MARCH, 2016

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Xavier School of Management
For the greater good

SAPPHIRE

TOP STORY

SELF MANAGED TEAMS IN MANUFACTURING...

~ Biju Sebastian, HEAD HR (India) APOLLO TYRES Ltd.

STUDENT SPECIAL

RIDING THE PEOPLE ANALYTICS WAVE

~ Nikhil & Bhavya

SYNAPSE

2015-16

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ONWARD IN SEARCH OF EXCELLENCE……

TO ANOTHER 26 YEARS OF BRILLIANCE!!!

SAPPHIRE

Providing a strong thrust to the domain of human resources and industrial relations knowledge at XLRI is SAPPHIRE, the Students' Association for the Promotion of Personnel Management, Human Resources and Industrial Relations at XLRI. SAPPHIRE is a student body aiming to integrate the experiences of practitioners with the theoretical knowledge of academicians in the area of human resource development.

SAPPHIRE'S Mission: To enable development of world class, well-rounded HR Professionals who are capable of delivering and creating value in the emerging business environment and make meaningful contributions to the field of Human Resources.

Central to this mission is the unshaken belief that continuous interaction with industry is needed to give a well-rounded, practical business perspective that adds to the quality of management education. It provides students at XLRI with a deeper understanding on real issues and the actuality of corporate existence.

One of the oldest committees on campus, SAPPHIRE over the years, has acted as an interface between the industry and the academia and provided a forum for discussion and debate on the prevalent HR concepts and best practices. Since its inception in 1989, SAPPHIRE has organized a consortium of events, which have served as platforms for debating and discussing state-of-the-art HR and Industrial Relations practices.

Inside this Edition…

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Another year has gone by, and Sapphire encounters new triumphs and challenges as we move forward on the road called life.

We started our new season with an ice breaker and ended with a new team forming to take up the reins of the next season, with some familiar faces continuing on. Through all this, the committee has itself been striving to one up itself every year. Our biggest enemy or threat is the past.

But for us to move on, we must first take a glimpse back and see how we can improve on what has already happened. History may not have been many people's favourite subject but it is a useful one all the same.

Going back through the sands of time, we find some great moments that will forever shine in Sapphire's long history – the HR League we started this year gave us great moments and some interesting responses. We'll better that this year for sure.

We also brought live projects on campus, giving students practical experiences in the fast moving startup world. Next year we need this to increase in quality and quantity.

Looking into our two major events, Apollo and War of Wits (not to forget the well-received ice breaker Chaos), we find there is room for improvement and we aim to make all these an enjoyable and learning affair for all. The class, Professor Dr. Soumendra N. Bagchi took after Apollo to help all students understand what should go into a project and what shouldn't were especially eye opening – we need more of these to help both juniors and seniors prepare both for classes and the world beyond.

Coming to publications, you hold one in your hands right now. The other, Xpress HR has had some issues the last year, with technicalities forcing us to restrict it to only one edition. You can be sure that won't be repeated and you'll get Xpress HR if not monthly, then on a bimonthly basis. We are human after all. But we want your voices carried within our pages.

Finally, the big one. FiRE@X and SAPPHIRE have been holding conferences every alternate year – creating issues both in knowledge transfer and in retaining sponsors and speakers. We are going to change all that. This year, we'll be presenting the first joint HR-IR conference in XLRI history. Double the sponsors, double the speakers, double the effort.

A lot to look forward to, right? We'll all work our hardest to ensure all this strategy on paper makes it to the real world – and we look forward to you all helping us all the way. Cause XLRI is a team effort, and in truth we are a bigger team than just the committees.

Thank you for reading and hope you're all in splendid health,

Editor

Sapphire

RIDING THE PEOPLE ANALYTICS WAVE - WHERE ARE WE HEADED?

- Nikhil Iyer & Bhavya Sharma

Analytics is the latest buzz in HR with its potential to transform HR practices, and also the way businesses perceive and make use of their HR function. Results from the PWC Annual CEO Survey, 2015 revealed that 34% of the CEOs from US are highly concerned about the availability of key skills as talent plays a critical role in driving the top line, achievement of business strategy as well as driving change and innovation within the company. A new domain for HR departments within most companies, people analytics can transform the decision making mechanism within organizations. Data analysis has the potential to make processes more efficient by deriving serious insights from patterns and trends that may seem random at first. HR processes and policies play a huge role in business strategy, but quantifying their impact has always been a problem for human resources (HR) executives. Gut feeling and historical practices determine the answers to questions such as "Which method of performance appraisal will yield the best results?" or "What is the impact of training programs on the businesses bottomline?" Adding to this, a lot of people decisions have been based on experience and personal relationships, with orientation towards aversion of risk and compliance with legal norms. [2]

Since, the business value of HR processes is not measured, HR has not been able to fulfil its role as a strategic advisor for business decisions.

With the emergence of data harnessing technologies and the ability to analyze data, there now exist a variety of tools and techniques which can help HR connect the dots between policies and performance in a more precise manner. Focussing on predictive analysis over reactive decisions, these tools and techniques allow organizations to evaluate decisions objectively, in a cost effective and time saving manner. While the outcomes of these analytics are counterintuitive at times, they are effective myth busters and add confidence to decision making. Collectively called "People Analytics", data driven decision making is no more a thing of the future. And the timing for this couldn't have been more perfect, since businesses are getting more competitive and looking at new avenues to add superior value. Along with this, the availability of and access to HR-specific data has increased, due to 3 major factors: widespread adoption of ERP, the availability of a variety of HRIS software platforms which help link various aspects of HR such as employee productivity and talent management, and the current practise of outsourcing or offshoring transactional HR jobs The opportunity to exploit people analytics is huge, considering that organizations spend 50-60% of revenue on payroll, and this variable has been barely analysed. Optimizing such variables can have huge payoffs, such as delivering millions of dollars to the bottomline. [3]

Some of the applications of People Analytics can be listed as follows:

Studying trends in employee retention:

With increase in competition in the business world, and organizations spending thousands of dollars on training and development of its workforce, employee turnover is a huge concern. For instance, a company can collect various data points on employee behavior and determine the traits of employees likely to stay versus employees at-risk of leaving. This will also help the company understand the factors which make their employees stay or leave the organization.

Increasing employee engagement:

Rather than relying on age old HR practices to boost employee engagement, the organization can identify specific factors which lead to

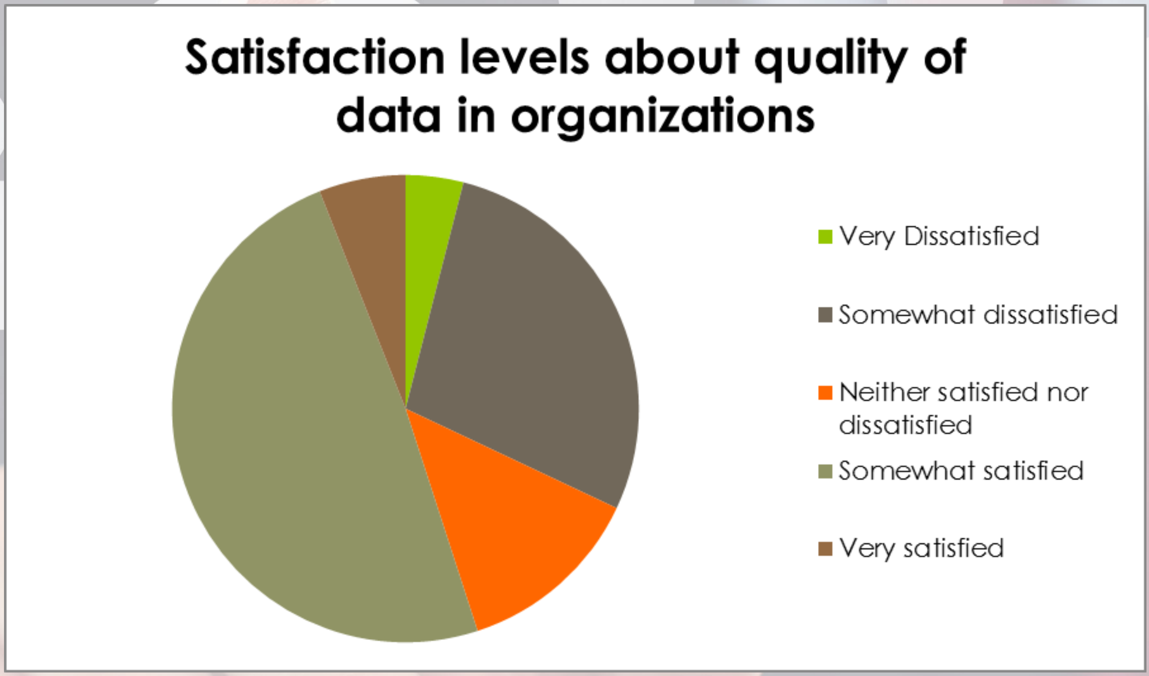

Figure 1: How satisfied are you with the quality of people data within your organization? [6]

dissatisfaction of employees. For instance, analytics helped one of the organizations discover that its compensation was too evenly distributed which kept the middle level performers satisfied but often led the high level performers moving out in search of better opportunities.

Improving hiring practices:

Organizations are moving away from conventional hiring practices and investing in analytics to understand the impact and value of the various policies and practices that form a part of the recruitment process. For example, Google discovered that, beyond the fourth interview, subsequent interviews add little or no value to the hiring process. [1] This insight has led to reduced hiring costs, and better selection practices.

Linking talent with work responsibilities:

Analytics can also be used to study data regarding talent characteristics versus role performance for specific work responsibilities so as to become better at making hiring decisions, setting sales targets and even identifying future leaders in the function or division. Organizations such as Oracle already use such techniques to streamline their HR processes.

Moving away from conventional applications such as trying to measure learning and development (L&D) costs and trying to identify HR policies which added the most value, people analytics is now focussing on organizational-level strategic requirements such as hiring the right people, ensuring productivity of the workforce and identifying employee behaviour to attract more customers and drive revenue. People analytics has advanced to become more than just analysing HR; it is now about analysing business. Organizations should leverage this science for a cross disciplinary approach. Cross functional teams can be created that visualize data across processes from various departments such as Finance and Operations, and define the business benefits of improvements to various parts of HR.

To use people analytics for better decision making, it is important that we access the right data and ensure its quality. Firstly, the data used must be relevant, keeping the business problem in mind. Since a lot of environmental factors affect employee behaviour, one must look at both internal as well as external data for a holistic view. Secondly, the validity of the data, its quality and the credibility of its source is important to ensure accurate results during analysis. Thirdly, the presentation of the data should be clear and simple, so that people don't have to search for links between data points or read between the lines. Fourthly, the result of analytics must be such that it transforms behaviour and thinking and leads to faster and better decision making. And finally, it is important to understand and act on the outcomes of these analytics. One must also realize that people analytics is no substitute for direct engagement with employees, but are instead techniques to gain additional insights, a supplemental tool to conventional people processes and practices.

Roadblocks:

While the potential in people analytics is massive, research shows that most organizations don't completely understand its elements, leading to weak acceptance of the system. Many organizations are just waking up to this new wave of people analytics, and suffer from issues ranging from poor data quality to weak skills in analysing them. While analytics can deliver higher return on investment (ROI) in a standalone manner, HR departments in organizations are finding it difficult to synthesize "multiple unintegrated sources" of people and organizational data to build a comprehensive plan around this technology. [6] One research study shows that more than 80% of HR professionals rate their ability to analyse data as "low" – a worrisome trend in a function that is now increasingly data-driven. In another study, 75% of surveyed companies believed that using people analytics was "important", but only 8% believed that their organization was "strong" in this area. [4] Also, companies that built foundations in people analytics outperformed their peers in quality of hire, retention and leadership capabilities, and were found to be generally ranked higher in their employment brand. [5]

Identifying this gap in HR competence,

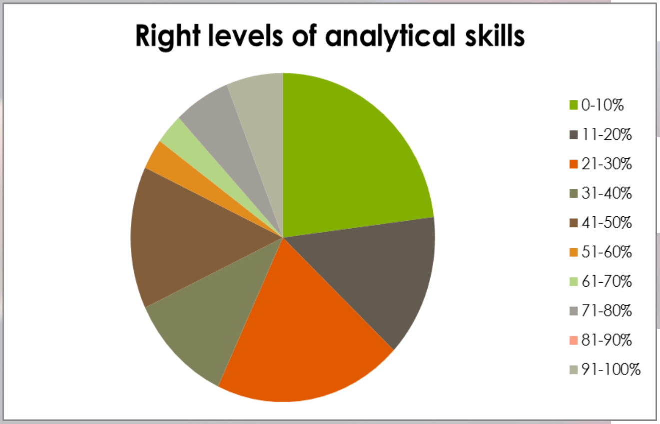

Figure 2: What percentage of business partners have the right level of analytical skills? [6]

there is now an increasing surge of vendors such as Oracle, LinkedIn, ADP, SumTotal Systems, and SuccessFactors offering a variety of software platforms including predictive analytics tools, integrated to their HR and talent management

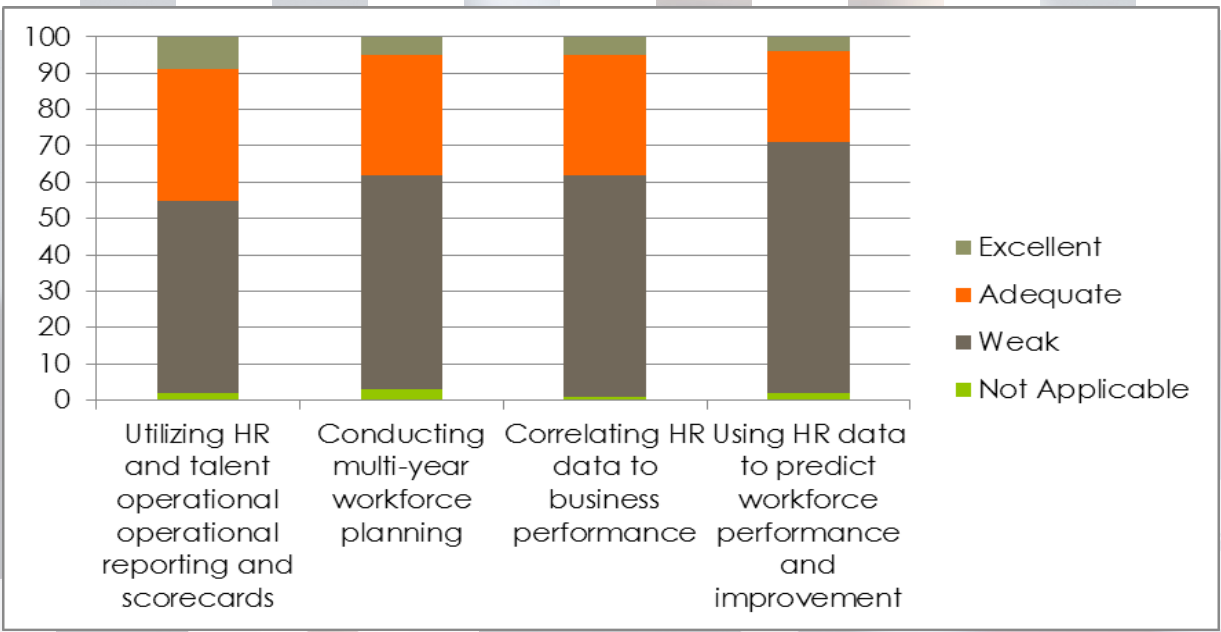

Figure 1: How satisfied are you with the quality of people data within your organization? [6]

software to automate HR processes and connect siloed data sources. Some vendors even offer data visualization and analysis tools, making it easier for HR professionals to visually study and understand data. [3] But buying such software is just the initial step in absorbing this technology, and experts predict that it will take years for organizations to fully unleash the power of people analytics.

Organizations must take cognizance of the fact that investing in people analytics is essential for gaining competitive advantage, and requires substantial investment at the earliest to get traction. Organizations need to have the right analytics team comprising diverse individuals with a combination of business and technical skills. Organizations should also choose the right platforms for analytics suited to the company needs, and upgrade the technology accordingly. And lastly, the organization should ensure that there should be a close collaboration between analytics and other departments, so as to extract comprehensive benefits for the organization.

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THE STARTUP GAME

- Ashish Agarwala

The year 2015 has been a tumultuous year for start-ups in the Indian scenario to say the least with the year culminating in Rocket Internet opting to write-off key companies and a failed attempt to sell off its FoodPanda and Jabong operations. But the symptoms and bad press first hit the market when people first started questioning the business viability of the acclaimed food-tech industry. TinyOwl's layoffs and the unrest which followed sparked a flurry of debate in the startup world with some speculating that the bubble is finally bursting. Meanwhile Housing was also letting hundreds of employees go over a span of several months, which it attributed to closing down of its business units. The argument that these companies are led by young, fresh graduates and hence suffer from inexperienced leadership fails when you see Zomato dropping the axe on 10% of its workforce in one blow.

Now, some of these efforts went relatively smooth, with some bad press and muffled grumbling, but cases where the senior management faced the ire of their ex-employees (as demonstrated by TinyOwl CEO Gaurav Chaudhary being held hostage), it sent a strong signal to the Indian entrepreneurs that you cannot get away with a high-headed attitude. Now understandably market competition coupled with investor pressures lead to companies taking dras-

tic cost-cutting measures. But does this indicate a failure of hiring practices both at a junior and senior level? Could the process of laying off be better managed? Another question which arises is the level of manpower planning these companies are expending. Are they effectively judging the required force and the expansion levels they plan to achieve? A consistent criticism most fledging enterprises with a strong VC funding face is the fast and furious cash burn carried out in the rush to quickly hire new employees. Is the budgeting decision given the due thought it deserves? All these problems somehow relate to less than adequate attention to strong long-term HR practices. One may definitely argue the feasibility of an entire HR department in a start-up but a strong management attention towards these concerns can help avoid a world of trouble later.

Now take the fiasco which Bangalore-based hyperlocal delivery Roadrunnr venture faced after it redesigned its pay structure for its delivery boys. Founded by former Flipkart employees Roadrunnr maintains a local fleet of delivery personnel whom they paid on a per-hour basis. Further it charged its customers on the basis of their shipment size. Its revamped policy chose to pay them on a per-delivery made basis. The discontent among the employees manifested with them ransacking and attacking the Roadrunnr office, arguing that their pay had now significantly decreased. Now did the company consider the daily volumes of orders its delivery boys were handling? Did they consider that they were charging their customers disproportionately for the order size and therefore profit per order fluctuated? A due consideration on the severe impact the move may have on their salary slips should have been enough to predict the situation.

A consistent problem of over-hiring with such companies is the high disposable cash they possess. In a rush to expand quickly and grab more eyeballs budget considerations and efficiency take a back-seat. Can one really blame them? With relatively inexperienced leaders at the helm who are mostly from a technologically robust background a learning curve is expected from them. But this proves to be dangerous in an emerging company leading to chaos at a point where it should focus its resources on business development and process streamlining.

Maybe this is something that the Indian entrepreneur has begun to recognize. The reality of the passion of keeping your venture afloat might cloud your judgement when it comes to ‘people’ is hitting hard with the leaders. They have realized that they can’t do it all. Maybe this is why Oyo rooms decided to appoint an experienced Dinesh R. as its CHRO recently to help manage the significant growth they have achieved.

The problem lies not only with managing the employees at the lower end of the hierarchy but ensure that hiring and managing is done right at the middle and senior level. Start-up employees look for a high level of learning in their initial days. But the risk associated with joining one leaving their cushy jobs and the additional work pressure most of the times entails enticing them with a significant pay rise which now becomes a bench-mark in the company only to increase further with expansion. Budget management in this highly uncertain environment becomes a task as erratic pay is fixed upon with no job evaluation governing the pay. An outcome of this is that em-ployees who joined in the earlier stages end up receiving lesser pay leading to attrition at middle levels.

So what is the solution? Do you concentrate on a HR department with equal concentration as you would for a Business or Product Development department? Or do you at the helm of the compa-ny take prudent, safe decisions? The answer lies in developing a new model. Only innovation and due adaptability according to the organizational circumstances should see flourishing days. Every key decision maker should keep a few basic things in mind. It would be rash to suggest intro-duction of a large HR department, but in rapidly growing and expanding ones that seems to be a rational choice. Bringing in someone with a wide array of industry experience at the helm should enable him to handle the diverse problems aris-ing. Prudent budgeting and prospective cost-measures anytime in the near future should be clearly ironed out. Any employee service agree-ment or contract changes should be carefully pre-pared keeping contingency measures. For exam-ple, in the case of Roadrunnr the employees could have been incrementally introduced to such a change where salary based on mix of fixed pay and number of deliveries made could have been kept incentivizing faster deliveries and at the same time protecting employees from fluctua-tions in delivery demand.

We must step back and realize that in the rush of chasing VC funding and expanding oper-ations, start-ups are forgetting their major assets – employees. One does recognize that job de-scription is varied and decisions need to be taken at a moment's notice otherwise the competition wins, but what we need is a certain level of check or evaluation in taking rash decisions while con-sidering standard HR practices. The ones who do, take the advantage and emerge victorious.

MASTERING THE CRAFT WITH BIG DATA

- Shikha KT, Welingkar Institute

Over the passing years, companies have started acknowledging the role of human resources in creating value .It is not perceived any more as a means to an end. According to Harvard Business review, 71% of CEOs surveyed believe that human capital is the TOP contributing factor to sustainable economic value. Customer relationships seconded human capital at 66% whereas technology, the supremacy of which is expected to demean the role of people as resources stood at 30%, a far cry from human capital. (Missildine, 2015)

Considering the significance of human capital in our economy, HR must enter the big data game to ensure organizations remain competitive and profitably acquire and retain talent. The Oracle 2013 report highlighted how Big data and analytics drives HR towards excellence rather than survival. (Gupta, 2014)

Big data analytics for HR is the process of looking at big data in search of trends, patterns, correlations and insights about human behavior. The idea is to uncover something that the business didn't know and to be predictive when it comes to certain HR functions like hiring, training and choosing between HR initiatives. (Missildine, 2015)

It extensively involves integration and analysis of internal metrics, external benchmarks, social media data and government data to deliver a more informed solution to the business problem at hand. It helps HR organizations to identify management blind spots thus arriving at a smarter and more accurate decision (forum, 2013)

BIG DATA AND THE BIG THOUGHT

CEOs and other leaders no longer base decisions on previous experiences and their gut. Leaders now want to see the facts and data that enhance their particular position. Being able to predict which of your high performers may be at risk for leaving is just one area HR can analyze and bring insight to leaders. By analyzing turnover trends, engagement patterns and performance scores, HR could intervene BEFORE a regretful resignation happens. (Missildine, 2015)

Organizations like Dentsply India and Johnson Matthey are using HR Analytics to drive their organization's HR strategy. Employees of these companies require specific domain knowledge, making talent management a very critical aspect. These organizations capture the employee data across all locations as well as utilize Gallup data. They are able to design employee engagement programs based on the age, tenure and other demographics by using Analytical tools. This helps in enhancing the commitment levels amongst the employees as the incentive scheme can be now diverse and specific to what the employee requires based on his demographic profile. (Gupta, 2014)

The research on 'High-Impact Talent Analytics' by Deloitte revealed that the companies who were using advanced analytics are twice as likely to improve their recruiting efforts and leadership pipelines and thrice more likely to achieve efficiency and cost reductions as compared to those who don't. (Agarwal, 2014)

The tech giant Google too has played its game in the big data field. In the Project Oxygen mission to build better managers, begun in 2009, Google's people analytics team analyzed data on performance reviews, feedback surveys and nominations for manager awards to come up with eight criteria for effective managers that were ranked in importance and then integrated into training, coaching and performance reviews. The changes resulted in a statistically significant improvement in manager quality for 75 percent of its worst-performing bosses. (Rafter, 2013). Thus Big data helps to elevate the quality of decision making and provides the platform for a reliable outcome.

CHANGING THE BIG SCENARIO

Big Data has changed the traditional approach in HR. Here are five areas that have been the canvas to the big data strokes

Talent Analytics

The trend of using big data for human resources is commonly referred to as talent analytics. Talent analytics gathers and analyzes data from a company's current and prospective employees. The objective mostly is to optimize what the company spends on its workers and to check the tradeoff between returns and investment. Big data solutions help to find new ways to prevent wasteful spending. (Espenson, 2015)

Employee Retention.

One of the most difficult tasks for human resources is increasing retention among employees. Businesses with a high turnover rates end up spending a whooping amount on employees that don't end up staying with the company, which is a costly waste of resources. (Espenson, 2015)
The $22.4 billion printer and outsourcing company changed the criteria it uses to hire call-center employees after running a six-month pilot with Evolv on Demand, a San Francisco-based vendor that uses big data and predictive analytics to help companies transform their workforces. Evolv's benchmarks for ideal call-center workers show they live close by, have a reliable way to get to work, and are creative but don't ask too many questions. In the pilot, Xerox revamped its call-center candidate screen test to take those attributes into account and saw attrition drop by 20 percent (Rafter, 2013)
With big data, HR representatives can get a more accurate picture of who is leaving and if there are any patterns among those seeking employment elsewhere. At the same time, big data can be analyzed to identify patterns for people choosing to stay with the company, eventually coming up with a model for employee retention. (Espenson, 2015)

Better Training.

Employee training though necessary, can dig a hole in the pocket. Measuring the potential and effectiveness of training initiatives can ensure that employers are making wise investments concerning employee development. However, CEB's 2014 Global Assessment Trends Report revealed that only 45 percent of its 1,400 respondents use measures of potential to guide development and succession plans. (Straz, 2015)
Employers should focus on obtaining data related to training program participation and outcome. Are employees taking advantage of the professional development opportunities being offered and are they implementing them is a question, the answer to which lies within Big Data.

Better Hires

Much of that starts with the hiring process, and big data has a key role to play there as well. When businesses look for new employees, they can look at data from job sites and social media to find people with the exact qualifications they want for a particular position.
Without big data, the chances of making a bad hire only increase, which can in turn be costly. One survey from CareerBuilder found that 27% of employers believed a single bad hire could

cost them as much as $50,000. Using big data companies can hire right and save huge. (Straz, 2015)

Performance Measurement

Big data can also help make sure performance is more accurately measured. Companies may use big data to determine that some hourly employees aren't being as productive during certain shifts. They may also use it to identify employees that are considered top performers and reward them appropriately, thereby treating workers more fairly based on performance. Use of big data in HR is still relatively new, but as more advances are made, greater savings will likely be the result. (Espenson, 2015)

THE BIG FUTURE

The big data trend in HR is here to stay. We're a knowledge-based economy that needs better decision-making capabilities. Big data presents a new set of opportunities for data-driven decisions to be tied to business strategy across the organization. (Missildine, 2015) However they are not adequate resources in form of skilled professionals available to use the complex analytical tools to unlock the power of analytics which makes us refocus on the need for skill enhancement in this domain. Big data in HR will break the stereotyping of HR as a mere back end function with no scientific application based functions. Indeed the big game changing future is here. (Gupta, 2014)

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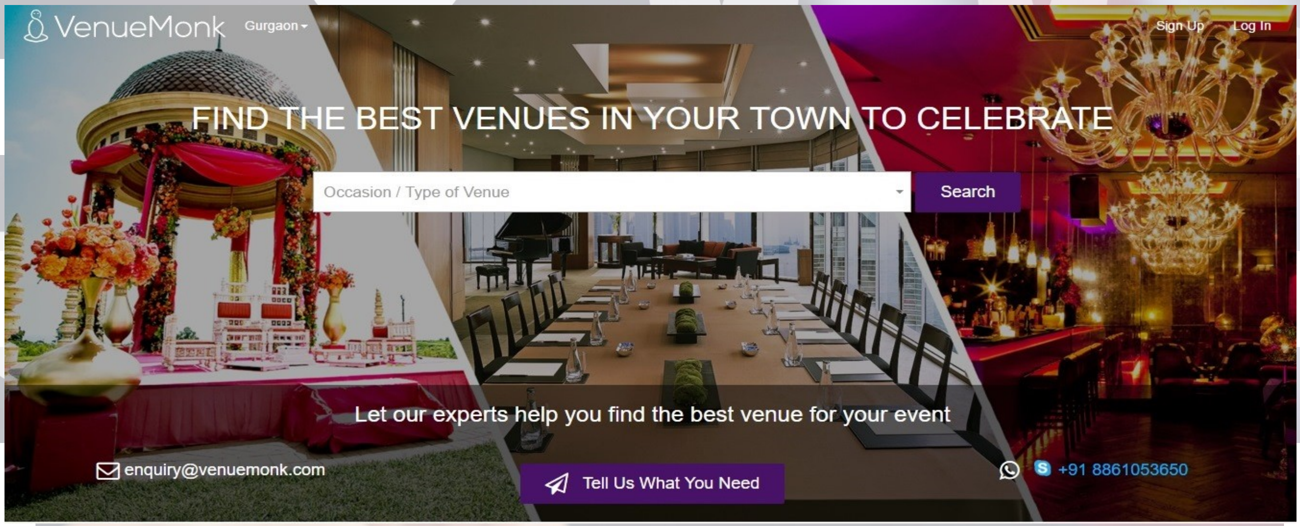
SO HOW DID THE PROJECT GO??

A casual chat with the live project winners of VenueMonk

Last year we at SAPPHIRE brought Venuemonk a nascent startup venue aggregator, on campus and exposed XLRI students to a live project opportunity. While the BM batch got a chance to implement an online marketing scheme, the HR batch was tasked with HR strategy. After some fierce competiton, two teams were selected from each batch – Team Goldminers (BM) and Team DART (HR).



We sat down with them to take a stroll down memory lane and learn about their experiences from the live project – good and bad.

Why Live Projects?

Team DART: This would be a good learning experience for the future and interest in how startups works as opposed to the huge organizations most of us come from and are learning about at XLRI.

Team Goldminers: We did a live project before this with Careeranna that was brought by Ex link. While the team was different this time, we all had work ex and an interest in marketing as a specialization – so an online marketing project seemed ideal for us.

How was the experience?

Team DART: We were exposed to a lot of client facing processes and due to the nascent nature of the company, the HR competency was absent. We were able to apply concepts learnt in the first year to maximum effect. Our motivation was an internal benchmarking that we established so as to ensure we gave good suggestions. Another thing was we ventured into labour law, but the employee strength didn't allow that. Otherwise, we were able to help them with the expansion strategy they were trying to implement.

Team Goldminers: The Sapphire contact helped us out a lot and the CEO, who was younger than us, had similar interests as us – we got along really well. The fast pace was a revelation to us and we all divided our work and gave inputs. For example, we suggested a tie up with Gaana.com to increase exposure. There were no hassles in scheduling and the client was very accommodating.

Some key learnings?

Team DART: We faced some challenges as this was an unique startup and so benchmarking proved difficult due to lack of direct competitors. So, we tried benchmarking with tech startups which were similar and aggregators like OLA and Foodpanda. A lot of secondary research was involved.

Team Goldminers: The unorganized environment was a great experience for us, due to our familiarity with formalized workplaces. The speedy responses we got to our proposals and seeing them implemented were great to see.

Venuemonk as a choice for Live projects?

Team DART: A very basic company. A more complex structure would have given more resistance and challenge to the students, but a good platform if you're new to live projects or start-ups The unpaid nature of the project was a negative though.

Team Goldminers: Startups are great input machines in comparison to larger organizations, which are more inflexible and there is a large gap between idea and implementation. No stipend was an issue though as was the sudden closure of the project from the company's side

Some suggestions for the next year regarding live projects?

Team DART: Startups due to their nascent structure are good areas for HR experimentation. A larger company on the other hand will provide different challenges and require more research. So, a mix of both would be ideal from a learning perspective.

Team Goldminers: Given this was marketing specific, next year more domain specific live projects could be brought like operation based, finance based and marketing based. This will give opportunities to those specializing in those fields.

We hope you all had a pleasant experience. Sapphire will try and bring better and bigger live projects next year.

For more details on venuemonk go to http://www.venuemonk.com/

THE TALENTED WEATHERMAN

- Avishek Chatterjee

Abstract
With the skill ratio depleting with increasing population and human resources reaching critical levels, we need a device that can help us get the right people for the right job

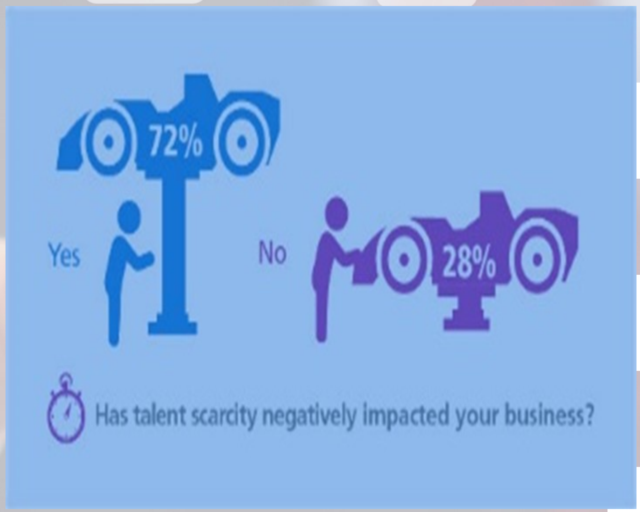
In a world where population keeps on growing and the ratio of skilled people among them keeps getting smaller and smaller, we need a mechanism that can help us get the competitive advantage we need to secure top talent.

That is where Talent forecasting comes in. Talent is considered as the capability of any individual to make a significant difference to the current and future performance of the organization[1] while talent forecasting involves the following steps:

1) KNOW your Business Plan
2) IDENTIFY the key positions that will drive change
3) ATTRACT the people needed for those key positions with a long term view

First of all, this is HR at its most proactive. Instead of waiting for people to show up and apply for positions, there needs to be an energetic look at the market to find candidates who suit your needs. An easy analysis can be done from Lou Adler's survey alongside Linkedin which found that 83% of fully employed participants are not actively looking for a job[2] while of those interested, most were trying third party options like referrals or search engines.

In the Randsrand Sourceright 2016 Talent Trends Report[3], a survey was carried out on talent scarcity, the results of which are given in the graphic.



Talent Forecasting is especially crucial with the impending threat of a Supply Chain Talent "Perfect Storm". In an article by Ruamsook and Craighead[4], they identified four trends that was leading to strains in the supply chain management:

1) Industry demand for new supply chain talent
2) Supply chain talent gaps
3) Supply chain professional dynamics

4) Potential business faculty shortages

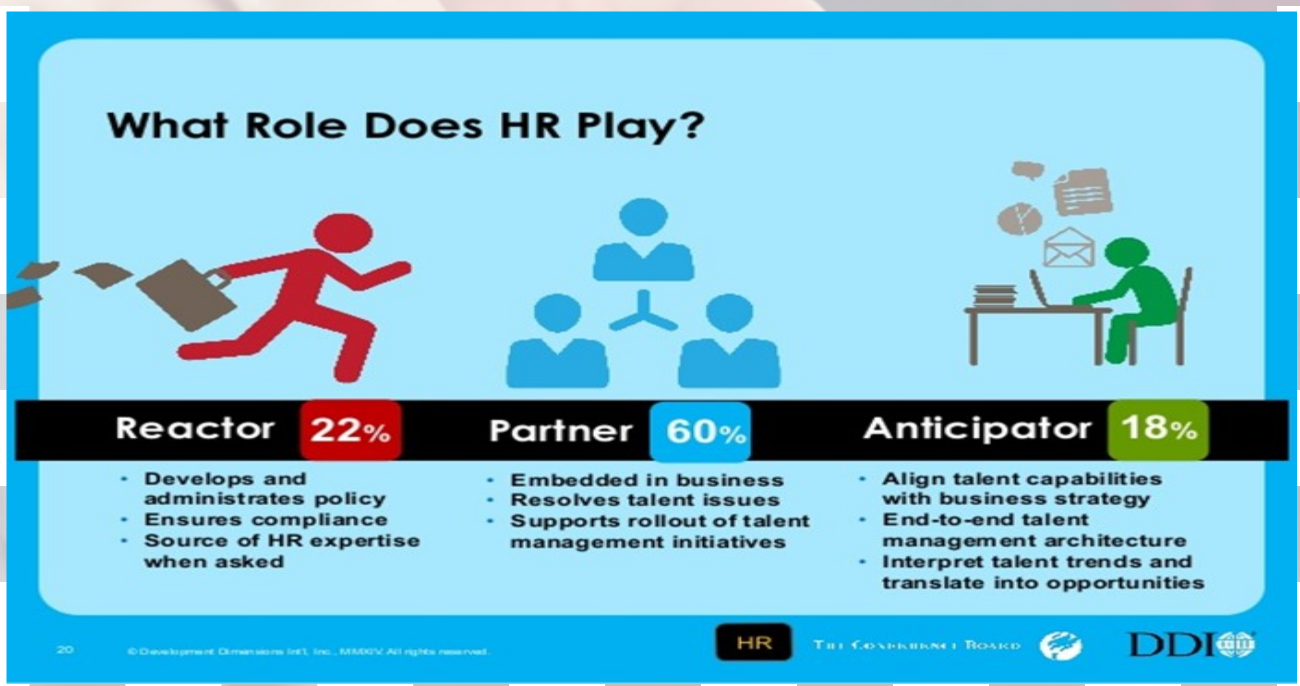
Some figures given will further strengthen the above aspects. According to a McKinsley study[5], while 72% of educational institutions surveyed believe their graduates are ready for work, only 42% of employers agreed. Also in the article by Ruamsook & Craighead, that it is projected that three out of four jobs in supply chain will change by 2015, and that 60% of all new jobs in the 21st century will require skills that only 20% of the workforce possesses.

"Everyone sit perfectly still."

These figures bring into stark reality how desperate the situation is – and the need to fight and find the right people for the critical jobs of an organization

Lisa Hartley in an article on HRE Online[6] identified the key elements required to bring the gap between demand and supply. They are:

1) Predictive Analytics which can alert you of issues in the horizon and opportunities for identifying talent beforehand. For these, real time metrics are critical and historical trends need to be eliminated from assessment.
2) Recruitment needs to be integrated with other aspects of talent management so that with integrated analytics, talent and performance processes, the organization can be rapid in response in segmenting top performers and acquire them before the competitors can act.
3) Engagement of candidates is required due to most being passive as mentioned before. Invest in social media and communication tools so that you can make the potential employee aware of your presence and nurture high touch relationships with recruiters.
4) Big Data is an integral part of using the large



data volume available on candidates' supply and demand intelligence systems. A "line of sight" can be created between predictions and outcomes resulting in recruiter efficiency and high candidate quality.

One last thing she mentions is that this area of talent acquisition should be recognized as an important tool for organizational growth and success. According to a survey by Boston Consulting Group, covering 4,288 HR and non-HR managers, this was identified as the single most valuable resource for growth in revenue and profit.

In Dr Martin Factor's presentation for the Global Leadership Forecast 2014-15[7], he identified the various roles of an HR and where they currently stand on each aspect.

It is as an anticipator that the HR has to take the fight on behalf on his or her organization to the competitors and talent forecasting can be the perfect weapon for this kind of precision strike.

Clearly talent forecasting is more than just counting the number of employees in your company, it is about understanding how to optimize them for profitability and progress by using the technology at our fingertips today.

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HR Innovation - Leading the way to Sustainability

- Sonul Sudeep, KJSIMSR

"If you don't have a competitive advantage, do not compete". These words by the former CEO of the General Electric, Mr .Jack Welsh, sums up the fact that gaining a competitive advantage is a quintessential requirement for any company to sustain. On these lines, Innovation becomes a major step in gaining a competitive advantage. Although, when we talk about Innovation, we focus more on the technical aspect of the same, but the non-technical aspects are a pre-requisite for the technical aspects of the same. This is where HR Innovation comes to the fore which is a management activity taken by the firm to add value to its processes.

How to drive Innovation among HR Professionals?

The first step of any sort of Innovation or a Value-adding activity is to identify the requirement for the firm. As you shortlist some of the important requirements, you have to check the risk and resource requirements associated with it. The risks include risk of investment, implementation failure and failure to deliver desired outcomes. Thus, for an HR Innovation practice, it is a necessity that you acquire, share, investigate and integrate new ideas and knowledge.

How do the HR Practitioners collect and utilize the knowledge?

Let us first look at how to collect the required knowledge for an HR Professional. It can be two sources, Internal and External. External environments include market analysis including competitor analysis, a SWOT analysis of the companies, customer interviews and previous work experience. On the Internal side, it is mostly from the capable knowledge of seniors like the line managers and operational employees. Some companies even have the Process Improvement vertical to ensure there are ideas inflowing to the management and get the best ideas not only for their own benefits, but also customer satisfaction. Tata Consultancy Services is a prime example in this area. Beyond this, there are regular meetings, group discussions and informal chats over coffee/tea to share the knowledge.

Examples of HR Innovation- Systems and Pro-

cesses

While most of the companies focus on the technical side of innovation to gain credibility and a benign sustainance in future, let us look at some of the examples which have HR Innovative practices to get the right mix of individuals for the betterment of the company.

1) Workforce Intelligence System

This is in reference to one of the articles in the PricewaterhouseCooper's where they have focused on the need of a Workforce Intelligence which is a way to assess the workforce return on investment. Companies which adopt this system will have a greater access to their workforce and the productivity they are generating and hence have a shot at building and maintaining sustainable competitive advantage. What does the Workforce Intelligence System do?

It packages the whole HR system into a single package. From recruitment to all the HR programs being followed to capturing the impact of the HR programs, this system answers questions including :- How many employees do we have? How do we get the right hiring objective? How are we getting the turnover? How do we track the Return on Investment from Labor?

Thus overall, it tells us the improvement on the the investment the company has made in recruitment, training, benefits and increased hiring.

2) Predictive Analytics

Strategic Planning has been an integral part of an organization which they can leverage to bring in competitiveness and this has been looked into as a primary need in the Human Resource department too. This is where Predictive Analytics comes to the fore to guide the decision making and strategic development process. Predictive analytics can create value in but not restricted to Employee Profiling and Segmentation, Employee Attrition, Forecasting of HR Capacity and many more. Predictive Analytics helps get the right training needs for particular employees and thus, builds up a commendable workforce for the company. It can help in getting the right cause for managers to understand the high attrition rates and thereby reduce their occurrence. On the forecasting side, Predictive Analytics can help the organizations to have optimal resource utilization and thus, help HR managers develop plans for re-

cruitment, training and other developments. Beyond these, Predictive analytics can help in appropriate profile selection, employee sentiment analysis, employee fraud risk management and many more to get the right balance of workforce in a company.

3) Shared Services Model

The Shared Services Model also known as the SSC Model in Human Resources shifts the HR Administration activities like payroll, benefits to global low cost service centers. This will ensure the core processes of Human Resources are taken care properly and the other administrative activities can be implemented in the desired blend and balance to deliver the expected return. Before implementing the Shared Services Model, the company has to think over the questions like : What benefits can we get from Shared Services? Is it the right time to go for it? How do we manage the change? How technology will affect the initiative? How and what resources do we need?

Beyond the questions, the SSC Model can add significant value to the firm by:

A) Lowering the operating costs and bring in efficiency

B) Can improve the architectural agility of the firm by getting itself into a SSC Organization

C) Improving service quality and organizational learning.

D) Getting the core competencies in the right place to have sustainable advantage.

Examples of HR Innovation- From the Company's Point of View

Let us now look at how of the World's best and most sought after companies have implemented HR Innovation practices and what laurels has it bought to the company

LinkedIN

Ranked as one of the most desirable employers to work for by the Business Insider in 2014, the motto at LinkedIN is to Work Hard and Play Hard. The team design is made in such a way to encourage employees to create systems that break the status quo. Once a month, the company holds an InDay, which is when employees are asked to come up with new innovative ideas. The result-Employee turnover is less than 8 percent and promotions consistently run over 17 percent.

Twitter

Twitter has been consistently grabbing a spot in the Glassdoor's annual list of best places to work with and this is because of the innovative HR department that promotes work-life balance, rapt attention to training while maintaining a culture of authenticity, transparency, and accessibility

HR AND TECHNOLOGY

- Shiva Gandhi, IIM-Rohtak

Ever since the 18th century, with the rapid development of a new industrial approach introduced drastic revolution in hiring demands, harnessing the strength of human capital capabilities in pursuit of competitive advantage and global growth remains the guiding goal. The C suit wants HR to hit the sweet spot with better, smarter, faster and learner performance. The time is right for the HR to step up and meet these stepped-up demands and expectations.

A significance of part of realizing this lies not in the soft skills so often presumed to underlie the essence of HR, but in the nuance of data. Far from turning the HR practice into a number game, it's about using workforce data to better read the organizations and the people that power them.

Leading organizations utilizes human capital metrics, surveys, and predictive analytics to bring workforce insights out of the shadows and to draw a vivid profile of everything from workforce trends, patterns, and motivations to operational and HR cost drivers and organizational assets. Today's expectations are high. But HR today has access to suite of analytical tools like never before-analysis that can help them enable the enterprise assets and inform the C-suite with high-performance, high-level, and highly effective perspective and insights.

Data is being seen as a sleeping, benevolent giant that is poised to bestow keen insights and a more sophisticated, competitive, sustainable talent model on HR leaders, the organizations they serve, and talent they manage. With HR organizations facing escalating demand from business partners and seeking way to demonstrate strategic impact, they can make use of data for predictive analytics.

Workforce analytics are changing along with the rest of the new-global business community. Today's sophisticated analysis transcends reporting past events or point-in-time measurement of current employee attitudes. HR professionals has tapped these advanced statistical techniques to boost their strategic contribution and the power of their predictive metrics. Lagging and point-in-time metrics are still important, but HR are significantly upgrading to dashboards by infusing them with leading, predictive insights. The higher they advance the analytics maturity curve, the better the predictive solutions become the part of organizational workflow, involves considerable investment beyond technology, extending to the skills sets organization hire for, the processes organization build and the technology and tools that enable people and processes. It also helps in boosting the organization's ability to predict employee behavior, elevating HR's profile within the organization in the process. By incorporating workforce analytics to achieve organizational goals-cutting turnover in pivotal roles, enhancing new-hire retention-HR can up its game as a strategic business partner.

Knowing where the workforce is heading can help them see where the organization is heading. If the talent is poised to walk away from the organization, not work for the organization, strategic intervention is essential to protect the entity's sustainability and position in marketplace. By understanding and embracing this potential, HR proactively enhance its effectiveness, gain greater sophistication, and grow its contribution as a strategic business partner.

Amid today's rapid growth and global change, HR leaders continue their bid to balance efficient service delivery with the ed to meet organizational growth and change with the agility and scalability. HR leader, using service delivery models, provide effective services without breaking the bank led many organizations down the shared service center path in the past decade. With the use of next-generation shared services approach, with an emphasis on finding ways to achieve the desired end state, HR is able to orchestrate the right proposition of strategy, organization, people, processes, and technology, informed by what's happening in external environment with respect to technological advancements, talent availability, and the like.

Over the past five years, companies have been cutting headcount, costs, and capital expenditures. Some business leaders, failing to consider the long-term view on staff reduction, didn't stop at thinning the ranks of non-performing talent; they also cut some high-performing employees. Administrative functions, including HR, took significant hits, perhaps disproportionately so. Yet, project demand HR capabilities to support talent, benefits, workforce planning, and other HR capabilities continues too outweigh the supply of resources available to most CHROs. The right technology, like cloud based HCM technology, helps HR provide unprecedented perspective on the organisation, yielding real-time data that can great enhance the decision-making process.

The Fundamentals of running an HR function come down to three things: people, process, and technology. The right people in the right jobs. The right processes in place. Then, finally, the right technology to enable the vision of what HR can be to the organization. To achieve the desired results, truly make change stick, and make organization effective, one can't be done without the others.

"I'm not a techno-determinist. I believe we need to improve our existing human resources, and technology can only be a complement. "

Shashi Tharoor

JUST HR THINGS

UNDERSTANDING THE GAME FROM THE FOOTBALL FIELD

- PRAKHAR AGARWAL, IIFT

Is the HR a game changer? In my view this text comes out as a rhetorical question, because what stands today between us and our primitive past, and what will stand between the today and our hopefully bright future is again only effective human resource management.

In past it was personnel management of men in wars, politics, by the kings and councils of big kingdoms, which shaped the world, after which came the era of industrialization, with the concept of capital and profit which led to the evolution of HR practices in professional workspace. It is a very simple thing to understand that in any organization, that is a workspace with collection of people, human management can be the single most differentiating factor, among the competition because a man is the ultimate resource, who can create or destroy all the effective instruments of game - be it capital, weapons or human themselves, if handled properly.

In modern times too, human resource management plays an equally important role, and perhaps it is easier to recognize its play in scheme of things with great amount of structure that come into the organizations today in form of documentation, departmentalization etc. irrespective of the area they operate in, be it politics, games, manufacturing, etc. If we look at the 2014 general elections or even the Delhi elections win of the Aam Aadmi Party, one again can see effective HR management practise that won the government for the respective parties. This was visible in the form of the ground work conducted by these parties, which included recruiting and management of thousands of volunteers, coordination with the local leaders, compensation of various kinds to multiple entities involved, and also to some extent public relations. Without this, instead of winning elections, we could have witnessed in numerous parties, disputes, scattered ground work force, and effectively would have led to possibly no action and created the difference between the parties' goals and achievements, as much visible in the case of Congress, where the party workers and leadership were often quoted as being disoriented by the people concerned, leading to low morals and in fights which could been seen as an example of bad human resource management, irrespective of who performs it.

The point being that human resource management was always the important aspect, it is only in recent times it has been termed and recognized as a potential skill. The perspective has widened of how people view the job today, i.e. a few years back when job description of an HR was only to see industry labour relations, or as an clerk who was responsible for taking in the grievances of an employee to the management, and distribute pay checks, today they play much wider role, which creates an much wider impact such as, talent acquisition, retention, skill development, policy making, rewards, employee engagement, and much more all of which have an direct impression on the bottom line of any organization, and has an much more in shaping the environment or the culture of the company according to its mission and the vision, inculcating the values, which creates an so called soul of any organization.

If we need to look at why the current role of an HR and why perhaps it is very successful, we can have a perspective of football managers, because they literally personify the meaning of game change by their practices. For example, for a football manager of the Premier League or the La Liga, the only effective difference of how their team performs depend on how good HR they can be, as for the other resources such as coaching staff, the infrastructure in terms of basic training facilities etc. clubs are relatively on same footing on to their competition, barring some exceptions of very high profile clubs, but we have also seen it being nullified as a result of some successful HR practices.

We can begin with recruitment of new players, equivalent to talent acquisition in companies, where we have seen how a new right player can do wonders for an club in one season pushing them to verge of a title as Luis Saurez did for Liverpool, and how millions spent on a wrong player can ruin the financial as well as position of an club. Similar thing applies to any industry too, where according to one report a wrong personnel can cost a company around 5 times the cost of annual salary, while a right one can sprout up a future CEO.

Second is settling exact opposite of acquisition, where manager is also responsible for gauging the performance, and selling the players, or sending them on loans to improve. Similar is the case for a company HR, where they need to remove deadwood, and increase efficiency from method of training and workshops, again impacting the performance and the financial of the company.

Third comes in the on field management of the players, where a manager imparts his philosophy in the players of his playing style. Like tiki-taka of Pep Guardiola, again visible in the performance of the team on the pitch. Results, even managers change because of the style of play because it dictates the result as well as public perception of the team, and it is very important for players to understand and implement the correct style. Similarly for an HR in any organization today it is effective translation of values and working style of the company that impacts the performance, and public image of the company. For example a company like Johnson and Johnson would go great lengths to bring culture according to the code of their founder to their every employee, as it defines their organization and their public perception, and to make this realize effectively to every employee is work of an effective HR, again of great implication.

Fourth comes the maintenance of on field unity, compliance between the players, as well as the players and the club. We have seen how a team performs when player don't want to play for the team, such as absence from training sessions, as well as deserting the team from between the tournaments, which have an great implication on the performance and the moral of the team. It is therefore responsibility of the manager to handle this situation by either selling that player, or motivating and convincing them. Similar for an HR in industry, they handle disputes, biases etc. which enhance the environment of the company. An example can be google developing program to identify the perception of its employee and countering them, which help them find their biases in work, and improve their working and efficiency.

Last comes the management of the salary, and the compensation. Although manager does not have a direct say on how much the club must remunerate the player, they have a say in deciding the limit they would go, for instance in transfer pricing. Again it is important for an HR to identify how much they are willing to pay for the talent, as it has significant impact on bottom line of the company, with limited coffers and budget. A wrong decision could lead to heavy losses, while a bargain could lead to heavy profit, as visible in cases of some free transfers in football.

So as we take a look at this is quite short list that largely abstracts the kind of work HR do today, it is important to recognize that they play the game changer because their every decision is possibly the difference between the success and failure, because they have the control of the implementers, the decision makers, the workmen - all important cogs, but only if a HR fits them in the right place.

In future, it is only more certain, that more importance will be given to human resource, because with coming up of automation, machine learning etc., it is human decision makers that could make the difference, and it is upon HRs to have the correct set in place to make that decision.

JUST HR THINGS

SELF MANAGED TEAMS IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR AND THE IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

- BIJU SEBASTIAN

HEAD—HR (INDIAN OPERATIONS)

APOLLO TYRES LIMITED

Recent years have brought many challenges to the Indian manufacturing sectors. A workforce that now demands more from work than simply a means for making a living, the increasing complexity of technical knowledge and information flows, and other forces have pressured companies to explore innovative work designs.

Continuous improvement is the key for success and survival of an organization in the ever changing global economy. Hence many corporations are now relooking the organizational structure by replacing the existing traditional organization structure that has steep hierarchies, rigidly divided functions and bloated bureaucracies with a new organization structure that is lean, flexible and designed to support, motivate and enable its employees to contribute maximum energy and ability to the success of the organization.

One of the popular and innovative work systems is Self Managed Teams and it is designed to achieve organizational efficiency, effectiveness and enhance the healthy organizational relationships between internal and external stakeholders such as unions, associates, customers and suppliers. Work designs based on SMT tend to give workers a high degree of autonomy and control over their immediate behavior.

SMT approach

Self Managed Teams represent a revolutionary approach that goes beyond quality circles or ad hoc problem-solving teams to the way work is organized and performed. These teams are "Natural Work Groups" that work together to perform a function or produce a product or service. The team manages the planning, production, quality control, material management, hiring peers, performance feedback etc.

The company supports the team by redefining its organizational structure to suit to the philosophy, defining areas of empowerment, communication channels, learning programs, reward and recognition mechanism and performance monitoring tool. This performance comes at a price: decisions are slow, work teams require extensive training and months to mature. However, the benefits far outweigh the difficulties and frustrations.

Principles of SMT

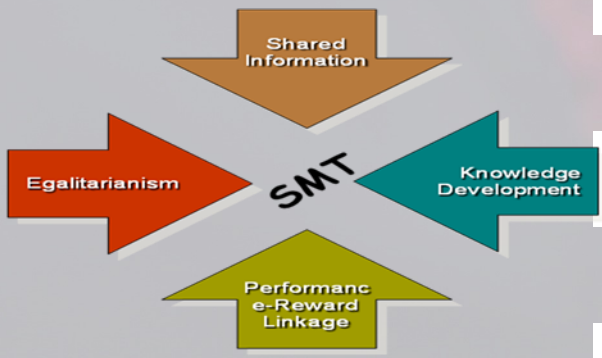
The conjunction of these four parameters leads to a high involvement of employees.

Principle of Shared Information

Creating a Culture where all employees have access to all essential information; a shift away from the mentality of command and control.

Principle of Knowledge Development

Culture where everyone learns in "real time," on the job, applies collective wisdom and enhances multi-skill, and uses innovative new approaches to solve



novel problems.

Principle of Performance-Reward Linkage

Culture where all employees are aligned towards organizational goals, and rewards are connected to performance, employees will naturally pursue outcomes that are mutually beneficial to themselves and the organization.

Principle of Egalitarianism

Egalitarian work environment eliminate status and power differences and, in the process, increases collaboration and teamwork.
When this happens, productivity will improve - people who worked in isolation from (or opposition to) one another begin to work together.

SMT Methodology

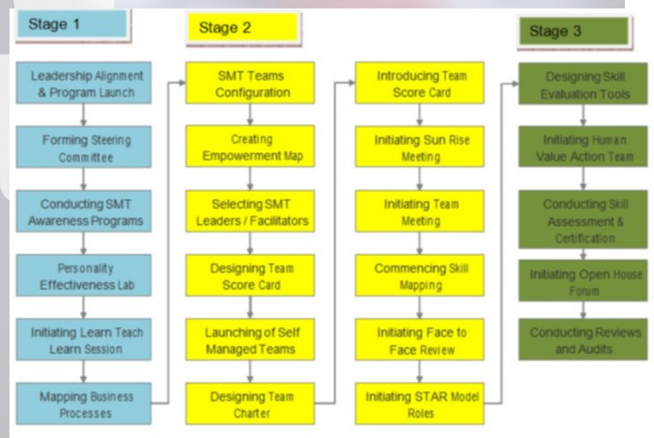
The SMT model would pass through intermittent stages to reach the ideal SMT structure (with having only three layers and supervision-less functioning). Better the improving maturity level of the teams better the autonomy and empowerment.

- The teams are configured based on VAPs (Value Added Processes). The ideal team strength is around 8 to12 members.
- A team could be of members from across shifts or within shifts also. Also, it could consist of members from cross functional / section or within functional / section.
- Maintenance function generally gets disintegrated as autonomous maintenance except for specialized maintenance and projects. Quality team would extend support - acts as a trainer and conscious keeper, and not as an inspector.
- Stores would remain as a centralized support team but will have a defined resource person to support each team.

Stage 1: Blue cells refer to processes that are the foundation, which are to be carried out before the roll out of teams.
Stage 2: Yellow cells refer to processes that are core processes of SMT. These can be implemented in pilot area and on seeing the results (say within 4-5 months) they can be replicated to other areas.
Stage 3: Green cells are the advanced processes which can be initiated only after establishing the core processes of SMT.

Preparedness for SMT implement

Failures in many self-managed team programs have made it clear that self-managed team programs should no longer be considered as a simple set of tools or practices. It should be understood that SMTs are not appropriate for every organization. Before designing these teams and establishing expectations for them, the organization should first conduct an environmental analysis to include strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis).



This analysis should focus on three basic sets of considerations.
The first consideration is whether or not a company is in a competitive environment. Second, consideration should be given to the management style that already exists in the organization. If the company follows an autocratic style of management, it will be difficult to integrate the self-managed team system immediately. Finally, a company should consider what type of technical capabilities under which they operate. Highly specialized and automated production technology is designed to function most effectively with limited intervention by individual production operators.

Implementation Challenges (Failure Mode Effect Analysis)

Self-managed team programs often fail because of tactical errors made by management. They must prepare for possible problems, evaluate their objectives, and ready themselves for employee reaction. The organization should assess the possible FMEA before jumping on SMT concept.
Management Expectations - A number of group leaders and members have expressed frustration because they are not completely sure of what the upper management expects from them. In one case, both the corporation and the plant had mission statements,

goals, and objectives, but the majority of the team leaders, and almost none of the workers, had ever seen them.

Management Assistance - Generally, the team leaders want assistance from the management when they need it, but not interference although in some cases, direct intervention by the management would have been welcomed. However, it is difficult for management to provide on-going assistance without giving the impression of interference.

Group Expectations - Closely related to the difficulty of management liaison are problems relating to what is expected from each of the teams. While some guidance is given concerning such things as desired Fist Pass Yield (FPY), productivity and quality, little is given on other aspects of team operation, especially the less tangible issues. Team leaders also had some difficulty accounting for the variability between groups.

Team Management - Management has had some difficulties in working with the teams. The first of these difficulties is evaluating team performance. Measuring intangible items such as communication, team leadership, meeting effectiveness, cooperation, and problem-solving ability is more difficult for management than measuring the productive processes.

Performance Recognition - If material rewards are given, the rewards must keep getting bigger and bigger to have the same motivating effect. Rewarding the team leaders is even more difficult. If team leaders receive more compensation than team members, the team members view the team leader as a supervisor or designated team leader. If there is no monetary differentiation, then team leaders may soon tire of the additional responsibility and work required. The recognition of performance of team leaders therefore, continues to be a perplexing problem.

Development of Employee Cooperation & Discipline **-** Team leaders feel that disciplining employees is management's role. However, for management to discipline an employee, much of the necessary information must come from the group, particularly if the problem relates to performance or disruptive behavior. Often, the team members are reluctant to give this information.

Performance within the group **-** Internal problem recognition is difficult for groups. Though many of the teams are trained in the use of problem recognition techniques, most have difficulty abstracting and identifying problems. In many cases, they simply overlook the problems. In other cases, they are not able to identify the problem areas, nor relate the problem to operations.

Group Changes Another factor that reduces the effectiveness of group performance is internal group changes. Three types of changes have been identified:

- Changes in group membership;
- Expansion of group membership
- Changes in group leadership

Because group changes are sporadic and widely dispersed, new members do not always receive team training. The new leaders are given some training in the problem identifying and solving techniques, but often they do not know how to apply these concepts in real work situations.

Intergroup Relations - Teams face two sources of intergroup conflict. If a group discovers something that would be of benefit to other groups, the first group often does not share the information with others as it does not want to increase the competition for recognition and awards. The other difficulty that arises is dealing with problems that exist between groups. In most cases, these are not dealt with effectively.

Increasing numbers of firms are revamping their management styles and work processes in favor of those more effective in meeting the needs and expectations of customers. The topic of employee empowerment has been one of much discussion, including the effects of its implementation on managers and employees. Companies that have implemented self-managed team programs have learned that these programs are long-term strategies. The large amount of resources needed in the early stages of implementation and inconsistent customer service during transitional periods do not allow for many short-term rewards.

SAPPHIRE – A QUICK GLANCE AT THE PAST

SAPPHIRE had an eventful year last year with numerous events being conducted throughout the calendar year. The events conducted were successful and praised for their creativity and participants were appreciative of the fact that they got to apply what they learnt in classrooms in practical situations in an engaging manner.

With the new batch we conducted CHAOS, the ice breaker event for the junior batch at the beginning of the first term of year. It was lauded by the participants as being the most innovative ice breaker they have taken part in. Involving basic HR learnings like Training and Development, Wage Determination, Recruitment and Selection etc. it represented a true amalgamation of learning and fun.

Battle HRoyale 2015, the national HR quiz league was then initiated. A series of 4 innovative online quizzes, its popularity could be judged by the fact that 400+ 4 member teams from over 30 B-schools registered for the first quiz and more registrations started flowing as the event proceeded.

With cash prizes worth 20,000 up for grabs, there was the added incentive for its popularity apart from the innovative format for the quiz.

Ensemble 2015 was the biggest edition of Ensemble and SAPPHIRE played a big part in ensuring that. Conduction not one but two events, the flagship event War of Wits and Apollo, in association with Fire@x and CRUX, the events were a huge success.

Involving nearly 180 teams who battled through multiple quiz round before the best 6 teams duked it out in the finals which was a live case study, it was a huge task which SAPPHIRE pulled off. With teams from top colleges including IIMs, IIFT, SP Jain, NMIMS, the bar has been set high to better this year's work.

Finally, the pilot run for the HR League, an intra-college event was held this year. Involving both the junior and senior batches, the events were of a very practical nature.

Domestic Enquiry, HR Employee Auction and Training & Development scenario were a huge task to pull off but the team managed to pull it off successfully. We and the participants gained key insights into how to do projects and team scenarios.

Coming to newsletters, we published Xpress HR for the period of October-November on the theme of 'High Potentials'.

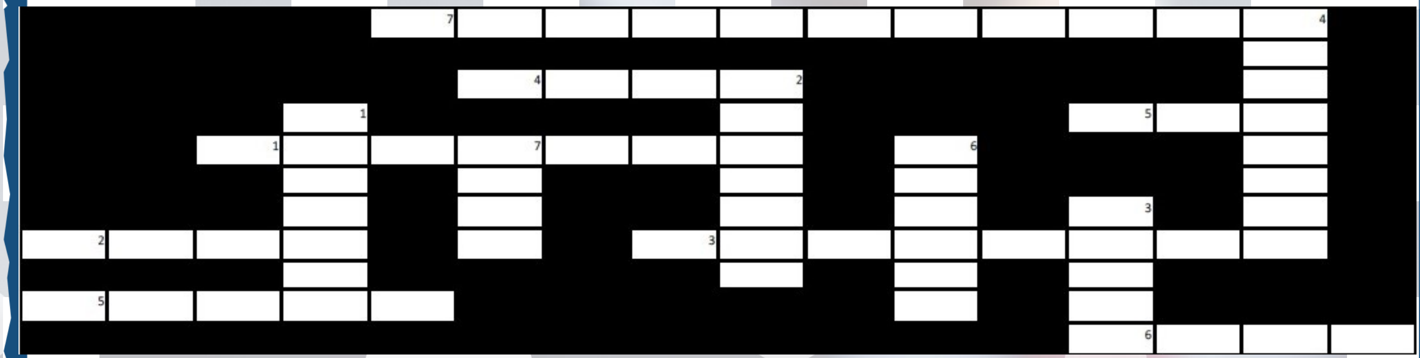
It included articles from students, interviews with 'Hi-Po' corporates and some of the best HR practices.

We hope to make the new year bigger and better!

"Life is divided into three terms - that which was, which is, and which will be. Let us learn from the past to profit by the present, and from the present, to live better in the future."

William Wordsworth

CROSSWORD



Down

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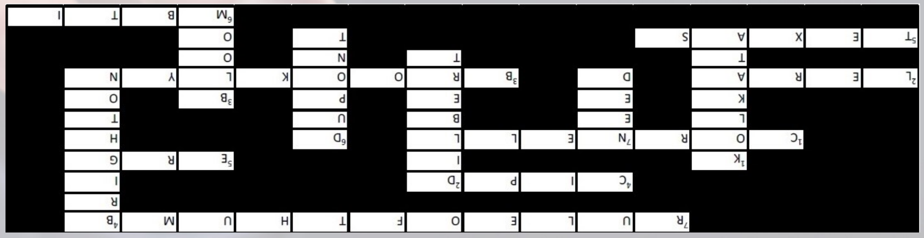
Shubhra Bhandari works at (5)
Introspective self-report questionnaire (4)
Qualitative forecasting technique used for determining demand of HR (11)

ANSWERS



SAPPHIRE – A NEW DAWNING

This next academic year at XLRI will be a crucial one for Sapphire. We aim to build a better and more efficient overall system for the committee establishing benchmarks that can progress the value of HR beyond the present.

The key piece in this is the HRIR conference. For the first time, Sapphire and Fire@x will collaborate to bring together the key elements that have made XLRI what it is. Instead of a biannual event for either committee, the conference will be a joint annual effort, helping in bringing in sponsors and key speakers in both HR and IR.

Getting into something more Sapphire specific, this year HR League was a great success but we hunger for more. A more refined version allowing more participants and more diverse events will be a key area of focus for us in the upcoming year.

Similarly, Battle HRoyale will be back, with better questions and bigger exposure!

Coming to Live Projects, we will be aiming to bring more cases that involve crucial HR learnings and great practical exposure. Finding more platforms, especially Maxi Fair, to promote these projects is also up there in our priorities.

As for War of Wits and Apollo, we'll ensure that we can keep up the standards of years past and try and improve the experience for everyone involved.

Xpress HR will be out in full force, will an aim to bring it out on a bimonthly basis starting with September upto the publication of Synapse, making it a mouthpiece for students, professors and industry professionals to venture opinions on all things HR.

So, onward towards a bigger and brighter future!

"MORNING WILL COME; IT HAS NO CHOICE."

SAPPHIRE

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