Information Technology: An imperative Platform for Talent Management

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ABSTRACT

We are into digital times and on-going advancements in Information Technology and Systems has brought profound changes in the way talent is managed by the organizations. With progressive use of IT in business is vitalizing the way organizations manage the talent by digitizing the information. IT promotes and enhances communication, collaboration, and engagement, not limiting it between employees and the organizations, but extending it between and among the employees for professional activities and growth. These activities enable the varied group of talent to collaborate for a business activity. Information Technology is helping the organizations to embrace a holistic view of talent management. With use of technology, organizations are better equipped to find, manage, measure, retain, and motivate employees to drive business performance through talent management strategies.

Keywords— Talent management, Industry Practice, Performance, HR Digitization, Knowledge Economy

I. INTRODUCTION

Information Technology has always been on emergence as the demands of business are dynamic and IT solutions are delivering economic value to the enterprises. Growth of IT has always proven disruptive for existing IT approaches in the organization but has brought into various innovations in adoption and has made the organizations more agile in nature. The continued innovation in IT represents radical changes to work practices and also requires business and IT professionals to learn and leverage new skill sets. IT has influenced the way professionals and organizations work and will be at core of managing talent to meet current business expectations and deliver business value.

The versatility and availability of technology has modified the belief of population that they will be empowered by the technology in their professional and personal life identically. The employers are scaled higher if they empower their employees with the latest technology. Also, constantly organizations are recording information in digitized form and the historical hard information is converted into soft information including employee and talent data. The better techniques could be applied so as to manage profiles of executives. The telecommunication breakthrough in the recent past has led to access to rich Web information anywhere as and when required. The organizations and its employees could access the legitimate information and collaborate with the competent talent irrespective of the demography. IT and IS management has helped construct the knowledge economy. Effective talent is required strategic asset in current times and IT is at core in felicitating effective talent management.

This paper explores the way in which IT could be used for effective talent management in current and coming times to cater to the ever growing demands of the industry for providing it with pool of talent to meet business requirements.

II. TECHNOLOGY FACTORS AFFECTING TALENT MANAGEMENT

With the growth of business, more emphasis is laid on having manpower with specialized skill set and competency at almost all professional levels and positions. Use of information systems and technology is changing work methodologies in all business domains and functional areas. Automation is demanding for enhancing the skill set of the engaged manpower or else lead to émigré. A special skill set is required to work in current organized retail stores which use technology for generating all JIT reports spreading across invoice preparation to dynamic handling of commodity stocks for auto store replenishment. One can pick any functional area in any business domain to see how IT enabled systems in these domains require special
skill set and to have that, efficient talent management is practiced with the dynamic support of IT platform. Increased expectations, digitization, and growth in telecommunications are the most impactful technology trends on talent management.

1. Rising Potential

With the affordability of technology, exposure of the people with technology, availability of technology, and ease of usage of technology, people are adopting technology in their day to day life and are getting accustomed to the technology to such an extent that they expect to use the technology in their professional life with the same rigor as they use it in their personal life. They always hope that the technology would be made available to them when they will work for an organization.

Businesses are growing and so does the human knowledge. The growth is so substantial that it is assumed that what is learned in graduation becomes obsolete till the time graduation gets complete. It is believed that the human knowledge doubles every two years on an average [1].

Disparate to common sense linear growth, the growth rate of technology is exponential to an extent that twenty first century will experience a growth equivalent to twenty millenniums when calculated with the current rate of growth. The exponential growth of IT is advocated by Moore’s law too. The belief is that there’s even exponential growth in the rate of exponential growth [2]. The upshot of this is that since the growth of IT is enormous, the adoption too is accelerating. The comparative analysis give clear view on this that how other communication medium took large time in adoption compared to the Internet and current advanced gadgetry. It took 38 years for radio to be adopted by 50 million consumers. Television took 13. The internet took 4 years, iPods took 3 years, and Facebook took 2 years to reach same number of people [1] whereas the iPad took only 1½ years for the same at the rate of almost one sold per second [3].

This leads to key observation that from knowledge management, technology innovation, to technology adoption, the growth is exponential and disruptive for executing processes. How the work used to be done in yester time is not applicable in today’s era. There may be effective technologies helping the management in managing the talent, but the employees will expect great piece of technology at their disposal for performing the assigned jobs, to live in connected world, and for mining the sea of information and perform decision making with effective information support systems.

2. Digitization

The biggest breakthrough in technology that has impacted the human kind is Internet. It has come as the easiest form of IT / IS utility for people. Irrespective of whether people have specialized training to work on Internet or not, it could be used with ease and has allowed the generic population as well as breed of experts to conveniently use it enabling them to connect, communicate, create closed communities, and allow bridging the demographical locations.

Enterprises have utilized the platform of internet more dynamically to address their business operations impacting their business procedures. It has allowed the organization to digitize the content as well as their commercial activities for utmost benefit. It has limited the intermediation in various business activities across the business domains. With its versatility, more and more organizations are converting their physical information into digital pages for better practices of commerce.

On the same lines, digitization of talent profiles is done by the organizations for effective talent management practices. As stated by Mr. Karl Ederle, VP of Product Strategy for Oracle Taleo talent management products, “Nothing has changed the competitive landscape more than digitization” and they have been innovative in up keeping digitized professional profiles and are using effective Performance Management Systems for assessments and mapping of the manpower based on talent attributes.

The digitization of talent profiles helps the organizations in workforce engagements, selection of the workforce, mapping competency of the manpower for specialized jobs, and utilizing appropriate talent. The talent assessment by the organizations may very well be thorough internal data repositories or through the cloud over internet which since recently has changed the way the people are managing their professional information. LinkedIn is an appropriate example of up keeping the talent information in digitized form over the cloud where people record their professional information that could be used by the enterprises to hire competent people.

3. Telecommunications

The growth of Internet services is due to the advancements in telecommunication which in recent times has been quite impressive. Not to forget, it’s the skeleton behind the internet services. There are advancements in speed and bandwidth which has also led to colossal use of internet through mobile devices. The transfer speed of data is ever increasing and 29.5% of global population is accessing the data faster through 3G or better services [4]. With the same available infrastructure of cell towers, the specific advancement in the cellular technologies may double the carrying capacity of cellular networks [5]. The gigabyte network is already in place and offers very quick data transfer rate to the subscriber.

Cell phones are the prime devices to access the internet and it is assumed that internet is more accessed through cell phones as against the desktops [6]. The continuous advancements in the technology, it becoming more affordable, and the rise in disposable income of masses have led to increased use of cell phones [7] and gradually it is turning as an immense platform through
which internet is used. The advancements in internet technologies to support mobile devices added the value of having a cell phone as a connecting device for accessing and managing digital information.

With the advancements in telecommunications, the geographical boundaries are becoming void when it comes to employing talent. With the global connectivity, enterprises could utilize talent on demand through full time & part time employees, consultants, free lancers, and could even outsource the specified operation depending upon the nature of the operation and the talent pool required for it. For multinationals having offices across the globe, this seems a feasible option to create a team of employees from various office to work on a project and share their knowledge and expertise. The organizations are using solutions such as InnoCentive, Mechanical Turk, and TopCoder for talent management and practices to fulfill their requirements [8].

The enterprises are practicing workforce balancing and mobility as per the demands of business by pursuing talent management strategies to seek competitive benefit through talent management. Netflix uses collective expertise of people to cater to specific business challenges through its talent driven competition [9]. It is assumed that the innovations in talent management will be impacted by growth of innovations in social media and telecommunication as it is going to be prime medium to bridge the demographical gaps and enable the collaboration and working capacity over virtual platform.

III. TALENT MANAGEMENT IN THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

In current era, the production of goods and services is based primarily upon knowledge-intensive activities which results in the large growth of economy and are directly affecting the employment. The search for knowledge workers and engineers is on high to meet business activities of an enterprise. The recent innovations in knowledge economy are an outcome of zeal in knowledge workers to continually update their skills, intellect, competency, and expertise.

There is a shift from production of tangible goods toward intangible or informational goods. The enormous available talent can move the value of goods into information base and intellectual asset. 80% of value of public trading company consists of unique intellectual capital, its intricacies, and patent rights [10].

IT has enabled the enterprises to tap the right pool of talent. For the growth of economy, people manage financial capital through which modern organizations conduct their business [11]. The collaborative IT platform of internet allows people to exchange expertise and ideate, and companies have started tapping the external talent for the same [12]. An external talent could collaborate with an internal talent for a business task and share his expertise as a full time employee, a part time employee, a consultant, or a freelancer. The trend of using outside talent is on high in recent times and employers are planning to increase their use of contingent workers. The organizations are progressively gaining value from outside talent by collaborating with them, sharing their expertise, and building the required knowledge. Agile talent is growing and is here to stay, and organizational leaders are increasingly turning to external experts to provide the speed, flexibility, and innovation they need and to more cost-effectively plan initiatives [13].

The leading organizations are trying to tap the intellectual capital of all stakeholders including the clients, customers, partners, opponents by enabling community services on electronic portals and record their voice & experience [14]. The aim is to connect to external talent and get the internal needs analyzed. Enterprises have hosted their portals which enable the customers to collaborate and share their experience among themselves as well as organization. The theory is that there is “wisdom” embedded in a crowd of individuals that exceed any one individual of small group [15]. The belief is that the crowd is able to identify the best idea among the large pool of potential innovations. Various organizations have ideation platforms such as Dell IdeaStorm and My Starbucks which helps the companies to pick better ideas, ideate new products, create efficient strategies, and provide better services to its customers through customer engagements. Similar collaborative platforms like lauchrates, innocenceive, elance, and MechanicalTurk have helped the companies to innovate, reduce costs, and solve intricate business matters through knowledge building. These platforms have given the organization a growth dimension through capturing information from external pool of talent.

IV. CLASH OF INTEREST

Information Technology had a huge impact on the talent management and will support its scope for times to come. It has given new dimensions to the talent management practices and is redefining the employer-employee relationship. The technology is leading to increased collaboration – often outside of traditional hierarchies and channels [16], collaborating the external and internal talent. The talent management is no more restricted to internal management of people.

The current generation of talent is IT savvy. Technology has given personal empowerment to the people but enervate the execution especially when the use of technology impacts the organizational reputation [17]. The intersection is not yet majorly experienced but could rise as one of the admonish factor in coming times.

The biggest breakthrough that technology has brought is the elimination or decrease of collaboration hierarchies which are side-lined and the users have got
The world economy is changing at an unprecedented rate. All economies are on the path of getting developed into knowledge economies assisted by Information Technology and its allied services. Like any fundamental economic shift, the knowledge economy has caused disruption and uncertainty for many people, especially for those without the higher-level skillset that the knowledge economy demands [23]. To have a profession, it is getting mandatory for people to have a specialized skill set to utilize technology. The task ahead is to narrow down the gap in digital divide among various demography so that equal opportunities prevail for people. This is reflected in the trend towards growth in high-technology investments, high-technology industries, more highly-skilled labor and associated productivity gains to maximize performance and wellbeing in Knowledge based Economies [24]. The task is demanding as various demography are having distinct levels of intellect, exposure, and experiences and the weaker sections may find difficult to meet the required level of competency necessary to be a citizen of knowledge economy. The challenge is to create a knowledge economy that provides jobs for everyone, both high-skilled and low-skilled, in all parts of the country [23].

Information Technology may bring in the divide among people doing digital work and knowledge work. Both will use the IT systems and services, the former one will use it to perform routine tasks which could be automated using IT services. Formers will be more into digitization of data and information and content creation [25], but the latter one will be involved in storing, retrieving, evaluating, organizing, analyzing, sharing, presenting, and applying data and information for making decisions and delivering services [26] through judgment and critical thinking. IT will facilitate them in better decision making through use of decision support technology.

Other demographic issues may play a spoil sport too. Implementing IT and its services in view of knowledge economy may face execution difficulty. Organizations with high average employee age may not be able to implement IT services with similar impact as that in a new start up or as in the organizations with lower average employee age. It is vital that efforts be made to encourage mature workers to continue to have up-to-date skills [27] and enterprises have to implant specific job design, flexibility, training & development, and health & wellbeing for the older people. Similar may be the case with the organizations having mandatory retirement age where people who are not having specialized IT skill set may only exit the organization post completing their tenure. The digital divide and the profile of people will impact core of the talent management strategies and the world may remain divided due to this disparity.
The social and economic drivers will provide new opportunities with IT at its core. IT has brought changes in almost all business domains and people now require specialized skill set to meet the demand and sustain with the new developments in their profession.

Technology is changing people’s lifestyle and they expect professional arena to have versatile IT platform. The growth of technology is exponential and the employees hope that they will have key technologies assisting them in their profession. The digitization has allowed professionals to connect, communicate, and bridge the demographical locations. The profiles of the talent are also digitized and task specific expert teams of full time employees, part time employees, consultants, and free lancers could be formed. The enterprises are into workforce balancing and mobility as per the demands of business through effective talent management and are collaborating internal talent with external talent.

Information Technology is bringing behavioral change in the people who believe that technology has given them self-dependency and control. They may undergo a boredom in their professional life if they are barred from using the technology to the extent they use it in their personal life. They tend to get disengaged if the organizations lack in technology and deem the organization at subpar level.

A strong platform of IT is a key in talent development in the current knowledge economy. IT felicitates in critical thinking and decision making. Almost all organizations are implementing IT for organized operations. The digital divide hence can play a spoil sport. The automation may lead to growth of specific people who are IT savvy having specialized skill set and have better employment chances. This could lead to disparity. It is important for the organizations to understand that IT will impact their operations. The talent professionals in coming years need to develop and map the competency to aid the emerging trends in information technology. IT will influence the way talent will be managed across changing demographics, economic evolution, and technology advances. IT is a key domain having profound impact on the talent process and strategies.

REFERENCES


