

FORTIE

YOUR HUMAN STRENGTH



CHRIST
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INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT



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EDITORIAL

Dear Christites,

While we embark into another trimester at IMCU, the FORTE Team is proud to present the September 2016 issue.

This issue highlights some interesting issues like leadership lessons from the animal world, emotional intelligence, work life balance and effect of automation on people. A couple of internship experiences will provide insights into the summer internship journey that many students will undergo next year. 'Coffee with HR' provides insights about the corporate. Along with the usual articles we also have Book Review and Crosswords. The FORTE team would like to thank everyone for their contribution, support and association. We hope the same continues in future also.

Forte Team,
IMCU Kengeri

TEAM FORTE

Editorial

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LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM THE ANIMAL WORLD



Dr. Sowmya CS
HOS, OB and HR

A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way and shows the way. Leadership is the most discussed and debated topic; academic studies have multiplied like amoeba since the 1970s.

What is amazing is that there are ingenious insights and lessons from the animal world to emphasize the importance of imbibing, developing, listening to and trusting intuition – increasingly becoming a differentiator in leaders – to develop the confidence to take that leap of faith which every risk bearing decision entails.

1. A good leader must encourage knowledge sharing among employees – This we learn from bees. Bees have honed an exceptionally complex system of information exchange by which they monitor internal and external conditions, convey hive status and needs to one another, and direct activities. After all, most organizations have a collective fount of knowledge and experience that is deep, rich and varied. All employees, no matter their experience or position in the company, have the potential to contribute to strategy, tactics and capabilities. Determining how to tap this resource and to generate knowledge sharing in organizations is a key requirement for a leader.

2. A good leader must nurture, teach and coach employees – This is an important aspect of leadership and

is this learnt by observing elephants. Elephant calves thrive on long term care. The mother suckles the baby for two whole years after birth. During this long period, the baby also learns the finer points about elephant society, and picks up vital information about how to find the best places to eat and drink.

3. A good leader must listen to his employees – A good leader will always listen to his employees. He must be able to listen to the soft, barely audible signals outside the ‘normal’ hearing range, the ‘infra-sound’ like the pigeon. It will contain messages for the leader. Pigeon’s ears are particularly good at detecting very low frequency sounds, called infra sound, including the very low frequency acoustic shock waves generated by ocean waves crashing against one another. This acoustic beam always tells the pigeons where the ocean is. Even more valuable to pigeons is infra sound reflected from cliffs, mountains, and other steep sided features of the earth’s surface. Ocean wave infra sound reflecting off local terrain could provide a pigeon with a detailed sound picture of its surroundings. In every organization there are sounds to be heard as well as echoes and sound reflections to be sensed. Those echoes and reflections are faint, and the astute leader has to strain hard to identify them and catch the message.

4. A good leader must give space to his employees – The more space given to employees, more their growth is accelerated. Leadership revolves around empowerment and delegation. This we learn from Katla fish whose growth is accelerated by increasing the space for growth. Katla fish could grow to a certain size in limited ponds. However, when it rained a lot, the ponds overflowed. The fish could swim more vigorously over longer distances. They found that such fish attained in nine months, a threefold increase in growth rate.

5. A good leader must mentor / coach his employees – A leader must be a good mentor / coach to his employees. This is best learnt from the ferocious looking bird - falcon which is synonymous with Arab traditions and culture. There is a relationship between the ‘falcon’ and the ‘falconer’, which is why training of a falcon in Arabia takes three weeks, just half of the time it takes in other countries. The trainer carries the bird wherever he goes, communicating with it all the time in one way or the other. The emotional bond between the two, called coaching or mentoring, accelerates training greatly.

6. A good leader must have the ability to read signals emitting from the organization – Leaders must develop enormously long sensors that read signals from and far beyond their immediate surroundings. This enables them to feel and touch what is going on, giving them a chance to adapt – like the cave cricket. Cave cricket live deep in caves where light

never reaches. They have minute eyes or are even eyeless. In spite of this, it finds food because they have ‘feelers’ or antennae up to four times the length of their body. It is by the dexterous use of these extra long antennae that they survive the extreme conditions they encounter.

7. A good leader must lead his followers - Aspiring leaders can learn a thing or two from ants – how to work hard for what they want and how best to lead their followers in simple ways. Ants are some of the most diligent creatures on earth. The tale of the Ant and the Grasshopper tells us that this tiny animal slogs all day and gathers food for its community when it is available and stores it away for leaner times. It does not waste time and does what it needs to do to secure its future. Also, the ant uses pheromones to leave trails for its fellow ants. This helps the bunch find the fastest way to food and the best way to avoid danger.

8. A good leader must praise his employees - Dolphin trainers will attest to the fact that these beautiful beasts of the sea are not like other animals – they don’t respond positively to threats or punishments of any kind. Rather, if you want the dolphin to do your bidding, you must coax, cajole and praise. In our world too, praise and encouragement work much better in getting people to do your bidding willingly. The operative word here is “willingly” because any task done unwillingly is never well done.

Amazing isn’t it? Definitely leaders have a lot to learn from the beautiful world of animals.

CHALLENGES FACED BY HR CONSULTANCY STARTUPS



Nivetha K

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The human resource consulting industry has emerged from management consulting and addresses human resource management tasks and decisions. HR Consultants are responsible for assisting clients by strategically integrating effective HR processes, programs and practices into the client's policy. The Human resource consultants work with organizations to perform hiring, interviewing and recruitment duties. Despite helping the organization choose the right person the HR department also helps in retaining them and also measures their performance periodically to improve it.

Companies outsource human resources consultants to establish guidelines in areas of work safety, fair treatment, pay and benefits packages. HR consultancy service is required in the current scenario because:

- It reduces the burden from administrative staff.
- It helps in formulating the HR strategies.
- Guiding managers for better employee handling.
- Training and Development.
- They can obtain specific expertise.
- They help in identifying problems.
- They supplement their company's internal staff.
- They act as a catalyst for change.
- To be an objective onlooker.
- They assist in business launch.
- They share contacts.



There are few challenges that the HR consultancy startups are facing. Few of them are discussed below:

Building the candidate database

As they are new the contacts they have is too low. Thus they end up showing lower number of candidates. This poor candidate database in one drawback for new consultancies.

New recruiters

In case of being a new consultancy there is a higher chance of getting a new recruiter. This means the consultancy should give training to both the recruiter and also the candidates.

Budget constraints

Technology helps a lot in easing the jobs of every professional. But the main challenge lies in buying those. These tools are costly and hence people can't afford buying those products.

College recruitment

College recruitment is one process where recruiters can choose a wide number of candidates. But the expectation of college students is changed whereas the recruitment is the same. Hence new consultancies should focus a lot on college recruitment and the mentality of students.

Shortage of good recruiters

All the best consultants are already working with the top recruiters hence getting the best recruiter for the new start up consultancy is quite difficult. This is one drawback for the new consultants.

Getting the first lead

For new consultancies as any other organization faces is getting the first lead. Thus they should remember putting enough hard work and effort will bring success.

Acquiring more market knowledge

The more experienced a person is the more knowledge he has. New consultants lack in this and hence find new and cost efficient means for acquiring knowledge.

Following up the work

Keeping track of the work carried out will improve the efficiency of the work and thus improve the organization growth. Thus collecting proper data and keeping

track of it will improve the efficiency of the work.

Professional attitude

Most new recruitment consultants have this big problem. They don't have the professional attitude towards work and they are too casual this will affect their reputation in the very beginning.

Unable to expand

Their reach is limited and now people who are growing have been able to do that mostly by expanding internationally. It is quite difficult for new consultants to expand themselves internationally.

Taking up the offer letter but not joining

There are candidates who appear in the interview when they are called up by the new recruitment consultants but later they don't join the company even after getting the offer letter. This badly affects the name of the consultants and hence they should be careful in this tendency of candidates.

Candidates have high expectation

Candidates have lot of expectations that the new consultants find hard to meet. The main constraint the new consultants face is the availability of resources (in this regard), thus this acts as a hindrance for new consultants.

Fish! A Remarkable Way to Boost Morale and Improve Results, Reviews

By



Harry Paul, John Christensen, and Stephen C. Lundin

Vrinda Suresh
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If you ask anyone to recommend a book that is related to Human Resources, the first name that pops up is Fish! The title is misleading, I know. You might think, “Why something that talks about people has such a name?” Well, you will get the answer to this question once you start reading the book. The authors Stephen C. Lundin, Harry Paul, John Christensen, portrays the issue of boosting the morale of the employees, an issue that many companies face, in a very beautiful manner. The authors address a very common work issue with a beautiful use of metaphor. They tell a story about how Mary Jane Ramirez, a widower and a mother of two and the manager of a company, faces the responsibility of transforming a unit which was commonly referred to as “toxic energy dump” into an effective one. Dejected and demotivated herself, she took a walk one afternoon and happened to come across a fish market – the famous Pike Place fish market – and started observing them. The fish sellers threw the fishes in the air, juggled them, and created such an energetic environment that the buyers and even the pedestrians got equally energized and enthusiastic. The workers in the fish market showed that no matter what your job is, you can make it fun and keep yourself and others mo-

tivated. Just by applying four simple steps – Choose your attitude, find ways to play, be present, and make other’s day - Mary Jane learns how to energize her employees and bring transformation in her department. The lessons imparted are very simple but so empowering and provocative that many companies have actually adopted these principles. I myself would never have thought that you could learn management from a fish market. The book gives a very uplifting message and is a must read for every HR student. It inspired me so much that the first thing I did after finishing the book is Google “Mary Jane Ramirez” and “Pike Place fish market”. The former, like in majority of books, turned out to be a fictional character. But, guess what? The fish market is real!



COFFEE WITH HR

Mr. Owais Noman,
Assistant Manager, HR
At WNS Global Services



Ayesha Nausheen S
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Tell us about your role at WNS.

I'm an integral part of WNS's Talent Acquisition team. I currently head recruitment for the Insurance Analytics division of WNS. I help teams in hiring analytics talent. Additionally I build strategies to acquire and retain talent.



How has your HR journey been so far?

I have been in the HR industry for five years. Have catered to global Fortune 500 companies in hiring niche and futuristic talent in close to seven plus industries.



How do you keep your employees motivated?

We as an organization believe in engaging employees and effective utilization of resources. There are numerous learning opportunities that an employee gets to enhance technical skills. Additionally, the employees are given facilities such as transport, tenured maternity breaks, and work from home, leave policy, health and financial support. Teams focus on engagement by organizing cross training and doing in house fun activities



What would be your advice to students who aspire to make a career for themselves in HR?

Gone are the days when HR was merely a support function. Human resource has now become an integral part of every business unit and it would be impossible to run business without the intervention of Human resources. With the advancement in technology and processes, HR in itself is an industry. HR houses multiple opportunities such as talent acquisition, learning and development, Generalist, HRMS and Shared services. This will only enhance growth opportunities for students looking to pursue HR as a career. With respect to compensation, HR has some of the highest paying opportunities, in some companies even more than the IT and consulting roles.

“ STAND-UP MEETINGS, INTER CALLS, DEADLINES ,
FAMILY , CHILDREN , HEALTH , PARTIES , EXERCISE ,
BALANCE ” !!!



Anub Geo Kurian

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WORK LIFE BALANCE

Climbing the organizational ladder often requires employees to work for long hours and deal with difficult and complex issues. Some days on the job are likely to be fun and positive and other days are tension-filled and stressful. A common dilemma for many people is how they manage all of the competing demands in their work and life and avoid letting any negative effects of work spill over into their personal life. There always happens a cumulative effect of unbalance i.e. if a person have had a bad time at office, that stress is reflected in his family matters in one way or the other, disturbing the family balance.

So, it's all about Balance. But if we take the scenario now, it is not just about balancing in life, instead it is about prioritizing and making choices, striving for work-life effectiveness. We will have 'n' number of choices before us. Those who are wise enough to pick the right choice at the right time becomes the winner in life.

Bryan Dyson once termed life as juggling game with balls – work is rubber ball and all others (family, friends, health and spirit) are glass balls. But in this era, where people are running behind money and fame, to have a better work life they should prioritize and choose. Let me try to explain it as per my perspective.



In circus juggling balls are just balls for playing, but in life each ball is vital and precious and has its own value. Let me explain them as:

Career:	Glass ball
Family:	Wooden ball
Health:	Metal ball
Friends:	Rubber ball

These are the four balls in life which you need to juggle. And so unlike in circus we cannot take risk, because it is the matter of life. The process has to be given importance as the balls get broken if it falls down. It is about matter of choice – which one to give highest priority now and which one not to, and to keep on juggling.

“All areas of life are to be balanced always”- that is where the main issue is. Instead we should make perfect blend of choices so that we can run life smoothly. Even if such blending lets some areas of life left out, planning and strategizing should be adopted in such a way that everything is taken care of.

The question of “WHY & WHEN” the ball is to be chosen is important and should be answered first, before deciding “WHICH” ball. That is how prioritizing should happen.

Structure your life in a way that a perfect trimming of ‘unwanted and less prior’ things are done and focus on activities you specialize in and value most. Even helping your child to get ready to school comes out to be valuable thing for him, rather than you running behind

work and earning for him. So don’t always imagine of doing big things to get self Actualization, start doing small things perfectly, it can really make big changes.

As we all know, of all the sectors mentioned, for a youth the most important will be the Career i.e. the Glass ball. Like a glass ball in hand, it has to be handled with utmost care. Once career has fallen from our hand and goes out of control, it is difficult to get it back and it will cost you lot. Career is not your job alone, it is the long term plan, never should it confine only to your work which can create more imbalance. Rather focus on your goal of life where growth is evident. See yourself after 10 years where you want to be, and start a long term plan for its achievement; career is not what you are now, it is what you will be.

Coming to the part of health and family, which I compared as Metal and Wooden balls respectively, have to be given care and importance, because both of them respectively gets cracked and dent, if fallen. Health- Metal ball once gets dent, it will be permanent. Similarly the Family - wooden ball once dropped down gets cracked.

The fourth horizon of life namely friends is the most flexible ball of life where you can have some relaxation. So I made it of rubber which has the property of elasticity. It can be put down as it bounces back. Often go partying and enjoy life with your friends. There is only one life and live it to fullest. Handle this circle of life with love and concern and it will surely bounce back to you when you are in need.

Often in life we need to compromise on our priorities so that we can handle the juggle of life perfectly .It is not that we need to always do everything the best way. We need to keep some balls on less prior side and others on the more prior side.

Apart from all this, have anyone noticed a ball, other than this four in image?? Yeah one ball is there inside oneself – Inner spirit. (Ball Aura inside the person in image).

Emotional balance is a must thing in life, even if we don't have anything in life we can be happy if our inner spirit is balanced and our mind is in joyful mood. Meditation and prayer that can bring real peace and harmony within you. As we have already discussed

good health is inevitable. Stress and health are inversely proportional, but both can be kept under control by proper exercise and meditation. They take less efforts but payoff is huge.

As growth comes to a person, the responsibilities get accumulated. Looking for perfection in all areas and all things can lead to destructive effect on life. It is better to compromise in some things and to excel overall. We always hear “don't take your work home or home to work”. To lead a balanced life we need to create a habit of keeping all gadgets away and spending time at our home often and make it a real home. Deciding when, where, and how to be accessible for work is an ongoing challenge.

The above story is applicable to all irrespective of gender, nature of work or any sort of differentiation, it is applicable from domain of a farmer to a company CEO.

So Balanced life is about the matter of choice you make, it is about proper planning and scheduling with respect to your priorities. Life is fragile and so handle it with care.



WHAT EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE BRINGS TO THE WORKPLACE



Janvhi Mishra
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Emotional Intelligence or Emotional Quotient (EQ) is an important aspect for the development of an organization, along with Intelligence quotient (IQ). IQ measures the raw intelligence, particularly the logic, reasoning, language and mathematics but it's not a realistic factor in predicting success. If IQ measures how smart a person is, then EQ determines how they will use these gifts. In simple words, life success can be measured accurately using both EQ and IQ. This is the balancing act between results and relationships.

What is Emotional Intelligence?

Emotional Intelligence or Emotional Quotient is the ability of an individual to recognize his emotions and also other people's emotion and to be able to differentiate between different feelings and use this information to guide the behaviour and thinking. A high EQ will ensure greater mental health, high job performance and potent leadership skills. At an organizational level, people with higher EQ will help in avoiding hostile situations at work and inculcating a work environment which will lead to higher productivity, increase job satisfaction, employee tenure and improves the bottom line.

For HR professionals, incorporating Behavioural EQ in the organization has two main benefits, not only will it increase the understanding of themselves but also of others and by doing so they can help employees to develop their Behavioural EQ. Hostile situations can be avoided and conflicts will be reduced at the workplace. Emotional Quotient is the emotional part of the job description whereas the intelligent quotient (IQ) is the intellectual part of the job description. EQ is about being emotionally wise while interacting with people.

A study by Pearson and Porath, of thousands of managers and employees to understand the importance of Emotional Quotient at workplace had the following results:

Two-thirds of employees said their performance declined

Four out of five employees lost work time worrying about the unpleasant incident

63% wasted time avoiding the low EQ offender

More than 75% of respondents said that their commitment to their employer had waned

12% resigned due to the low EQ behaviour



How to improve Emotional Intelligence at workplace

The essential premise of EQ is effective awareness, management and control of one's own emotions and also of others. To promote emotional intelligence at workplace, HR professionals need to plan and strategize management and development efforts with social and emotional learning as the goal. There are certain steps which need to be taken before implementing the training of employees to have high emotional intelligence.

Assessing the organization's needs: Determine the competencies that are most critical for effective job performance in a particular type of job and make sure the competencies to be developed are in accordance with the organization's culture and strategy.

Assess the individual: The individuals should be evaluated based on the key competencies needed for a particular job, and the data should be collected from multiple sources using multiple methods such as interview, survey etc. to maximize credibility and validity.

Feedback: Give the individual information on his/her strengths and weaknesses and allow plenty of time for the person to digest and integrate the information. Provide the feedback in a safe and supportive environment in order to avoid any resistance or defensiveness from the employees.

Link learning goals to personal values: People are motivated when the personal goals are aligned with the learning goals. It is important to understand the individual goals and aligning them with the goals which the learning will help them achieve.

Adjust expectations: The expectations of the learners should be built by explaining them the competencies that will be acquired by them can lead towards improvement and have valued outcomes. The expectations of the learners should be realistic of what the training process will involve and how it will benefit them.

Gauge readiness: Estimating whether the individual is ready for training or not is crucial. If the person is not ready because of insufficient motivation or other reasons, it is necessary to focus on ways to make them ready by interventions or other means.

Set clear goals: Goals need to be set specifically and people need to know about the competencies and how they would acquire them. They should be told how to use these competencies on the job and what behaviours and skills would form the target competence.

Rely on experiential methods: Experiential methods work best for learning social and emotional competencies. Development activities that engage all the senses and that are dramatic and powerful can be especially effective.

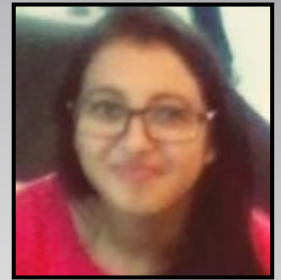
Encourage use of skills on the job: Supervisors, coaches and mentors should encourage learners by rewarding them for using the learnt skills on the job. Change will last longer if it is replicated by senior and upper level managers.

Evaluate: It is important to measure the development before and after the training, at least two months later and have a follow up after one year to chart the progress from the acquisition of the competencies. This helps in assessing the impact on job related outcomes such as performance measures and indicators of adjustment as absenteeism, grievances etc.

A High EQ builds a solid foundation for positive branding for the team, and likewise, the company. To be a successful leader it is necessary to have both technical and emotional skills in the team to build a product, service or community that has been envisioned. A study published in the Human Resources Management Review found that teams with higher EI are better and quicker performers than those with low EI. Thus, Emotional Intelligence really matters.



INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES



Namrata Nandi
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INTERNING AS A HR GENERALIST AT ANMOL SHARE BROKING LTD

A human resources department is a crucial element of employee's well-being in any business, irrespective of its size. But most of the companies usually feel that an HR department in a company is a cost incurring department and they can function/manage without a proper HR department. To many people the preconceived notion of the work of a HR is just hiring the right kind of people but it is something more than that. My summer internship was like an eye opener.

I did my internship at Anmol Share Broking Ltd, a 10 year old company holding its presence in trading, insurance, reality and compliance and has an employee strength of 45. My internship was to understand how the various things are done in an HR department; that is when I realized that it is just more than recruitment or training, it's about people. Just recruiting right person will not work here an HR has to understand the people he or she works with. It was a privilege to work there as it helped me a lot to gain a thorough insight about HR i.e. how it works and what challenges it face. My work there as an intern were as follows -

- Learning and development
- Recruitment
- Employee engagement
- Employee motivation and work culture
- Administration

These are the areas where I made some major contributions to the organization, which includes developing a full Learning & development calendar for the year 2016-2017 for organizing personal award show in the organization in order to motivate the employees and many other initiatives. The most important contribution of my internship is that all the work given to me was done at a minimal cost.

INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES



Shikha Agrawal
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LEARNINGS FROM INTERNSHIP AT TAJ HOTEL

Today world is rightly a VUCA world. A world which is volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. L&D plays a major role in an organization by helping it to be agile, adaptive and ambidextrous. Especially in a service industry, learning and development helps people to cater to the customer's need effectively by imparting the employees with better training facilities which gives them the knowledge of what the organization is, what roles are available are and how they can contribute to the overall business strategy.

For a service organization like Taj Hotel, L&D is a core functional unit of HR department in developing their people and thereby maintaining the brand image.

Learning and development as a function if executed effectively turns out to be a retention strategy for the organization. Creating an environment of learning within an organization not only motivates its employees but also provides them the dimensions to grow. By availing an environment where people are free to learn across dimensions, across functions, cater themselves with the best practices followed across organizations creates a sense of ownership. They feel their goals and objectives are aligned to the organizational goals.

It also helps in succession planning, thereby developing future leaders.

“L&D doesn't create followers, it creates more leaders”

Learning and development thus plays a vital role in shaping an organization and can be one of the success factor to remain competitive in the market.

CAN AUTOMATION OVERPOWER THE HUMAN ELEMENT IN ORGANIZATIONS ?



Tanya Kothiyal

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With automation being the buzz world in the current corporate scenario, I'm strongly of the opinion that technology can help us to connect but there still has to be a human process in order to build high performing teams around the globe. There is a sensitivity that is involved when humans function at the workplace in union. When trust and team building are spoken about within organizations, there is a concept called 'unconscious bias' which is often discussed. This is how each one of us operates without knowing that we operate in a certain manner. Thus, many times, we might interact with global teams in a particular way without even realizing it. The general human perception is to like people who are like us. This is the natural human orientation. However, this approach may not work when we are working in diverse global teams.

We might have to be conscious about liking those who are unlike us as well. Therefore, you always have to make a conscious effort to include and treat everyone who is a part of your team as equally important. It is then when you are being unbiased towards others. Irrespective of which part of the world people come from,

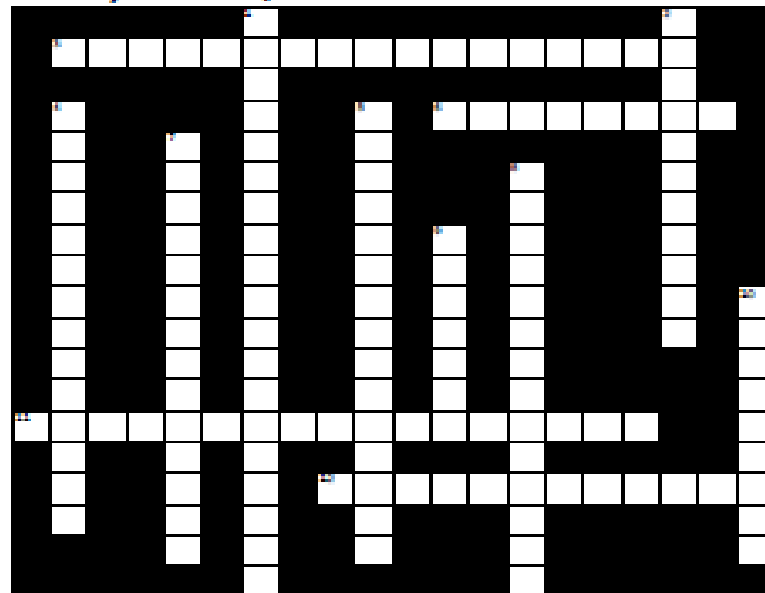
they are all human. Technology makes it easier for us to network and also gives us easier access to knowledge, but it still has to be a human process and this is the only way we will be able to build better relationships with people across the globe. The growth of automation is increasing at a rapid rate. However, the food for thought is the fact that humans continue to be exceptional in spite of technological breakthroughs and the human intelligence is irreplaceable when it comes to solving issues that involve the application of head and heart in decision-making within organizations.

CROSSWORDS

A crossword puzzle consisting of commonly used HR terminology!!

Word Bank

Applicant pool, Benchmarking, Blue collar workers, C-Suite, Core competencies, Demotion, Job enrichment, Off-duty hours, Recognition, Skill gap, Time management, Work/life balance



Across

- 3 Having a measure of control over when, where and how individuals work, leading to their being able to enjoy an optimal quality of life
- 6 A permanent reassignment to a position with a lower pay grade, skill requirement or level of responsibility than the employee's current position.
- 11 The skills, knowledge and abilities which employees must possess in order to successfully perform job functions that are essential to business operations.
- 12 The systematic process of comparing an organization's products, services and practices against those of competitor organizations or other industry leaders to determine what it is they do that allows them to achieve high levels of performance.

Down

- 1 Hourly paid workers employed in occupations that require physical or manual labor
- 2 An acknowledgement of an employee's exceptional performance or achievements expressed in the form of praise, commendation or gratitude.
- 4 Used to define the periods of time during which an employee is totally and completely relieved of any and all job duties and is free to attend to his or her own personal activities
- 5 The discipline of utilizing time efficiently and well in order to achieve professional, personal or organizational objectives.
- 7 The sum total of all individuals who have applied for a position either by submitting a resume or application for employment which the employer uses to select candidates for employment.
- 8 The practice of adding tasks to a job as a means of increasing the amount of employee control or responsibility.
- 9 A term used to describe members of the executive team, i.e. CEO, CFO, CIO, COO, etc.
- 10 A deficiency in basic writing, reading, mathematical or oral communication skills