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Passion Drivers For Managing People

Passionate employees are healthier, live longer, are happier, have a greater ability to spring back to normalcy, and are far more productive

HCL focuses, very interestingly, on generating and sustaining employee passion, through EPIC (*Employee Passion Indicative Count*).

"Passion focuses on holistic individual development and has various benefits. As compared to non-passionate employees, passionate employees are healthier, live longer, are happier and have the ability to spring back to normalcy faster than the others, and are far more productive as well as re-productive", says Mr. Anand Pillai. Inspired by the studies from Gallup, Inc. (*for identifying strengths*) and The Ken Blanchard Companies (*for identifying 32 work-related passion drivers*) HCL conducts EPIC as an organisation wide initiative. Since each person has a different passion driver, they club various age groups, into buckets called 'bands': 18 to 24 years, 25 to 30 years, 31 to 40 years, and 41 years and above. While customer support and collaboration are areas common to all bands, 'social' outlook is the dominant theme for the youngest employees. The dominant theme for all other bands is that of 'self'. Hereon, the passion drivers for all employees are nurtured for greater productivity.

"We are finding out the micro-granular aspects for each generation. This is important as each generation has different expectations from the organisation. For example, the youngest employees want planning, organising, and credibility, while the oldest ones expect creativity. HCL focuses on intrapreneurship; it is a self-driven and self-motivated organisation," says Mr. Pillai.

Engagement strategies are then constructed as per the passion drivers. In fact, the results of the EPIC assessment

are shared with employees within 24 hours of the process, after which they sit with their managers to realign job responsibilities. At HCL, "responsibilities are not given, they are taken," proudly adds Mr. Pillai, which ensures that learning and experiences are openly shared across the organisation.

In reinforcement of this resolve, there are various HR initiatives that propagate such a culture. The online seminars through 'Knockout' (*for business-related topics*) and 'Voice' (*for technical-related topics*) help share knowledge. Blogs and discussion forums are used to develop communities of interest. For example, individuals can look at their top 5 passion drivers as part of the EPIC Community. 'Top Gun' is a next-generation leadership academy, where current leaders share their experiences and expertise with the next generation. 'Leader's Teach' is yet another platform for practicing managers, wherein even the President and CEO participate. Therefore, says Mr. Pillai, "the wisdom across age groups is passed down in a structured manner."

To ensure that such innovative initiatives are percolated to all levels of employees, effective communication is given high importance at HCL. Mailers are addressed to individuals, and not a generic audience, which helps raise the probability of employees reading the emails. 'U&I' is a blog by the CEO available on the company's intranet, which enables employees to write directly to him about issues related to the company.

Shifting focus to talk about the role of culture in developing employee mindset, Mr. Pillai sheds light on this using the company's example, "We consider culture to be a component of three overlapping entities: individual value systems, managerial working styles, and business unit strategy. Cultures change depending on various business units, and the same applies to various generations. However, even here, there are many implications. People in the age group of 18 to 24 years will have the same culture irrespective of the business unit. But as they mature, their value systems evolve and they can be groomed further."

Keeping this in mind, Mr. Pillai further explains that "older does not necessarily mean wiser to today's generation." Qualification, age, seniority (*in terms of tenure*) and position (*that is, designation*) are not the criteria for according respect anymore. The only thing that is respected is the amount of value addition brought in by the individual. The rule, he says, is that no one should be entitled to manage others unless he/she is adding value.

In Mr. Pillai's opinion, individuality is one of the most important aspects while managing employees in organisations. This is because "every individual is a designer product, to be treated individually." Rather than clubbing groups of people as one entity, the kind of potential that individuality will unleash is mind-boggling, says this talent transformation expert!

WHILE CUSTOMER SUPPORT IS COMMON TO ALL BANDS, social outlook is the dominant theme for the youngest employees