



| HUMAN RESOURCES |

HCM Professionals' New Agenda and Challenges

Challenge # 1: Changing Mix of Work Force

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The greatest asset of an organization is its people at work. People are selected through Recruitment and Hiring. We all know that Recruitment is the process of searching for the right fit employees for a variety of jobs. Classical tasks involve stimulating people to apply for jobs with the objective to increase selection ratio i.e. number of applicants per job vacancy. The more the applicants apply for a job, the more is the chance of getting the most 'right fit' person for the position, the aim being hiring of the best. Most investors want the best machinery for better productivity and long sustainable performance. In the like manner, HCM professionals must look for the best people for an organization.

An organization needs a variety of skills for a variety of jobs - technical, non technical, professional to custodial, administrative to accounting, financial; scientists, physicists agriculturists, biochemists, you name it. Where do you get the best people from? The obvious answer to this simple question is: from the mix of people available in the society. But this simple question is not so simple because there are certain jobs that require high expertise. Again, there are certain menial, manual blue collared jobs that people may not be willing to do, particularly people of highly educated affluent society. Then what do we do? Import people from another society where they are either abundant or are easily available?

1.1 Impact of Global Economy: Global economy, as part of one global village, has the need for a mix of people. Countries vary greatly in their economic growth. Standards of living in Japan, or USA, or some Middle Eastern countries have risen dramatically while people in some African and Asian countries languish in poverty. There are a number of reasons for such prosperity and poverty in the world, which are the domains of economists and social scientists. But the HCM professionals will have to consider two factors: (a) that technological innovations of these countries are more important contributors to the economic well-being; (b) that the nations in the world economy are increasingly becoming open and interdependent. They need people from within or without. 'Man behind the machines' becomes extremely important for their economy. This is one of the reasons why educated and highly skilled individuals often move temporarily or migrate permanently to richer countries seeking opportunity; this has been the case during the sixties. Since the early seventies rich countries have wanted skilled and unskilled laborers. Skilled laborers include professors, teachers, doctors, engineers, architects, pharmacists and other professionals. Unskilled laborers include municipal cleaners, plain agriculture laborers, aquaculture laborers, drivers, masonry helpers, salesmen, seamen, and the like. This movement has positive effects for

both the losing and the gaining countries - capital rich countries gain an influx of labor to keep their factory wheels going, for example, and the labor rich countries receive capital when the migrant workers remit money back home. This movement of people was seen negatively with arguments such as "brain drain" or euphemistically noted "human capital flight" in the sixties and seventies. With the increasing growth of global economy being dependent upon other economies, technology or human capital, these terms are not in argument any more. Given the interdependent global economic and commercial scenario the HCM Professionals' challenges are twofold: one, ensure that expert and skilled people match the technology required for an individual organization and two, arrange for continuous skill development training to cope with the ever changing technology and dynamic innovations.

INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVE	ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reality – the phenomenon that people are in many ways different and some ways similar, too. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management Tool – describes how an organization improves its bottom line by acknowledging, valuing and fostering differences (managing diversity)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mindset – our attitude towards differences and our awareness of the impact that being different is normal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business principle – new ways of doing business that is based on recognizing that the uniqueness of everyone is key to success.

1.2 Managing Diversity: Managing diversity in workplace is one of the major challenges that HCM Professionals have to address. Diversity describes a range of differences in people - ethnicity, nationality, gender, function, ability, language, religion, lifestyle, culture, etc. - binding them all together to achieve the objectives working under the same roof. The training and orientation programs will have to be designed in such a way that everyone, with his own unique characteristics, merge into the common harmony in accordance with the goals and objectives of the company. Diversity management therefore, is an aggregate effect of proper recruitment, reward, performance appraisals, employee development, pay and compensation management of these diverse people so that they develop behaviors which lead to competitive advantage and team work. When diversity is managed well, it can enhance creativity, increase commitment and job satisfaction. Let's look at the following table precisely that bespeaks two different perspectives in diversity:

Obviously what the HCM professionals will have to do is assimilate all features of diversity that are making multi-cultural organizations. These include:

- Pluralism: all groups respect value and learn from each other.
 - Structural integration of all groups represented at all levels.
- Integration of minority group in all activities including formal or informal networking.
 - Absence of prejudice and indiscrimination against any group or sect.
 - Minority/majority members identify equally with goals of the organization.
 - Minimization of intergroup conflicts, zero tolerance for strife/conflict.

The following matrix is suggestive of approaches to handling of multi-cultural diversity:

c	HEAD	HEART	HAND
Accept Issues	Study and accept all programs and issues related to multi-cultural uniqueness. Do benchmarking of activities acceptable to all.	Exclusion of discrimination. Recognize that every individual has his own practices and norms.	Align with business context and objectives. Diversity on the agenda of management meetings so that interests of all quarters are met.
Recognize Opportunities	Market scenario, product positioning and market opportunities that the diverse capacities can contribute.	Arrange for equal training. Set best practice examples.	Consider legal consequences, if any. Reward employees for best performance without any discrimination.
Commitment to Change	Drive for change. Arrange team diversity workshops.	Networking, mentoring and arrange for events to commemorate special days.	Make training mandatory for all people.
Sustain Inclusion	Strategize business such that it recognizes the reality of diversity. Arrange for 360 degree feedback.	Arrange for learning labs. Empathy for complaints.	Establish accountability. Balanced score card. Allow leadership to grow among the diverse people.

1.3 Compliance to mandatory laws: The HCM Professional must oversee that compliance to regulatory requirements of the land is best met; however, the job is primarily IR Managers' job. Bangladesh Labor Law 2006 mandates that all Labor issues must be dealt with in accordance with the law. Role of labour and industrial laws are of paramount importance. The enactment defines precise conditions of employment and mandates that the said conditions must be enforced at all levels. The law defines conditions of employment, termination, retrenchment, discharge, disciplinary action, leave, etc. The Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 (Public Law 92-261) of the United States of America is a revolutionary law that influenced law makers of other countries to recognize the rights of every man and woman to have equal rights to employment without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, or sex. The goal of this law and program is to make discrimination in employment illegal. HCM Professionals will make policies and procedures in accordance with the law of the land. They must remember that non-compliance to law of the land is a punishable offence. The challenge, therefore, is to play the role of employee champions as well as bridge the gap between the employees and the employers such that employees are not deprived nor are the employers over burdened with the ever increasing overhead expenses.

1.4 On the Job Training (OJT)/Orientation Curriculum: These people come from different cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds but work under the same roof of a company. They do not speak co-workers' language nor do they have the same food habit although, probably, live in the same dormitory. The modern HCM Professional's first challenges begin here alongside conservative orientation program - the teaching of a commonly understandable and communicable language. Introductory orientation syllabus will not relate to company information only. It must include the following suggestions along with the company affairs:

- A snapshot of the law of the land, especially common law i.e. traffic rule;
- Cultural norms and social practices - do's & don'ts;
- Language skills training for communication;
- Currency exchange rate(s);

- Malls and market places;
- Roads and routes including metro, sky rail routes, etc.;
- Health facilities and health insurance;
- Police help desk number.

1.5 Ensure Organizational Objectives with the changing mix of people at work: One of the first things that the managers must bear in mind is that each organization has one or multiple objectives. The HCM professionals should strive to attain the goals and objectives with the diverse segments of workforce. The points that they should consider are:

-That the organization will innovate, create, produce and distribute a product or service: the people engaged in actual creation, producing and distribution of product and services perform the basic work of the organization.

-Satisfy personal objectives of the members of the organization i.e. profits for owners, and salaries and wages for employees. If the personal objectives of all groups are not reasonably met, the basic objectives of the organization will suffer.

-Enhance pride in work, ensure security;

-Consider community and social obligations through CSR programs which now a days has become strategic objectives of an organization.

-Protect and develop human resources of the society through skills development training and education to cope with ever changing technology and innovations.

The professional's thrust should be directed towards achievement of equitable considerations for all corners - primarily the diverse people at work and the employer. The challenge, therefore, is an intelligent pursuit of all these principles.

(Next issue: Challenge # 2 -Changing Personal and Cultural Values of Workforce).

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