



## Breaking the shackles

■ BY UNMESH RAI

The need to be in best B-schools and being open to relocation, has made the millennial kids far more independent than any other. This has also led to a significant percentage of Gen-Y to stay away from their parents, who in turn learnt to connect with them over an occasional video call or an email.

On the other hand, we are also not alien to stories of over protective mothers who decide on what the kid should choose in the electives, to arguing with the coach on sports grounds. This common trend which was earlier limited to interference in the child's school and college life has slowly transitioned to the workplace. At work, many of us swap stories of an odd father who was at the reception to submit his son's resume, sometimes even without the candidate's knowledge. Then there are instances of parents sitting outside interview rooms and attempting to strike a conversation with the HR facilitator. In some cases, recruiters have encountered candidates who choose to check with their parents before accepting an offer. Some parents even intervene in disputes with their kids' co-workers. The campus hiring teams in many organizations often have funny anecdotes to share of how some parents reach out to them through senior government officials to establish the contact and request for internships. Sometimes, there are odd calls, with requests to post their child at a particular location once placed.

Is this trend limited to a few stories or is it the new normal for the young workforce transitioning to the workplace? The answer may not be clear. With Gen -Y, slowly laying their claim to the future of business, do organizations need to evolve their HR programs and services to adjust even to these needs of their workforce and more importantly their parents.

By standing out of workplaces, parents should realize that they are allowing their kids to grow their cerebral muscles and professional

physique. This way, the youngster challenges his beliefs, is ready to take counter intuitive assignments and can fend for self. As employers, we all want employees who can steer through challenging assignments. Given the highly competitive business landscape, we all need reliable managers who can think on their feet and most often independent of direct supervision.

Workplaces increasingly are matrix, with both managers not available on a day to day basis and employee sitting at customers end. One of our business leaders mentioned to our recruiter recently, "I am ok if this person we are trying to hire takes a decision. Right or wrong - we are there to guide and mould. But we can't afford to have an employee who will constantly look up to his managers to decide for him or her." The fear with the trend is that the constant care and direction by parents throughout childhood and more importantly into the adulthood may leave the youngster without the ability to cope in such an environment.

Of course, the involvement of families can also be positive. On annual days, we have often seen our leadership stand up and applaud all the families for the support they offer to the employees. Is there a need to seriously look at an overall process to engage with parents of a younger workforce? Are nurturing parents the new normal or is the indulgent parent the best parenting style. Does this keep some of you awake or can we sleep peacefully for now? After all, we are hiring the best and the brightest, with strong support from their families as they grow up and are therefore well adjusted, have attended the best schools, and thus are the best job candidates. (HC)

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