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2012

HR Learning Centre



**THINK OUTSIDE
THE CUBICLE**

Moving forward everyday...



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HR Team

JUL-AUG-SEPT Issue



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From the Mentor's Desk

Dear Readers,

Greetings to all HR Professionals !!! It gives me immense pleasure to launch the quarterly e-magazine started by our HR Team. The motive behind the initiative is to fight ignorance with knowledge. It is a conscious effort to share knowledge and enhance awareness in our domain thereby harnessing the power of collective learning. Learning is not attained by chance; it must be sought for with ardor and diligence. I hope this will facilitate in becoming more competitive HR Professionals.

This is your forum and can be enhanced with your qualitative feedback, your contributions on any HR trends that can be covered in future issues and any other suggestions that would help enrich the quality of the content. You could email your thoughts and suggestions to anil_kumar_singh@iffco.in and arvindtiwari@iffco.in.

I wish the HR Team all the very best.

Happy Reading....

D.V.Suri



From the Nurturer's Desk

Dear Readers,

A new dawn of strategic HR has started taking shape and such transformation requires enhancement of new set knowledge and skills. In this context I am happy to launch the first issue of quarterly *e*-magazine HRLC as a step towards bridging the gap between what we know and what we must know. In brief this issue focuses on Organisational Culture, and Reverse Mentoring. Important court judgments are covered under Labour Law Updates. The section of Business Quiz will bring a different perspective of corporate business environment and facilitate in preparing for quizzes like TATA Crucible, IFFCO Mgmt. Quiz etc. Lastly a Book Review section to give a bird's eye view of various management topics explained in the book. I hope this *e*-magazine invigorates your senses and facilitate in continuous learning.

At the outset I congratulate the HR Team for such innovative effort and wish to keep up good work in future.

R.S.Nair

HR Practices: Org. Culture Fitness

Determining a cultural fit isn't as simple as describing your work environment and then asking the candidate for a thumbs up. In fact, you don't want to offer details about your culture until near the end of your interview process. Here are my top five techniques to determine if a candidate fits your culture:

1. Ask "What was the worst company culture you worked

in?" I love hiring people who had a genuinely awful work experience. I know that might sound odd, but it gives the candidate the appropriate perspective of a truly difficult work environment. For example, Josh told me during an interview that the five brothers who owned the company he worked for frequently squabbled. I'm not sure if punches were ever thrown, but they swore and yelled at each other before storming out of meetings. One brother would give Josh direction, then another brother would stop by Josh's desk and say, "Forget him. Do this instead." How would you like to deal with that every day? Josh has been a strong employee of ours for 11 years now. His job isn't easy, but he appreciates that our culture encourages cooperation.



Candidates who haven't experienced a poor work environment may feel the grass is greener at another employer when your job gets hard.

2. Be skeptical of the candidate's answer. Determine if the candidate's past work culture was problematic or if the candidate is overreacting. An operations candidate was angry at her employer because she was required to make deadlines. My company

requires sales reps to turn in paperwork weekly and hinges operations employees' bonuses on deadlines. These candidates were clearly not a fit for our company, but I didn't learn that until holding out for details of their "terrible" work environment.

3. Ask "How did you cope in that culture?" This

question will provide insight into several character traits of the candidate. Did they persevere through the tough times or quickly bail? Did they stay enthusiastic or did their attitude sour and harm their co-workers? When describing the experience, do they exhibit kindness? Are they overly bitter or are they mature enough to realize they learned something from the experience?

4. **Near the end of your interview process, detail your company culture.** Put it in writing. Prior to the final interview (where we discuss our aversions of the candidate and they detail their aversions of my organization), we give candidates documents that detail our company's culture plus an introductory letter from the company president. Here's a passage from that letter: "If you ever feel we are not adhering to the concepts outlined here with you or anyone else, we would truly appreciate you making us aware of it. If you don't understand the reason behind an action or policy, or you don't believe appropriate changes are being made — and your supervisor is not able to adequately make changes that align with our principles or help you to understand why we are doing what we do — please let me know. We are striving to make this a fair and safe work environment where high-character, self-governing, independent-thinking people thrive — both at work and in life."
5. **Set them up for future reference on your company culture.** The communication technique of *Set Them Up For Future Reference* — I convert it to the fun acronym *STUFFR* — consists of identifying and understanding a potential problem

and discussing it with the candidate in advance. You also need to note the candidate's (and your own) exact words and commitment to not failing. My company doesn't care if someone generates a zillion dollars in new revenue. If that person doesn't treat co-workers right, we don't want that person on our team. Here's what I say to candidates: "You can take what I'm about to say to you two ways. You can take it as me wagging my finger in your face saying, 'We have a bunch of good, honest, kind, hard-working people here. Don't screw it up. I'll throw you out of here because I don't want one person ruining it for us.' Or you can take what I'm saying as our company making a commitment to you that you don't have to tolerate anyone screaming, yelling, swearing, or belittling you. If someone breaks the Golden Rule, let me know and we'll put a stop to it. Are you OK with that?"

Finding candidates who fit your company doesn't have to be a mystery or guessing game. Execute the above questions and conversations during your interview process, you'll hire employees who will enhance your organization's culture.

(Source: www.ere.net)

"If you always do what interests you, at least one person is pleased."

Katharine Hepburn

HR Trends: Reverse Mentoring

Why youngsters at Bharti Airtel have been called upon to mentor their CXOs

At Bharti Airtel, it's not uncommon to see a CXO sitting in the canteen, in avid conversation with a young executive many levels his junior. They're likely to have an intense look on their faces and every now and then, they might punch the keys on a PC open before them. Those who know about such things might guess this is some kind of mentoring relationship, with the CXO passing on his gyan to the wide-eyed junior.

Why then is the younger person doing most of the talking and why on earth is the CXO nodding as if he's the one doing the learning? Over the past three years, Airtel has instituted a programme vide which every member of the management board has a young mentor.

Inspired by Jack Welch, who introduced the idea in GE when he was its CEO, the programme is meant to give the company's old-gen practical insights into how technologies of the future are actually being used. Welch ordered 500 of GE's top level executives to reach out to younger people in the organisation in order to learn how use the internet. He himself roped in an employee in her 20s to teach him how to surf the Web. Decades later, the idea has evolved as

a management practice and gained a name: Reverse Mentoring.

As the executive director for human resources (HR), Krish Shankar is both a participant and a co-coordinator of Airtel's reverse mentoring programme. "It is particularly useful for technology companies," says the 49-year-old. "Telecom is a youth market. But most of our top guys aren't even aware of how young people use mobile telephony. They themselves don't use any of the applications."

Old timers don't need to be coached on surfing any more, but most of the 40-plus set still have an Achilles Heel - social networking. Shankar's mentor is 27-year-old senior business manager Ila

Wadhwa, who has taken it upon herself to teach him about the nuances of social networking.

"Most senior managers tend to more comfortable with something like LinkedIn. The Facebook culture, they don't get sometimes," she says.

The reverse mentoring programme has helped Airtel's CXOs, including CEO Sanjay Kapoor, come to grips with what makes Facebook (FB) tick. This has yielded tangible results.

A few years ago, employees were not allowed to access FB in office. Now, realising that social networking is not just fun and games, Airtel allows FB access during the slow hours between 12



noon and 3 pm and then after 6 pm - a policy level decision, taken at the top.

Though it started as a way to get senior executives up to date on technology usage, reverse mentoring has since broadened in its scope. Today, global corporates like *Proctor & Gamble*, *Cisco* and *Ernst & Young* are using it to help top managers cope with diversity issues and get a first hand feel of company culture down the line.

"Reverse mentoring is a good way to get connected with younger employees, but it's not for everyone," says Vineet Taneja, Airtel's operations director for the South, who enrolled in the programme nine months ago. "The first thing you have to be clear about is whether you need it and want it, because it involves a time commitment. You have to volunteer for it. It can't be thrust upon you." A former Nokia man, Taneja, like most of his peers, has always been a 'light user' of Facebook and Twitter. It's only now that he's come to understand how 'life consuming' social media is for the new generation. His teacher is senior manager Ashwin Srinivasan, who says: "Being a mentor gives you a special status in the organisation. Your voice gets heard. You learn a lot from someone so senior and it's hugely motivating."

Indeed, the line between traditional mentoring and reverse mentoring can get slightly blurred. Shankar began his relationship with his mentor with the narrow objective of finding out what her peer group thinks of the Airtel brand, for which Wadhwa had to do her homework and come prepared. But over time, the

initial formalities gave way to more informal conversations and Shankar picked up on new and wholly innovative ideas.

"I figured out how we could create a system whereby young people in different verticals could participate in projects. For example, someone in finance could join an e-commerce project." Wadhwa, for her part, sometimes sets aside her mentor hat and becomes Shankar's mentee. "I get career guidance. It's a symbiotic relationship," she says. So far, Bharti Airtel's reverse mentoring programme covers 20 top executives, which includes the 12 members of its management board.

Many of them have had more than one mentor over the past three years. Wadhwa is Shankar's second mentor and as it happens, he is also Wadhwa's second mentee. Why the churn? "Usually it is because people get transferred or move on," says Shankar. "In any case, the length of the mentor-mentee relationship should ideally be around 18 months, not more."

As in its traditional mentoring programme, Bharti Airtel has been careful to ensure that the mentor and mentee in the reverse mentoring programme have no direct reporting relationship. Though the programme has been successful, Airtel has no plans to expand it to cover more of its senior staff. "We want to keep it only for the top leadership. Down the line, mentoring goes on all the time. HR doesn't need to intervene," says Shankar.

(Source: Economic Times)

1. "Compensation is appropriate when service rendered for short period"

2012 LLR 588 DELHI HIGH COURT (LPA 113/2012, CM No.2765/2012 (For Stay) & CM No. 2767/2012 (For Exemption), D/-22-3-2012
New Delhi Municipal Council
Vs.
Praveen Chand Sharma

IMPORTANT POINT : In view of long litigation and short period of service, compensation in lieu of reinstatement with full back-wages is appropriate.

2. "Writ is untenable against order of cooperative society but not against order of Asstt. Registrar"

2012 LLR 653 HIMACHAL PRADESH HIGH COURT (LPA No. 76/2007, D/-27-3-2012)
Bheira Agricultural Cooperative Society, Bheira through its Vice-President Shri Kartar Chand son of Shri Parma Ram, Himachal Pradesh
Vs.
Shiv Kumar S/o Shri Sukhdev Ram & Ors.

IMPORTANT POINTS:

- Writ only against the order of the Cooperative Society is not maintainable.
- When writ is filed only against the order of Cooperative Society but also against the order(s) of statutory authorities under the cooperative Societies Act i.e. Assistant Registrar of Cooperative Societies, the same is maintainable.

3. "Dismissal justified when job is obtained by concealing facts"

"Generosity is impermissible when dismissal is for loss of confidence"
2012 LLR 598 RAJASTHAN HIGH COURT (D.B. C.S.A. (Writ) No. 2666/2011, D/-6-2-2012)
Ram Ratan
Vs.
Canara Bank and Ors.

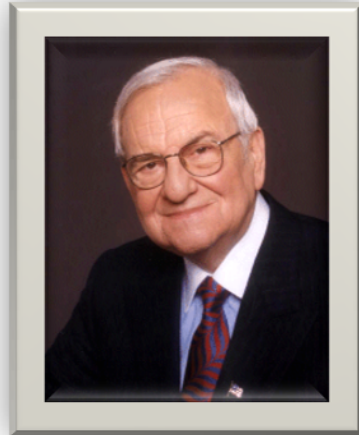
IMPORTANT POINTS:

- Concealment of material facts, particularly relating to misconducts committed and proved while in service with the previous employer, at the time of getting job with the new employer is a serious misconduct and dismissal from service is justified
- Sympathy or generosity is impermissible in law where dismissal is on the basis of loss of confidence irrespective of quantum of money misappropriated.

Business Quiz

IDENTIFY THE BIG BOSSES

1. What is the significance of the Phrase “I Am Chairman Of Chrysler Corporation Always”? Identify from the pic.



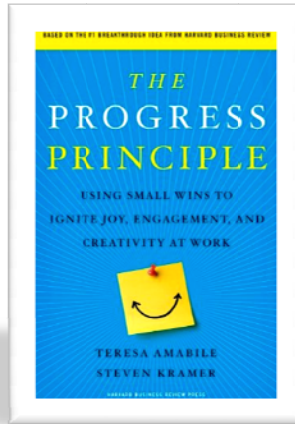
2. Incorporated on September 4, 1998 at a friend's garage in Menlo Park, California. Who are they?
3. Which company and its CEO inspired Ashutosh Gowariker to make the Hindi movie Swades with Shah Rukh Khan in the lead role?
4. Companies today are increasingly recognizing human capital as a form of wealth. “Our core corporate assets walk out every evening, mentally and physically tired.” So said one of the most sought-after CEO's of India Inc. to the graduating class of Wharton. Name the CEO?
5. Born in San Francisco to two university students Joanne Carole Schieble and Syrian born Abdulfattah “Jhon” Jandali. He used to serve as a technician at Atari Inc., California. Who is he?

ANSWERS : In the next Issue

Book Review : The Progress Principle by Teresa M Amabile

The book outlines seven major catalysts for progress:

- 1. Setting clear goals.** "People have to understand what they're doing and why," Amabile says, adding that it's important that the goals be reachable in a realistic time frame—owing to the idea of small wins. "So, for instance, rather than having the sole goal be to cure cancer, if you can chunk that down to the goal of understanding the mechanism that can block a particular type of lung cancer cell, you're setting up a win that people can experience in a realistic time frame even though they'll have some setbacks along the way," she says. "That's more effective than saying, 'We're not going to feel good at all until we cure cancer.'" (Shifting goals constantly, on the other hand, would be an inhibitor. Imagine a meeting at which the leader says something to the effect of, "Do this because I said so, and never mind that I said the exact opposite last week.")
- 2. Allowing autonomy.** "People need to know what goal they're trying to reach, but they have to have autonomy in order to get there," Amabile says. "It's a delicate balance. You do want to make sure that people understand what their mission is, but you don't want to micromanage them. If you do, their creative thinking shuts down, and you lose the value of their unique talents, expertise, and perspectives."
- 3. Providing resources.** This doesn't mean spoiling employees with fancy weekend retreats and unnecessary cutting-edge gadgets, but rather realizing that a significant project will always require a significant investment in materials and personnel. "There are some managers who believe that if you keep projects resource-poor, it will enhance creativity," Amabile says. "But that just makes the employees use their creativity to find



resources, which takes their creativity away from the project."

- 4. Giving enough time—but not too much—to complete a project.** Amabile explains that deadlines are important, but only if employees understand how the deadline benefits the mission. An occasional weekend of cramming for an unexpected Monday deadline is OK if it means the chance to secure a giant customer, but only if such deadlines are not commonplace. Too many deadlines and people will just feel like they're on a treadmill—going nowhere fast. "We found that in general, extreme time pressure is bad for creative productivity, but low-to-moderate time pressure is good," Amabile says.
- 5. Offering help with the work.** Autonomy is not the same thing as isolation, Amabile says. Employees will feel inhibited if they don't feel comfortable asking for support or, worse, if they feel that others are deliberately blocking necessary information from them.
- 6. Learning from both problems and successes.** "Ideally this means having managers and coworkers who, if you try something and it fails, will not punish you or ridicule you, but will say, 'OK, what happened? Do you know what went wrong and why? Let's figure it out,'" Amabile says. "That can actually take a setback and turn it into a sense of progress: you learned something."
- 7. Allowing ideas to flow.** In short, good managers know when to shut up and listen. The book also details the four nourishers necessary for a healthy inner work life: **respect and recognition, encouragement, emotional support**, and, finally, **affiliation** - any action that serves to develop mutual trust, appreciation, and even affection among coworkers.

(Source : HBSWK.HBS.EDU)

A Better World Begins With YOU

Keep Learning Keep Moving Forward....

HR Team

Send articles and suggestions to :

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