

## Contemporary HR Practices

### *Articles:*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Development of HR Strategy Using the 3S Framework<br><i>Soumendra Narain Bagchi</i> | 1 |
| Happy Employees Make Excellence a Habit and a Norm<br><i>Eeman Mallick</i>          | 6 |
| Transforming Human Resource Practices<br><i>Soni Agrawal</i>                        | 8 |

### *Interview:*

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| Innovative HR Practices: The Key to Organizational Excellence<br><i>Harsha V Agarwal</i> | 12 |
|--|----|

### *Events:*

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| Fourth Annual Convocation   | 16 |
| IMI Kolkata Hosts Twelfth Annual Conference of<br>Asia-Pacific Economic Association | 17 |

## **About IMI Konnect**

*IMI Konnect* is an open access Scholarly Management Magazine published from International Management Institute Kolkata. It started its journey in December, 2012 and publishes original research articles by scholars in the field of management and firsthand perspectives from business thinkers and practitioners on contemporary issues. *IMI Konnect* provides an intellectual platform for the national and international scholars and the industry experts to discuss and debate their opinions and thus contribute to the knowledge of management. It also publishes interviews with eminent personalities in the field of business. The publication caters to academicians and practitioners in corporate and government organizations and departments.

The issues are themed on topics in Marketing, Finance, Organisational Behaviour & Human Resources (OB & HR), Information Technology & Operations (IT & Operations), Strategy, Economics and Management. There are six issues in a year. Students/scholars pursuing Masters, M.Phil or Ph.D. are also encouraged to send articles on the aforementioned areas. The articles will go through a review process before publication.

## **Editorial Team**

Editor: Dr. Paramita Mukherjee

Associate Editor: Dr. Rituparna Basu

Editorial Assistant: Ms. Rajashri Chatterjee

## **Manuscript Submission Guidelines**

The article should be non-technical and within 1600 words. It should be typed in MS Word in Times New Roman 12 with paragraph spacing 1.5. Figures and simple, small tables can be incorporated. There should not be any notation or equation. Full forms of each abbreviation should be mentioned at first instance. Upto eight references can be included in the article. Limited number of short footnotes may also be included if necessary. Send your manuscript along with your name, designation, institutional affiliation, email ID and contact number to the editorial office at [imikonnct@imi-k.edu.in](mailto:imikonnct@imi-k.edu.in) mentioning the area viz. Marketing, Finance, OB & HR, Economics, Strategy, IT & Operations, Management Education and Others.

For copies/queries and submission, please contact *IMI Konnect* editorial team at [imikonnct@imi-k.edu.in](mailto:imikonnct@imi-k.edu.in) or call +91 33 6652 9664

# Development of HR Strategy Using the 3S Framework

**Soumendra Narain Bagchi**

Associate Professor

Personnel Management & Industrial Relations

XLRI, Xavier School of Management

## Introduction

Business strategy, one might say, is the core responsibility of organizational leadership. They provide both the plan as well as ensure its implementation. In recent times, breakdown of overall business strategy in the form of manufacturing strategy, financial strategy, IT strategy, HR strategy etc., to name a few, has become popular. Such an approach has allowed functional expertise to dwell on subject specific issues, yet, aligned to the overall organizational goals.

Management practitioners, irrespective of their functional affiliation, are under pressure to show quick results, which has led to search for 'best practices'. This is seen in the prevalence of "best practices" concept – things which are portrayed as a "silver bullet" for all the problems in their organizations (Furnham, 2015). This trend is furthered by certain section of the management consultancy industry that thrives on marketing and implementing certain tools like Business Process Reengineering, Balanced Scorecard for business performance, ERP in IT, and so on. However, the many failures of such an approach prompted Christensen and Raynor (2003:72) to write in *Harvard Business Review*, "in business, as in medicine, no single prescription cures all ills".

HR is no different. Under pressure to deliver results fast, HR professionals end up doing what other organizations are doing. Different tools like 360° appraisal system, HR scorecard etc., have been, or are still, fashionable. The spread of bell curve for individual performance rating, implemented initially in GE by Jack Welch, internationally as well as in Indian corporate world would be a case in point. Not to be undone, the Indian government had recommended a bell curve, much in line with the practices being followed in the private sector in the 2nd pay commission for the public sector undertakings (PSUs) and enterprises (PSEs). The current shift of organizations which involves mainly the private sector so far, is about moving away from the practice of forced bell-curve, e.g., TCS, and this shift forms an ironical interim epilogue. As stated earlier, HR professionals as well as organizational leadership seem to be focusing on what their peers are doing. It is not a situation of strategizing, but a case of 'monkey sees, monkey does'.

Academic research, with its stress on 'newness', has also contributed to this trend. At one point of time, reference to Huselid and Becker's (1997) famous bundle of HR practices often put HR professionals in a corner, particularly if they had not implemented the same in their organization in some way or the other. Commenting on correlation based research using large databases, Christensen and Raynor (2003:70) wrote "...many academics and consultants intentionally remain at this correlations-based stage of theory building

in the mistaken belief that they can increase the predictive power of their 'theories' by crunching huge databases on powerful computers”.

### Contingency Theory Revisited

Contingency theory articulated by Morgan (2007) and other scholars, indicates that there is no single best way. Thus, it provides a broad canvas to practitioners to develop strategies, practices or policies as appropriate for an organization. However, an empty canvas can be a nightmare for most practitioners. To overcome the problem, the 3S framework allows a broad guide to practitioners.

### The 3S Framework as a Guide

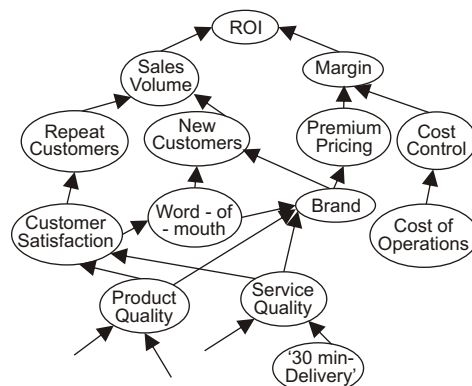
The 3S approach advocates that organization's strategy, structures and systems are to be aligned with each other. To elaborate this approach, the example of Domino's Pizza is taken. Almost every middle class Indian has some information related to the product, the delivery channel and the operations.<sup>1</sup>

**Strategy:** A rapid analysis of an organization's strategy can be done by:

- Identifying the strategy drivers (or critical success factors, whichever is the terminology adopted) and the supporting activities thereof, or
- Developing a strategy linkage map which diagrammatically links the strategy drivers (or the critical success factors) to the supporting activities.

Domino's Pizza's delivery business is built on the promise of 30 minute-delivery. However other business activities are needed to support the organization goal. A brief strategy map linking overall organizational goals to different strategy drivers (Fig.1) is sufficient for this paper.

**Figure 1: Deciphering Domino's Strategy: A Partial Strategy Map**



<sup>1</sup>While development of 3S framework is attributed to Igor Ansoff, the term 3S was not explicitly used by Ansoff. In his widely popular book *Corporate Strategy*, Ansoff categorized three decision categories: strategic, administrative and operating (1965:5); strategic decisions focused on how the firm would “develop and exploit its present product-market position” (1965:6), while administrative decisions focused on “structuring of authority and responsibility relationships, work flows, information flows, distribution channels, and location facilities” along with “acquisition and development of resources” (1965:6). “Resource allocation among functional areas and product lines, scheduling of operations, monitoring of performance, and applying control actions” were part of operating decisions (1965:5) [Ansoff(1965)].

**Structure:** The strategic drivers would be enabled by certain activities. For the 30-minute delivery to be achieved, the activities involved would typically be:

- a. order taking
- b. order processing
- c. order delivery

In order to achieve high efficiency and effectiveness, as well to allocate responsibility, a formal mapping of activities to activity owners – the people who will be responsible for the execution of the activities, leads to the core elements of organizational structure. When allied activities are bundled together as processes, we have the emergence of process owners. These later lead to different designations/posts/titles.

**Systems:** During working, difference will emerge, which require guidelines. For example, if we consider order taking, the following question would be a part of operational decisions.

What would be the order taking policy and the 30-minute delivery promise during rain and traffic, or, during late evening, or, for chain ordering by students in hostel in order to obtain a free pizza, or, for buildings or apartments with strict security rules that restrict free access to residents within?

As one gets into developing answers to the questions and related questions, one would be obtaining the initial drafts of systems. The questions pertain to:

- Who will resolve what kind of decisions, or
- How certain decisions will be taken, or
- What are the escalation points in the organization's hierarchy, or
- Who can sanction exceptions and the reasons for the same, for e.g., discounts to institutions for bulk orders.

Emergence of issues and development of standardized responses lead to development of systems, which is aligned to the structure. At this stage one can separate issues pertaining to different functions. An example using “Delivery related activities” has been illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1: Development of Functional Strategy**

Analysis for 30 - minute delivery

Employee Related Issues	Process Owner	Processes	Operational Issues
1. Manpower Planning 2. Recruitment and Selection 3. Training 4. Performance Monitoring 5. Mentoring 6. Possible Career Paths	Delivery Employees	Delivery Related Activities	1. Strength of Delivery Fleet 2. Maintenance of Delivery Fleet 3. Plans in Case of Break-downs 4. Escalation Point for Resolution
Part of HR Strategy			Part of Operational Strategy

This process thus allows a very close alignment of business strategic drivers with HR strategy, as well as other functional strategies.

### **Where Can Errors Creep in?**

Elaboration of the details starting from strategic drivers requires ground level knowledge. Only a person who has worked in the field would know issues at field level better. Without that, it might be better to incorporate line specialists as consultants during the exercise. Apart from lack of operational knowledge, the other sources of errors/inconsistencies are:

- False need for organizational uniformity: employees mapped to different strategic drivers will be managed using, or subject to, similar HR processes/practices.
- Personal biases: policies like rigid timings versus flexi-timings are made uniformly which emanate predominantly from the personal bias of organizational leaders or HR practitioners.

### **Merits of this Approach**

This approach forces the management practitioner to understand the core business drivers, and derive functional sub-strategies accordingly. Thus a practitioner implements only those tools/practices/policies which are aligned with the strategy drivers of one's own organization, and not to that of others. The combination of sub-strategies like HR – strategy, IT – strategy, Manufacturing – strategy etc., thus derived, will be more cogent and synergetic as compared to getting different disparate tools and techniques to work together.

### **Conclusion**

How does one counter the argument that an organization may avoid all trouble by replicating the structure and systems from a similar organization in the same industry? “Why re-invent the wheel? Would it not be better to just copy and modify?” is a question that merits an answer.

An analogy is used here to answer. Even though two individuals might wear suits of the same cloth and design, to be a perfect fit, either:

- an existing suit would have to be altered at various places, which have to be identified by a competent tailor, or
- the individuals engage a competent tailor for a bespoke job.

It is perfectly possible to have disasters in both the mentioned approaches. It finally depends on the competence of the tailor. Here too everything depends on the practitioner.

A phased approach, similar to a tailor's multiple trials, might be a preferable approach than to a big – bang approach. It will be helpful to remember the following words of wisdom by Winston Churchill, especially when dealing with employees – “First we shape our structures, and afterwards they shape us”.

An ill-designed combination of systems and structure may end up breaking down the strategy of the company, if they are not in alignment.

## References

Ansoff, I. (1965). *Corporate Strategy*. McGraw-Hill.

Christensen, C.M. and Raynor, M.E., (2003), Why Hard-nosed Executives Should Care about Management Theory. *Harvard Business Review*, 81(9), pp.66-75.

Furnham, A. (2015). Fads and Fashions in Management. July 20, 2015. *European Business Review*. Accessed from <http://www.europeanbusinessreview.com/?p=7629> on June 28, 2016.

Morgan, G. (2007). *Images of Organization*, Thousand Oaks: Sage

Huselid, M. A., & Becker, B. E. (1997). The Impact of High Performance Work Systems, Implementation Effectiveness, and Alignment with Strategy on Shareholder Wealth. *In Academy of Management Proceedings* (Vol. 1997, No. 1, pp. 144-148).

# Happy Employees Make Excellence a Habit and a Norm

**Eeman Mallick**

Assistant Professor

International Management Institute Kolkata

Happy workplaces are not just a 'Nice to have' phenomenon but an important prerogative for organizations if they fancy themselves of attracting, motivating and retaining talented people. Organizations are no longer product manufacturing facilities but knowledge creating entities. They create and retain knowledge through the creative minds of people. Creativity, innovation cannot thrive in a throttling environment which does not celebrate diversity of opinions, unabashed risk taking and no rules being the only rule. In the context of organizations, the relevance and importance of workplaces are being recognized by leaders, practitioners and employees in terms of their impact in shaping the minds of the people. This can have a positive impact on employee motivation which could lead to result oriented actions and behaviour. The importance of workplace in the life of employees being recognized more and more and efforts are being taken by organizations to engineer, reengineer them to make employees feel at home. This could be a reason because the boundaries of personal-professional is gradually fading away as organizations go a long way to impact the life of an employee in totality. Organizations living by the "Great Place to Work Philosophy" approach an employee in totality and acknowledge its bearing on all aspects of the employee i.e. personal, social and psychological. Employees spend the most significant part of their active hours of the day in office or places of work, keeping themselves away from indulging in activities or relationships that make them happy. The obvious argument for the above statement would be that they are getting paid for their job. What ignites the urge for innovation, going beyond oneself for the call of duty, excelling at work is the happiness quotient at workplace.

The people perspective in the new age organizations has made workplace designing a very critical aspect of people engagement practices. The new age employees do not lend themselves to definition, boundaries and being set into a cast or mould. They are self-assured, self-sufficient in terms of their learning and are result oriented rather than a follower of processes and protocols. They operate from a level of spontaneity and not compulsion. They value freedom, autonomy, an ease of approach and accessibility. Their spirit cannot be contained in boxes defined by rules and hierarchies. They need to flow free in an environment where they are rewriting new rules for the new workplaces. Redesigning new workplaces is not just about designing open spaces, lounges, pool tables and so on but also internal dynamics of trust, freedom of expression.

More and more organizations are building workplaces that are brimming with youthfulness reflecting the spontaneity of their people. So workplaces are designed to give a feeling of home comfort to people like a nap room, escape room, lounging room where the leaders want to ensure that the millennial staffers are at comfort and are motivated to perform. Flexibility in office hours, dress codes, food and beverage



arrangements, might ensure all comforts to achieve excellence out of people. Organizations want to transform themselves from workplaces to 'Temples of Excellence'. Today's youth who comprises a significant part of the workforce are confident and prefer being blunt and upfront. Their perception of their workplaces are different. They approach work with self-accepted ownership and 'Doing It My Way' approach. They do not need to be directed or supervised at every juncture but need to be trusted and recognized for their creativity. They are not just concerned about themselves; they also want to build a community and help coworkers, which give them a sense of family and belongingness. Participating in decisions of impact is more desirable to them than just been impacted by them unilaterally. Organizations are facing a challenge in integrating people with distinct needs and aspirations. How do organizations bring to synergy a group that focuses on results alone and a group for whom process adherence is the fundamental premise? In this context how do organizations engineer workplaces to bring out the best in their people? These are the fundamental questions facing the leaders of today.

The VUCA scenario in business is what characterises the business contexts and the need for leaders to steer the boat through the turmoil to a safe haven. This is becoming critical day by day. The leadership crisis characterises the corporate scenario in our country but it is hopeful to see the rise of entrepreneurs. The disruptive reconstruction is the new age philosophy, where two kinds of organizations emerge, the disrupters and the disrupted. So the leadership in organizations becomes very crucial. Leadership in that context is not about positional leadership but attitudinal leadership that needs to be exhibited by our people. Organizations can prepare their leaders by giving employees and young talent challenges far bigger than what they are prepared for, consistently. These challenges become crucibles to forge their leadership through transformational experiences.

The talent development process in companies is analogous to an escalator where everyone rides, receives some training and time bound advancement but only a handful manage to climb steps to get to the top. The organizational leaders should be able to identify those leaders and put them on a fast track growth path. Talent and leadership can thrive in an environment of trust, expression and absence of fear. This motivates risk taking, going beyond the prescription and innovation towards excellence.

Although many companies still think that higher profits are more important, research shows that happy employees are the real source of competitive advantage for an organization. Companies with high employee satisfaction/happiness index outperform their competitors. In terms of employee productivity as well, happy employees are more productive than employees under stress. Research further points out that happier employees stay with organizations and a sizeable portion gives priority to work environment to higher compensation. Thus happy workplaces make performance easy and spontaneous leading to excellence in results. It uplifts employee morale and the overall health and hygiene of the organization. Creating happy workplaces needs sensitivity, awareness, thought and a fundamental belief that "People are good". This belief will actually guide our actions and choices that we make in taking care of our people, and most importantly the right people who are assets for the organization.

# Transforming Human Resource Practices

**Soni Agrawal**

Assistant Professor

International Management Institute Kolkata

Human Resource Management (HRM) is in the transition phase. The nature of change is qualitatively different from other profound changes in the past. The change is happening at tremendous speed and is affecting lot more people than ever. Traditionally, the role of HR is perceived as managing payrolls, benefits, and operational functions, and did not find itself as a part of firm's overall strategy. Presently, HR is moving from micro focused roles to macro strategic paradigms in which HR functions such as recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation and performance management are more aligned with organizational goals.

Globalization, on the other hand is changing the distribution of world jobs, and new business opportunities are emerging fast. Looking into the future, by 2030, emerging markets are expected to produce 70 per cent of world's GDP<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, changing needs in today's globalized world also need people from different age group and background, who can understand better the needs of today's market. The success of an organization depends on how an organization offers high-commitment HR practices to its employees to satisfy the employees' needs that subsequently influences employee morale and satisfaction (Raub & Liao, 2012).

The strategies that worked earlier for searching talent, hiring, developing, etc., do not translate success in the new and possibly more competitive environment. Researchers and scholars had observed that adoption of best HR practices or the practices that worked for a company may not be suitable in all cases as the socio-cultural environment is completely different (Cooke & Saini, 2010).

It is observed that policies that work with a group of people, may not necessarily be appreciated with other set of people. Thus, companies follow policies and practices as per the need of their employees for engaging them better. For example, emphasis on higher pay and rewards is appreciated by employees who are at their mid-career while global career opportunities and experience are valued more by employees who want to grow and enhance their capacities.

On all counts, globalization has brought a frenzy of innovations driven by ever growing digital revolution and unfurling global markets. This trend is explicitly seen as more and more millennials are entering into the workforce. Companies now understand that focusing exclusively on revenue growth and cutting cost without investing in their people, may find it hard to attract and retain right talent. This means, in the changing times, with work-force diversity, continuous improvement initiatives and employee involvement practices are needed. Companies are revising HR policies and practices to attract and retain employees. They

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/global/Documents/About-Deloitte/gx-wef-2015-millennial-survey-executivesummary.pdf>

are also striving to create and promote new competitive profiles, to attract and keep both employees and customers satisfied.

### **Diversity in Workforce**

Earlier work force was homogenous and it was relatively easy to manage them. Today, workforce comprises of people of different age, gender, social class, sexual orientation, values, personality characteristics, ethnicity, religion, education, language, physical appearance, marital status, lifestyle, beliefs, ideologies and background characteristics such as geographic origin, tenure with the organization, and economic status. Diversity is critically linked to the strategic direction of the organization. The more diverse work force we have, there are chances that we have better creativity and decision making process in hand added with greater scope for innovation that can increase the competitiveness of an organization. This also means that organizations are able to cater to the needs of their employees and expectations. There are practices that are followed in the companies, which are considered important by the companies that appear in 'great places to work'.

### **Flexible Work Conditions**

In the present scenario, companies prefer giving importance to outcomes, rather than counting on working hours. This practice helps in achieving performance goals and exploring career opportunities. A transparent process helps women employees or working mothers in planning their careers. Increasingly, most companies use benefits such as flexible work hours and telecommuting as a benefit program. These organizations, specially, information technology (IT) and IT enabled services (ITeS) are able to promote the balance between career, family and leisure-time for their employees. For working mothers, companies set up day care centres and crèche facilities as an attraction and retention strategy. Sweden is a benchmark with the world's highest percentage of working mothers in providing such facilities.

### **Health Care Facilities**

In today's competitive environment, each employee is running towards achieving performance goals, and frequent travel, multitasking, and strict deadlines are today's requirement. Such work schedules often leave employees mentally and physically exhausted. Companies have begun to realize that healthy employees contribute to higher efficiency and productivity. It has been found that 61 per cent of listed companies in Economic Times' "Great Places to Work" outperformed both in sectoral indices and investors' returns<sup>2</sup>. Apart from medical benefits, companies are also offering yoga classes and health camps and have doctors on campus. HCL Technologies Ltd, for instance, like many other IT companies, has 24/7 medical facilities in all its centres<sup>3</sup>.

### **Recognizing High Performers**

Unlike star performers, who are potential leaders, and therefore more likely to move out of an organization fast, organizations are putting efforts for recognizing solid citizens. These solid citizens work hard and are

<sup>2</sup> Economic Times (2016). Happy Employees Mean Healthier Investor Returns, July 20, p.1

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/146027/ipl-2012.html>

most likely to stay with the organization for longer period of time. This provides stability and strength to an organization. Thus, organizations invest time and resources in managing and developing such employees.

### **Employee Involvement**

Employee involvement concepts are accepted and appreciated in today's time. Empowering employees require extensive training in all aspects of the job. Managers need to accept delegation, participative management, work teams, employee training, and empowerment of employees. HRM has a significant role to play in employee involvement. What is needed more here is demonstrated leadership as well as supportive management.

### **360 Degrees Feedback**

Organizations are recognizing the need that performance evaluation system is very critical for an organization and it is important to have a system that can recognize performance in a transparent manner. Thus, there is an increasing trend of using 360 degrees or multi-rater feedback process. In this process, feedback of employees' performance is collected from different sources. It is not only the reporting manager's feedback that is considered while finalizing the overall performance of an employee, rather peers, direct reports, customers, or any other who is involved with the work of an employee are asked to provide the feedback. While most companies started using this system as a means for performance appraisal, now they use it to identify the learning and development needs of employees also.

### **Instant Rewards**

In an organization, recognizing and rewarding high performers is one of the most effective tools to attract and retain the right talent. Companies now prefer the reward system more seriously, and are adopting total reward practices that include compensation in both cash and kind.

Apart from the initiatives as discussed above, talent analytics and modelling for making decisions for effectively developing and sustaining local and global work force are also very important. These initiatives include, building internal pipeline for talent leadership competencies, career development, and succession planning.

### **Targeting the Right Talent in Specific Markets**

A very substantial part of the modern day workforce are the contingent workers. Contingent workers are individuals who are typically hired for shorter periods of time. They perform specific tasks that often require special job skills and are employed when an organization is experiencing significant deviations in its workflow. When an organization makes its strategic decision to employ a sizable portion of its workforce from the contingency ranks, several HRM issues come to the forefront.

Recruiting and developing skilled employees is important for any company, which is concerned about competitiveness, productivity, quality, and managing a diverse work force effectively. Skill deficiencies translate into significant losses for the organization in terms of lower-quality work and productivity, increase in employee accidents and customer complaints. Since, a growing number of jobs will require diverse skill

sets, HRM practitioners and specialists need to understand it and devise the policies that support:

- Deployment of talent globally with understanding in advance international experience
- Hiring policies that focus on attracting talent from all over the world
- Raising corporate profiles among potential employees and companies
- Co-operation with universities and other organizations that attract young professionals
- Retaining valuable employees

Various estimates suggest that losing a middle manager costs an organization up to 100 per cent of the manager's annual salary. To retain employees, many factors are important other than compensation and benefits. These include transparent career development opportunities, a good balance between work and life, quality of supervision, regular performance feedback and clear communication of goals, roles and responsibilities.

### References

- Cooke, F.L., & Saini, D.S. (2010). (How) Does the HR Strategy Support an Innovation Oriented Business Strategy? An Investigation of Institutional Context and Organizational Practices in Indian Firms. *Human Resource Management*, 49(3), 377–400
- Raub, S., & Liao, H. (2012). Doing the Right Thing without Being Told: Joint Effects of Initiative Climate and General Self-Efficacy on Employee Proactive Customer Service Performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 97, 651–67

# Innovative HR Practices: The Key to Organizational Excellence

**Harsha V Agarwal**

Director

Emami Limited

**IMI Konnect:** *How did the HR practices in Emami transform over the years since the initial days?*

**HA:** Today's organization is faced with multiple pressures such as increasing globalization, rapid technological change, organizational changes such as new organizational alliances, new structures and hierarchies, high rate of change etc. HR plays a critical role in helping organizations navigate through this transition.

The role of human resources has evolved in Emami for quite some time. The shift from "personnel" to "human resources," for example, was part of the movement to acknowledge the value of employees as an organizational resource and was an attempt to remove some of the stigma that was associated with slow, bureaucratic personnel departments. This shift in label was accompanied by a call for HR to become a strategic partner with the leaders of the business – to contribute to significant business decisions, advise on critical transitions, and develop the value of the employees – in short, to have a seat at the table.

HR now deliver services that meet the needs of both employees and employers and is signified as one of the contributors to organizational success in ways more than one viz. proactively addressing business issues and organizational development opportunities; developing talent management strategies; making employees analytic, insightful, and relationship focused; and focusing on benchmark efficiency, but with a careful view on operations with strategic values.

**IMI Konnect:** *What have been the biggest challenges and paradoxes in this journey?*

**HA:** The challenges were more on understanding the importance of HR in the organization where someone championing and leading HR from the front acts as a change agent. Absence of core/systematic HR processes was also one of the challenges. Also, it is always a daunting task to change deep seated employees' perceptions.

Absence of clearly defined and communicated policies has also been a big challenge. Implementing the same with data based decision has been a key achievement of HR. Being a large organization with multiple departments, managing the core HR process with all available data at a central table has been a big challenge. This has been conveyed to senior management who has been highly supportive in implementing IT enablement in HR.

**IMI Konnect:** *What innovations are Emami thinking of bringing in the organization with respect to the HR functions?*

**HA:** Over the years HR in Emami has witnessed lot of impetus and it matches the growth story of the business. Emami believes that people agenda is of prime importance and it has to be complemented with the innovative practices to enhance the employee value proposition and experience. Some of the key initiatives taken are: a) Technology Enabled HR Process with enhanced feature that brings employee delight when they are engaged in processes like recruitment and onboarding, performance management system and learning management system. The unique employee self service and manager self service enable the employees to enjoy independence to access any employee related information with accuracy and minimal time; b) Leadership Capability Development Program, which is a unique initiative that aims at identifying critical resources within the organization and grooming them for potential roles in future. This ensures a visible career path for the identified employees with identified developmental plans; c) Mentoring Program for Management Trainees - Emami being a talent rich organization continues the journey by bringing in new quality talent within the organization and inducts premium B-school graduates every year in its talent pool. To ensure that the resources are groomed properly beyond the functional discipline, Emami has also launched a mentoring program for the management trainees for a holistic development; d) Governance Framework - This initiative is one of its kind which has been spearheaded by senior leadership team of Emami in order to ensure meeting cadence in the organization and faster decision making; e) PMS Audit - Emami always believes in consistently improvising on the critical processes and how employees are contributing to adhere to them. On a regular interval, a critical process like Performance Management System is audited through an external consultant to get objective views on various parameters of Annual Appraisal Process and Goal Setting.

**IMI Konnect:** *Is the use of analytics really benefitting the HR function? What are the pros and cons of HR Analytics? How much importance do you attach to HR Analytics?*

**HA:** In today's fast paced business world, we need to make quicker decisions than ever before and these decisions need to be based on facts. Facts can emerge from the data available to us in a representable format. HR analytics integrates disparate data available from different sources to provide actionable insights on an improved performance perspective. It provides a better understanding of employee productivity/performance pertinent to various factors and helps to identify improvement opportunities.

The key benefits include its varied role in identifying and driving strategic HR initiatives; mapping employee productivity and organizational performance and identifying factors to be driven for incremental productivity; and building a common interface across functions etc.

As an organization, Emami puts significant importance on data based decision management system and hence it has embarked into an IT enabled analytics set up through an SAP product – Success Factor and is currently in the process of implementing the same.

**IMI Konnect:** *What kind of Talent Management Practices Emami is opting for at the moment?*

**HA:** Talent Management encompasses areas like capability development, leadership development, employee retention to meet organization's current and future business objectives. Management skills would drive individuals to develop and deliver effectively the business results.

The initiatives that have been taken as part of Talent Management practice are - capability development through implementation of training framework; employee engagement survey to effectively plan the engagement for employees; focused interventions like leadership capability in mind to identify and groom critical talent for leadership roles; and mentoring of entry level talent etc.

**IMI Konnect:** *What is your take on strategizing to ensure work-life balance for the employees in the Indian context?*

**HA:** It's a win-win situation for both the employer and the employees as the productivity and commitment improve. While the employee is satisfied and happy, the whole exercise is making business sense to the organization (increased productivity, high retention, engaged employees). This trend is now catching up in India, where employers have started recognizing the significance of providing a good work-life balance and are focusing on the well-being of their employees.

With the passage of time the relevance of work-life balance becomes very important for an individual when family responsibilities increase, and care for children or other dependents becomes a priority. Highly demanding careers have dominated the lives of many and this takes a toll on their family life.

A few of the initiatives which Emami practices are – encouraging employees not to stretch beyond the working schedule until and unless extremely necessary; offering two additional weekly offs in a month; provision to take leave during the day in case of any exigency; and leave during annual festivals.

**IMI Konnect:** *How do you describe Emami's employee attrition in the current scenario? What are the proactive steps taken to deal with such challenges?*

**HA:** Employee attrition of Emami is at par with the market with competitors in similar lines of business. However, retaining talent has been one of the key imperative of the organization. A few of the initiatives taken at Emami are – Performance Management System PRAGATI that aligns with the Emami philosophy of Plan, Perform and Progress, conducted annually; training of front-line supervisors, managers and administrators on leadership, managerial effectiveness, execution skills; scheme of loyalty bonus to retain the critical hires; and formalizing goal setting for each employee etc. Goal setting is essentially a top driven approach. First the corporate goals are formalized which gets further cascaded to business and then functions and individual. This helps in eliminating any ambiguity that may have persisted otherwise and also assisting employees in understanding what is expected out of them.

Other initiatives are also there, like, privilege club membership for senior level resources in the popular clubs of metro city; anonymous employee satisfaction surveys on the basis of which action plans are implemented, for e.g., improved canteen facility, revised entitlement of travel policy, relocation policy, leadership capability enhancement etc; non-monetary reward to employees for their efforts and contribution, making the employees intrinsically motivated and engaged, for e.g., Spot Awards - "I Value You (Appreciation Mails), Cheers to Peers" (Thank You Card); employee engagement events to bring fun and frolic in the daily work environment, viz. birthday celebrations, annual picnic, cricket tournament, corporate quiz and felicitation of the employee's children on academic success.

**IMI Konnect:** *How is Emami dealing with the emerging issues of gender diversity and GenY management?*



**HA:** Emami is an equal opportunity employer and believes in the fact that diversity drives innovation and performance. Bringing in gender diversity across the talent board has always been a choice. Emami is proud of having a lady CEO in place. In fact in many of the key functions women employees are in steering positions driving the business/function.

Emami represents a unique combination of Gen X and Gen Y employees and has been effectively managing the same. Emami has launched a Mentoring Scheme and also a Fast Track Career Path for management trainees in order to address GenY's career aspirations.

**IMI Konnect:** *How can HR contribute to make organizations green and sustainable?*

**HA:** HR can undertake environment-friendly initiatives resulting in greater efficiencies, lower costs and better employee engagement. The HR function in days to come will become the driver of environmental sustainability within the organization by aligning its practices and policies with sustainable goals.

HR can contribute in meaningful ways to make the organization greener and sustainable. In Emami, few of the "Go Green" initiatives that are practised include use of electronic mode of communication more; making double-sided photocopies; powering down computers after a few minutes of inactivity; using energy-efficient electrical appliances; switching off the lights before leaving the cabins; recycling waste papers into fresh notebooks; and move towards a lesser paper usage platform (IT enablement initiative) etc.

**IMI Konnect:** *What is the emerging role of HR in the context of the changing business scenario in the country especially with respect to business diversification?*

**HA:** HR needs to take up the role of true business partner in the current context of changing business scenario. HR has come a long way from the historical role of just employee life cycle management. Every organization has realized that the key to impact the topline and bottom line is all about leveraging human capital. HR plays a pivotal role in enhancing the organization's performance.

**IMI Konnect:** *Do you think that HR practices followed in this part of the country significantly differ from that in Mumbai or Delhi owing to the perceived differences in workforce culture?*

**HA:** Geographical impact on work culture in today's age has little relevance. The mobility of employees has increased and what is seen today is cosmopolitan environment irrespective of the location of the organization. HR practices should be objective in nature and should be linked to enhance the engagement level of the employees which will further impact the organization performance. With digitization and information on finger tips, employees are aware of the best practices not only in India but globally as well. Hence considering geography to frame HR practices will lead to microscopic view. Organization should strive towards best HR practices irrespective of their location.

## Fourth Annual Convocation

The fourth annual convocation of IMI-Kolkata for the PGDM Batch 2014-2016 was hosted on July 16, 2016 at the campus. Mr Aniruddha Basu, Member, Board of Governors, IMI Kolkata and MD, CESC Limited, Professor Bakul H. Dholakia, Director General, IMI, Professor Arindam Banik, Director, IMI Kolkata, Dr. Paramita Mukherjee, Dean (Academics), IMI Kolkata, eminent personalities from public and private sector enterprises, parents of the graduating students and faculty and staff of IMI Kolkata were present at the event. The event commenced with the lighting of the auspicious lamp.

Mr. Aniruddha Basu while presiding the ceremony congratulated the graduating students. He lauded the accolades received by IMI Kolkata in a span of 5 years since its inception in 2010 and acknowledged the role of the institution in nurturing diligent, creative and socially responsible students to become successful business professionals in the corporate world.

Professor Un-Chan Chung, the Chief Guest for the event, while addressing the graduating batch, mentioned that perseverance and hard work are the pillars to success. He emphasized on the “can do” attitude that will help them in making a mark in the future. Commitment, value system and a strong zeal, according to him, play an important role in moulding one's career path. He added that India and Korea have many similarities and deliberated the factors that helped Korean economy to rebound and transform to reach new heights.

Professor Dholakia encouraged the outgoing batch to attain greater heights in all future endeavours. Professor Banik highlighted the achievements of IMI Kolkata from the point of view of academics, admissions, placements, corporate relations and foreign collaborations.

The event concluded with the 70 graduating students of PGDM batch of 2014-2016 receiving their diplomas. A few students were also felicitated with special awards for academic excellence. Later in the day the guests were invited for a cultural evening with a classical instrumental performance by the String Quartet from the Creative School of Maths & Music, New Delhi.

## **IMI Kolkata Hosts 12th Annual Conference of Asia-Pacific Economic Association**

IMI Kolkata hosted the Twelfth Annual Conference of the Asia-Pacific Economic Association (APEA) at its campus during July 13-15, 2016. The prestigious event witnessed the presence and participation of a host of eminent economists and academicians across the globe. This is the first time the APEA conference was held in South Asia. The previous APEA conferences were held in countries like Japan, USA, China, Singapore, Thailand and Taiwan.

During the inaugural session Professor Arindam Banik, Director, IMI Kolkata addressed the august gathering with his views on economic implications of trade cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region that existed since the ancient times. Professor Shin-ichi Fukuda, Vice President, APEA in his welcome address expressed his optimism about the success of the conference.

Professor Un-Chan Chung, Chairman, Korea Institute for Shared Growth and Former Prime Minister, Republic of Korea, delivered the keynote address during the inaugural session. Professor Chung expressed his pleasure at speaking in the city of Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore. He spoke about the Korean economy and its challenges and mentioned how sustainable economic growth has been made possible in Korea since 1960s. Presently, as of 2015, South Korea is the 11th largest economy in the world in terms of GDP. However, growth has slowed down in Korea over the past few years and the heart of the problem lies in the difference that exists between the conglomerates and the SME's. Conglomerates often take undue advantage of their size and market power to gain over SME's. Here comes the concept of Shared Growth which would help not only in the fair distribution of wealth but also sustainable economic growth.

Papers were presented on various areas related to Economics viz. International Trade, Microeconomic Analysis, The “Belt and Road” Initiative, Financial Crises and Risks, Economic Growth, International Finance, Emerging Economies and the likes. The speakers at the plenary session on “Economic Integration in Asia” on the final day of the conference presented their views with respect to the factors that drive the Asian economy and the way trade integration in the region has intensified over the past years.



**International Management Institute Kolkata**  
2/4C, Judges Court Road  
Alipore, Kolkata 700027  
Telephone: +91 33 6652 9664  
website: [www.imi-k.edu.in](http://www.imi-k.edu.in)