

Dawn of Analytics and the changing HR game

There is a set of problem questions that ubiquitously plagues every HR or Business Head. Some of these are along the lines of:

- What will my turnover be next year?
- What factors drive employee turnover?
- What are my biggest workforce risks?

Predictive analytics to provide such answers would hugely simplify processes for the HR department. Decisions, predictions and expectations become more objective and realistic, and therefore the path forward is significantly more concrete than it would be with the traditional guesswork approach.

The good news? There is an abundance of data available, 90 per cent of which was collected in the last two years alone.

There are numerous definitive ways in which Big Data and analytics can change the HR game, enabling an efficient and agile shift in human resource development and management. What are some of the areas that analytics will play a huge part, and how will this shape the future of the corporate world?

Managing Talent Agility

- The HR departments of the future will largely focus on talent agility. There is increasingly a shift being seen from attempting to foster change and recruit new people, to actually ensure that the talent deployed is agile and can seamlessly move with the times.
- Predictive data will give the HR department hints on which direction the trends are moving in. This will help build a people pool with the latest business developments in mind.
- Aligning and realigning at regular periods of time will prove easier with data available on people and their skills. As agility becomes the new norm, talent will have to be matched to work and vice versa.

Talent Advisory

- With talent agility, the HR department will also become career advisors. In a world where agility leads everyone to change careers at regular intervals, the unit with the most data at their disposal, will be the most effective source of career advice.
- The HR department will also be in charge of workshops, training sessions and onboarding initiatives that will align employees with their new job roles in a rapid, yet efficacious manner.
- In assigning new job roles, or simply giving input for employees' future options, the extensive performance data will prove very useful. Analytics can help search through years of data across the organisation, match competencies, look for keywords, and find talent potential where mere human observation cannot.

Freelance Talent Management

- With the dawn of HR analytics, the future workforce will be mobile, possibly remote, and will be employed in multiple jobs.
- Talent acquisition will also expand. Rapid talent mobility will lead to freelance marketplaces, rather than job boards. These will deploy employees on a project basis, incentivising, evaluating and finally redeploying, all at a swift rate.

Persona Hiring

- Lengthy job descriptions will no longer serve any purpose. Roles will be created according to need, served and then dissolve in a rapid fashion.
- The hiring process will evolve to consider actual past performance of existing employees, sourced from various databases. This will in turn create a persona for a potential employee which will play a crucial role in the interview process.

Ultimately Big Data will lead to a culture of fishing where the fish are. Social media and big data analytics will play a huge role in matchmaking and finding the right talent. Hunting for new talent will go the route of digital marketing, where skills will be marketed in much the same way that products are now.

The HR department trajectory will go full circle. To keep up with a fast-paced, analytics-based culture, Human Resources as a field, will have to build strategic thinking as a core competency. In many cases, the inhouse HR will be downsized, and a large chunk of HR responsibilities will be handled by specialised agencies.

While the process is fascinating and will ensure that numerous loopholes in current HR methodologies are addressed, a regular culture of impact assessment is just as important. There is, after all, an ROI on everything, right from talent acquisition initiatives to employer branding and employee engagement – all of which come under the scope of HR responsibilities. The key to *successful* HR analytics is, thus, **analytics of HR analytics**.

The dawn of a new HR age means that humans will become more human, and machines will become more mechanical, efficient and predictable. The need for effective and competent leadership will grow and ultimately people will be more real with one other, because this is what will count – honesty and transparency, and claims that line up with results from extensive data analysis.