Tailoring Talent Management:
Tactical v/s Strategic

BY SHRUTI CHADHA AND S. AJAY KUMAR

Human Capital spoke to HR experts over the increasing relevance of technology and AI-driven tools in the talent management practices within an organisation keeping in purview the tech savvy generations in the workplace and the need for mindset shift from the C-Suite. The success of HR off late is more about selecting the right things to do than about doing it right.

Our Expert Panel

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Modern technologies such as data automation, predictive analytics and artificial intelligence (AI) have now added a level of sophistication in how businesses can manage and engage their workforce for higher productivity. Just when organisations are starting to adapt to the demands of are ready to stir up a storm. Satisfying the tech-savvy workers millennials, and the Generation Z might be tricky. HR professionals have been excelling in tactical management. That is, core of their work day revolves around, "doing things right." However, with the current pace of disruption, the success of HR will be less about "doing things right" and more about choosing the "right things to do." This will call for a shift from tactical management to strategic management, and, in fact would imply a perfect blend of both. HR issues will have to be viewed from both business and people perspective. This mindset shift and balance is critical for HR, to tailor its talent management practices for the new generations, and create a renaissance for the existing talent.

Talent acquisition has undergone a sea change in the last decade and is reaping direct benefits of technology. With ABC (Artificial intelligence, Blockchain, Chatbots) of recruitment changing, what strategic moves does a recruitment manager have to make?

Samriti Malhotra: The business dynamics has constantly evolved with globalization, workforce demographics, economic uncertainties, and technology

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Samriti Malhotra is Associate Vice President-Global HRD, Denave. A management professional with rich and blended experience of over 13+ years, she has managed HR functions across geographies in organisations of repute in Airtel, Barclays, Sterlite Group of Industries and Environmental Resources Management (ERM). Samriti is an avid contributor to eminent HR forums as a panellist.

Rajesh Tripathi is Vice President and Head - Human Resources, GHCL Ltd. Rajesh brings to his job over 17 years of experience in varied industries, like Manufacturing, Telecom, IT, Pharmaceuticals. He holds a Post Graduation in HR from XLRI, Jamshedpur and a Post Graduate Diploma in Psychology from Amity University.

Santosh.T.K is Director - Human Resources, Dell Technologies. He has rich and varied experience of over 24 years in sectors like Information Technology, Services & Hotels. Prior to joining Dell, he was with The Taj Group of Hotels for a decade. Santosh has a Degree in Hotel Management from Mangalore University and has complete his Executive MBA from XLRI Jamshedpur.

Harpreet Sandhu is Vice President - Human Resources, India Mortgage Guarantee Corporation (IMGC). She has an experience of over 17 years, working in diverse roles such as HR Business partnering, mergers and acquisition, talent acquisition, organisation design and effectiveness and change management and has worked in American Express, GE Consumer Finance and EXL. Harpreet is a Post Graduate in Economics & Business Administration.

Vipul Singh is the Vice President and Head- HR and Communications, ADP India. He has an experience of more than 25 years in HR leadership in industries such as Information Technology, Telecommunications and Consumer durables. He has led multiple HR organisations and provided strategic HR and Marketing Communications support to various growing businesses. Vipul holds a Post Graduate Diploma in Human Resource Management from International Institute of Management and a Bachelor's degree in Economics Honors. He is also a PCMM Certified Auditor.

innovations having a key impact on the business. The shift in management philosophies and technologies has offered a great deal of opportunity for HR to strategize and lead the change with unprecedented pace. Talent management has secured strategic position pivotal in HR strategy. Talent Management carries a set of programmes and practices that contribute to talent acquisition, aligning performance to strategic business goals, learning & development, career progression, total rewards and managing separation and institutionalising employer branding. Holistically, the HR agenda, in any organisation, constitutes of tactical as well as strategic initiatives for talent management. Whilst the tactical charter focuses on 'Run of the Mill' activities such as operational support to business on policies, compliance, training for basic skills, coordination for the appraisal process etc. The strategic initiatives focus on partnering and collaborating with business, engaging the employees, enabling change management to drive business performance, transformation, investing in coaching employees towards evolved capabilities, creating talent pipelines,

succession planning and linking rewards to the organisation's goals and Milestones achievement and, creating "Employee Value Proposition" for talent attraction and retention. The quest to attract and retain top talent has gained momentum and positioned "Talent Management" as the top priority on organisations' and CHROs' business strategy. Organisations believe that talent is a combination of 'Competence', 'Commitment' and 'Contribution' that has a huge impact on the bottom-line. Talent Management adopts a strategic approach to integrate a delightful experience at all the touch points during employee lifecycle to create positive experiences, desired perception and meaningful employee engagement, that are instrumental in driving organisation's performance and vision.   Change in the workplace has accelerated at lightening pace. With the ongoing war for talent hunt, there has been a shift in paradigm when it comes to HR practices. The organisation and the candidates have taken over parallel and equal roles in job selection. Whilst organisations are selecting the candidates, the candidates are also screening and shortlisting the organization on the

basis of value proposition for 'WIIFM- What's in It for Me'. New age dynamics in VUCA times continue to disrupt HR practices by leveraging technology to hire and retain talent. Artificial intelligence is well on its way to become universal on the basis of algorithms that build up and become more and more exact with every instance. AI is being used to lend speed, detail and exact match for jobseekers and employers. At an initial stage, HR toolbox is majorly relying on chatbots. There are apps in the market already that are catering to elementary requisites of recruitment - sorting CVs, sending reminder mails, setting up date and time for interview etc. are all being increasingly automated. The scope of tasks has expanded to include screening candidates on their work ethics and testing them for their emotional stability besides tasking them with tasks they would have to take up if hired. Repetitive tasks within candidate engagement are the core area where Chatbots are being leveraged enabling HR professionals to focus on critical areas of harnessing performance and productivity from its employee base.

Rajesh Tripathi: As a recruitment manager, it is important to evaluate candidates based on their cultural fitment as much as their skills and experience. The biggest mistake we do is hiring purely on technical talent, rather than personality. Personality is vitally important to the culture of an organization. Hire a technically brilliant but socially devoid person, and, you will have trouble keeping a cohesive team. Apart from the fitment part, today's market pressures call for a candidate-centric approach to recruiting; instead of being transactional, it is relational. And, instead of managing requisitions, the recruitment manager has to focus on an unbeatable candidate experience. It is a strategy that flips the traditional administrative-centric model to one where candidates are at the centre of the process. From the first time a candidate lands on your career website, to their first day on the job, the recruitment

manager continuously needs to engage with them.

Santosh T.K.: Emerging technology trends like AI and automation help organisations to find the right talent by rightly matching skills, experience and overall personality of the candidate for the organisation. AI tools and technologies empower talent acquisition and hiring process through research tools by gathering insights about a potential candidate for the available role. In the coming years, cognitive recruitment bots will revolutionise candidate experience through intelligent conversational interfaces. Also, AI will dramatically change the way employers hire candidates and how candidates seek employment opportunities. As new roles emerge, it is necessary for HR professionals to gradually change job roles that are more relevant to the industry and bet on right strategies to recruit and hire candidates. Realigning skills, learning, experimenting and adapting to new processes are some of the requisites for HR managers to be successful in hiring and retaining best talent in the changing times. Artificial intelligence, Blockchain and Chatbots will significantly change the selection and recruitment processes in the coming years. Some of the ways in which HR professionals can prepare themselves include:

- Practice programmatic advertising to make job ads more targeted and effective
- Understand a candidate's interests and skills through profile augmentation
- Hyper-personalize your candidate outreach with an employee value proposition for every individual candidate
- Use chatbots to fill in gaps in résumés and answer candidates' basic questions
- Résumé screenings will help find candidates with similar skills to previous hires
- Use facial and speech recognition software to make video interviews more revealing.

Harpreet Sandhu: With the changing ABC of recruitment, it is imperative for organisations to gear up and redefine their engagement levels with the needs and priorities of younger generation job seekers. What was once considered informal modes of communication (Facebook and Instagram), have now become acceptable platforms for information exchange. The recruitment process today is a clear shift from what it used to be a few years ago. The candidate selection process today is more scientific with the burgeoning use of various online tools. More and more organisations are moving towards online testing for candidate recruitments. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) recently announced how they plan to switch to online testing processes for hiring engineering graduates. This will undoubtedly make the hiring process faster and more convenient, reducing the over-dependency on traditional methods. Organisations like Planet Ganges and Mettl are building highly efficient platforms for assessments, in order to support small and mid size companies where budget remains a major constraint. Additionally, for many organisations, campus recruitment and picking up best-suited talent is a key focus area. Usually the best of organisations come first for campus placements. So, for candidates getting day 0 or 1 remains critical, for organisations on the other hand, year-round campus engagements via various activities to build understanding of the organisation is very important. That is how potential candidates also get to have a better understanding of the organisation. However, in the end, hiring the right talent pool that fits into the organisational culture and whose objectives are aligned to the overall vision of the organisation still remains the key.

Vipul Singh: At the outset, recruitment in this age happens at a massive scale, and, this makes it the biggest talent spending area around the world. In this scenario, the two important factors for success are shorter response times and maximum reach. When we add to that, other factors like candidate experience, diversity & inclusion, pay parity, cultural fit, and even reskilling, there is an immediate need to adopt technology to stay in the game. For instance, verification of the data provided by the candidates can be enhanced by a Blockchain-based resume verification system that can create sophisticated profiles by processing connections, recommendations, contribution to skill groups etc. Now, pair that verification system with a chatbot that provides instant responses to candidates' queries and AI system, which not only helps eliminate bias by screening profiles based on abilities, but can examine a job candidate's pitch, voice, and facial expression for indications of dishonesty. This combination of Blockchain and AI-based systems could significantly save time, build untampered profiles, eliminate the need for multiple skill tests, and help hire a diverse workforce. As a result, there will be more time for multiple conversations with several aspirants, to accurately evaluate each profile, and provide the best candidate experience.

From technology standpoint, there has never been a better time for Talent Acquisition teams. That said, corrective measures and final decisions can only be approved by people. Hence, recruiting managers need to understand how to leverage the tools to acquire accurate information sans the noise and interpret them the right way. To leverage the technology, the first thing for recruiting managers to do is collaborate with the IT teams to understand integration of the new tools with the rest of the tech stack. Taking it up a notch higher, organisations may also consider creating opportunities for AI experts who can help read these tools. Organisations should also consider facilitating trainings for any additional skills these systems demand. And, when all of this is put together, recruitment managers will have solid understanding that is required to stay on top of the consequences to embrace the change as it comes.

(To be continued ….)