STATE OF THE CHRO 2015

SPECIAL FEATURE
HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?
ARE YOU BRANDING TO ATTRACTION THE RIGHT CANDIDATES?

While attracting the right candidates, organizations would do well to 'Brand for Influence' rather than 'Brand for Mass Appeal'

By Ankita Sharma Sukhwani

CULTURE
Building an ethical culture
By Pallavi Sharma

INFographic
5 Types of Toxic Employees

STRATEGIC HR
Is HR different in theory than in practice?
By Aparna Sharma, Former Country Head HR, Latlarge India

CULTURE
Of stories and conversations
By Kavi Arasu, Chief Manager - Learning & Development, Asian Paints

KNOWLEDGE+ NETWORKING
Why talent branding is important
By Anu Babu Kurian

INTERVIEW
We hire people more like ourselves
Madan Pillutla, Professor of Organizational Behaviour at London School of Business

By Pallavi Sharma

REGULARS
04 From the Editor’s Desk
10 Letters of the month
12 Quick Reads
88 Knowledge + Networking
86 Blogosphere

CONTRIBUTORS IN THIS ISSUE
Anil D’Souza
Dave Ulrich
Gautam Ghosh
Raj Kavi Arasu
T.V. Rao
Anirudh Goel
Arvind Pandit
Atul Vohra
Niranjan Bhat

FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE
A.G. Rao
Arvind Goel
Navnit Singh
Sandeep Chaudhary
Smita Jatia

04 From the Editor's Desk
06 Anit Kaur
08 Letters of the month
10 Quick Reads
88 Knowledge + Networking
86 Blogosphere

CONTRIBUTORS IN THIS ISSUE
Anil D’Souza
Dave Ulrich
Gautam Ghosh
Raj Kavi Arasu
T.V. Rao
Anirudh Goel
Arvind Goel

FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE
A.G. Rao
Arvind Goel
Navnit Singh
Sandeep Chaudhary
Smita Jatia
APARNA SHARMA

Is HR different in theory than in practice?

The actual execution of the HR strategy does not have a guide and varies on organizational need, external forces, culture and top management

"In theory there is no difference between theory and practice. In practice there is" — Yogi Berra

In today’s highly dynamic business environment, every manager has to deal with new and complex challenges, which do not have textbook solutions. Hence, the employability of many entrants into the business world, especially at the entry level, depends on the litmus test of transferring the theoretical knowledge into practice in the REAL world.

As you go higher in the hierarchy, the complexity of problems and challenges become manifold. Thus, while making the transition from Campus to Corporate or even as they move jobs across companies, it is imperative for new managers and entry level graduates to develop skills and attitude besides knowledge.

Even in HR, just like other disciplines, sound knowledge of theory is critical to building a solid foundation and understanding of the subject besides its applications in the real world. Theory helps students to understand the “what” and “why” aspects. But, the “how” is learnt at the job.

My maiden book “Reality Bytes-The Role of HR in Today’s World” covers the “what” and “why” of all contemporary HR topics. Theory is dovetailed with practical cases to drive home the concepts.

It is very useful for:
• MBA students at crossroads-Which specialization to opt for HR? What does HR do? Is it only for women? (myth)
• Early Career HR Professionals-Ready Reckoner
• Line managers, People managers who need to be an HR manager for his/her team

In general, once the foundation is laid, it is less jarring to see how theory comes into play on the ground. In my own experience, while aspects of theory may form a part of strategic framework or the HR strategy, the actual execution of the HR strategy does not have a guide or a rule book. It varies based on organizational need, external forces, culture and most of all the management or the top leadership.

New entrants and early career professionals often feel lost since they’re not able to directly see the connection between what they studied and “this is how we do it here” as is the case in quite a few organizations. Some may even get disillusioned; hence the practical aspects of HR need to be integrated into the curriculum. My book serves this very purpose.

In order to help the new entrants assimilate the new culture and processes of the organization, most have a structured initial induction followed by a 30/60/90/180 day plan for smooth on boarding or even rotation across functions as part of the Management Trainee Program. In fact, it is a good HR practice to have this in place!

My submission is that one must put up one’s hand for real roles/projects, which provides close interaction with business managers/teams and even customer interface, in order to accelerate learning and knowledge about the organization’s business and environment. HR folks must refrain from fancying pure HR roles since it limits them to their functional area and deprives them of general management exposure early on.

This opportunity brings them into direct contact and exposure with the business and opens up opportunities to impact business in a much more meaningful way.

It’s time to break away many of the stereotypes that define HR since in the past the function was driven by the business rather than driving business. Strong performance orientation and innovative HR practices can impact measurable business outcomes. Everyone in HR must also keep refreshing their knowledge and stay abreast with latest developments on tools and practices.

APARNA SHARMA is the former Country HR Head at Lafarge India. She is a seasoned HR professional, thought leader and author of Reality Bytes-The Role of HR in Today’s World.