



# Moving Beyond The Challenges

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- BY ALOK KUMAR

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## Challenges faced by organisations

Some of the challenges faced by an organisation vis-à-vis talent today are-

**Recruitment:** Finding the right candidate - right in terms of culture, personality, and the identity of the organisation, and, who would fit in their organisation, and be productive for a long time. And, once you find them, how do you entice them to be a part of your journey? Showing and selling them purpose, will be the key in getting them on board.

**Talent Management:** Hiring the right candidate is half the battle won.



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However, there will be recurring challenges to retain and manage them, and, if there is a significant mismatch in terms of culture and values, and, when organisations fail to provide them with a purpose, and, hand them the opportunity to expand and grow with right guidance and support without being micromanaged.

**Old performance ratings system:** The traditional performance review generally follows a set practice - goal setting at the beginning of the year and a review by the front line manager at the end. However, this format poses certain challenges. Firstly, since reviews are done at the end of the year, there is every probability of the so termed "recency bias" to creep in. Recency Bias refers to the idea that more often than not, only the most recent behaviour or accomplishment of an employee will be remembered by his/her manager.

Another problem is the negative impact of year-end ratings, traditionally seen with the bell curve, on an employee's morale. The bell curve usually follows a 10-80-10 rule, where the top and bottom 10% performers are rewarded or weeded

out, respectively. The remaining 80% are the average performers.

Hence, the elimination of the performance ratings system by certain organisations is an informed decision, arrived at in time for the millennial bubble that we are about to witness. Millennials always demand a fair, transparent, and an open work culture, and provides them with an equal opportunity to grow. They appreciate regular feedback sessions, and flexibility in expressing themselves within organisations, as against a rigid or an autocratic approach. While Gen X who are mostly employed in leadership roles will not be impacted whether the performance ratings system is in place or not, end of this age old bell curve method promises hope for the new age employees. Transparent communication will help HR in better talent management, and hence, attrition can also be managed.

A common challenge is over the ways of keeping freelancers as the engaged and productive members of the organisation. With full time employees, the engagement is generally from a long-term perspective. However, with freelancers

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and contractors, it is normally time bound. Hence, this calls for a change in the engagement model and methodology. A freelancer may be required to fulfil a particular skill requirement for a particular time frame, and, managing their aspirations and demands has its own challenges. For example, a freelancer may only

work for 3 days a week, and for a certain number of hours. If the organisation fails to communicate the freelancer's roles and engagement model, a full-time employee may demand the same working environment as well, which may simply be impossible to provide, and thus, pave the way to confusion and conflict.

Similarly, a full-time employee may have certain benefits and privileges that a freelancer or a contractor may not have. For example, having access to certain information or tools, and they may feel left out. Keeping them engaged in such situations becomes tricky and critical.

### **Leadership Training and Millennials- Understanding the gap**

To understand the way millennials function, organizations need to realize their ideologies. The Gen Y want a workplace where they can get regular opportunities to grow and learn. As soon as the opportunities tend to become less exciting, they may choose to move out of the company. Another aspect that affects their stay is the quality of manager / management.

They want a coach, not a boss. Millennials on the other hand, are goal oriented and owing to this, they have an undying ambition of finding true passion, purpose, and meaning in their lives through their jobs. Another important aspect which every employee expects is flexibility.

With these ideologies being their

core, the leadership style will be significantly different. Organisations can face many challenges. This could be their ability to work in a fast-paced environment and produce results quickly. Being overly competitive and not afraid to speak their minds and display emotions can lead to constant scrutiny too. Further, there is always high attrition in case there is a delay in growth opportunities.

#### Identifying the right talent

To identify and recruit Hi Potential (HiPo) candidates, companies across industries are making use of head hunters, social media, conducting competitions such as business case challenges, hackathons, and, are also participating in cultural and managerial fests in colleges for hiring fresh talent.

Developing Hi Potentials is a challenging and an on-going task that involves engaging talent at the "heart" level. Showing them a purpose, the value and difference they make, the growth opportunity that they have, and the flexibility that they get to work amongst other things such as competitive salary and perks, informal work environment, etc.

#### Evolving talent management

In our minds, if HR gets the basics right, half the work of talent management is done. And the basics are engaging the workforce. Though the fundamentals of talent management might not have changed, the means and the methodology have. And, so have the rules of employee engagement. As mentioned earlier, employees, especially the millennials, do not want bosses, they want a coach. Someone who can guide them, coach them, train them, push them, and take them to a level they themselves would have not thought of, and that too without being threatening and being "bossy".

HR's contribution towards retaining the best talent in this evolving scenario is much more challenging and important. They have to create more such managers who act as a coach, not a boss. They have to work closely with the employees and managers, co-create employees' career plan, show them the future, and provide them with opportunities that will

help them fulfil their goals. Again, as mentioned earlier, engage them at a heart level. Show them how their roles are valuable and impact the organisation, and how they are a valuable contributor. Working with business leaders for building an open and a transparent organisation, where open communication flows both ways such as a Facebook like communication channel. Have a digital mindset and digital environment - as most millennials are technology hungry, investing in technology will keep them engaged, and get them associated with the organisation.

#### Employee engagement as an effective tool

Employee engagement activities vary from merely arranging a "fun at work" activity into going much deeper and

activities help create an emotional bond with the organisation and show the softer side of an organisation that states we care.

#### Soft skills training

Today, the need for soft skills training is more important than ever for potential employees. It has become one of the key factors of differentiation. According to the findings of the SEED Report 2016 (Student Enrichment and Employment Development), the employment scenario in India has changed for the better, but the curriculum continues to lag behind. Although, a lot has changed in terms of market trends and technology, the education system needs updating.

Most college curricula in India are still not equipped enough to teach in-demand, job-ready skills. Aspiring

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meaningful and having a career changing conversation. Some of the activities that organisations can adopt may include- getting coached by a senior leader whom people look up to, getting to work on a certain kind of project as an award, opportunity to create a brand for themselves, opportunity to learn something new through on the job training, or through structured training, building an informal relation with the team and manager, helping them focus on their health and wellness.

Kestone had conducted an employee engagement activity with an Olympics like theme for one of the clients in the past, to help create an emotional connect between employees. Employees were encouraged to bring their parents and kids to work at the office. Such subtle

according to a survey, the numbers reveal that India has almost 8 lakh engineering diploma holders who enter the job market every year and only about 20% of them are employable. Most critical soft skills training that organization need to train their individuals with is the manner in which they can communicate their ideas effectively, empathy, cultural diversity and sensitivity - diversity of sexual orientation, language, religion, opinions. Some of the major challenges have been in managing cross cultural differences. With mobility, people from different countries, cities and of cultural background find it easy to move and bring in cultural diversity. Ability to create a cross cultural and culture sensitive organization becomes a priority for HR. 