



CEO AS

CHIEF TALENT OFFICER

2014

TALENT INITIATIVES THAT INDIAN CEOS ARE DRIVING

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Foreword



SANJAY MODI,
**Managing Director, Monster India/
SEA/HK and Middle East**

Organisational diversity will be a key area of focus for CEOs in Indian organisations in the coming months. As a CEO, I personally lead and track diversity initiatives in the organisation. There is a significantly large untapped opportunity that organisations are yet to exploit in the current economy. Perhaps the largest of these opportunities lie in the search and inclusion of women in the organisational workforce. A significant percentage of the economically valuable population within the working age bracket are women and as a CEO, my job is to constantly think about how to create more inclusive opportunities for women. Besides that, there is also another opportunity that is tapped only on the surface -- the opportunity of hiring differently-abled people into the workforce.

A CEO will need to personally invest in the development of talent. Often, people tend to fall into the trap of strait-jacketed thinking. A CEO has to drive innovation and “out-of-the-box” thinking in the organisation because no amount of L&D efforts can effectively drive that. A CEO can energise the workforce to

stop thinking incrementally and start thinking exponentially. The demand for hiring will exponentially increase pan-industry in 2015-16. At the same time, nothing has happened in the last few years to suggest that the churn of skilled workers has increased. A CEO, therefore, has to really think hard about partnerships with colleges and universities. Academic partnerships have moved beyond just being good PR exercises and have evolved to become a necessity.

Engagement and retention of key talent in the organisation has to be the personal agenda of every CEO. As the head of business, I maintain relationships with key talent in the organisation and personally maintain relationships with each one of them.

This is outside the realm of any high potential program. Sometimes, it could be just be over a water cooler break or a coffee. I maintain a separate scorecard to track the engagement and initiatives of every key talent. In fact, the retention of key talent is an essential part of my CEO scorecard.

Foreword



ESTHER MARTINEZ HERNANDEZ,
CEO, People Matters Media Pvt. Ltd.

The fact that “talent” is any CEO’s most important priority is no longer a revelation. This year’s CEO as the Chief Talent Officer 2014 survey, which is the 4th edition of this study, only reinforces the fact that talent has gradually merged into each and every aspect of a CEO’s thought process.

Macro-economic factors such as the positive outlook of the international market, a new pro-industry government at the Centre and high growth prospects have all contributed to the belief that CEOs just cannot detach talent from any of their business plans any more.

While the previous year’s surveys reveal that CEOs were more concerned about sustenance and business resilience, they are likely to focus on growth in the coming months. While growth was previously focused solely on hiring, this year’s survey reveals a change in a CEO’s approach to growth.

It appears that Indian CEOs no longer consider growth and hiring as a one-to-one equation and do not view hiring as the most important engine of effective growth. Indian CEOs across various

industries believe that their organisations require a much deeper and more committed involvement of their time and attention to talent. Not only are CEOs spending more time and effort on talent management, they personally drive and track talent initiatives, which improve the organisation’s brand, make employees happy and prepare leaders.

In the coming 12 months, hiring numbers are likely to go up, competition for talent will become tougher, and leadership and succession will be the key themes for a CEO.

CEOs in Indian organisations reveal that to keep pace with these developments, there will be several initiatives that they will need to drive personally. Many CEOs, we spoke to, say that more than 75 per cent of their time is devoted to talent-related activities. CEOs are spending most of their time mentoring the next line of leaders, creating succession plans and making the organisation ready for the future.



Methodology

This year's CEO as Chief Talent Officer study covers a pan-industry survey among CEOs and Heads of Businesses in the Indian industry. The online survey was conducted in the months of September and October 2014. A total of 54 CEOs participated in the survey. Parallely, 10 Indian CEOs in small and large organisations in different industries were interviewed to understand the key areas of talent focus in different industries. We also aimed to profile some actual initiatives that CEOs drive in their organisations. The interviews were conducted in October 2014.

Executive Summary

The trends outlined in the CEO as Chief Talent Officer 2014 survey present a comprehensive representation of the priorities of Indian CEOs. They aim to serve as a benchmark for CEOs in India on the amount of time and effort spent on talent management and the key areas that they will need to focus upon. The survey and interviews reveal some key trends among Indian CEOs that reflect how and what they are investing their efforts around.

TREND #1: TALENT TAKES THE MOST AMOUNT OF A CEO'S TIME

Talent is not only the single-largest priority in a CEO's agenda in the coming months but also an area where they spend the most amount of time. Indian CEOs invest more than half their time on talent and talent-related activities.

TREND #2: CEOS PUT FAITH IN THE LINE LEADERSHIP TO BUILD CULTURE

Almost every industry leader surveyed or interviewed in this study believes that her/his key job is to act as facilitators of organisational culture. CEOs across the industry are getting more hands on with culture-building activities, including formal and informal meetings with leadership teams, informal chit-chat sessions and Friday townhalls. Apart from that, CEOs are connecting at a much more personal level with their employees through e-mails, which range from sharing business numbers to lessons learnt from personal experiences.

TREND #3: CEOS ACT AS MENTORS FOR LEADERS

CEOs are spending the most amount of their time with the organisational leadership as their mentors. Succession planning is a key agenda for CEOs this year and they are involved more than

ever before with key talent in the organisation. CEOs in most organisations are, in fact, leading and driving these talent initiatives and use these mentorship opportunities to drive their vision and mission to the rest of the organisation. CEOs connect with key talent and leaders using a combination of formal and informal conversations, including informal chats over coffee breaks to scheduled 1.5-2 hour meetings with key talent.

TREND #4: CEOS LOOK TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT OF DEVELOPMENT

Overall development of the workforce is a key agenda for Indian CEOs. CEOs realise that having a meritocracy-based organisation pays more in the long-run compared to a pure-performance organisation. CEOs involve themselves either directly (by leading the training session) or indirectly (creating systems and processes where employees continue to learn every time) with development of the workforce.

TREND #5: GREATER INVOLVEMENT IN SPECIFIC TALENT INITIATIVES

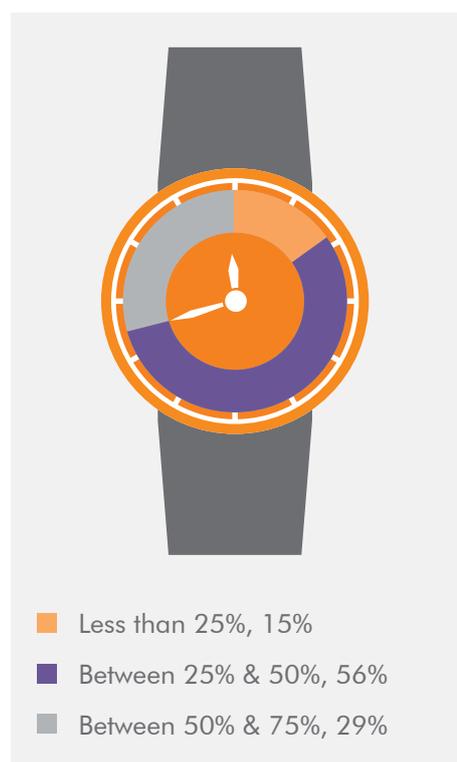
CEOs will personally look to involve themselves in specific talent initiatives, traditionally outside their regular gamut of activities. For example, CEOs will look to personally own and drive diversity and CSR activities in their companies. Employer brand is another key area where CEOs feel they will focus their time and attention toward. Besides that, CEOs will look to involve in specific initiatives for engaging the overall workforce and drive positive energy.

Talent takes the most amount of a CEO's time

100 per cent of the CEOs surveyed this year have personally driven talent initiatives in their organisations in the last 12 months. It is no surprise that compared to last year, the amount of time CEOs spent on talent has increased. A staggering 88 per cent of CEOs taking the survey reveal that their time investment on talent-related activities has either remained the same or increased since last year. In fact, 53 per cent actually reveal that they invested more time on talent management now compared to last year.

HOW MUCH TIME DID YOU INVEST IN TALENT MANAGEMENT IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?

85 per cent of CEOs spent more than 25 per cent of their time on talent-related activities



HAS YOUR TIME INVESTED ON TALENT MANAGEMENT INCREASED OR DECREASED IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?

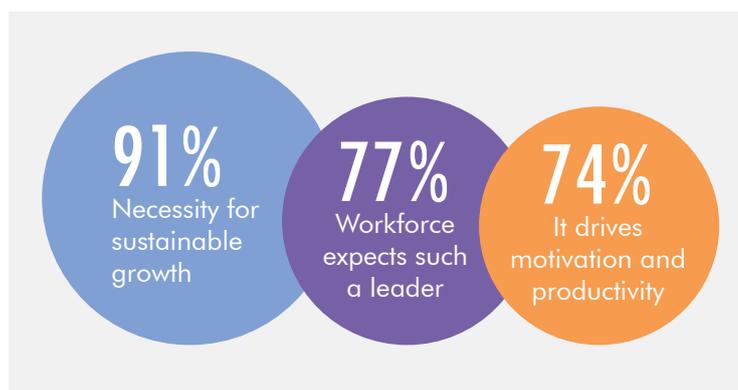
88 per cent of CEOs mention that the amount of time they spend on talent has either increased or at least remained the same since last year



CEOs believe that their hands-on involvement with talent initiatives has become an expectation. CEOs are regarded as the face of the organisation and their direct involvement impacts business growth and engagement. An overwhelming number of CEOs believe that their direct involvement with talent initiatives will be a critical factor for meeting the growth objectives of the organisation.

WHAT WERE YOUR TOP REASONS FOR DRIVING TALENT INITIATIVES IN YOUR ORGANISATION?

91 per cent of CEOs believe that their involvement with talent is critical for growth



Building culture is a CEO's biggest talent objective

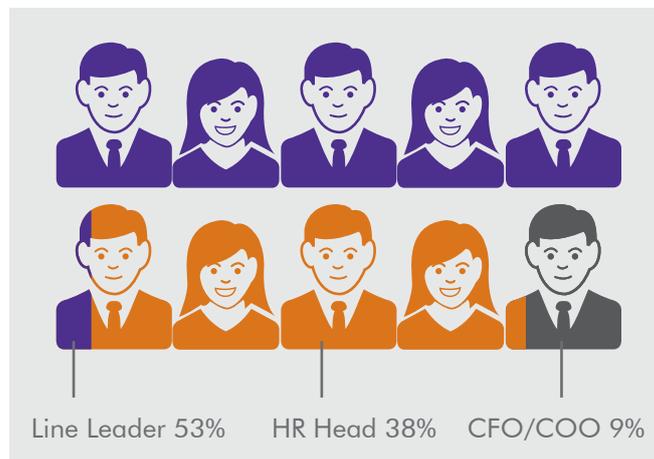
Driving the organisational vision, business objectives and future strategy will be one of the key priorities for Indian CEOs in the coming months. D. Shivakumar, Chairman & CEO at PepsiCo India, says, "For any business in today's environment, brand and people are the only two real assets. People are at the cornerstone of any brand business. As good talent is finite and healthy growth is anticipated in the coming times, a CEO's role in building the culture of the organisation into one of meritocracy, ownership and respect has become paramount." Shivakumar himself drives several personal initiatives to instil a sense of meritocracy and pride at PepsiCo. Two of his most popular initiatives are floor town halls and weekly insights e-mail. In the floor town halls, the CEO walks into the "floor" in any of PepsiCo's offices and addresses the floor and answers questions. These townhalls are web casted to other locations in real time and employees can directly ask their CEO any question regarding the company, about their work or anything else. Shivakumar also writes weekly insights for all his employees in the e-mail newsletter, which can include anything from simple advice to lessons of the week. A few employees we interviewed at PepsiCo reveal that they look forward to these weekly insight e-mails every Friday as a source of knowledge, inspiration and wisdom.

Dr. Ajoy Kumar, Chief Executive Officer, at Max Neeman, walks around the office frequently interacting with talent on business and personal issues. In addition, Kumar mentions that his Friday floor meetings are a forum for sharing

of information, issues and solutions in the entire organisation. He drives these meetings personally in his company. He also believes in building a transparent relationship with his line leadership, who help him drive his vision and objectives to the rest of the organisation. The survey reveals that CEOs trust their line leadership more than the CHRO or COO/CFO to drive their talent objectives.

WHOM DO YOU TRUST THE MOST TO DRIVE YOUR TALENT INITIATIVES?

More than half of the CEOs in this year's survey trust their line leadership to drive their talent objectives

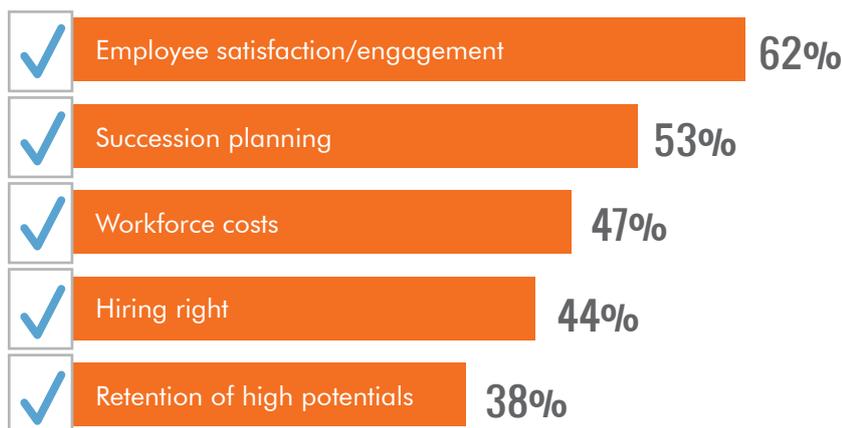


In terms of measurement too, this year's survey reveal that talent metrics are no longer "good to have" inclusions in a CEO's scorecard. India CEOs are actively tracking engagement scores, retention of key talent and impact of succession plans on their

scorecards. Besides that, CEOs are also tracking the impact of talent-related initiatives such as diversity and corporate social responsibility. This indicates a clear shift away from the erstwhile approach of CEOs from 'overseeing' to 'practicing.' The survey shows that the top three things that CEOs in India track in their scorecards are employee engagement (62%), succession planning (53%) and workforce costs (47%).

WHAT ARE THE TOP 5 TALENT METRICS YOU TRACK IN YOUR CEO SCORECARD?

Tactical involvement of CEOs in talent management is more; they actively track and drive important initiatives such as engagement and succession



Interestingly, CEOs in start-ups and SMEs/MSMEs demonstrate an even more hands-on approach. More than 70 per cent of CEOs in start-ups and SMEs/MSMEs indicate that they participate actively in managing wage costs, while about 52 per cent of such CEOs also indicate that they personally drive initiatives to solve grievances and conflicts. The qualitative interviews indicate

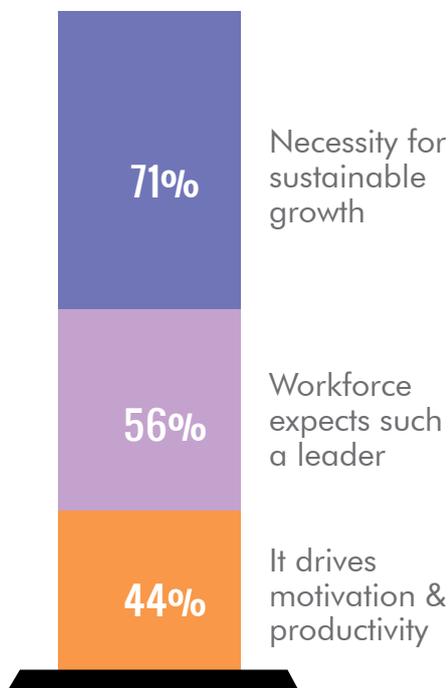
that across the breadth of the Indian industry, CEOs have taken the reigns of building organisational culture into their own hands. A key contributor to this trend is the fact that growth is deeply dependant on measures, which are long-term and sustainable, including employee happiness, a good employer brand and most importantly culture.

CEOs act as mentors for leaders

CEOs are also personally involving themselves in connecting with key talent in the organisation. 71 per cent of the CEOs drive mentorship initiatives in their organisations. In addition, 68 per cent also reveal that they plan to spend the most amount of time in the next 12 months in developing leaders and connecting with key talent.

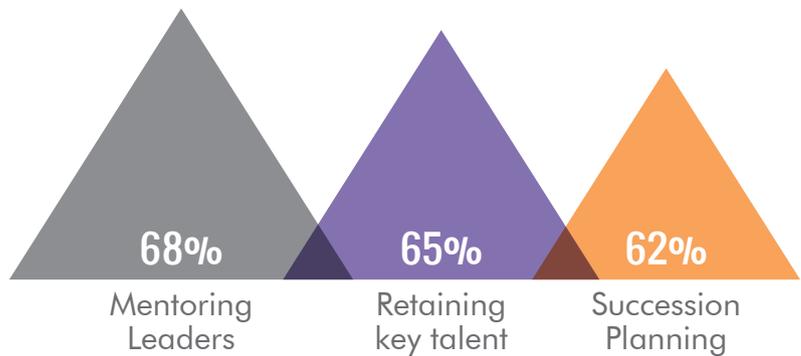
WHAT WERE THE TOP 3 TALENT INITIATIVES YOU DROVE IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?

CEOs spent the most amount of time in the last 12 months mentoring leaders and retaining key talent



WHAT ARE THE TOP 3 TALENT AREAS WHERE YOU WILL SPEND THE MOST TIME IN THE COMING 12 MONTHS?

CEOs in 68 per cent of organisations believe that their top talent objective is to mentor leaders



Sanjay Modi, Managing Director, Monster India/SEA/HK and Middle East, maintains a personal scorecard of 80 of his key talent in his organisation. “My personal scorecard of key talent in the organisation,” explains Modi, “is independent of the one that my CHRO maintains.” In his personal key talent scorecard, Modi tracks how engaged each individual is, how her/his progress in the organisation has moved over the months, and how s/he generally feels about working in the organisation. These insights are gathered solely from personal interactions with these 80 individuals over short conversations. These conversations are mostly informal and free-flowing and usually do not carry any underlying agendas.

At Tata Power Delhi Distribution Ltd., CEO Praveer Sinha is personally in-charge of the initiative that sends key talent in the company for external courses and certifications. “I drive all initiatives,” adds Sinha, “that can provide key employees the opportunity to attend higher education courses. At times, I even partner with line leaders during selection and approval processes.”



CEOs look to create an environment of development

Indian CEOs have started personally driving initiatives that maximise the effectiveness of the workforce. CEOs realise that meritocracy is key to enabling growth and profitability. CEOs involve themselves not just with the strategy of hiring right, but also how the organisation grooms talent. Rajdeep Endow, Managing Director, Sapient India, wants to ensure that all the people in his organisation view development differently. Development traditionally has been viewed as a push from an organisation to the employee. Endow's personal vision is to change that model and create an environment where talent chooses and pulls development. "My role in the coming months," says Endow, "is to personally drive the change inside the organisation and create a talent mar-

ketplace where individuals drive their own personal development." Endow envisions the marketplace to match their need to what is available and choose a development path, with help and support from the organisation.

Sanjiv Mehta, CEO & MD of Hindustan Unilever Limited, says the talent agenda in HUL is not the sole responsibility of HR but is owned by him and every member of the leadership team. "The company operates on the principle that leaders build leaders. Any leader in the company at any level would not hesitate for a moment to work on strengthening the employer brand be it engaging with new entrants or extolling the virtues of working for HUL to a prospective talent," Mehta says.

Greater involvement in specific talent initiatives

A major theme for CEOs in the next 12 months will be to tap the rich pool of women and differentially-abled talent. CEOs will personally oversee specific initiatives such as connecting with employees, driving diversity, CSR and positive energy. Dmitry Shukov, CEO at MTS India, personally drives action learning projects in his organisation, which are aimed at tracking the progress and rewarding people in the organisation. The program is called MPower and project teams make their final presentation directly to the CEO. Prashant Tandon, CEO of the online commerce company HealthKart, is directly involved in the hiring efforts of the organisation. Tandon interviews all candidates who are considered for the position of manager or above. In addition, he spends the most amount of his time speaking with leaders in the

organisation to drive his vision and strategy.

Nitin Jain, CEO of Edelweiss Financial Services, believes that a CEO plays a vital role in building a higher EQ. It is the sole factor that helps in driving passion and organisational vision to the workforce. “Many CEOs,” Modi adds, “will be leading diversity and CSR initiatives in the coming months.” Engagement with the workforce is also a key agenda for CEOs. Many CEOs interviewed during this research reach out to the entire workforce on a weekly basis through e-mails. These e-mails have a personal tone to them and can range from anywhere between work advice to lessons learnt. Employees value these personal efforts from their CEOs because they look up to her/him as the biggest proponent of the organisational brand and its values.

Expert speak: What talent priorities are taking a CEO's time

CEOs should keep both innovators and executors happy

As a CEO, it is important to not only take care of key talent, but take efforts to keep all employees happy and engaged

Development is the first and foremost agenda for me as the CEO, because capability is an integral component of our business. Every employee gets the opportunity for 200 hours of training in a year and our minimum expectation from an employee is to clock at least 50. Being a knowledge-centric organisation, I am also deeply involved with all e-learning initiatives within the company and closely track opportunities to send key talent for upskilling programs, including evening MBAs or other training programs.

As a training-centric organisation, I take a lot of technical training programs myself as it gives me the opportunity to connect with talent. Besides that, we conduct an "open house" every Friday to informally connect with one another. As a CEO, I drive these "open house" sessions and encourage and motivate free and frank flowing of ideas. In these sessions, we mutually select a topic of discussion related to the business. For example, we can pick up a topic on customer retention or leadership and have a hearty discussion on it.

I value both the innovators and the operators in the organisation. A major part of our business comprises the operators or actual executors of projects and plans. There are only a small percentage of people in the organisation who are responsible for thinking outside the box. Most of the middle management layer in the organisation comprises people who are the direct interface with customers and are responsible for bringing in all the revenue. It would be fair to say that middle management of the company constitutes a majority of the business and my most important priority is to keep this section of the workforce happy and engaged. As a CEO, it is important to keep both innovators and executors of the business happy.

Over a period of time, I've realised that one of the most important elements of creating a deep-rooted culture is the aspect of safety. We are not an organisation that believes in firing people, and the sense of safety contributes to creating the strong culture in the organisation. There are several people in the leadership team who have been in the company for more than 12-15 years and are happy. There is a pervasive sense of camaraderie and purpose because the organisation treats its employees like a family.

I believe that putting together fair and transparent talent processes is absolutely crucial to an organisation and it should reflect in every aspect, including performance, rewards and recognition, and development. For me, while 50 per cent of a CEO's time should be about development of the business, the remaining 50 per cent gets invested in talent.



Dr. Ajoy Kumar
Chief Executive Officer
Max Neeman

'Must do' talent initiatives of a CEO

Succession, engagement of key employees, and diversity have transformed from 'nice to do things' into 'must do priorities' of a CEO

I make it my personal priority to drive all talent-related agendas across Schneider Electric India. I personally dedicate time and attention to three areas that demand the most amount of my attention--Succession, key talent engagement and diversity & inclusion. For a CEO, such talent initiatives are no longer 'nice to do' activities, but are an essential and integral part of what s/he 'must do.' Currently, all three demand equal amount of attention from the CEO. While it is important to have a strong succession planning process and an internal leadership pipeline, it is also important for the organisation to have key talent communities. As a CEO, I personally oversee the development of key talent communities of Regional Sales Heads and Key Account Managers critical for our business transformation. Thirdly, my priority as a CEO is to build a strong team of women leaders.

In order to build a strong pipeline of leaders, we have launched an internal leadership development program spread over eight months. The program entails workshops, visiting an NGO, dialogue with external leaders and working on a real life business critical project. I, along with my management team, have attended some of the sessions with upcoming leaders to understand them better and to create an environment where participants can apply what they are learning. We have been involved in actively coaching and mentoring these leaders on mission critical projects. The challenge is to create joint ownership among senior leaders for the development of the next line of leaders. Succession is not the responsibility of CHRO or the CEO, but of everyone who is in a critical leadership position.

It would be absolutely essential to build the right leadership capability from within and infuse just the right fresh talent from outside, wherever necessary. This would help create a leadership pipeline to support business evolution and transformation. Attracting the right talent and retaining the key talent to mitigate business risk will continue to be my focus area.

The first of my key areas of talent focus for the coming months is the development of the next lot of 50 strong mid-level leaders and developing a "Women leadership development and mentoring program". We will also continue to focus on hiring women talent in key roles.

Schneider Electric believes in providing development through mobility and exposure to new opportunities. I will continue to encourage mobility including sending many more Indian leaders to the global offices within Schneider. I also think that the vast young population in India can be developed for niche roles through innovative partnerships with academia. We would like to explore such possibilities.



Anil Chaudhry
Country President &
Managing Director,
Schneider Electric
India

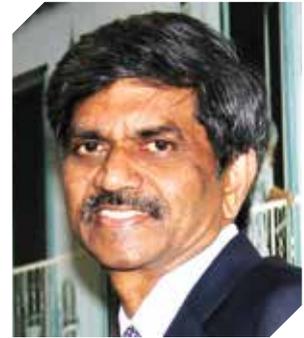
A CEO's core job is to build culture

A CEO should spend the most amount of time to interact with people and drive the organisation's reputation, both internally and externally

Most businesses have two real assets--brand and people. This is even truer for FMCG businesses because the value of an FMCG business is its brand value. If there is a great brand but poor people, the business will suffer. On the other hand, if there is an average brand but great people, the business will grow. People are at the cornerstone of any great brand business. The first question for a CEO is the question of 'why do people come to work?' The reasons are varied and many. People come to work because they believe that the purpose of the company is good, they have good colleagues and they are convinced that they will end up with something better in the evening from where they started in the morning. This means that the first thing that a CEO needs to think about is the culture of the organisation. The culture that we've been trying to promote within our company is of openness, transparency and of a non-hierarchical structure.

One of the programs that I drive is called 'C.E.O.', which stands for Collaboration, Execution and Ownership. The C.E.O. program is for the top performing leaders of the company. In my experience, 'ownership' is always the most difficult part in leadership. Small companies have an entrepreneurial mentality or a 'founder's mentality' that is difficult to expect in a large organisation. For a CEO in a large company, one of the key puzzles is to have answer to the question, "how to build a founder mentality?" The second key issue business priority for me is the development of people. All investments in plant and machinery depreciate, but all investments in people appreciate. There are several talent initiatives which I drive personally. A CEO has to use as many interactions with talent as possible, including face-to-face interactions, e-mail communications, and newsletters. As a CEO, I try to talk to as many people as possible, encourage and energise people in meetings, and write out my key lessons of the week through weekly newsletters.

I spend a minimum of 12-14 days in travelling and meeting people. A CEO has to treat people with respect, have trust and approach every individual in the organisation as an adult. It is a good approach for a CEO to consider employees as volunteers. Volunteers consider key parameters in an organisation, including quality of leadership, reputation, and culture. A CEO should also consider how to make a favourable impression of the organisation's brand in the broad ecosystem, including partners and external agencies. I consider an organisation with a good culture as one that has respect for individuals, trust, is very responsive, and focused on who they are serving. It is critical for a CEO to be self-aware, so that s/he can focus on doing the right things even if they're not popular. A CEO's job is to secure respect because that lasts much longer than instant popularity.



D. Shivakumar
Chairman & CEO –
India Region, PepsiCo

A CEO should rejuvenate people with positive energy

A CEO needs to continuously connect and engage with talent and act as the source of positive energy for the whole organisation

As a young organisation with just five years of operations in the country, we have grown tremendously. At every stage, the one thing that gets ratified repeatedly is the fact that it is talent which enables us to achieve our business priorities. As an organisation, we know that we can define strategic pillars for ourselves but all these ultimately depend on talent. Hence, our quest is to always focus on talent.

For us, the balance is shifting away from an informal, ad hoc orientation to significantly greater rigor and formality in talent management. Over the years, the partnership with HR has also grown stronger to run various initiatives within the organisation. As a leader, I personally take it upon myself to ensure my involvement. The entire telecom industry is at a crucial juncture right now and success would lie in meeting the ever increasing customer demands with flexibility and speed. One critical factor that is helping us in this objective is to ensure continuous supply of quality talent to key leadership positions across the organization.

Initiatives as strategic as 'Creating a Talent Bench' or ensuring that the highest level of reward and recognition is given to our high performers is something that is extremely critical for the success of our strategy. In-addition, we also lay a lot of emphasis on our Action Learning Projects in the form of an initiative called MPower. It is a cross functional team, working on core projects, which directly impact both our top and bottom line. Developing people continues to be one of our biggest challenges. People, irrespective of levels, need a clearer idea of their role within the organization and hence we developed a career framework where employees know what they need to do for their career advancement.

We are in an industry characterized by rapid technological change, short product cycles and rapidly changing customer expectations. In this business scenario, communication becomes the key to bind the company together. The communication system is so designed that it promotes both upward and downward flow of ideas and suggestions.

Operating in a market like India is not easy. However, given the huge market potential, availability of good quality talent, not to mention the new progressive government being in place, one is really hopeful of even better days ahead for businesses across sectors. Given this backdrop, the war for talent is bound to intensify even further. We have been very particular about the people we want to hire. I personally ensure that due emphasis is given on elements like alignment of hires with the culture of the organization. This becomes all the more critical when it comes to senior hires.



Dmitry Shukov
CEO, MTS India

A CEO has to drive the organisation's EQ

In people-intensive businesses, driving high EQ of the workforce is a key agenda for CEOs in addition to driving entrepreneurship

HR is an integral part of our company's strategy and every important objective is planned in collaboration with HR. However, there are talent initiatives that I personally undertake. The first one comprises the development of senior leaders in the organisation. We have a group of 45-50 key leaders who are either running small businesses of their own or are capable of running them with the next 2-4 years. As a CEO, my key objective is to connect with this group, not to develop or enhance their functional ability, but to encourage them to collaborate with other teams, enhance their ability to manage large teams, and their ability to think big. As the head of the business, my key objective is to find ways to empower them and make them entrepreneurs.

I oversee this program to drive the values of ownership among the key talent and design the best model of mentorship. At present, 10 of the most experienced people in the organisation mentor this group of 45-50 key talent. This mentorship model works to identify their goals, their strengths and weaknesses, and how to best leverage their strengths. Perhaps the biggest emphasis that I lay for the organisation's talent is on EQ. Considering our organisation is an analytical organisation and IQ is a fundamental hiring criteria, with the growth in size of the organisation, I've realised that driving EQ is more important. Another key criteria which I'm personally interested in driving is the percolation and alignment of the firm's strategy and vision at all levels of the organisation, especially at the junior most levels.

I oversee a program called 'Netritva' targeted at the branch managers. The objective of this program is to drive the vision of the organisation and the firm to these branch managers so that they can act as CEOs of their own small businesses. One of the major traps that large organisations fall into is the one of centralisation. The main objective of this program is to 'decentralise' so that individual branches collectively do well to contribute to the well-being of the whole enterprise. As a CEO, I maintain a regular cadence of interacting with these branch managers through phone calls and in-person interactions.

As a CEO it is important to build a culture within the organisation that attracts talent. It is about building an environment where talent really blossoms. A key part of this culture is to ensure that people within the organisation get enough opportunity to do the things that they want to do. A CEO has to be personally involved that roles within the organisation are not straitjacketed and people always have the opportunity to explore. He/she has to build an organisation into a platform that is meritocratic and encourages risk-taking and opportunity-identification.



Nitin Jain
CEO, Edelweiss
Financial Services

A CEO should instil pride

A CEO should ensure that people in the organisation are happy and proud, and that automatically drives other talent levers

In our industry, two very crucial talent elements demand a CEO's time and attention--hiring the right set of people and ensuring that talent is engaged. Owing to several typical characteristics of a brick and mortar industry like ours, where consumers are always connected to the company, having the right people on board is a top priority for a CEO. Having the people who blend into the organisation's culture is, therefore, extremely important for a CEO. In these times, as a CEO, it is important to act as an advisor to where the organisation is sourcing talent from and guide the talent acquisition team in decisive matters such as which campuses talent should be sourced from, the profile of people the organisation should be looking to hire, and to build a diverse and balanced workforce.

Diversity is a big agenda for CEOs. It does not simply imply hiring of more women, but also encompasses a more holistic approach to having people from diverse ethnic and economic sections of the society. A CEO should act as the guide and advisor for the organisation's diversity agenda. A CEO's role in the induction process is also very crucial and I personally drive several training and learning initiatives within the company. In an industry like ours, training is a crucial component of business operations, and every person has approximately four man days of training per year. A CEO should work very closely with the learning and development team and track how the workforce is growing in terms of knowledge and skill. A CEO needs to connect with key employees in the organisation very closely. In our organisation, a big piece of employment value is the opportunity of key employees to go for external courses and certifications, which I personally drive.

The amount of time which I invest in talent related activities continues to increase as we've seen that through a CEO's direct involvement, there was a much-needed drop in attrition numbers as well as improvement in the ability of the workforce to perform. In my scorecard, I track employee engagement, retention of key talent, training, and employee productivity as key metrics. I plan to spend more time and effort on talent management in the coming months and it will continue increase in the future. In terms of relative importance of business priorities, talent is most certainly among the top 3.

Every talent measure emanates from employee happiness, and it is a CEO's job to understand the levers of employee happiness within the organisation. Some measures of happiness that CEOs should absolutely ensure include having engaged employees, people in the right places in the right kind of jobs and a sense of pride and self-realisation in the workplace. Instilling a sense of pride of working in the organisation will continue to be among my top priorities in the coming months.



Praveer Sinha
CEO, Tata Power

Talent is more important than capital

For the CEO of a start-up, human capital is far more important than talent and s/he spends the most amount of time on it

The top management at HealthKart is given specific goals and budgets for talent management, starting from engagement, performance, attraction and retention. As the head of the business, it is my objective to ensure that the management team is empowered and driven to meet their objectives. I connect with everyone in the office formally and informally and an important part of that objective is the monthly townhalls. Through these townhalls, I ensure that I connect with everyone in the organisation at least once in a month. The tone of these townhalls is mostly informal, and I use this forum to allow anyone to ask anything directly or bring up any issue without inhibition. To achieve this objective, we place question boxes before the townhall and people drop their questions anonymously. I answer every question, no matter how 'politically incorrect' or inappropriate that may sound.

My involvement in talent expansion spans across the talent acquisition and development lifecycle. I personally interview key hires and any candidate applying for a position of manager or above is interviewed by the core leadership team. As a CEO, I was closely involved in structuring and standardising hiring processes, from a fully decentralised system to a hybrid system, involving the department lead and the leadership team.

Besides that, I also work closely with the senior leadership team to mentor them and drive my vision to them. I would estimate that almost 75 to 80 per cent of my time is spent on talent management. I am also closely involved with the formal onboarding process. As an organisation, it has helped us drive the vision of the company to candidates in a much better way. For any start-up, talent is more important than capital and thus, the CEO's more important objective is to get and retain the right talent in the organisation. Also, it is very important for talent to understand the objectives of the organisation and work toward common goals.

One of the most important things on my scorecard is the trajectory of potential leaders in the organisation. It is important for me to ensure that key talent in the company is happy and engaged. On the broader scale, I am also interested in tracking overall attrition because it gives me an overall idea of the general happiness on the floor. I have an open office, and I do not sit in a cabin. I sit with the team so that people can reach me directly at any point. In the coming 12 months, I will be looking to build a quality and balanced leadership team in the organisation. We also believe that it is time to make a more structured process to provide better development opportunities for high potential talent. Lastly, I want to figure out how to improve the conversion ratio of applicants versus selected.



Prashant Tandon
CEO, Founder &
Managing Director,
HealthKart

Building talent and culture is a CEO's job

The two things that a CEO can do for long term success of the company are building its talent and culture

We are past the point where a CEO needs to assess the importance of talent in the scheme of business priorities. Talent is a top priority for any CEO. A CEO's talent plan should be more long-term rather than short-term. With respect to the long-term impact that a CEO should aim to make are two-fold— talent and culture. These two parameters contribute the most to long-term success, even strategy is temporary. A CEO needs to ensure that employees and leaders develop the capability to adapt to the change and volatility in business conditions.

Today given the volatility in the environment, it is not possible for the top person (or even the leadership team) alone to stay on top on the changes and how to respond to them. By the time an organization codifies and institutionalizes the learning from a change, the next change is already here. So, in these times, it is particularly important that organizations focus on helping people contextualize the change and figure out their own responses to these. Of course, it all needs to fit into a strategic framework. The CEO has to drive these initiatives that prepare people for uncertainty.

As the head of the business, there are two key areas which I personally drive in my organisation. The first initiative is helping senior leadership to be more adaptive and anticipate changing business conditions as in our business, the pace of change in technology and consumer behaviours has increased dramatically. It is a combination of training and mentorship to identify the ways in which business conditions are changing and what leaders need to learn and unlearn.

Another initiative which I personally drive within the company is in the area of talent development. Talent development traditionally has operated in the 'push' model where the organisation initiates and delivers training to its employees. We want to move to a model that reverses this and creates a 'pull' from employees to own and organise their own development and careers. At any point, the structure will offer options for an employee to choose which training programs to attend, which development interventions to involve, and what skills to hone.

Sapient has always been very focused on hiring right and we spend significantly more than the industry average to hire the right talent. Once candidates join, the company takes their development very seriously and helps them build careers. I track engagement scores, leadership succession and leadership development. I also personally mentor the top talent in the company, mapping talent for development and succession. Almost 30-40 per cent of my time is spent on performance management, feedback, coaching, and managing organisational talent.



Rajdeep Endow
Managing Director,
Sapient India

All employees should know a CEO's vision

It is important for a CEO to ensure that the strategy and vision is communicated to all employees in the company

HUL has always believed that the biggest asset of the company is its people. It is my intrinsic belief that great people make great brands. As a company, the ability to track, hire, develop, and retain the best talent is the most important agenda for me and the leadership team. It is very important for the company's leaders to believe in a purpose. The sense of purpose draws inspiration from the Victorian era legend of A.O. Hume starting the first branded soap. Hume created the product where 1 in every 2 children died before the age of 2 owing the lack of hygiene. Having a sense of purpose in making a difference to the society is a vital part of how leaders think in the company. The HUL brand believes that in the interest of working for consumers, the community, and by making a positive impact to the society the company automatically creates shareholder value.

As a CEO, the talent agenda is not delegated to HR but owned by me and every member of the leadership team. The company operates on the premise that leaders build leaders. Any leader in the company at any level would not hesitate for a moment to interact with entry-level talent or even prospective talent, either within the premises or by visiting campuses. The reason behind this openness is because the leaders themselves were groomed this way. This is a key ingredient of HUL's employer brand and its success.

Engaging with key talent and putting the diversity agenda into practice is among two of my most important priorities. I have a target of connecting personally with 100 of my key young talent in the company within the next few months. In fact, I've already connected with 60-70 per cent of that group in the last several months. These personal interactions with key talent are in the form of 1-2 hour meetings. Besides that, my personal agenda is to ensure that the company does not lose out on the potential demographic of young mothers. Many young mothers, owing the lack of support from an organisation fail to reconnect with work and leave their potential under-utilised. It is an organisation's responsibility to encourage and provide all forms of support necessary to avoid losing the benefits of this rich potential demographic. As a CEO, I personally undertake initiatives including talking to expecting mothers to encourage them to keep themselves engaged with HUL.

My job in the last 12 months was for the employees to understand me and my purpose. With the help of the leadership team, I drafted the strategy for 2014 and the next step was to ensure that people in the company understood it well. I have conducted many road shows and full-day sessions at various HUL locations where I shared perceptions, strategy, and answered questions directly from the workforce.



Sanjeev Mehta
CEO & MD, Hindustan
Unilever Limited



people
matters

People Matters Media Pvt. Ltd.
1203, 12th Floor, Millennium Plaza,
Tower B, Sector 27, Gurgaon - 122009
www.peplematters.in

monster.com

Monster.com
Monster.com (India) Pvt. Ltd.
Plot 61, Chimes, 1st floor, Block-D,
Sector-44, Gurgaon-122002
www.monsterindia.com

Lead consultant

Vikram Choudhury is the Head of Research at *People Matters*. He can be reached at vikram.choudhury@peplematters.in

monster.com

people
matters