

2013

# HR Learning Centre



**THINK OUTSIDE  
THE CUBICLE**

*Moving forward everyday...*



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*HR Team*

JAN-FEB-MAR ISSUE



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## From the Nurturer's Desk

Dear Readers,

I wish everyone a very Happy New Year. This year is awaiting us with new challenges and opportunities. We all get another year to do what can be done right with whatever we have, whichever position we are in and wherever we are located. This issue begins with HR Practices in organizations who are leading the change in its evolution. An eye opener as to how these organizations are able to motivate and retain talent in knowledge based industry environment. Next, is a Self-help article focusing on making *Positive Deviance* in one's personality as an asset and converting it into a competitive advantage. A section on updates from Labour Laws and Business Quiz questions from National Level Quiz Competition "TATA CRUCIBLE". Lastly, a book review of the book "What Matters Now" authored by *Gary Hamel* on workplace expectations from the *Facebook Generation*.

R.S.Nair

## HR Practices: Top 10 Bold & Outrageous HR & Talent Management Practices

Here are the selections for the top 10 bold approaches that define the current “bleeding-edge” of HR practices.

1. **Outrageous benefits:** *Google* recently revealed that it offers amazing death benefits to every U.S. employee. Should any of its U.S. employees die, their surviving spouse or domestic partner will receive 50% of the employee’s paycheck each year for the next 10 years! With a young employee base, fortunately not many will likely take advantage of this benefit, but it still sends a powerful message that benefits at *Google* are different.

2. **Limited-term employee contracts:** Even though most managers have the right to fire weak-performing employees, most never get around to it unless the employee does something truly outrageous.

In order to force managers to weed out weak performers, the *Revel casino* and hotel required many of its new hires who interact with customers to sign employee contracts with a limit of four to five years. After their contract expires, employees must formally reapply for their job. Hotel management argues that eliminating the guarantee of a permanent job will pressure employees to remain productive and customer-friendly throughout their employment term. They also believe that top performers won’t be discouraged with the lack of job security because their performance level will continue to make them desirable.



3. **Meetups for recruiting:** *Edelman*, the powerhouse PR firm, combines social media and “meet up” events to attract and build relationships with the very best. It uses employee social media contacts to invite candidates to mingle and to build relationships at social events held at popular restaurants. Candidates are offered unique snacks and drinks, while senior executives give a brief presentation. At the events, employees wear name tags with their Twitter handles on them. Attendance has reached as many as 300 and the events have resulted in more than 25 hires.

4. **A recruiting TV show:** The Chinese are learning how to be bold in recruiting by offering a TV show entitled “*Only You*” where candidates are interviewed and hired by executives in front of a live TV audience.

5. **Outrageous recruiting video:** Game creator *Kixeye* put together an outrageous recruiting video that pokes direct fun at its competitors. The video literally mocks the age of *EA’s* approach to gaming by including the logo “EAARP Games” (A reference to the AARP senior group) and an aging executive with an oxygen breathing tank. They also mock another competitor, *Zynga*, by transforming its famous dog logo to a logo showing one dog literally humping another. To most, this mocking would definitely be in bad taste, but to candidates in the gaming industry, it may be considered cool and bold.

**6. Bold employer branding:** Amazon recently placed a letter containing information about its employee educational reimbursement benefits directly on its customer homepage. Although a letter about benefits might startle shoppers, it also sends a message to everyone who interacts with Amazon that employee welfare and development is important. Placing HR and recruiting information in the middle of a firm's primary homepage is certainly unique.



**7. Unlimited vacation policies:** A major role of the HR department is to track absenteeism and vacation days. However, *foursquare*, *Netflix*, and several startups have begun to offer unlimited amounts of vacation and sick leave. This bold approach treats employees like mature adults who know how to manage how much time to spend away from work. By offering compelling work, tightknit teams, and performance-based pay, the firm offers enough positive incentives to drive employees to work more hours.

**8. Outrageous referral practices:** The quality-of-hire result provided by employee referrals has encouraged firms to redesign their programs. While many firms discourage nominating friends as referrals, *Tata Consultancy Services* of India did the opposite. It developed a program that was specifically designed to encourage buddy referrals by making "your friends your colleagues." Its slogan "what if all your friends worked with you at TCS?" is a powerful one. The pressure to increase employee referrals has become even stronger now that employees can use social media to make more contacts so *DNAxexus* raised the reward bar by

offering a \$20,000 referral bonus ... plus a free DNA screening for referring a software engineer who was hired.

**9. The worst-place-to-work ranking:** For years there have been a variety of best-place-to-work rankings, but now the magazine *The Consumerist* is sponsoring a new "worst place" ranking. It conducted and published a poll asking readers to rank the worst companies in America to work for. Obviously making the list would severely damage your employer brand and recruiting. This year EA

beat out B of A with more than 64% of the vote. In addition, the increasingly popular employee feedback site *Glassdoor.com* now allows contributors to rank a company's CEO. In one case this year the CEO of Visa received only a 20% rating while the Apple VP received a 97%. Obviously, a bad CEO ranking can now damage your recruiting and employer brand image.

**10. Keeping the job a secret:** Smart firms periodically peruse the job postings of their competitors in order to use the required skill sets to aid in predicting their upcoming products and initiatives. The "inside Apple" blog, reports that some candidates at Apple are being kept in the dark throughout the hiring process about the specific role and job that they are being recruited into. In a company well known for secrecy, the premise for this approach is that the information about what new hires will be working on is valuable and it must be kept from competitors. Obviously this approach can frustrate some candidates and it could even turn them off if they didn't fully understand the reasons behind it. (Source: [www.ere.net](http://www.ere.net))



## Self Help Article: BE YOURSELF – Everyone Else Is Taken

**Embrace that which makes you different, and use positive deviance as a means to showcase your full potential.**

Everyone has individual qualities and life experiences that make them unique and separate them from the crowd. And yet, we often find ourselves tempering our differences in order to fit in....

**Any quality that makes someone different can become an advantage.**

Whether it's how you dress, your age, your ethnicity, your opinions, your piercings, the length or color of your hair, your gender, your passion, your tattoos, your perspective, or your upbringing - the things that make you different can set you apart and make you better. Your uniqueness allows you to relate to people more broadly, learn to be comfortable in your own skin, and to differentiate and distinguish yourself in a world crowded with monotony. But first, you must embrace it.

***“Always be a first-rate version of yourself, instead of a second-rate version of somebody else”***

**- Judy Garland**

The most successful folks in today's competitive landscape are often the ones that celebrate, showcase and develop that which makes them different. They

succeed because of their individuality, and give back to others as a result of their exploration into their own uniqueness. In fact, what sets them apart often uniquely qualifies them to achieve their goals.

***“The reasonable man adapts himself to the conditions that surround him... The unreasonable man adapts surrounding conditions to himself... Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man.”***

**- George Bernard Shaw**



Think back to your days in high school. In that stage of life, a common synonym for “different” could be “weird”. “Unique” might equate to “loser.”

As we grow older, “weird” can become “innovative”, “unique” may become “creative”. “Different” can evolve into “artistic”, “interesting”, “passionate”, “powerful” or even “revolutionary”...

This metamorphosis isn't just a result of changing perceptions, but is based on how you nurture the traits, opinions, and activities that shape your individuality. Only you can control how your unique being is perceived and how you might use your individuality for your own benefit.

***“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not.”*** – The Lorax

**Don't be shy about your eccentricity!  
Embrace it -- and let it to lead you to  
greatness!**

If you are a manager, don't discount or overlook the unique traits of people on your team. While an assembly line strives for consistency, standardization, and repeatability, today's jobs - knowledge work, service work, and creative work - flourish when there is a high degree of individuality, uniqueness and creative tension.

As *Darwin* discovered, differentiation is how humans move forward. Positive deviants - people whose uncommon but successful behaviors or strategies enable them to find better solutions to a problem than their peers - run the world - their differences advance them through life at an unparalleled pace.

History is full of examples of folks who have become mega successful because of their ability to hone that which made them different. *Salvador Dali*, *Stephen Hawking*, *Richard Branson*, *Adam Yauch* - *MCA* - of the *Beastie Boys*, (who passed as we were writing this), *Abraham Lincoln*, *Walt Disney*, and *Albert Einstein* are just a few that come to mind. Dali once said, "Each morning when I awake, I experience again a supreme pleasure - that of being *Salvador Dali*."

Lincoln said, "If I were two-faced, would I be wearing this one?" Those who rise to greatness embrace and celebrate their individuality. *MCA* said, "I don't really care if somebody makes fun of me. I'm not afraid of what people might think."

Let's take the slightly lesser known case of NBA player **Dennis Rodman** for example...

**How Dennis Rodman made  
"different" into "better" twice...**

Dennis Rodman is a **Hall of Fame** NBA basketball player. His career provides a wealth of examples and lessons in how to turn individuality in to competitive advantage. After flunking out of community college and enduring a troubled upbringing involving drugs, a torn family, and a suicide attempt - he landed at Southeastern Oklahoma State University.



He was a struggling kid, with a lot to prove. He was weird. He was different. If there was one thing he *wasn't* - it was "better" - than anyone. He felt he was not better at anything. Not even basketball. But that soon changed. Not only did he use his troubled past as motivation to succeed, he went a step further and continued to seek out opportunities to use his physical features that were often mocked, as competitive advantages on the court, and his personality - which was also mocked - to differentiate off the court.

Although Dennis did well at SOSU, he would not have been a Hall of Fame NBA player without focusing on his

differentiating characteristics. He had a natural talent that he spent hours of practice time to perfect - to be able to judge where the ball would land after hitting the rim. The ability to judge a rebound location is not something that coaches can teach, but Dennis saw his unique skill as an opportunity. When everyone else was shooting free throws, he was practicing how to rebound. He was working to perfect a unique skill - not trying to fit in with others. Dennis eventually became the 27th overall pick in the 1986 NBA draft because he could rebound so well and because of his constant hustle on defense.

Rodman didn't stop there; he embraced his off the court differences as well. In fact, he built and maintained a mega-celebrity career through "being different".

From the NBA to global corporations, being "better" starts with being "different". It's those that can find and embrace the experiences and qualities that make them unique that know the true meaning of success.

***"To be nobody but yourself in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everybody else means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight; and never stop fighting"***

*- E.E. Cummings*

Look around at the world's leaders - in industry, sports, entertainment, politics, even your own organization - those who soar the highest are different. And so are you.

**Be yourself - everyone else is taken.** Some quick questions to ask yourself to get your ideas flowing...

First, brainstorm 5 things (qualities, habits, experiences, perspectives) that make you unique (don't limit your thinking to what you feel applies most to your career) or different from your peers. Write them down.

- How do these influence the way you make decisions?
- Think about some specific choices you've made because you had an alternative viewpoint. What's the relationship of any of these 5 to that perspective?
- What is something positive that has happened to you because of your unique differences? Something negative?
- What have other folks possessing one of your unique differences done to grow their careers, solve business problems or address customer pain points?
- How have you solved a problem at work differently than your co-workers because of one of the qualities that make you different?
- How do your differences affect how you spend your time?
- How do your 5 unique qualities impact and influence your current role?
- How do your 5 unique qualities impact and influence your current role?
- What is "Brand You"?

(Source: [www.weknownnext.com](http://www.weknownnext.com))



**1. "Prosecution justified when the factory, employing 170 females, has no creche"**

2012 LLR 751 JHARKHAND HIGH COURT (Cr.M.No.545/2000 ®,D/-22-2-2012)  
Ram Kumar Lal@R.K.Lal  
Vs.  
State of Bihar (Now Jharkhand) and Another

**IMPORTANT POINT :**

- When at the time of inspection of factory premises, about 170 female workers were employed in one shift, but there is no proper creche, it is in violation of section 48 of Factories Act and Rules 73 to 76 of the Bihar Factory Rules,1950.
- Section 92 of the Factories Act provides that if there is contravention of Factories Act, or any rules made thereunder, then occupier and manager of the factory shall be held guilty of the offence.

**2. "Workers can't shout abusive slogans"**

2012 LLR 673 DELHI HIGH COURT (CS (OS) 1746/2011, D/-29-3-2012)  
G4s Security Services (India) Pvt. (M/s)  
Vs.  
G4s Krantikari Karamchari Union

**IMPORTANT POINT:**

- No doubt ,employees and their Union have a right to demonstrate for the purpose of achieving their legitimate demands, but at the same time, they do not have any right to use abusive language and/or commit violence or prevent ingress and egress of other employees and visitors etc., and in case such unlawful activities are not restrained/curbed by the court in the vicinity of the organisation, within the radius of 100 meters of the premises, of the personal safety of employers and visitors may get jeopardized.

**3. "No forfeiture of Gratuity on pendency of criminal trial"**

2012 LLR 782 ALLAHABAD HIGH COURT (W.P.No.6182/2009, D/-8-2-2012)  
Harnam Singh Yadav  
Vs.  
State of Uttar Pradesh and Others

**IMPORTANT POINT:**

- Forfeiture of Gratuity of two employees, during pendency of their criminal trial, will not be justified since such trial cannot be construed, in any manner, to fix responsibility of any loss to the employer.



## Business Quiz

### FROM TATA CRUCIBLE

1. Car Launched by TATA “eMO” What is the full name?
2. Identify the device?



3. He named the company after the first space craft landed on Moon. Which company was thus founded?
4. Who endorses “Yamaha Ray”?



5. With which e-commerce company did TATA start its online services called “Deal Zone”?

### ANSWERS: November Issue Answers

1. ORPAT (after his initials and surname)
2. Hawkins Cooker Limited
3. Pidilite Industries The product was *Fevicol*
4. Amritanjan
5. Nirma

## Book Review : What Matters Now by Gary Hamel

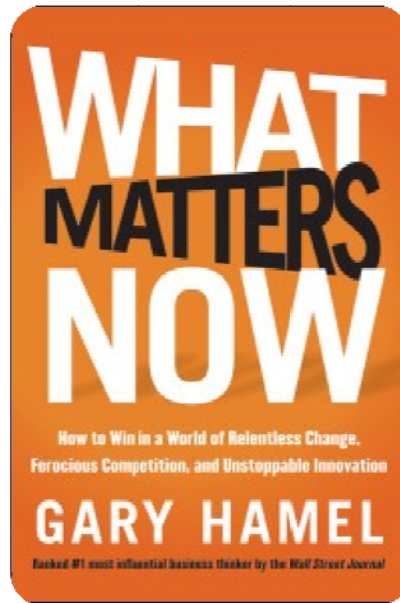
The experience of growing up online will profoundly shape the workplace expectations of *Generation Facebook*. At a minimum, they'll expect the social environment of their worklife to reflect the social context of the Web, rather than a mid-twentieth-century bureaucracy.

With that in mind, I compiled a list of 12 work-relevant characteristics of the social Web. These are the post-bureaucratic realities that tomorrow's employees will use as yardsticks in determining whether your company is "with it" or "past it." In assembling this short list, I haven't tried to catalog every salient feature of the Web's social milieu, only those that are most at odds with the legacy management practices that characterize most companies.

1. **All ideas compete on an equal footing.** On the Web, every idea has the chance to gain a following, or not. No one has the power to kill off a subversive idea or squelch an embarrassing debate. Ideas gain traction based on their perceived merits, rather than on the political power of their proponents. By disassociating "share of voice" and "share of power," the Web undermines the ability of the elites to control the conversation or set the agenda.
2. **Contribution counts for more than credentials.** When you post a video to YouTube, no one asks you if you went to film school. When you write a blog, no one cares whether or not you have a journalism degree. Position, title, and

academic degrees — none of the usual status differentiators carry much weight online. On the Web, what counts is not your resume, but what you can contribute.

3. **Hierarchies are built bottom-up.** In any Web forum there are some individuals who command more respect and attention than others, and have more influence as a consequence. Critically, though, these individuals haven't been appointed by some higher authority. Instead, their clout reflects the freely given approbation of their peers. On the Web, authority trickles up, not down.
4. **Leaders serve rather than preside.** On the Web, every leader is a servant leader; no one has the power to command or sanction. Credible arguments, demonstrated expertise, and selfless behavior are the only levers for getting things done. Forget this online, and your followers will soon desert you.
5. **Tasks are chosen, not assigned.** The Web is an opt-in economy. Whether contributing to a blog, working on an open source project, or sharing advice in a forum, people choose to work on the things that interest them. Everyone is an independent contractor and everyone scratches their own itch.
6. **Groups are self-defining and self-organizing.** On the Web, you get to choose your compatriots. In any online community, you have the freedom to link up with some individuals and ignore the



rest, to share deeply with some folks and not at all with others. Just as no one can assign you a boring task, no can force you to work with dimwitted associates.

7. **Resources get attracted, not allocated.** In large organizations, resources get allocated top down, in a politicized, budget wrangle. On the Web, human effort flows toward ideas and projects that are attractive (and fun) and away from those that aren't. In this sense, the Web is a market economy where millions of individuals get to decide, moment by moment, how to spend the precious currency of their time and attention.
8. **Power comes from sharing, not hoarding.** The Web is also a gift economy. To gain influence and status, you have to give away your expertise and content. And you must do it quickly; if you don't, someone else will beat you to the punch and garner the credit that might have been yours. Online, there are lots of incentives to share and few to hoard.
9. **Mediocrity gets exposed.** Online rating systems have become ubiquitous — for hotels, books, local businesses, and products of every sort. Though not every review is useful, in the aggregate they provide a good guide to what's remarkable and what's rubbish. In traditional organizations, employees don't get to rate much of anything. As a result, one often finds a "conspiracy of the mediocre" — "I won't question your decisions or your effectiveness, if you don't question mine." There are no such cabals on the Web. If you're inadequate you'll be found out. The Web gives disgruntled customers a global soapbox. Few companies, though, seem eager to give employees an internal platform where they can challenge executive decisions and corporate policies.
10. **Dissidents can join forces.** In a hierarchical organization (or political system), it takes a lot of courage to speak up. When communication channels run vertically rather than laterally, it can be difficult to know whether anyone around you is possessed of a similarly rebellious mind. Individuals who feel isolated and vulnerable are unlikely to protest. The Web, by contrast, makes it easy to find and connect with individuals who share one's own dissenting point of view. Agitators who might have been marginalized in a top-down organization can rapidly mobilize like-minded confederates in the Web's densely-connected "thoughtocracy."
11. **Users can veto most policy decisions.** As many Internet moguls have learned to their sorrow, online users are opinionated and vociferous, and they'll quickly attack any decision or policy change that seems contrary to the community's interests. Only by giving users a substantial say in key decisions can you keep them loyal. It doesn't matter who built the online community; the users own it and, as a practical matter, policies have to be socially constructed.
12. **Intrinsic rewards matter most.** The Web is a testament to the power of intrinsic rewards. Think of all the articles contributed to Wikipedia, all the open source software created, all the advice freely given, all the photos submitted to *Flickr*. Add up the hours of volunteer time and it's obvious that human beings will give generously of themselves when they're given the chance to contribute to something they actually care about. Money's great, but so are recognition and the joy of accomplishment.

(Source: [www.ere.net](http://www.ere.net))

# A Better World Begins With You

*Keep Learning Keep Moving Forward....*

**HR Team**

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