

## Bringing Together People, Processes, and Technology

The way we work and live is changing, and those who contest this statement are wasting time not preparing for the future. Jason Averbook, in the last session for the People Matters Talent Tech Evolve Virtual Conference brought together insights on how people, process, and technology must come together for a better tomorrow, and how the HR community can start laying the groundwork for this synergy.



### The Equation for Success

The equation for success in today's world balances the right people who work in the right processes, using the right technology. There is so much thrust on the way people and technologies are changing that often processes remain the same. When digitization is mistaken for automation, it results in suboptimal results. Adoption of new technology, without effectively understanding why it is needed or studying its intended usage, is one of the biggest mistakes several

organizations make. The starting point should be what you want, and then one should determine the best technology available to achieve the same.

Jack Welch once said that 'If the rate of change on the outside exceeds the rate of change on the inside, the end is near' and thus it becomes critical to relate all these changes, technological or otherwise, to the changes happening inside the organization. Adoption of digital processes or new technology must not be seen as a cluster of tasks or allocation of responsibility in order to make the most of it.

### Where are we today?

Nearly five years back, the concept of cloud was not as easily explainable or accessible. But as more individuals and organizations are using it, they are reacting in either of the three ways: 1) finding ways to make it work, 2) getting used to it without seeing much benefit or 3) using it to innovate and build further. These developments in the tech domain have been parallel to the fundamental shift of focus in consumerism, which has moved onto experiences now.



Organisations today are selling an experience, then matching their products or services to that experience. The HR community needs to act as the intravenous drip that delivers out capability from enterprise to workforce. They need to integrate the digital technologies with experiences for their employees, in order to lead into the future. In order to attract and retain the right kind of people to work with, HR needs to build the right kind of culture, business and alignment to deliver capabilities and enhance the workforce experience.

## Four key priorities to remember

Identifying and comprehending the disciplines that need focus can be a challenging task when the evolution of technology and work systems are so swift. However, the following four priorities need to maximum attention, and must be adequately studied, explored and understood, in order to work towards a sustainable workforce experience for tomorrow:



### 1. Foundation/Data

There is an urgent need to build a stable foundation of data to help in better decision making, improving personalization, increasing credibility and making processes more efficient. The idea is to make use of data comprehensively and not add another silo of work in the existing framework. This way, when a change happens, for example, a merger or dissolution, there isn't a need to go back to the drawing board, because you already have an anti-fragile foundation, ready to be amended. Additionally, making the best use of data frees up a lot of human attention and resources to solve problems that need to be solved.

### 2. Workforce Experience

Maya Angelou once noted that people never forget how you made them feel. The same has never been truer for employees. You need to understand what excites your employees, what drives them, what makes them tick and what they aspire for, in order to provide them with a frictionless experience. Do not forget to make this experience interactive. If all you offer is a transaction to your employees, and do not embed interaction in the process, the experience will never have the intended impact, and the results will become harder to measure. You can get your employees to want to stay and work with you, only if you provide them with a suitable experience, which is preceded by knowing them better. Being empathetic can help you provide the right product to the right people at the right moment through the right channel.

### 3. Automation vs. Digitization

The idea of increasing the role of technology in our work is not to simply reduce processes, or create new ones. Automation can only reduce routine manual tasks, but the process of digitization involves converting adoption of technology into the addiction of the same. Your digitization process needs to re-imagine work and add unshakable value to it. Allowing employees to interact with technology directly when they need it will result in more strategic and efficient decision making. Investment and expenditures in digital technology need to be seen in the context of helping people work with better knowledge, collaboration, and analytics. Also, 'HR Technology' must not be viewed as technological upgradation of HR and its processes, but that of the workforce.

#### 4. Re-skilling of HR

The most pertinent question that HR leaders can ask themselves today is 'Where are we on the journey?' Answering this honestly will help them identify if they are technically competent or literate or ready to transform. Apply the 'digital-first' approach to every process and use technical solutions to solve business problems, like that of recruitment and retention. If you can successfully create the need to understand the impact of technology, both inside and outside the organization, the need to re-skill will naturally follow.



#### Where and how do you begin?

The goal is to have a seamless implementation of ideas and processes technically, by fostering design thinking and innovation. Prepare to have something or the other in 'Perpetual Beta' and create leadership buy-in, because you need to leave enough room for evolution. Put in place a high-level plan to achieve one or more goals under conditions of uncertainty, and ensure that an alignment between the organizational strategy, HR strategy, and digital strategy is at the forefront. Invest in technology, not because of its impressive features, but because it solves a challenge that you have.

The bottom-line is that if you are able to replace transactions into interactions, you will be able to provide an enabling, supportive, flexible and conducive experience to your employees, which will facilitate a smooth transition to the way we work in the future. Data, technology, cloud, and analytics is here to stay, and are already changing the way we live. Navigating the road ahead is challenging and exciting in equal parts.

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