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THE MOST SOUGHT AFTER – THE CAREER EMPLOYEE?

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- a. **Career Employee with Long Term Perspective.** ¹This research expectation has been dealt with quite exhaustively. Finding the long-term career employee depends on the need for one such person in an organizational context. If it is determined that such an employee is inevitable, necessary HR interventions and cultural positioning needs dimensioning within organizational boundaries. HR systems and processes that cover competency matching, electronic learning opportunities to make individuals proactive and trained, compensation programs that make partners out of erstwhile employees and an organizational environment conducive to perform are but some of the interventions. Nevertheless, elusive employee would ask for more than what has been provided and this may mean tweaking the system to match individual expectation within organizational constraints. Not all corporations may be willing to make dynamic changes of their policy framework to provide for individual nuances. Imagine an organization of 1000 management staff with 50% of them asking for individualized compensation menu systems to suit their needs of income and expenditure. The fact that only 18% of the respondents have asked for career employee indicates the growing awareness of the absence of this organizational breed. Some pointers could be:
1. Organizational ability to fudge skills and knowledge to make employees transit from one job to another.
 2. Make employee risk taking ability to move into jobs and careers relatively trouble free and easy to make the change over.
 3. Demonstrate success experiences and individual confidence to take over areas not attempted before and the organizational ability to offer supportive resilience.
 4. Make risk orientation a cultural possibility within the company. Let people find the culture easy to deal with and equally simple to cope with success and failure with equal measure.
 5. Create learning forums where the new age employee profile is discussed, agreed and understood.
 6. Help employees feel accepted within the environment even if their career orientation is different, short or not conventionally acceptable.

¹ Kale Consultants have identified middle management systems professionals hiring and retention as a critical area of human resource endeavor. A Company that excels in a positive work oriented fun culture is poised to adapt innovation in their career definitions.



- b. **Knowledge Worker and Intensive Intellectual Orientation.**² While knowledge worker and knowledge careers have been dealt with in the earlier notes, some mention of the intellectual orientation is necessary. Transition from approved ways and means of doing things turning into unanticipated influences over people, systems and process would happen unknowingly. A natural process of asking individuals before we act upon them is inevitable if we desire their wholesome commitment to their roles and the company. Organizations see the need for institutionalizing learning and teaching systems for people to learn, develop and intellectually grow as a responsibility, “self imposed”, on them. **While people are doing their jobs and getting things done there is a group of facilitators, coaches and trainers who perform the role of institutionalizing learning. They are the leaders of tomorrow. They make education happen naturally without elaborate systemic processes or planned classroom training.** Intellectual culture could sometimes, in fact many times be conflict prone given occasional polarized and strong views on individual positions and perspectives. **Participating members typically have a point of view on issues confronting him or her or the organization and feel their role to be critical enough to substantiate their argument. Large-scale differences are eminently possible. When two minds that think are put together there would a point of difference.** Creation of a performing culture where people would sense the common goal of customer service, satisfaction, adding to shareholders wealth and bottom line orientation is key to the Intellectual Corporation.

A culture where “people – systems” would replace “systems – people” with the original contribution of the people as the critical input. Quality of hiring talent into the corporation has undergone a radical shift. Firms now bring in people with special expertise to the job, people with proven academic depth and potential to pursue intellectually stimulating assignments. Seeking recognition is no longer confined to own circle of friends, peers, superiors and mutual admirers. **The posting of one's work on the Web ensures that it has the potential of being seen perhaps by the best in the world and a response including recognition being received from a strange but important visitor to your site.**

Organizations have a large number of employees who understand and know what have they visited the corporation for and what do they have to receive in return for their contribution. Corporations too have made learning and development as a necessary condition for employee development and systemic interventions at periodic intervals are provided to make employees employable. Training function and its focus on development has undergone a significant shift and moving away from staid forms of development routes. Substantive amount of quality managerial time is currently spent on managerial competencies, performance goals and action report charts to evaluate performance against set work plans. Added to this phenomenon is the issue of employees asking for substantive job content that includes thinking and doing. There is urgency on the

² Vipul Jain the managing Director of Kale Consultants is structuring a Knowledge Management Cell that provides an opportunity space for intellectual from several functional orientations to come together and work on concurrent goals.



part of the new employee to demand active involvement in management thinking and decision making process.

People would like to be involved in all aspects of business that affects them first of all and in all aspects of the business where they believe they can contribute. ***Lines of control, hierarchy is no longer emerging to be relevant need to know information is in question. What was in yesteryears treated as “none of my business” is today made into “everything is my business” by the thinking employee group?*** Employees would rather not be left behind in a decisive situation. And there are many and many that would like this level of active involvement. As a consequence there is a need for offering intellectual equity for people with personal commitments to make their contribution real and meaningful to organizational performance. Involving individuals in activities beyond their defined scope of work is fundamental a form of offering intellectual equity to people.

Employees view the emerging business complexity as an inevitable feature of the modern economy. **In it they see an opportunity for individual capabilities, skills, competencies and most of all their intellect to be put to use considerably.**

Essentially the intellectual employee also arrives with a baggage of imponderables behaviorally and intellectually.

To our mind this cultural mix confusion is eminently possible at the first few stages of the interactive processes:

- Make knowledge intensive tasks routine to the work groups and is in fact a way of life to reach out to enduring goals.
- Make scenario-setting agendas to make intellectually superior people to come together and work on organizational challenges.
- Make group cross-functions where required, and make the encounter mutually beneficial.
- Create crucial interdependencies amongst employees who need to make their target only through a formal process of transaction.
- Create “Chat Groups” that has been created to discuss on issues on a periodic basis in a formal setting. Have the group inundated with employees seeking space to say what they have to say.

Intellect has an untold, unseen intensity to break apart and come out into the open irrespective of behavioral consequences on themselves or those they are dealing with. **This needs management and a system of fast-cycle feedback is essential**



to make the interactive process work at the ground. Organizational charisma needs to capture the minds and the imagination of the intellectual population and channelize their energies and goals towards organizational effectiveness. Empowerment at a minimum is essential for hanging on the very bright and bubbly. One can hardly see any conflict in the management of the very bright Vs the not so up and tidy lot of managerial population surrounding the organization. Intellectual initiatives should not go unrewarded or unrecognized. Every step in providing identity and visibility to the corporate intellect there is a greater scope for legitimizing their contributory presence and making change sustain.

However there are some imponderables to reckon with on the individual:

- Individuals of this corporation have rarely worked in teams and show reluctance in doing things together. Individual excellence and team excellence should be dealt with up front.
- Large number of intellectually inclined individuals shows deep sensitivity and care towards organizational processes that may appear to be so rigorous and meaningless traditional managers. What may appear to be a loss of quality time would appear to these thinkers that without a fair process change in any event does not internalize or happen.
- It would but become inevitable for organizations to create and manage institutions on an ethical basis in their policies and practices.
- For the intellectual managers this is a path of realism, a journey necessary for organizations to transit from current state to a desired state of performance and effectiveness.

Rarely do organizations encounter counter insurgency measures from the intellectual managers who believe by nature of their work ethic and value that corporations have been created to generate wealth and all members should do whatever necessary to make this happen. The purpose of an organization rarely needs to be told to an intellectual manager. They know what they are in business for and for what purpose have they been hired. An organizational mercenary, if it explains our position.

Over time intellectually intensive organizations and consequently teams would eliminate through natural competitive positioning peers, superiors or subordinates not comparable to their current averages.

- c. **Consultants/Freelancers.** Over 55% of the top management of this research has indicated consultants and freelancers as the new employee profile. Sorry, they are not employees at all. It is possible that they are ex employees, have done their time at the penitentiary and are now out on their own, with a mind that matters. Again apart from this group of ex employees or employees with experience

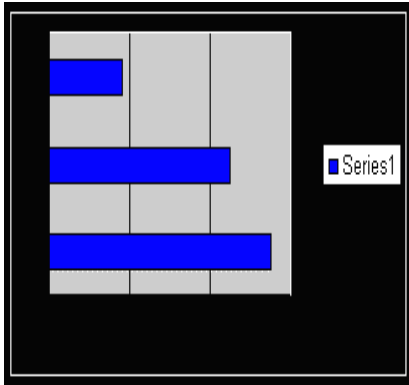


another lot comprise of passing out graduates from business and technology schools who have chosen the freelancer path for their individual contribution. Intellectual stereotypes should be managed across the corporate population. An added element of predictability and behavioral understanding should be brought in while dealing on any people issue. Some thoughts from the creation of an Intellectual Corporation needs mention in this context:

1. A detailed start up workshop on Transformation and the creation of the Intellectual Corporation should be a curtain raiser. The entire effort should be fancy free and should mean business with people as the drivers. That the program is eminently capable of being dropped half way through if the concerned people do not want it. No jobs will be lost. The question does not arise either.
2. Thinkers-doer's distinction should be eliminated in policy, spirit and in action.
3. The change effort should commence in a small, measurable way and should escalate in intensity logically.
4. Individuals cannot be subjugated to staid forms and methods outdated in content and spirit while intellectualization efforts are on in an organization.
5. Barriers of an intellectual nature describing organization in pockets, creating functional silos, taking positions on right and wrong are all avoidable completely.
6. The change envisaged is not a quick fix problem solving initiative. There is an assumed level of intellectual rigor expected of the organizational members and the organizing actors to make the change real to all people.
7. People encountering change should understand that this is not a yet another corporate HQ driven program with a fix all perspective and that this initiative has come bottom up. That the expectation of the change is only as good as the expectation that they have from it themselves.
8. Top management should know by knowledge and experience when to get off the back of the individual.



MOST SOUGHT AFTER EMPLOYEE IN 2000 - 2010



A CAREER EMPLOYEE - 18%

B KNOWLEDGE WORKER - 45%

C CONSULTANTS/
FREELANCERS - 55%

MULTIPLE RESPONSES FROM
EACH RESPONDENT HENCE
TOTAL IS NOT 100%

- Multiple responses from each respondent hence total is not 100%

Article by Ganesh Shermon of www.hrindia.com and is based on research work by the firm and its associates.