays are introduced to business transactions already in flight.

“45 percent of the human resource (HR) heads surveyed want to hire a Gig worker so that they can supplement the skills of the existing workforce, 39 percent would do this to reduce the cost, and 10 percent for filling temporary vacancies in their teams.”

Scenarios where atypical workforce is needed

- **Change in strategic direction:** This is a regular occurrence, especially in emerging growth companies. Many companies developing a technical solution are often looking to match the solution with the best market opportunity. As a result, companies must quickly execute a new strategy. And Gig workers perform the rescue act!
- **Speed to market:** Companies

that need to accelerate a project or product to the market might not have the people power to get the job done, so they call in specialists. This is often the case in technology companies that need coders to come in on a contract basis.

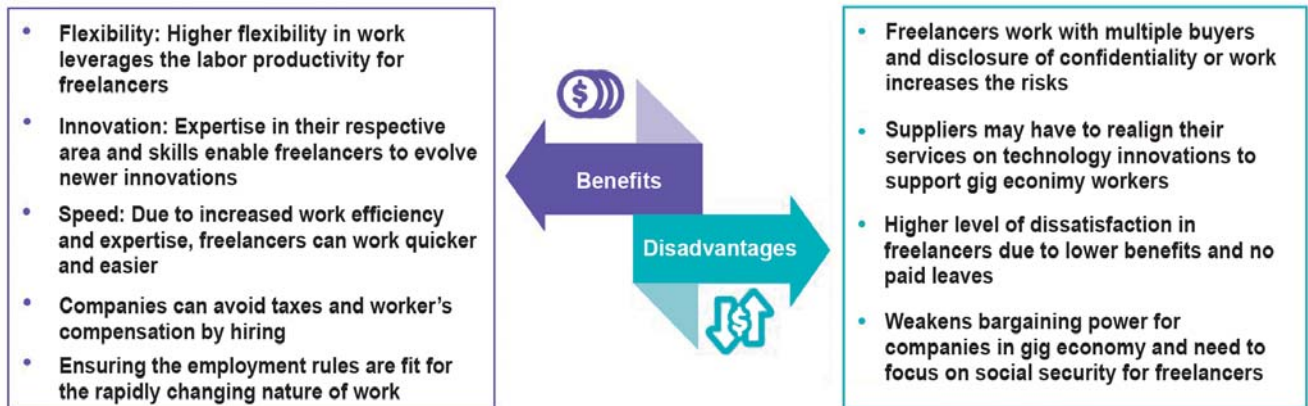
- **Larger contracts:** Large organisations often need workers to fulfil contracts. In many cases, these are massive government contracts. E.g. There are more than 45,000 contract jobs in the Government posted on Indeed.

- **Spikes in Customer Service:** Seasonal spikes in customer service across most businesses helped in the rise of the gig economy. A flexible workforce allows organisations to be more agile and plan for spikes and lows. In fact, 70 percent of employers say Gig workers increase profitability and efficiency.

Companies do to seize the Gig economy

- **Converting JDs into Skills-based roles:** At present, most organisations leveraging the Gig economy to scale-up their business are the Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Larger corporations have been slow to adapt to this trend, and are contemplating whether their recruitment strategy and compliance practices can accommodate short-term contractors within their existing structure, especially in terms of how Gig workers can adapt to their corporate culture and working style. With the rise of Robotic Process Automation (RPA), data analytics and routine tasks are often automated to achieve higher efficiency and accuracy, allowing employees to engage in skills-based value-added tasks. Hence, instead of holding up to traditional JDs, corporations can creatively divide work into skills-based tasks, so as to simplify processes of briefings, handover processes, and management.

- **Addressing the work hygiene:** Like employees, Gig workers also have certain basic needs when they come to work every day. They need to know what is expected of them at work. They need to understand



Source: CNBC and American Law Journal

how things are done in the company. They need to feel that their work is being appreciated and that they are contributing to organisational goals. By studying the experiences of workers with alternative arrangements in the organisation, HR leaders are better able to evaluate their strategy and course correct. When a project is well executed through Gig workers, identifying the key behaviours and processes related to resourcing, onboarding, teamwork, and management can contribute to the success story.

- **Evaluating policies:** Corporations should evaluate existing internal policies and candidate assessment processes to cater to permanent employees. As companies look towards engaging Gig workers, it is essential for the talent acquisition teams to revamp their approach to assessment processes and job requirements, as well as staff benefits and policies. This is equally necessary for the roles, which require Gig workers to work on-site and off-site. An effective evaluation process is required to ensure consistent and quality work, where customised assessment procedures need to be developed with the active participation of the relevant line manager.

- **Collaboration Across diverse teams:** Organisational workgroups and the cross-functional teamwork that are necessitated by multifaceted projects are becoming even more complex with remote workers, matrixed team members, and Gig workers. Though less frequent than the traditional employees, a Gallup

study found that a majority of Gig workers work in teams. In the context of diverse teams, Project management, knowledge transfer, and team communication becomes paramount for getting the work done efficiently. It takes a strong Manager to coordinate these diverse teams, set clear goals, and regularly evaluate team progress toward those objectives.

- **Effectively communicate employer brand:** Communicating an authentic corporate brand is needed for traditional talent acquisition processes, and is even more important in a gig economy, where the foundation is built upon trust. Sceptics perceive that the impact of the Gig economy on the workforce undermines a corporation's dedication to fair treatment of employees. It is vital for corporations to communicate their brand in a true and personal manner to their permanent employees, potential candidates, or contractual staff. By focusing on the company culture and its people, companies will bring a positive experience to existing and potential employees alike.

In order to avoid a disconnect, corporations must also bring brands to life, ensuring that the corporation is relatable by giving it a distinct voice and personality. Many companies are already doing this on digital platforms, such as user-centric mobile-friendly career sites, mobile-enabled application and assessment tools, usage of video content, and employee video blogs. Such practices enhance the employer's

brand and communicate brand culture.

The Gig wave is democratising the workspace in India very rapidly, E.g. Uber, Lyft, Etsy, and Airbnb. The advent of concepts such as co-working spaces, an increase in crowdsourcing platforms, efficient block-chain based payments, and steady flow of work opportunities in the market are some of the driving factors contributing towards this transformation. Hence, the future of the Gig economy in India is bright and can expect an upward swing as India is one among the top ten countries for freelancers. Task-oriented work has already gathered tremendous steam, which suggests that in the not-too-far-off future we are likely to see an economy that has rebuilt itself on hundreds of millions of small businesses, rather than hundreds of millions of 9-to-5 jobs. Then the "Gig economy" will be seen as "the economy."

Managing the Gig workforce is a challenge and also an opportunity. While the talent pool is immense, so is the competition. It is a Gig worker's market because we are at some of the lowest unemployment rates. On the other hand, companies are fast changing to meet market demands by offering workers great, interesting work. Companies have never had a greater choice in terms of talent to meet the organisational demands. Now is the time to meet the challenge and seize the opportunity of the Gig economy. 

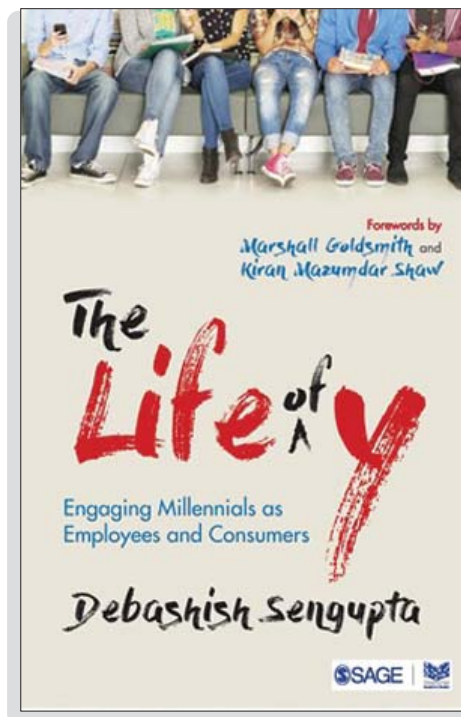
Gen Y Calling!

Millennials, aged between 17 and 37 years, are fast becoming the world's most important generational cohort in terms of consumer spending growth, sourcing of employees, and overall economic prospects.

BY DR. DEBASHISH SENGUPTA

The Life of Y is a riveting account of two billion millennials - also known as Generation Y - on this planet. The book recognises the differing attitudes, mindsets, and behaviours exhibited by them, and the critical role played by the environment in shaping this unique cohort. The book delves into the life of millennials and uncovers several paradoxes that dots their life, thus impacting their wellness and reversing their happiness quotient. Understanding is the basis of engagement. The author uses this very principle in creating a deep and absolute understanding of their life and attitudes that forms the basis on which millennials are engaged in different contexts - workplace (as employees), marketplace (as consumers), and the society at large.

Millennials, aged between 17 and 37 years, are fast becoming the world's most important generational cohort in terms of consumer spending growth, sourcing of employees, and overall economic prospects. Engaging this cohort for businesses, societies, and nations is no more a matter of choice. Most studies indicate poor levels of engagement of this cohort. Poor engagement, apart from introducing cost implications, also have huge negative implications on the growth, profitability, and sustainability of



companies and societies. The book attempts to create a deep empathy for millennials and provides a consultative guidance to engaging millennials, seeking to complement the old models and designs of engagement.

The book has several highlights, but the best part of the book are the real-life narratives of millennials that are sprinkled generously throughout. These real stories not only make the book an interesting read, but also create a factor of

believability, thereby keeping the readers engaged. This can be deemed as one of the reasons for the book to be able to appeal to readers of all ages and be acclaimed at the national as well as the international level. The book has also been showcased at the Stanford University, National Library Board, Singapore, University of Wisconsin, Madison, and several other global institutions of repute. 

'The Life of Y: Engaging Millennials as Employees and Consumers' written by Dr. Debashish Sengupta and published by Sage Publications has been chosen as the best book at the prestigious DMA-NTPC Business Book Awards (2018-19).

About the Author

Dr. Debashish Sengupta is the Professor at the Royal University for Women, Bahrain. He also works as a consultant and is on the board of advisors of several companies in India and Middle-East and is the India Editor of a Marginalia - The Future of Work, based in London. Dr. Sengupta is a dual Ph.D. and holds a certificate in Social Psychology from Wesleyan University, USA.

Realising The Future Of Work



Realizing 2030: A Divided Vision of the Future, a report compiled by Dell Technologies and the Institute for the Future on the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT) on work and life in 2030, has brought forth certain significant insights. The report basis a global survey which covered 3,800 business leaders highlighted a grossly polarised viewpoint on whether automation would improve or adversely impact workplace productivity. The leaders, however, were unanimous in their opinion that organisations need to transform themselves to be prepared for the days ahead.

BY S. AJAY KUMAR

Human Capital spoke to Indrajit Belgundi, PLM APJ, Dell Technologies, wherein he expressed his views on the said report. He also highlighted the impact on work and workforce in the wake of new age technologies making greater inroads in 2030.

Q According to Realizing 2030: A Divided Vision of the Future, a survey by Dell Technologies, 85% of the jobs that will exist in 2030 are yet to be invented, and the required skills for these roles are yet to be scoped out. How do enterprises respond to such a situation and ensure that they remain relevant and digital ready for 2030?

A With swift advances in technology, it is believed that every organisation will be a technology organisation by 2030. Hence, this warrants Businesses to start thinking on the ways of futureproofing their infrastructure and workforce today. The aforementioned report reflects this very school of thought. The report says that 56 percent of global business leaders feel that in order to prepare students for jobs that are non-existent today, schools will need to teach how to learn, rather than what to learn, corroborating IFTF's (Institute for

the Future) forecast that 85 percent of jobs that will exist in 2030 are yet to be invented. The rapid pace of change will make people learn 'in the moment' using new technologies such as Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR). The ability to gain new knowledge will be more valuable than knowledge itself. As an extension of today's "gig economy", companies will set out tasks to be completed, then make use of information technology to match the task with the people and technology necessary, anywhere in the world. Enterprises have to understand that in order to get ahead, employees will need to learn on-the-go by making use of new technologies and upskilling themselves. For businesses that are struggling to keep up with the pace of change, we believe that Dell can offer assistance by empowering customers with technology to upgrade, upskill, and transform their workforce, and enable them to be competitive in their business.

Q The impact of Automation remains a double-edged sword. While we are witnessing the fruits of economic benefits and the subsequent industrial developments, the impending aspect of job losses looms over us. How do you look at such a phenomenon? What possible implications do you foresee in the coming years?

A Automation will become relevant to certain industries, and there will be new jobs that will get created in the future. As per the Dell Technologies report, 82 percent leaders anticipate that humans and machines will work as integrated teams within their organisation within five years, and 26 percent state that their workforce and machines are already working

successfully in such a manner. This, besides the fact where people are will also have a bearing on how they view and do their work. According to a report published by Dell Technologies and Vanson Bourne, 38% of Indian leaders agree that humans and machines are already working together successfully as an integrated team within their organisations. Transitioning to more technologically advanced tools is a change from the traditional definition of "human touch," but the change need not be negative. New technology strengthens human relationships through digital connections. When there are tools that are properly integrated into the digital workplace, many employees experience a greater connect with their colleagues. This creates greater opportunities for interaction, ultimately enhancing the engagement levels. At Dell, we understand the magnitude of these changes. We are building technology and services ranging from edge to core to cloud, in order to ensure that businesses and their employees are future-ready.

Q We are witness to the challenge posed by security breaches owing to increase in the number of connected devices with each passing day. How do you feel that companies in the technology space need to be prepared to tackle such situations? How well is Dell equipped to address the issue of security?

A According to a report by Dell Technologies, 51 percent of companies surveyed admit that they have ineffective cybersecurity measures in place, and 59 percent believe that their workforce is not sufficiently security savvy. Experiences with personal technology are leading to higher expectations, and employees

want the latest technology as per their needs, to deliver security, and to enable them to be productive, all at the same time. However, it is an imperative over issues pertaining to data security. Companies must focus on educating employees and enforcing policies and procedures that secure data wherever they go, without hindering productivity. Education on Cybersecurity must be an integral part of the workplace culture. It must be built around a practical, ongoing dialogue in which employees are empowered and incentivised to speak when they are unsure about the implications of a decision.

At Dell, we deliver innovative solutions that secure data not only at rest, but also in flight and wherever it goes, starting with a trusted device. Our security solutions work in tandem from deep inside the data centre out to the farthest remote device, and all along the networks and the cloud. As a result, our technology can provide full-spectrum visibility and share context-aware intelligence, enabling users to adapt to the ever-changing threats and regulations, while continuously strengthening security across the agency. Dell focuses on providing rapid time-to-value, superior ease of use, and unmatched flexibility to provide mission-critical security that is fundamentally better; an integrated, end-to-end solution that closes the gaps created by legacy and point products, connecting security across agencies for context-aware intelligence security. We offer an exhaustive range of hardware and software solutions from our commercial PC range, including Latitude, Optiplex that are built with the best in class security. Furthermore, Dell is cementing its

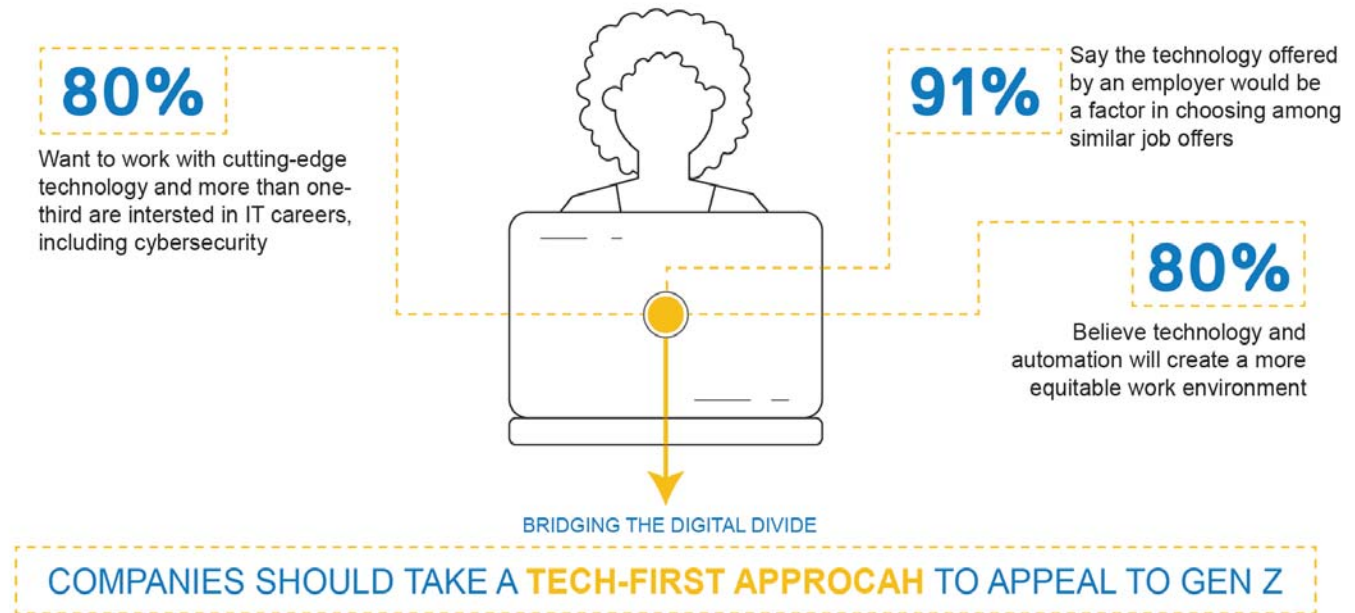


By 2020, Gen Z could represent

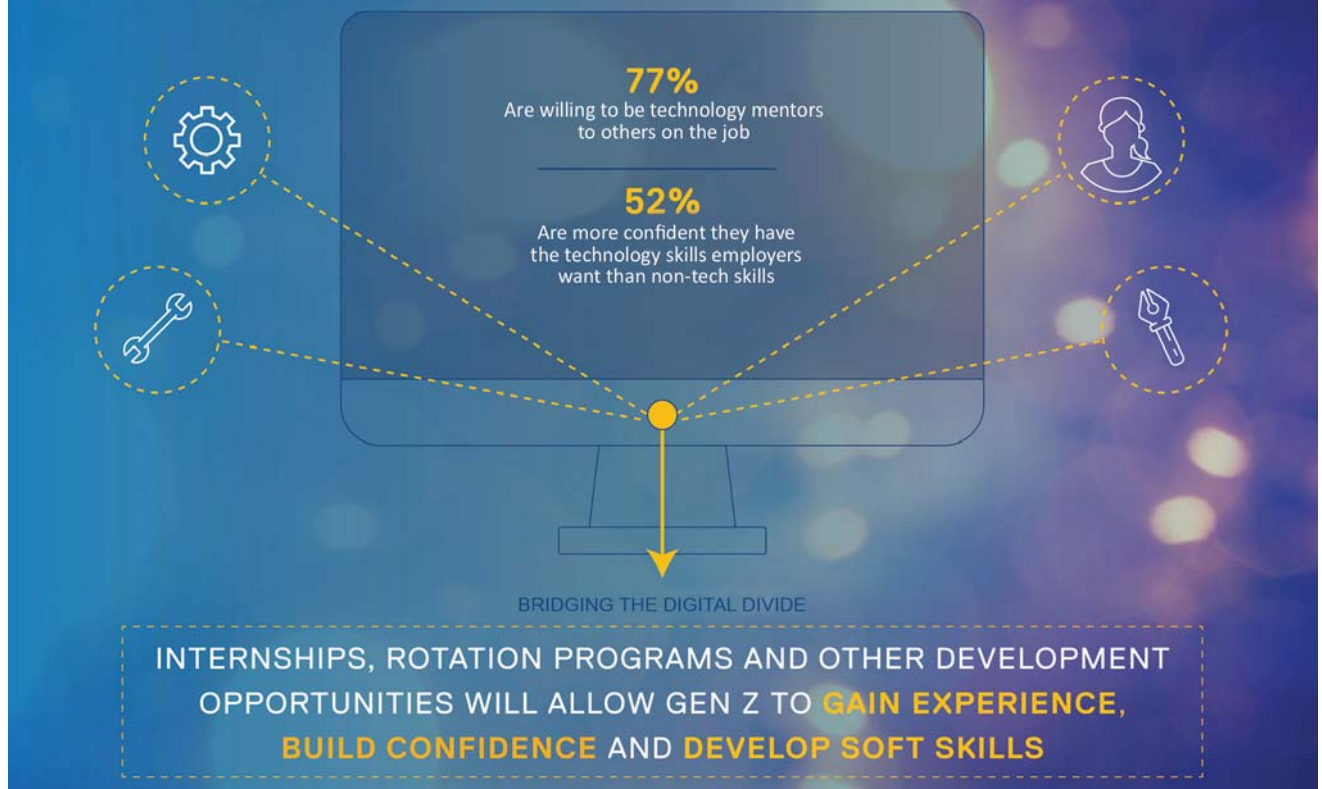
20% of the workforce

As organizations welcome these digital natives, they must bridge the deepening digital divide across multiple generations in the workplace.

Gen Z is entering the workforce with a **deep understanding of technology** and its potential to transform how we work and live



While Gen Zers are **confident about their technical skills**, they worry about having the right skills and experience for the workforce



leadership in data and endpoint security through new enhancements to Dell Data Guardian and Dell Encryption to ensure security and in-depth data and device management options.

Q According to you, how are new age tech like AR and VR transforming today's workplaces and workforce? Do you believe India is prepared for such a shift in every respect?

A For today's workforce, workplace infrastructure and technology are two key reasons to retain smart employees, and these should always be at the top of the leaders' mind. Technologies such as VR, AR, and MR (Mixed Reality) are definitely becoming boardroom conversations for companies in India. In terms of AR/VR at workspaces, telecommuting and telepresence are vastly beneficial

“Companies will have to work closely with their IT, HR, tech, and business leaders to ensure that there is a cohesive atmosphere for workers of all generations and types.”

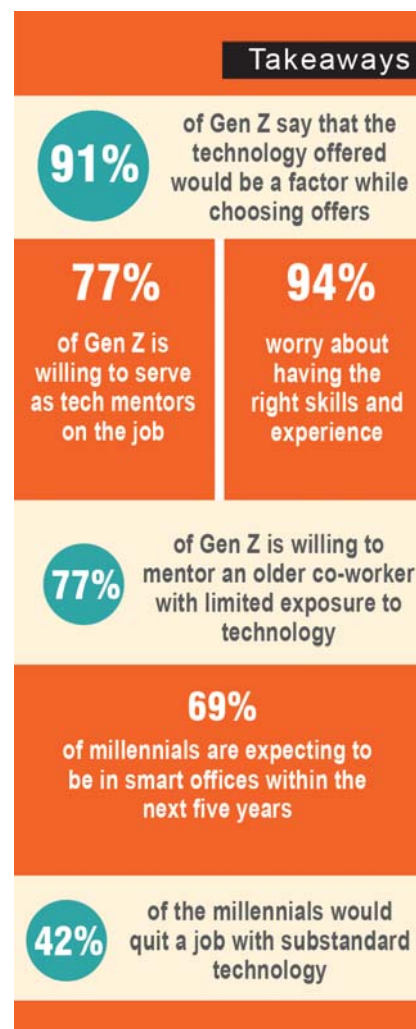
to professionals, since they allow flexibility to work from anywhere, and conduct virtual meetings without traveling from point A to B, saving on time and money. New age technology can also help in improved understanding and better explain job roles and responsibilities. This reduces the time of adjustment and transition to the role, increasing productivity, and adding an element of fun to routine work. A majority of workers emphasise on functional benefits with 63 percent of millennials and 55 percent of older workers (over 35 years old) indicating they would rather have high tech perks, such as Augmented/Virtual Reality (AR/VR). While millennials are looking forward to such a

convergence, they are not the only segment of the workforce looking forward to the introduction of these technologies into their working lives. Two thirds (66 percent) of the global population would be willing to use AR/VR products in their professional lives, while 46 percent believe these technologies will improve productivity within their individual role. In order to help accelerate the adoption of AR/VR, businesses should create a workplace culture that sees the advantages and positive utilisation of new technologies as a means to company and individual success.

Q While the tech savvy Gen Z is upbeat about its tech skills, does that equate to workforce readiness? How should organisations prepare the other generations in order to be skill ready for transformations in the workplace? How does a company address the security skills gap to lead the way in such an ecosystem?

A For the very first time, there will be four generations in the workplace, and all of them are required to be effectively prepared to interact with technology. According to the Gen Z survey commissioned by Dell Technologies, 91% of Gen Z workers say that the technology offered by an employer would be a factor while choosing offers among similar roles. 77% of Gen Z is willing to serve as tech mentors on the job, while 94% worry about having the right skills and experience. With five generations in the workplace, businesses must help workers find a common ground. 77% of Gen Z is willing to mentor an older co-worker who has had limited exposure to technology. 69% of millennials are expecting to be in smart offices within the next five years. The consequences for not meeting these expectations is also greater for the millennial workforce, with 42% saying they would quit a job with substandard technology.

Thus, empowering and enabling people across a diverse workforce is crucial for success. While there may be moments of uncertainty, it is



imperative for business leaders to keep the workforce engaged, excited, and open to new possibilities by offering trainings and introducing the latest in technology for everyday use. Hence, companies that do not invest in updated technology not only risk a loss of productivity, but also put themselves at a disadvantage in attracting, motivating, and retaining the talent needed to promote the collective growth of the company as well as the employees, both now and in the future.

Q “50 percent of business leaders agree that automated systems will free-up their time and 50 percent do not.” How would you interpret this statement from an HR Perspective? How do you believe HR should address the issue in the case of either set of leaders?

Gen Z yearns for more human connection

75%
Expect to learn on the job
from coworkers or other
people - not online

53%
Prefer to go to a workplace
vs. working from home



43%
In-person communication
is the preferred method for
connecting with coworkers,
followed by phone; messaging
apps and texting ranked last

BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

**FLEXIBLE WORK ENVIRONMENTS CAN ENABLE TEAMS TO BETTER
CONNECT, COLLABORATE AND LEARN IN THE MOMENT**

Reports suggest that human-machine partnerships will result in the creation of newer skill sets that are needed for humans and technology to work alongside seamlessly. As a trusted partner to businesses across the world, Dell believes that with technology becoming ten times faster and smaller every five years, it has enabled the rise of new age technologies. These technology advancements in capability, bandwidth, and mobility have forever changed how we work, leading to workforce transformation. Businesses are united in the need to transform, and are actually very optimistic about being able to make it happen. Employees have seen first-hand the ways new technologies can help them do their jobs better, and are looking to use the latest advancements to be more productive. While this may seem daunting, it is a business-critical opportunity for companies to be at the forefront of the future workplace and enable the future workforce. An understanding of different mobility needs of each type of worker will be critical for

success. Dell understands that employee experiences with personal technology will be challenging to IT departments, but companies will need to work with an end-to-end solutions provider to ensure these needs are met in the most economical and efficient way possible.

Q “More than eight in ten (82 percent) leaders expect humans and machines will work as integrated teams within their organisation inside of five years.” Do you believe that the very laws of diversity in the workspace would stand to be redefined?

A As human-machine partnership becomes more evident with time, it will alter the dynamics of workplace diversity and engagement. By applying Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence to customer data, companies will be able to predict and understand customer behaviour like never before. The influx of new technology in the workplace has affected how employees communicate, collaborate,

and work with greater efficiency. Workers are not only ready for businesses to implement the latest technologies to make their offices smarter, they expect it to happen within the next five years. Specifically, 44 percent of employees worldwide feel that their workspace is not smart enough, and more than half expect to be working in a smart office within the next five years.

Such expectations are higher amongst the younger workforce, with 69 percent expecting to be in a smart office within the next five years. Much of the learning will take place on the job. Schools will shift from teaching what to learn, to teaching how to learn, in order to complement the machines and technologies with which people will be working. Hence, businesses need to act now to transform their IT, workforce, and security to stay ahead of the curve. Companies will have to work closely with their IT, HR, tech and business leaders to ensure that there is a cohesive atmosphere for workers of all generations and types. **HC**

The Boss And The Man Friday

Many teams in organisations are unable to connect with their 'Boss', and hence, have to work with Man Fridays, who manipulate the flow of communication to suit their personal interests.

BY KESHAV SRIDHAR

In organisations, there have always been instances where teams have found it difficult to connect with their decision maker or the 'CEO', and are therefore forced to work with Man Fridays, who manipulate the flow of communication to suit their personal interests. These Man Fridays or 'Priests' account for very high inter- and intra-departmental friction in certain organisations, since they distort the communication coming from the Business Head. This leads to a situation where the employees begin to hate the top management or the CEO, and instead rub shoulders with the Man Friday, because he projects that he understands their plight, but is helpless. This leaves the populace with no alternative apart from 'cajoling' the Priest, if they have to see their 'God.' On the other hand, the Priest would have presented a completely different picture about the people and their expectations to the CEO, who would deem it fit to avoid any discussion whatsoever with those people, or worse, even avoid the people themselves.

Such 'Executive Assistants' operate by actually banking on the friction

created by rubbing people's ego the wrong way. After understanding one's strengths and weaknesses, they will keep hitting at them in the guise of 'others'. Over time, this would end up creating a lot of hatred among the people in the team, to such an extent that they would avoid each other. In most cases, the victims quit the organisation and the culprit is never caught - and such double headed snakes continue to spew venom as the CEO's trusted Man Fridays!

Evidently, this is one irresponsible person. He holds a selfish motive, having been vested with the task of managing meetings and communication by the so-called leader, and ends up rather carelessly disarranging the team synergy. After a few years, when the truth is revealed, good talent would have left the organisation, and the ones who stay back are the 'birds of a feather' that flock together! Sometimes, the CEO is aware of most of the happenings, yet operates through his Man Friday deliberately, since he sees it as a way to shield himself from certain people in his organisation.

“The God sends the corn and the devil (priest) mars the sack”

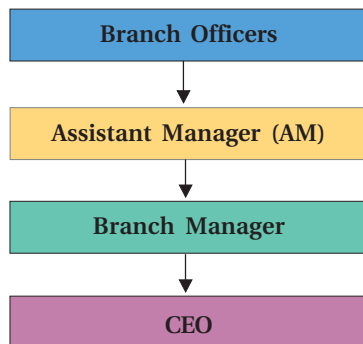
- Translated version of a Proverb in Kannada

“Executive Assistants' operate by actually banking on the friction created by rubbing people's ego the wrong way. After understanding your strengths and weaknesses, they will keep hitting at them in the guise of 'others'”

One would want to narrate a real 'office' story, which is a good learning experience. And the story is such that it will give the best of the soap operas a run for their money!

An organisation, a big brand with presence in three Indian cities and one branch abroad, had hired an Officer for one of their Indian branches, who later went on to become the CEO's Man Friday. This would-be priest was actually hired as an Office Assistant and not as an Executive Assistant. However, due to misinformation over his role during the selection, he was under the impression that he would be managing the city office all by himself. Since he had always worked as a branch head and as an individual contributor with small organisations in the past, he could not be blamed for assuming so. When he reported at the new office, he came to realise two things. One, an Assistant Manager who has joined recently is effectively managing the show in the branch, and two, the CEO has hired a Manager as the actual Head of the Branch. However, this Manager, who was supposed to join within a month, joined nearly after three months. Meanwhile, the CEO wanted that the Training Manager, responsible for the in-house training at all the four branches, to manage this branch until the Branch Manager joined.

The hierarchy in the organisation was as below: -



It seems that the AM in the branch under focus started seeing the Training Manager (acting Branch Manager) as an unwanted threat, because he had assumed that a delay in the Branch Manager's joining probably implied

that he may not join at all, and hence, he had aspired to become the Branch Manager. The Training Manager though, had no interest in the Branch Manager's chair, as his profile was to manage and deliver training programmes across all the branches. Yet, he was doing the job of a Branch Manager as per the CEO's instructions; also, the Training Manager came from an Entrepreneurial background, and hence, could manage both the training and the branches.

On the other hand, the Branch Officer, the would-be Priest, wanted to quit because he was asked to take over the job of an Office Assistant, which he considered to be below his dignity, as he had assumed that he would be the head of the branch. However, he was in two minds, as he had joined a big brand. The CEO wanted him to decide quickly, and had instructed the Training Manager to somehow ensure that the Officer stayed back. Every day in the evening, the Training Manager would counsel the officer, as a friend and a well-wisher, and the Officer was convinced to stay back. By this time, the Branch Manager had joined as well, and thus, the Training Manager could focus on his core areas for which he was hired.

However, the real problem started now. It turned out that the CEO had hired an Officer who was better than the AM, and the AM was way better than the Branch Manager. And each of them thought that they are better than the other, and hence, it was a circus of sorts every day, with each fighting for his own survival.

The Training Manager, though not a branch specific resource, was being held in this branch for operational / logistical convenience, and hence, was seen as a threat and an unwanted resource by the branch employees. The heads of the other branches held a similar feeling since he would be eventually working with them in their branch, thus sharing the limelight with the respective branch managers. He was forcibly dragged into a fight almost every day by the folks working in that branch. Since he was the common threat for everyone, they ganged up to throw all the blame on him for even the slightest failure in their branch, stating that the failure had occurred owing to poor training.

The CEO understood the selection

and placement errors in the resources he had hired. However, his ego was stopping him from owning it up and rectifying it. In fact, people in all the four branches started losing respect over the CEO's judgment. He foresaw his grip becoming weak on the team, and hence, made his move by making the Officer of the branch in discussion his Personal Assistant, rather than the Office Assistant for that branch. This gave more

“In an organisation ailing with deep-rooted people challenges, the HR department may have thrown a blind eye, or worse, may be one among the disillusioned lot.”

power to the Officer, as he became the CEO's Man Friday. At the same time, this ensured that the CEO cut direct access between him and the respective heads.

In a nutshell, the Officer became the 'Priest', and he did everything possible to vent his frustration on everyone in the organisation, since, during his initial few months, he was forced to take up something much lesser than his expectations. And within a span of a year, there was an attrition of around 40%, which included the Training Manager, who in fact had helped all the branch heads by shouldering their share of work to win a place in their branch.

In an organisation ailing with deep-rooted people challenges, the HR department may have thrown a blind eye, or worse, may be one among the disillusioned lot. Irrespective of the size of an organisation, any individual works with not more than ten people shoulder-to-shoulder on a daily basis. Is it truly difficult for the leadership to facilitate a level-playing field for their folks? Or is it that, the bigger the brand, stronger is the thought that - whose battle is it anyway? 

About the Author

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

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Lessons From A 9 Year Old

Leadership recognises the importance of followers and relates the process of the collective to social (or even cultural) capital, and is not limited by the sphere of time and scope.

BY KRISHNAN BANGARUSWAMY

A two day external leadership workshop started off with an Australian Facilitator challenging us with the statement: "If there is one person in the room who can come forward and say, 'YES!' I have been a true leader and I could not have been any better." It is interesting to note that none of the participants from different industries, including the facilitator himself, albeit senior professionals, stood up! The learning was simple: though all of us are leaders, we know that Leadership is a great deal more than what we think and act, and this set the context for the next two days.

Over the next few days, the hangover of the workshop was such that I turned to anyone and everyone to talk and debate on the subject of Leadership. The outcome of most, if not all, the conversations was that there is no single leadership style that serves best. Rightly so, as a Google search on Leadership throws up a 1000 million results in less than a fraction of a second. It is huge and vast, and as per a report, we spend 14 Billion Dollars a year on leadership development.¹

Just at the time of appreciating leadership beyond the sphere of time and scope, I had an interesting conversation with Anvita, my 9 year old niece. Since she had served as the junior people leader at her school the previous year, she was the right candidate for this subject. I tried the Australian's way and asked her whether she believed that she has served as a Leader to her best capacity. She nonchalantly responded, 'YES!' I further asked her, what made her think so, and how would she articulate those qualities or attributes, say the top 3?

She thought for a few seconds and mentioned - (a) being kind and caring for the group, (b) taking responsibility for the group's actions, and (c) being independent and strong with an ability to look at options. In all my sixteen years of professional life, I have never come across anyone this confident and spontaneous in answering questions on leadership. I asked her, how did she





Anvita the author's 9 year old niece

know what she mentioned is true. She retorted, 'I have been reading and observing so many people, and importantly, I performed the role and that is how I know what it takes!' I was instantly moved by her answer. A 9 year old had such a deep understanding of leadership by the meaning of social relationship in her world. I continued, 'Then who according to you are the best leaders, if you have to name a few?' She replied, 'Gandhiji, My class teacher, and most importantly, My Father.' I was bowled over again. At a time when adults quote names such as Bill Gates and the late Steve Jobs, here is a child quoting 2 out of 3 names by virtue of actual experience. She continued, 'See, the way I see it, being a school people leader is really not about the self, but everything about others. It is those qualities that will make us successful!'

There was nothing more I could say. If anything, this child should be giving lessons on leadership. If you realise, she just politely told me the difference between leaders and leadership. Leaders can be individuals, but leadership is different as it recognises the importance of followers and relates the process of the collective to social (or even cultural) capital, and is not limited by the sphere of time and scope. At the heart of leadership are qualities such as Being Ethical, High Integrity, and Benevolence. As I reflected upon my niece's answers, I realised that each of her points carries a meaning, purpose, and direction.

A. Being kind and caring for the group

A genuine quality of going beyond self-interest towards the interest of others is indeed a very important attribute for a leader. All through history and the present, successful leaders have exhibited compassion and empathy towards individuals and societies with high integrity and honesty at the core. It is this quality that set them apart as a leader and brought them success through their journey, even at a time when they were formally not recognised as a leader. Robin Sharma captured this beautifully in his book,

'The leader who had no titles.' He writes that in order to be a great leader one should first become a great person. As for me, greatness starts within oneself when you become genuinely concerned about others' welfare. Perhaps, when we relentlessly work towards the well-being of others, our meaning of success goes beyond extrinsic motivators such as titles, money, and possessions, and sees oneness among everyone and everything that we do, a way of higher being. Energies are unleashed for greatness within and around, and people look to you as a leader.

B. Taking responsibility for group's action

Our former honourable President, the late Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam shared an experience in his book 'Wings of Fire' which seems very apt in this context. The year was 1979, and after 10 years of hard work, India was on the verge of launching its first ever experimental rocket 'Rohini technology payload.' The project was driven under the leadership of Prof. Satish Dhawan with Dr. Kalam in a key role. The entire nation was looking forward to the success of the launch. Unfortunately,

“Known as the concept of Romance of Leadership, we tend to ignore contextual factors such as the environment and followers. We either glorify or degrade leaders on the basis of the outcome.”

the rocket plunged into the deep waters of the Bay of Bengal, and the launch failed. Fingers were pointed at Dr. Kalam for the failure. Dejected and concerned with the criticism, Dr. Kalam was unsure about facing the media. But Prof. Dhawan faced the media and took the blame upon himself and promised that they will be successful the next time. Exactly a year later, Dr. Kalam and his team were able to carry out a successful launch

“Authentic leadership means, 'knowing and acting on what is true and real inside yourself, your team, and your organisation, AND knowing and acting on what is true and real in the world'.”

and were praised by the entire world. There was jubilation all across India, and during the press conference, Prof. Dhawan gave credit to Dr. Kalam and made him address the media! This sums it all as to what it means to take responsibility for the group's action. While one can insert many adverbs and adjectives such as inspiration, empowerment, and trust, ultimately it is the willingness to assume ownership of the team that is most important!

C. Independent and strong, with an ability to look at options

Sadhguru once said, 'A leader is someone who is able to see things which others are not able to see.' This is entirely true and can be developed only through a strong sense of awareness and commitment that makes them strong and emotionally balanced, with an ability to look at options and arrive at the right decisions. It is only through a sense of responsibility that it becomes possible to develop such a commitment. There needs to be a conscious effort to build this commitment, and the first two points of caring and taking responsibility for the team forms the foundation for this ability.

A critical aspect of this ability would be to build awareness within oneself. Importantly, this awareness should be built on experience and not be entirely academic. There is substantial evidence supporting experiential learning such as the 70:20:10 model² which states that learning happens 70% of the time through challenging assignments, 20% through developmental relationships, and the remaining 10% through coursework and training. This has been researched and is proved to be true, and in our experience, building awareness is presently the root spine strength of leadership. As Sadhguru says, if you become aware, new possibilities open up and you elevate yourself to a higher level.

The adult world's biggest problem is that we tend to over attribute success or failure in a given situation to individual leaders. Known as the concept of Romance of Leadership, we tend to ignore contextual factors such as the

environment and followers. We either glorify or degrade leaders on the basis of the outcome. This being the reality, if only all of us can improve our awareness even by a degree, the world would turn out to be a much better place not just for leaders, but more importantly, for Leadership.

Given the lessons from my niece, the best way is to spread this awareness among others. This is clearly the best leadership lesson that I have received from a nine year old. It becomes possible for children to state this naturally since they are not judgmental, hold no bias or prejudice, and hence, are totally authentic. By its definition, authentic leadership means, 'knowing and acting on what is true and real inside yourself, your team, and your organisation, AND knowing and acting on what is true and real in the world.' In conclusion, it is the quality of seeing everyone as self that makes a successful leader stand truly apart! 

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Gamification To Drive Engagement



Gamification works because it triggers some real and powerful human emotions like happiness, curiosity, and excitement. This leads to positive user experiences, better engagement, loyalty, and higher sales.

BY MANOJ AGARWAL

“Happy employees are more driven, creative, productive, and profitable, and they want more than a fat pay cheque. They want communication, instant feedback, clear cut goals, and appreciation.”

Were we all not great fans of Super Mario Bros? Or perhaps some of us prefer Candy Crush today. The point is we all love rewards and crave competition. This very sentiment is used to design programmes based on gamification. Gamification is the process in which companies use game-like elements to drive engagement and businesses. One of the simplest examples of gamification could be collecting stamps on coffee drink bills. When you collect ten stamps, you get a free drink. Gamification works because it triggers some real and powerful human emotions like happiness, curiosity, and excitement. This leads to positive user experiences, better engagement, loyalty, and higher sales.

In a study, more than 80% of millennials and two-thirds of baby boomers indicated interest in getting rewards for purchases and brand engagement. The same goes for employees. We all know the importance of a happy employee. Happy employees are more driven, creative, productive, and profitable, and they want more than a fat pay cheque. They want communication, instant feedback, clear-

cut goals, and appreciation. While HR heads and management teams can continue to contemplate on ways/ modes to drive their reward and recognition program, gamification seems to stand out in providing recognition via low-key social messaging and virtual kudos. Studies show that organisations with effective gamification solutions improve employee turnover by 35% and engagement by 48%. So, do not let your assumption of gamification as "waste of money" or a trend that is "temporary" get on your way of exploiting such a powerful engagement tool. **HC**

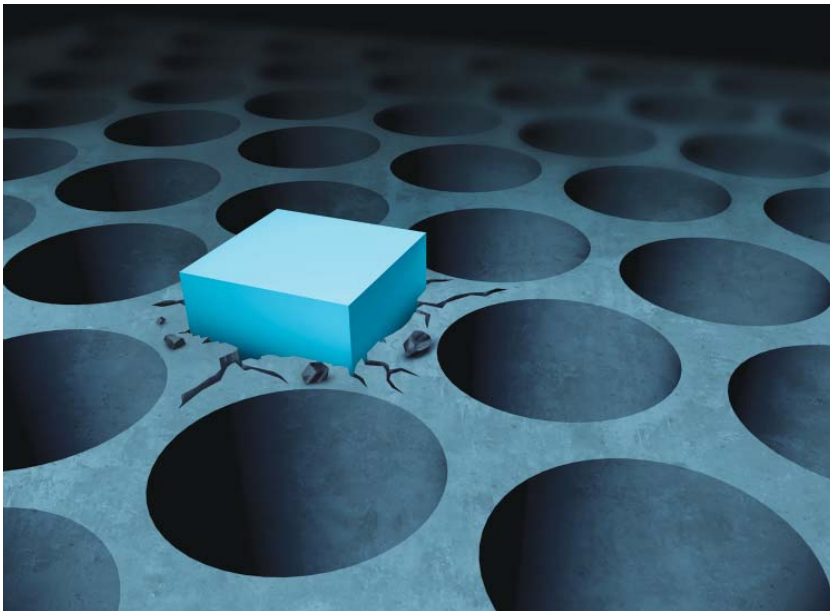
About the Author

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

Square Pegs In Round Holes

When organisational values are aligned, employee behaviour will embody the core values. However, more often than not, values end up as empty catch phrases coined by copywriters.

BY KALPANA BANSAL



Organisations define values as the beacon for interactions with each other and with customers. When values are aligned, employee behaviour will embody the core values. However, more often than not, values end up as empty catch phrases coined by copywriters. Such statements lead to increased levels of cynicism in the workplace and undermine the credibility of the top management.

When organisational culture and strategy fall out of alignment, leaders may be forced to deal with far-reaching consequences. Value statements are a reflection of an organisational belief system that warrants employee buy-in and that it

is upheld by them. All too often, employees get to deal with a conflict of organisation values with their self-values, or they sense that the organisation has made lofty declarations that are either ambiguous in interpretation or not upheld in spirit. There is a propensity on the part of the leadership to use phrases such as "Integrity", "Give, Gain, Serve", and "Be Humble" to define the core values. Such phrases are good to hear and make for good storytelling, but end up meaningless when not reflected in action. Organisations need to realise that employees do not rally around a set of hollow values when such ideas are not practiced and upheld by the leaders in their organisation.

When values are misaligned, it leads to considerable fallouts, which are manifested in the following ways:

- **A lost sense of Purpose:** When strategy and a strong culture are aligned, they bring in a sense of clarity and direction to employee actions and decision making. When the alignment is lost, employees default to self-serving behaviours or tend to drift away.
- **Disorientation:** Mixed signals from the leaders could lead to emergence of issues that are brimming under the surface. For instance, a company that we worked with talked about "Being Humble" as a guiding value, when the leaders themselves had over-the-top behaviours, looked down on people with poor language skills, and refused to hire people unless they "look presentable." When leaders espouse one set of values, but reward a different set of behaviours, it can leave employees confused and out of touch

“Organisations need to realise that employees do not rally around a set of hollow values when such ideas are not practiced and upheld by the leaders in their organisation.”

with the organisation's goals. A classic mistake most companies make is that they talk about "Teamwork", but reward the individual contributor who is typically a poor team player.

- **Credibility:** A company's brand image is a reflection of its Culture and Strategy. Organisations that talk about "Diversity and Inclusion" but insist on serving only vegetarian food, or consciously avoid recruiting people of a particular religion send signals that reek of hypocrisy to stakeholders.
- **Impact on attrition:** When companies extol some values but practice contrary behaviours, employees lose a sense of identity with the organisation and its mission, and that leads to them seeking more engaging assignments outside. This creates increased attrition challenges for the organisation.

The Way Forward

When organisational values need to be defined, the following questions need to be considered:

- Do organisation and employee goals align with the values and vision?
- Are there frequent discussions about the 'why'?
- How and by whom is the organisation culture defined?
- How do external stakeholders perceive the culture? Is there any disconnect between internal perception and external perspective?
- Are individuals in the organisation

empowered to design work in alignment with the values?

- Is there accountability and consequence for non-alignment?

More specifically, implementing an actionable value agenda requires the following steps:

Avoiding "feel-goods"

While it is tempting to author "feel good" values, it is sometimes the basic, day-to-day actions of the individuals in the company that enshrine values that are truly at the core of operations. It is not success but failure that defines what an organisation is. A good and robust mechanism for outlining organisational values is to recount instances of three of the most difficult situations that the organisation has faced, and its response to those situations. Most times, leaders and teams rally around certain core tenets which are at the heart of the operation.

One of the organisations that had mandated a Vision and Values organisation kept emphasising Integrity as a desirable value. However, when discussions emerged, it was apparent that the industry in which it operated had a long history of paybacks and cross entries which, at the heart of it, were at conflict with the very principle of Integrity. After much debate, it was decided that the phrase would be dropped from the value list.

Likewise, the management in another organisation was all set on "Risk Taking" as a core value, while the general business setup emphasised adherence to set processes with no deviations. In a value clarification exercise, it became clear that Risk Taking was a desirable attribute because the organisation sensed the need for change, while a majority of its systems and processes penalised risk takers or innovators. Concerted discussions led the organisation to shift its perspective and state its value as "Stick to the Knitting."

Examine the Intuitive: While organisations are increasingly moving towards big data and analytics for everything, things such as values are best approached from a more intuitive perspective. While quantitative data

“Values help us in clarifying what everyone should do or not do in any business situation. It saves enormous time and effort because each issue does not have to be individually debated at length. Values transmit trust. Trust is not only at the heart of leadership, but forms the essence of all relationships. Trust is the only currency that can sustain a corporation through the turbulences over its lifecycle.”

– By Azim Premji



adds a lot of value to decision making, it is usually the sentimental or "human side" of a decision-making process that functions as a differentiator.

Realigning corporate culture

It is important to take a step back and re-examine the organisation's purpose and core values every now and then, and re-chart the mission at regular intervals. While doing so, it is important to consider these aspects:

Stock-taking of your employees: What are the organisation's hiring and promotion practices? Are there unconscious biases in operation? HR policies often have the "right" phrases, but many practices are out of alignment with these phrases. For instance, companies talk about "Care and Compassion", but when employees resign, they are meted out unfair treatment.

Systems and Processes: The processes in an organisation often speak of values way louder than the value statements themselves. For instance, an organisation that espouses "Flexibility" but demands total centralisation and paperwork for anything and everything that needs to be done. Or "Trust" as a primary value when every employee is asked to

explain why they availed leave on a Monday or a Friday? Or even worse, an expense reimbursement system that does not permit most of the senior executives to approve expenditures.

Internal communications

What words are the leaders using to communicate? Are these communication choices supporting a culture that reinforces the values? Leaders often speak about things that are top-of-mind, and if the values are deeply enshrined, then the communication is in line with the values.

Wipro's corporate journey is a lesson in sound corporate citizenship, values, and ethics, and paying forward to society. The legacy built by Azim Premji is a glowing inspirational beacon for entrepreneurs, corporate employees, leaders, and everyone else. His emphasis has been more on seemingly simple and old-world principles. His own life embodied hard work and displayed perseverance as a discipline.

In one of his famous speeches, Mr. Premji has highlighted the importance of being an ethical organisation and having people who behave with unimpeachable integrity. He believed that such people take decisions with long term interests, and that is hugely beneficial in dealing with and adapting to change. He elaborated on his belief of the importance of values in adding value to business. As the mantle of leadership is passed over from father to son, we see a hopeful future and for Wipro to teach corporate India what Value Alignment is all about. 

About the Author

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

Redesigning Learning

In a learner-led world, it is required that L&D pauses, assesses, and focuses on its readiness to add value to the future workplace. Else, it misses out on an opportunity to highlight its relevance.

BY RAJLAKSHMI SAIKIA

When we introspect the changing landscape of learning design in organisations today, it is easy to trace sentiments that people can resonate with. We have failed to realise that we are in the midst of a transformation in human behaviour, which can be dated back to the entry of smartphones in our lives. While the smartphone came into our lives as another 'new product', it was bought by many with no knowledge of the extent to which it can be used; they also didn't know that it was a lot more than a phone. What had us hooked was the unabated focus on user experience. For the first time, we had a product that could be used without a manual, and it was equally intuitive for the user to simply 'figure it out.'

However, the last few years have seen that getting translated into how people processes have evolved in organisations, and the learner-led world has redefined learning & development in the following manner in the enterprise ecosystem:

- It has become paramount for learning experts to alter the learning design for their people. Today's learners (read 'users') are habituated to speed and access to anything and anywhere, thereby shifting learner expectations in the enterprise.
- It is imperative that the learning delivery matches the learning methods as per the learners' needs and introduce micro, bite-sized learning which can be consumed

anytime or anywhere. Greater focus on blended learning to cater to enhanced engagement through innovative learning channels (Videos, Podcasts, Micro blogs, Web Classroom and the likes) is the order of the day.

- The demand for shortened shelf-life of skills, and the learners' curiosity to learn new skills to stay relevant and future ready must be taken into account. Therefore, L&D needs to design a learning landscape that is accessible to everyone and allows talent to learn new skills in the most efficient way.

Litmus Test for L&D professionals. +

(Answer Yes or No)

- Are you able to connect the dots and see patterns/trends in disparate things?
- Are you comfortable in extensive collaboration and networking?
- Do you believe you have a design and user experience mindset?
- Are you comfortable connecting across cultures and their diversity?
- Are you humble and have a curious mindset?

If your response to at least 3/5 or more to the above is 'yes', you are good to kick-start now. If not, there is work to be done!

+ - <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/top-5-skills-future-rajlakshmi-saikia/>

- Getting an understanding of the concept of self-learning and continuous-learning. Today, the onus of learning is on the learner, with L&D experts as mere orchestrators of learning for the entire enterprise.
- With change apparent in L&D capability, there is a need for L&D experts to reskill themselves to stay relevant in terms of content curation (and not so much creation), understanding social/peer learning, ease of use of technology in learning, working a virtual classroom on Zoom/Webex, etc., and most importantly, understanding the ways of engaging the learner in a virtual/online learning scenario.

Most of these changes transpired by chance and we were reactive to technology changing learners' expectations. In large organisations, the change is visible, and the sooner one adopts the better the chances of developing a future-ready talent pool. It is therefore needed that learning experts take cognisance of this change and move ahead to build on the capabilities of a future-ready L&D function. While discussions around 'why no more classroom sessions' prevails, they are however receding. Organisations that are focused on enhancing their end-customer experience are making a switch to technology, and with evolving expectations from the end-customers, the very manner in which we operate is likely to be transformed. 

About the Author

Rajlakshmi Saikia leads Talent Development, CSR, and Diversity and inclusion at Genpact. She has over 14 years of diversified experience in various HR functions, including involvement in managing new initiatives in learning technology, user experience, change management, and communication. She features in the 2019 HR 40 under 40 list by Jombay and is also listed as one of the top HR influencers in India by SHRM Tech.

Note: The views expressed are the author's and do not represent that of her current organisation.



Empowering Employees Through Tech PMS

For the future-ready workplace, getting the performance management system right is critical in ensuring employees stay engaged and aligned to organisation objectives, and to empower managers to become more proactive in employee engagement.

BY CHAITANYA N SREENIVAS



Today's workplaces are vastly different from what they were a few years ago, with the influx of millennials necessitating organisations to relook into every aspect of HR, including performance management and employee assessment. Managers therefore need to think of themselves as coaches, who can go beyond focusing on employee upskilling, and have a wider engagement with their reportees, encompassing areas from career growth to mental well-being. Advances in technology have enabled managers to access a wide variety of data-led Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to better engage, assess, and reward their reportees. However, the utility, deployment, and an understanding of these technological solutions is what will set them apart as a successful

manager. While we need to be cognisant of factors such as creating a high performance culture, from being managers to coaches, and rewarding top performers, it is time to understand how AI tools can lay the foundation to create an effective and robust performance management system.

AI and Performance Management

This brings us back to how technology is helping managers and companies in L & D and other aspects of HR. At every step of the assessment cycle - from finalising targets, gathering feedback, tracking progress to creating personalised growth, and learning and development plans - tech driven tools

Takeaways

Critical elements for a future-ready workplace

- Getting the performance management system right to ensure that employees stay engaged and aligned to organisation objectives
- Empowering managers to become more proactive in employee engagement
- Placing actionable insights on employee sentiment before managers and HR departments using AI and technology tools
- Prioritising the need for a better enlightened employee engagement and performance management system

have completely transformed and streamlined performance management.

App based appraisal systems, for instance, have ensured greater transparency. Companies have introduced social technology platforms that allow employees to offer and collect feedback from anyone in the system, and not just the appraisal from their immediate superiors. Such systems allow for feedback to be provided on a real time basis, ensuring greater immediacy, and no cost lag in rectifying problem areas and errors. Such mechanisms also enable constant tracking of employee progress, thereby assuring them that their work is duly recognised.

AI has been largely useful in HR and has empowered organisations to effectively tackle the engagement challenge. For instance, it can analyse corporate social media content by sieving through unstructured content from annual surveys and pulse surveys, apart from social media chatter. Hundreds of thousands of comments can be analysed for themes in a matter of hours. AI tools, which are constantly crunching all employee data which is constantly generated in an organisation, can highlight milestone and target achievements immediately, and trigger a reward and recognition system. This

ensures that managers, who are typically busy with a number of simultaneous requirements, do not miss out on recognising and appreciating the work done by their reportees.

AI has proved to be a game changer in Learning and Development as well. For instance, it can better match people to new internal job opportunities on the basis of their skills and job requirements. It can provide employees insights into successful internal role changes or highlight skills that will be required for a prospective role.

For a future-ready workplace, getting the performance management system right is critical to ensure that employees stay engaged and aligned to organisation objectives, and to empower managers to become more proactive in employee engagement. AI and technology tools are definitely making this task easier by placing actionable insights before managers and HR departments as to where an organisation's employees truly stand, both in terms of performance and motivation and satisfaction. However, the tools can become effective only if the organisation prioritises the need for a better enlightened employee engagement and performance management system. 

About the Author

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PMS: Don't Scrap it... Fix it!

Continuous performance monitoring is every one's need - the employees, their managers, and the organisations - as they grapple with the ever-changing dynamics of survival in the VUCA world.

BY VIKAS SHIRODKAR

In the last issue we deliberated about The Maligned Bell Curve used in today's performance management systems. No one likes to be rated, ab initio! If one were to carry out a stacked distribution after the employee ratings have been carried out, with quotas for "Excellent" ratings on the one hand, and "Poor" ratings on the other, it becomes a grand recipe for dissatisfaction and disillusionment of the majority! Such force fitting of the performance ratings' distribution has given rise to the derogatory nomenclature of Rank & Yank for this system. Since employees in organisations are already a preselected group - and the poor performers' tail gets lopped off regularly in high performance organisations - it is indeed time to look at a new system which is simpler,

based on regular feedback, and developmental in approach. Continuous performance monitoring, as opposed to an approach of once a year appraisal rating, is every one's need - the employees, their managers, and the organisations - as they grapple with the ever-changing dynamics of survival in the VUCA world. Has the time arrived to sound the death knell of the Bell Curve? Maybe not, as many organisations continue to use the ubiquitous Bell Curve. Yet, improvements and other models are certainly emerging from behind the curtains.

Moving away from the Bell Curve

So why are companies moving away from the Bell Curve? The Bell Curve in performance appraisal systems pitches employees of the same company against one another, as some would race ahead to improve their own ratings alone. Concomitant achievement of collective goals of projects and organisational milestones takes a back seat! This makes way for internal politics since the people selected for the top slots would depend solely on the decisions of senior managers. The feelings of favouritism and unfair ratings create major issues pertaining to employee morale. With increasing talent shortage and problems in retaining the top talent, such appraisal policies will only do more harm. Major multi-national companies such as Microsoft, Accenture, KPMG, CISCO, etc. have dumped the forced curve



“Major multinational companies such as Microsoft, Accenture, KPMG, CISCO, etc. have dumped the forced curve grading system and have opted for systems that foster a collaborative and innovative workforce culture.”

grading system and have opted for systems that foster a collaborative and innovative workforce culture. Automated cloud-based performance appraisal systems such as SuccessFactors and SuccessDart provide flexible employee rating models. These offer employers with the option of bringing out the best of their employees' potential.

At one level, the task is simple. Every high performing organisation has to integrate all types of performance discussions by helping employees understand what they are supposed to be doing (goal setting and supplying context), and year-round communication on what is achieved, and what more needs to be done. We truly know how to manage performance. We also know enough about how workplace performance works that enables us to build performance management systems that deliver, which removes a lot of the discomfort from the process. The problem is not WHAT companies should be doing, but how companies can be encouraged to CHANGE their old-fashioned visions about reviews, which is something done to employees by their management. So, let us examine the alternatives to forced rankings that companies are using to strengthen their performance review schemes.

1. Calibration

Calibration is a face-to-face process in which managers who oversee similar groups review another manager's employee-performance ratings. In these "rater reliability" sessions, the rating superiors must discuss and defend their employees' performance ratings, and elaborate on the reasons behind the evaluation. As Joanne Lloyd has written in JobDig.com, "A calibration session catches the 'easy graders' and 'tough graders' and helps them rate their employees more realistically." The Annual Calibration meeting is a high-level managers' session where rating managers and supervisors (N+1) are given an opportunity to collaborate and review each other's employee rating policies and methodologies. This meeting is facilitated by the HR team. And as the convener, HR may step in to identify gaps and unfair practices that might have crept in. The HR provides an independent perspective,

while the managers themselves concur upon best practices relevant to the talent they shepherd as also their company. The outcome of the process is recorded as the criterion for judging employee performance uniformly and fairly across the organisation. The thing which is negative about this system is that employees are often kept in the dark about managerial decisions, and the very lack of transparency hampers the employees' chance of having a say in the rankings or ratings. Often, the superior/rater may hide behind this "management review committee" as an explanation for any bad rating or tough feedback to the employees.

2. 360-Degree Feedback

Instead of relying on one supervisor to evaluate an individual's performance, some companies ask everyone with whom the employee interacts to contribute their view. 360-degree feedback is a technique that collects performance data from a number of stakeholders like team members, customers, and direct reports to balance out the supervisors' rating. Eric Jackson has written in the Forbes, "When it's done well, 360 programs allow all your team members to improve in key areas that might be limiting their upward career path or actually causing major conflict within a team."

Companies that employ 360-degree feedback systems for performance appraisal are found to be having the most productive and satisfied workforce across the globe. Such a system puts visibility into the entire performance evaluation mechanism, and it is not just a managerial feedback that decides the rankings or ratings of an employee, but the feedback from all peers, managers, HR teams, and other relevant stakeholders with whom a particular employee has interactions during his job. The stakeholders also include external players such as customers, vendors, or contractors with whom the employee has significantly interacted. Because of increased visibility, this approach allows team members to collaborate effectively and work on collective goals which would have been dampened had the company followed a bell curve based forced grading.

“The problem is not WHAT companies should be doing, but how companies can be encouraged to CHANGE their old-fashioned visions about reviews, which is something done to employees by their management.”

About the Author

Vikas Shirodkar is Professor Emeritus & Dean, MET Institute of Management. He comes with a robust experience of 34 years in the industry and has worked in organisations such as HCL, Siemens, Atul Products, Johnson & Johnson and General Motors. He is the author of the book "Foundational Skills for Budding Professionals". Vikas holds an M.A. in Organisation & Industrial Psychology and a Fellowship in PM & IR from IIM, Kolkata.

3. Management by Objective (MBO)

First outlined by management guru Peter Drucker, MBO is said to be in place when supervisors work with employees to outline goals and desired outcomes. Managers evaluate staff members based on their ability to achieve results. According to the Society for Human Resource Management, the advantage of the MBO process is that it allows employees to actively participate in goal setting.

MBO works in a structured way as an employee is rated on the basis of set Key Performance Indices and Key Result Areas that get revised from time to time. The employee's reporting manager has to assign the appraisal score or rating. However, it is not a unilateral decision. The manager is expected to communicate his judgment to the employee in person, as also the reasons behind such a rating. The employee can challenge the rating, and can request intervention from HR if s/he feels there is favouritism, bias, or unfair practice. After both parties agree upon a score or ranking, the appraisal is taken up by HR for Comp & Ben calculations.

4. Peer Review

Peer reviews require co-workers to comment about each other's performance. As has been written by Stephanie Gruner in Inc, "Co-workers often know more about their peers' strengths and weaknesses than supervisors do, and letting employees review one another is a great way for management to share in that knowledge." Peer Review can form the most critical part of almost all feedback-based performance appraisal mechanisms, and can even be implemented for bell curve based systems. In Peer Review, co-workers who work with an employee are requested to rate and provide feedback about the employee. It is obvious that peers would have a holistic and accurate on-job information about how a particular employee does his job and contributes to the team's success in any task or assignment. It is easier for management stakeholders and HR teams to identify strengths

and weaknesses through Peer Review systems. This helps in investing in the right talent development practices like training and mentoring sessions, while also rewarding recognised talents without bias. Decisions arrived at for appraisal following such a peer-to-peer rating mechanism leaves no room for politics as only deserving employees would be ranked high with the consent of their peers.

The challenge here is creating an open culture of providing and receiving feedback in the organisation, and ensure that we stay away from a "you scratch my back, while I scratch yours" approach. The other negative in this system is that it keeps everybody busy when the time for appraisal approaches. All employees have multiple forms to fill and submit, besides managing their daily jobs. Getting this done on time, in a strict schedule, can be a nightmare for HR!

Continuous performance management is the call of the times. We have discussed viable alternatives to bell curve/rank and yank performance appraisal techniques. They provide a chance to help employees get better at what they are doing in real time, thus moving the performance needle for your company. Companies have used these evaluation methods for ages, but are continually experimenting with new feedback iterations. In today's times, working together on fulfilling customer needs is critical. As has been said by Shalini Pillay, Head People, KPMG, "We want to encourage a collaborative work culture and take away the internal competition between employees, thus encouraging qualitative discussions on performance. We do believe this will help support and drive a high performance culture." 

Hence my exhortation

-- Don't Scrap it, Fix it!

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Zomato Prioritises A Different Kind Of Delivery - Babies!



That we have become accustomed to a culture that relentlessly prioritises work over family, friends, and even hobbies, is no longer a matter of surprise. It appears that the very motive of our lives is to broadcast our rate of productivity, only next to our ability to innovate. Our concern for larger collective goals, as well as for our communities has been unduly side lined.

Zomato's new parental leave policy, offering at least 26 weeks paid leave to its employees, therefore comes as a matter of delight. In terms of perspective this ushers in a new era. It tells us that it is important to be with our children as they make the transition from the womb to the world, and that there are bigger things, beyond business, which we must reckon. Interestingly, it does not stop here. Making room for nurturance for its employees is not the only move made by the food delivery operator - and the very conditions in which this initiative is being created is very different as well. For instance, the scope of this policy is not only limited to women, who are often thought to be the only important primary caregivers, but also covers men under its ambit. Moreover, the policy is applicable not just for pregnancies, but

holds true for surrogacy and adoptions as well. Deepinder Goyal, CEO of Zomato, mentioned that an unequal parental leave policy is one reason for India to face a dearth of women in leadership positions. Moreover, he said, "the myopic view of primary caregiving" alienates half the workforce.

The Union Government in 2018 had made it mandatory to provide women with 26 weeks of paid maternity leave. Even though it was one of the most progressive policies in the world, it led to financial concerns that rising business costs would discourage firms from hiring women. By giving both parents the same benefit to care for a new child, it is anticipated that women will not be unfairly penalised with lower pay. India has the biggest disparity in average hourly wages between men and women, with the latter being paid 34.5% lesser than men on an average, as per the International Labour Organisation's Global Wage Report 2018-19. Zomato's high-profile move may bring more attention to the issue of lower pay and may set a trend for other companies to follow.

In addition to this, Goyal has said in a blog post that new parents will also be given an USD 1,000 (Rs 69,262) per child, as a gesture of good faith, as they welcome their new baby to the world. This is perhaps the cherry on top. Now this is certainly Zomato prioritising the most novel delivery among all - that of a baby! 

Send Fewer Emails To Engage Deeper

When you send multiple emails on the same issue (reminders and follow ups), people begin to tune out-to that specific message and also to the others sent by you.

BY DIANNA BOOHER



Tim, a friend of mine back in college, had the weird habit of setting his alarm to go off at 7:00 AM on his day off when he had no intention of getting up early. "Why?" I asked him one day when we were complaining about studying late for exams. "Oh, I don't get up at 7:00! I just love the feeling of slapping off the alarm and knowing that I can roll over and go back to sleep for another 3 hours."

Often during the last three decades, as I have coached, consulted, and keynoted throughout organisations across myriad industries, I have heard a similar sentiment. It is just worded a little differently, "HR sends so much paperwork and nags us for so much information. It feels good just to ignore them."

HR professionals have an essential mission, of course - to recruit, develop, and retain top talent. To create a culture that works for all. Educate about regulations and ensure legal compliance. Yet it is not uncommon to hear these complaints:

- "HR's unresponsive; they move too slowly."
- "Go around HR. That just muddies the water."
- "HR will tie your hands. They are not risk-takers."

Could better-but fewer-emails close the gap between those negative perceptions and HR's essential mission? Or in other words, "Do you say too much . . . about too little ... too often? And does this habit bury

critical communication employees need to hear?"

The Stats About Overload

We were told more than two decades ago that email would revolutionise the way we work and save us an enormous amount of time. While email has many benefits, it has also engulfed us and created other productivity drains. Booher Research Institute, recently commissioned a survey of email communication habits and productivity from the Social Research Lab at the University of Northern Colorado. A representative sampling of knowledge workers across multiple industries reported about their email habits is reproduced below: -

- 42 percent spend 3 hours or more per day reading and writing email
- 55 percent check email either hourly or multiple times per hour
- 34 percent say the email they get is redundant (meaning they receive duplicate copies) or irrelevant to their needs

Send Fewer Emails to Get Quicker Action

When you send multiple emails on the same issue (reminders and follow-ups), people begin to tune out-to that specific message-and also to the other emails sent by you. In essence, you are "training" readers to ignore "first editions." As with those who hit the snooze button on their alarm clocks,

people become accustomed to ignoring the required action until they get several email reminders.

Many conference planners have communicated through this typical "cycle" and learned this principle the hard way. E.g. their annual convention ends in August. They began sending periodic emails, "Sign up now for next year to get a discount." To the speakers, they start a different email series, "Propose to speak." Soon it becomes, "The proposal deadline is coming." Then, "The deadline is about to close." Then, "We're extending the deadline to give you longer to propose."

Then the next series starts, "Submit your materials by X date." Then, "This is a reminder to submit your materials by X date." Then, "This is your last reminder to submit your materials by X date." Then, "We are extending the submission deadline."

You get the idea. Such communication habits sound like a parent's saying to the four year-old, "This is the last time I'm going to tell you this last time to pick up your toys." Lighten your load and stress. Do not train your employees to ignore you.

Engage Fewer People to Get More Responses

Culling your distribution lists for emails you send will likely increase engagement on important projects. As with meetings, the larger the group, the lower the individual participation. When you are emailing a group for input (E.g., a group of managers about their training needs for the new year), the same principle applies. When you copy a large list, people feel anonymous, and fewer feel obligated to respond.

If you want/need input, cut your list, and you will increase response-not to mention clearing inboxes for the uninterested.

Clarify and Adapt to Standard Response Times

Eighty percent of the participants in the UNC survey said they typically expect readers to respond to "important" outside emails within four

hours or less, 59 percent expect a response within an hour or less. What is the expected response time in the culture of the team you are serving? Four hours? 24 hours? Should you adapt to it? Are there exceptions? If so, what? If you do not know, find out from the organisational leader.

What is the standard response time expected within your own HR organisation? (If you are the leader, communicate that standard to your team.) Protect your organisational brand and your personal brand by living up to the expectations.

Slow responses suggest many things-most of them negative.

- You are overwhelmed and cannot keep up with the pace.
- You are puzzled by the decision or action required.
- Your system of handling daily inquiries is ineffective.
- You have a staffing problem.
- The situation, decision, or project is unimportant to you.
- You need to gather more information or input before replying.
- You need time to deliberate before responding.

Can you routinely afford to be considered the bottleneck?

Email can be an enormous timesaver--unless poor communication practices diminish its benefits and create an untamed monster. To tame the beast and reclaim your time, send fewer but better emails to engage employees to act on the essential. 

Learn more about this in the webinar "Communicate like a leader" scheduled on 23rd August 8 PM, organised by Leadership Demystified webinars in association with Human Capital and Womenlines.

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Dianna Booher is the bestselling author of 48 books, published in 61 foreign editions. Her latest books include "Faster, Fewer, Better Emails", "Communicate Like a Leader", "What MORE Can I Say?" and "Creating Personal Presence". She has been interviewed for opinions on workplace communication by Good Morning America, USA Today, The Wall Street Journal, Bloomberg, Forbes, FOX, CNN, NPR, and Entrepreneur. Dianna blogs for Forbes, Microsoft, and The CEO Magazine.

Balancing The Balanced Scorecard

The time is right to move the concept from policy/process manuals to real life, where it actually creates a lasting impact and builds a well-balanced, healthy, happy, and holistic organisation.

BY MANOJ K CHAUDHARY



Work Life Balance, Work Life Harmony, Work Life Integration. These are terms that have been around for long and debated on various forums. And yet, individuals and organisations struggle to achieve a realistic balance. However, it is for the organisations to mull whether they are doing enough to bring in balance, integration, or harmony. Different HR processes and policies have been explored to introduce such a change. However, performance management as a process remains unexplored to drive this change. The time is right to move the concept from policy/process manuals to real life, where it actually creates a lasting impact and builds a well-balanced, healthy, happy, and holistic organisation.

What gets measured, gets done.

Performance Management has been a strong lever to drive organisational objectives. Successful organisations realise that performance management is a critical business tool in translating strategy into results (DDI, 1997). Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 1992) has been one such performance management tool used extensively by many Fortune 500 companies, and other small and large organisations, to draw strategy maps and chart out different metrics to measure organisational and individual performance. Balanced Scorecard has been able to help strengthen performance management for many organisations, and play a role in achieving set objectives for more than two decades. The scorecard incorporates four perspectives- Financial, Customer,

Internal Processes, and organisational capacity.

- How do we look to shareholders? (financial perspective)
- How do customers see us? (customer perspective)
- What must we excel at? (internal perspective)
- Can we continue to improve and create value? (organisational perspective)

Going beyond traditions

The name "balanced" comes from the idea of looking beyond traditional financial measures to encapsulate a more holistic view of performance. When one looks closely at these four perspectives, there is a clear realisation that though these serve the organisation well, they do not take into account the perspective of the individual employee. What about their life beyond the organisation, which has a clear interplay with his work life? A healthy life outside the workplace helps in making life inside more productive. Employees who attain high levels of job and life satisfaction tend to be highly motivated and efficient. The moment we put this lens into perspective, the imbalance of the Balanced Scorecard becomes apparent. Bringing this balance in the long term will also help in enhancing productivity. Managing and organising both the work and life of employees, systematically and strategically, in public or private sector units, have in the long run led to enhanced productivity (Kanthisree, 2013). A scorecard without this balance will hurt the organisation's performance in the long term.

can be as below:

- Time spent with family and friends (Relationships)
- Time spent to follow one's passion/hobbies (Passion)
- Contribution to society (Social Responsibility)
- Mental & Physical Fitness (Health)
- Joy & Happiness

Bill Gates, in one of his blog posts, proposed a readily available 4 Q framework for measuring the quality of life which includes the 4 questions mentioned below.

- Do I devote enough time to my family?
- Do I learn enough new things?
- Do I develop new friendships and deepen old ones?
- Do the people you care about love you back?

Implementation of the fifth perspective will work as an enabler for the individuals and promote a culture of ownership. It will be a good idea for the individuals to decide the metrics for this perspective by themselves, and thereafter, have a mechanism to track and measure these metrics. The idea is to have something concrete on paper, which not only relates to the organisation and its top and bottom line, and at the same time, builds measures which impacts the individual and the society around. Discussions around such measures go a long way in building healthy and happy employees. Workplaces are already struggling with stress and other related issues. This fifth perspective will certainly empower individuals and organisations to weed out such issues. Organisations can no longer afford to keep themselves away from their employees' lives, instead, they will have to look at better ways to engage actively. This will endow a formal structure and platform to facilitate these discussions around individual life along with work.

Further, the fifth perspective, when implemented, provides organisations with an opportunity to communicate the shift in their approach towards taking a holistic view of performance which goes beyond work, and which cares about an individual's life beyond the organisation. This means a lot of

“Organisations can no longer afford to keep themselves away from their employees' lives, instead, they will have to look at better ways to engage actively.”

The Fifth Perspective

In order to bring this balance, it is proposed to bring Quality of Life as an additional perspective.

- How do we improve employees' life inside and outside the organisation (Employee perspective)?

Or

- How is an employee living a quality life?

Some of the metrics which can be explored under this fifth perspective

rigour should be involved in building readiness for the perspective and the associated processes, before formally launching it in the performance management process. Building readiness would include brainstorming sessions with leaders and managers in the organisation to take their views and get their buy-in for the process. It would also involve training the managers on having meaningful conversations with the employees, while incorporating it. It should be left to the individual to measure this perspective, including the scoring mechanism and weightage in the overall scorecard along with this manager. A healthier discussion will also help in forming a strong bond between a manager and the employee. We have been separating the two lives - work life and personal life since long, but with technology and social media, the boundaries have already diluted. The time is ripe to have meaningful conversations and build purposeful relations within the organisation through the quality of life perspective. It is a long-term investment for any organisation, and get ingrained into the organisational culture slowly and steadily. But today's investment will certainly lead the way forward to create a future ready workplace.

Millennials will relate more to such meaningful organisations.

Companies with effective performance management systems have significantly improved their financial performance and productivity (Hewitt Associates, 1994). It is primarily because these metrics were tracked very closely by the Performance Management System. Adding this fifth perspective and tracking it closely will certainly lead to improved quality of life and a better society. Long term organisational success cannot be defined by unidimensional metrics of business performance or income. Responsible organisations will have to weave in quality of life of its people as the core metrics to define success. Bringing this balance to a balanced scorecard will help organisations to ensure sustainable success, and also serve to create a healthier and happier society. While addressing students at Georgia Tech, Warren Buffet stated that one's success in life is measured by how many people that one wants them to love, actually love them. While it can be debated whether an organisation can interfere with an employee's life outside its boundaries, the key is in effective implementation. Let us balance the scorecard and build balanced happier organisations. 

“Balanced Scorecard has been able to help strengthen performance management for many organisations and play a role in achieving the set objectives for more than two decades.”



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Irreplaceability Of individuality And identity

Not for Nothing, the great German thinker, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, says, "I am what I am, so take me as I am."

Irreplaceability of individuality and identity is the grant of respect to self. It is a hard fact that LGBTQ+ individuals constitute only a "miniscule fraction" of the country's population. But 6th September, 2018, was indeed a remarkable day in the Indian history, since it marked the day when consensual gay sex was legalised by the Supreme court. Corporates who were previously shying away from hiring or accepting the presence of LGBT individuals, have come forward with a broader vision to make organisations inclusive in terms of regional, linguistic, physical and LGBT. This has paved the way for a significant cultural and societal shift and opened new avenues and employment opportunities for the Indian populace.

According to a recent article in the Economic Times, multinational corporations such as Accenture, IBM, SAP Labs, Sodexo etc. have openly come about in their support for the rights of the LGBTQ community. They are encouraging employees to openly speak about their sexual orientation, their life journeys, and their experiences on virtual platforms and video blogs on YouTube. IBM even hosted a pride march in its Gurugram Campus for the LGBT community, which was well accepted with a large number of people partaking in the walk. The Royal Bank of Scotland is also planning an internship programme for transgenders and companies like American express would be holding a panel discussion on Diversity and Inclusion.

According to a recent survey by Bospar, 60% of workers mentioned that

they do not have a preference when it comes to co-workers, in their choice of gender identity or sexual preference. In other words, there is a growing normalisation of LGBTQ+ identities at the workplace. Industry experts feel that in the coming future, an open workplace culture will be shaped where LGBT employees know that they will be safe and accepted. Organisations like Teamlease, Acer, Royal Bank of Scotland and many more have already taken necessary measures in terms of changing HR policies like health care cover for same sex partners. This is bound to encourage the LGBT community to come out and talk openly and confidently.

Leaders from the Industry are also taking necessary steps to make the hiring process impartial and fair. Several groups have come forward to strengthen this community by forming LGBT groups. Some of these groups are:

1. The Humsafar Trust - Mumbai
2. The Naz Foundation Trust - Delhi
3. Udaan Trust - Maharashtra
4. Lakshya trust - Gujarat

It appears that with the passage of time, the understanding of the sexual orientations and gender identities is changing. From one which is rigid and prescriptive to one which is fluid and descriptive. Moreover, 83% of respondents held that equality is on the horizon for LGBTQ+ employees. For a cornucopia of reasons - including more education about LGBTQ+ issues, greater diversity in the existing workforce, more workers coming out as LGBTQ+, and professionals with more sympathy entering the workforce. 

No Extra Wings To Fly

The catastrophic effects of lack of communication was evident when the Mars Orbiter, a US \$125 Million spacecraft disappeared while in space in 1999. Further, a study by IDC in 2014 has revealed that companies with 100,000 employees were leaking US\$62 million every year due to poor internal communication. While these highlight the significance of communication in today's organisations, the moot question is - are they communicating effectively?

BY DR. DEEPIKA PANDITA

“ If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough” – Albert Einstein

In May 2017, AirWings, a large company that manufactured Airplanes, established its biggest manufacturing unit in Biratpur, a small town in India. This plant produced various airplane models catering to the requirements of various airlines. The company had managed to create a brand name for itself as India's leading plane manufacturer in a very short time-span. The plant was being managed by Shweta Kothari, General Manager-HR, and Anju Mehra, General Manager-Operations, along with their team of managers and engineers. The Biratpur plant employed 200 workers who were working in two shifts. The plant made use of state-of-the-art high tech machinery, which demanded higher order skills and proficiency on part of the workers in order to operate the machines efficiently. The workers would receive adequate training and skill tests which provided them with sufficient knowledge to work on the production line with the machines.



The plant was manufacturing fifteen units per month.

AirWings provided several benefits to its employees starting from the top-level managers down to the employees working on the production line. The company ensured that the workers worked in clean and healthy conditions with the required

safety gear. All the workers were insured under the medical and accident policy, they were provided with four weeks of leave every year, they were staying along with their families in the quarters nearby, and the company also funded the schooling of the workers' children. Bonuses were paid at the end of

every year, which was decided on the amount of profits made by the company. This was the maximum benefit which was received by the employees while working in any company as on 2018. The company made sure that the employees were content and engaged to their work. Airwings was also awarded the best company to work for in 2017. Employees experienced a sense of pride working for such a company. However, things did not remain the same during the next year.

During the second quarter of 2018, the company had suffered severe losses owing to a steep decline in sales. But the company was required to keep the factory running and meet the demand for its products. The Managers of the plant were summoned by the CEO to make sure that the company survives the temporary turmoil. The sales team was under tremendous pressure to procure orders and revive the company's business. After a lot of sales pitches and client servicing, the company bagged a huge order of manufacturing 150 planes for a chain of two new airlines that were to commence operations in India.

Shweta and Anju leapt into action and got the plant rolling. But this time they were running on a constrained budget due to the losses incurred in the previous quarter. Shweta said, "we have to recognise that the times do not remain the same and we should reconsider our compensation policies." Hence, they decided to cut down on the bonuses and the paid holiday schemes which were previously being provided to the employees. They intended to make the employees work day in and day out in order to fulfil the order in time. And the workers in the factory were made to work extra hours so that they could complete the task on time.

While the project was being undertaken, the workers were not informed about the changes in the compensation policies; such as no bonus and a cut on their earned leaves. They were only informed that they will be required to work

extra hours in order to complete an extremely important order. The workers had faith in the management, and blindly followed their orders assuming that they will be paid extra at the end of the month in light of the extra hours put in by them. The workers worked diligently and supported their company at such an hour of urgency. They exhibited passion and were meticulous in their work.

At the end of the month, when the workers received their wages, they shockingly discovered the new company policies whereby they received wages for only one shift, and were not compensated for the extra working hours. This broke the employees' faith in the management. The workers felt cheated and wanted to escalate this matter with the top management.

Kapil, the union leader, took the matter onto his hands in order to resolve the grievances that the fellow workers were confronted with. On the same evening, Kapil sought a meeting with the top management, and thereafter, discussed the matter with the union, wherein it was decided that they would go on an indefinite strike. The strike commenced the very next day and work in the production line came to a standstill. The management decided not to take any action upon hearing the news of strike called by the workers. And they paid no heed to the strike even after a week. Kapil and his fellow workers became agitated and tired. Hence, they decided to aggravate the situation since they felt that they needed to do something more and force the top management to provide due importance to the situation. So, they went on a rampage in the factory, and in a fit of rage and anger, broke the machinery and equipment.

Upon hearing this, the top management decided to put their foot down and called the police to resolve the problem. The police arrived at the spot and arrested some of the workers, but Kapil was not one among them. Kapil realised that it was time to confront the top

management and resolve the problem face to face. He realised that it would be better if the issues were sorted out in a harmonious manner. The union felt that there was no use in prolonging this matter using violent means. So, they decided to have a meeting with the management.

Kapil, along with a couple of senior workers, scheduled a meeting with Shweta and Anju during the third week of the strike. During the meeting, Shweta and Anju explained the financial position to the employees' representatives due to which they were unable to provide the bonuses, but the argument was refuted that this information could have been communicated to the employees well in advance, and prior to undertaking the big project. After a long discussion, both the parties came to a consensus that the employees would not be compensated completely due to the damage caused by the strike, but will be paid one third of their compensation amount, and the managers assured them that all the workers would receive full compensation for the extra hours put in by them in the days to come. 

About the Author

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Analysis by Ravi Mishra

An organisation's credibility is based on mutual trust between the employees and employer through their real-life action at the workplace. But the ownership always lies with the big brother, i.e. the organisation. While several companies understand such a value proposition and put it into action, some of them believe in it but fail to effectively communicate this during the early stages of organisational life. It is apparent that AirWings failed to communicate to its employees about the financial crisis and the action plans, which are directly linked to their wages and salary. It has always been observed that organisations often fail to deliver over the aspect of communication, one of the most viable tools, on time. This creates room for doubt, and ultimately develop cracks, leading to loss of trust between the two parties.

It is unclear as to how Shweta, a HR professional, ignored the fact that an organisation is not permitted to change its existing policies related to workmen, such as earned leave and non-payment of compensation against the work done during extra hours, without their consent. She was supposed to follow the statutory compliances under - Model Standing Order, Factories Act, and Payment of Wages Act.

AirWings, established in 2017, with a mere 200 workers in the plant, set a bad precedent by making room for a 3-week long strike in only its second year of operations. Also, the reason behind the strike was not nonpayment for the extra work hours, but because the employees were not provided with timely information that the company was looking towards them for support in such an hour of crisis.

At the very first instance, Shweta, the HR Head did not oppose the

decision to curtail the workers' benefits when the company was not faring well. There are many other avenues which should have been looked into keeping the employees' salary as the last resort, because AirWings is a highly automated and a new age organisation. If we cut the workers' wages and salary, it would not have big impact on the bottom line. The employees going on strike for three weeks alone was a bigger cost for the company.

It is beyond anyone's imagination that the workers resorted to strike at a time when the organisation truly needed their services so as to keep the commitment to its customers in order to sustain and survive. However, the company did not feel the urgency to talk to them until the situation took a grave turn to rioting and arson. This is the time of Industrial Revolution 4.0!

The wisdom displayed by the union led by Kapil in reaching out to the management to find an amicable solution needs to be truly appreciated.

- Shweta must have taken due cognisance before it became too late, and ensured that the company shared its concerns with the workers through Townhall meetings, so that it had the employees' trust and thereby prepared them for the ramifications.
- It is about time that the government brought in changes in the statutory laws that define the relation between the management and workers. The term 'master and servant' was in vogue during Industrial Revolution 1.0, but everything has changed since then.
- Organisations do understand they are no longer the master and employees the servants, but are partners in the shared vision and mission. Organisations therefore



need to discuss and share the final print with employees during regular Townhall meetings.

Going forward, AirWings shall understand the value of effective communication and employee engagement across all levels. This will strengthen the employee relations and recast the compensation policy considering various current and futuristic factors, and build remedial provisions to mitigate situations such as the one above. 

About the Author

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Analysis by Rohit Hasteer

Organisations as well as leaders are prone to err in their judgement. However, immunity is unacceptable in case of deliberate oversight regarding a business decision that impacts people. Any decision taken by the management when fully aware that it is going to impact people adversely is insensitive, and beneficial only in the short term. Even though Shweta and Anju were faced with a tough situation, as seasoned professionals, they should have been prepared for such circumstances. Irrespective of the context of the business, one cannot overlook transparency in communication and clarity in new policies and expectations.

The very benefits that made the plant effective, kept employee morale high, and made them give their best were taken away. However, stopping the benefits did not lead to a situation of conflict. It transpired since people felt cheated after they realised the changes in the policy. And it did not stop here. The cold, non-responsive behaviour from the management made the workers feel distanced. While that in no way justifies vandalism, the sheer lack of clarity and the feeling of being cheated definitely qualify as triggers leading to the outage. The onus lies with the leaders, since they were needed to be responsive in time.

- Shweta and Anju should have realised that being honest and transparent about the performance of the company with the workers would have been a better approach than leaving it for people to figure out at the end of the month.
- While there is a possibility that people would still have been unhappy, they would not be sceptical over the management's intent.
- Creating inclusion and offering

transparency might have provided the workers with a perspective as to why cost-effective measures were undertaken.

- Since people took pride in associating with this organisation, it is likely that after learning about the company's situation, the workers might have worked even harder to achieve the larger objective.
- Both the leaders could have spoken about the organisation's willingness to share profits through various forms, and the need for the workers to step up and help the company when its going through a tough phase.
- A deal could have been struck where people could have received special bonuses when the company was back in shape, or options such as deferred pay-out could have been managed, keeping the interests of both the parties' in mind.

However, ignoring the opportunity for such a negotiation turned the situation from bad to worse. What made things go further south was the management's reaction to the strike. The fabric of every successful organisation is built on trust and integrity. And the leadership has every right to take hard decisions in the best interests of the organisation. However, it cannot do so at the cost of value systems and integrity.

- HR should have been honest enough to accept the lapse in judgement and the lack of timely communication, and that would have restored some faith in the workers towards the management.
- The CEO of the company should send across a strong message to the leadership for such a reckless decision, with a clear mandate to uphold the company values, and recover the loss due to violence from Shweta and Anju.



- The workers who indulged in vandalism and resorted to unlawful means also need to be punished as per law so that it gives a strong message that wrong doing shall not be tolerated.

- Communication continues to be the pillar of success for most efficient organisations, irrespective of industry, talent archetype, or geography.

Righteous decision making involves securing the interest of both the employer and employees. And this stands as a testimony to the element of leadership that can make or break an organisation. 

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Performance Management And Learning

The aftermath of appraisal cycles during Performance Management, affords a natural TNA for the L&D department. But should L&D dive into it and accept all the Training requirements identified, or be more discerning in separating the wheat from the chaff?

BY DIPANKAR DAS



plus requests from an active headcount of 4,000. Of course, many of the requests were repetitive, but even after filtering out the repetitions, the number was an impossible 3,000 plus requests.

Well, do you see a bit of your organisation in this story? Truth be told, appraisal time is a busy time for L&D departments. Appraisal discussions yield a number of actionables, one of the most prominent being the Training needs of the appraisee. And even before the Appraisal Letters are out, the rank and file expect the Trainings identified by them to be rolled out, as of yesterday.

Once upon a time....

Ram Murthy was an unhappy CHRO. The position of the L&D Head, in his infrastructure company, was lying vacant for almost a year now, and the last year's appraisal cycle had generated a huge set of Training requests from the business. Other than the usual Induction programme and a few programmes for the leadership, flying off to the Tier I business schools, no progress had been made on the laundry list of requests for Training. This year too, the Appraisal cycle was coming to an end, and the L&D Head had only joined.

The L&D Head had his job cut out - to immediately address the requests for Training that had emerged in the annual performance management cycle. A spreadsheet extraction from the LMS threw up a whopping 9,000

Going about it systematically

A few pointers are required at this stage. Very often, an erroneous step starts from the wrong questions being asked. After every appraisal cycle, among the solutions recommended to plug performance gaps, is a Training module. A Module or a classroom training should be the end result of a well thought out process, and not the automatically chosen solution to address a performance gap.

The introspection any skill gap should elicit is whether it is the physical skill that needs upgrading, or is it a behavioural change that is the need of the hour. Often, it is the latter, if not both. In such situations, it would be a better solution to develop a learning path for the individual. A Learning path covering the skill deficits would make the journey easier. Rarely



does a behaviour change as part of the singular Learning intervention, yet the perennial expectation is to identify a Training, and nominate the appraisee to attend the same, and voila, the performance gap is bridged. Let us look at three scenarios to understand this well.

Scenario 1

During the appraisal cycle, Ramesh Pathak, who has been asking for a role change for some time, gets transferred from Quality to Procurement. In his new role, he will now be interacting with many vendors and will be required to negotiate with them. Many, who are in Ramesh's shoes, assume that they will learn by observing and doing. So, there is no structured learning path, but Ramesh learns, albeit slowly, through the rough and tumble of work. The learning curve is stretched and Ramesh is still never very sure of himself in the Procurement role, but work goes on.

Scenario 2

Ramesh joins his new role and immediately identifies a Training on Negotiations skills. He goes and attends the programme. The part of the Training that was genuinely overlapping with his role was useful, but most of the learning evaporates within days of the training for want of relevance and reinforcement.

Scenario 3

In this instance, however, instead of opting for a Training programme, a planned learning experience is crafted through the job, rather than through a Training programme, with a specific learning objective. The plan identifies two role models who can be observed by Ramesh. In addition, learning review periods are baked into the learning plan for the induction period. Ramesh is then prepared for his first negotiation and deal closure, which is observed by one of the role models, who then gives feedback to Ramesh. Once he is comfortable, he too attends a session on Negotiation Skills and is able to glean much more from the course.

The third scenario involved designing a learning path and not just learning. It helped create an

ecosystem, in which, not just Ramesh, but the department focused on his learning and implementation of that learning. It is always easy to align people to Training programmes; that is the easy way out, but Learning is a journey, not a one stop shop.

Performance appraisals are one of the best times to plan your L&D interventions, budget them and gear up for rollout. Appraisals inevitably involve heartburn and moments of reckoning, the planned learning after the appraisal is over, can often be instructive and cathartic for the much-bruised employee.

Meanwhile, in the Infrastructure company

Meanwhile, in our Infrastructure Company; by the end of the year, Murthy was a happier CHRO. The new L&D Head knew how best to address the flood of expectations coming out of an Appraisal cycle. Going through last year's data, he discovered that the expectations last year and those this year, were very similar. Hence, the learning interventions could address the gaps for both years. And most importantly, it was not about a Training module, it was about a journey, which L&D could help catalyse, but the business would have to partner with the L&D department to provide domain expertise, coaching, and in drawing out the Learning journeys.

Business stopped pointing out any L&D lacuna and accusing HR of inaction. L&D had become a joint responsibility - HR's and businesses. Targets were in place, and work was afoot. The process of Learning and knowledge transfer was not confined to the Training schedule and restricted to classroom learning, but dispersed across the operations floors and support functions, as it always should be. 

About the Author

Dipankar Das is a Facilitator and Performance Coach. He specialises in implementing L&D and OD interventions in a cross section of Industries. He has worked in diverse organisations, including IBM, Genpact and Tata Projects Ltd.

“Truth be told, appraisal time is a busy time for L&D departments. Appraisal discussions yield a number of actionables, one of the most prominent being Training needs of the appraisee.”



Ours is an IT Company with a workforce that comprises contract and regular employees. In order to promote a harmonious working environment, we arrange team outings and other social events that are sponsored by the company, in which the contract employees are also invited to participate. Does this enhance the risk of contract employees staking a claim for direct employment with us?

Actions and circumstances that may lead to a successful claim of direct employment are viewed holistically and not in isolation. The occasional participation of contract employees in team events alongside regular employees in order to build team harmony and improve team morale will in itself not lead to a successful claim for regularisation. However, when viewed with various other factors of control/supervision as described above, such inclusion could give credence to a claim of regularisation. It is advisable to keep such team events involving contract labour to a minimum, so that they do not perceive themselves as direct employees, and also arrange such events with the contractor being present.

It has come to our notice that one of the employees on contract recently deployed by our Company through a Contractor X was previously deployed by the Company for a short duration through Contractor Y. Given that the Company has deployed the same person through two different contractors, is there a risk of a successful bogus claim?

It is true that one of the key factors considered by the courts in bogus claims is whether the same contract employee has been engaged through different contractors. However, given that employees inevitably change jobs and move from one contractor to another, it would not be unusual for employers to end up hiring the same individual through different contractors, in the natural course. In the instant case, if the Company can establish that it does not systemically engage the same contract employee through different contractors and did not specifically request for this particular employee and he/she was allotted/assigned to the Company by Contractor X, at his discretion, in the usual course of business, the risk of a successful bogus claim is very low.

If the contractor through whom our company has engaged contract labour defaults on provident fund contributions for the contract labour, will we be required to bear this cost?

As mentioned above, the EPF Act imposes an obligation on the principal employer to make contributions to the provident fund thereunder on behalf of contract labour. Therefore, even if this liability is contractually moved to the contractor, the regulatory authorities are not prevented from proceeding against the principal employer in case of default by the contractor. However, the EPF Act allows the principal employer to recover this money from the contractor either by deduction from any amount payable to the contractor under any contract, or as debt payable by the contractor.

Separately, do note that certain High Courts have held that in case a contractor is a large organization, with control over its employees and has obtained a separate registration under the EPF Act, then such a contractor shall be treated as an independent employer and in such a case liability arising from any default by the contractor cannot be fastened on the principal employer. That said, in order to mitigate against any issues arising in this regard, it would always been recommended to engage reputed and large contractors who have the necessary registrations and licenses in place, and routinely confirm that the contractors are continuing to be compliant. 

About the Author

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Risks & Best Practices While Engaging Contract Labour

BY RASHMI PRADEEP AND BISHEN JASWANT

Engagement of contract labour has become a vital part of the workforce strategy among organisations across sectors. In an increasingly competitive business environment, employers are deploying contract labour to meet contingencies, surges in workload, and requirement of niche skill-set for projects. Certain key attributes of such arrangements, such as flexibility, reduced operational costs, and scalability make it an attractive option for employers. This is also preferred from an HR perspective, since the payroll obligations of contract labour are managed by the contractor. While there are numerous benefits, engagement of contract labour comes with its own risks.

The primary legislation governing the engagement of contract labour in India is the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 ("CLRA"), which is applicable to principal employers and contractors engaging contract labour beyond a prescribed threshold. The CLRA regulates the working conditions of contract labour and aims to gradually abolish contract labour under certain circumstances.

Key Risks

Lack of parity in terms of compensation and benefits between contract labour and regular employees of the same establishments and the resulting discontent often leads to the contract labour claiming regularisation and/or an increase in wages and other benefits on par with regular employees. Based on an



analysis of judicial precedents there are three primary grounds on which such claims are raised:

- (i) Contract labour undertake the same work as (some) regular employees of the principal employer, but their wages are not on par ("same work claim").
- (ii) The contract entered into between the principal employer and the contractor is not genuine but a camouflage to evade laws and deprive contract labour of benefits ("sham claim").
- (iii) A notification is issued under the CLRA, abolishing the engagement of contract labour in the notified establishment for certain processes ("prohibition notification").

On the same work claim, courts have held that the responsibility to pay the same wages to contract labour for the same type of work lies with the contractor, and the CLRA does not obligate the principal employer to make any additional payments to make good any

difference in pay between employees and contract labour for the same type of work. Courts have also held that the issuance of a prohibition notification will in such processes not give the contract labour engaged the right to automatic absorption, but the contract labour should be given preference if the principal employer employs regular employees for the processes covered under the prohibition notification.

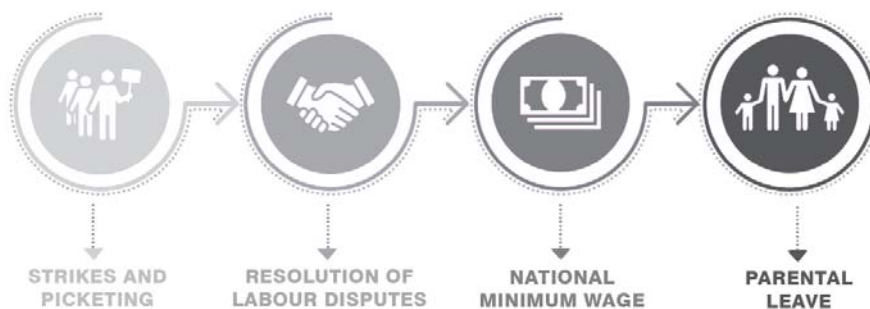
Contract labour generally raise the sham claim on the ground that they are under the direct supervision and control of the principal employer. The involvement of the principal employer with the contract labour in the following matters are held as indicators of direct control and supervision over contract labour by the principal employer:

- (a) Hiring/firing
- (b) Conducting appraisals and determining bonus/incentives
- (c) Taking disciplinary action

- (d) Sanctioning leave
- (e) Redressing grievances
- (f) Engaging the same contract labour for an extended duration
- (g) Engaging the same contract labour though different contractors
- (h) Extending employee benefits and trainings.

Typically, courts examine a combination of the above factors to determine whether the contract labour engaged are deemed to be the employees of the principal employer, and existence of a single factor is unlikely to lead to a successful sham claim. In this regard, the Supreme Court has held that some control is bound to be exercised over contract labour, and this in itself does not create a relationship of master and servant, but if the contract is found to be a ruse to evade compliance with the law, the principal employer will be obliged to treat contract labour as employees.

Most recently, the Supreme Court ("SC") in *Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited v. Mahendra Prasad Jakhmola and Others*, 2019 (4) SCALE 738, decided on 20th February, 2019, has restated the principles to determine whether a contract labour is a direct employee. The issue before the SC was whether the 64 contract labour engaged through a contractor, and whose engagement was subsequently discontinued by the appellant employer, were in an employer-employee relationship with the appellant employer. The SC, relying on the past precedents set by it, drew a distinction between 'primary control' and 'secondary control'. It held that payment of wages by the contractor shows that the primary control over the contract labour vests with the contractor and that the principal employer who only exercises a 'secondary control' by directing the contract labour on 'what to do' after the contractor assigns/allots the employee to the principal employer cannot be said to control and supervise the work of the contract labour. The SC also took note of the fact that the



principal employer had not issued any appointment letter, provident fund number, or wage slips to the contract labour to rule in favour of the appellant i.e. the principal employer.

In addition to the above, there is also a risk that the government authorities may proceed against the principal employer for certain defaults committed by the contractor. Principal employers are responsible to pay wages and provide certain facilities to the contract labour should the contractor default in doing so. Social security legislation such as the Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 and the Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948 impose an obligation on the principal employer to make contributions thereunder on behalf of the contract labour. While the market practice is to contractually transfer the primary liability to make contributions to the contractor, government authorities may proceed against the principal employer in case of default.

Best practices

The risks associated with the engagement of contract labour, as highlighted above, can be mitigated to a considerable extent if the employers implement the following best practices:

1. Treat regular employees and contract labour as separate, including by prescribing different uniforms, identification tags, policies, etc.
2. Make certain that the contract labour do not report directly to the principal employer unless

absolutely necessary, and routinely report to the contractor or a contractor's representative deputed to the premises of the principal employer.

3. Ensure that actions which are ordinarily exercised by an employer, such as sanctioning leave, performance evaluations or initiating disciplinary action are taken by the contractor, i.e. the direct employer of the contract labour.
4. Confirm, prior to engagement, that the contractor has obtained necessary registrations under various social security laws.
5. In the agreement with the contractor, include such contractual provisions that:
 - (a) No employer-employee relationship is created between the principal employer and the contractor/contract labour
 - (b) The contractor is required to replace contract labour
 - (c) Supervision and control of the contract labour will always be with the contractor
 - (d) The contractor undertakes to comply with applicable labour legislations. **HC**

About the Author

Bishen Jeswant is Senior Associate in Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas' Employment Law Practice. He has an experience of over 7 years and has worked with Trilegal in the past. He specialises in matters pertaining to senior management terminations, employee misconduct, sexual harassment issues, employee benefits and etc. Bishen is a graduate of National Law University 2012 batch.

Managing Atypical Work In Tech Startups

'Atypical' work arrangements enable organisations to reduce costs of workforce compensation and management, and wield greater flexibility in workforce utility and planning.

BY ANKITA TANDON

In India, jobs have traditionally been dominated by roles that involve full-time, long term contracts with employers. Driven by the ICT mobile working model, the recent years have witnessed a spurt in non traditional, flexible work contracts such as part-time work and short-term employment. Riding on the tech wave, various startups are now attracting employees with such 'atypical' work arrangements. This enables organisations to reduce costs in workforce compensation and management, and wield greater flexibility in workforce utility and planning. An Economic Times article (July 2018) highlights the rise in demand for short-duration flexible work specifically in IT, ITeS, and e-Commerce sectors.

A significant volume of the part-time workforce is employed in delivery-based startups such as Swiggy and Zomato, and cab aggregators such as Ola and Uber. These companies compete on the basis of pricing as well as user experience. And both these aspects are crucially dependent on the performance of the part-time workforce. Also, the non-managerial workforce is a critical consumer touchpoint, and impacts consumer experience and satisfaction, which is directly linked to the organisation's image, reputation, and financial performance.

Managing a part-time workforce

in non-managerial roles poses several challenges.

- A largely mobile workforce presents higher attrition rates
- Lesser control over service quality by the organisations
- Work relationships more transactional in nature
- Reduced mutual trust and enculturation within the organisation

And these aspects can hamper the workforce's performance, which in turn affect consumer experience, and thereby revenue. Therefore, organisations that rely heavily on such a workforce need to deeply ponder over the ways of managing them and be successful.

With the growing demand for part-time workforce, organisations will need to make greater investment and effort in attracting and retaining better talent. Some of the following aspects need to be carefully considered for achieving these goals.

Investing in hiring better skills:

Organisations do not invest a lot of time, effort or, money in hiring non managerial part-timers. However, with the workforce being critical to organisational success, they stand to benefit from investing in hiring. Hiring needs to be more strategic to identify better talent with behavioural skills essential for such roles. The e-Commerce sector is already leading the pack, since increasing competition

has made them to hire an older and a more mature delivery staff, who are better-skilled and also remain in their jobs for a longer time.

Investing in training: Since customer interactions by the part-time workforce has direct implications on customer satisfaction and retention, organisations will need to invest in training them to enhance consumer experience. In addition to informal, on the-job learning and training on standard operating procedures, providing structured and intensive behavioural training will go a long way in reaping positive results.

Getting creative with compensation and benefits:

Part-time work contracts are generally devoid for long-term benefits that a full-time workforce enjoys, such as: social security, insurance, growth paths, benefits for the employee and their family etc. Organisations need to get creative and include rewards that are traditionally not part of part-time compensation agreements. For instance, Swiggy has incorporated insurance for the entire family as an add-on benefit for its delivery boys. Benefits that are small on costs, but large in terms of psychological impact, if incorporated are likely to attract a more engaged workforce. In addition, organisations can also differentiate themselves by adding various non-monetary rewards to the compensation package.

As part-time and other atypical contracts become more common, organisations will have to go back to the drawing board to formulate contracts and mechanisms that enable stronger relationships between themselves and an increasingly flexible workforce. 

About the Author

Ankita Tandon is Assistant Professor-HR at the FLAME University, Pune. She was awarded Junior Research Fellowship in Psychology by the University Grants Commission of India. Ankita is a Fellow (FPM) from the Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode in OB & HR and has a Masters degree in Psychology from the University of Delhi.

The Disciplined Captain

A few minutes of interaction with Niketh Sundar, Global Head - People Function, QuEST Global, are more than sufficient to understand the discipline he espouses in his professional and personal life. An erstwhile trained fighter pilot in the Indian Navy, he still bears the acumen and sustenance that his present role demands while remaining rooted to human values and organisational ethos at the same time.

BY S. AJAY KUMAR

IN BRIEF

Name	: Niketh Sundar
Age	: 55 Years
Title	: Global Head, People Function
Organisation	: QuEST Global
Experience	: More than three decades
Years in HR	: 17 Years
Education	: Graduate from the National Defence Academy, Pune, India. Master's degree in Defence and Strategic Studies and a PG Diploma in Business Management.



How do you look back at the professional journey that you have traversed thus far? Please share the enriching experiences that you have come across. How has working across industries made your professional journey more interesting?

I have had a fulfilling professional life, marked by enriching experiences, daunting challenges, and continuous learnings. My initial career was a childhood dream come true - I went through military training and went on to be a fighter pilot in the Indian Navy. The role of a fighter pilot is very challenging, and more so, in the navy. The discipline and focus it takes to land an Aircraft Carrier in the middle of the ocean hones one's work ethic for life. For instance, there is this famous anecdote by Neil Armstrong, who incidentally had prior experience as a fighter pilot in the Navy. When asked about the most exciting moment of his life, the obvious response expected by people was the landing on the moon; but he said, it was the first time he landed on a ship in the middle of the ocean at night. I can resonate with this.

When I eventually led a Squadron as the Captain of the ship, I confronted leadership challenges, which involved taking 'life or death' decisions on several occasions. Out in the ocean, the entire team is looking at you for the next step, and you have nobody to consult with for a second opinion. Situations like these have had a deep impact in honing my leadership skills - how to arrive at the right judgement in very little time, without having an opportunity to seek someone else's counsel. Being in the armed forces has also imbibed in me the elemental role that risk-taking plays in leadership. Once, we were docked off the coast of Somalia, where a civil war was raging. When we ran out of supplies and water, I had to walk right into the strife-torn coast to get the necessities, alert yet fully vulnerable to danger. Unlike in the corporate world, losses in the military are not just money and jobs, but your own life and the lives

of those you command.

Following my stint in active service, I spent an eventful tenure at the Defence Services Staff College as a member of the faculty on strategy and leadership. It was very fulfilling for me to groom the next generation of leaders, and getting the opportunity to upgrade my own knowledge in an immersive learning environment. I credit my leadership and management competence and personality traits like commitment and empathy to these experiences.

After 17 years of various roles in the armed forces, I took a calculated risk and decided to move to the corporate world, when I was offered a role in the leadership team in a U.S.-based IT Services company through some acquaintances. This was unlike several of my peers who had moved on to becoming commercial pilots post retirement. While their jobs offered them monetary comfort and a chance to fly, I could see that they did not find it challenging enough, as compared to the experience of a fighter pilot. This bolstered my decision to explore a completely uncharted territory. I discussed my prospects in depth with a friend who was a veteran in the field, and was advised to take up the opportunity. I enrolled for an Executive MBA at Narsee Monjee Institute of Management, even as I was working, and spent my time learning and absorbing the nuances of corporate leadership on the job - a journey I tremendously enjoyed. Applying the strengths of my past experience to my new role, while leaving behind those aspects that would not work in the new environment, was one of the most fulfilling and challenging aspects of my new professional life.

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

My entry into the corporate world around 2001 was rather propitious, as technology outsourcing was a booming industry then. I entered the right place at the right time.

My knowledge was completely raw, and I started from scratch. It was an exciting and challenging journey. Looking back, I certainly think that the company was way ahead of its time, as they focused on getting the right people for the job at the time of hiring, rather than retrofit people to the roles. I learnt a lot about the tech outsourcing industry on the job, and the experience of working in a startup continues to remain as one of great help. The biggest difference between my first corporate job and my present role is the start-up experience I had. In a start-up, the focus is not much on future plans. The main priority is to get the work done for the customer, and

Rapid Fire

Favourite quote : "I didn't have time to write a short letter, so I wrote a long one instead" by Mark Twain.

Leadership Style : Participative. As a leader, I am responsible for inspiring the younger workforce and helping them identify motivation at a more tactical level. Also, it is important to establish a connect and create a rhythm with my team, and more so in an environment where we work remotely quite often.

Favourite book : To Kill A Mocking Bird by Harper Lee

Favourite Movies : Day of the Jackal, Bohemian Rhapsody, and Sully.

Favourite music artists : Eric Clapton and Kishore Kumar.

Life is.... Too short.

Family is..... Everything.

I strongly believe in.... Living life to the fullest and not wasting a single day.

The most important thing I do on Sunday....

I spend time with my family and friends and unwind by playing a sport.

I deal with setbacks by....

Looking at the big picture. I am a very competitive person. Failures affect me a lot. But I try to stay calm and find the solutions to overcome those.

What are the things you never leave your home without?

My jacket and lunch box.

Up, Close and Personal

What inspired you to steer your career towards HR?

I wanted to come out from my comfort zone and try other things in life.

How do you like to spend your free time?

I spend my free time in sports, music, and reading. I play golf regularly and work-out in the gym a couple of times a week. I continuously read about world affairs and business - The Harvard Business Review and The Economist are two of my favourite publications. I am also learning to play guitar these days!

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

When I travel, I observe a country's culture and how people work. Visiting places like the UK and the US is easier, because we share a common language

apart from other similarities in the work culture. But, there is a lot to learn from countries like Japan and Germany. The comeback of Japan after the second World War illustrates the dedication of the country's citizens. Hierarchy, though downplayed, is important in Germany. At the same time, they are very sensitive to history, and hence, have thoughtful employee-friendly policies.

What was your learning from the B-School?

I undertook the Executive MBA course while working with QuEST. Although I do not come from an HR background, my experience in the Military taught me people and human resource management very well. What I did learn at the B School was 'Business.' Understanding a balance sheet and learning the nuances of the domain was of utmost importance to me. My on-the-job training and the curriculum at the B School helped me

to educate myself effectively on the subject matter.

Has anyone in your family influenced your values?

I was brought up in a middle-class family among humble and caring people. I grew up around people who were hard working and self-made. I inherited values like commitment, integrity, and care from people around me.

Who would you credit in shaping the man that you are today?

My parents have a major contribution in shaping the man that I am today. My father worked in HAL, Nasik, and my mother was a teacher. As a child, I used to watch fighter aircrafts in flight, and that gave me the dream of becoming a pilot. I deeply admired my mother for her ability to multi-task and manage both home and professional life through challenging times.

survive by hiring and paying employees on time. However, in a well-established HR framework, we diligently and continuously work on policies that promote greater productivity, talent attraction, and retention. For us, employee centricity is a critical practice.

Having been long associated with sectors such as defence, IT, and

engineering services, what is your understanding of the business, and how big a role does HR play in this sector? Were there any sector specific challenges and opportunities faced by you?

In the armed forces, HR is not a silo function, and you are involved in the people function at every level. For instance, as a young officer in the military, we talk of coaching and

mentoring. As a navy pilot, you are given a group of 15 - 20 sailors and you take responsibility for their careers, welfare, and other non-professional aspects. In my case, I was once put in charge of a group of cooks and stewards, and I was responsible for taking care of their leaves, promotion requirements, ensuring their personal wellbeing, and even counselling. You learn on the job. Today, we talk about people manager versus technical task manager, but even a hundred years ago, some of these processes existed in the military, though it was not studied as rigorously as today in the corporate sector.

When you come from a military background, you are equipped with the knowledge and experience in management, leadership, overcoming adversity, and getting things done. What you do not know about is business - What is a balance sheet? What is the meaning and importance of profit? It was important to understand what skills to bring to the table. Another challenge was the transactional nature of the business, where money makes a difference to everybody. People need salaries,

HR Perspectives

Some Gaps that HR organisations need to bridge

- HR is continuously evolving and in order to be in the game one needs to think of the future. There is no doubt that technology will be an important part of HR in the near future. HR will need a higher degree of tech savvy and business savvy people.
- We have to ensure that the right people are in HR. Analytical capabilities need to be built. At the same time, we have to make sure that we do not lose focus on taking ownership for the changes that are coming in terms of growth - organic and inorganic.

Common errors companies commit while designing engagement practices

- As HR leaders, we have a big responsibility to keep an eye on organisational values and culture and continue to enrich it. We should not lose sight of fundamentals. We have to be smart to bring new things from other leaders and developing the leaders for future.
- One of the most significant goals as an HR professional is to help employees in taking ownership for the changes in the organisation and implement change effectively.

incentives, and increments. That world of compensation and rewards took a little more time for me to get adapted to when compared to the noble world where I came from, where material returns did not matter so much. All that was important was that there was honour and courage.

It is difficult to create a high level of purpose in the corporate world - a sense of purpose is not the central priority for every employee. In the military, you are willing to die for your country and when you watch your friends die, you serve to protect without expecting anything in return. As people managers, we have to constantly innovate to find newer ways of energising the team with passion and drive that will elevate their capabilities beyond the standard deliverables. This is an approach that involves changing the entire culture of an organisation, which may not be always easy.

Who have been your figures of inspiration during the professional

Buzzer Round

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

My transition from military to the corporate chapter.

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

I am a go-getter and strive hard to achieve my goals. My biggest dream was to become a fighter pilot which has come true. I have been lucky to have accomplished all my dreams so far, and did not have to tuck away anything.

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

People usually seek my advice for complex inter-departmental and individual conflict-related challenges. Some of these can be global in nature.

When was the last time you astonished yourself?

Last weekend, when I played some not-so-bad Golf!

Learning Points

- Creating a high level of purpose in the corporate world like in the military. As people managers, we have to constantly innovate to find newer ways of energizing the team with passion and drive by constantly looking beyond the horizon. This will help elevate the team capabilities beyond the standard deliverables.
- To be diligent and continuously work on policies that will promote greater productivity, improve talent attraction and retention. Employee centricity and engagement is critical.
- To get an understanding of profitable growth and the challenges to achieve it.

journey? What are some of the values or ideologies with regards to which you think leaders should definitely walk the talk to win stakeholder confidence?

I would not name any one or two people as my idols. I learn from people every day, be it a fresher in the team or a random stranger walking down the street. I am continuously learning from both historical characters and present-day icons. I analyse and keep track of how national and international leaders are running their countries and organisations, as well as how corporates are functioning, and what drives them to make the decisions they do.

I have been able to acquire tremendous inspiration from the founders and leaders of an NGO I know of, which enables people with disabilities and other challenges to become social entrepreneurs. The leader herself is blind, and the selflessness and passion demonstrated by her and her partner to try and make the world a better place for others gives me tremendous energy.

Values such as integrity, humanity, aspiration, customer focus, and accountability are the belief systems of an organisation. Leadership is viewed on the basis of such beliefs. If leaders talk of accountability, but never take responsibility for their behaviour, they will lose their

reputation, and the culture of the organisation gets diluted. You are constantly watched by the stakeholders, and as a leader, you have the huge responsibility to walk the talk.

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

HR is changing continuously, and in order to be in the game, one has to think of the future. There is no doubt that technology will be an important part of HR in the near future. It will relieve a lot of pain from employees and management. HR will need a higher degree of tech savvy and business savvy people.

Therefore, we have to ensure that the right people are in HR. Analytical capabilities need to be built. At the same time, we have to ensure that we do not lose focus on taking ownership for the changes that are coming in terms of growth - organic and inorganic. It will bring a lot of flux in terms of new leadership, new people, and new geographies. We have a big responsibility to keep an eye on organisational values and culture and continue to enrich it. We should not lose sight of fundamentals. We have to be smart to bring new things from other leaders and developing leaders for the future.

What are the organisational goals that have been set by you?

I have set a bunch of goals for my organisation over the next two to three years. I want to build Quest Global's analytical capability, and bring in advanced technology into HR. One of the most significant goals for an HR professional is to help employees in taking ownership for the changes in the organisation and effectively implement change. As a team, we have a huge responsibility to preserve the organisation's values and strengthen them, not losing the organisation's basic fundamentals. Another priority goal for me is to develop leaders for the future. 

10 Tips For A Gig Worker

Creating a routine and making sure you optimise your time so that the work does not become your life. It is necessary to ensure that you can continue to produce high quality work.



BY JYOTI SINGH VISVANATH

Gig work is trending. Globally, more people are choosing the precarity of gigs over the security of a full-time job. Some people are more suited to the uncertain work conditions than others, but all those engaged in gig work can benefit by ensuring the following:

1. Managing time effectively

Time is the currency of the gig worker and gig work, and by definition, is unstructured. Most organisations are primarily interested in the outcome or product of your work, hence they do not necessarily monitor your time and how you use it. It is incumbent on you to make the best use of your time. Working across geographies and time zones can mean that you do not clock off. Creating a routine and making sure you optimise your time so that the work does not become your life is necessary to ensure that you can continue to produce high quality work.

2. Having clear priorities

When working for more than one organisation or online platform, it is

possible to feel overwhelmed by competing priorities. Every piece of work becomes urgent, even if it is not important. If your priorities are not clear, you will be led by the demands of the client, who in turn is working on their priorities. Even when working on a single task, it is important to create a sequence of how you will accomplish the outcome at a pace best-suited to your personality and way of working.

3. Balancing work and leisure

'Chasing the surge' as drivers on some apps do means losing sight of the things that matter. Suddenly, the money or the work becomes more important than relationships and things you actually enjoy doing. Similarly, the feast or famine principle of gig work makes you want to make the most of the work you are getting at any point in time because you might feel you will not get the opportunity again. This makes it hard to say no and pull back from over committing. Balance is a personal choice, the parameters of which are determined by you. So, choose wisely.

“Learn to take breaks, engage in activities other than work which bring you joy. When you have the freedom to sit on a beach and work, should you really be worrying about connectivity?”

4. Creating boundaries

Boundaries are essential in all human interactions. If you do not set these, others will ride roughshod over your personal and professional space. In gig work, it is important to manage expectations so that the client does not invade your personal space. For instance, calling at odd hours or pressurising you to deliver before a deadline. Create boundaries for yourself and you will find others respecting them. This could be as simple as not answering the phone or messages when you are having your meals.

5. Taking care of your mental health

Loneliness, isolation, anxiety, and stress come with the territory of gig work. This is largely due to the lack of personal interaction with most work being done digitally. As one piece of work segues into another, there could be times when your only interactions are on your smartphone. Binge watching a show or playing video games is not the solution, take time out to meditate and distance yourself from all tech gadgets, go for a walk amidst nature, and most importantly, get enough sleep.

6. Managing stress

Always being 'on call' or financial anxiety about pending payments or where the next assignment will come from has a physiological effect on your body. Stress raises the levels of cortisol, which can lead to development of problems like high blood pressure and other metabolic issues. There is 'eustress', which helps you perform well but when it tips over into burnout, it needs to be reined in and managed. Learn to take breaks, engage in activities other than work which bring you joy and keep things in perspective. When you have the freedom to sit on a beach and work, should you really be worrying about connectivity?

7. Eating well

As a gig worker, your body is your company. It is necessary that you take good care of it by providing it with the right nutrition. When working odd hours, it is easy to fall into the habit

of eating junk food and consuming a lot of caffeine. The detrimental effects of both are well known, but what we fail to remember is that eating better actually helps us work better.

8. Having an exercise routine

When time is compressed, one of the first things we let go of is physical exercise. Too tired, no time, later, tomorrow are all excuses. Movement can change your state of mind and exercise impacts your performance remarkably. Some form of exercise, be it time at a gym, doing yoga, or just going for a run should be prioritised.

9. Staying connected

When inundated with work, it is easy to shut yourself off and limit your real time interactions with people. The digital and physical world is not interchangeable. Loved ones need time, relationships and friendships need to be cultivated with presence and attention. Take time out to spend with family, friends, and other gig workers, who understand the trials and travails of this type of work. This not only compensates for the lack of belonging to an organisation, but gives you an opportunity to share your journey with those close to you.

10. Asking for help

At times, no matter what, you struggle to get past the overwhelm or sense of isolation or even the sheer anxiety of not having a clear career trajectory. Although family and friends care for you and can help you overcome some of these feelings, a professional counsellor or therapist can, as an unbiased third party, give you the perspective you need. Do not be afraid to ask for help and remember you are not the only one going through these challenges. 

“The digital and physical world is not interchangeable. Loved ones need time, relationships and friendships need to be cultivated with presence and attention.”

About the Author

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

HR In A Startup

Human Capital in conversation with Zoya Brar, Founder and Managing Director, Core Diagnostics, who highlighted the relevance of HR in the growth of a Startup.



Do you believe that convincing a candidate to join a Startup is difficult?

The recruitment industry is undergoing a big transformation and startups are clearly leading the way. Startups typically defy the general sense of corporate hierarchy and provide a lot more opportunity to grow in a significantly short span of time.

“Building a strong formal HR Machinery within a Startup can help maintaining employee retention rate of the company”. How would you like to elaborate on this?

It is essential for Startups to retain such employees who are aligned with the organisation. From the beginning until the end, the HR team takes the onus in ensuring that there is a culture to ensure that the employees are engaged, and their talent and their professional growth is thriving. HR should ensure that employees are provided with the right training so as to be successful in their roles and that their goals are met while trying to maintain a work-life balance. It should be able to empower employees to remain motivated and prevent burnout.

How important is it to ensure that the talent adapts itself to the work culture within a Startup?

Culture is the key to building a strong and successful company. As an organisation, the foundation lies in the principles of transparency, flat hierarchy, and high performance. For Startups in particular, since teams are smaller and the impact is greater, it becomes very critical for employees to blend in well

with the culture, which could directly affect their performance.

What according to you is more relevant-ensuring constant upskilling among the talent or preparing the HiPOs for leadership roles?

Startups invariably prepare employees for leadership roles. The investment on both accounts of the organisation and the employee then is mutually beneficial. It reduces the need to hire additional talent and allows employees to develop long-term professional goals and contribute significantly to taking the start up to new heights.

Why do you believe that it is essential to inculcate entrepreneurial skills among the employees in any organisation and more so in a Startup?

As mentioned earlier, Startups are very fast paced and require employees to catch up to speed very quickly. A Startup's success is directly proportional to how much work employees put in not only to compete with all the big fish in the sea, but also to make their mark and prove the brand. Allowing employees to handle things end-to-end provides them with a sense of responsibility of a higher goal than just completing a project. It aligns them directly to the company's goals and intrinsically builds a motivation in them to accomplish higher feats. Entrepreneurship is a key skill to operate at that level. Hence, according to us, it is important to inculcate entrepreneurial skills among all employees.

Do you endorse the fact that HR should have complete ownership of designing and implementing the performance appraisal process that other units follow in spirit?

While the HR team plays a very crucial role in implementing and standardizing appraisal metrics across the organisation, we do give equal importance to an employee's potential to perform in their respective role as a deciding factor in their appraisal. This is something that other team members and managers are able to see for an employee more than just HR alone. Startups tend to have a unique process of assessing an employee's performance and in deciding their appraisal than the usual questionnaire and line manager meetings as in a regular corporate setup. 

Appointments



Fortis Healthcare Appoints Sanjay Sinha As Chief Human Resources Officer

Fortis Healthcare Limited (Fortis) has appointed Sanjay Sinha as the new Chief Human Resources Officer. Mr. Sinha is a seasoned HR professional with an illustrious career spanning over 29 years. He has a successful and well recognised HR leadership profile that is spread across industries like Telecom, IT, Services and infrastructure. He holds a postgraduate degree in Management (MBA) from the Faculty of Management Studies (FMS), University of Delhi.

Livspace Appoints Joyita Poddar As Chief Human Resources Officer

Livspace has appointed Joyita Poddar as its Chief Human Resources Officer. She has previously worked in leading companies such as Sabre Corporation, eBay Inc., Star India Pvt Ltd, Piramal Enterprises and Saint Gobain. Her key specialisations in the field of human resources include organisation change management, M&A, culture and people strategies, transformation initiatives, leadership growth and leadership coaching.



Hometown Appoints Sindu Aven As Chief Human Resource Officer

Home Town has elevated Sindu Aven as Chief Human Resource Officer. She is a seasoned business professional and a serial entrepreneur with an experience of over 25 years across education, social development, corporate, and digital business sectors. Sindu is a creator by nature and has many firsts to her credit including the setting up of the entire Kidzee franchisee at Zee Learn where she was instrumental in leading and managing over 2000+ Kidzee centers across India.

Godrej Promotes Ruhie Pande As Chief Human Resource Officer, Godrej Housing Finance

Godrej has now elevated Ruhie Pande as the Chief Human Resource Officer, Godrej Housing Finance. Ruhie was previously serving as the CHRO of Godrej Properties, the Group's real estate business. Ruhie has over 20 years of experience and held various roles in HR in some of the leading companies across the FMCG, IT, retail, and real estate sectors such as ITC Limited, NIIT, and Reliance Brands.



FICCI Talent Acquisition Conference 2019

The Talent Acquisition Conference 2019 was held at the FICCI Building in New Delhi on 30th May, 2019. The event organised by FICCI carried the theme of 'Attract-Assess-Acquire', in the backdrop of a paradigm shift in talent acquisition ecosystem and philosophies. The day-long conference deliberated on important issues such as Talent Acquisition Strategies, New Age Practices, and Leveraging Technology with leading HR professionals from across the country.

Speaking at the event, Ranjan Kumar Mohapatra, Director - HR, Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. said, "Technology is immensely helpful, but it cannot replace the 'Human' in 'Human Resources.'" He also shared that Indian corporates need to focus on internal talent mobility and quality of resources rather than quantity alone. Anil Sachdev, Founder and CEO, School of Inspired Leadership, said that interviewers should be mindful during talent acquisition process and not let their assumptions and perceptions come in the way, and said that talent acquisition is actually a talent appreciation process. He added, "A candidate should be hired for the organisation and not for a specific job as the job can disappear or change." The FICCI-Strat-Board Report on



"Talent Acquisition Philosophies India 2019 & Beyond - Rethinking TA Fundamentals" was also released during the event.

Talent Acquisition Philosophies India 2019 & Beyond

Key findings and the road ahead:

- Availability of the right talent pool and candidate quality remains an industry-wide challenge
- Job sites remain the favourite sourcing channel for the industry
- Gig economy continues to mature across the board
- HR/TA needs greater skills, depth, and possible re-prioritisation to cast a strong employer brand
- Consumerisation of HR and a strong candidate experience will be the key differentiators
- The new world of assessments is here to stay
- Quality of hire is most critical outcome from TA
- Diversity and inclusion needs greater commitment
- Selection biases need careful sensitisation
- The speed of technology adoption needs to go up 





‘Bringing The ‘H’ Back to HR’

NHRDN organized its 7th Human Capital Conclave on the theme 'Bringing the 'H' Back to HR' on 28th June 2019 at The Leela, Ambience, Gurugram. The conclave deliberated on the pros and cons of technology in parallel with the power of unleashing a Hi-Touch approach to the business and functions. The Conclave was led by Anand Pillai, MD-Leadership Matters, as Conclave director and Biplob Banerjee, Chief People Officer, Allied Blenders & Distillers Pvt. Ltd. as the Conclave Co-Director. Rajesh Kumar, Executive Director -HR & Administration, IFFCO- TOKIO General Insurance delivered the Keynote Address. The Conclave featured some of the top HR professionals from the country to deliberate upon a topical theme.

The Conclave focused on the following topics:

- Bringing H back in Talent Acquisition
- Bringing H back in Talent Engagement
- Bringing H back in Talent Development

Leaders from the business discussed and shared how they have been able to balance between Hi-Tech and Hi-Touch. The Conclave was very well received and was attended by over 110 CHROs, Human Resources Leaders, Talent Management, Talent Acquisition, Talent Engagement and Organization Development Professionals, People Practices Professionals and Academicians leaders from all over India.

Human Capital was the media partner of the conclave.

Indiantelevision.com's Media HR Summit

Indiantelevision.com hosted the first-ever Media HR Summit in partnership with ZEE on 26th June, 2019 at The Westin, Mumbai. The day-long conference concluded with some insightful discussions around how corporate and HR leaders are steering media companies into the future on the back of good teams, HR analytics, diversity and inclusivity at the workplace. The conference was divided into four sessions, three fireside chats and three presentations related to work culture, emerging trends in HR, employee engagement models, future-focused people strategies, changing nature of employment amid the rapid changes in the media and entertainment industry. The first session,

"Responding to megatrends" had Heather Saville Gupta, Group HR Director, MullenLowe Lintas, Rajiv Bakshi, CEO, Reliance Entertainment's Big Synergy, Lara Balsara Vajifdar, Executive Director, Abraham Thomas, CEO, Madison World Reliance Broadcast Network Ltd as participants with Anil Wanvari, CEO, Indiantelevision.com as the moderator. This was followed by a fire-side chats by Anil Wanvari with Jai Maroo, Director, Shemaroo Entertainment Ltd and later with Megha Tata, MD-South Asia, Discovery Communications India. Sessions with themes such as "Building a great team " and "Tackling the tech leap." The event concluded with a session on "Diversity, equity, and inclusion."

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Location : Mumbai
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The 'I' Of India's Inclusion

Emphasis on individual and collective benefits through Training and Development of every person will ensure more people crossing the line from complacency to proactive willingness.

BY DR. NIRU KUMAR



Each of us has questions and statements in mind, but we are unable to express them at all times. Thirteen years ago, when I began my journey as a Consultant in Diversity and Inclusion in India, the very theme in itself was unheard of. I was forced to wear an armour during the initial training sessions, because I had sensed the possible psychological attacks when people are asked to change, especially when they do not see the need, or fear the loss of power. "You are asking me to change a system which is working perfectly fine for me, why should I do it?" "Why should I even spend time and energy listening to you?"

These are the natural and understandable sentiments of the dominant group, be it vis a vis gender, generation, orientation, culture, race, or ability. With such statements becoming rare these days, one would like to believe that there has been a rapid change in the mindset, and inclusion is being deemed as an inherent value and ability, however, the reality is starkly different.

According to the 2018 World Economic Forum Report, India ranks 108 among 149 countries vis a vis the Global Gender Gap, comparing parameters such as Economic Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment. The Global Gender Gap stands at 68%, indicating a 32% gap that remains to

be closed. Till date no country has been able to achieve parity. The report says, "The progress toward parity continues to be very slow."

The World Bank data on Persons with disabilities (PwD) suggests that there are 40 to 80 million persons with disabilities in India. This means that we have one of the highest numbers of PwDs in the world. Out of the 13.4 million PwDs in India, in the employable age group of 15-59 years, 9.9 million were marginal or non-workers. This means that millions of disabled people are dependent on their families or social security. The inaccessible public transport, pavements, and buildings rob them of dignity, and prevents them from leading a barrier free life. While we have only considered two aspects of diversity, it does reflect that the pace of change is slow. Mere conversations do not represent actual change.

The reason for people not voicing the reluctance openly as compared to the earlier years is the buzz around Diversity and Inclusion. Government and organisations have begun talking about it loudly, and out of fear of appearing non-progressive, people have silently confined themselves to their comfort zone of non-inclusion, an indicator that not much has changed in reality. What can we do to catalyse this movement? The powerful way forward is to begin addressing the 'I' of Inclusion.

The only motivators of deep-

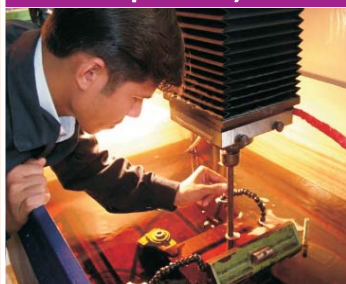
rooted unconscious change are pleasure and pain. The fear of punishment or the anticipation of reward. What is in it for me? Governments, Educational Institutes, Organisations, and Activists would need to use a combination of both. Under the 5 broad buckets of Inclusion - Social Justice, Organisational Development, Dignity, Competence, and Compliance, we can look for motivators and enforcers. Emphasis on individual and collective benefits through Training and Development of every person will ensure more people crossing the line from complacency to proactive willingness. A certain percentage which will need an approach of Compliance to prevent discrimination, thus tapping the massive buried potential of millions and moving the country toward authentic development. The "I" is the key! 

About the Author

Dr. Niru Kumar is a Medical Doctor, Psychologist, Gender Diversity Consultant, Mars Venus coach, Senior Barbara Annis Associate, Pranik healer, Reiki Grandmaster and teacher, Hypnotherapy practitioner, teacher affiliated to California Hypnosis Institute and an NLP expert. As the only Mars Venus Coach in India, she is a part of an International team of experts and has ongoing support from highly trained coaches and trainers across the world along with access to a vast resource of materials, systems and programmes.

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