

# HUMAN CAPITAL®

*realising business strategy through people*

Vol.20 No. 9 February 2017

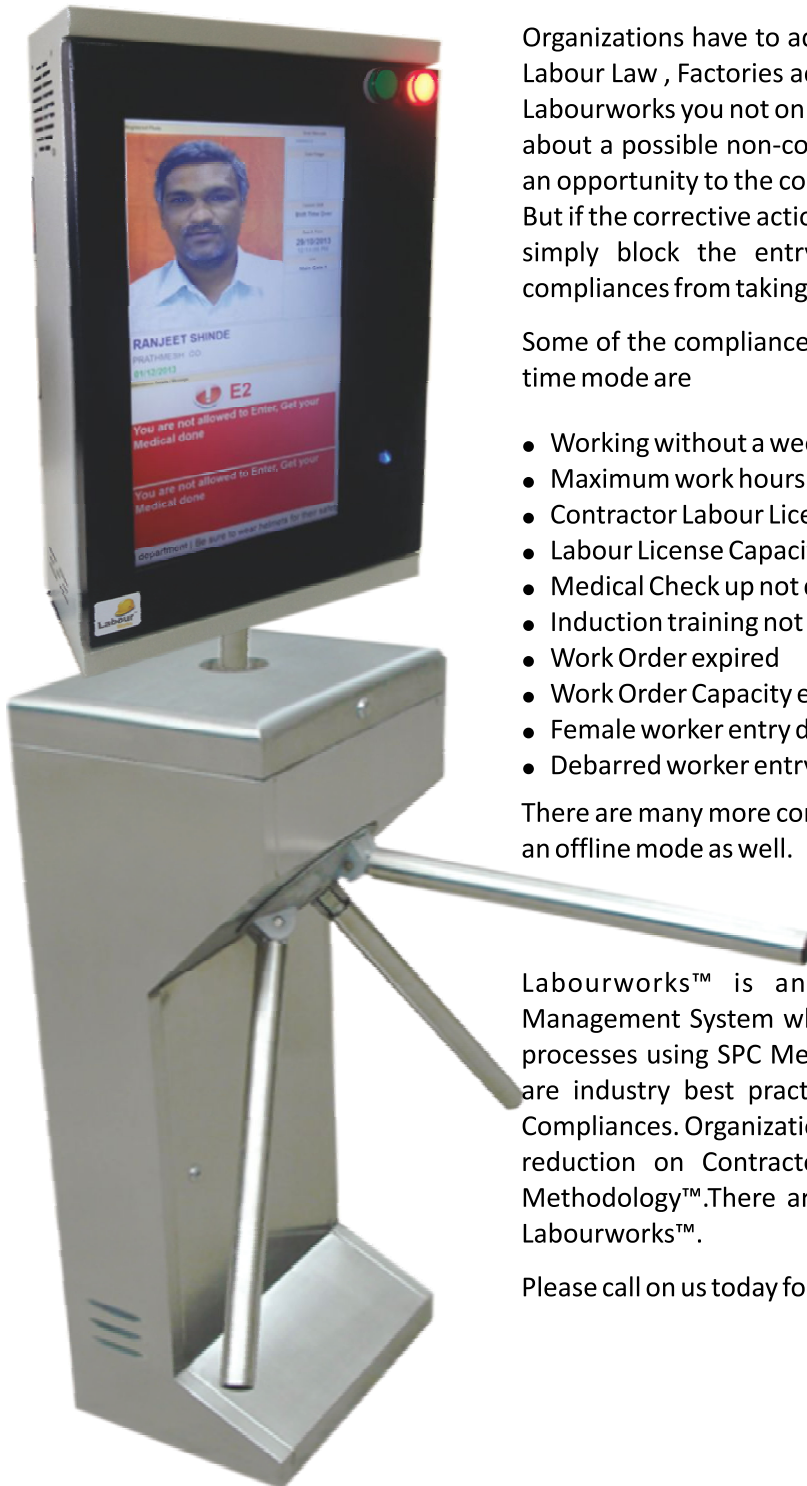


## Psychometrics: The Science of Measuring the Human Mind

**CASE  
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Please inform us during the same month (after 20<sup>th</sup>) if you don't get your copies, so that we can send another copy.

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This magazine contains 76 pages including cover

# To our readers

The February 2017 issue of Human Capital delves into the increasing usage and thereby the demand for Psychometrics during the course of recruitment and talent assessment predominantly owing to talent crunch in the corporate landscape. Human Capital interacted with Vijai Pandey and Dr. Mariya Jilinskaya from "The Psychometric World (TPW)" about the changing trends in psychometric usage across organizations.

Further, Belinda Brunner, Director, Testing Services Strategy at Pearson VUE writes that today's fast-paced environment creates the need for exams that are more readily accessible, workplace-relevant and convenient in terms of scheduling tests and receiving results promptly.

In the Interview section, Human Capital in conversation with Dermot O'Brien, CHRO, ADP, to understand how ADP is building innovation into their core values and encouraging employee engagement across a varied and multinational organization.

In the Learning and Development Section, Margaret D'Souza writes that every recruitment season brings in a new set of talent with fresh ideas and open mindsets and paves the way the need to reinvent training and development methods, since initiatives that were actually successful less than a

decade ago might seem redundant to the new workforce.

In the Readers Corner Section, extracts from two books "Uncornered Learnings From The Corner Office" by Luis Moniz and The Millennials: Exploring the World of the Largest Living Generation by Subramanian Kalapathi have been featured along with the authors' footnotes.

In the Talent Management Section, Dr. Ganesh Shermon writes that in a disrupted business environment, a leader cannot afford to make the mistake of not knowing who her true clients are, for, the first introduction to a client of your firm is always because of the team members, who in turn are responsible for your clients and customers.

In the Persona section, Shantanu Das, CHRO, Amway India, reflects that he carries immense faith in his belief that every experience in life; whether good or bad, is a part of one's learning curve and feels that this has been the prime reason for the success that he has managed to achieve thus far in his career.

Happy Reading!

MUKESH JAIN

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# The HR Club's 7th National Conference & Game Changer Awards

India's leading companies and educational institutions were honoured at the 7th National Conference and Game Changer Awards. The jury comprised of Padma Vibhushan Dr. M S Swaminathan, the father of Green Revolution, Padma Shri Dr. Ramakant Deshpande, Dr. Sailendra Narain past MD - SIDBI & UN advisor to several countries, Mr N Satyanarayan, CEO, National Cooperative Union Limited, Prof. V R Iyer Founder Member Janki Devi Bajaj Institute of Management, , Mr. D. K. Chopra, Strategic Advisor - Indofil Chemical Company, Former Group CEO, Biostadt India Limited and Mr. Srinivashan Iyer Founder -The HR Club, Leadership Lounge and The Entrepreneurs Network

Award was won by Aspire Home Finance.

Mr. H K Sharma, GM HR Unit-CPM at Fort Songadh of J K Papers Ltd won the HR Leadership Award. Cap. Sonica Muraleedharan Head HR Sterlite Copper, Tuticorin, won the Woman HR Leadership Award. Mr. Arun Nathani of Cybage Software Ltd, Pune won the Strategic Leadership Award. The Agripreneur Award was won by United Phosphorous Limited.

Educational Excellence Awards were also presented at the 7th National Conference. Excellence in Engineering Education and India's Most Lovable Campus Award were presented to Veer Surendra University of Technology, Burla. Institute of Plantation Management, Bangalore won the Best



"The HR Club is the largest network of HR professionals in the country with over 40,000 members. The idea of the awards is to recognize the best practices and inspire others to follow the path of these awardees " said Srinivashan Iyer Founder of The HR Club.

Sterlite Copper won the Innovation in Talent Acquisition Award. Vedanta Limited won the Award in Leadership & Succession Planning Practices. Mumbai Based Tata Power SED won two Awards in the Innovation in Employee Engagement and Cultural transformation through HR Categories. Innovation in Employee Health & Wellness Initiatives was presented to Jones Lang LaSalle Property Consultants India Pvt Ltd

Petroleum giant HPCL won the Best Learning & Development Initiatives Award. Bangalore based Anglo French Drugs & Industries Ltd bagged the award for Innovative HR Practices in the SME category.

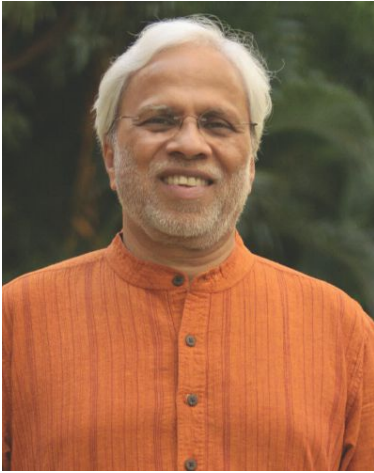
The CSR Leadership Award was won by Essar Foundation. Innovation in Products and Innovation Marketing Practices

Institution in Agri Business Management. Sri Sri University, Cuttack bagged the Excellence in Entrepreneurial Education Award & the Second Best Institution in Agri Business Management Award.

"This is the second year that we organized Agro Idol, India's only quiz contest for Agri Business Management Students and an Online Assessment for Agri Graduate and Post Graduation students. This year we also introduced Pharma Idol, India's on end only quiz contest for Pharma Business Management Students said Krithika, Member Core Committee of The HR Club.

"We organize Campus2Corporate Pro National Contest on Employability Skills in which IIMs, IITs, NITs and many other Engineering & MBA colleges participate every year. This was the seventh year" said B.Jayasree Member Core Committee of The HR Club.

Prominent institutions of India were awarded with Awards on Corporate Employability based on the performance of their students in Camus2Corproate Pro, Agro Idol and Pharma Idol.



DILEEP RANJEKAR

# Where Rituals Rule The Roost

In the first National Learning Conference in 2004 organized by the Azim Premji Foundation in collaboration with the Ministry of Human Resources Development, we wished to highlight the issue of Quality in Education on the national platform. This was based on the fact, that ever since 1999, a huge part of the discourse was around bringing the "out of school" children back to school, and, at the same time, ensuring that physical access to schools was made available in close proximity to where the students lived. Therefore, there was a specific need to discuss the issue of "Quality of Education" in a big way, and the Chief Guest for the event was none other than the Late Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, the then President of India. While dealing with various dignitaries on the list of invitees, we found dealing with the office of the President of India the easiest, and it was really a pleasure interacting with him and his secretariat. I was personally bowled over when my colleague and I entered his office in the "Rashtrapati Bhawan", and he almost got up from his seat to welcome us in. It was simply unthinkable of a President of a large nation like India welcoming his guests in this manner.

As a firm stand that the Azim Premji Foundation has always taken, we were clear that in the conference, there would be no rituals like lighting the lamp, garlanding the guests, high-back chair for the President, the red carpet etc. We mentioned all this with some apprehension to the President's Secretary, and, were greatly relieved when he said, "the President would be

very happy with this".

Last week, I was at Banswada district headquarters in Rajasthan, participating in a meeting with the education functionaries of the district, including the District Education Officer and the Block Education Officer. While

education functionaries. Many of these rituals in the Government functions have their roots in the hierarchical manner in which they operate, and, the expectations of seniors that they be respected in public by such rituals. What was more heartening was that



they were narrating their experiences with the Azim Premji Foundation, one of the aspects they mentioned was that all the programmes and events conducted by the Foundation wasted no time in several rituals - like welcoming dignitaries, offering flowers, allowing the dignitaries to speak (sweet nothings) etc., and the interactions directly came to the main agenda of the programme. They contrasted this to their own programmes, and, how speaker after speaker gave long speeches, thereby reducing the available time span for the teacher training period during the day. I felt nice that this aspect was noticed, recognized, and appreciated by the

they promised to spread this culture to enhance the productivity of their meetings.

## What are rituals?

Rituals are essentially ceremonial or procedural practices or formalities that get detached from the original purpose and meaning over a period of time. Illustratively, people celebrate festivals without knowing why they are being celebrated. Idols are erected and people worship them without even knowing their mythology. They are often carried out without understanding the meaning behind the practice. At times, certain rituals if practised with feelings help a culture



that is respectful. Illustratively, there is a practice of younger people showing their respect for the elders through bending or touching their feet. If they do it out of genuine respect, it may be fine (though I would not necessarily subscribe to it). However, when the youngsters do it without actually implying it, it becomes a meaningless action.

Lakhs of couples undergo religious ceremonies during their marriage without even understanding any of the "mantras" or recitations by the priest, because they do not even understand the language in which the mantras are recited. Several young children in certain communities undergo the "sacred thread" ceremony without knowing the import of it, or, without understanding or adhering to the subsequent practices that makes them lead a different life. Our holy shrines / places that are thronged by millions, are the very dens of such rituals, and, go through the motions as mandated by the priests. Neither the priests explain the rituals, nor do the people show any interest in understanding the same. In the bargain, people forget that maintaining the sanctity of the place through good hygiene and practices in sanitation are much more important.

On the other hand, there are rituals that are necessary in day to day life. They almost act as lubricants in the interpersonal relations. Rituals such as greeting and smiling at people when you meet them, acknowledging the presence of the people around you by way of appropriate gestures, or, thanking a waiter who serves you something. However, if they are performed devoid of necessary emotions / feelings, people are smart enough to notice and ignore them. I still remember during one of my early visits to the US, at the breakfast table a lady asked me, "how are we doing today?", and, before I could respond, I found her moving ahead. People who just go through gestures and expressions without meaning them are often perceived as "phoneys".

### Ritualism: A mere token?

At the societal level, if ritualism leads to mere tokenism and lip service, it is most undesirable. I am afraid that significant parts of our societal responses are becoming ritualistic. Members of society show momentary anger and protests after certain disasters, crimes, injustice and calamity. Whether it is 26/11, or the Nirbhaya rape incident, or the sacrifice of our army personnel, or the Bengaluru New Year molestations of women, or several blatant corruption cases against senior bureaucrats, we seem to just raise our voice for a few days, and, thereafter it is business as usual! We celebrate International Women's day on March 8 every year as a ritual, without contributing towards the improvement in the plight of women. The media writes about such developments once and forgets the very next day. Our ritualistic approach to such happenings is totally exploited by the politicians and bureaucrats. They are increasingly becoming apathetic and thick skinned to public outcry, and, are well aware that such sentiment would last a few days and die down.

The ritualistic society can only go through the motions without meaning anything seriously and cannot create any lasting change! **HC**

**Dileep Ranjekar**, Chief Executive Officer of Azim Premji Foundation, is also a passionate student of human behaviour. He can be contacted at [dkr@azimpremjifoundation.org](mailto:dkr@azimpremjifoundation.org).

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- Mr M Sahu, Operations Head



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- Mr R D S Yadav, Head-HRM



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- Mr Meghnath Mukherjee, GM-ER



"5S initiative helped us in improving operational efficiency and also strengthen emotional bonding of the employees with their work and company"

- Mr Mahadev Patel, Head HR



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- Mr Ravi Kathuria, Unit Head



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- Mr Satish Gudsoorkar, GM-Plant



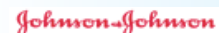
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## Increase In Discrepancy Rate In BFSI, ITES/BPO, FMCG, Healthcare & Pharma

According to a recent report 2016 witnessed significant developments across the globe as well as in India that had direct impact on employment. The increased emphasis on digitization and the penetration of technology across sector has led to the surge in demand for skilled workforce. This situation has surely added to the pressure on recruiters/ employers to ensure they make the right hire.

There is also unprecedented pressure on the job seekers as the competition has become rife and with the Government of India setting up national academic depository (NAD) to digitize all education records from school onward the possibilities of lying about one's qualification has become slim. The whole move of digitization is also helping the recruiters by weeding out fake applicants; thereby enabling them to take more informed decision while hiring and assisting them to bring on board more skilled and efficient people.



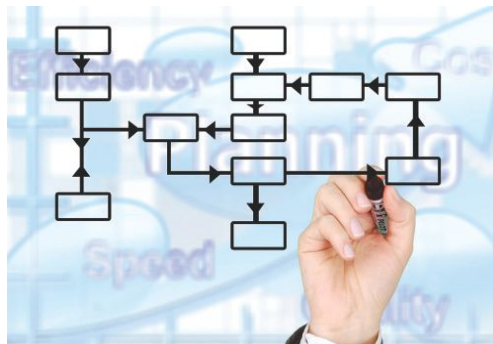
This latest study reveals key macro and micro trends, and also provides the insight to organizations to benchmark their current programs and realign their existing screening practices. The report is based on data collected from background verifications and reference checks conducted by First Advantage across India in Q3 2016. The results of the report are segmented under critical discrepancy types (employment, education, financial-related, address, and database) that examine the discrepancy breakdown by verticals, states, regions, industry, age, gender and the like.

Highest number of discrepancy cases was recorded in the BFSI sector at 41 per cent followed by IT at 25 per cent. Likewise in Q3-16, total number of cases Verified was highest for the BFSI sector at 35 per cent followed by IT sector at 29 per cent. Also, in Q3-16, 78 per cent of the overall discrepancy cases were Males and the remaining 22 per cent were Females. The overall discrepancy trend shows that the  $\geq 51$  years age bracket had the highest discrepancy at 27 per cent. Among the top six states (Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and New Delhi) Maharashtra recorded the highest discrepancy at 21 per cent followed by Karnataka at 20 per cent and Andhra Pradesh at 13 per cent.

## Only 15% of Indian family businesses have robust succession plan

While three-quarters of Indian family businesses have grown in the past one year, barely 15 per cent of them have a robust, documented and communicated succession plan.

Of those looking at an annual growth of over 10% over the next 5 years, about 96 per cent said that the growth of core business in existing markets will enable them to reach their targets. Over half of the family businesses surveyed said they were looking to expand into new sectors or new countries and will consider inorganic growth. The positive sentiment can be attributed to two broad factors. One: family businesses tend to remain relatively resilient and stable in adverse conditions. And two: the India growth story has been reinforced.



Priorities of family businesses for the next five years are not quite in line with the challenges anticipated. As part of personal and business goals, the endeavor of most

Indian family businesses is to build an enduring profitable enterprise, enjoy work and stay interested, innovate and leave a positive legacy. Innovation, which is considered the biggest challenge, comes fourth in business priorities—maybe because the need to innovate is linked with revenue growth at the enterprise level. Digital comes second in the list of challenges, yet only 22 per cent of family businesses feel their business is vulnerable to digital. While most family businesses understand the benefits of moving to digital technologies, more than half do not discuss them on the board.

Similarly, while the ability to attract talent comes in third in the list of challenges and businesses aim to bring in more professionals to give future direction over a span of the next five years, their ranking among business priorities is low.

## The end of the year saw a down fall of 7% in jobs

End of 2016 has seen 7% job decline from Dec 2015. The fall in the index is reflected in a decrease in hiring in key metro cities like Delhi - NCR, Mumbai and Bengaluru.

Within top metros Delhi/NCR, Mumbai and Bengaluru witnessed a decline in hiring activity of 12%, 2% and 6% respectively. Amongst other metros, the jobs index recorded a growth of 5% in Hyderabad and 4% in Pune while it stayed flat in Chennai and Kolkata when comparing Dec 2016 data with Dec 2015.

Although Dec 2016 was a slow month for hiring, the Banking Industry has seen a considerable uptick with jobs increasing by 14% on a YOY basis. Insurance jobs also went up by 19% in the same time period. While the IT-Software industry saw a 4% slump, the BPO industry saw a 4% gain in Dec 2016



as compared to Dec 2015. Likewise, Jobs in the Telecom/ISP industry saw a 24% fall while Construction and Engineering jobs decreased by 32% during the same period. Again, Oil & Gas and Power, Infrastructure jobs fell by 30% in Dec 2016 when compared to Dec 2015.

It was also seen that the IT Software jobs declined by 5% YOY, BPO jobs saw a gain of 6% for the same time period. Sales/BD and HR saw a 9% and 7% slump respectively in Dec 2016 when compared to Dec 2015.

Accounts/Finance and Production jobs decreased by 4% and 24% respectively since Dec'15. Hiring in Marketing and Advertising saw a 5% fall in the same period.

Also, the maximum number of jobs continued to be in the 0-3 year's category. However, it was the same category that saw a major slump in the hiring in Dec'16. Senior

Management hiring fell, with jobs for 16+ years of experience stayed buoyant when compared with Dec'15.

## 60% of candidates in technical sectors lack right combination of hard and soft skills

Hiring managers, across all Professional / Technical (PT) sectors say 60 per cent of candidates globally lack the right combination of hard and soft skills, highlights a recent survey by Kelly Services. PT hiring managers most frequently cite the ability to listen (81 per cent), and teamwork (72 per cent) as key soft skills that they look for in potential candidates. Team work is even more critical for engineering talent, at 85 per cent.

Also, 60 per cent of millennials are concerned with keeping their skills updated, reflecting the uncertain economic times that they grew up in, their fascination with technology and disruptive business models, and their relatively high degree of comfort with change. Geographically, APAC workers (64 per cent) are significantly more concerned with skills remaining current when compared to Americas (55 per cent) and EMEA (56 per cent).

PT workers represented over half of the workers surveyed in APAC and several PT disciplines

reported meaningfully higher than average concerns with skills obsolescence versus layoffs (74 per cent of finance and accounting, 73 per cent of IT and 70 per cent of engineering). The findings reiterate the impending IT skill shortages in APAC, and the potentially negative impact on the region's competitiveness.

It is to note that, relationships play the most important role in personal branding and it is changing the way people network. This is true not just for hiring managers but also freelancers as the survey shows that

57 per cent of freelancers tap their personal and professional networks to find jobs via word-of-mouth and referrals. More importantly, 24 per cent of global workers secured their most recent job via word of mouth or employee referral and another 29 per cent directly from an employer or head-hunter. The survey also brings to the fore the importance of skills to back up positive reputation.



## GLOBAL DIARY Feb-May 2017

### Creating Outstanding Business Leaders

Organizer-Harvard Business School  
Where - HBS Campus  
When - 1 Feb -12 May 2017  
Fees - \$68,000  
Website: [www.exed.hbs.edu](http://www.exed.hbs.edu)

### Maximizing Your Leadership Potential

Organizer-Harvard Business School  
Where - Taj Land End, Mumbai India  
When - 06-09 FEB 2017  
Fees - Rs 2,60,000 plus service tax  
Website - [www.exed.hbs.edu](http://www.exed.hbs.edu)

### Leading Global Businesses

Organizer-Harvard Business School  
Where - HBS Campus  
When - 12-17 February 2017  
Fees - \$15,000  
Website - [www.exed.hbs.edu](http://www.exed.hbs.edu)

### Authentic Leadership Development

Organizer-Harvard Business School  
Where - HBS Campus  
When - 12-17 Feb 2017  
Fees - FEES \$15,000  
Website: [www.exed.hbs.edu](http://www.exed.hbs.edu)

### The Leadership Transition

Organizer - Insead  
Where - Fontainebleau  
When - 27 Feb 2017  
Fees - €10,500  
Website- [www.insead.edu](http://www.insead.edu)

### Advanced Management Programme

Organizer - Insead  
Where - Singapore  
When - 06 Mar 2017  
Fees - S\$56,350  
Website - [www.insead.edu](http://www.insead.edu)

### Leading for Results

Organizer - Insead  
Where - Fontainebleau  
When - 13 Mar 2017  
Fees - € 9,150  
Website - [www.insead.edu](http://www.insead.edu)

### Human Resource Management

Developing Internal Talent and Leadership  
Location: Ahmedabad  
Date: 2 - 4 Feb 2017

### Entrepreneurship

Developing Entrepreneurial Mindset and Leadership  
Location: Ahmedabad  
Dates: 15 - 18 Feb 2017

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HR Auditing-Preparing the Ground for Strategic HRM  
Location: Ahmedabad  
Dates: 23 - 25 Feb 2017

### Communication Management

**Saying it all: Gender, Leadership and Communication**  
Location: Ahmedabad  
Dates: 27 Feb - 4 March 2017

### Leadership

**Leadership of Banks and Financial Institutions - The Challenges Today**  
Location: Ahmedabad  
Dates: 27 Feb - 3 March 2017

### Leadership and HRM

**How Leaders Bring Change**  
Location: Bangalore  
Dates: 27 Feb - 1 March 2017

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**Human Resource Management**

15th Human Resource Management-  
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Dates: 06 - 18 February 2017

**Management Development Institute**  
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HRD Interventions for Improving  
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**Leadership**

Leadership Skills for top Management  
Location: Hyderabad  
Dates: 20 - 24 February 2017

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Fax +91 40 2300 7099  
Email- [execed@isb.edu](mailto:execed@isb.edu)  
Website- [www.isb.edu](http://www.isb.edu)

**Human Resource Management**

Leading Teams for High Performance  
Location: Hyderabad  
Dates: 7 - 9 February 2017

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Fax +91 40 2300 7099  
Email- [execed@isb.edu](mailto:execed@isb.edu)  
Website- [www.isb.edu](http://www.isb.edu)

**HR Management**

Data Visualization and Presentation  
Techniques  
Location: New Delhi  
Dates: 6 - 7 February 2017

**FORE School of Management**  
"Adhitam Kendra"  
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New Delhi 110016  
Phone: (011) 2685 6301 (Direct),  
4124 2424 (Extn.471 & 498)  
E-mail: [mdp@fsm.ac.in](mailto:mdp@fsm.ac.in)  
Website: [www.fsm.ac.in](http://www.fsm.ac.in)

**NEWS ROUNDUP****Anil Jalali appointed Chief Human Resources Officer of Capgemini in India**

Capgemini, a global leader in consulting, technology and outsourcing services, today announced the appointment of Anil Jalali as Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) for its India operation, effective January 1, 2017. Anil Jalali joins Capgemini in India from IBM India where he was the Executive Director, HR. He takes over from BL Narayan, Vice President and the former HR Head, who joins the Business Services Strategic Business Unit as Head of Solutions & Sales Support from January 1 2017.

Commenting on the appointment, Srinivas Kandula, Head of Capgemini in India said, "With the successful acquisition and integration of IGATE, India is pivotal to the Group's transformation plans. Strategic talent management will play a crucial role in building organisational agility going forward. Anil will be a valuable asset to our HR team and I am confident that his rich experience, along with his understanding of the industry will further strengthen our people strategy in India."

Speaking on the appointment Anil Jalali, CHRO, Capgemini in India said: "As home to almost 100,000 team members, India is poised to play a defining role in driving competitive excellence for the Capgemini Group. I look forward to contributing to this vision."

Anil Jalali has over two decades of experience in human resources across diverse portfolios in Talent Management, Leadership Development, Employee Engagement, Compensation & Benefits (C&B), Careers and Recruitment and has led various companies in successfully driving transformational changes in a hyper-growth environment with multi-business complexity. As part of the IBM HR Executive Leadership, he led several key initiatives and built teams with a focus on clients and innovative solutions. He was previously responsible for establishing the C&B function as part of the IBM growth strategy. In a prior stint with Wipro, Anil performed a wide variety of roles including heading HR for APAC, managing Business HR, Total Rewards function and Corporate HR. Anil started his career with RPG Group where he played a key role in setting up the HR function for a Telecom JV of RPG-Vodafone, in addition to other assignments.

# Psychometrics: The Science of Measuring the Human Mind

Human Capital spoke to Vijai Pandey from "The Psychometric World (TPW)" and Dr. Mariya Jilinskaya (Masha) from IIBP Indian Institute of Business Psychology) about the changing trends in psychometric usage across organizations. TPW has been working with several business organizations, government departments and not for profit entities to hire, develop and retain best talents and drive company objectives, through precise and effective human Analytics

- BY SHRUTI CHADHA

In light of the ongoing battle for talent and the acquisition of a skilled and fit for purpose workforce, an increasing number of organizations are turning to psychometrics for decisions affecting their recruitment and talent development. The attraction is clear, and the promise of identifying, measuring, defining, describing and forecasting behaviour, aptitude, interest and personality can at times be a strong temptation for organizations to reach out to psychometrics.

Test development professionals have been using the Item Response theory (IRT) methods to provide the mathematical foundation for most of today's sophisticated and structured assessments. IRT models relate the properties of test items (e.g., difficulty/extremity) and examinee trait levels across knowledge, skill, ability and interests (e.g., math, verbal, and spatial abilities, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and motivation) to the probability of correctly answering or endorsing items. For practical reasons, most large-scale tests have been constructed, scored, and/or evaluated using one-dimensional IRT models, which assume that an item responding is a function of just one ability or



dimension. To obtain a profile of scores representing an examinee's proficiency in several areas, a sequence of one-dimensional tests is typically administered, with each being sufficiently long to achieve an acceptable level of reliability.

The use of technology in assessment, in contrast with the deep and long-standing tradition of self-report measures and ratings from peers and supervisors, has taken human analytics to the scientific level of evaluation that it needs to be in. Tests enabling immersive and realistic simulations and serious gaming provide opportunities for examinees to demonstrate knowledge, emotions, and behaviors as it is expressed within realistic scenarios.

Psychometric tests have been used for a variety of purposes. Some of them are:

- 1) Selection of personnel - Personality, aptitude, ability and knowledge tests are used widely.
- 2) Individual development and training - Psychometric tests such as the Business Attitude Inventory and Occupational Interest Inventory are psychometric tests available for training and development purposes. You could also use aptitude and skills tests to determine a person's ability in specific areas.
- 3) Team building and development - Tests like FIRO-B®, DiSC®, and the Hogan Development Survey are designed specifically to uncover potential sources of relationship tension. General personality assessments, including the Myers-Briggs Typology Indicator® (MBTI), are also very helpful for team building and strengthening. Values in Action can help you gain insights into group behaviors and dynamics that relate to people's values.
- 4) Career development and progression - Psychometric tests can help you uncover values and interests that are fundamental to overall career satisfaction. Surveys like Holland's Codes and Schein's Career Anchors are also useful psychometric tests to consider.

Excerpts of the interview with Vijai Pandey and Dr. Masha

**HC:** How do you feel an organization can decide, if psychometrics is the

**right choice to add in their candidate evaluation both for appraisals and recruitment?**

**Vijai:** "What gets measured gets done, what gets measured, gets developed". Measurement of Human and psychological characteristics is absolutely imperative if the organization wants to grow and wants to develop. Companies run without measurement however running without measurement is not effective and progressive in nature.

Most organizations agree that human resource is the most important resource they have, its absolutely essential to maintain a record of the talent pool, the creativity index, the conscientiousness levels and developmental needs of the organizations. To get the best, you first need to define the best and measure for the best. There is an added value of knowing what we have and what we want, to continuously develop. For 21st century the 4C's that need to be measured to predict performance across most jobs of the disruptive digital area. First is critical thinking, creative thinking, and competence and customer service. Within competence there are many ingredients of competence skills and behaviors that can be analyzed. Another personality-based predictor is conscientiousness; the tendency to be planned is another best predictor of performance in most jobs.

**HC:** In your experience what are some of the key changes that you have seen the psychometric industry go through?

**Vijai:** I would like to categorize the changes in two categories Technological changes and psychological changes in the mindset of the consumers. For eg; when Cattell came up with his trait theory to get a data of 15000 people across USA it took him 15 years and then to manually analyse all that data through factor analysis it took him another 3 years. These days if I want 10,000 people who want to fill up a developing test, we have 85,000 people in our data base and about a lakh over the internet, it wouldn't take us more than 15 days to be able to get my data. With advanced algorithms in the Anova tools that can calculate the factor analysis and item correlations ,



**Vijai Pandey** is an Entrepreneur and Innovator who has developed more than 100 psychometric tests since 2004. He is a keen researcher with expertise in the area of psychometric test development, assessment center, development center, employee engagement, test validation and localization, developmental HR activities, training on psychometric test development and interpretation, employee surveys, leadership assessment using 360 degree tools.



**Dr. Mariya Jilinskaya** is Assistant professor of Psychology in OP Jindal Global University. She is also a board member of the National Institute of work and Professional Orientation, France. Mariya has been in the field of teaching for over 12 years and is an accredited faculty at IIBP for certification courses for the Assessment and Development centre. She is a Ph.D from Nanterre University, Paris.

so once again years of time is saved now. What still remains the same is the time we need to think and understand the different dimensions and the framework around which the test has

The key competencies that can be measured through psychometrics and are very much related to performance on the job and they are creative thinking, critical thinking, conscientiousness and learning orientation  
- Vijai

to be developed, however since the data collection time has been shortened considerable test development cycle has been considerably reduced. Also, technology is connecting us, so we do not have to start from scratch; it allows us to build from the previous development far quickly. It's easier to reach a targeted group way faster through mails and social networking platforms. Finally the computation through advanced algorithms has made scoring easy. For eg: pattern matching and creativity test can now be designed, measured and interpreted by complex programming algorithms. Multifactor IRT models are available to predict patterns. So tests need not be in huge question pools, we can have adaptive tests for assessing personality and predicting performance.

From the Psychological mindset, or view has changed in the last decade. Its no longer associated with mental illness and is not the interest area of clinical psychology alone, nor is its usage limited in the form of interest inventories for educational purposes and career guidance. There are now several organizations that are defining what needs to be measured in human behavior. There are tests to see your parenting styles, measure analytical skills to creative thinking ability. People are more and more accepting to it.

**HC:** Which out of the Type or Trait approaches would you prefer as a measure of personality, which would be a better predictor of performance.

**Vijai:** This is like the 7 blind men and elephant story, while these are the two most important approaches there are others as well, like humanistic approach about conflicts in different stages of life, skinner's behavioral approach that gives a holistic view about measuring personality. However the choice amongst type and trait lies in the purpose its being used for. If you are hiring /selecting to get the best people on board in comparison to other people then we should use a trait approach. A test based on trait approach always compares people, with each other either on a criterion or with a norm group. If you have to develop people, help them see what is aligned to their preferences then a type approach serves best. If you use a type test eg Belbin, MBTI, Jung's type inventory are also easy to fake depending on what I am being assessed for. Though it can have lie detection and ipsative measures, we still cannot compare the person with any norm group or on any criterion and hence it will only give understanding of the person not on how he fares on what is required on the job. There is also no

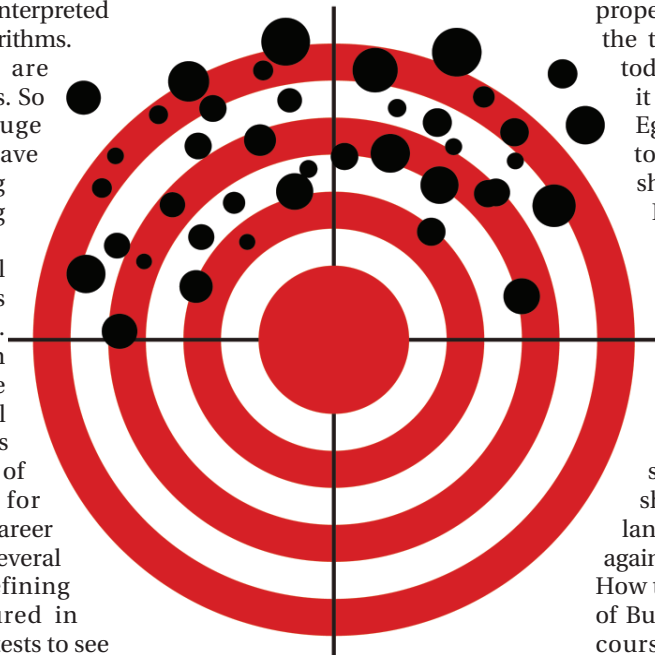
work with the leadership team, to see what kind of people to hire, for their growing demands. We discovered that the entire leadership team was of the same personality type. Upon analyses we realized that all the directors in the company were ESTJ type. Our first step was to sensitize people about different types and make the leaders aware that they were unconsciously choosing people who were like them. Secondly we created an interview panel which had interviewers of different personality types, because giving the test itself, can be faked. However if the interview panel is varied the selection is less likely to be biased and doesn't seem to resonate the blind spot of the panel in the candidate. Within 3 years they had a variety of people in their organization and today their turnover has tripled. We feel it can be attributed to the presence of different types. What the companies need to ensure is that there aren't too many incompatible personality types being put together. I would prefer trait approach for hiring and type for development.

**HC:** How best can HR professionals test the test, i.e. understand the application and validity of a psychometric tool.

**Vijai:** A test needs to have three properties. Firstly Reliability, if I take the test on two different occasions, today and may be after a few days, it should give me the same scores.

Eg: If I measure my intelligence today and after a week the test should give me the same scores. If I am measuring personality test today and tomorrow should remain within a narrow range.

Secondly, HR professionals need to check whether the test measures what it proposes to measure. This is the Validity of the test, which is its correlation with other tests that measure the same thing. Finally, the tests shouldn't have any discriminative language and should not have bias against any social group, minority etc. How to do that? IIBP : Indian Institute of Business which offers a free crash course on psychometry. Every HR professional should go through to understand what is reliability, validity and different types of tests to be used for different occasions. (The link to



single type that is good for a job, also its almost imperative to have a diversity of types to excel on a job. We worked with an organization, where we had to



this free course on psychometrics is: [www.learn.iibp.org.in](http://www.learn.iibp.org.in) )

**HC:** While most organizations use psychometrics for inclusive measures some use it for exclusion as well, please comment?

**Vijai:** Say somebody has a perfect personality for a scientist, however has never studied anything about science and another one who has studied science all his life, however doesn't have the personality to be a scientist. Which one will have higher chances of exceeding on the job. It will be the second one who has the required competence and skills. Hence different tests can be used for inclusion and exclusion. Ability test for eg: analytical, verbal reasoning ability, machine competence etc could be used as an exclusion criterion. Personality test should be used for inclusion and not exclusion purposes. Hence the first round of tests should be ability tests and the final decision should be made by keeping all factors in mind, including personality and not only personality.

However if there is values mismatch, I would hire a person who has matching values than the one with higher competence. However if it's about personality match I would hire the one who has a higher competence than the personality match. In personality, there is a compensatory effect. If u are lower on something that is required on the job, you can compensate it with another trait that you are high on. Another one is a compounding effect, there are some personality traits which when put

With the correct definition of competencies and appropriate activities to assess them, assessment centres can provide objective and highly valid data about candidates. The skill of assessment centre observers is of paramount importance in being able to capture and code the right behaviours to the right competencies.- Dr. Mariya

together, and there effect becomes way stronger. For eg: if a person has a high score on divergent thinking and also has a high level of conscientiousness his thinking will be very productive and focused. However with high divergent thinking if he has a low level of conscientiousness, he will jump from one idea to another and nothing productive will be produced. Because of these two effects personality assessment should

be used only as an inclusive measure and not an exclusive measure.

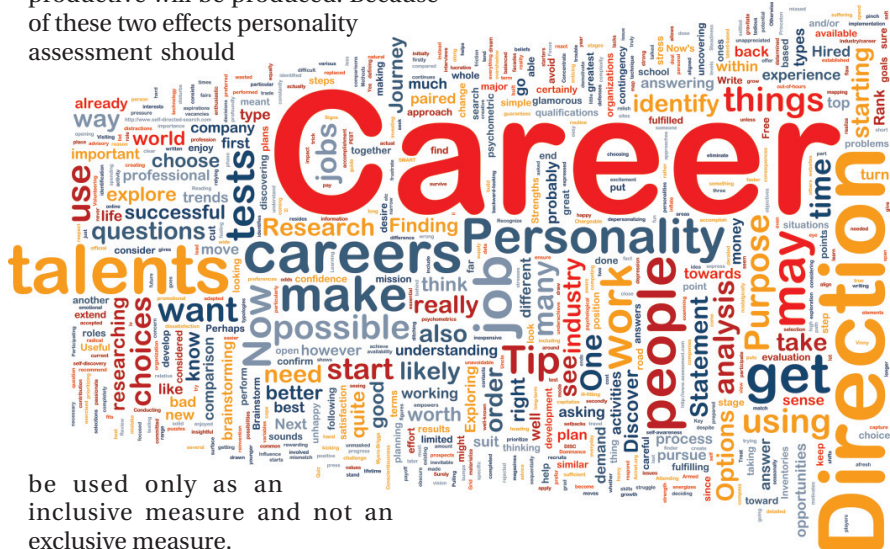
**HC:** Does a battery of test becomes an overanalyzing process, or do you feel its required?

**Vijai:** I think its never over analyzing. The more tests we use, the higher the compound reliability of your measurement. Spearman brown has given a formula of how many test you need to have or how many questions you need to ask in a test to reach the required level of reliability. Its always better to use a battery of tests and its never over analyzing.

**HC:** Top 5 competencies and tests that are being used by organizations.

**Vijai:** I would like to answer this in a slightly different way. There are some things that cannot be measured by any other method, other than psychometrics. For eg: Self Concept. This cannot be measured by somebodies observed behavior, it can only me measured by how a person responds to questions on a test. There are some other things that are very difficult to measure through psychometrics for eg Values. A person's values are not what a person says but what a person does, that can be measured better by observing the

person than by giving a questionnaire to the person. Core values can be assessed through assessment centers but not through questionnaires, they can only give us the best guess. The key competencies that can be measured through psychometrics and are very much related to performance on the job are creative thinking, critical



thinking, conscientiousness and learning orientation.

**HC:** Do you prefer fragmented assessments (as in separate ability and personality test) or do you feel they should be integrated? How can Psychometrics help in success profiling of high potentials.

**Vijai:** I feel tests should always be integrated. While doing success profiling, companies need to define their environment and changes expected should be defined. This is a context. Its not just the profile of an individual its also the context in which he has to operate. We cannot define what an individual needs to have to be successful, instead also define what environment are we expecting him to work in.

**HC:** How far do you feel psychometrics will also need to become more customer centric with platforms like Gamification and the role that it will play in shaping OD decisions.

**Vijai:** Yes, I believe the era of taking questionnaire assessments will soon be gone. Two optimistic trends are, one Gamification, that makes learning fun

and engaging, however its side effect is that some micro learning might happen, since you might not have to learn a subject for 5 years or ten years. It brings in the concept of micro learning, where people learn just what they need to know in smaller digestible capsules. Right now assessment models are very old, currently we give questions, which might not be a direct measure of that factor. Till now studies that have been mentioned about gamified tests, it has shown several sources of extraneous errors, whereas these errors are lesser for questionnaire based testing. Hence there reliability is lower. If we could find ways of removing the extraneous errors reliable gamified assessments would be possible.

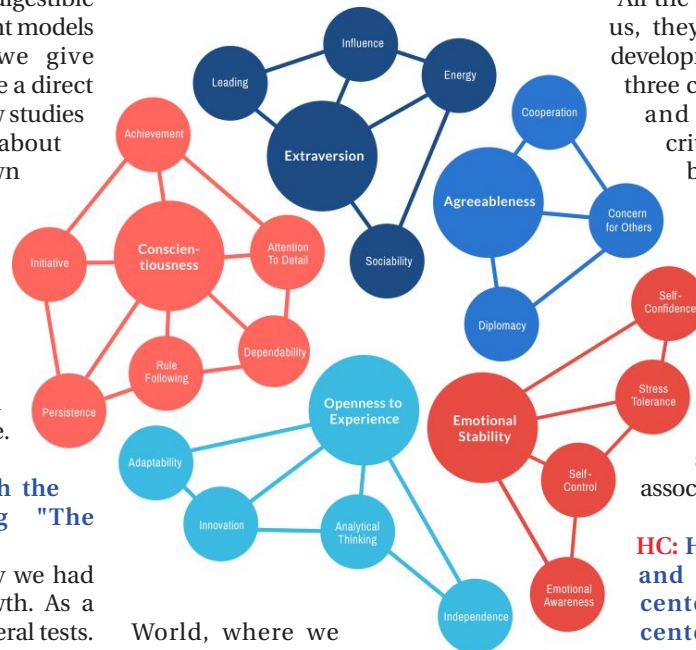
**HC:** Please take us through the journey of establishing "The Psychometric world

**Vijai:** In Allahabad university we had a course on Individual growth. As a part of that we were given several tests. Then I started exploring how useful it was and how useful would it be to other people. So I started with a marriage counseling center till 2010, where I helped couples to understand their compatibility matches. After using 16PF for 3 years (2004-2007) I realized that it wasn't robust enough to measure

All HR Professionals should go through a basic course in psychometrics to be able to understand the important characteristics of a good psychometric tool. Its reliability, validity and non biased language. This will help them choose the most appropriate tools for selection and development across functions.

all factors of personality, eg: I found dominance is not a one-dimensional factor it had multiple facets. So I decided to make a test adjusting it to the current psychological make up of people. Where we came up with WPI -

Pro which had 20 dimensions in 4 categories. Dimensions related to people management, task management, self and change management. In the end of 2011 we launched TPW: The psychometric



World, where we started providing services for WPI pro and also for developing and standardizing tests. As of today the journey has been great with over 100 clients across middle east, Europe, India. We are doing a lot of assessment and development centers. I can see the value of using tests and the impact of that analysis on the behavior on ground. This is the differentiating factor, where we are very much in touch with clients. We are the bridge between the academic development around the world and the ground reality of human capital in organizations. We have more than a dozen personality tests and 800 ability tests. We also have several customized tests that are specific to customer's needs and population. We do not have many personality tests, because one good robust test gives a lot of information, whereas ability tests are very specific to what has to be measured. We are an applied research organization we do not work on building constructs. We have for eg: used all the work done on the trait approach of personality and created the WPI -Pro. We took all the work that has been done around career guidance and occupational interest and we

created OII: Occupational interest inventory one for students and one for professionals, Work done around Emotional intelligence we created a test called EQIP: Emotional Quotient inventory for professionals.

All the tests that are developed by us, they follow the standard test development process of meeting the three criteria of reliability, validity and free from bias. These criteria's have been laid down by the British Psychological society, EFPA: European Federation of Psychologist association and International test commission (for ability test), IIBP: Indian Institute of Business Psychology. We publish our tests only after it meets all the standards laid down by these associations.

**HC:** How do you see the growth and usage of Assessment centers and development centers for hiring and development?

**Masha:** An Assessment Centre is a multi-method approach to selection whereby a candidate will complete a number of different assessments that are specifically designed to assess the key competencies for the role for which they are applying. Based on the selected competencies, the Assessment Centre provides a clear understanding of the candidate's strengths or developmental needs and evaluates their potential.

A Development Centre is similar to an assessment centre, but focuses more on the participants' further professional development. The competency profile for the assessment or development centre is determined according to the needs of the role.

I see this area growing rapidly within India, of course globally its already a well accepted methodology, where in US more than 85% of organizations and in Europe over 80% organizations use assessment centers already. We are bringing objectivity to the assessment process. In India cost becomes an issue to conduct assessment centers, also the return of investment needs to be defined for more companies to be able to establish and use it.

HC

# The Signs of Efficiency

Today's fast-paced environment creates the need for exams that are more readily accessible, workplace-relevant and convenient in terms of scheduling tests and receiving results promptly. - BY **BELINDA BRUNNER**

**Q**ualifications are a crucial factor for life-changing decisions such as hiring someone for a job, the government granting a license to drive a vehicle or perhaps the ability to practise medicine or law.

For professional examinations used to screen individuals for employment or professional practice, the decision to be made is whether the individual has the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to perform a particular job or professional role. While examinations are brought used in employment selection and professional credentialing for many years, computer-based testing (CBT) and advances in measurement science or psychometrics - offer new ways of addressing this question.

Amongst the greatest advantages of CBT is candidate convenience, meaning that exams can be offered throughout the year on-demand, and they can receive their results more quickly. In addition, the exam papers do not have to be physically transported back and forth to testing locations with CBT so it is administratively easier to provide greater flexibility.

With CBT, the testing software offers the option of automatically marking the test papers depending upon the question formats that are used. That means test takers can receive the score results before they leave the testing site if they take a computer-based test. This, in turn, means that there is no delay for successful test takers if their employment depends upon passing the exam.

To support these candidate conveniences such as on-demand testing special procedures are needed to ensure that the exam is fair to all test takers and that the result is fair, valid and reliable. This is where psychometrics enters the picture.

Often, with paper-based tests there is only one exam paper, presenting a security risk because the contents can be leaked by candidates to those who are yet to take the exam. This creates a major fairness issue as some candidates may benefit from prior exposure to test content while others have not seen leaked content.

Modern-day psychometrics allow students to book tests on demand but with a reduced risk of test paper fraud. Unique, equivalent papers can be created for each candidate by the testing software using pre-determined psychometric specifications as the candidate is sitting the exam.

It is important to ensure that different versions and presentations of the exam are created so that they comparable and consistent with regard to both content and difficulty. The different exam versions should be constructed so that they have the same distribution of test questions across content areas and topics but with the same difficulty level.

Psychometric analysis is conducted to obtain difficulty values for the test questions. Then psychometricians perform a process called equating to address any differences in difficulty across the different exam papers.

This is considered best practice for computer-based exams in terms of the fairness and reliability of the test results. As the different versions of the test are equivalent both statistically and with regard to the content covered, the results will then be consistent regardless of which version of the test a candidate sat.

Validity is perhaps the most important characteristic of an examination. This is the extent to which the interpretation of the test result is supported by theory and evidence so that it measures what it is intended to measure.

This allows for an assessment that closely resembles how individuals

perform tasks on the job - a growing trend within the testing industry. However, authenticity does not guarantee validity. There may be subtle differences between how an individual would perform the task on the job and how they are being asked to respond



**Belinda Brunner** is the Director, Testing Services Strategy at Pearson VUE.

to a test question that infers with assessment of the knowledge, skills and abilities the exam is meant to assess.

Another validity challenge is making sure that instructions on how to carry out the test are not so difficult to understand that they become a challenge in themselves. This could impact the accuracy of the exam results, meaning that the validity of the decisions made based upon these results is reduced. Today's fast-paced environment creates the need for exams that are more readily accessible, workplace-relevant and convenient in terms of scheduling tests and receiving results promptly. CBT and measurement science addresses these needs but without sacrificing validity, fairness and reliability. **HC**



# Perfecting The Art of Practice

**Human Capital in conversation with Dermot O'Brien, CHRO, ADP. To understand how ADP is building innovation into their core values and encouraging employee engagement across a varied and multinational organization.**

- BY SHRUTI CHADHA

*“We are not just a human capital provider we believe in being the best human capital practitioner”, for ADP “Every person counts”*

**HC:** While it is evident that ADP is an organization which is constantly growing over the last decade, what are some of the most important decisions that you had to take as a leader? How do you see the decision-making process in the coming years?

**DOB:** I have been with ADP for four and a half years, and, have witnessed some very important decisions with Carlos, our CEO who has been in the role for five full years since last November. I think he has really tried to focus the company on ultimate human capital management. ADP has a history of having some other kinds of businesses; we had a business called dealer services, and Broadridge, a company we had acclaimed, all of those have now been spun off. Two years ago, we spun off our dealer business, where we had 8000 people around the world in that domain with a two billion dollar business. All our businesses are now in HR and human capital management, and internally, we say we are all in one human capital management, and that is the key, because the shift is sort of strategic. Carlos was really driving ADP, we are known for sales and for services. Our technology had sort of lost its way a little bit. So, he really watched and raised product and innovation to the forefront, so we have been doing a lot of things around the platforms and

the products and services that we have available. We have opened up several innovation labs and Chelsea, Manhattan is one among them. We have one in Pasadena and we have one in New Jersey. So ADP has changed from the days of payroll, and, now we are trying to get to the forefront of how we drive experience and engagement through key processes, around pay and talent etc. I think in the past we would be more fragmented, and, so to connect the company around the world we have changed the structure, and we have changed our leaders. We put our investments in innovation. ADP has really improved its listening skills for its clients- we listen better to the market, and we always listen to our associates. It is actually a service profit chair; we believe in having happy employees and happy clients. In these past few years we have a new internal, magic "WIN AS ONE". The idea is that we are all in this together around the globe as to how are our people feeling? What can we do to help them feel better? And, most of the issues that our associates want our help on is not about more pay, it is not about I want to work less hours, it is about give us better technology, better tools to meet the needs of our clients and its all lined up and you kind of know what those issues are. Very specifically, what our scorecard measures that we

introduced six months ago. We set three year goals and every quarter we are transparent with our associates, and Carlos writes a blog to share the numbers, we are very clear and they are really around the areas of R&D investment. We are going to have a moving majority of our clients onto strategic platforms. We are saying we all have a fifty percent reduction in tools that our associates are using in three years; simplify their work environment to deliver better to clients. This is the first time ever I think as a company we said we were all in on these goals together. That was a big change for us.

**HC:** You are going to invest more into R&D and innovation. Is there a standard plan across all of your centres to inspire innovation as a core value for the organization, just like employee satisfaction is a core value for you?

**DOB:** Yes. Innovation is a big word. It is an ocean. For me innovation stands for continuous improvement. It is big at times and sometimes it is as small as making a contribution to the client. We have been putting in lean practices, we are trying to have people work in horizontal teams, people are

*“We have a platform called the pitch and the pitch was in HR; there are 800 people in HR put together, a pitch for a HR Human capital product, we had thirty submissions. Short videos were presented, and the winner gets to work with our innovation lab on our product and the winner was called 'E Harmony' of mentoring.”*

doing journey mapping now, which they never did before. ADP has been working in silos historically, however, now with lean and journey mapping, employees are touching back to the client; end-to-end. So, we have been broadening our thinking, people get through the life cycle of the client, and, our focus in the US right now is called ONE ADP. We are now creating these big sites of intact teams; Orlando- 1500 people, Norfolk, Virginia - 1800 people and Tempe, Arizona-1500; the point is big sites, with intact teams working across the issues that clients need. We do not want clients to say we have a payroll issue and now we have a talent issue. We



want a talent team available at the client's time. We have more client relationship managers so we are more client oriented.

**HC: Does that become like mini businesses working for big business?**

**DOB:** Yes it does, because they are more integrated and we have, as the entrepreneurs say, small business services we have mid size clients with regard to multinationals. In our small business services associates been called the voice, and, at this point of our innovation any associate, any level can put in an idea and they can track it and watch and see that we are working on that. So, instead of going into this black box and nobody ever gets back to you, there is a lot of idea generation being put out by our regular associates. In HR, we have a global summit that we did virtually. We have a platform called the pitch and the pitch was in HR; there are 800 people in HR put together, a pitch for a HR Human capital product, we had thirty submissions. Short videos were presented, and the winner gets to work with our innovation lab on our product and the winner was called 'E Harmony' of mentoring. It was this idea of mentoring through technology, where people can say I need this and I would like to have this person and the system helps them, we have put together the demand side & the supply side. We now have our innovation lab working on that product. We are doing much more to lean practices and coming out to the frontline and understanding what the real challenges are.

**HC: There is a tendency where such a spirit gets dampened especially when the top notch gets changed. How do you think ADP has been able to sustain the inspiration and has been able to sustain this as an institution?**

**DOB:** Talent leaders tend to come in with their own pieces, and, this dampens the spirit and I think what we are trying to do is to make sure that we are aligned on what the organization needs, than what a leader wants. When I came in as the new HR head four years ago, I did not say this is the right thing. I did a lot of listening

and said that if am going to be a human capital management provider then we should be a human capital management practitioner, and we should be really good at it. People strategy matching our business strategy made good sense. Being a leading practitioner became the basis of our strategy and 'very clearly of our stakeholders'. We got better at strategic planning, and they actually became the top things we have been working on, and, we have made a lot of progress. These were not my strategies, they were

One of a Kind Culture: We're changing the world of work, where staying a step ahead means creating a collaborative and agile environment within a company known for its stability, ethics, and integrity. Our down-to-earth culture welcomes diverse perspectives and creates a place where careers can flourish. We are on a transformative journey to advance human potential in a powerful way, and the strength of our team comes from what each of us has to offer.

ADP's strategies because we listened and we had a process that could gather all this and it got the HR people involved and it was not just the seniors. It only took us three-four months and we are four years plus in and the same strategy is in place which means it was a good strategy since we listened to the organization. ADP is becoming more of an integrated company that HR cannot do what it wants to do by itself, businesses cannot just do what it wants to do by itself. We strongly believe in ONE ADP.

**HC: How do you feel the other leaders in this organization communicate these core values? How do you make people going further down assimilate this value further to their teams?**

**DOB:** We have several mechanisms for that. Those are the goals see the 90 % (WIN AS ONE) win as one see the

stickers right around you. We are a big company, as soon as the CEO published his blog win as one, it was received incredibly well. ADP is an execution organization we are good at passing on messages and frameworks. We just give the people a framework to say that this is what the direction is, we then give forms so every group HR, finance, we are all one now. It was not this way when I came in, but now everybody reports to functions globally. I did the Global town hall from here yesterday, to the 800 people in HR;

this is one forum to update people of every quarter's business. We also have this thing called senior leadership meeting; once a year and every other quarter we do it on phones. The top two hundred leaders of ADP come together to meet in September. It is about what are the big messages; we give them a storyboard to go back and an expectation you have to talk to your team and ensure there is just this cascading process of the key messages. In the next few years 'win as one' is probably a big campaign for us and our values, we have each person counts and we put that mirror up to us every day. So if complaints come in, we have separated our associate relations and it is no longer in the business with the HR person who is in the business; we are now a separate independent group that looks at all

associate queries. Our engagement work has fifty questions in it; these are questions about our environment, we take it very seriously. I would call them cultural audits and sniff out if we have got some bad leaders and we take them out. That might sound bad and mean, but it is good because we do not have time to have a single bad leader amongst the 6,000 global leaders and we need them all to be pretty good. We cannot afford to have anything other than the very top tick, because if it is not good for our associates, it is not good for our clients. Twice a year we do a televised 'Global town hall' to all the estimated 60,000 associates because of the 'win as one' goal, and, it is hosted by me. Associates can put in questions in advance in the form of a little video. We answer many questions there. We now put the answer to every question within two

weeks after it is uploaded on our portal so anybody who wants to go see the answer to the question, can. It is all about building trust and approachability. I think ADP is a very humble company with very approachable leaders.

**HC: How do you spot and identify leaders and make their succession plan? How do you train them to have an equally competent army of 6000 leaders across the globe?**

**DOB:** We have been doing a lot of work around two major areas of focus, Global performance culture and global talent and I am all about measurement and outcomes, what are the outcomes that are going to measure success? We can architect an environment with tools and measurements for the business, but it has to be business led, HR cannot lead it. So part of our architecture has to be easy and effective in usage. We have talent reviews every year; we roll them up with nine boxes a piece. We now have a leadership dashboard. For a particular leader, we look for his nine box results- What are his engagement results with his direct reports and his team? What are his diversity results? What is the makeup of his direct report team? What is the progress versus prior periods? - He has had ten opportunities in the last year to make hires. Very specific things that we have, we were thinking two of them were created in this new agile world of feedback - leadership compass and a network compass, and, it is a priority product that HR created with our innovation lab in Chelsea. It is twelve questions on the leadership compass every six months, and my direct reports answer these questions. It is mobile enabled-its quick for them, I get the report, I get the report for my leaders so, I can look at them. The network compasses your peers. The network compass is eight questions. We are building this tempo of frequent feedback, left and right adding that into a kind of performance process that we have. We are now implementing quarter variable working leadership assessments. We are adding more objectivity to the assessments so that we remain unbiased.

**HC: So what is your benchmark for assessments? Do you have certain competencies in place with which you say this is the ADP way of doing it?**

**DOB:** We set up a success profile of competencies which is most important at ADP. We star those with weighted averages for appropriate roles. We create these success profiles, assess against them and now we are saying any internal move for a GM, the top two candidates will go through and not just external people. When I joined, the executive women were 22% and today they are 30% and a year ago, when



they were 28% we put in a 5 year goal, a three-year goal of 33%. So, 33% is the goal and then we will do another goal and until I get 50% I will not be happy. That was a big jump in a few years to our manager level, at the manager level we are about 42%, and, at the company we are about 54%, and what is really interesting is that women 30% executives lead 51% of the company. So, we are at 50% in terms of oversight and I am a big advocate for diversity. Talent to me is around transparency, measurement of things that you think are important, not just the business results, but, business and people results. And, I think now we have the tools in place to do that- it can be done in minutes,

is frequent and you are constantly getting feedback- they encourage you to talk to your teams, and, there is an electronic coach system that comes with it so I get every week, I get this coaching tip that is very good.

**HC: What do you think are the biggest challenges that the leaders are facing today? What is the one mistake you witness leaders making more frequently in organizations that similarly sized as yours?**

**DOB:** The one thing that I see too much of in my career, not just ADP, is that the leaders are really not maximizing the talent. Sometimes they are hogging talents; they are not looking to share their talents. Our practices that we put into place are not to hide the talent; we know who they are, we are discussing them and we are grooming them. We are setting policies this year as every business has its own mobility policies. We did the math on all the blackout periods, and for one business, it was seven months. That is when we made a global policy. A unit cannot hold onto a person longer than thirty days. We have been introducing a strategic workforce planning, we are in the process now, and we are trying to get ADP leaders to think for over three years about talent because there was a lot of short term thinking around talent here. I think hogging talent is bad because it suppresses everybody- the company as well as the people- and if people are not growing at the rate they need to or they leave.

**HC: How do social networking and media play a role in your organization for your internal associates? Do you think it has an impact on the way they function?**

**DOB:** We have a twitter like social platform inside the company; we also use the ADP Works. Blog by Carlos is on ADP WORKS. We also have HR people, which is an engagement platform that partners with the outside world for social, mobile and global initiatives; for example one of them is Globoforce, a recognition company. It is a modern platform, you attach videos and wish birthdays, you can issue points and say a quick thank you. Its anywhere in the world and its global, easy and efficient. We have also put it

in a company called Benevity, and this is really around what our corporate social responsibility values are. People want to do good things and help others, now we have a global system that actually tells you what you can do. It is mobile enabled and social in sense of its accounts, I would call it a modern engaging technology.

**HC:** The industry is also opening up to unconscious biases, Is ADP also moving towards any such measures of introducing unconscious bias?

**DOB:** The more objective we can become, the more we counter the bias. We have training around unconscious bias. The single best thing that you could do to help diversity is put a diverse person in a decision-making role. For example, my team, when I came in, was very homogenous. It was a very Caucasian team, but today it has two African Americans, two Indian citizens and our team is half women, half men and people of colour determine the outcomes, because the results that we get from it and putting people that are diverse in decision are phenomenal. Women are managing 51% of ADP, because now we have women in these big positions, and so it is growing. The best thing you can



do is find great female talent, put them in big jobs and they will change the makeup of the teams under them.

**HC:** The industry is in a 'VUCA' environment, there is a lot of volatility and ambiguity. Does the way ADP function change or does it feel any insecurities coming up in its next few years because employment is shall not be predictable?

**DOB:** 'VUCA' did not start now, but it has become visible now, but if you went back three years you would just point out at these things hitting. I think

**“VUCA' did not start now, but it has become visible now, but if you went back three years you would just point out at these things hitting. I think it is just volatile in certain worlds for a long time, but I think that the strongest companies are the ones that do not get over distracted by noise and hype.”**

it is just volatile in certain worlds for a long time, but I think that the strongest companies are the ones that do not get over distracted by noise and hype. My life is based on philosophies, because the world can change and we got to make a lot of decisions. But, if your decisions are based on philosophy then you'll navigate all this complexity. It is time to come back to your values as a company, come back to what differentiated your market position, take care of your clients, take care of your associates. It is important for me to ensure that people have confidence regardless of what is spinning around them. I think core values are tested and if they do last, then they are here to stay which means they are the right core values.

**HC:** Can you name one person or any incident who has had a lasting impact on your career and the way you have made decisions?

**DOB:** Yes, I have been lucky, I have got to work with some really good people but there is a gentleman by the name Herbert Monroe Allison, Jr. Herb was a former President of Merrill Lynch with long term capital. In the 90s, he was the Wall street executive for Merrill and he was asked to get all the other wall

street companies together and they resolved a critical issue and Herb ended up being the CEO for a company that was called TIAA CREF. When he asked me to come and run HR, I was 37, I was very young and it was a Fortune 500 company, and I learnt so much from him. He had been an investment banker in Tehran earlier in his career. He was my CEO and he was a tough, smart guy, and what I learnt from him was that he was a driver and pusher. He was always about values, which means doing the right thing; it was never about him. It was the first time I ran across a servant leader and a servant leader does not always mean that they are always nice. He was a hard charging person, but it was for the good of the people, the business, and the clients. What he taught me are the things I have been trying to repeat at ADP, it is how to listen, how to include people in assessing situations and giving them a strong hypothesis to derive the strategy. It is not about the leader, it is about the important role he plays to capture a responsibility, the leader needs to show how to achieve and then be there, and he changed me a lot.

**HC:** Considering that you have a fair distribution of the millennial generation working for you, there is bound to be a lot of inbound liquid workforce. What is your take on this?

**DOB:** We think there is liquid workforce in the gig economy. It is funny since we have been looking at that issue, ADP is an employer payroll kind of company. While, a lot of people are on the hype right now for a liquid workforce, we have to see how it plays but we want to be ready. 85% of our global shoring like India, Philippines, Brazil, the whole group of people are about 12,000, 85% are millennials and I did not know that was a record this year so meanwhile in USA of about 33,000 associates, 35% are millennial, we are doing things to ensure we understand them differently. We have some of these technologies eg: making things mobile enabled. I also believe in flexibility, I do believe that for knowledge workers and technology you do not need to be sitting alongside rules. The real knowledge talent would want a lot of flexibility, and, I think we have to be ready for that in terms of



how we still can drive in engagement and understand strategy. We have flexibility and we have pretty good technologies to help us out with that if fluid workforce becomes a reality.

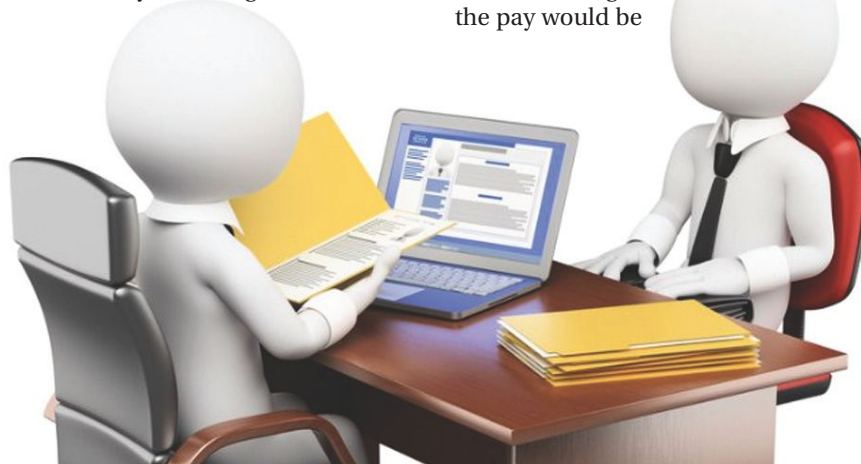
**HC:** Another intriguing question that most leaders talk about is core values, mission and vision. What do you think goes down to an ADP team member individual contributor level?

**DOB:** Well for me I am hoping that the one that penetrates the most is the values. Values are visible; so long as you do not have to teach them they just see them and just live them. I think values help, and, the environment is open enough to challenge people so they think. Values are the glue and how they keep things together, for me values are something that can be learnt globally. E.g: You cannot do talent acquisitions the same way in Hyderabad as you do in Barcelona, but, what kind of an experience we want our people to have is the same and is an integral value for us. Every person counts. Yes to me values are more sustainable and visions can change like ADP's vision has changed. ADP is now the leading provider of human capital management, that was not its vision ten years ago. I think that could change, but values would not change. It is kind of what your reason is for being, and, I bet if you ask a 100 ADP associates the key values now, they may or may not be able to mention all seven but the ones they would mention would be exactly the ones they have experienced.

**HC:** Is ADP moving away from the Bell curve? Since the bell curve is a force fit metric driven way, does it match with your core value of Every Person Counts?

**DOB:** We are not moving away from the bell curve. When it comes to your voice, I do not care if you are a high performer or a low performer, but every voice matters. We have worked a lot around pay for performance and we have changed the sentiment a lot. We changed a lot. So here is my take for long-term success of companies. Strong financial results, client results matter so we have got NPS, revenues, profits plus strong people results- that's around building to attract talent, to engage talent, to retain it and to reward

it. To me, both of those are in equal long-term sustainable performance. Some companies have good financial performance for different reasons, but they are treating their people bad, and they are getting those results on the backs of the people. That is a short-term strategy and it is going to come back to bite you in long run. The other



thing which is just as bad is the HR way, where you get great people results, everyone is happy, everyone is engaged, but not getting business results that is bad. It is important that we know how to analyze it, and be able to win as HR teams proactively, not just ask them to troubleshoot it. We now know who our best people are, you know we differentiate our pay. We know because we added two new questions to our engagement work which we did not want to add before which were- I am paid for everything and my pay and performance was a lot. So, it is not that the curve has changed around pay but it is the sentiment that has changed. We would say the middle 70% are the ones who really matter, but it is only fair for the people who are contributing at the higher levels that they get more rewards, but we are not doing it so much so that its on the backs of the 70%, so we are tracking that very carefully. It is great to see that our top performers are feeling great, our next level are feeling really good, I want to ensure that our Middle is feeling good too. Every company has what they call as the actively disengaged and I call them the hotel Californians, they have checked out but they are still around, and that is a very dangerous group because they are actively campaigning, against their

company inside the company. You have got to have a system that is open, has more touch points, and to be able to identify them so that they cannot hide in a corner somewhere, you got to call them out just like you call them on bad manners. The higher the performer, the retention is higher, the pay would be

higher and more satisfied and fulfilled they are in terms of engagement.

**HC:** What do you see as the key challenges for HR in 2017?

**DOB:** We focus on data, insight and, so I think more and more HR requirements are investing in options into analytics. I know they are saying get out of the art form of HR, which we were already with, and get into the science side of it. So, I do think bigger investments, and bigger focus on analytics and measurement. My big message regarding this is that HR in the future, which should have been today, is about sensing people. I think this wiring of the place from an analytics perspective is getting bigger and bigger.

I do think robotics, artificial intelligence and virtual reality (VR) can pick up pretty quickly in terms of transaction management, onboarding people mainly through VR like they are just ways of testing people through scenarios. I think talent is the issue. It is the ultimate issue. Talent is the bulls eye and the use of analytics will probably help with the more informed decisions. Our interview panels consist of diverse groups to remove out the subjectivity and biases. We are defining, measuring and evaluating the human side of businesses.

**HC**

# The Evolution of Relations

Every recruitment season brings in a new set of talent with fresh ideas and open mindsets. This actually paves the way the need to reinvent training and development methods, since initiatives that were actually successful less than a decade ago might seem redundant to the new workforce.

- BY MARGARET D'SOUZA

**T**he modern business setup encompasses a lot more than providing the best product or service, in order to generate revenue. The contemporary business environment demands not just availability of tangible resources, but, also the right kind of skill and talent to manage the same and put them to optimal use.

While investing in employee development programmes is vital for the holistic growth of an organization, it is a matter of utmost concern that in spite of such initiatives, there is no reduction in the attrition rates. Hence, companies must realise that with changing times, the methods and techniques of employee motivation must be

modernised as well. Every recruitment season brings in a new set of talent with fresh ideas and open mindsets. This in fact, works its way to create the need to reinvent training and development methods, since initiatives that were actually successful in just the last decade might seem redundant to the new workforce. Further, it is required that the HR department must be on the lookout for external and internal development programmes that benefit their employees and bring prosperity to the organization at all times.

## Paradigm shift in hierarchies

With organizations evolving with every passing day, the business hierarchy is undergoing a paradigm shift as well. A top - down approach no longer makes the cut when it comes to disseminating responsibility or being accountable for key responsibilities. To strike a balance between authority and responsibility, a flat hierarchical structure is majorly preferred in the new age organisational setups. Accounting for all of this, another step towards business evolution is to motivate, train and develop the skills of one of the most valuable resources of a business setup - the Human Resource. Employees are the greatest strength in an organization and their career growth is therefore of paramount significance to the company.

Hiring the right talent, setting the correct compensation benefits, and creating a positive work environment are key parameters to reduced attrition rates. The recent times have witnessed a trend of increased employee motivation with functional benefits, and, not mere monetary increments or perks. In contrast to popular belief, these benefits tend to bolster employee motivation as effectively, if not more, than monetary incentives. As a result, various organizations consider investing in employee engagement programmes as a viable option to retain the workforce.



## An overview of the employee engagement programmes

To begin with, engagement programmes are an amalgamation of leadership, skill training and development programmes.

Right from specific initiatives such as Manager Development Programme (MDP), competency-based development systems to scheduled lessons on business etiquette and communication skills, companies chart out year-long programmes for employees across departments. For instance, in many organizations, the middle management of the sales and marketing department undergoes extensive training sessions on interviewing skills, sales capabilities, and leadership effectiveness.

Cross-functional rotational programmes are another effective medium of training, and are considered a great source of learning and professional development. Under this programme, various teams switch roles in order to understand the key responsibilities of the other teams and get a better insight of their work interactions, on a daily basis.

Smaller projects such as on-the-job internships, training programmes, and off-site schedules prove to be equally beneficial for employers and mentors along with the employees. Before we dig deeper into these initiatives, let us understand the qualities required for a good mentor and a mentee to team up for any programme.

### Mentors and Mentees: The essentials

Training and development programmes work best to boost organisational productivity, only when both mentors and mentees work in tandem and understand the long-term benefits of these initiatives.

Most importantly, mentors must showcase willingness and patience to share knowledge and expertise in their field. Along with dedicating a fair share of their time for guidance and constructive feedback, a mentor should also acknowledge the professional goals of mentees, value their opinions, and motivate them by setting a fine example.

On the other hand, the mentees have an equally vital role in the success of the programme. An ideal mentee sets the standards, goals and correct expectations from the mentor's sessions. Moreover, they need to participate willingly and learn as much as they can. Mentees must also willingly accept slip-ups and be open to the mentor's constructive feedback. The success of any training programme can only be judged by the outcome and assessment from both the parties involved in the programme.

In modern business setups, varied initiatives are developed in order to harness the skills of the



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existing employees. These initiatives not only work in favour of the current workforce, but could also be a potential pull to bring in the crème de la crème of talent.

### Types of training programmes underway today

The 'One to One' Programme: New age organizations render serious credence to individual

**“Most of the new age businesses appreciate and promote a symbiotic growth environment. Therefore, a 360-degree feedback programme works best for all employees wherein they receive feedback from their peers, subordinates, and seniors. In a common scenario, HR identifies high potential individuals, mostly one of the senior leaders from relevant business units as a group mentor, and encourages employees to speak to them.”**

career development. Therefore, they devise 'one mentor-one mentee' sessions to provide personal development opportunities on an organization wide level. These include a fixed-tenure internship

## E-Mentoring

**On-line mentoring or e-mentoring, is a mentoring relationship conducted via the Internet. E-mail can be the exclusive vehicle for young people and mentors to connect or it can be additional communication tool for those who ordinarily meet in person. Still shares the goal of establishing a trusting, nurturing positive relationship.**

course, wherein the employees choose to work for a department different from their own. This programme provides the perfect platform for participants to harness skill sets of their interest, which often helps broaden their perspective of various job roles. As these sessions are very interactive, participants get a hands-on experience of various activities that are not part of their job role, and learn skills that benefit their career in multi-fold ways. Specific assignments and a well-planned curriculum is a part of the course, and the final certification is awarded upon the successful completion of the programme. The tenure of these sessions are decided on the availability of the mentor and the mentees and usually, last for about a week's time.

To illustrate, copywriting is one such course that could benefit both the marketing and support

***“To strike a balance between authority and responsibility, a flat hierarchical structure is majorly preferred in the new age organisational setups. Accounting for all of this, another step towards business evolution is to motivate, train and develop the skills of one of the most valuable resources of a business setup - the Human Resource. Employees are the greatest strength in an organization and their career growth is therefore of paramount significance to the company.”***

teams. Similarly, sessions on visual design are viable for product managers, as well as digital marketers and developers.

The 'One to Many' Sessions: In order to explore the possibilities of knowledge sharing, companies

often invest in 'one-to-many' classroom sessions. The primary objectives of such initiatives are to broaden the scope of knowledge of the assigned employee group via discussions and interactions with experts from various fields of business. Organisations select experts, either from within the company or from outside, to share their daily experiences of working in a dynamic industry. The field of these interactive talks varies from Business, IT, Healthcare, Retail, Marketing, Social Sciences to Research and Innovation and possibly many more. Accounting for hectic work schedules and unavailability of employees, businesses also record high-quality audio and video content and upload them on intranets.

Feedback driven sessions: Most of the new age businesses appreciate and promote a symbiotic growth environment. Therefore, a 360-degree feedback programme works best for all employees wherein they receive feedback from their peers, subordinates, and seniors. In a common scenario, HR identifies high potential individuals, mostly one of the senior leaders from relevant business units as a group mentor, and encourages employees to speak to them. The session begins with a pre-evaluation and context setting with the HR, followed by group mentoring sessions to ensure that the mentoring relationship is continuously maintained between both the parties.

Along with the aforementioned approaches, smaller projects, assignments or courses are also considered as trusted techniques of developing the employees' potential to a considerable extent.

While organisations offer internships for lower and middle-level executives, professionals too, do not shy away from the proposition of mentoring other employees. These internships provide opportunities for individuals to experiment with their job roles, and, undertake projects that harness their creativity to build dexterity in their current job profiles.

### How Do These Programmes Help

In an employee development programme, both mentors and mentees stand to gain equally. Employees benefit by increased self-motivation levels and sharper skills, while mentors gain from the opportunity to advice and coach, thereby increasing their self-confidence and job satisfaction.

Furthermore, employers are on the winning end as motivated and trained employees tend to remain loyal, make lesser mistakes and minimise losses for the firm. The company also uses these training programmes to attract potential employees to their firm. Such initiatives in any organisation aim at addressing the learning needs of a dynamic workforce and instil appreciation of work performed by other functions. HC

# Unravelling The Mysteries of The Corner Office

- By **LUIS MONIZ**

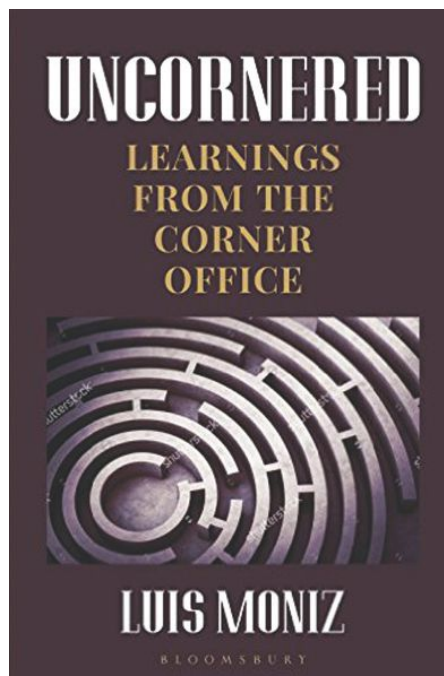
**M**y journey for writing "Uncornered" commenced around seven years ago, when I was considering setting up my own career and executive coaching practice. Well, that is not fully accurate, because the main theme for the book has evolved over the years, and, the title only emerged just before the book went into print.

My initial objective for the book, around 2010, was to share my perspectives and learnings as a C-Suite headhunter both to clients (employers) and candidates (the professional being placed by the headhunter) and the working title was "Third side of the triangle". This evolved to a book based on the premise that the moves one makes over one's career lifespan have as much impact on where one finally reaches as the performance in between each move, and therefore, it is critical to make the right career moves. The working title as I recall was "Snakes and Ladders", and this was around five years ago! I then was absorbed in building my coaching practice and the book project went onto a back burner until I got a call from a publisher in the second half of 2014 enquiring whether I would like to write a book on Leadership Coaching in India. I thought that this topic would be quite boring, and I suggested to the publisher that I could write a book on career guidance targeted at mid-career professionals in India.

My experience as a career coach showed that most professionals now recognize that the traditional strategies of loyalty, hard work, dedication and dependence on our employers for

career progression are no longer effective in this turbulent world. However, many executives are not familiar with the new mantras for success in the current career paradigm, and therefore, look for guidance and pointers on how to achieve greater professional success. There are very few Indian books aimed at this segment and the publisher initially agreed with the concept. However, when that publisher later backtracked, I opened discussions with Business Standard Books who liked my concept as well, and we signed the publishing contract in January 2015. I had several working titles for Uncornered and was keen on a catchy title but my publishers felt it was too risqué or irreverent. The name finally emerged from the sub-title - "Learnings from the corner office" and I coined a word that does not exist in the English diction, because I wanted a unique one-word title.

While I had a good understanding of the strategies that super achievers adopt to get ahead in their careers despite the turbulence around them, I did not want to book to end up being a boring sermon. I therefore interviewed over 40 highly successful professionals from diverse sectors and job functions to capture their interesting experiences, perspectives, learnings and practical advice in the book. The overriding theme for the book is to always remain uncornered so that we take charge of our careers and proactively create credentials for the possible higher level roles. The career success strategies have been



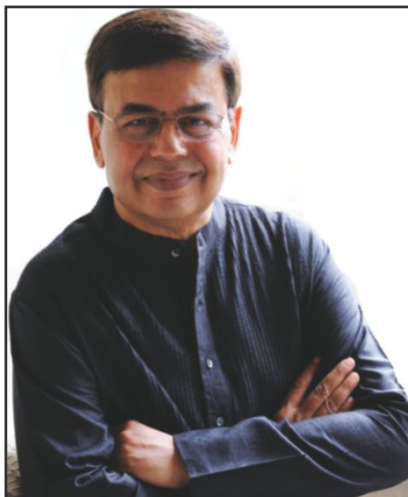
categorised under three pillars - Mindset, Enablers and Performance. An excerpt from the final chapter of my book will provide you with a broader idea.

**Extract from "Uncornered Learnings From The Corner Office" by Luis Moniz**

..... I thought that it would be good to end this book with my own perspectives on how all the themes fit together and thereby could enable you to remain 'uncornered' all the time.

Just to recap, ultimately it is your performance in a job role that determines your career trajectory. However, you need to stop performing with the mindset of the previous era, when you worked very hard to achieve the key result targets that were set for you at the beginning of the year and then were dependent on your employer to reward you with a generous bonus, promotion or enhancement of your responsibilities. In a turbulent world, you can no longer leave your career's destiny in anyone else's hands. Your boss who will review your performance at the year-end may move in the middle of the year. Your organisation may suddenly be faced with disruptions in its markets, which portend a difficult career situation for you and many others in your organisation. Your employer could be acquired by a bigger player resulting in significant changes in strategies, priorities and adjustment to a new work culture. Therefore, you are solely responsible for your career and need to take charge of it by performing in the same mindset of an entrepreneur who is running a business. You should view your employment contract purely as a business relationship where you provide a value-add or service to a customer and get paid for the value-add or service every month and at the end of the year.

Since employment is a 'single-customer' business, where you are providing the value-add or service to only one customer at any given time, the relationship is likely to be lopsided against you. However, you have the ability to change that relationship to a more equitable one and perhaps tilt it your favour. This starts to happen when you deliver outstanding results without the need for much direction from your seniors and can achieve these results by working with other stakeholders using influence rather than authority. You keep pace with the dynamics of the organisation and are focussed on contributing to ever-changing issues and initiatives that are most important for the organisation. You also create your personal brand and USP and network in the relevant professional circles to build your market



**Luis Moniz** is a career and executive coach focused on developing senior and middle management professionals since 2010. He is able to bring corporate experience for over two decades and deep understanding of the talent acquisition space gained as a C-Suite executive search professional for 6 years into his coaching engagements. Luis holds an MBA from IIM Ahmedabad and an M.S. in Finance from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

reputation. Therefore, you establish yourself as an invaluable resource within your organisation and your reputation is well-respected in professional circles as well. You will then be in an enviable situation where you can say that "If my employer doesn't recognise and reward me fairly, I am confident that my outstanding track-record will be attractive to another employer and with my strong market reputation, I can move relatively easily". However, you may not need to make the career move because your seniors will also recognise this and ensure that you are rewarded fairly and do their best to retain you.

It may be difficult to consistently deliver outstanding performance over a long period of time without the right enablers, both internal and external. I have discussed various enablers at length in the first two pillars of this book and would like to highlight a few pointers here.

The key internal enabler is being passionate about your role because you need to be charged up every morning of the work week and go to bed with the feeling that the long hours you spent at work have been really worthwhile. You may not know your passion area at the beginning of your career and it could emerge after a few job moves where you have dabbled in different types of roles. You may need to ignore the well-meaning advice of friends and family members when choosing to pursue a non-traditional career or move to an emerging profession. Also, the area that you are passionate about may change over time or it may need to be tweaked when you need to reinvent your career to match the demand for your talent. However, if you focus on working in an area that is best aligned to your passion, you are more likely to be successful in the long run as compared to working in an area that may be more lucrative, monetarily, but which you don't truly enjoy.

The other key internal enabler is your ability to take calculated risks when making your career moves. Since everything is in a state of flux, you will need to take a well-considered decision and then stay 'uncornered' so that you can move again if the situation warrants the need to look for a new role or to reinvent your career. The best way to stay 'uncornered' is to think two steps ahead when making a move and analyse the possible roles that you could move to, after spending a few years in your upcoming role. When you keep these possible next roles in mind, you will automatically focus

on building credentials that are needed for those roles and be well-positioned to make the move after a couple of years. When you feel that it is time to make the next move, avoid asking your boss for suggestions on where you could move to, since you are then leaving your career's destiny in his/her hands. Instead, do your own research on internal moves that are likely to come up in the next few months and which match your passion areas. Once you have identified two or three possible moves that you are keen to move to, ask your boss for his/her guidance on the option you should pursue and seek his/her support for your candidature.

Your ability to learn continuously is another key internal enabler for outstanding performance. The first step to learning is an openness to admit that you don't know something and therefore, either find ways to gain knowledge in that area or hire a team member who is a domain expert in that area. This leads us to the most important external enabler, which is having a team of superior performers, who in turn hire superior performers in their respective teams. Attracting such talent and retaining them is not easy but is well worth the extra effort involved, as has been discussed by many of my interviewees earlier in this book. They have also candidly acknowledged that their performance would be nothing without their talented team members.

The other two key external enablers are mentors and coaches and family support. Mentors and coaches help you to get past your limiting self-beliefs so that you dream big and find ways to achieve those dreams. When you are very focussed on delivering outstanding performance, there are bound to be pressures on the time available for your family and your family members need to support your career aspirations, irrespective of your gender. They need to appreciate the choices that you make on how you spend your time each day since it could mean missing many family occasions or events due to your travel or your need to be on late-night conference calls or to attend networking dinners. My interviewees have advised that it is best to discuss your time pressures with your key family members openly and work out solutions that are comfortable for everyone.

Your key internal and external enablers are the main ingredients in the recipe to remain 'uncornered' in your career. However, the proof of the 'uncornered' pudding is in the eating. Your track record and market reputation of delivering outstanding results will ensure that you are able to move to a new role or reinvent your career every time you sense you may be getting into a corner and thus remain 'uncornered' all the time. **HC**

"Uncornered Learnings From The Corner Office" by Luis Moniz is published by Bloomsbury India and is available at all leading book stores.

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# Getting Closer to Millennials

- BY SUBRAMANIAN KALAPATHI

With multiple generations working together and contributing at the workplace today, building intra- and inter-generational engagement is an imperative for leaders in all organizations. In certain sectors and geographies, where millennials are already making up a majority of the workforce, pioneering organizations have begun putting in place structures that bring out the best in this generation. While there is a lot of debate around the similarities and differences of millennials as compared to other generations, most professionals agree that there is a transformation under way, as usually happens when a new generation enters the workforce. The sheer scale of young professionals wanting to learn, grow, and make a difference at work is perhaps unprecedented in

recent history.

With this context in mind, I began work on *The Millennials: Exploring The World Of The Largest Living Generation* around three years ago as an attempt to bring to the fore the multitude of changes accompanying this generational shift. The result is a book that blends primary and secondary research in order to analyse the evolving nature of work and the workplace, seen through the following seven lenses: motivation, culture, innovation, digital technology, collaboration, learning and leadership.

It is my ardent hope that the perspectives outlined in the book leave you inspired, and nudge all of us towards positive action that bring out the best in all generations, including millennials.

## The Millennials: Exploring the World of the Largest Living Generation

Extract from Chapter 2 - 'Authentic versus Dissonant Culture'.

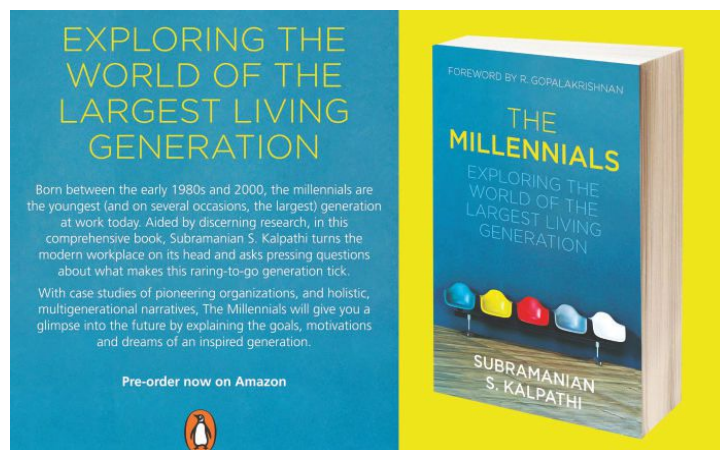
Innovation Institutionalized: Ideapreneurship At HCL Technologies

Iowa, USA. Meet Prem Sundar, a millennial database professional at HCL. Prem and his team had been entrusted to work with a key client—a large aerospace and defence company that provides avionics-based IT systems and services to governmental agencies and aircraft manufacturers. Transport aircraft around the world are installed with a version of their aviation electronics systems. While engaging the client, Prem and his team identified a unique challenge. The firm captured a large amount of avionics data on its database, but every time

the database was queried to extract information, it took a whopping seven days for the system to respond with an output. This had been causing a

major drag on decision-making, and delaying execution. Prem knew that his team had to look beyond just managing the product life cycle, and came up

with the idea of developing a new query language. Prem took his team's help to build the language, and eventually developed a system that had a parser to understand the query syntax, an engine to output query-based data, along with a state-of-the-art client user interface that made it easier to extract information. The result? The seven-day query process was





brought down to five minutes, resulting in savings of over \$5.1 million and countless man-hours. The savings continue to accumulate for the client.

Oregon, USA. Meet Ramya Subramanian, a millennial technical lead at HCL. Ramya's client is a major American Internet corporation. As Ramya worked through her project, an anomaly caught her attention, something that was outside the purview of her routine tasks. The client's project management tool was highly inefficient-project tracking was being done by following messy trail mails. With multiple teams working in parallel, each team having up to forty people, and every team member being endowed with specific tasks, the client had his work cut out. Ramya shuddered at the thought of someone having to track individual performance and progress for such a large team by scanning through hundreds of emails. As Ramya thought through a possible solution to this unique dilemma, she had her eureka moment-the project management tool she used at HCL was best in class, and she could build an efficient tool for the client using this system as a template. Ramya did just that and created a tool that allowed easy collation of team communication (no more messy trail mails), broadcast information to individual team members, captured overall status reports, helped the manager keep track of scheduled tasks and identified delays in the process. The client was impressed with Ramya's solution and implemented it-the solution had a projected value of \$120,000.

New Delhi, India. Meet Payal Baloni, a millennial project lead at HCL. Payal had taken up an assignment for a client in the healthcare domain. A core requirement of the project was to ensure error-free migration of raw data from clinical trials. Without this, the client would be unable to fetch the requisite US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approvals, and without approvals, they wouldn't be able to release drugs into the market on time. As project lead, it was Payal's responsibility to manage the current tool and ensure that the migration happened smoothly. There was one problem though: the current data migration process was plagued with errors, and Payal's team had been

taking flak for managing a proprietary tool they had little control over. Payal went back to her team and led a brainstorm to get to the root cause. The team came to the conclusion that the current migration tool was possibly outdated, and badly in need of an upgrade. Payal did a few checks with the client to validate these assumptions and found that the tool had indeed been customized and modified multiple times, with several bug fixes along the way. Payal had the choice to work on the existing tool, by plugging errors manually as and when they arose. Instead, Payal and her team came up with a unique, service-led solution to handle the data migration process: they call it DIASS-Data Integration as a Service. The new tool had the potential to migrate raw clinical data faster, make the process more efficient and accurate and gave the client submission-ready output. It was a complete and comprehensive end-to-end service. The outcome? The client implemented Payal's idea in eight projects and saved over \$1.2 million.

Prem, Ramya and Payal belong to a breed of intrapreneurs at HCL called Ideapreneurs. If you observe closely, there are three behavioural threads that are consistent through all these stories: seeding an idea by looking beyond the obvious, nurturing it to bring it to realization and harvesting an intrapreneurial ecosystem that commits to self-sustained growth. The result-Ideapreneurs providing value to clients much beyond what is expected from contractual obligations and service agreements (what HCL calls building 'relationships beyond the contract'). HCL encourages these behaviours by putting in place processes that give employees at all levels the 'licence to ideate'. To understand the essence of Ideapreneurship, we must turn the clock back a few years.

### The Adjacent Possible

In his bestselling book, *Where Good Ideas Come From*, author Steven Johnson refers to a concept called 'the adjacent possible', an idea borrowed from molecular biology:

The adjacent possible is a kind of shadow future, hovering on the edges of the present state of things, a map of all the ways in which the present can



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reinvent itself. Yet is it not an infinite space, or a totally open playing field . . . What the adjacent possible tells us is that at any moment the world is capable of extraordinary change, but only certain changes can happen . . . In human culture, we like to think of breakthrough ideas as sudden accelerations on the timeline, where a genius jumps ahead fifty years and invents something that normal minds, trapped in the present moment, couldn't possibly have come up with.

Put simply, an 'adjacent possible' is an idea that is ahead of its time. In 2010, then CEO of HCL Technologies, Vineet Nayar, proposed such a concept in his book *Employees First, Customers Second*. He described how he had brought about organizational transformation at HCL by driving a culture of trust through transparency,

inverting the organizational pyramid and completely recasting the role of the CEO.

While the transformation process was under way, Nayar found that one group of employees was particularly enthusiastic about the proposed changes—a group Nayar referred to as the 'transformers'. With over 80 per cent of HCL's population comprising millennials, not surprisingly, a large percentage of the transformers turned out to be from this generation. Nayar acknowledged in his book that the millennials (or Gen Y) 'were the ones who did the real work. The ones who met with customers. Who delivered our products and services. Who worked through problems. Who deserved support and praise.'

He also realized that millennials created the most value for customers at HCL, and collectively made up what he called the 'value zone' in the organization. Nayar then went about strengthening this 'value zone' by inverting the traditional organizational pyramid and transforming the way value was delivered to HCL's customers. 'Wouldn't it help us become more engaged with our employees and fire their imaginations? Wouldn't such a transformation, made from the ground up, be more sustainable?' he wondered.

## Beliefs

HCL Technologies is one of the few organizations that identified the potential of the millennial generation early on and systematically went about putting in place structures that would bring out the best in them. The unique philosophy of Employees First, Customers Second gets translated into business value by answering three crucial questions:

1. What is the core fundamental of a business? To create value.
2. Who is creating the value? Employees.
3. So, what should be the role of management? To engage, enable and empower employees to create value.

HCL puts its employees first, as they form the value zone and are closest to the customer. Management at HCL embraces employee-led innovations that are driven from the grass roots, and in doing so, HCL has inverted the organizational pyramid to

put employees on top. The core belief driving action at HCL is: Put your employees first and customers will never feel second.

## Behaviour

To tap into Ideapreneurship in the value zone, HCL understands that its employees need to be supported so that they can come up with consistent and differentiated insights while engaging with customers. This capability must exist at the individual, team and leadership levels. For Ideapreneurs, this understanding gets converted into a three-step process: Seed, Nurture and Harvest. The 'Need to Seed' requires an ability to look beyond the obvious, to generate and foster ideas that promise incremental progress. Prem Sundar projected this ability when he created a query language that slashed runtime from seven days to five minutes. A 'Desire to Nurture' requires evolving a network that nurtures these ideas to realization with an intent towards implementation and gathering ambitious scale. Payal Baloni reached out to her networks both within and outside HCL to validate assumptions before proposing a solution that could be implemented to scale. A 'Commitment to Harvest' involves incubating an intrapreneurial ecosystem that self-sustains growth from initiative to business outcome by defining the commercial value of an idea. Ideas implemented by Ideapreneurs at HCL have added over \$1 billion in client-reported value.

## Institutionalizing Ideapreneurship

With over 1,00,000 employees worldwide, HCL has put in place a number of programmes aligned to the core tenets of Ideapreneurship, guided by innovation that happens in the value zone. Behaviours that seed, nurture and harvest customer-focused ideas are encouraged through programmes like the 'Value Portal'. This is how the Value Portal works:


- Ideas raised by employees go through workflow cycles and are shared with customers for feedback and approval.
- Estimates on cost and expected value generation are projected and some of the ideas are chosen for

implementation (often at no additional fee to the client).

- Shortlisted ideas are given guidance and mentorship for successful implementation.
- Ideas are co-created and co-implemented with the client. This makes it easier for the customer to measure the value realized and sign off on the savings achieved through such an initiative.

Other programmes like LeadGen facilitate servicing of untapped customer demands and requests through delivery employees who have a direct connect with the customers; MAD JAM recognizes and celebrates outstanding employee-led innovations for customers; and the Good Practice Conference makes it possible for employees from across the organization to put forth their suggestions, in the form of discussion papers which get presented at an annual conference.

For someone who joins HCL, the power of Ideapreneurship comes alive thirty days before joining the organization, with stories of successful wins shared during the pre-induction communication process. It lingers on through the duration of the candidate's employment experience with the organization, with targeted training and coaching, rewards, platforms and evangelists who bring the concept of Ideapreneurship to life in a myriad ways. Even after moving on, Ideapreneurs keep in touch by way of a robust alumni network.

HCL Technologies is an organization that has empowered a generation of employees it deeply trusts and believes in. The results are obvious: driven Ideapreneurs have already delivered over \$1 billion in customer value through continuous ideation and implementation, with a supportive ecosystem that guides them through this challenging journey. As HCL strengthens its internal processes to further align culture, strategy and performance targets, the employees first, customers second framework will allow the organization to be ready for perpetual change. For HCL's over 1,00,000 Ideapreneurs, the journey has only begun. 

Excerpted with permission from *The Millennials: Exploring the World of the Largest Living Generation*, Penguin Random House India.

# The Journey And The Road Ahead

The trends and challenges for the Industry in the various aspects of HR as they were perceived in 2016 and how they stand for 2017 as explored by O.C.Tanner, a global employee recognition and engagement company.

- BY ZUBIN ZACK

## Leadership, Engagement & Culture

**2016:** The economic climate of the day for smarter operational methods of business and challenge was to stay ahead of global demographical shift and the growing competition, and was thus leaning towards one common theme, employee engagement interconnected to culture. Therefore, companies were required to place employee engagement and culture as their top most priority in 2016. Secondary to this theme was Leadership, who knows how to lead teams and inspire them to create an exemplary brand and a journey to success. Further, learning and development, which forms the foundations of the brand, has an equal foothold in this highly commercialized world.

**2017:** The aforementioned theme continues to bear significance in 2017, and, it is anticipated that it will continue in 2018 as well. It did progress in the priority list of CEOs, and the ROIs were evaluated to make investments in leadership and engagement / culture influencing initiatives. We will see a lot more business cases being presented to Company Boards to justify and measure the investments on initiatives created by organizations towards cultures and engagement of employees.

## Developing the human side of the business

**2016:** Majority of the organizations with the ability to thrive in today's dynamic business environment are struggling because they do not empower people. Success in the 20th century was driven by process,



structure and encouraging people to function more like machines hereafter success in the future requires us to make more of the human side of business.

Humans have evolved to deal with

uncertainty through collaboration, cooperation and using conflict in a constructive manner. Businesses need to encourage their people to develop mindsets geared towards connection, conversation and experimentation.

We need to continue questioning whether we are doing things simply because that is how they have always been done, and, seek new perspectives to identify better solutions. Different departments and reporting lines provide clarity of role and accountability; however, they also tend to create artificial barriers that block progress. Organising people basis their skills and functions reinforces the patterns required to solve simple as well as complex problems, but it discourages them from working with other departments. Businesses were required to redefine how they view fear and failure; most of us allow fear to assume control of our lives, and, the key to eliminate this is to look behind and take back the self-imposed curtains our fears created.

**2017:** The Human side of business or even the human side of any process or programmes are far more important than everything else. With digital and technology playing a big

role in all processes, systems and methods, we overlook the human side, which is required to succeed. 2016 saw more conferences that bespoke the impact of digital in HR than in the years before. In all the conferences,

the questions, which were put up to panel members, were, "how do we make our employees use the technology implemented? - everyone wanted their technology to be used and considered that a success!". It was disheartening that there was not a single question on "how do we make employees connect face to face with other employees", or "how do we build communication paths which are genuine and can create trust, transparency, collaboration and belongingness". This is despite of the fact that everyone was jumping onto technology and digital solutions. 2017 shall be the year where conversation in India will be around the "mix" or "integration" of people and technology. It will start on how we can get the mix right to succeed. In



**ZUBIN ZACK**

Director and Chief Recognition Strategist, O.C. Tanner India

2018, total solutions will be seen to be playing a big role, and equal importance will be given to all mediums and thus ensured that the employees are duly served and the programmes or initiatives are effective.

Even though, the above aspect will be seen in 2017 and 2018, the conversations will hover around how we can deliver the human connect with consistence, and yet customized for multiple geographies, different age groups, different job roles, job skills

and different cultures. This will be of great importance since as in business, everything will need fine tuning.

### Improving the employee experience

**2016:** HR commenced a new journey in terms of focus. HR transformation had been ongoing for the last 10 years, implementation of new technology to streamline the processes were underway, and now it was focused on improving the employee experience.

Marketing and sales departments were required to improve and develop the customer experience in order to increase market share and revenue. Employees were looking forward to see an improvement not only focusing on external customer but also internally to improve their journey.

Every function that implemented new processes without looking at the big picture in terms of employee journey resulted to become a painful process between financial / HR / IT / Procurement / Benefits processes. All those departments were using different technology/workflow and documentation to perform the tasks that were transferred in the last decade. Improving the employee experience in a challenging environment was aimed at driving engagement and retention.

**2017:** Somewhere in the middle of all the aforementioned aspects, it becomes evident that the employee has become the centre of any investment, solution or technology implementation. However, in 2017 or later, we will see the human side of the employee experience play a role. Today, we have seen how the technology or the benefits can be customized so that the experience the employee has will be seamless and a pleasure just like how it may be planned. However, going forward the experience will move up the curve to involve their culture, background and other preferences. In the manner in which, analytics have aided our customers with customized solutions, we will see these experiences for employees also customized to the denomination of one.

### Data driven recruiting

**2016:** Accessibility to data became easier with new technology and

professional network platforms. Talent acquisition leaders could arm themselves with data to become more strategic in their decision-making.

**2017:** This is journey-driven and only some roles within recruitment can be leveraged with data. The personal connect and personal judgment through face to face meetings will continue and retain its importance.

### Relationships not programmes

HR continues to be about relationships and the key skill set for future HR people will be how to effectively understand and manage the impact of mergers, demergers and globalization. These changes have profound impact in the workplace.

### Keeping the skills of your workforce up to date

Keeping the skills of your workforce up-to-date is more important as it is fast-changing world. Many companies immediately turn to an external training firm but it is worth thinking about the expertise and experience already in your company, and, how this can be tapped into this to the benefit of the rest of your staff. Harnessing peer to peer learning can be an efficient and cost effective way of increasing skills, and the knowledge transferred is likely to be relevant because it is delivered by people who understand the organization's culture.

### Focus on well-being and resilience

Wellbeing and resilience continues to be a big area of focus, which means physical, emotional, mental and purposeful wellbeing. For instance, providing free counselling to the employees and their dependents.

As Individuals are pushed to deliver ambitious growth targets at work and at home, there can be struggles with unemployment (partner or child), financial pressures like the mortgage, loans etc."

### Big data analytics

Now, it is not about big data but about how to start acting on that data and put it to use.



# Redefining The Workspace

The notion of the workplace is expanding to include more human elements and meeting employees' expectations for autonomy and control over those elements. These changes will result in a better employee experience and will lead to better business results. - BY **TIM BRASWELL**

**H**R is in a defining moment. Demographic upheavals, digital technology, and disruptive change are transforming the workplace, and driving an approach to delivering measurable value and people services. Business leaders across functional areas and industries have concurred that their organization's success is now determined by attracting, retaining and optimally managing a quality workforce, and building a corporate culture that is globally integrated and locally responsive.

The notion of the workplace is expanding to include more human elements and meeting employees' expectations for autonomy and control over those elements. These changes will result in a better employee experience and will lead to better business results.

In the coming years, HR leaders will be focusing more on technology that shall culminate in greater employee engagement, teamwork, innovation, and collaboration. This will have a greater emphasis on team-based goal alignment and coaching, putting in place systems to provide feedback and measure engagement, and rethinking the way organizations measure performance, manage careers, and enable continuous individual learning. HR trends will also focus on empowerment, employee experience, and ultimately a more human, diverse and inclusive workplace. **Getting ready for 2017, major areas of focus for HR will be:**

**Technology:** Organizations are focusing on employee benefits and wellness programmes as a differentiator. As employees across the world are becoming more health conscious,

organizations are focusing on providing wellness benefits to attract and retain talent. Mobile apps will gain precedence over web-based cloud management systems while improving their flexibility. Wearable gadgets like watches and FitBits will merge health and wellness with employee engagement. We may witness mobile solutions to meet employee timekeeping needs, merging the freedom of cloud with the flexibility of mobile devices.

**Stepped-up competition for talent:** With the rising demand for skilled and qualified workers around the globe, organizations are finding it more difficult to attract the best talent. HR professionals are focusing on building an inclusive culture within the organization to establish the company as a great place to work. Various employee-friendly policies, safety and security measures and building a mutual respect-driven culture have become the cornerstones of an organization's HR strategy.

**HR Expertise:** Dynamic and flexible HR expertise are replacing the old centres of excellence moving toward agility, innovation, and better business integration. This will help unify HR and extend within and beyond the organization, coalescing around specific challenges and opportunities as they arise in the business. People analytics is becoming the new normal for organizations- once reserved for highly specialized experts. This discipline is maturing into a core skillset for HR professionals.

**Hire and retain the right people:** HR will have to treat an individual employee as a "workforce of one" with

unique needs and preferences, and customize employee incentives. HR will have to reshape itself to enable new organizations designed around nimble and responsive talent. Hiring the best up-and-coming talent among the millennial generation, the HR function will have to tailor its focus on the preferences, traits and habits of candidates.

**Learning and development:** Traditional notions regarding learning technology solutions are being challenged and organizations are being forced to retool and reimagine solutions that best serve the workforce. Millennials desire learning benefits, and being engaged, gamification and virtual



**TIM BRASWELL**

Director - Human Resources, PNB  
MetLife Insurance

reality will step up to enhance learning experiences. Mobile learning will enhance portability and flexibility of learning methods, fast access to learning materials, and the ability to engage in distraction-free learning activities.

**Productive performance reviews:** Organizations will be better positioned to engage and retain their workers simply by committing to understand engagement drivers within their companies, and, by recognizing differences across generations of employees. Millennials are highly relationship based and require frequent and specific feedback.

Although priorities will vary from organization to organization, overall trends can guide decisions and help determine the biggest problems to target and fix throughout the coming year. **HC**



SRABONI HARALALKA

# Sniffing out The Right Talent

One of the best ways to recruit the best talent in the job market is to get off the beaten track and look for it in the most improbable places. The game of hide-and-seek serves as a good analogy: the kid who hides in the most difficult-to-find hiding place is the smartest of them all.

*“It doesn’t make sense to hire smart people and then tell them what to do; we hire smart people so they can tell us what to do.”* - STEVE JOBS

Steve Jobs was well aware of the fact when he made the above statement. Throughout his leadership, this founder of Apple hired only the best and brightest people to design and sell some of the most iconic products of our times. Smart companies hire smart people, and organisations are often only as good as their employees.

While Jobs knew how and where to look for brilliant employees. What about other entrepreneurs and organisations? What about specialised businesses like investment banking and multi-family office? Where do they find the crème de la crème of talent?

## The Talent hunting guide

Here is a guide that will show employers and recruiters how to look for talent and excellence the non-traditional way - and still hire people best suited for the future of their companies.

**Digital tools:** The digital age is redefining the way HR managers and experts are scouting and hiring talent across industries. From the traditional résumé - through word of mouth, delivered by hand or sent by post - we went online and thence to digital, where the hiring process includes online surveys and video interviews. For instance, popular portals like SurveyMonkey-for assessing candidates on specific subjects, online writing tests- to make sure candidates really want the job, and Google Hangouts- to highlight job openings and engage with potential candidates

are enabling recruiters and employers understand candidates better and hire the best among them.

## Podcasts and Webinars

One of the biggest outcomes of digital transformation has been video podcasts and webinars, which are effectively used in recruitment. Employers are making use of various video channels, including YouTube, to talk about their companies, what makes them ideal workplaces, and the HR benefits and administration services they offer. These videos can be both scholarly as well as entertaining, and, they capture the culture and values of the organization. These digital tools are also a means to make a company stand out from its competitors.

**Group interactions:** Another non-traditional approach to hiring unique employees is conducting group interactions. This is an excellent way to gauge their temperament, behaviour, attention span, working knowledge and communication skills among other characteristics. It also tells the employers whether they are a good fit for their corporate culture. One new approach to the hiring process is conducting an open house where the shortlisted candidates discuss various topics related to the employer's business. This is different from group interaction as the setting is informal and the air more casual. The open house strategy also shows how candidates behave and interact with each other.

**Personal communication:** More and more employers are connecting with prospective candidates directly, and establishing the first line of contact. This one-on-one



communication helps employers spell out specific needs and allows them to gauge the suitability of the candidates. On the other hand, it puts the candidates at ease, boosts their morale, and ups their chances of landing the job. Reaching out personally demonstrates an organization's willingness to go out of its way to hire the right person for the right job. For example, when a small company reaches out to a candidate, it enables the latter to understand his or her role in the organization much better.

**Looking in unlikely places:** While job fairs continue to be among the best places to hire talent, employers and recruiters are increasingly scouting other events for the right candidates. And, some of the unlikeliest places for a candidate hunt are business meetings, seminars and conferences, which are attended by highly qualified people. For example, an employer looking to hire an analyst would do well to look for candidates at financial conclaves. The participating analysts are already in their chosen field and probably passionate about their jobs, which makes it easier for employers to tap them and find out firsthand if they are open to change.

**Ex-employees and rejected candidates:** Many companies have an open-door recruitment policy in the sense that they rehire people who have left or reconsider



résumés that were rejected. Often, this exercise throws up a surprise - companies discover talent and skill they had previously overlooked. Whatever the reasons, if an organisation thinks that a candidate is suitable for a particular job, it cannot hurt to get in touch again and invite him or her for an interview that may help fill an important vacancy.

One of the best ways to recruit the best talent in the job market is to get off the beaten track and look for it in the most improbable places. The game of hide-and-seek serves as a good analogy: the kid who hides in the most difficult-to-find hiding place is the smartest of them all. How do you trace him? You use clever thinking and technique to find the kid - and make him part of your team. He can be one of your best recruits, your most valuable resource, and help your organisation stand out from its competitors. **HC**

**Disclaimer:** Wodehouse Capital Advisors does not necessarily use the above HR practices in its recruitment.

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Enhancing Excellence in Performance

# Evaluating Business & Talent Disruptions

In a disrupted business environment, a leader cannot afford to make the mistake of not knowing who her true clients are, for, the first introduction to a client of your firm is always because of the team members, who in turn are responsible for your clients and customers.

- BY DR. GANESH SHERMON



**T**imes, they are for real, and, so is an ambiguous and a volatile digital world. Where there is uncertainty, as it is now, there is bound to be failure, not necessarily business termination, but back breaking losses and a disastrous loss of respect, image and dignity, not to forget shareholder value depletion. The fall from grace could be deadly.

It is not surprising, therefore, that many new ventures, visions and aspirations fail while experimenting. What happens to leaders when their businesses fail? What happens to those ideas? And, what were the factors that led to such failures? People hear of highly successful leaders extolling the virtues of failure as a valuable teacher. Why did their business fail despite

opportunities? Was it because those opportunities were meant for a better business organization than them? Every client who walks into your firm needs engagement. Allow one to walk out and the rest will follow. You may actually get used to it!

**Clients - People Disrupted**  
But, this is more easily said than



experienced. The after effects of failure or success of a business on the individual leaders, brought on poor client management, in a digital organizational volatility are however far more complex, stressful, delirious and arguably paradoxical. While failure may lead to a potentially valuable, wisdom, learning, and experiential opportunity for the leader who founded the failed business, it may also be an emotional and a traumatic experience leading to unbecoming behaviours displayed in public by such beaten down leaders - simply an unexplained public breakdown - effect of disruption. Many business failures have one common cause - client and people, both inter related. In a disrupted business environment, a leader cannot afford to make the mistake of not knowing who her true clients are, for, the first introduction to a client of your firm is always because of the team members, who in turn are responsible for your clients and customers. You do not get a second chance to create a first impression. Disgruntled employees do turn away your clients unconsciously in several ways, from not so friendly body language, poor display of expertise to downright rude behaviour (From Character to Competence or from Performance to Politics or from Attitude to Absence or from Arrogance to Aspiration). As a leader, we cannot please every client or people, but we can set an example without defining them as rules. And, it is true that it can be an endeavour in itself. Reckon any form of people control takes away the charm of being engaged. It is the choice that makes people free, for an opportunity to lead people is a gift, a joyful experience for both, provided we make the best out of it for both. Leadership is not complicated and tends to offer more support while demanding less. Clients, people, vendors will give more than what you may have demanded! Ask tough questions but back it up with strong, friendly, and fair processes.

### Knowledge Disrupted

We are now beyond the threshold of the knowledge era - 2017, not way back in the 1900s; yet, there are so

many aspects of transformation that we see are resonating even today; where intellect would dominate organizational processes; make information, data and learning only as the fundamental and necessary condition for knowledge creation, assimilation and management. The analysis, synthesis, and enveloping variables would be an eco-system - people, process, technology and environment for making things happen. If in 1900s, technology meant assembly - scientific - mass, - machines, today it is AI, Robots and neural. The knowledge organization environment, (Quip, Freshservice, Bloomfire, Capterra, Abbyy, KPS, IDERA), at least, in the first few decades appears to be quite predictable for organizational scientists. The emergence and happening of the tech knowledge era is certain. For e.g. Machine learning, cloud as a hosting solution or analytics as a driver for challenging thinking, the power of social strata (read media) of the society making a corporate influence through Glassdoor, Tumblr and Face book or anytime - anywhere mobility and devices, form the core of technology

***“Reckon any form of people control takes away the charm of being engaged. It is the choice that makes people free, for an opportunity to lead people is a gift, a joyful experience for both, provided we make the best out of it for both. Leadership is not complicated and tends to offer more support while demanding less.”***

engaging with people without the fear of technology (similar to mass production in the 1900s). In the knowledge economy, corporate

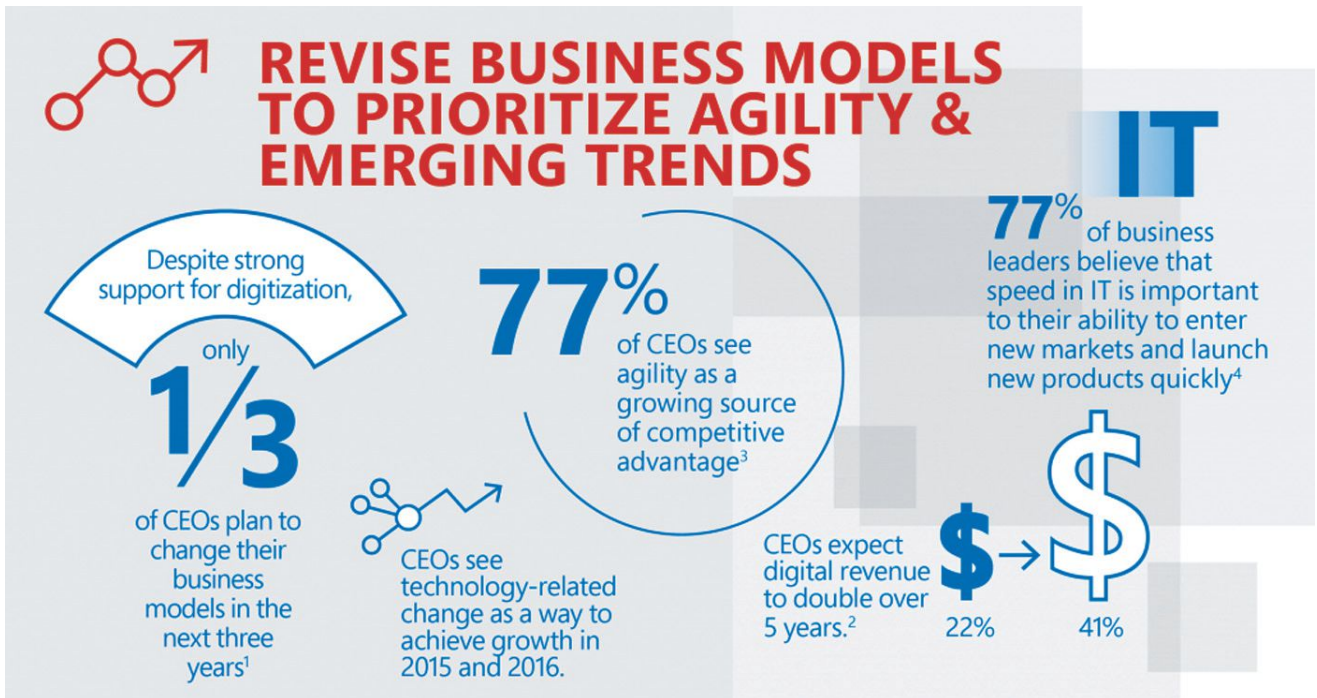


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performance is measured by the return on the knowledge invested. In fact, knowledge is a personal wealth when it is achieved, and, is a corporate asset when it is shared and institutionalized.

### Volatile Resources

Capital resources (Fiscal, Oil, Gold, BoP, Debt, Commodity) and asset management turn into "not so critical management parameters" for creation of shareholder wealth. But cryptocurrencies - blockchain, bitcoin, Ethereum, Monero, Quarkcoin, credit unions, Interac, are fast becoming viable alternatives. While investing resources continue to be an essential ingredient for corporate competitiveness and retention of innovative advantages, money by itself would mean precious little to make or break a deal. Knowledge brought in and grown by the corporate determines organizational competitiveness and successes seen as fundamental for business survival. The premium for managerial actions is on the ability to attract, hold, and maximize the intellectual equity available within the corporate. Interestingly the cycle of maximization, optimization and minimization is included in human capital management as well. The environment necessitates global



networks, connected business portfolios, functional linkages across geographies, resources grouping and sharing in a seamless, boundary less organizational space. It is an opportunity to invest anywhere and share in all necessary places as may be deemed appropriate. People bring in to their organizational settings a core set of knowledge, experience, competencies, skills, learning, training, demonstrated performance and potential. The summation of this set of parameters, engaged digitally, is the organizational intellectual equity - as volatile as these may be!

**Discerning Product Needs**

At the external influence scenario, there is a critical focus on value imperative while making marginal improvement appear inconsequential. The customer does not pay for corporate inefficiencies and poor management. The opportunity to transfer the short and medium term organizational handicaps to the customer, or, in some situations where environmental protection (Trade Barriers, Tariff Control, Government Tenders) was available, the inefficiencies continued, and costs were shared with the customer indefinitely. Nevertheless, value and

service imperative has unarguably become fundamental in this digital world. The customer truly has limitless options to determine alternatives, products, services, evaluate concurrent advantages, make choices on a time frame that is open, transparent and easy to administer. In other words, the customer is under no compulsion to buy what is available at the first distribution location or be governed by advertisement induced factors that profile the products more attractively than what it delivers. Now there are multiple channels from Amazon to Flip Kart, Alibaba Group, LightInTheBox, WayFair, Google, eBay, Tumblr to Instagram, Apple - Tidal, Spotify, Shomi, Starz, HBO, Hulu, Crunchyroll or Netflix. Options have not emerged because the corporate turned efficient in the consumer environment, but the competitive scenario in which the consumer shopped turned turtle viz. VUCA. Products that were far and wide in reach and purchase-ability were now available at a consumer backyard with added value, variety, convenience, and more importantly at an affordable price!

**Fix Social Complexity**

Social media is at the heart of disruptions (FB, Twitter, YouTube,

Pinterest, LI, Flickr), and without doubt, it was enabled by technology. But the ones who press the buttons are always the ones who invoke disrupt and cause change. Trump and Modi are classic examples of utilizing social networks to connect, communicate and engage. Leadership is at its best when they have a dynamic 24/7 access to their "People - Insights, Pulse & Performance". If only leaders behaved the way they exhorted, or, what they tweeted or posted on LinkedIn, would not social media gain greater acceptance in their business organizations and with their team members? There is a basic and an appropriate social need to be dealt within a volatile environment.

- **Need for Social Differentiation** - We would be innovative in differentiating ourselves in the marketplace, in identifying the business opportunities we incubate, in engaging the crack team for incubating new business, the speed at which we establish these new businesses, and, for the services we deliver to our customers.

- **Need to Think Social Global** - The businesses that we incubate will be evaluated for a global market with the best of talents from across the globe, and, executed through a global

delivery model (the procurement could happen somewhere, process could happen somewhere and the marketplace could be elsewhere).

- **Need for Social Synergy** - We engage seamlessly across the group for leveraging competencies which may be distributed across the globe as well (e.g. competencies being finance, strategy, people) to deliver the promised result to our customers. Our vision and values enable us to operate in a synergistic manner.

- **Need for Smart Achievement** - Reflect - Not about where you are today. But about where you started to reach you today. Differentiates inheritance and self-made.

- **Need for Intellectual Competence**- Not as easy to manage a team member smarter than you unless you are intrinsically good, not intellectually but conventional.

- **Need for Structure** - Distance between time taken to decide and time talent to implement! Lethargy - Same as above! Failures - Sum of above two!

- **Need for Work ethic** - Attended a meeting where two out of the three came completely unprepared? Is this a culture, performance or attitude issue? Who needs to fix it?

- **Need for Half Way is Great** - Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch excellence.

- **Need to Abandon Metric Mania** - Employers would benefit more by increasing insights than singularly monitoring metrics.

## Culture Resolves Uncertainty and Ambiguity

Culture encompasses the way in which the organization and its leaders present themselves to the outside world as well as the way in which internal operations are conducted. While more weight is usually given to the formal culture while planning and communicating inside and outside the organization, the informal culture is more important in shaping what really happens. And, this causes friction among what the leader is pushing to happen, and, the subtle resistance shown by the traditional - informal culture. When the formal and informal

corporate cultures clash, as often occurs with transformations, gridlock can ensue, as in the pitfalls described here. If a formal initiative is counter to the informal business culture, the informal culture will win every time. And many a times, such informal networks are sponsored at the leadership level and may manifest itself as gossip, back bites and political slandering amongst members of the leadership. Formal corporate culture, influenced by short term seeking leaders, involves everything that is official-the corporation's mission and value statement, the policy manual,

*“Culture encompasses the way in which the organization and its leaders present themselves to the outside world as well as the way in which internal operations are conducted. While more weight is usually given to the formal culture while planning and communicating inside and outside the organization, the informal culture is more important in shaping what really happens.”*

the operating procedures, the performance review system, the organization chart, and so forth. Leaders who carry the belief in the occurrence of an immediate change see quick fix triggers as the best form of influencing it, but quickly realize a volatile environment needs clarity, not ambiguity, needs stability not uncertainty, needs planning nor crisis management and needs sustenance.

MIT SMR 2016, authors Gerald C Kane, Doug Palmer, Et All, write, on aligning the organization for its digital future-

**Creating an effective digital culture is an intentional effort:** The need to conspicuously understand aspects of VUCA as it impacts

organizations is fundamental to any coping mechanism. Digitally maturing companies are constantly cultivating their cultures. Nearly 80% of respondents from digitally maturing companies say their companies are actively engaged in efforts to bolster risk taking, agility, and collaboration. Only 23% of companies in the early stages of digital development are doing so.

**Senior-level talent appears more committed to enterprises maturing digitally:** Companies that give their leaders the resources and opportunities to develop themselves in a digital environment are more likely to retain their talent. In contrast, approximately 30% of such leaders who lack such opportunities are planning to find new jobs in less than one year.

**Digitally maturing organizations invest in their own talent:** More than 75% of digitally maturing organizations surveyed provide their employees with resources and opportunities to develop their digital acumen, compared to 14% of early-stage companies. Success appears to breed success - 71% of digitally maturing companies say they are able to attract new talent based on their use of digital, while only 10% of their early-stage peers can do so.

**Soft skills and change trump technology knowledge in driving digital transformation:** When asked about the most important skill for leaders to succeed in a digital environment, only 18% of respondents listed technological skills as most important. Instead, they highlighted managerial attributes such as having a transformative vision - building organizations, change drivers, urgency to align, master management, workforce teams - (22%), being a forward thinker -vision, futuristic, transformative (20%), having a change-oriented mindset (18%), or other leadership and collaborative skills - teaming, cooperating, joining in, (22%). A similar emphasis on organizational skills above technical ones for succeeding in digital environments was also reported for employees.

When struck with Volatility Stick to People and Culture - More Long Lasting!

HC

Irrespective of the Industry, retention shall always remain to be the bone of contention for HR as well as CEO. Though money is always at the core of the retention strategies in companies, there are many other things that one can do to retain the best employees as well. I carry the experience of working with HR Heads and CEOs and have enabled them to evolve their retention strategies. There are three key questions that need to be answered while developing the retention strategy -

- Who is your best employee?
- At what cost do you retain your best employee?
- What are the techniques you will use to retain?

### The definition of the 'best employee'

While performance is the most conventional and convenient metric for selecting the best employee, a combination of performance and 'loyalty' must be deployed as the main criteria for the said purpose. Loyalty or ownership arises when a person is retained for the right reasons. For example, if an employee is in the company only for money, the only way to retain him/her is through money! But, you cannot win the game

# Holding Onto The Best

While performance is the most conventional and convenient metric for selecting the best employee, a combination of performance and 'loyalty' must be deployed as the main criteria for the said purpose.

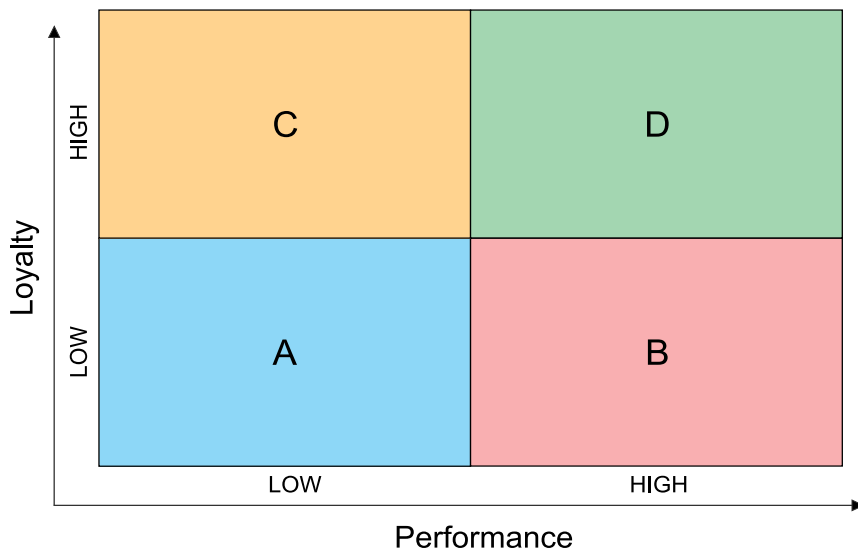
- BY T.MURALIDHARAN

with money alone, since there is always that employer who can offer more. Further, the 'best employee' need not necessarily be the 'best performer'. He/she is a 'best performer with the right reason for staying like "learning, great team at work, value system match etc"'. And,

these should be an integral part of the annual assessments.

In the graph above, you have Performance on the X-axis and Loyalty on the Y-axis. So, for employees falling in quadrant 'A' which represents "Low on performance and Low on Loyalty",





retention is not on the agenda. And, it is natural that a very small employee percentage will fall in Quadrant 'D', "High on Performance and High on Loyalty". In this case, retention is very important, but it is also easier since the employee will want to stay. Ideally, you have to move employees in Quadrants 'B' and 'C' to quadrant 'D' - 'high performance and high loyalty'. The biggest challenge for retention is from the employees in the High Performance and Low Loyalty viz quadrant 'B'.

Employees in quadrant 'C' - Low performance and High Loyalty are likely to stay, but here, the problem is of performance. The entire retention strategy of quadrant C is to focus on performance improvement. The reasons for low performance need to be examined. The reason, many a times is that the person is in the wrong job, or, he is with the wrong boss. These reasons can be corrected with a plan. So, a performance improvement plan has to be drawn along with a plan to improve competency.

Employees in Quadrant 'B' - "high performance and low loyalty" are employees required to be retained and migrated to Quadrant 'D', and, this is where the real challenge to retention comes from.

### When should you retain?

A company has three phases - start-up, growth and stability or decline. It is therefore pertinent to identify as to when the best employees must be

retained among the three phases. In the start-up phase, it is difficult to get people to work for you, and therefore, you have a small sized team. If you are unable to enforce loyalty among the people, and, if things do not work their way, they will simply walk out leading to unwarranted delays. So, the highest value of retaining the best employees is in the start up phase.

It is not very difficult to attract talent to work in the growth period since the company is doing well and getting a lot of visibility in this phase.

The second highest value for retention is in the stable or the decline phase. When the company is declining, you need some of your best employees to stay, because, if they

leave, you will be left with medium or low performing employees, and they offer little help in a turn around.

In essence, it is most important to retain the best employees in the start-up period, secondly, the stable or declining period and lastly, the growth period. Most of the time, companies spend a lot of resources retaining employees in the growth period and giving very little or no importance to the other phases. In my personal opinion, it should be the other way round.

### How should you retain your best employee?

The most important aspect in retention is that the employee should feel that there is a future for him in the company. So most of the time, the employees' primary concern is about the company's growth and how he/she can grow with the company. So, the bottom-line of retention is to get them to buy in and believe in the future.

Having people contribute to the vision by ideating and dreaming together is one of the best retention strategies. Many a times, promoters sell their dream to the other employees, but this does not work if you want to retain your best employees. You need to get them involved in the dream. Co-creating a dream is a critical step.

Secondly, it is obvious that you want to retain him because he has got better opportunities outside. He

## 3 strategies to retain quality employees

- 1 Staff engagement**  
Where employees work with managers to improve processes;
- 2 Care teams**  
Where work is delegated to the appropriate level and everyone plays an important role; and
- 3 Get paid for the work**  
Recognition, which may extend beyond wages, including flexible hours and educational rewards.

Source: Deborah Walker Keegan, PhD, FACMPE



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is definitely going to make a sacrifice and you must find a way of giving him a benefit. The most common way is to offer a retention bonus. But retention bonus will matter only if after giving him a bonus, his market value also improves which happens only if he grows with the company.

The third way is for the best employees to be involved in decision-making irrespective of the level they are in. So bringing them into various sub groups, in various think tanks in the company is a big advantage as they want to be a part of the decision making process. Put them in

work and building a personal connect? When I was working with NOCIL, our MD Mr. Dharam had the phenomenal ability to connect with youngsters like me which built our loyalty and he used to spend a lot of time with us outside office, he used to take us out for dinner and occasionally even for drinks. So, retention is possible when the leadership spends disproportionate time.

Lastly, an interesting retention strategy I had discussed with my client was helping the employee buy an asset, which is beyond his reach. A good example is 'own your house' scheme. In this scheme, the company buys the house because it has the capacity to purchase when the price is lower, and the employee has to stay seven years to get the property onto his name. So, basically the company helps the employee buy an asset he is keen to own, but is reticent to buy. The spouse also gets involved in the retention because it is a family asset. **HC**

***“In essence, it is most important to retain the best employees in the start-up period, secondly, the stable or declining period and lastly, the growth period. Most of the time, companies spend a lot of resources retaining employees in the growth period and giving very little or no importance to the other phases.”***

So, the second way is the Employee Stock Options. He will be willing to take some stock in the company provided he can see an exit plan for the stock - such as an IPO or private equity buying.

committees and groups where the Managing Director (MD) has keen interest.

Fourthly, is the CEO or MD spending disproportionate amount of time, not only at work, but also outside

# The Sum Total of Good Culture

Irrespective of the claims made in the organizational chart, business strategy, or the corporate mission statement, culture brings together the implicit and explicit reward systems and defines how an organization works in practice.

- BY **RAHUL JASHNANI**

**I**rrespective of the claims made in the organizational chart, business strategy, or the corporate mission statement, culture brings together implicit and explicit reward systems and defines how an organization works in practice. In any given organization, culture plays an important role in shaping people's behaviour, innovation and customer service. Many leading companies are nowadays recognizing the significance of culture, and, are using data and behavioural information to manage and influence culture. HR on its part is witnessed as playing a supportive role in the strategy through measurement, process and infrastructure.

## Culture in an organization

Culture in an organization includes the values, beliefs, behaviours, artefacts and reward systems that influence people's behaviour on a day-to-day basis. It is driven by the top leadership, and, becomes deeply embedded in the company through a myriad of processes and behaviours. Culture is the sum total of all behaviours that may or may not improve business performance. Today, culture is a CEO-level issue and can be quantified, measured and improved to drive strategy. A whole new industry of culture assessment tools have emerged, enabling companies to diagnose their culture using a variety of well-established models. In view of the importance of culture and the consequences of cultural issues, many companies are proactively defining and cultivating culture. In an era where bad news travels instantly, and, with the

culture of an organization being transparent and tied directly to its employment brand, the hallmark of great companies is to consciously cultivate and manage their culture, and turning it into a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

Culture should top the priority list: The top management and HR must clearly understand their company's cultural values, determine how they relate to the business strategy, and, assume responsibility towards shaping them. At the same time, they should analyze their own behaviour that acts to reinforce the desired culture.

Clear understanding of ongoing and desired culture: Business leaders should closely examine current business procedures in a systematic manner to identify whether the practices are aligned with the desired culture or are destructive so that they can be suitably amended, and, begin by uncovering the values and behaviours that allow those practices to develop. While many HR organizations are building teams to communicate the leaders' vision of the desired culture in an effective manner, these teams do not always connect cultural amend programmes to behaviours and business strategies.

Examine the organization to determine whether the targeted culture is taking hold: HR Executives can drive permanent cultural change throughout the organization by reminding employees that culture is a tangible set of attributes and behaviours that can be clearly recognized at visible 'touch points' among the employees and people outside the organization.



**Rahul Jashnani** is Managing Director, Jashn, a premier women's lifestyle ethnic wear brand. He aspires to inspire other entrepreneurs - and believes to be an entrepreneur one should possess skills like - communication, branding, sales, strategy, and finance. Rahul studied at the St. Francis College and the HR College of Commerce and Economics.

Measure culture: HR should take the lead and make use of empirical tools to understand the attitudes and actions of the employees. If the measurement reveals that current behaviours conflict with the desired cultural values, refine the programme to communicate and model culture throughout the organization.

Although HR has a distinct and proactive role to play in driving cultural change-a fact that has already been embraced leading HR-the challenge of culture should be owned at the highest level by the leaders who are responsible for business strategy. In short, leaders must understand that their beliefs and actions are the primary drivers of the organization's culture. In any new organization, senior leaders must drive cultural change just as they do other cross-organization issues, reinforcing the behaviours necessary to support the business strategy. Start by identifying the practices that need to be changed before any cultural transformation can take hold, and, then use the new tools available today to measure and manage culture towards alignment with business goals. **HC**

# Emulating Change Through Self awareness

Diversity has become an essential element among today's global workforce and organizations that effectively manage diversity will be the ones that will hold a competitive advantage.

- BY SANDHYA MATHUR

**G**lobalization, mergers and joint ventures have led to an upward trend with respect to diversity at the workplace. It is a major shift from the homogenous workforce seen some years ago. Today, diversity encompasses ethnicity, age, cognitive style, gender, education, background and a lot more.

Managing diversity involves a complete understanding of the benefits that come with diversity and the challenges it presents. It is about the mindset and how you choose to view the world, because diversity is not only about how people perceive themselves, but also about how they perceive others. These perceptions form the basis for determining and affecting their interactions.

Looking at today's scenario, we can confidently assume that diversity in the workplace will only increase in the coming years. Therefore, it is imperative that organizations acknowledge the need to be in readiness to manage diversity in an effective manner. This would involve planning of resources along with developing and implementing.

## Recognising the benefits

Most organizations now recognize the

benefits of embracing diversity. There is increased adaptability as a direct consequence of employing a diverse work force. The employees bring individual skills and experiences that enhance flexibility in adapting. A diverse set of talents and skills with languages and cultural understanding allows business in the global scenario. This ensures viewpoints of a larger pool and inspires employees to perform at their highest potential and ability. There is also better and a more effective execution.

Roy Y.J.Chua, a Professor at the Harvard Business School has reported in his research findings, "The more your network includes individuals from different cultural backgrounds, the more you will be stimulated by different ideas and perspectives." The research also indicates that rejecting diversity can prove to be detrimental and impoverish the workplace. It narrows the potential pool and makes it tough to hire good and effective talent. Encouraging acceptance in the workplace can enhance creative problem solving and innovative spirit. This would result in a more positive environment that stands based on trust and respect. Acceptance also ensures open communication, which catalyzes effective and productive teamwork. Some other rewards from accepting and implementing diversity would be a decrease in stress related issues and better retention of valued and skilled employees.

Diversity in the workplace is not without challenges though, with communication being the first and foremost challenge. Cultural and language barriers must be overcome for diversity to succeed. Resistance to change can silence new ideas and inhibit progress. Successful management and implementation of diversity that permeates every function of the organization is therefore extremely important, and, it is definitely a lot more than merely recognizing differences in people. As





per Professor Marlene G. Fine of Simmons College, Boston, "People who spend significant amounts of energy coping with an alien environment have less energy to do their jobs."

### Using emotional intelligence to manage diversity

High levels of emotional Intelligence are essential to succeed in a diverse workplace because emotions drive the way you react to people who may be different. It is your core beliefs that define you and your behaviour. A new kind of emotional intelligence that gives you acuity and a sense of purpose to deal with diversity is therefore essential, and emotions are an essential part of the human identity. This remains unaltered at the workplace where feelings affect performance. Instant and volatile reactions based on beliefs, biases and misinterpretations can cause behaviour that you may later regret. The feeling of being out of control and not feeling appreciated provokes people to react emotionally.

The first step towards this is creating self-awareness, which is the process of knowing, understanding and accepting your own identity. It is about dealing with feelings and emotions during periods of change and ambiguity. You need to learn to manage your emotions constructively. To make an appropriate decision, you also need to weigh your options and make the best judgement. It is essential to acknowledge the emotional impact of change and make an effort to gain new perspective by viewing it as an opportunity.

### Self-awareness: The key to transform behaviour

Self-awareness brings about an understanding and awareness of others' emotions, which is very helpful in managing relationships at work. If you can develop and master this skill, it allows you to tap into your emotions and harness their energy. Managing responses and communicating needs effectively to others becomes easier. The idea is to apply the power of your emotions to your relationships in a positive and

an objective manner. When you are comfortable with yourself, other peoples' differences will neither threaten nor challenge you. Experts claim that managing emotions at the workplace can prevent people from destroying one another, and, may result in redirection of energy into building a workplace that is ruled by respect, synergy and compassion.

A coach can support the process of self-awareness and tap into emotional intelligence. You need it to communicate well and understand the employees' beliefs, values and experiences. This will boost harmony and productivity. In the global environment, intercultural literacy is necessary. You need to transcend your own beliefs and perspectives and show empathy. The ability to express empathy is essential to good management. Executives and managers who can see the diversity objectively are better equipped to enable their team. Cultural diversity thrives in an environment of acceptance and patience.

Self-awareness can alter behaviour so that you can cope with change effectively as it is one of the most recalcitrant problems encountered by managers. Most of the time, it is just accepted that "people resist change" and nothing is done about it. It is important to manage the technical and social aspects of change. The key

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issue is to understand the true nature of resistance and address personal concerns through assessments of diversity. Emotional intelligence helps understand blind spots and attitudes, and the workforce learns this over a period of time. They do not want any social change, which affects their relationships. Hence, it becomes essential to foster an environment of



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openness. Employees should be encouraged to express themselves so as to attribute a sense of equal value to all. The workforce should feel comfortable and valued and not

threatened or overloaded. It is a good idea to create an atmosphere of inclusion where every employee is involved in executing diversity initiatives. As our economy becomes increasingly global, our work force will become increasingly diverse. Success and competitiveness in organizations will depend on the ability to manage diversity effectively. **HC**



# E-Way or The Highway!

An effective e-HRM will not only help in managing your expanding business needs, but contributes directly to the growth of an entity by de-risking an organization from the negative impact arising due to the exit of key employees, high employee turnover and the impact of regulatory non compliances.

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- BY GAURAV JAIN

**H**uman Resource Management is an integral part of every corporate entity; irrespective of their size, and, is also dependant on the type of business activity, location etc. It is gaining prominence owing to globalization and the rise of new and innovative business enterprises, dynamic social, business and regulatory environment, increased competition, high retention

rate, innovation in HR practices and a lot more. Today, India is ranked third globally when it comes to the number of start-up enterprises. The start-up enterprises focus on scaling up the operations within a few months, and the businesses are valued at millions of dollars based on few months/days of operations. Therefore, start-up enterprises are under tremendous pressure from

their investors to perform and deliver the desired results. They are therefore embroiled in a constant hunt for talent, and, somehow want to grab the best of talent. Though these companies offer highly competitive packages, the employee performance is below expectations. This is the reason for a high retention rate and a low employee satisfaction rate.

## High Attrition Rate

Some of the leading e-commerce businesses in India have witnessed the exit of CEOs, CXO's in less than a year, in spite of great packages and stock options in place. While e-commerce firms were in news owing to their growth in the past, they are in the news today since the top executives are exiting them viz. Flipkart, Snap deal, Ola. Some very common reasons for such an attrition are long working hours, high levels of stress, inter-departmental conflicts, complex compensation structures, no proper training or information about the job, KMPs' appointed by founder based on personal reference, centralized decision making, absence of an employee road map, and most importantly, an insecure future.

Such high levels of employee attritions result in a delay in the implementation of growth plans, breakdowns in the routine operations, low employee productivity, reduced investor confidence, difficulty in attracting the right talent, and

should actually be well versed in creating, reviewing and modifying the entity structure, perpetually analyzing the organizational need, articulating job description, attracting talent, talent acquisition as per the need of the organization, skill augmentation planning, initial and performance review, career mapping, compliances, counselling, improve the talent retention and confidentiality, and data security.

## e-HRM Solutions

As a process, the HR team needs to acquire, collate, and review a lot of employee data. Some of these data are measurable, but some critical functionalities are dependent on the behavioural aspects. For a HRM function to be effective, it must be able to have a holistic view of both the qualitative and the quantitative aspects. Therefore, technology being an inherent part of our daily lives, adoption becomes imperative as well. Nowadays, people have been simplifying some routine tasks and problems with the use of computers



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**“Start-up enterprises are under tremendous pressure from their investors to perform and deliver the desired results. They are therefore embroiled in a constant hunt for talent, and, somehow want to grab the best of talent. Though these companies offer highly competitive packages, the employee performance is below expectations. This is the reason for a high retention rate and a low employee satisfaction rate.”**

increased cost of acquisition and retention.

## Lack of Fundamental HRM Practices

Tech start-ups are no strangers to such issues since in spite of their rapid growth they fail to build strong fundamental Human Resource Management practices. That HRM is involved only in acquiring talent, issuing appointment letters, filing few statutory returns and mundane interactions is a mere myth, and, is in fact, a function of fundamental importance. In my opinion, HR

and the Internet. It has sped up some processes and increased the efficiency of performed assignments. In contemporary business, information technology (IT) tools are fundamental to realize processes in faster and more efficient ways. Larger human resource departments must be able to use detailed, advanced data gathering and statistical analysis techniques to gauge the success of their initiatives. These results can then be used to adjust HRM programmes or even make organizational changes.

e-HRM solutions not only help in

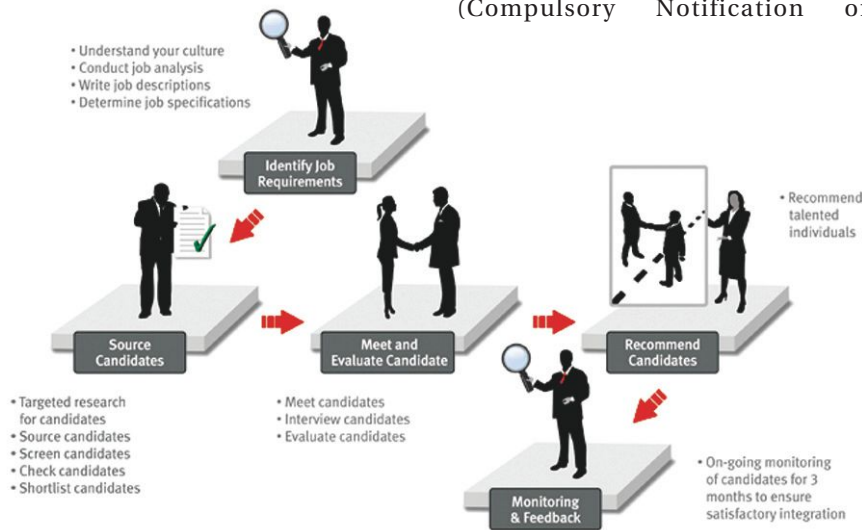
enabling the HR department to perform their tasks more efficiently and effectively, but also add value in the following manner:

- They help in forecasting the need of Human Capital using predictive analytics, improve accuracy and transparency in the decisions, and standardization of processes.
- They keep them updated with innovative HR practices and functions, dynamic reports, enable web-based tests and interviews.
- They enable faster response to HR related queries and decisions, security of data and privacy.
- They render the HR function to be more strategic and business focused.
- They provide support to future planning and for policy formulations.
- They create the ability to produce comprehensive and consistent management information, significant reduction of administrative burden and facilitate e-learning thus breaking barriers of time and location.

**e-HRM enables HRM to perform with the growth**

e-HRM enables HRM to perform alongside the growth of the entity. It is a mechanism to bring various stakeholders i.e. management, employees and the HR division on a common platform. This is a manner of linking, managing and monitoring HRM for the employees across all the verticals and sites from a central location. Employees can also retrieve information relating to the terms of employment, various certificates, salary slips, ESOP status etc. at any instant.

Further, there are e-HR Compliance tools like Lexcomply, which enable HR departments to identify, allocate, manage and report statutory compliances. In HR functions, statutory compliances are of immense importance. In India, it is not only the Central Government, but also the state governments that have enacted various Acts/Laws towards the welfare of workmen and governing their terms of employment.



**Some of these labour laws are:**

1. The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 and the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Rules, 1988.
2. The Employees Provident Fund & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 and Employees' Provident Funds Scheme, 1952
3. The Employee's Provident Funds

- and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 and The Employee's Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme, 1976
4. The Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act,

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- 1952 and the Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995.
5. The Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948 And The Employees' State Insurance (Central) Rules, 1950 And The Employees' State Insurance (General) Regulations, 1950
6. The Payment of Bonus Act, 1965 and Payment of Bonus Rules, 1975
7. The Apprentices Act, 1961 & Apprenticeship Rules, 1992
8. The Employment Exchanges (Compulsory Notification of

11. Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972 and Haryana Payment of Gratuity Rules, 1972
12. Payment of Wages Act, 1936, Payment of wages (Haryana

- Amendment) Act, 1985 and The Punjab Payment of Wages) Rules, 1937
13. The Minimum Wages Act 1948 and & The Punjab Minimum Wages Rules 1950
14. Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 and Haryana Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Rules, 1975
15. The Factories Act & Haryana Factory Rules

These laws are dynamic and are subject to constant change. Non-compliance may result in monetary penalty; closure of business operations or even imprisonment. So compliance tools like LexComply generate the due date, event based and ongoing compliances by themselves, and, thus reduce the chances of non-compliance.

**Bring technology to the fore**

Since most of the start-up products and services are technology driven, it should be natural for them to bring in the technology in HR function also. e-HRM is an advance business solution, which provides a complete on-line support in the management of all processes, activities, data and information required to manage human resources in a modern entity. An effective e-HRM will not only help in managing your expanding business needs but contributes directly to the growth of an entity by de-risking an organization from negative impact arising out of exit of key employees, high employee turnover and impact of regulatory non compliances. **HC**

# Good Health, Greater Productivity

The Willis Towers Watson 2015/16 Global Staying@Work survey indicates that employers in the Asia-Pacific region are committed to employee wellbeing, but, lack of strategy is undermining their wellness programmes, thus making them fragmented, and, creating a disconnect with the employees.

- BY R. ANANDAKRISHNAN

**E**mployee wellness programmes have become the staple in many corporations as a way to attract top talent, keep them happy and productive, and limit attrition. It is a well acknowledged norm that companies that run robust health and wellness programmes enjoy far greater loyalties, and, their employees feel engaged and cared for. In today's day and age, an employee

spends most of his/her productive and awake hours at the workplace, and, it makes utmost business sense for any organization to invest in wellness initiatives of their most important resource - the people. Various studies at the global as well as the APAC region support the fact that healthy and engaged employees perform better and linger around for a longer time-span. Not only does it

affect the output of team members, it also makes them feel good in all areas of life including work.

However, health and wellness requirements may vary from one sector to another. For example, requirements in the manufacturing sector are fairly different from what is needed in a typical corporate office environment. It may be tempting to introduce novel and unique wellness





**R. Anandakrishnan** is the Senior Vice President Human Resources, TVS Motor Company.

initiatives in these environments, but, organizations that are most successful are those which concentrate on consistent effort and engagement rather than introducing newer initiatives at short intervals.

### The lack of a fitting strategy

The Willis Towers Watson 2015/16 Global Staying@Work survey indicates that employers in the Asia-Pacific region are committed to employee wellbeing, but, lack of strategy is undermining their wellness programmes, thus making them fragmented, and, creating a disconnect with the employees. One cannot automate or outsource better health, but an organization can inspire and shape it. Employers can empower people with the right tools to inculcate the intent of being healthy and productive. Sharing information related to health, helping them understand its importance and positive impact, and, giving them the guidance and incentives to manage their health can be a good starting point. This will help in creating sustainable engagement in wellness. And, sustainable engagement can lead to more than just healthcare cost savings as it can change lives.

A workplace health programme is a health promotion activity or organization wide policy designed to support healthy behaviours and

improve health outcomes while at work. At TVS Motor Company, we strive to ensure good health for all our employees and accomplish this by way of running various wellness programmes. These programmes include health assessment, periodical and annual health checkups for all employees, weight management, lifestyle coaching, wellness consultation and workshops.

With the help of Health Cards and in-house doctors, the health of all the employees is tracked and managed on a regular basis. This includes quantitative parameters like blood pressure, weight, diabetes, hypertension and hyperlipidemia, cholesterol, etc. and qualitative parameters like healthy diet, exercise, stress management, etc.

### Occupational Health Centres for all round health of the employees

A fully-functional Occupational Health Centre (OHC) at all the manufacturing facilities help the employees to keep track of their health record. The OHC must offer the very best of health and wellness services. Even the family members of the employees must be provided access to the facilities at OHC with prior appointment with scheduled weekly doctor visits at the other offices as well. The OHC in association with the local hospitals should also run preventive health

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checkup camps for non-communicable diseases viz. eye camps for all employees. This should be further extended to the contract workers and truck drivers carrying cargo in and out of the factories. The role played by life partners in the success of the employees must be recognized, and, lifestyle management workshops must be held for the

employees' spouses. In the event of any accidents or emergency, assistance must be provided to the employees along with outpatient consultation and treatment whenever needed. As a testimony to all the efforts, the Indian Association of Occupational Health (IAOH) has recognized the OHC run by TVS Motor Company as the Best Occupational Health Services in 2009-2010.

Apart from this, classes in yoga and meditation for the interested employees must also be conducted. Recently, the TVS Motor Company in association with the Art of Living Foundation conducted a meditation session for the employees. In addition, Walkathons are organized regularly around the factory premises wherein employees from all grades participate. Women employees of the company are also provided with a crèche for children aged between 6 months to 4 years.

Successful organisational programmes are those that flow from the top to the bottom, and, are strongly supported, embraced and enforced by the leadership team. In a manufacturing environment, there is often a strong leadership structure available and organizations can use this to their advantage. For instance, many organizations will already have a health and safety committee. Incorporating wellness programmes into

this existing framework is a great way to communicate with the employees, and establish consistent messaging. When the wellness messages are integrated, it signals strong organizational support for these initiatives.

### The pertinence of mental well being

It is always believed that mental well-

being is as important as physical well-being, and, it is important for people across levels to keep learning on the job to be motivated and excited about their work. In line with this thought, regular classes on up-skilling for the employees are highly essential. Empowering employees with better skills will create a win-win situation for the employee and the company by enhancing value addition across levels.

A crucial aspect of mental wellbeing apart from honing one's skills comes through the comfort of being around like-minded people and working in an amicable environment. Many a times, diversity of the workforce is sacrificed in creating a homogeneous mix of human resource, and, this is where the differentiation of a mature and evolved organization is put to test. A seasoned organization will always strive to maintain diversity at the workplace and create equal opportunities for all individuals. At TVS Motor Company, we believe an organization's success depends on its ability to embrace diversity. When people from diverse backgrounds meet, they naturally create an environment that encourages innovation. Diversity encourages seeding and exchange of multiple ideas. Currently we are working on expanding our women workforce to 25%. We are also targeting a higher women ratio during campus recruitments to maintain a healthy gender ratio.

### Key health and wellness offerings by TVS

Pre-employment medical checkup
Outpatient consultation and treatment
Attending to accidents and emergencies
Special clinics for diabetes mellitus, hypertension and hyperlipidemia every month
Periodical medical checkups
Annual health checkups for all employees
Ophthalmological examination for truck drivers



**“While physical health and mental wellbeing are crucial for the overall employee wellness, another important factor which ensures high levels of motivation and willingness to contribute is happiness. A motivated workforce means a highly productive staff, and will help you achieve your business goals.”**

While physical health and mental wellbeing are crucial for the overall employee wellness, another important factor which ensures high levels of motivation and willingness to contribute is happiness. A motivated workforce means a highly productive staff, and will help you achieve your business goals. Thus we have taken another proactive step to motivate our employees to maintain good health, for which we have appointed health champions from our existing working staff. According to a study by Bersin Group, 41% of the companies that encourage colleagues to support one another experienced a significant increase in customer satisfaction. Being a customer centric company, TVS understands that internal motivation goes a long way, and, hence the initiative aims to drive motivation to its employees with the help of the health ambassador. Our health champions hold regular sessions,

develop on-going links and relationships with the community, inspire and encourage employees to uphold good health so that they can reach their full potential and initiate campaigns for the same, largely creating an approachable image for themselves.

Very often, organizations conceptualise and implement initiatives that speak of attributes such as stability, productivity etc., but softer nuances such as ensuring whether the employees are happy doing what they are doing are missed. Numerous studies, including those from Forbes and the Harvard Business Review have concluded that happy employees are around a third more creative and productive than unhappy employees. While measures such as financial compensation, growth and learning do count, humane aspects like feeling valued, appreciated and rewarded for one's efforts are significantly important as well. **HC**

# The Right Words at The Wrong Time!

It is evident that deeds not words define effective communication in a workplace. It is equally pertinent that the culture of communication in an organization must effervesce at the very top and percolate to the bottom. However, with the top management focused on achieving the desired business goals, the principles of communication are somehow lost in translation.

- BY **DR.POORNIMA GUPTA**

**A**jit Nanda was on the way to his office when he received a call from one of his customers. Hey Ajit, Good Morning! Good Morning, Mr. Shah! How are you? Not too well, Ajit. The shipment you promised last night is yet to arrive. You know how important those parts are. All our work has been stalled because of this. It is delayed by 2 weeks as it were.

Yes, Mr. Shah, because of the new specifications, it took a little more time than anticipated. But, I am sure the shipment is on its way. All the boxes

had been packed yesterday itself. Let me get to the office and I will get back to you with the status. It may be stuck up on the way, as I am sure it has left the factory. I will be reaching in just a few minutes.

Ok Ajit. But please ensure delivery. You know how competition is. If you are unable to provide us with timely deliveries, we may need to look elsewhere.

Oh! I am sure it will not come to that Mr. Shah. We have had a long history without any problems. Just give me some time to check.

Ajit Nanda is the Marketing Manager of Autotron India, a market leader in auto components. Established in 1995, it is an ISO 14001 certified company. In a matter of a couple of decades, the company has managed to make a name for itself in the industry owing to their experienced manpower and state of the art technology providing optimized components in a short time span and at very competitive prices. Their very philosophy is "operational excellence provides customer value". Their customers include some of the major OEM's (original equipment manufacturers) in India and abroad. Extensive manufacturing facility and distribution network makes the product available to the customers in time. Ajit had joined this organization a year ago, and, was still struggling to work with a more informal system of reporting in a family style culture as compared to the rule driven multinational where he had worked previously for 5 years.

Mr. Shah was an important customer accounting to nearly 20 % of their sales. Ajit was a little tense as he entered his office.

He immediately put a call through to Mr. Irfan Sayed, their Dispatch Manager to come and see him.

Mr. Sayed, come in. Hope I did not pull you from anything urgent?

Not at all Mr. Nanda. How may I help?

Mr. Sayed, what about the shipment which was supposed to leave yesterday? I saw all the production was complete. Where is the delay? Mr. Shah just called me and he was very angry.

Well, the shipment could not go





because the QC rejected it.

Rejected it? But why?

I don't know. Ask the production.

Ok. Let me go to the shop floor and see.

Ajit went to the shop floor to meet the production manager Mr. Sharma. There was a kind of chaos reigning there with the workers running back and forth.

Mr. Sharma, what is going on? Why hasn't the shipment for MSL left until now?

Oh Mr. Nanda, the quality team rejected all the parts.

All of them?

Yes. They sampled a few earlier but all were rejected so they are doing a 100% check now.

What is the reason for rejection?

They do not meet the required specification.

Let me see the report.

After a few minutes of perusing the report, Ajit exclaimed, "But we changed the specifications. Did no one bother to tell the QC team about it?"

Mr. Sharma replied, "We are not responsible to send the specifications to the QC team. That's someone else's job."

"Someone else's? Whose?" Ajit shouted.

Well, maybe marketing?

No, it sure is not marketing's job. Our job is to get the specifications modified as per the buyer and send it to the production. We have never sent the specifications to the QC team.

"Maybe the design department then?" Mr. Sharma said.

"No, it is the job of production." Ajit said, "They are supposed to send the specification sheet to the QC."

No wonder all the parts are rejected. The QC team is following the old specifications. And, because of this, the shipment has been delayed. We may lose a very important buyer because of this. Have you considered that Mr. Sharma?

I am just doing my job here. It is not my fault the QC never bothered to check the right specifications.

We are not getting into the argument of whose fault this is. We need to get this shipment out latest by tonight, else it will be of no use to Mr. Shah. Please get the new specifications to the QC team and get the parts tested

again.

Ajit then walked out of the shop floor back to his office.

He was very worried about what was happening. Last month one shipment had been rejected by the buyer. Apparently, the buyer had told the agent certain specific requirements for packaging the product, which was different from the normal packaging. The agent did not inform them correctly and the buyer rejected the entire shipment. Luckily, it was not a high value shipment and the agent was able to find another buyer to whom they had to sell the parts at cost price, but the reputation of the company suffered. They were still unable to convince that customer to look at our parts.

He wished he had some time to be able to solve these issues but there was a quarterly meet to be held the next day. The CEO would be asking about the status, and these problems were sure to come up in the meeting.

Next day, the meeting held with all the General Managers from marketing, production, quality, finance, administration, dispatch and purchase.

Mr. Srikanth expressed his concern over the rejections and urged everyone to come up with viable solutions to minimize such errors in the future. He said that with the expansion happening in Thailand, they need to tighten up operations in this plant.

He then announced that he would be relocating his family to Thailand, as he would be spending a large amount of time overseeing the new plant. Therefore, he would divide his time between India plant and Thailand, keeping Thailand as the base.

This came as a surprise to all. They were wondering what the priorities would be. Will this plant get the same attention if the CEO is not there most of the time?

The meeting adjourned with subdued reactions and everyone eagerly waited to leave the room so they can dissect the implications of this move privately amongst themselves.

The CEO also addressed the production and marketing teams separately to give this announcement.

Later that day, in the canteen, accountant Shubhra and facilities manager Ramesh were found



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discussing.

Shubhra: Hey Ramesh, did you happen to hear? Mr. Srikanth is moving to Thailand.

Ramesh: Thailand? When did this happen?

Shubhra: Well apparently, we do not figure on any important part of the organization. Mr. Srikanth addressed all the departments except ours. He even went to the shop floor.

Ramesh: Oh! What will happen now? Who will be responsible for all decisions?

Shubhra: I do not know. I only overheard the marketing people talking about it. I think we may need to rethink our future. I am here only because of Mr. Srikanth. If he was not here, I do not know what will happen to the organization. Everyone else is so hoity-toity, and more so the Marketing Manager. He thinks he knows everything and we are just minions to follow through. He can make mistakes and always get away with it. Remember the shipment that was rejected last month? He even got a raise after that. God help us if he is made as the in-charge.

Ramesh: Oh! Don't be so pessimistic. Mr. Srikanth is no fool. If he is going, he will surely put someone capable in charge.

Shubhra: I sure hope so.

HC

In this case, as is evident from the conversation between Shubhra and Ramesh, insufficient communication amongst the various departments is largely apparent, thereby leading to a lack of trust among the members of the team, among each other and the management. The actions of the managers and their attitude of passing the buck and playing the blame game highlight accountability issues and perhaps a lack of clarity about the job responsibilities of the managers, leading to frequent delays and mismanagement of orders.

The meeting held by the company's CEO makes it clear that the lack of communication begins at the top. Mr.Srikanth, has taken some very significant decisions about investing in another company abroad, and, his moving out of the day-to-day running of the organization. It appears that there has been no prior discussion or consultation with the staff about such a major change, which reflects a lack of trust in the top management. There is also no clarity about the succession plan leading to a sense of insecurity amongst the staff, who, are unsure of what the future has in store for them, and who would be their new boss, and, whether their company would get the same priority as the new company abroad.

Further, there seems to be no clarity on the role of the managers, and though the CEO seems concerned, he is not really hands-on about looking for a solution to a recurrent



**Jyoti Arora** is the HR Head of Sky Candle.

problem of rejection of shipments.

### The role of the HR Department

The first point of action would be to call a meeting of the key personnel involved in the current issue of the delayed and rejected shipments. It would of course be inappropriate and counterproductive to ask the managers to explain the reasons for the chaos, and, to discuss the job descriptions and the lack of accountability. It is



important to address the issue of accountability without ascertaining blame, and to make the managers aware that their attitude of 'it is not my job to inform the other departments of the change in specifications' is detrimental to the running of the organization. The HR Department needs to assert the core values of the company and motivate the team to work together without conflict.

It might be more useful for the HR Manager to call a meeting and address the other departmental heads by explaining the situation in this manner. "Yesterday, we had to deliver a shipment of components to Mr. Shah, one of our largest clients. The parts were ready for delivery but at the last minute were rejected by the Quality Check Department leading to a delay in shipment. The client had requested some changes which had been conveyed to the Marketing Department, who had in turn informed the Production Department of the change. The Quality Check Department had not been informed of the change and they rejected the shipment, as it

did not meet the specifications that they had on record. In hindsight, it is obvious that the delay has occurred owing to a lack of internal coordination within our company.

I would also like to remind everyone that this is not the first time that this has happened and just last month a shipment was rejected by a buyer because the packaging of the product was not as per the requirements of the client. He had made a special request

to the agent but we had not been informed of the client's need, due to which the entire shipment was rejected. We were fortunate that the shipment was not of high value and the agent was able to find us another buyer. We did not lose money, but it definitely impacted the reputation of the company in the market.

From both these incidents, it is clear that there is a need for greater coordination between the departments and we must take corrective action within the organization to ensure that such incidents do not occur again and that all the departments take accountability for their work. At the same time, we need to take steps and put some systems in place so that there is greater communication amongst the departments and we are all aware of the latest developments and changes taking place within our organization.

I would really appreciate cooperation from all the department heads towards creating a more cohesive atmosphere in the company and would welcome any suggestions to improve the internal communication systems."

HC

An ideal employee is one who takes responsibility, shows initiative and really owns the projects, processes and issues. When people in organizations focus only on their positions, they have little sense of responsibility for the results produced when all positions interact. In this case study, no one seemed interested in taking accountability or even seeing the larger picture. There was a very narrow focus on getting their immediate part of the job done without stepping back to see if their actions facilitated meeting the company objectives of 'Customer Value through Operational excellence'. This case is also typical of employees working in silos without seeing how their work is interconnected.

Mr. Sayed - the despatch manager, not only demonstrated sheer lack of knowledge as to why Quality Control (QC) had rejected the batch, but was also quick to blame production. Mr. Sharma on the other hand was nonchalant about QC rejecting the batch. No one had informed the QC team that the specifications had been changed. This is a clear indication of a lack of defined job roles and process flow. In Autotron, when cross-functional team members did not communicate well with each other, and roles and responsibilities were not clear, some tasks tended to overlap, while others may have been overlooked completely, leading to confusion and conflict between team members. This resulted in a failure to achieve objectives. In a structured set up, roles and responsibilities would have been clearly defined and established, and communication channels known to all.

'The Enemy is Out There' is usually a by-product of 'I am my position' and the non-systematic ways of looking at the world that it fosters. When we focus only on our position, we fail to see how our actions, or, the lack of it extends beyond the boundary of that position.

Vision Statements, many a times, remain only on a document and as is evident, Autotron's capacity to hold a shared picture of the future they sought to create of 'Achieving customer Focus through Operational excellence' clearly did not get translated into a shared vision that galvanised the organization. As a result, the focus of all the stakeholders remained narrow and limited. It is important to communicate

the vision and mission in a compelling way that sets out the purpose of the organization clearly to create the context for the people who connect it. The shared vision and values, including the choice of words, the message and the tone together create the blocks on which the organization is built. Failure to communicate this in an effective way undermines the entire strategic effort as is evident from this case study.

When the work environment is designed for accountability, it will flourish. Some areas which Autotron can focus on are:

1. Clear roles, team leadership and individual ownership- People struggle to be accountable when their roles and processes are ambiguous. Removing as much confusion as possible about who is doing what, and, how they will proceed is an important step. If a team is truly accountable, members will identify gaps, learn new roles and processes, and, ultimately build a more capable team.
2. A sense of ownership for team results- A strong focus on team processes is critical in driving accountability. Each member should have the obligation to seek information, give and receive feedback, and point out the need for corrective action at any time.
3. Freedom, support and control to navigate competing priorities- Most problems have multiple solutions, so it is important to give people the freedom and the control they need to make decisions. Support is the key - we need to ensure that people have the resources, knowledge and assistance they need. With such an approach, team members increase their skills, confidence and ownership.

It appears that Mr. Srikanth's communication to the team about the new factory in Thailand, the implications of his spending more time there, and its impact on the current manufacturing set-up was not very clear. Owing to this miscommunication, employees were spreading rumours and were gossiping amongst themselves. It is very critical to communicate any change to the employees in a transparent and clear manner. This not only results in better employee buy-in, but also quells speculations and rumours. Communication must always be a strategic agenda topic, a central part of



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the culture of the organization.

An organization's ability is equally important to identify sensible employees like Ramesh and use them as change agents. Ramesh and others like him can be used to discreetly speak to employees, who can be disruptive in their outlook due to lack of knowledge towards the new developments in the organization.

As individuals, people have a tendency to make their behaviour adapt to the prevailing culture. If that culture fosters communication and encourages a standard of excellence, while embracing failures as learning opportunities, the potential for a communication culture is high. The opposite is also true. One must address the causes of communications systematically in the organization to reduce the risk of failures.

In an open communication environment, people can have the kind of difficult conversation that they might otherwise avoid, or handle poorly, and achieve the most effective outcomes. Knowing that it is okay to fail because there is a learning culture - one in which people can acknowledge what they do not know - provides the necessary platform for mastering the skills needed to push the frontiers and excel. **HC**

## Managing Team-Efficient Handling, Building Relationships

It is all about managing relationships at the workplace within the same functions as well as the cross functions. Differences in opinion, expectations, values and personalities can all contribute to a healthy or a conflicting situation. Conflicts escalate where individual performances become larger than broader organizational goals, and, the people involved forget the essence of the common objectives and team results. It is imperative for the employees, especially at the senior or decision-making levels be proactive and resolute to identify the real issues and bottlenecks. It otherwise results in poor work quality, communication issues and business losses.

### Communication - a critical managerial parameter

If we take the case of "Ajit"; as a person new to the organization, it is important for him to understand the structural processes and the responsibility matrix.



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It is essential for the new members, especially those joining at the management level to understand different personalities, strengths and views to be successful individuals and leaders. In case of failure, they stand isolated with no followers and credibility in the system. Srikanth, the CEO, has been in the system and hailed as a credible leader; however, his sudden relocation to Thailand was abrupt. He mostly addressed all the functions apart from Finance and HR from the announcement, which left employees speculating about their future, and their growth in the system. Furthermore, impacting the decision-making going slow, keeping important functions out of the communication as defining Processes, Delegation of Authority, Commercial Approvals, Budgeting and Planning is hindered.

### The Different Approaches and No Ownership of Work

If different individuals involved from different functions, do not come together to resolve common issues, it becomes an organizational issue than an individual issue.

### What went wrong

- Absence of Project Manager - The strategic Project manager establishes leads, and, leverages a cohesive cross-functional team for the product. Here, it proved to be devastating and thus the probable loss of a client who accounted for 70% of the business.
- Leadership roles for Project Managers - The Project managers often mistake their team as the developing team. However, the right approach would have been the assembling of a cross functional team aligned to the same goal, governed by the same directives and achieving the desired result. It should be an efficient mix of representatives from across the company. It should have included one person from all departments or groups that have spent time ensuring the success of the product, which in this case was the dispatch.
- Communication - One of the most important areas that needed improvement within the team was communication. Weekly meetings to review the processes and progress of the project and order is one way to

avoid conflicts at the eleventh hour, and to resolve issues during regular updates. A handbook or an SOP is very important for smooth operations. It helps in streamlining the workflow and makes the task easy for everyone involved in the cross team function at large. Achieving synergy, collaboration can bring the speed and agility required to keep up with the rate of



demand of competitive market and customers. Nobody can work in isolation, or is lucky enough to work with like-minded people at all times. People have to work and adopt different styles to bring in the best to achieve units/functional results and up their end game.

Having outlined the pros of cross functional teams, it should however be noted that they often fail because the organization lacks a systemic approach, teams being headed by unclear governance, by sheer lack of accountability, by goals that lacks clarity, and by organizational failure to prioritize the success of cross functional projects.

### Suggestions

- Accountable leader for every project
- Overseeing each end-to-end function as an accountable leader
- Ensuring regular meetings, decision making and escalation matrix
- Project should have clearly defined resources, goals, objectives and deadlines
- Team should have the success of the project defined as their main KPI
- Influencing internal communication

HC

# The Paths of Onboarding

Integrating an array of the operational activities related to onboarding towards a unified common objective results in a journey to delivery excellence, led by loyal employee attitude and customer service aptitude.

- BY ANTHONY JOSEPH

In an era of progressive development, new industries and practices emerge every day altering the very structure of businesses. Today, business enterprises operate in a scenario where there is extreme personalization and merchandising of all products and services. It is therefore significant for them to establish an effortless and an exceptional customer experience and this journey actually commences at home.

Smart organizations including HGS believe that incorporating employee involvement across various processes of the company help in laying a strong foundation to a successful customer experience. These are companies that focus an equal or a greater amount of time, energy and resources on employee experience as the customer journey. They understand that happy, intelligent and well-qualified employees are the very foundation for building loyal customer relationships.

The development of a pre-designed employee experience blueprint strategy therefore becomes imperative to attract the right representatives and empower them to deliver the right customer experience. For instance, the HGS CX Blueprint delivers increased retention rates, higher customer satisfaction, decreased employee turnover and higher overall return on our clients' BPO investments.

HGS' Onboarding Programme is designed to recognize and intentionally build the employee relationship at key "moments of truth." From the time team members walk in for their first interview, and, move along the hiring and training process, it has been identified that there is a trigger of anxiety and job dissatisfaction, and it

is essential to create and nurture a positive emotional connection and an empowering experience.

The onboarding programme should commence from the very first day, being welcomed to their interview warmly, by name, as a potential new member of the HGS family. As successful candidates, our newest HGS team members are brought through a four-stage onboarding process and are supported, encouraged and respected along the way. They are also prepared for the complexities and the challenges of customer care. Following our onboarding processes, our staff and management create what we have observed to be both loyal and able employees, who express pride while representing our client's brands.

## 1. Day 1 or Week 1- The foundation stage

This stage runs for a week and focuses on inducting a stronger employer welcome and reducing new employee anxiety. We create an adult learning environment for the new employees that explains and manages the multi-faceted expectations in the BPM services industry.

## 2. Day 0 to 30- Supportive learning environment stage

The second stage targets to achieve increased socialization between the employee and the organization. This is the stage where intensive team meetings are held, and there is a constant effort to create and increase employee confidence.

## 3. Day 31 to 60- On-the-job training

The core activities during this stage include demonstration of employee value, shifting the departmental handoff to the concerned employees, and creation of a smooth transition



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environment.

## 4. Day 61 to 90 - Production integration

In the product integration phase, the programme seeks to establish and renew appropriate expectation settings and devise an appropriate employee fit.

## Journey to excellence

HGS built this four-stage framework to ensure that our newest employees' perceptions and opinions are positive and to bolster the success of our referrals and recruitment. What we found when we implemented this was that the impact of our onboarding programme went so much deeper. The onboarding blueprint increased initial 90-day retention, encouraging and empowering employees to stay for a longer period. And, as a function of our empowered employees with longer tenure, we are able to affect both customer retention and customer satisfaction in a positive manner.

Thus, integrating an array of the operational activities related to onboarding towards a unified common objective results in a journey to delivery excellence, led by loyal employee attitude and customer service aptitude.

HC

In the recent years, we have witnessed several instances of ruinous leadership in the world of governance and politics as well as in the corporate ethos. Destructive or toxic leaders have wreaked multibillion corporations and torn nations apart. In an emerging economy like India, we have stood witness to similar failures in well-known instances such as the Commonwealth Games, Adarsh Housing Society, Satyam Computers and several others. Research as well as anecdotal evidence suggests that one in every five leaders is toxic.

Literature dedicated to leadership frequently mention toxic leaders, and, have led to the creation of multiple opinions and viewpoints about what a toxic leader is. The term "toxic leaders" has been popularized by Marcia Lynn Whicker (1996) and, Professor Jean Lipman Blumen of Claremont University, California. While Dr. Whicker describes toxic leaders as "maladjusted, malcontent, malicious and often malevolent. They succeed in tearing others down. They glorify in turf protecting, fighting and controlling rather than uplifting followers", Dr. Jean Lipman in her book, "Allure of Toxic Leaders", elaborates that "corruption, sabotage, hypocrisy and manipulation

# Decoding Toxic Leadership

Toxic leadership is dangerous to the individuals, and, it also impacts the sustainability of the organization. Individuals having disruptive leadership style or toxic traits should be identified and should be prevented from growing or operating in an organization.

- BY MANAVI PATHAK

an "ongoing, deliberate and intentional action by a leader to undermine the sense of dignity, self-worth and efficacy of an individual. The results are demeaning and devaluing work experiences". Ashforth (1994) argues that leaders who are frequently engaged in a range of behaviour including self - aggrandizement, belittling of followers, lack of consideration of others, a forcing style of conflict resolution, punishment for

mission and integrity. In contrast to toxic leadership, authentic leadership nurtures and affirms the dignity, worth and efficacy of an individual. It creates enabling, empowering and meaningful work experiences. There is a pressing need for leaders to understand the nature and dynamics of toxic leadership.

## Toxic Leaders in Organizations

Toxic leaders are self-serving. Schilling (2009) found that these leaders also exhibited behaviours aimed at obtaining personal rather than organizational goals. They do not care about the organization or the people within, and, treat them as a vehicle to help them get where they want. They often use their positional power and their authority to intimidate coerce and deceive people who work for them. They usually have "informal power networks" as a means of finding out what is going on in the organization so that they can use it to their advantage. Such leaders are quite successful in the short-term, but over the long-term they fail their organizations because they do not develop strong leaders and high performing teams.

Toxic leaders demonstrate great appeal and have a tendency to attract followers. The leadership literature reports that most toxic leaders demonstrate disruptive behaviours characterized by dramatic, histrionic, emotionally demanding and narcissistic behaviours. Given that we usually



as well as other assorted unethical, illegal and criminal acts are a part of the poisonous repertoire of toxic leaders." All these point out to a single common axis of toxic leader-destructive leadership.

## The characteristics of a toxic leader

Toxic leadership has been defined as

no apparent reason, undermine organizational goals and well-being of followers. Experts have summarized Toxic Leadership as an "organizational cancer" that undermines long-term organizational performance through self-centred motivation and dysfunctional behaviour. Toxic leadership always has the danger of devastating the organization's culture,

recognize toxic leaders for what they are, why do we followers not only accept, but, often adulate and occasionally abet their toxicity. This can be explained by the internal forces that push followers to tolerate toxic leaders. These forces are both psychological-embedded in the psyches and existential-embedded in the followers human condition. Strong yearnings for leaders percolate up from our unconscious, where psychological needs send us in search of leaders who can comfort our fears. Our very fear that we are powerless to challenge bad leaders, also contribute to our reluctance to challenge them. The second set of internal needs, our existential needs stems from the painful awareness of our own mortality. The tension between the certainty of our death and the painful awareness of when and how it will occur, generates what philosophers have called "Existential Angst". This attracts us towards toxic leaders who reassure and provide meaning to the existence.

According to Jean Lipman (2005) who extensively studied the dysfunctional personality of leaders, the

Toxic leadership behaviours fall on a continuum ranging from insignificant gestures to physical abuse of others, and, from petty pilfering to fraud and distortion of facts against the organization. Leaders can demonstrate the dark side of leadership due to a range of factors, and, there is little evidence of a definitive causation. It is often easy to misinterpret and confuse a toxic leader with a loud, demanding and overzealous leader. A leader with a mellifluous voice and façade of sincerity can be toxic as well. In the end, it is not just one behaviour through which one can be deemed as toxic, what matters is the cumulative effect of the demotivation behaviour on the unit, the morale, and the climate. Organizations are making extensive efforts while trying to understand and control toxic leaderships. The behaviour and performance of leaders needs to be monitored and assessed to ensure that they interact with team members which results in a healthy work environment.

In a research by Professor Babiak and Hare (2008) out of the 200



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in the early part of a leader's career also decreases the possibility of building strong toxic behaviours. If organizations do not have any such mechanisms or processes in place, they should take the help of professional counsellors, organizational psychologists for helping the victims and re-educating the deviant leaders. The penultimate option available for an organization is to offer a safe exit for leaders who engage in toxic behaviours.

Toxic leadership is dangerous to the individuals, and, it also impacts the sustainability of the organization. Individuals having disruptive leadership style or toxic traits should be identified and should be prevented from growing or operating in an organization. We need responsible and ethical corporate guardians to drive out toxic leaders from the workplaces they inhabit. Leadership toxicity is an inevitable disease of organizational life, the sooner it is recognized in the development of leaders, the better it is for the organization. **HC**

**Types of Toxic Leaders (Source: Allure of Toxic Leaders ; Why we follow Destructive Bosses and Corrupt Politicians ( 2005)**

- **The Cold Fish:** the ends justifies the means. So any decision and actions are justifiable in terms of the results desired
- **The Snake:** the world serve me in the endeavour to satisfy my personal needs like greed, status and power
- **Glory Seeker:** personal glory and public visibility at any cost, regardless of whether I have made any real or meaningful contribution
- **Puppet Master :** absolute, centralized control over everything and anyone, under all circumstances
- **Monarch:** ruling the organization as if it is my kingdom. All of its assets are available for my personal use

following personality traits were central to determining toxicity in leaders:

- Lack of Integrity
- Insatiable ambition and lust for power
- Poor self -awareness that blinds the leader to the short-comings of his/ her own character
- Arrogance that prevents them to acknowledging their mistakes
- Tendency towards recklessness and complete disregards for the cost of their action to others
- A form of cowardice that leads them to shrink from difficult choices

executives from eight international companies, 3.5 % were found to have toxic leadership qualities. Hare and Babiak have developed "B-Scan", a non-clinical tool rooted in business language that can assess corporate managers, identify potentially destructive individuals and contribute to selection, management development and succession planning. Identification

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¥ Blake Ashforth is the Professor of WPC Management, Arizona State University.

# Prof. Jan Schilling is Faculty at the University of Applied Administrative Sciences, Hannover, Germany.

# Working and Balancing the Breaks

Work-life balance can be achieved by managing various aspects of life. From encouraging vacations to offering breaks within the workspace, employers must give the much required escape to their employees for greater efficiency and the creation of a positive atmosphere.

- BY URVI ARADHYA

*“Those who feel satisfied with their personal lives are more satisfied with their careers and perform better.”* - MICHAEL HYATT



**T**uggling workplace stress along with the pressures of personal life is a task every working individual undergoes, but, the key is always to strike the right balance between the two. If the answers to these questions- do you end up making excuses to people in your personal life owing to work? Do you end up feeling

tired too quickly?- is 'yes', then it is a strong indicator that you need to bring about some serious changes in your life. Working or being wired to your desk 24/7 is never a healthy work-life balance situation.

### **Achieving work-life balance**

The employer and the employee need

to work hand-in-glove to achieve work life balance. In both the scenarios, the balance can be achieved when both parties support each other to achieve the result of work-life balance.

### **As an Employee**

Plan a holiday: To break the monotony of a mundane routine, a vacation or a



break can play a refreshing role. Even though it may seem like the situation of 'money lost', people should consider taking a break to connect with their family and friends, rejuvenate and prioritize personal time. This in turn, increases productivity and creates a positive spirit whilst working tediously all through.

A deteriorating morale amongst the workforce is a warning sign that their motivation, willingness to give the best, and determination is at an all-time low. To pull them out of this situation, employers should encourage them to take regular breaks from their demanding job. A happy employee is more likely to push his/her limits to accomplish a given task. Therefore, it is the employer's responsibility to ensure that his staff increases productivity through improved efficiency rather than overburdening them.

An employee's primary concern is how and when to request a holiday, but, the right time is always hard to find. Some employees are holiday-shy and find it tough to approach the boss and request even for a day's permission. Then there are the others who are married to their job; workaholics who think taking even a day's break will topple things down at work. Passion for the job is imperative, but not allocating time to your personal life is a slip that one must avoid. Planning in advance is the key; since this not only gives you time to sort things out in a systematic manner, but, also gives the employer enough buffer time to ensure things go smoothly whilst you have a relaxing holiday.

### Planning a holiday in advance

**Notify your employer:** Give your employer enough notice to ensure that the running remains smooth in your absence. Apply for your holiday well in advance to avoid any hindrances in the functioning of work.

**Inform clients:** Clients deal with you on a daily basis, and they need to know you are not going to be around for a while. So ensure that you inform them well in advance by giving them notice by a couple of weeks. You may additionally put a note on the email



**Urvi Aradhya** is the Senior Vice President Human Resources, K Raheja Corp

footer serving as a reminder. Turn on your out of office message with an alternate point of contact for any queries during your absence.

**Holiday handover:** As you are proceeding on a long or a short leave, a holiday handover should be given to a colleague who will be the point of contact for all your clients. Prepare him/her in advance with a contingency plan to handle each client with ease.

### As an Employer: Provide Resources

An employer can contribute in an employee's work-life balance by providing necessary resources around their workspace, and assist them in maintaining their work and personal life. Activities, initiatives and time-offs are a few things a company can incorporate. Here a few resources an employer can look at:

**Flexible working hours:** Giving an employee flexi hours helps them devote time at home and at the same time ensure that their work stands unaffected. Completing 'x' amount of hours and getting your day's work done must be the key point here.

**Community engagement activities:**

Allowing employees to dedicate few hours in a month to offer community services will not only give them a break from their routine, but, also give them the satisfaction of doing something significant and valuable.

**Company offsite:** By organizing a getaway for all the employees, by taking them to a resort or a hill station in the vicinity. This can be a good break for the employees and an opportunity for them to bond outside work.

**Wellness workshops/ training or exercise access:** Health and fitness is an important aspect, and, every employee should maintain a fitness regime. Conducting zumba or yoga training, and organizing health and fitness workshops will encourage and motivate healthy living. Offering company discounts at select gym outlets or providing employees with Fitbits will promote the idea of staying fit, and, increasing productivity.

Work-life balance can be achieved by managing various aspects of life. From encouraging vacations to offering breaks within the workspace, employers must give the much required escape to their employees for greater efficiency and the creation of a positive atmosphere. **HC**

# The Eternal Learner

Shantanu Das, CHRO, Amway India, carries immense faith in the eternal belief that every experience in life; whether good or bad, is a part of one's learning curve and feels that this has been the prime reason for the success that he has managed to achieve thus far in his career.

- BY S. AJAY KUMAR

## RAPID FIRE

**Favourite Quote:** "And, when you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it - Paulo Coelho."

**Leadership Style:** Lead from the front and Walk the Talk

**Current Professional Goal:** To be the Global HR Head

**Favourite Books:** Freedom at Midnight (Larry Collins & Dominique Lapierre), White Mughals (William Dalrymple), Delhi (Khuswant Singh) City of Joy (Dominique Lapierre).

**Favourite Movies:** I am a movie buff! Benhur, Sholay & Parinda are my all-time favourites.

**Favourite Music Artists:** Pt. Ravi Shankar (Sitar); Ustad Zakir Hussain (Tabla); Ustad Rashid Khan (Vocal), Asha Bhosle (Vocal), Ghulam Ali (Ghazal) & Late Jagjit Singh (Ghazal).

**Life is...** Once, live king-size

Family is ... Priority and do the best you can for them

**I strongly believe in...** building and nurturing relationships and sustaining them for long years

**Family for me...** Number one priority

The most important thing I do on Sunday.... Go to my classical music classes.

**I deal with Setbacks by....**Patience, sincerity and staying positive

**3 Things I never leave home without.....** Phone, spectacles and wallet

**How do you look back at your professional journey? Please share some of the most enriching experiences that you have come across so far.**

If I look back, it has been a journey full of learnings, and, every experience has strengthened me as a person and helped me to do my job better. And, while life has not been only mere successes, there have been failures as well, and in hindsight, I would refer to them as learnings. Whenever I have been able to contribute meaningfully to the business, whether it is a restructuring exercise, acquiring the "right talent" to transform the business, be the catalyst to change the culture, embed new systems and processes which aids business results, all of these have really been fun as well as challenging.

One very recent experience that has proved to be truly enriching was in Amway, where HR supported and partnered in restructuring the Sales Organization, and made the structure for "Amway Next" - a structure for the future. The business understanding and appreciating the contribution of HR at all forums, is what makes it most satisfying.

**What were the highly challenging times in your career that provided you the most important lessons of life?**

There have been many challenging times, and, at that moment of crisis or failure, it has been daunting, and at times depressing. In retrospect, I can tell you that those moments have only strengthened me as a person, and, built my character and resilience.

**Some of the lessons learnt are-**

- Take time to trust a person and do not trust with ease
- When the chips are down, stay positive as far as possible. Once you begin thinking negatively, it starts spiralling and

only brings your morale further down.

- In times of crisis, the people who would surely stay with you are your own family members - your parents, spouse and children. Hence, do not discard your family at times when they need you!
- If there are upheavals on the personal front - prioritize and sort out the domestic issues, lest it start affecting your professional life as well. It does not get solved by default!
- Never ever underestimate any individual on face value! You will surely be proved wrong.

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

I do believe that the basic HR deliverables remain the same across all the industries. However, the experiences becomes different and interesting across industries, depending on the culture/values and the business phase in which the company is at that point of time. And, as mentioned earlier, with every experience you end up becoming stronger, both at the professional level and on the personal front. What is most interesting is that when you work across industries, the difference is apparent in the kind of people you come across, the skill sets and the profiles. And, when you interact with these diverse set of people, you experience expansion in your thinking and your horizon, thus making you a "richer" person. For instance, while I have worked across a section of FMCG companies thus far, and, now when I am in Amway, which is also an FMCG, but with a direct selling distribution network - it gives a whole new dimension and perspective to my experience, considering the way this business works as compared to other companies.

#### **According to you, how different are the two experiences- setting up HR from the scratch in an organization to managing well established HR frameworks?**

Honestly, I have never been in any company where I had to set up HR from the scratch, though I have been in companies wherein the processes



had to be rebuilt and strengthened. And, in such set ups, the focus has been more on getting the basics right, and, execution has been the key to success. In the case of established HR frameworks, one needs to be more strategic, and, ensure that the HR deliverables are constantly reviewed, and kept aligned with the business priorities. And, more specifically in an MNC like Amway, it must be ensured that the practices and processes are in sync and customized to the local needs and priorities.

**In spite of your hectic schedule, how would you like to spend time with your family. Has someone from your family inspired your values and growth as a human being?**

I abide by this golden mantra - whatever time you spend with your family, it has to be "quality" time - in other words that time should be dedicated to the family alone, and, not get divided into other priorities. And, higher the quality of time, higher is the compensation it does for the less time you spend.

There are many in my family who

have inspired me - especially the women who have worked "silently" and sacrificed their own aspirations for the sake of members like me to do well in our lives. For me, they are truly the unsung heroes. My spouse has been a friend and has stood strong in times of crisis, and, I need to imbibe the virtues of "patience" and "resilience" from her.

**"Best HR practices are built on a futuristic vision." What is your view on this and how have you practiced this during your stint with various**

**organizations?**

In today's complex world, the present is dependent on the future! Companies that anticipate the trends of the future and build the present organization on the basis of the future are the ones which survive in the long run. And, the same is applicable to the people domain. HR should have the ability to understand the future business needs and support in building the business accordingly. Both the hard and the soft matrices stand on equal footing when it comes to building the future organization. We need to be unrelenting in our minds, and, constantly challenge the status quo, which is "what is working today, will that work in the future as well?" If the answer is no, then we need to re-gear ourselves to make things happen and ensure that they work for the future. Often, I have noticed companies adopting HR practices merely for the sake of staying on par with the industry - in my view, this is not a well thought-out approach. The logical approach is to do what is relevant for your company, and, what will ensure that it stays relevant for

## In brief

NAME	: Shantanu Das
TITLE	: CHRO
AGE	: 45 years
ORGANIZATION	: Amway India
EXPERIENCE	: 20 years
YEARS IN HR	: 20 years
EDUCATION	: PG Diploma in PM&IR XLRI

## UP, CLOSE AND PERSONAL

**What inspired you to steer your career towards HR?**

Though at times, I did feel the move to Sales, however continued in HR because of the sheer dynamism that this function has. Meeting varied kinds of people with diverse thinking & different perspectives makes it truly an interesting function. Also being in HR, you are actually driving the "live wire" of the organization.

**Please share some of your experiences of your travels to different places. What were your gains from these experiences?**

I have travelled to 13 countries for business and had the privilege of interacting with a diverse set of people. This has only broadened my perspective to look at things differently. Also, one tends to learn from various cultures that one gets exposed to. I have built a network across many sections of people across all these countries and this makes it a truly enriching experience.

**Could you please share some of your memories from your years of growing up with us?**

I was brought up in a joint family, and have very sweet memories of my years growing up, especially with so many family members around all the time. My school days in

Jamshedpur have been an extremely pleasant experience - some of the teachers have left the impression of a lifetime on me, and, I am in touch with them even today. Innumerable acts of mischief intended to "pull peoples' legs" are what that sum up a large part of my fond memories!

**What was your learning experience from the B- School?**

Graduating from an ordinary college and then getting into a premier B-School was initially a little overwhelming. However, in the two years, the grind that we had to go through, made us start our career on a strong wicket! And, there was a lot of value addition as far as knowledge is concerned. I still refer to many of the handouts/notes from XLRI days while taking training sessions for the employees.

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

There has been not been a single person who has influenced me, since there are several! Parents, spouse, siblings, teachers, some of my superiors, some of my peers and colleagues have all contributed to whatever little I have attained today. I am also thankful to God for enabling me in my achievements thus far. I also believe luck and destiny matter to any individual and the same is applicable for me as well!

## BUZZER ROUND

- **A mysterious benefactor wrote you a check for Rs. 100,000 and said, "Help me solve a problem! What would you say?"**

Give it to the needy and contribute towards eradicating poverty - no amount is small when it comes to helping the poor!

- **What is the one thing that you are deeply proud of, but would never put on your resume?**

That I am a well to do classical musician!

- **What is the one dream that you have tucked away, for the moment?**

Authoring a book!

- **Is there something that people consistently seek your advice? What is it?**

Most of the advice that people seek are related to career and relationship.

- **When was the last time you astonished yourself?**

In one of my musical performances, I never imagined that I could enthrall the audience the way I did .....

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

Recognition

- **Are you living your life purpose- or still searching?**

I am definitely living my life purpose.

the future - do not just ape from the others without assessing the company's necessities and needs.

**Who have been your figures of inspiration during your professional journey? What do you think should be the values and ideologies that leaders must definitely walk the talk to win the confidence of the stakeholders?**

It would be unfair to name a few and miss out on the others. However, the one aspect of commonality in all these figures of inspiration has been the ability to nurture me with utmost passion and sincerity. They have guided me during times of crisis or need. And, they have stood tall as leaders and stood by me, when it was most needed. On the other hand,

there are many who have worked with me, and presently are either heading HR or doing very well in their careers and they attribute me as one of the reasons for their career growth. This makes me feel truly satisfied as a professional.

"I should practice what I preach". Any leader should possess this strength. I have this simple rule for myself - in any interaction that I have with anyone, I should do at least one value addition from my end to the other person/persons in some form. And, I have been consciously practicing this, and, it has truly worked for me in building my reputation as a leader.

Again, in my leadership style, I truly believe in empowerment and delegation. However, at some point, I also keep control of things through formal as well as informal mechanisms. I strongly believe that execution is the key to success and this reflects in my leadership style as well.

**How do you like to spend your life beyond work? What are your hobbies? How do you find time to**

**still enjoy them?**

The one career that I could not pursue, but had always aspired for - was to become a professional Indian classical musician! However, I have been an amateur musician for far too long! I have pursued music for several decades, and, over the years have learnt from many eminent musicians and continue to do so. I play classical guitar (Hawaiian guitar adapted to Indian classical music). In the time that I have "for myself" - most of it either goes to my practice or listening to music.

**Please share interesting incidents and anecdotes from your experience that have added interesting facets to your professional journey. What aspect in HR inspires you?**

What inspires me and makes me ticking is the very dynamism of the HR function. You deal with people of multiple shades and perspectives, and, there does not seem to be one answer to the same problem. HR, as a function has taken far too long as compared to the other functions to emerge as a business partner, however better late than never! And,

## LEARNING POINTS

- **Build a brand for yourself:** As you progress in your career, be known for your set of values, principles and style of leadership. And, a set of points which describe your personality should remain consistent and predictable. And, that is what becomes your identity and brand. People will eventually know and remember you for what your brand is. And, the same is applicable in your personal front as well. Build and live your brand!
- **Make things happen and not merely manage your role:** While this may sound a cliché, however in reality this is what can be a significant point to drive success. It is just not important how you execute your existing role. What is even more important is your ability to look at the big picture and galvanize teams to deliver business success and that may require you to go beyond your current role - so be it!
- **Go into Details:** While it is imperative to focus on the width, however in my view what is important and critical is to go into depth as well. Superficial value addition can only take one till a point and no far! Thinking in depth and going in the details is what enhances one's credibility.
- **Be Factual:** the god and the devil lies in the data! The more factual we are, the better we are as professionals. Cut the emotional biases and rely heavily on facts/figures for any decision that you need to take.
- **Do not stop learning:** "I know it all" is an attitude for disaster! Keep the window open for yourself to learn irrespective of the years of experience that you may have. The more open we are as a person, better is the learning and better is the self -development. On a different note, I must admit that there is a lot to learn from Gen Y!

# HR PERSPECTIVES

## Some gaps that HR Organizations need to bridge in India

- HR Organizations should support the business. I am a big believer of decentralization, and, I would tend to lean towards adequate HR staffing where most of your people are based out of!
- I would urge HR folks to understand and talk business just like any other business manager. And for this, I encourage my team to interact with the functions and get more intrusive into the business - the more we do this, sharper will be our people interventions. For instance, in Amway, we have kept our agendas linked and glued to the success of Amway Business Owners (ABOs), which constitutes a key fulcrum to the business.
- People processes and systems often do not have clear measurements of effectiveness and impact it is expected to bring. Do not do any practice for the sake of practice! One of the worst hit in this is the L&D domain.
- Networking has often been a gap and I would strongly recommend especially young HR professionals to

deliberately work on this aspect - do not merely stay within the overall precincts of your own team and the company in which you are working. Professional socializing is very vital in today's world for success.

## Common errors companies commit while designing engagement practices

- "One size fits all" is one of the most common pitfalls that we should certainly avoid. You cannot have an average shoe size - it ends up fitting no one! Engagement practices should be contextual and relevant to an individual's need and requirement. We roll out a series of engagements that are often feel good or a fad, and, not really making any actual impact.
- The more we involve people from other functions and seek their inputs/feedback the more robust is the engagement plan. And, we often do these engagement surveys with a lot of fan-fare but then lose the tenacity to drive and implement the action plans arising out of the survey results.

with such a dynamic function and being a part of the journey to make an impact to grow and build the business is what keeps me ticking.

There have been quite a few incidents which have transformed me as a professional -

As I have mentioned earlier, Amway is in direct selling, and, when I interact with the Amway Business Owners (ABOs), who are entrepreneurs in their own right, how HR can contribute to the success of the ABOs is truly an interesting facet in my professional journey at this

## Awards and Accolades

Won appreciation for several lectures and sessions at several prestigious forums.

juncture. There have been several interesting experiences in my previous assignments as well, especially when driving systems and processes, which bring a change to the status quo - from the initial resistance to alignment of the key stakeholders, is an enriching experience for any HR professional.

In one of my previous companies,

I had just about one and a half years of work experience and was entrusted to drive VRS along with my superior, there were a large section of employees who came and checked with me on what they should do, and what is better for them. In some cases, I recall the employees insisting that I visit their homes and convince their families. This was an overwhelming experience considering the fact that they had this huge trust in me that I will not misguide them. And, I did realize that a HR professional has to build trust and faith amongst employees, and, this went on to become a guiding principle for me throughout my career.

Similarly, in another company, galvanizing the entire workforce to "one team, one dream" and make all employees (including the indirect workforce) to work in unison and make the company achieve the vision ahead of the timeframe was an overwhelming experience for me, considering the success of this initiative.

In one of my previous stints, amidst various differing opinions, I had floated the idea of hiring class 12 pass-outs as shop floor associates, and provide them with the training to run

the shop floors. And, we actually implemented this and these associates went on to run the shop floors on their own without any supervision. It was indeed a very satisfying experience.

## Having been a part of diverse sectors how did you manage to constantly up-skill yourself to meet the professional demands?

I have been majorly in the FMCG sector and the basic principle of business remains the same across the industry, barring a few specific nuances that every business brings to the table.

And, as I said earlier, the basic pillars of the HR function do not alter - for instance every company will certainly have a performance management system, though there could be a little variation in the formats. The same is the case for the other pillars as well. What is important for an HR professional though, is to constantly upgrade himself/herself on the latest trends and imbibe them with the desired customization. There are many ways through which one can stay abreast- self reading, attending conferences, and, in my view, the most important way is through peer learning among your network. **HC**

# Q & A

**W**e are a company having an office in India, registered under the name of the wholly owned subsidiary of our parent company in the US. The Indian operations are in an SEZ unit. One of our IT staff is requesting for a 6 month deployment at Pune, where his wife will be residing for six months. He is requesting that he may be allowed to work for the Indian SEZ unit from his wife's Pune residence (outside SEZ) during this period. Please share the pros and cons of the above situation and also suggest the best possible way in which we can manage the request.

Please note that Instruction No. 85 dated August 2, 2016 issued by the SEZ Division of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry lays down the general conditions under which an employee of an SEZ unit may work from home or from outside the SEZ premises. The said conditions are reproduced below:

- "(a) The person should be a regular employee of the SEZ unit and should be authorized by the SEZ unit [issued Identity cards as per Rule 70(2) of SEZ Rules, 2006] to undertake the work pertaining to that unit.
- (b) The work to be performed by the employee permitted to work from home should be as per the services approved for the SEZ unit, and the work is related to a project of the SEZ unit.
- (c) For the purpose of work from home, SEZ unit should provide laptop/desktop and secured connectivity (for e.g. VPN, VDI etc) to establish a connection between the employee and work must be related to a project of the SEZ unit.
- (d) Ensure export revenue of the resultant products/services

should be accounted for by the SEZ unit to which the employee is tagged and at no given point should work from home involve the export of services from outside the SEZ unit.

- (e) Once the employee ceases to be part of the project of SEZ unit, the employee shall be untagged from the respective SEZ unit and the unit shall surrender the I-Card (form-K) to Specified Officer as per rule 70(2) of SEZ Rules 2006."

Therefore, in our opinion the concerned employee may be permitted by your company to work from home / outside the SEZ premises so long as the conditions mentioned above are complied with.

**We had appointed an accounts executive and he was to serve a probation period of six months. After the completion of his probation, he is claiming that he is entitled to be confirmed and also a hike in the salary. Though we wish to confirm his employment, we are not ready to increase his salary. We have not even mentioned any such provision in our appointment letter. What is the legal definition of a probationer? Is the company bound by law to increase the compensation / salary after a new employee completes his probation? Please note that the word 'probation, or 'probationer' is not defined under any employment / labour legislation. However, probation, in the context of employment means a period where the employee is being evaluated and tested by the employer as regards his/her suitability for the position for which he/she has been engaged. In other words, during the probation period, the employer generally retains the right to terminate the services of the probationer without notice or any other obligation. The**

rights and obligations of the employer and the employee during the probation period may vary from company to company depending on policy, or may be set out in the employment contract. However, in the absence of any such policy or provision, it is generally understood that the employer is evaluating the performance or suitability of the probationer and reserves the right to discontinue the probationer's service at will if the employer is not satisfied or does not consider the probationer suitable for the job.

In the instant case, since the appointment letter issued to the employee concerned does not stipulate a promise of salary hike after the completion of the probation



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period, your company neither has an obligation to increase his salary after the probation period nor does the executive has any right to demand such a raise. Increasing the salary of the said executive post probation period is completely at your company's discretion.

**I run a shop in Mumbai and have 12 people employed in my shop. Last month, one of them, while reaching for goods placed on the top shelf, somehow got disbalanced and fell from there. He broke his leg and had to be taken to a nearby nursing home. The employee's wife is now claiming compensation as well as medical expenses incurred due to the accident. Please tell me whether I am liable to compensate since mine is only just one shop and there was no contract between me and this employee.**

Please note that the law governing the employees' compensation (for injury caused by accident) is provided in the Employees' Compensation Act, 1923 ("Compensation Act").

Given that you are running a shop in Mumbai, please note that you are

governed by the Bombay Shops and Establishment Act, 1948 ("Establishment Act"). Section 38A of the Establishment Act provides that the Compensation Act is applicable to all the shops/establishments covered under the Establishment Act and accordingly, Compensation Act will be applicable to your shop/ establishment also.

Further, you may note that according to Section 3 of the Compensation Act, an employer is liable to compensate the employee for an injury caused to him/her by an accident arising out of or in the course of his/her employment. It is understandable that climbing up the shelves of your shop to reach different goods was a part of his duty and well within the scope of his employment.

Since the injury caused to the employee is temporary in nature, therefore as per section 4 of the Compensation Act, you will be liable to a half monthly payment of the sum equivalent to 25% of his monthly wages. Such half monthly wages will have to be made to the employee on sixteenth day either from the date of

disablement if such disablement lasts for a period of 28 days or more or on the nineteenth day where such disablements last for a period of less than 28 days, and, thereafter half-monthly during the disablement or during a period of five years, which ever period is shorter.

**However, please note that you will not be liable to pay compensation if:**

- the injury is caused by an accident which is directly attributable to:-
  - the employee having been at the time of the accident under the influence of drink or drugs; or
  - the willful disobedience by the employee of an order and rule expressly given to secure the safety of the employee; or
  - the willful removal or disregard by the employee of any safety devices/guard provided for the safety of employee.

Additionally, please note that as per Section 4 (2A) of the Compensation Act, you will also have to reimburse the actual medical expenses incurred by the employee for treatment of injuries caused to him. **HC**



# Proposed Reforms In Labour Laws

- BY K.V.SINGH AND ANKITA RAI

Most of the labour laws in India were enacted decades ago, when the industry practices and employment conditions were squarely different from the current scenario. However, the laws have not been updated with the changing times. There is therefore a pressing need to revisit these laws and ensure that their benefits reach the maximum number of workforce and entitle them to real and tangible benefits. The enforcement machinery responsible for the implementation of relevant laws must also be strengthened.

To undo the malady in the Indian labour market and to encourage economic growth and generate employment opportunities in the country, the Government has proposed that 44 labour laws be codified into just five, viz. (i) the Industrial Relations Code Bill 2016 (dealing with industrial

relations); (ii) Wage Code Bill 2016 (dealing with wages); (iii) the Small Factories (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Services) Bill (dealing with safety and social security); (iv) Employees Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions (Amendment) Bill (dealing with welfare); and (v) the Shops and Establishments (Amendment) Bill.

The Labour Code on Industrial Relations Bill 2015, which will consolidate the statutes dealing with industrial relations, i.e., Trade Unions Act 1926, Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 and Industrial Employment Act, 1948 is one of the most significant proposals in labour law. The Ministry of Labour and Employment introduced the draft Labour Code on Industrial Relations Bill, 2015 (hereinafter referred as 'Draft Bill') in April 2015. The

proposed amendment aims to overhaul several issues pertaining to industrial relations, including registering trade



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unions, standing orders, notice of change of terms of employment, strikes, lockouts, lay-offs, retrenchment, investigation and settlement of disputes and other related matters.

The Draft Bill contains 107 sections and 3 schedules, which not only consolidates the three Acts, but also amends the law substantially. While the present Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 requires industrial establishments hiring at least 100 workers to obtain the permission from the





Government in the event of lay off, the Bill proposes to allow industrial establishments employing up to 300 workers to lay off workmen without seeking any approval from the Government.

Further, the Bill proposes to limit the liberty of the workers in registration of trade unions. It provides that a minimum of 10% of the workers employed in an establishment would be required to make an application for registering a trade union. However, the perimeter of minimum 10% would not apply in the following circumstances: (i) where 10% of the workers exceed 100, it would be sufficient if the application is made by 100 workers; and (ii) where 10% of the workers is less than 7 workers, a minimum of 7 workers shall be required to make an application for registration.

The Draft Bill further aims to increase the compensation at the time of retrenchment to 45 days' average pay for each completed year of continuous service, or any part year in excess of six months. Currently, the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 requires the employer to pay compensation equivalent to 15 days' average pay for each completed year of service, or any part year in excess of six months.

Another significant proposal to overhaul the labour laws is by way of proposing a wide definition of 'strike' to include within its ambit casual leave on a given day by 50% or more workers in an industry.

Further, while the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 permits the workers employed in public utility service to go on strike only after giving 14 days' advance notice to the employer, the Draft Bill proposes to govern all industrial workers by the same stringent conditions of strike which are currently applicable only to public utility service workers under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947.

The Draft Bill abolishes the concept of labour courts and proposes to introduce a dispute resolution mechanism through Industrial Tribunals. Furthermore, while the employer and the workmen can refer an industrial dispute to arbitration only prior to approaching a labour court/ tribunal under Section 10A of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, Section 50 of the Draft Bill entitles the parties to refer the dispute to arbitration at any time.

Section 35 of the Draft Bill envisages an extensive list of matters to be covered by Model Standing Orders drafted by the Central Government and considered as acts of misconduct. For example, sexual harassment, refusal to undergo training organised by the employer, etc. have now been classified as misconduct under the Model Standing Orders. The Draft Bill has also introduced a time limit for completion of disciplinary proceedings within 90 days from the date of suspension.

India has been a socialistic country with stringent labour laws. It has been contended that the labour laws in India make employers prone to harassment, thereby making it difficult for them in India to compete against the global giants in countries with simplified laws. Several recommendations have been made to make labour laws less restrictive for employers, in order to give them a level playing field against their international counterparts. In this regard, the introduction of the Draft Bill is a significant proposal to overhaul the labour laws. Presently, labour laws are so numerous and ambiguous that they promote industrial disputes rather than facilitating a business-friendly environment for employers. In this regard, India needs a good labour policy that simplifies and rationalizes the complex and ambiguous extant pieces of labour legislation into a simple code rather than impaired or shortsighted law amendments that would address only the present problems. With the present economic slowdown taking the situation from bad to worse, the attempt made by the Government is a laudable effort, as it will certainly provide flexibility to the employers, which will lead to increased confidence in the industry. However, overhauling and simplifying labour regime should also be accompanied with a renewed thrust on enforcement, to make sure that the system works. **HC**

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Transforming and Managing Family Business	Atul Arun Pathak, Saroj Kumar Pani	Nov. 23 - 26, 2016	XLRI	Leading and Managing Organizational Change	Rahul Sheel	Jan. 30- Feb. 1, 2017	Bangalore
Certification Programme on The Art and Science of Competency Based Interviewing	R K Premarajan	Nov. 24 - 25, 2016	Bangalore	HR Audit-Leading to Internal Auditor Certification	M G Jomon	Jan. 31- Feb. 3, 2017	XLRI
Financial Inclusion, Social Banking & Micro Finance	Prabal K Sen	Nov. 28 - Dec 1, 2016	XLRI	Leading Mindfully	E S Srinivas & Satya Chaitanya	Feb. 1 - 3, 2017	Bangalore
Team Building and Conflict Management	I S F Irudayaraj	Dec. 5 - 9, 2016	XLRI	Lean Thinking & Management	Ajith Kumar J	Feb. 2 - 4, 2017	XLRI
Data Analytics and Visualization	S K De	Dec. 5 - 9, 2016	XLRI	THE AMAZING MARKET MAKERS OF INDIA: Insights and Inspirations	Sharad Sarin	Feb. 6 - 8, 2017	Mumbai
Transformational Leadership	E S Srinivas & J Singh	Dec. 6 - 9, 2016	XLRI	Leadership Excellence through Self-Discovery	Manish Singhal	Feb. 6 - 9, 2017	XLRI
Out-think! - How to use game theory to outsmart competition	Sumit Sarkar	Dec. 12- 13, 2016	Bangalore	HRM for Line Managers	M Srimannarayana	Feb. 6 - 10, 2017	XLRI
Managing Diversity in Workplace	Anita Sarkar	Dec. 12- 16, 2016	XLRI	Basic Leadership Skills	Fr.S George, S.J & Sunil Sarangi	Feb. 6 - 10, 2017	XLRI
Mentoring, Coaching & Counselling for Personal and Managerial Effectiveness	I S F Irudayaraj	Dec. 12- 16, 2016	XLRI	Advanced Corporate Finance	A Kanagaraj	Feb. 13 - 15, 2017	Mumbai
		<b>2017</b>		Effective Performance Management	Pranabesh Ray	Feb. 20 - 24, 2017	XLRI
Beyond Coping: thriving under stress in the workplace	Manish Singhal	Jan. 16 - 18, 2017	Bangalore	Supply Chain Analytics	T A S Vijayaraghavan	Feb. 20 - 24, 2017	XLRI
Empowerment & Leadership for Women Executives	Anita Sarkar	Jan. 16 - 20, 2017	XLRI	Assessor Certification Program on Assessment Centre Approach to Competency Mapping	R K Premarajan	Feb. 20 - 24, 2017	New Delhi

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