

LEVERAGING ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

There is evidence today that the emotional skills of managers are influenced and shaped by organizational policies and practices.

- a. Organizations can improve predictability of performance amongst managers by building criteria of EI skills into hiring and promotion decisions. This will obviously require use of appropriate selection tools and methodologies. However selection & promotion processes that involve self knowledge and people skills (key components of the Emotional Intelligence Framework) increase managerial Emotional Intelligence.
- b. Organizations which have systematic and credible feedback and mentoring systems help managers improve EI skills by providing them multiple perspectives on how others see their behaviour. Managers can use this feedback to correct distortions in the self concept and enhance their self awareness, one of the four dimensions of Emotional Intelligence
- c. Organizational values, though not directly shaping EI, however do help to deepen dialogue about norms of behaviour and culture that are necessary for organizational success. The dialogue around functional and dysfunctional behaviours (In the latter case by sending cautionary signals to those whose actions are non-compliant) supports the development of EI.
- d. Organizations have used training since long as a tool for building EI amongst managers. Although the long term impact of training, particularly in the area of retention of learning over time, is not fully known, the organizational

experiences however do suggest that training can have a positive influence in the shaping of EI skills amongst managers.

The evidence provides a new insight, which is that "emotion" is already targeted by a number of organizational practices & policies. The need is for organizations to move away from a training led dependence, and instead leverage improvements in existing practices and policies, to further development of EI amongst managers.

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DEVELOPMENTS IN ASSESSING PREDICTIVE VALIDITY OF INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUES IN SELECTION

Organizations are increasingly worrying about the costs of poor selection. The hiring cost is the lesser worry. The long term damage that opportunity cost does is not easily recoverable. This has brought interviewing techniques, that a large number of organizations use, as a basis for selection decisions, into scrutiny for their ability to predict performance.

Amongst a range of selection techniques and methods, such as assessment centres, IQ tests, integrity testing, reference, cognitive ability testing, education, personality tests, etc. Recent studies have established that structured behavioural interviewing technique offers substantial predictive validity, even in situations where the interview was administered though the telephone. Such non traditional use of telephone as a medium also has the added advantage of substantially reducing hiring cost.

Despite the general skepticism about its validity, employment interview has, for a number of unique advantages it offers over other assessment tools (cost flexibility, face-to-face candidate interaction, etc), remained the selection method of choice in most organizations. What has however fuelled doubts about its validity is the general recourse to unstructured than the structured format in employment interviews. Studies have now established that structured interviews can correct this disability; their reliability is estimated to be at least four times higher than unstructured interviews. Behavioural interview technique is based on the concept of life theme theory that aims to understand the recurring patterns of thought, feelings and behaviour deployed by candidates in handling past situations as predictors of their future responses. The life themes, as against being generic, need to be customized to suit each employing organization.

There are three steps involved in developing a behavioural interview format. The first step is to identify the key drivers of superior performance pointing to the existence of specific life themes ideally through focus group interviews replicating the critical incident technique. The second step involves interviewing a group of employees consisting of superior and average/below average performers from the particular occupational group to which recruitment is to be made (such as sales people) by posing questions around life themes identified in step- I. Each answer to the questions in the interview is evaluated in order to identify differences in response between the superior and average/below average performers. Questions eliciting responses that show co-relation with superior performers are regarded as valid questions for predicting performance and are included in the behavioural interview.

In the third and the last step a comprehensive document detailing each of the selected life themes, a series of related questions and appropriate verbal cues is completed as a guide to conducting the behavioural interview. Candidates are posed questions in the guide and rated according to the degree of correspondence between their responses and the verbal cues of superior performance.

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WORK-FAMILY INTEGRATION IS CRITICAL TO CAREER MANAGEMENT

Contemporary career management practices in organizations have emphasized the need for optimal employee development that results from the integration of work and familial roles. There has however been conflicting evidence as to whether employee feelings (affect) as well as attitudes (job satisfaction) towards work have spill-over effect on family relationship. This ambiguity has since been resolved. The latest developments in theory as well as practice have confirmed the above relationship, however with a qualification, that it is moderated by the extent of work-family role integration or segmentation. High integration is suggestive of a state where the employee makes little distinction between his/her work and family roles (An employee who cannot turn off his/her mobile phone to track official developments during family vacation). Segmentation in contrast indicates separation of work and family roles. These findings have the following two critical implications relevant to the role of HR practitioners.

- Work lives of employees influences their family life as also the lives of their spouses and significant others.

For organizations, experimenting with flexible work arrangements (which blur the time and space boundaries), there is an imperative need for training their employees better ways of integrating work and family roles so that they can experience greater personal benefits from job satisfaction.

HAVE YOU ADEQUATELY ADDRESSED THE TWIN DIMENSIONS OF “FOCUS” AND “FIT” IN YOUR TALENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY?

Talent management today represents a wide range of organizational practices. Its conceptual underpinnings are becoming more visible as organizations grapple with the challenge of linking talent management practices with their strategies and identifying sustainable talent pools.

Despite lack of commonality on the definition of talent management, there is increasing recognition that it targets a small segment of high potential employees and to that extent differentiates itself from workforce management and development that has all the employees in focus. This definition, however, is a source of anxiety and disquiet because it raises the prospect of undermining the traditional notion of equality of opportunity and can generate a sense of exclusion for a sizable segment of the employee population. How do we

therefore reframe the debate on talent management so that it is perceived to be beneficial both from organizational and individual perspective? The answer lies in emphasizing "Focus" and "Fit" in the talent management strategy.

"Focus" addresses three questions; which areas should be the target of talent management effort? These could be few or several. Where can the right kinds of people be found? And lastly what development outcome is the organization seeking? Depending on the contextual factors (such as hiring policies, nature of career paths, etc), organizations design talent management strategies with varying purpose and focus. For example, organizations which use systematic career paths for meeting internal manpower needs at middle and senior levels tend to use a far more inclusive and step-by-step approach. Others, who focus on supply of future leaders, called the leadership pipeline, focus on differentiated employee segments. Combination of these two strategies is most common in organizations. Still others may focus on functions which are difficult to source and where critical shortages are envisaged.

Clarity on "Focus" should be followed by a search for a talent management approach that "Fits" an organization's culture, strategy and supports workforce needs for development. There are several dimensions to getting the right fit such as fit to culture, workforce expectations (Psychological contract) existing HR practices and capability in managing people.

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THE EMERGING PATTERNS OF CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT IN PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT & MANAGEMENT

As public institutions become more citizen centric (in the fashion of corporates becoming customer focused), public managers are rising to the challenge of identifying alternative frameworks that will give citizens greater opportunities to participate in and influence performance outcomes in these (public) institutions. The experiences in this regard, world over, however suggest that the responses of public managers to this challenge are ambiguous, reflect varying anxieties stemming from perceived conflict between professional or technical standards and citizen expectations and lack of clarity in regard to the impact of citizen involvement on planning, resource management, accountability and relationship with elected representatives.

In the context of citizen involvement, two issues are supremely important to performance management: Is there a system for soliciting citizen feedback and are citizens involved in developing performance measures? The evidence gathered from existing practices points to a range of mechanisms by which governments are involving citizens in their performance and management efforts.

The most common and least intense form or system of citizen involvement is performance reporting in budget documents. In this system the information flow is mostly one way (government to citizens). There are notable exceptions, however, that allow citizen feedback at a later stage.

The relatively more in-depth form of citizen involvement is characterized by direct citizen participation in parts of the process that traditionally were in the domain of public managers and elected representatives.

The highest and the most intense form of citizen involvement is represented by the "citizen informed" performance measurement in which citizens are directly involved in developing measures and in some cases evaluating results.

Very few public institutions have matured to the discipline this form of citizen involvement entails. While it seems logical for public institutions to move in the direction of intense citizen involvement, attention needs to be paid to several contextual and implementation issues. Notable amongst them are:

- Ability of the public institutions to sustain citizen interest
- Level of complementarity or otherwise between direct citizen involvement and role of elected representatives
- The impact of hyper involvement of citizens on accountability

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DO YOU HAVE THE METRICS NEEDED TO ACHIEVE YOUR BHAGS? (BIG HAIRY AUDACIOUS GOALS)

BHAGs pose extraordinary challenges. In accomplishing them organizations need a systematic and step-by-step process of performance planning, execution and metrics management.

- Step – I** Start by clarifying the goals. A critical qualification of goals is their ability to excite and challenge and leverage the organization's passion, economic resources and core competence.
- Step – II** Using a structured approach, such as the Ambitious Target Tool developed by Suerken, identify the blocks to goal accomplishments.
- Step – III** Develop Intermediate objectives (Specific actions needed to eliminate obstacles) for each performance block with assigned responsibilities, time frames and action priorities.
- Step – IV** Determine the metrics that will provide signals as to whether the plan is on track.

The trick is to ensure that your scorecard does not get mired in a plethora of metrics. Focus on a few that track primary outputs and will have company wide impact.

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