

Crucial skills to stay relevant

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The business landscape is evolving mercilessly with disruption being a norm rather than exception or a novelty anymore. To flourish or even survive in such a dynamic environment, it will require HR managers to rewrite the rules. There is a significant opportunity for the HR function to revamp and truly influence the company's structure and strategy.

Failure to see the signs, fear of letting go and not adapting will lead them to be bystanders in their own organisations. It's imperative for every HR professional to be market ready for 2020 and here are some of the crucial skills:

Hire for culture not knowledge

The global war for talent will continue to intensify where hiring right will be the differentiator leading to better retention and engagement of employees. Culture eats strategy for breakfast, lunch and dinner hence talent-related decisions including hiring, transfers and promotions should be taken with more focus on the potential candidates' alignment to the company values, ethics, environment and ethos rather than straight jacketed job descriptions and role def-

initions. Skills and knowledge can be more easily acquired compared to changing an individual's beliefs, value system and primary motivators.

Command over communication

HR managers are in the business of people and can't emphasise enough on the power of communication through all available mediums. Learn to communicate in a clear, credible, crisp and compelling way.

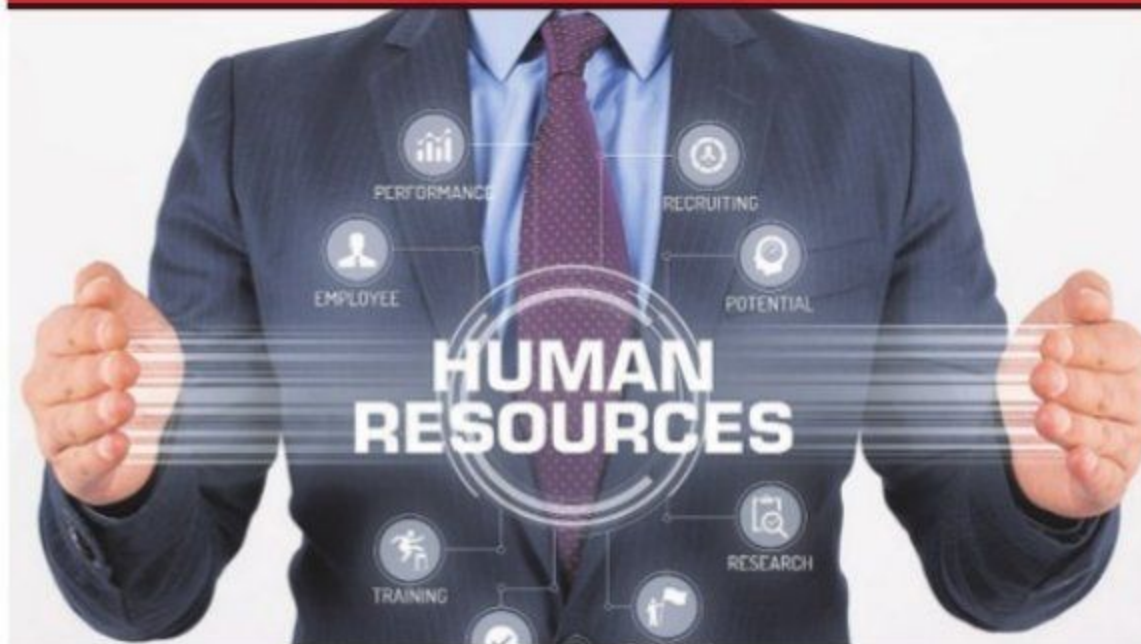
Embrace technology

Technology has become the cornerstone of effectiveness and efficiency. The explosive growth of information technology will continually force HR managers to go to the drawing board and use the available platforms to interact better and faster with internal customers in a language they understand and appreciate. There will be no place for old archaic systems.

Learn the business

Being a technical function where copious amounts of knowledge is required to run the function effectively, HR associates sometimes fail to join the dots on the business side. While they need to continually upgrade functional skills,

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it's equally critical to delve in the workings of an organisation as a whole and its intricacies to be able to contribute more meaningfully.

Demonstrate diversity and inclusion

It has been proven without doubt that a diverse workforce eventually leads an organisation to sustainable success. It's no more a mere feel good corporate programme, but a critical component of the company strategy also and HR has the responsibility of ensuring that it is embedded in everything they do, starting with hiring to talent and succession planning, career development and a mandatory

part of training calendars. Furthermore, metrics should be introduced for measuring and auditing the effectiveness of the programs.

Analytics is the future

It will not be a demographic forecasting tool alone but will be used for defining strategies and potential investments by churning vast amounts of information/ data and offer savvy customised solutions and input to the organisation. Standard reports and data crunching will have no place in the sun going forward and will be rendered futile. This tool, if used effectively has the potential to radically transform the

HR reputation and bring it to the driver's seat.

Scenario planning

Everything is plausible in future and there is no ceiling on preparedness. It may seem farfetched initially but train the team to think differently, deal with the ambiguous, devise multiple plans and hopefully be better prepared for surprises which if not addressed appropriately, organically and in time can negatively impact the company's fortunes.

Chuck the chair

Be approachable and accessible. Don't wait for people to come to you, walk the floor as often as you can

Take risks

1 Trek the road less travelled at least once in your life. The benefits will almost always eclipse the downside.

2 Develop your personal brand

3 Everyone has a story; make yours interesting. Find opportunities to enhance and demonstrate it but at all times keep it authentic.

4 Impactful HR leaders of the future will be those who successfully navigate through social, cultural, political and regulatory changes and keep investing in themselves.

5 It's time they start preparing for leading from the front and not just walking on the sides and thereby get tangled in the web of being outsourced.

—engage and encourage conversations; you will be surprised as to how much you will learn about what your employees are thinking. Collaboration is the best way to turn your ideas into reality.

The challenge is to work towards staying "Relevant in 2020" - Start Now!

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