

TOP 12 HR TRENDS

1 Talent management will remain a priority

In the recent time, the "one size fits all" approach has become a passé. In 2015, the 'war for talent' is all set to intensify despite efforts from organizations, especially when the Generation Y workforce is on the lookout for the experience rather than a career. Hence talent management will continue to remain a top priority for HR across sectors. Rajani Tewari, Head - Human Resources, Wockhardt Hospitals Ltd, says, "Workforce in any organization, comprises of an eclectic blend of both Generation X & Generation Y employees. Identifying their similar and more importantly dissimilar needs and devising a developmental strategy while catering to both in an unbiased manner will be amongst the top trends this year," she quips. She further opines that effective segmentation based on the performance and potential as well as tenure and experience will go a long way in catering to the differential needs of the different strata of your talent.

On the other hand, Richa Tripathy, Chief Human Resources Officer at Tata Teleservices Ltd points out often the recruitment process is focused primarily on talent acquisition rather than the entire employee lifecycle. "While hiring great talent is extremely important to the health of a company, so is developing future leaders, engaging employees, and deploying them effectively after on-boarding," she affirms. Prithvi Shergill, Chief Human Resources Officer, HCL Technologies affirms that in 2015, HR will be expected to tap into new pools of talent across the globe more efficiently- to attract as well as retain them while delivering the committed experience.



2 HR technology to move a step forward

Technology played a significant role in HR in the year that went by. And in 2015, it is expected to gain significant prominence. "In 2014, the theme was to "simplify" - understand and use technology but yet keep it simple and 2015 will be of "adoption" - making technology easy to use and deliver the distinctive experience organizations promises," asserts Shergill. With new age workplace making its way, fixed office locations will soon be a rarity. And, with this, tracking attendance and monitoring the entry and exit of employees will also take a back seat. "This presents a need for HR teams to move up the value stream and ensure they remain connected with their workforce using social collaboration, mobility and cloud technologies to create innovation in a distributed environment where the freedom to ideate, decide and act is with everyone everywhere," he adds.



3 HR analytics to garner more attention

In 2014, HR analytics spread great amount of excitement and optimism in the HR function. The value derived from data and analytics became all the more prominent. This year, HR analytics is expected to new grounds as organizations have gained considerable understanding of big data. "HR decisions are being taken not on a hunch but based on data backed analytics. This trend is expected to grow in 2015 as some of the leading firms are pioneering in this area and their success is spawning interest. This will be the year of experimentation around analytics and some definite



analytical models are soon to emerge," shares Shatrunjay Krishna, Director - Talent Management & Organizational Alignment, Towers Watson India.

In addition, Tripathy is of the opinion that the usage of these analytics will range from developing people strategies to exploring various hypothetical scenarios. The HR metrics relating to the human resources of an organization can, if purposed appropriately, maximize the effectiveness of not only those human resources, but equipment, technology, office space, real estate and working capital as well.

4 Diversity will be the business agenda

Industry leaders are of the opinion that 2015 will witness more organizations striving for diversity. Especially with SEBI mandating the presence of at least one woman director on all company boards from April 2015, diversity will be on every CEO's mind. 2014 witnessed an increased emphasis on retaining and hiring women employees across levels, "however, establishing an unbiased society and promoting gender equality will extremely crucial for the overall development of our culture," opines Tripathy.

Adding to that Nishchae Suri, partner and Head of People and Change, KPMG in India asserts, "Remunerating men and women equally for comparable work, removing barriers for equal participation in attractive work opportunities, institutionalizing work practices that embrace needs of both genders are areas which would gain further traction in the New Year. With increased relevance for the cause, particularly in India, leaders will make the gender initiative personal. Progressive organizations and diversity champion groups will also recognize the need for increased male sponsorship as a critical component to drive greater success of diversity programs," affirms.

Another factor which will be vital aspect in diversity management will be managing the Generation workforce. This breed of employees has aspirations which are different from the older lot, are savvier with technology, and are increasingly defined by their love for autonomy, focus on merit over tenure and aspiration to be part of making a difference. "There is a big gap in their learning patterns and preferences, compared to that of older management. Developing senior leaders will help the multi-generational workforce get clear direction and role-modelling from the top," asserts Pallavi Jha, CMD, Dale Carnegie Training India.



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Develop your leaders

In the current business scenario, leadership crisis is a major issue that is haunting organizations globally. Leaders equipped with the ability for critical thinking, engaging people and visioning are in dearth. According to a study by Elance oDesk, 27 per cent of Gen-Yers already work in managerial positions, and in 10 years that number will increase to 47 per cent. However Gen-Y may not be adequately trained to handle the tasks. So, it is crucial for organizations to harness on these young talents, train them to become strong leaders and move them accordingly to newer roles in 2015.

According to Krishna, strong leaders fuel profitable growth and hence organizations are placing greater emphasis on this aspect more than ever before. Therefore, "The ability to communicate the larger organizational vision, connect with all employee levels and generate buy-in has necessitated that leadership capabilities be the core competency that L&D needs to focus on in the coming year," shares Jha.



6

Scalable skills will sell

According to Faisal Nadeem Saiyed, Director - Human Resources, Expedia® India, companies will hunt those people who have practical experienced in 'scaling' businesses. Middle and senior level jobs will go to those employees who can demonstrate an ability to be able to move their companies from where they are, to a larger, bigger scale. "In other words, 'we are still a start-up' will be more of an excuse for lack of systems and processes that do not cater to galloping business, but also career paths, policies and practices," he adds.



Further, Krishna points out that in this volatile and uncertain world, workforce skills need constant rejigging. This will come as a strong challenge to HR departments in 2015 and this will increasingly become a big ask from the business managers as they will be themselves grappling with this issue. "HR being the specialists in this area would have to take up this challenge of skilling and reskilling the workforce," he shares.

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Strategic workforce planning

According to HRBoss, a workforce planning and analytics software provider, has announced the launch of its Workforce Planning survey, a robust and aligned workforce planning strategy is an integral part of successful businesses but are organizations working smart when it comes to placing the right people in the right places, at the right time? Or, is the reality that companies are still conducting workforce planning on an 'as-needed' basis? Strategic workforce planning involves developing a workforce deployment model for medium to long term. It also involves thinking more fundamentally on the business delivery model (e.g., what areas to outsource, etc.). "In 2015, workforce planning will be driven not merely by workforce cost considerations but also speed to market, nimbleness in responding to change and management bandwidth among other factors," shares Krishna.



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Futuristic approach

By 2020, the average age of an Indian will be 29 years. So it is an imperative for HR to devise policies that are focused on attracting and engaging this young generation of professionals. According to Tewari, having a 'blunt instrument' approach wouldn't help; instead, segmenting your grain from the chaff and focusing your efforts on nurturing and rewarding this talent is the need of the hour. Therefore, she stresses that HR professionals will thus need to have a futuristic approach towards catering to needs of the future generations and plan ahead of time by watching the changing behavioural patterns amongst today's youngsters and equip themselves with policies, processes and talent management practices to foresee their needs and attract the right talent.

Another important fact is employee experience. The past decade has witnessed remarkable developments, not just in terms of technology and processes but also the way mindsets have evolved. In today's digitalized global economy, it is essential for organizations to ensure that the job experience is delivered as promised. "Thus, in 2015, an employment experience introduced through distinctive sourcing and candidate management interactions should position progressive companies as a preferred choice. Having the right capacity and ability is the primary accountability for the HR function will directly contribute to enabling the business plan and its success," says Shergill.



The impact of social media on the current generation is overwhelming. HR also needs to evolve at the same pace. "Currently, social media is an important tool for recruitment. The usage of LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms for recruitment is set to intensify in 2015, with organizations seeking to keep track of both alumni and new talent pools," shares Tripathy. "To stay focussed and also match up to the pace, HR needs to now think 10 years ahead and devise its policies and work culture relevant to the Generation Z that will eventually be HR's future customers," adds Tewari.

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Have a succession plan in place

Most leading organizations already have a high performer program in place to reward, recognize and retain the best, however many fail to stay consistent when it comes to sticking to their plan for the potential leaders. In fact, HR is often seen besieged when they have to find replacements for managers and leaders who choose to quit. "In 2015, succession planning will be crucial for Human Resources across sectors and organizations. Hence organizations must formulate specific high-potential plans to develop bench strength and also groom, not only the current leaders, but also the next-in-line for better continuity," shares Jha.



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Retirement benefits

According to Tewari, another important area of focus for HR in 2015 will be retirement benefits. "HR needs to make its people aware about the benefits of longevity in the organization by devising policies keeping in mind the needs of its people on retirement. One challenge here is to make employees aware of the importance of planning long term to avoid financial hassles post retirement," she asserts.



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Global exposure, local implementation

According to Saiyed, in 2015, perhaps now more than ever, employers will look for people who are able to synthesize global or cross country experiences and synthesize them for local implementation. "This will be critical because this skill will complement the ability to 'build for scale'. A classic example is that Infosys had to look for Vishal Sikka (an Indian) working in a large MNC (SAP), based out of USA (global connect) to re-vitalize Infosys," he explains.

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Growth will align capacity and ability

Today the millennial generation plays a vital role in the functioning of the overall workforce and the organization. They want to be associated with an organization which is ready to invest and prepare them to contribute to the business growth. They adapt to re-skill, cross-skill and up-skill and grow mastery in disciplines that are most relevant to the business context. According to Shergill, 2015 is the year, when progressive organizations are all ready to redesign internal processes that enable performance, career, talent, rewards and learning management." Last but not the least, he stresses that to enable growth in 2015, both individual and organization, it will be important for employees to see people practices as a mirror that helps them understand their own potential; transparent, flexible and trust that they are fair and objective; empowering them to add value to their work and give them the responsibility to be the 'CEO of their own careers'.





Faisal Nadeem Saiyed
 Director - Human Resources
 ■ Expedia® India

Expedia to leverage on technology

Expedia global vision, expressed simply, is to revolutionise travel through the power of technology. It is technology which will play the role of being an integrator of people and thoughts. Thus, our employees are very strong on the fundamentals of technological prowess and recognized for their ability to provide customers complex yet effective solutions for their travel needs. There are about sixty two million unique visitors every month on to the websites, and the only way to engage with such humongous volumes is to offer them real differentiation. These trends will accelerate in 2015-16 and hopefully, Expedia will be well placed to take the right calls.



Prithvi Shergill
 Chief - Human Resources
 ■ HCL Technologies

HCL to leverage on data and talent

The plan is to reduce the constraints of looking at data in silos and ensure that we can 'connect the dots' so as to be able to better address challenges and decisions that help us have access and availability to the right place, right skill, right time and right cost - as this translates to best in class utilization, meaningful work experience and productivity. In a fast changing business environment, focusing on these trends will help us improve decision making, resulting in the ability to take advantage of opportunities, minimize risks, and control costs.



Richa Tripathy
 Chief - Human Resources
 ■ Tata Teleservices Ltd

Tata Teleservices to leverage on diversity

In 2015, we will continue to focus on equal opportunity for women in the workforce and, to that end, aid and abet women to come forward and contribute to the company and their individual growth. A safe and enabling environment for women employees is mandatory. We will continue to recognize and celebrate their efforts and achievements. TTSL's efforts are to remove unconscious bias as well as any policy shortfalls. Flexible programs that enable women to work happily across their entire career cycle encourage women to continue their career and grow in the company, especially employees in the middle and senior level of the pyramid.



Rajani Tewari
 Head - Human Resources
 ■ Wockhardt Hospitals Ltd

Wockhardt leveraging on talent management strategies

We have a robust 360 degree talent management & talent engagement model in place that focuses on basic hygiene, personal growth, fun at work & professional growth and learning opportunities. Apart from that, we also adopt a segmented approach to talent management by customizing our developmental initiatives to the differential needs of diverse workgroups. We have revamped a number of policies in the previous year and are constantly revamping our policies to be as flexible and empowering as possible given the challenging and complex environment within healthcare space.

Challenges ahead of India Inc. in 2015

There are a few challenges that HR leaders foresee in 2015, however, they are optimistic that the hurdles can be overcome through constant vigilance. Tewari cautions organizations and asserts, "Access to information is no longer a challenge. Hence being transparent in our communication and being careful in

whatever we say and the way in which views are put is the key to being successful in handling today's young generation." Adding to this, Shergill further points out that adaptability will be a key trait for HR to focus on. With more than one generation working together in teams to achieve superlative performance, various challenges will present themselves at different managerial

levels. Tackling this will demand tailored programs that will increase and improve the level of engagement between the different mindsets at work. "Newer ways to plan your workforce and more adaptable plans to re-skill and up-skill your focus must be deliberated upon and put into practice," he shares.

With talent being in short supply, another challenge, according to Suri,



Pallavi Jha

CMD

■ Dale Carnegie Training India

Training investment to be critical

In India, trends indicate that retaining high performers is getting increasingly difficult. At the same time, with today's large talent pool recruiting fresh talent has become extremely competitive and hence more expensive. As more organizations are recognizing the acute need to reassess their own retention and engagement strategies, training investment becoming more strategic as opposed to tactical.



Shatrunjay Krishna

Director - Talent Management & Organisational Alignment

■ Towers Watson India

Towers Watson to leverage on trust

Towers Watson believes that HR can play a very strong, almost decisive, factor in executing the strategy of the company. Depending on your strategy, you need to focus on a few HR levers to make things happen. We work with client to bring HR programs to life that helps them execute their strategy. We would like to be a trusted advisor for our clients and bring to them insights based on our global work in these areas so that they make the right decisions about their people program choices and are not driven by trends alone.



Nishchae Suri

Partner and Head of People and Change

■ KPMG in India

KPMG on engagement

We are likely to see a defined move from the one-size fits all approach to a more customized, personal one. HR leaders will look to assess motivational differences - how to meaningfully respond to individual aspirations and what it takes to communicate the 'what is in this for me' for every single, unique employee. The emphasis will be to create a culture of cognitive and emotional engagement - a place where employees feel warmth, affection and connection. The future will therefore belong to organisations that can tailor and segment their approach to engagement.



Prashant Bhatnagar

Director-Hiring and Staffing

■ SapientNitro

2015 will be the 'Year of the Candidate'. Technology will continue to disrupt the HR profession- right from identification of candidates/jobs, assessment, deciding who to consider, pre-hire engagement, on-boarding, learning and career discovery, all are enabled by technology. Mobile and social will no longer be buzzwords but more integrated into ways of our working. Video interviewing and social media will be used as a source of referral. Employer brand and candidate experience will be intertwined and a key metric for recruitment heads will be on the advancement in diversity, especially diversity goals.

is for businesses to evaluate people-related decisions for their return on investment. "It is therefore imperative that organizations to focus on hiring retainable talent, practice one-on-one engagement and celebrate the growth of their employees," he asserts. With cross-generation workforce becoming a norm in most organizations, technologically empowering the employees who are shy to experiment

with digital and technology will be a challenge many organizations are bound to encounter. "To make them understand the importance of changing trends and making them adapt accordingly will be a task. The digital divide that separates generations will be one of the major areas to work on," affirms Saiyad.

With several challenges and opportunities ahead of Human Resources, it is critical for new age

HR leaders to shoulder the responsibility to transform current organizations for a better future. Hence to gain the competitive advantage in 2015, organizations will have to make an extra effort to understand the different generations that co-exist, strive hard to attract the best talent and, of course, ensure that the existing employees do not look for option outside the company. (HC)