

LET'S TALK TALENT

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Exclusive - P Dwarkanath

Spotlight - Amit malik

A Connections Initiative

Food For Thought

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Point of View

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LET'S TALK TALENT - A CONNECTIONS INITIATIVE

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P DWARKANATH

*Former Chairman
GSK Consumer Healthcare*

Mr. Dwarkanath brings a rich and varied experience of nearly five decades in the arena of Leadership Development and Human capital. He was the Chairman of GSK Consumer Healthcare and Director - Human Resources and Administration, India/ South Asia of GSK. He was also a member of GSK's International HR team. He has held Board/Advisory positions in various organisations including in some prestigious Educational Institutions. Till recently, he was associated with Group Human capital of Max Group. He has held several management positions in various professional bodies. To name a few, he was the President of National Human Resources Development Network (NHRDN), President of Delhi Management Association (DMA), Regional President - Northern Region of All India Management Association (AIMA) and Treasurer of AIMA. Mr. Dwarkanath has won several prestigious awards for his valuable contribution to the business and also in the field of Human Resources and Leadership Development.

EXCLUSIVE

P DWARKANATH

**Former Chairman
GSK Consumer Healthcare**



1. Tell us about your early life and how you strayed onto the path for a career in HR ?

As the saying goes, I was born with a "golden spoon" and was one of the classic "Baby Boomers" born soon after our country got freedom.

I was very fortunate and blessed to have noble, educated and cultured parents from service background. My father is a retired and acclaimed judge and my mother, a graduate, who brought me up with a lot of discipline, affection and values. My father taught me the fundamentals of life pertaining to sense of purpose, commitment with positive thinking and empathy. My father also taught me the concept of "Art of tough love"

which he has practiced successfully. This was further reinforced and transcended to my school and college career where I spent my early life in a disciplined and caring environment of a Christian missionary institutions.

I would have been a professional tennis player or a lawyer had I not taken up the Management Trainee position at DCM Shriram group in the beginning of my career in early 1970s. The attributes such as team spirit, the winning attitude and working with people which I have acquired by virtue of being an all round competitive sports person, coupled with the leadership drive and networking ability earned through my debating skills and as a President of Students Union made me take the right decision of pursuing my career in People's Management, Leadership Development and Corporate Governance. Along with this, my valuable HR experience in the initial years of career and my flare for law also helped me on to the path for a career in HR.

In order to succeed in your profession, it is very critical that you need to have great nurturing in your early life which will provide the pathway for a great career." The Art of Tough Love" helps you to act tough on issues but soft on people.

2. People are people, but different mindsets and cultures can present all kinds of different challenges. Tell us your experience in this regard?

It is a great question. In today's competitive global environment, the competitive advantage of any organization is its people. Business growth is through people's growth.

"Take away my money, take away my factories, warehouses and land but leave my people and within 5 years I will have it all back" though this was stated by Alfred Sloan many decades ago, it holds good and relevant even today. It is true that the mindset of the people varies and we need to address them by providing "Different strokes for Different Folks" and there is no "one size fits all" solutions. This is the novel and a great challenge that the leaders are confronted with and this underlines the importance of culture of an organization. It requires leaders to foster and facilitate collaborative and inclusive culture with shared purpose despite varied mindsets of people.



As regard to my experience in bringing transformational change of an organization through culture initiative, during M&A and organization restructuring, is worth mentioning. I briefly share my experience by quoting **"I have neither changed my name nor my profession, but the organization with which I was associated over four decades has changed its name four times."**

The only unifying and binding element which helped me to navigate through challenging times was the culture that evolved during the transition from one organization to another without much disruption. Culture in my view is all pervasive, inclusive and collaborative and this is the DNA of the Organization. In SB, culture is defined as **"The way we live and do the business"**. Undoubtedly, it is a set of beliefs and values which need to be executable. In other words, it is not enough to display the value statements in web sites and message boards, but it needs to be translated into actions so that the organization can be transformed into a sustainable, growth oriented and winning organization in this competitive global environment.

In order to do this, the hard wire, like the strategies, practices, policies should be robust and reliable to dovetail seamlessly with soft stuff, namely the values, beliefs etc. It is challenging and interesting to ensure that we have a winning culture. In order to bring such a transformational cultural change, the concept of "Hard wiring the soft stuff" needs to be executed by the leadership team by following the principles of "Walk the talk", "Lead from the front" and the change needs to be brought from "top to bottom" and the "Tone at the Top" is very imperative.

Culture is the way we work and live in an organization. It is all pervasive, inclusive and it is the lifeline of an organization. In order to bring a transformational cultural change, it's imperative to ensure that the culture is executable through the concept of "Hard wiring the soft stuff."

To sum up, I am tempted to quote Jim Collins, "Architects of visionary companies don't trust in good intentions of 'values statements'; they build cult-like cultures around their core ideologies."

3. What is the biggest challenge facing organizations today and what is your advice to overcome it?

We live in rapidly changing times, especially the businesses. Many political, regulatory, economic, social and technological pressures are affecting companies and individuals. The biggest challenge facing organizations today is uncertainty about the future and being able to predict the customer and market trends in the dynamic economic climate. Further, being able to sustain company growth and even ensuring its existence in VUCA environment is not an easy task and companies need to scrutinize their future viability. What worked well for companies that survived for over 100 years, like General Electric and Boeing, might not hold true for many organizations of current era.

In order to survive and thrive in the long run, companies need to create value for all stakeholders including its shareholders, customers, employees and vendors. The approach of win-win for all stakeholders works best to ensure sustainability of the company.

Further, to take advantage of opportunities and effectively manage risks, companies must place sustainability at the heart of their business model. Organizations and leaders need to remain flexible and agile, adapt to changes quickly and customize their offerings and decisions by proactively sensing the changing market and business needs.

In a nutshell, companies should be prepared for failure, success, and everything in between.



To sustain in the long run, companies must adopt a Win - Win Approach and create value for all its stakeholders including the shareholders, customers including employees, vendors and society.

4. What do you think defines an organisation as a top employer today?

When we think of top employers, we often focus on the perks and benefits that make a workplace more fun, flexible or convenient. For instance, Google provides free meals to employees, Salesforce.com provides treadmill desks and Tata Steel has given a year of 'work from home' to white collared employees.

However, a company can't become a top employer just by replicating these best practices or creating a great presence on social media.

There are different ways to look at a top employer and it would be right to say that 'No one size fits all'. For instance, some employees look for flexibility, autonomy, and entrepreneurial work environment in a top employer while others look at the rewards and benefits or psychic income. Some other set of employees might look for a work environment that is transparent, values ethics and create a positive impact on the society.

Therefore, it is important for a company to be able to attract, motivate and retain employees who share its vision and are ready to contribute and work towards the organizational goals.

In fact, the foundation of a great workplace lies in its culture of engagement and trust that unites the management and workforce in a common vision that's not only about success but also describes the type of company an employer wants to be.

Companies can't become a top employer just by replicating the best practices or creating a great presence on social media. In fact, definition of Top Employer would be different for different segments of workforce.

It is important for companies to be able to attract, motivate and retain employees who share its vision and are ready to contribute and work towards the organizational goals.

5 .How are the technology and consumer demands challenging the way the corporation operates and how is the business changing to be a major competitor for the future?

Rising incomes, impact of COVID pandemic, aging populations, middle class bulges and increasing number of Gen Y and Z in the workforce are re-shaping the customer base around the globe. Technology has raised consumer expectations for curated experiences like never before. At the same time it should be remembered that for a company new technology could be both an opportunity and a threat. Hence figuring out which technologies will help or impede the achievement of business goals is vital.

What Apple did to Sony, Sony did to Kodak!

In today's business environment customer is in the driver's seat. The buyers of today want organizations to treat them as unique individuals, and know their personal preference and purchase history. With online streaming, Amazon Prime, Uber etc, customers have already grown accustomed to receiving personalized, immediate service at affordable prices.

Despite this, the boards and leadership teams of most companies tend to focus more on investors and innovation, and perspective needs of customers /employees are often considered secondary, especially when the organization size increases.

As Steve Jobs rightly said: "Some people say, 'Give the customers what they want.' But that's not my approach. Our job is to figure out what they're going to want before they do."



It is not enough to display the value statements in web sites and message boards, but it needs to be translated into actions so that the organization can be transformed into a sustainable, growth oriented and winning organization in this competitive global environment

Therefore, it is suggested that companies should focus on the following areas:

- Gaining and sustaining trust of customers, maintaining complete privacy of their data
- Providing a personalized experience to its customers
- Not just relying on market research - but thinking or figuring out what customer would want before even they know it.
- Proactively adopt and leverage the digital transformation wave.

6. What are the three things that you would like to tell to today's youngsters who will be joining the corporate world?

Firstly, it is important to realize that in the VUCA work environment 'Learning is the survival skill'. Past credentials are good indicators of how your future potential is. However, they do not guarantee success in one's corporate career. The mantra is to adopt the principle of lifelong learning. Even seasoned professionals should adopt reverse mentoring in their daily routine.

Secondly, having a right attitude is a must. Technical expertise and functional skills can be developed over time. However, a great attitude is a secret ingredient for the recipe of success. Always remember that your genuine passion is infectious.

Thirdly, Don't limit what you think. Someone has very rightly said that 'What a man can think, his hands can achieve'.

Finally, please do remember that "If you don't keep scoring ,you are just practicing" it is therefore very essential to measure the deliverables on a timely basis.





AMIT MALIK - SPOTLIGHT

**Chief People, Operations & Customer Services Officer
Aviva Life Insurance India Ltd**

Amit Malik is a business leader, customer focused with over 21 years of experience in Financial Services -Insurance, Banks, Captives and FMCG. His current role is Chief People, Operations, Customer Service Officer along with Admin for Aviva Life Insurance India. Amit Malik has been awarded 'Top 40 HR Leaders' 2014 in the country by Asia Pacific HR Congress. He has also authored several articles on Key HR trends and practices in leading national dailies like Economic Times, Times of India, and Financial Express among others. He has been a speaker at various prestigious forums. He is a Certified Coach from ICF and Erickson.

SPOTLIGHT

AMIT MALIK

**Chief People, Operations & Customer Services Officer
Aviva Life Insurance India Ltd**

1. Take us through your journey and the high impact roles you have done in your career?

Every role that one does in their career should be of high impact. Gone are the days when only at a certain position you would have the ability to create impact. It is more of a personal philosophy. one has to be determined to create a dent in anything they are handed, big or small.

When I started my career with GSK consumer healthcare, I used my role of HR manager for Sales in North as an opportunity to understand how the products are sold and how the company makes revenue -a learning that I still continue to apply. My sojourns in Northern India accompanying sales people on the back of a Luna (not sure how many remember it) / motorbike, every month for 2-3 days was a great way to understand sales and how HR could make an impact to the key drivers of top-line growth

Working in financial services for major part of my career I have come to realize how important it is for HR to be a listening function and that which leads to building trust. We all in HR encounter situations which are grey and have to learn the art of balancing organization interest and employee interest. I have always believed that one should be strict on process but flexible on people

Working as HR leader for Retail bank of RBS during the financial crisis and then the organizations' decisions to sell the India business made me realize the power of how one can do more with less.

In Aviva- as an HR leader, I have overseen the journey of Aviva India from being ranked as the 25th best company to work for by World HRD Congress in 2016 to heralding the culture and the people strategy and becoming the No.1 Best Place to Work for at World HRD Awards 2019. That has been one of the impactful journeys I have had. It has been possible for us to achieve this by ensuring that we focused on giving our people an opportunity to do their best work and provide a working environment that is safe, nurturing and enabling employees to win at marketplace.

Taking up operations two years ago, being at the helm of teams that have constantly improved the claims ratio from less than 90 to an enviable 97.29%, reduced complaints received by 55%, all this, I feel has been a role of considerable consequence and impact. It is the learning and work in all these roles, starting right from the first one with GSK that have helped me drive these outcomes.

2. If you are given a chance to change your career, would you?

I am happy with the journey. I did once aspire to be a media personality and who knows what the future holds

3. There are very few CPOs who have handled enhanced role outside HR. What prompted you to take over operations and customer services in addition to HR and how has that changed your perspective as an HR leader?

I would like to connect this to the earlier question - it was my opportunity to widen the impact I could create in the organization by virtue of leading two functions instead of one. It was challenging, exciting, an uncharted territory where I would have to first be taught by my team members who had done operations for years and then quickly come up the curve to give them strategic direction. Therefore, it had all the elements of a next role that I would have wanted to take up.

In a sales focused industry like insurance, Operations can become a department that can be overlooked. What one realizes when one looks closely is that this team manages all the customer touch-points for existing customers; whether it is pay-outs, claims, fund redirection, call centre, complaints, email desk. And in a business, like insurance, where long term relationship building is the key, one tends to understand how Operations is not just a need to have department, but one that can create competitive advantage for any insurance organization. Leading this department has therefore helped me understand the nitty-gritty of business better and helped me stay closer to my customers. For any HR leader, there is no bigger learning that will help them to their job better- i.e. understanding the business and understanding the customer.

In hindsight, when I look back at my experience, I realize how important it is to follow the T shape when you are building your skills. A T shaped skill set basically means you are an expert in one domain and over a period of time, keep learning few other skills

that might be of interest to you and have some overlapping skills from another area of expertise. The coming times will throw up more and more opportunities and organizations would want to hire people who can do multiple jobs.

4. What was the turning point of your career?

This is a tough one . Every role in my career has contributed in making me a professional and the person that I am today. Every role has come with its own learnings, successes and failures. These have enabled me to perform the next one better.

5. What have been your most challenging deliverables during the pandemic?

While the business continuity documents were all in place and already being relooked at, none of us were ready for a scenario where all offices across the country were shut off altogether. As the CPOCSO, there were three most important challenges that my team and I focused on and tried to solve:

- Customer : Any new customer seeking a new policy should be able to do so - hence the whole policy issuance process needed to continue even while working from home. Our existing customers should be able to reach out to us for any help they needed with respect to their policies - so our customer services team needed to be up and running

I think every career will have its own unique path as the workforce becomes more and more diverse and we start working in more uncertain environments. However, there are few simple rules that will remain.



- Employees - Our employees should not experience any form of anxiety because of the ongoing uncertainty- so our employee communication needed to work at a 2X speed to let them know we were there for them
- Managing Risk- With so much changing all around us, we made some paradigm changes in the way we operated our businesses. While we hustled and innovated, it was important to ensure that we were always doing the right thing by our customers. A big part of this was effective risk management and mitigation even as we continued to challenge the norms and found new ways of doing things.

6. What are your greatest learnings that you think has shaped up your career and what is the career advice you would like to give the next generation of CHROs?

My key learning and advice to next generation of CHRO are:

- Courage and conviction are competencies that you need to build and demonstrate.
- Understand the customer and products keeping the future in mind. HR can build the capability today for what the organization needs tomorrow
- Remember that the Human in HR is the key to the success of the function and it's your role to keep it at the centre



7. For the young business leaders who are entering the corporate world in such uncertain times, what would be your advice:

I think every career will have its own unique path as the workforce becomes more and more diverse and we start working in more uncertain environments. However, there are few simple rules that will remain. For all the youngsters who are starting out and want to make a career in the corporate, this is my word of advice:

A. Understand the Business Context

Whether they work in Operations, Marketing, Sales, Human Resources or Strategy, young leaders must know who their customer is and how they think. They should also be aware of the transforming macro environment and its potential impact on business. Other than that, they should be able to anticipate the unlikely places their competitors can emerge from.

B. Have a Clear Vision but build Adaptability:

What role do they visualize themselves in 10 years from now? Whether the vision is to be an entrepreneur, an artist or a corporate leader, it must be a clear one and they should have a roadmap of how to go about achieving this. The power of focus is often underscored in today's time but its value is everlasting.

You must however be careful not to let your vision and plan imprison you to becoming someone who cannot adapt and change. While it is important to have a long-term goal the short-term milestones have to be such that they are easily changeable and updated to be relevant.

C. Embrace the Digital:

That digital (Social, Mobile, Analytics, Cloud, IoT, AI) will be hygiene to all businesses is inevitable. Therefore, one must learn how to embrace it. It is important to note that every job is digital. If your job is not then either you are in the wrong job or you are not ready for the future.

D. Get Comfortable with Metrics, but don't hide behind it

Data is already available and in abundance. The story that we extract from the data, the metrics that we choose to accept and those that we choose to ignore are important. But one must not hide behind metrics solely for decision making but also for emphasizing the importance of experience and intuition. Instinct is nothing but multiple data points through your life that you have become exposed/accustomed to. One must learn therefore, how to use the two in tandem.



E. Soft stuff is the hard stuff:

The ability to have open and honest communication, to articulate thoughts and ideas well, to listen and accept divergent views, to motivate peers and subordinates, to speak your mind and challenge the views of your superiors, to be able to coach and mentor others into becoming leaders will be the litmus test of true leadership. Thus, it is the soft stuff that will set you apart! Courage and Conviction is hence a key competence to make one a successful leader.

I believe 3 major changes have taken place in the way the HR function operates:

8. How has HR evolved over the last 6 months?

a) The role of HR has transformed from having a seat at the table to having a voice at the table. The pandemic was an opportunity for HR to lead from the front making organizations future ready. In the last few months, the HR function has come to the forefront to help manage the workplace in times of crisis, prepare for return to work, think about long term implications of the crisis and re-imagine the workplace of the future.



b) HR has been often referred to as a function with a lot of inertia, lack of agility and innovation. But in the last few months these notions have changed .

c) I often say that the HR function is not supposed to hide behind the computer screens. The pandemic has finally forced them out (quite ironically, as they have done this by spending more time in front of screens).

With people in the organization needing more answers or being anxious, or in case of more evolved organisations, (like ours) we have asked HR folks to actively connect with all the employees and make sure things are OK. The core skill of HR professionals therefore has been tested. The manifestation of all of the three can be seen in every initiative, response and process changes that have been made by the function.

9. If you get a chance to do a PhD what would be your thesis topic?

I have not given it much thought but would be in lines of "what is the meaning of work for different generations and how it has evolved "

10. Who is your role model?

Mahatma Gandhi

11. As an avid reader, name 3 books that you would like to recommend people to read

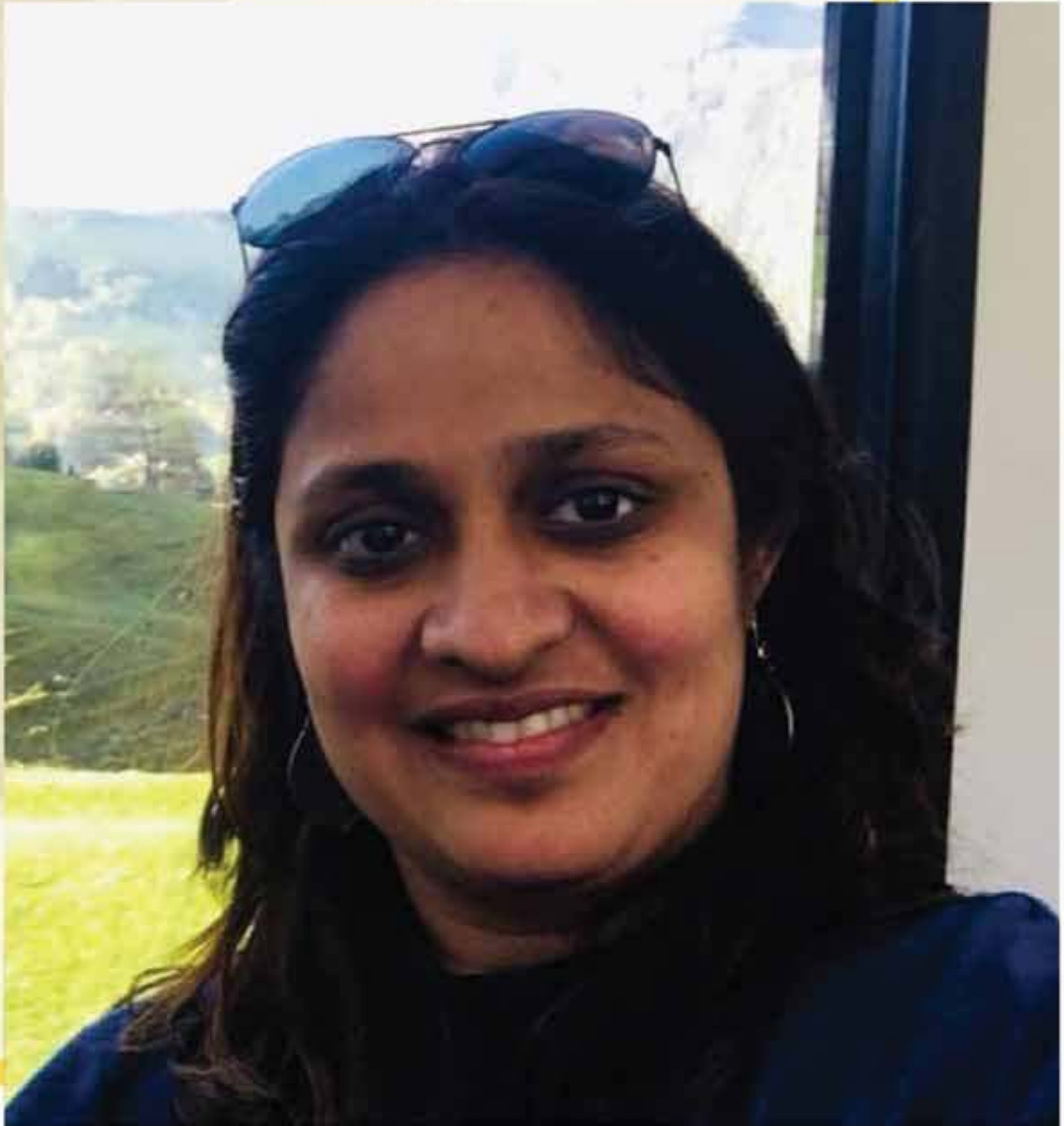
I would encourage people to read different genres of book and not stick to any one style of writing: Read about Finance, Economics, Leadership, EQ, Philosophy and obviously a good fiction once in a while. Three books that I've read and I would like to recommend are:

The Hard Things about Hard Things- Ben Horowitz

Poor Economics- Abhijit Banerjee & Esther Duflo

The Ride of a Lifetime- Robert Iger





KHEVNA SHAH

**Head HR
Coverfox Insurance**

Khevna is a computer science graduate with a post-graduation in Management. She has over 12 yrs of experience in the varied facets of Human Resource field, across industries like manufacturing, banking & financial services and insurance. Khevna's strength lies in her ability to work with stakeholders across ranks & locations, thinking creatively yet aligned to the vision of the organization, being an experimenter with execution focus and being resilient in face of challenges.



Food for Thought

KHEVNA SHAH

Head HR
Coverfox Insurance

Is Technology a distraction or a productivity tool?

This topic feels quite like a debate on, 'is atomic energy boon or bane'. It takes me back few decades into school life. But with time I have evolved into having a balanced view.

In the era that has seen technology take over the most mundane of tasks like mopping and sweeping, to building insights from clicks over social media, and literally any nook and cranny of our personal and professional lives (especially in the face of the pandemic), I have to say Technology is a HUGE productivity tool!

It is so intriguing and interesting what technology can do for us that it is easy to lose sight of what we embarked upon to begin with. Technology is a terrific enabler for crawling into the web spaces and sharing data that we otherwise would have never be able to get our hands on. It allows us to reach out to our employees and collaborators in the most remote corner.

As a productivity tool, we must harness the best that technology has to offer and glean out what its detractors or distractions may be. From the Human Resources aspect of an organization, I find these questions useful to consider when we take the tech journey:

- 1) What is the problem statement that I am looking to solve, and what are the tech / non-tech options that can be used to solve it?
- 2) Will the use of technology:
 - a) Improve efficiencies in term of hours of work or cost accrued?
 - b) Enhance employee or customer experience?
 - c) Allow me entry into business segments that I'd otherwise not be able to explore?

While these are the two critical elements of embracing technology as a tool for business, the overarching questions are, of course, the cost-benefit impact in the short and the long term. It's also important to consider the readiness and adaptability of the the industry and the employee base to use technology as a tool.

But let's not forget the fact that the use of technology has been a productivity tool in the pandemic and the positive resilience of businesses and leaders who have turned this adversity into a paradigm shift for their people and their customers. Virtual call centres, online learning sessions, virtual meets - are just the tip of the iceberg as we continue to explore over and beyond.



PRAVIN RAI

Head - Talent Acquisition

Tata AIG General Insurance Company Limited

Pravin Rai has vast experience in HR & Administration. He has introduced effective systems, which improved management control and reduced costs. His extensive administrative skills coupled with excellent organizational skills and the ability for multitasking effectively is an integral part of his management style.

Point of View

PRAVIN RAI

Head - Talent Acquisition
Tata AIG General Insurance Company Limited



Compassionate Leadership to ensure People Connect.

This has been a tough year for all and one of the biggest challenges that organisations have faced is that of people connect. It is a natural concern with the work from home culture, and to ensure that 'people connect' remains strong in the organisation and within teams falls in the hands of the leaders. Hence "Compassionate Leadership" has become a necessity in these changing times.

For any organisation or leader to become 'compassionate' they need to develop the following basic but essential human skills:

Understanding

Leaders need to understand their employees and display inclusivity and personal connect with them. Probing into the current work life challenges of their team with a dose of humility and humour will create a positive perspective among the employees and make stress bearable.

Leaders need to act like a role model to their team members. They need to coach the employees and encourage them to explore challenges together. The leaders need to be there for their team. This will provide a common platform and allow employees to seamlessly navigate through these uncertain times.

Presence**Empathy**

Leaders need to acknowledge and share the emotional state of their employees without judgement. Empathy by the leaders will make employees confident that they will not be left behind and that will make them do more for the organisation.

Leaders need to ensure their own physical and mental resilience. The days now are filled with uncertainties, fears and setbacks. Leaders need to fight back and emerge victorious despite of these. They also need to develop resilience within the team. This will have a huge impact on how employees manage and evolve during these trying times.

Resilience

Employees have always been and should be a prime cause of concern for every organisation. However, in the current scenario the employee and their family set-up has been crucial. A strong compassionate leadership will definitely help Organisations see this through effectively.



VISWADEEP ANSHU

VP - Talent Acquisition
LEAD School

Vishwadeep Anshu has been cited as 'Top HR Minds' (India) by CHRO Asia and World HRD Congress in Feb'20. He has been experimenting with building Org Culture focused on enhancing Organization Productivity & Performance. He has played significant roles of HR Business Partner, Project Management, Operations Management, HR Process Improvement, HR Process Automation, Talent Acquisition, Employer Branding & Evangelism. His strength lies in setting HR processes at ground zero level and bringing in both efficiency & effectiveness into HR Processes

Point of View

VISWADEEP ANSHU

VP - Talent Acquisition
LEAD School

Building & Scaling Culture at Start-ups!

"A start-up in its earliest days, when there are no established processes, structure or metrics; the key differentiation elements are the people and the culture."

There are two ways to build a culture - either build it consciously with concentrated effort or allow the culture to shape up automatically. Allowing culture to take its own course can be risky if it takes the wrong path.

The first task is to define culture and the output from the culture. There are three aspects of culture:

1. **Values** - Identify the core values, vision & mission of the organization and ensure that they merge with the culture.
2. **Assumptions** - Look at the unconscious attitudes of employee actions which represented what employee thinks.
3. **Artifacts** - Explore what the organization represent in the form of product, processes, dress code, infrastructure, food menu, office layout, etc.

Designing Culture Driven Processes

- While designing culture building process, incorporate concepts of mechanism design, system thinking and integrative complexity. Focus on designing each and every people process using a human centred design methodology, ensures that the cultural essence gets captured.



Look at the output of each process on culture scale to see which culture aspects this process represents? While designing processes, focus on designing the process and not the individual. All people process needs to start with a philosophy and the philosophy needs to include at least one cultural element. Try to imbibe passion and personal values as part of culture process. Always talk about the big picture.

- Culture should be scalable, and this is possible only if each and every employee experience is aligned with culture. Employee experiences are determined by his/her personality and his/her surrounding/interactions with the organization. Organization do not have much control over an employee's personality but can work on employee experiences and interactions.
- Start involving people in culture building process. Have shared consciousness, decentralized decision making and empowered people on execution. Give people breathing space so that they have time to think. Giving some free time to employees ensures that employees do have time to think at work (on many things including culture).
- "One of the reasons for successful culture scale-up is when culture becomes a habit." Begin by asking employees whether the decision or the action being taken is aligned with culture. That way employees will start making a habit of doing things aligned to the culture. Make culture the guiding principles for day to day running of business operations and strategy.

Start describing the culture essentials to new members and update the culture essentials to all employees regularly. Remember that the definition and meaning of culture keeps evolving.

- "Ethnic cleansing - weed out people who have negative influence on culture."

Evaluate all employees against the framework of culture. In order to have the right set of culture to evolve, take hard stance of letting those people go who do not align themselves with the culture. There will be people who will try to influence culture negatively. Simply ask them with respect to move on.

- An organization will not have the right culture if employees do not have a right set of work-life culture. Focus on bringing in a right set of work-life culture. Focus on skill development of individual along the lines of culture. Focus on skills required to reflect the culture. If organization has innovation as part of culture, train people to make them innovative at work. Reward people who reflect culture aspects. Focus more on intrinsic motivation rather than on extrinsic motivation.

- All candidates across levels mandatory had to go through cultural round during interviews. This is best if conducted by founders. Hire the culturally fit people and then allow them to hire next set of culturally fit people. Look whether the candidate is of high standards on the culture aspect. Setting high standards is contagious; a high cultured team member will automatically influence the team to pick high culture standards.

- Keep focus on the leadership team. When it comes to hiring a leader, evaluate the candidates on both cognitive and emotional empathy.

Focus more on emotional empathy - when it comes to building culture in teams, it is important for a leader to understand the feelings of all team members. Always keep an eye on team cultures. Generally, smaller groups will develop their own mini culture. Do not get involved till it starts interfering with the organisation's culture.

Communicating Culture

Start marketing the communication through all mediums. It means expressing culture through values, skills, habits, rewards, rituals, norms, symbols, environment, processes, metrics and anything else wherein employee handshake is involved.

Successful cultured organizations like Microsoft and Apple have excelled in creating stories about their culture. Try to identify stories of culture being exhibited in an organisation and start telling these stories to employees. It becomes easy for people to remember when told in a story format.

Measuring Culture

Organization needs to start asking the following questions to themselves:

- *Do we act as we say?*
- *How do we behave when things go wrong or how do we handle failures?*
- *Which values do we actually live and which are the ones we only talk about?*

Finally start measuring cultural achievements ensuring that employees are really reflecting the culture which organization wants and that it is being achieved to its full extent.



GITESH KARNIK

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Gitesh is an MBA with more than 2 decades of experience in the field of Human Resources. He has worked in NBFC, Retail banking, Retail, ITeS, and Real Estate. His stint with a Private Equity Funded Company has helped him build his entrepreneurial skills coupled with speed of execution and detail orientation. Gitesh sees himself as technology evangelist in field of Human Resources.



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Relevance of Talent Management & Succession Planning in 21st Century

Principles of Talent Management were relevant and based on nurturing in house talent in mid 80s to early 2000s. Most companies, especially the ones driven by independent boards and not by promoters, looked at creating leadership pipeline within the Company. Also, the average vintage of an employee in those days was 15-20 years, making it lot easier to invest in developing talent internally for long term.

As the time went by and the world experienced new business models of software development, Y2K, and social media companies, the DNA of employees started changing. A much younger and vibrant work force started to join the organisations and the aspirations of these people were quite different from the baby boomers.

These people were not averse to risk and job loyalty was not one of the traits that they espoused or aspired for.

Also, the sheer number of people required for this new burgeoning sector led to goldrush towards engineering colleges which mushroomed everywhere to meet the demands of this sector. Even after the 2000 dotcom bubble burst, things didn't change dramatically for these people as it changed for most of the financial mavericks who experienced the 2008 melt down.

These young people who joined the workforce in plentiful changed the dynamics. A lot of young entrepreneurs entered the world of software that didn't have any entry barriers of capital. Most of the successful ones started from a garage and became behemoth of sorts, the Apple of stock exchanges world over.

Well, this led to opening up different avenues of employment, even the best of mechanical & civil engineers joined the IT and software bandwagon leading to shortage of these skills in automotive and related industry.

Then came along Tesla who transformed the way cars would be driven; again based on heavy technological backdrop to it.

So as the world moved in pursuit of talent, talent evolved and was suddenly available all across the world.

Today when new Company starts its operations, they don't have to worry over finding the right people. They are available in abundance - in competition and allied businesses, if not the core. Today the challenge is whether one builds the talent or buys the talent thereby making Talent

Acquisition more important than Talent Management. Concepts of succession planning and building a leadership pipeline is not as important as mapping the competitive talent pool where you can tap in to, on demand.

No one is proposing that one should dismantle its talent management machinery. But it definitely makes you wonder how much should one invest on these expensive talent programs when talent is available off the shelf anytime.

Whether one should build or buy depends on how immediate the need is, as building is a process whose fruits of labour are not guaranteed, because, there is someone out there mapping the talent that you have invested in! Hence having a good balance of buying and building should give an organisation strategic and tactical advantage over those who religiously believe in building talent internally.





Team Talent



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