

SCOPE AND PROSPECTS OF HR CONSULTING INDUSTRY – A PERSPECTIVE

It was early 2000 when India experienced a tangible transit from a manufacturing to a service dominated nation. There was a gradual shift from Job hunting by individuals to mass recruitment by employers. This happened due to emergence of IT and ITES. Our manpower had an edge due to which we became a global outsource destination, the factors being largest English speaking nation primarily and low cost of operations too played an important role. The impact on country economics was so high which boosted financial sector as there was a scope of investments and savings beyond mere reducing the income tax liability. This growth followed by increased consumerism in the country thus retail sector along with food chain businesses mushroomed. In between overall growth one major industry which emerged higher and higher with each sector growing was telecom sector and aviation. Telecom sector grows with IT, ITES, Retail and Finance because all the sectors require mass human capital which requires higher person to person communication.

When I started my career way back in 1991, people to people contact was negligible whereas in today's environment communication is on the forefront and person to person contact has taken a quantum leap not only within the country, we need to communicate global. I started my career with a Project Management consultancy and was high work alcoholic Technical professional deep into process calculations and equipment design and considered my self on the right path to the top, until I joined a corporate projects company where it turned out to be a non-technical profile which made me uneasy. My CEO, who later on became my mentor, used to ask me "What is your goal " I would reply "To be a CEO by the age of 35" He in turn would always guide me, if there is a desire to be a young CEO, focus less on technical more on Interpersonal skills. On my disagreement he would ask me to do a survey and find out if any company is headed by Technical Manager, I could find none. Once I opened my mind to non- technical trainings he gave me an opportunity to groom myself by attending trainings at Institutions like IIM Ahmedabad and Eicher Consultancy, and went ahead and became the CEO right at the age of 35 years. I was so fortunate to learn soft skills when this concept did not exist and just like the way I used to think every body that I talked about it, felt that there is no need for such trainings. This was the perception because the need to communicate was least during that time; from then to now the need has taken a quantum leap, thus giving HR consultancy industry an ample opportunity to contribute.

The above analysis guides us to why there is a sizeable requirement of manpower in India and what is the current and future scope of HR consulting Industry. Emergence of above sectors will clearly indicate huge requirement of mass human capital with special respect to young and

frontline manpower. In some sectors like IT, ITES, Finance the human resource will be professionally qualified and sectors like retail, telecom and aviation may absorb less qualified manpower based on skills and attitudes our young generation acquires. The wave on one hand will create a demand of sizeable manpower requirement though on the other hand will increase the demand and responsibility of HR consulting industry. There is an importance in refocusing on the root cause of the growth and understand the negligence before we further define the scope and prospects of HR consulting. Our growth started, with special respect to human resource demand, with an emergence of IT and ITES and that we became an outsource destination. The primary reason is that we are the largest English speaking nation in the world. However we never focused on this issue earlier because we thought we will enjoy monopoly forever, somehow we neglected CHINA factor, they being a non-English speaking country. China raced ahead on many fronts because of productivity, now they are training themselves to speak English and as per my information they are already number two outsource destination and are ready to Challenge India's monopoly as far as ITES is concerned.

We will do justice to articulate this subject once we realize the challenge ahead and responsibility of HR consulting Industry. The challenge from skill enhancement point of view is to develop skills in our Human resource, which confirm to the global thought process and attitudes and to develop Non-English speaking and rural manpower on personal grooming and development. In future HR consulting industry will be focusing on two major issues – Attrition and Skill enhancement (Training and Development).

Attrition control and employee retention is a key issue because of less availability of trained manpower. Organisations spend on the training of their employees only to witness Job change for better prospects by their employees. I was training at a leading technical support BPO in Noida where young engineers were on an average 6 months old in the organization and it was quite normal for them as an average Job change duration. Large companies and sectors, in most cases have annual recruitment plan of 500 to 3000 people, not because of expansion only but major issue being attrition makeup. HR industry has and will have a good scope of innovation in this area. Employee attrition is the key issue wherever mass manpower is operating. I have personally observed one case where a leading bank of our country has learned to live with attrition and employees joining them consider it as a training school where they do the internship and join some other financial institutions where work hours and days are comparatively easier and salaries are higher. We can clearly visualize a huge scope for consultants to innovate and produce processes and methodologies for the organizations to increase employee loyalty and retention. This can be done through growth based compensation plans, performance based revenues but most effective tool will be an assessment methodology of Individuals Job

expectations and responsibility to their delight. Nothing more can motivate individuals if they have a responsibility as per their strengths and not weakness and they are empowered in a suitable open communication environment and mentoring program. Mentoring and Empowerment of people as per their strengths develops and grooms them, this helps them to have a sense of accomplishment. Personally I have mentored many colleagues of mine from so called waste resource in to company to top performers. In one case, I was working as a Deputy Manager Projects at a Soap Plant export company and my young personal assistant, who was a non-technical person and was not considered to be productive. Once her strengths were identified by me and she was rightly delegated, she managed sixty percent of the project work and later was elevated as personal secretary to the Managing Director. There are countless examples.

Training and development from HR industry point of view is only scratching the surface, we have yet to start digging the depth. This area is yet to be organised, why I say that is most of the organizations we have trained have focused less on Training need analysis (TNA). One of the large organization I trained informed me that they want to conduct a workshop on Negotiation skills as a necessity of an ISO 9001 2000 audit. This is rather a good news if we start taking action in organizing this industry by educating the need of training on soft skills with defined objectives and training need analysis only conducted by a professional training consultancy who will develop the content and deliver the training, or at least validated by them if the analysis has been done by the organization or an institute internally. If we go back to the need to communicate globally and realize the China factor, we will for sure understand the need of Soft skills training to the people specifically Interpersonal Skills, Communication skills and emotional quotient. The scope of training roots up from Schools, Management Institutes, Professional degree Institutes, frontline manpower (educated or uneducated). There is a maximum scope of Training and skills enhancement for the young and frontline manpower which goes up to middle and managerial level people and yes, there is good scope of leadership training to the top management.

Need for training of development is so high which can be explained through a recent training program at two quite reputed MBA institutes on communication skills including cracking through Group discussions and personal interviews. Last year the students were rejected in masses at a group discussion stage itself, hence they conducted a specialized training program this year, led personally by me. MBA students lacked basic principles of communication and an ability to conduct themselves in group discussions. They were completely ignorant on the basic practical queries related to their subjects. We did their training and results amazed me too, on an average 60-70% of the students were placed in first three days of campus interviews with most reputed organizations. If the grass root who is qualified business school graduates needs training to

extent that the vacuum is loud and clear, we can well imagine what the overall need is. We as consultants and corporate along with Institutions need to wakeup to the peoples call

There is a strong need to realize the desire of Indian workforce to get trained and consider it as an absolute priority and not an added burden. If we do that huge gap in this segment is good news for growing India, if not, this may turn into a bad news sooner than we think. I visualize Schools and Colleges make soft skills as a mandatory subject and teach them to smile and parents help them to acquire right attitudes and leadership skills more than stressing them to commit suicides. I also visualize organizations giving priority to recruit the employees undergone soft skills workshops and trainings and giving soft skills an equal weight age to hard skills as these skills are quite important.

I will conclude the perspective by retreating a strong need to innovate on the methodologies for attrition control and realize the gap pertaining to training and development for the working human force and prepare them to the best communicators and excellent attitude carriers and be unbeaten and indispensable business executors