



## **TECHNOLOGY AND THE MODERN WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT**

**Shabnam Priyadarshini**

Chairperson, HRM,

Institute of Management Technology, Hyderabad

### **ABSTRACT**

*Changes in technology have affected businesses across the globe enormously and the workforce has had to adapt to these changes quickly. When utilized well, technology makes HR practices more efficient. However, when misused, it can have serious implications for managing the company's HR. The present paper focuses on how advancement in technology has brought about the changes in the way HR departments operate in the organizations. It discusses both positive and negative impacts that advancement of technology has brought with it on the table.*

**KEYWORDS** - Digital HRM, People Management, e-HRM, Modern Workforce, Modern HR

### **INTRODUCTION**

Globalization has impacted every organization. The very nature of work has changed. With that the definition of worker has changed too. Words like, “temp” and “full time” are no longer sufficient job classifications. Many companies have on their role employees who are loosely affiliated individuals or even workers on call. Present day workforce is undergoing a major alteration in the generational makeup, a change in basic composition that poses grave implications for the management. The corporates

---

are now having a talent pool whose age spans a huge gap. The electronic communication devices like mobile phones and tablets are omnipresent and have become a tool of choice for the millennials, a rapidly rising population in the workforce.

Technology has made inroads not only in our personal lives but also the workplace. Collaborative decision making is ubiquitous and does not wait for face-to-face interactions. Emails are passé and apps like WhatsApp have taken over for quick decision making. Embracing all these changes can be challenging as well as exciting. In this rapidly changing world, the role of HR function has also changed drastically.

Every organization needs engaged employees as it has a positive impact on the employee retention and loyalty. Employees who are engaged are less likely to quit and are less likely to be tempted to look out for jobs outside their organizations. More importantly, employee engagement has been linked to higher levels of profitability and business performance (Markos & Sandhya, 2010).

As the technology is advancing, so is the practice of managing human resources in an organization. While technology advancement in workforce management has many advantages, a few research studies also highlight how technological advancement, particularly pertaining to social media has adversely impacted employee productivity.

The present paper is an attempt to discuss the changes in HR practices that organizations have adopted. It also discusses the advantages and disadvantages of the advent of technology for organizations.

## **I. ELECTRONIC DATABASE AND WEB BASED TECHNOLOGY**

The advent of technology has transformed the very nature of Human Resource information system. The traditional method that was much complicated has been transformed into a new system that consists of easy accessible data storage techniques. This transition of HR technology started from pen and paper first to personal computers and then to web based technology. Using this new system, HR professionals are able to transform information into knowledge that helps organizations make better decisions. The Hackett Group, in one of its latest study

© Associated Asia Research Foundation (AARF)

A Monthly Double-Blind Peer Reviewed Refereed Open Access International e-Journal - Included in the International Serial Directories.

found that World-class HR organizations spend 25% less than average HR organizations and function with 30% less staff, but are more effective because they use technology effectively (DiRomualdo et al., 2017). The research also found that, through digital technology, HR organizations can improve their efficiency and effectiveness in delivering services, boost customer experience, place additional resources on high-value activities and use sophisticated analytics for better decision-making.

Electronic databases aid in storage of information pertaining to employee attendance, employee tasks, and employee duties. Besides storing employee demographics, electronic databases also store the job description, compensation and benefit packages of the employees.

## **TRAINING AND TECHNOLOGY**

E-learning has become one of the most popular methods of learning with most organizations. A plethora of software packages is presently for organizations to cherry-pick from for training and development of their employees. Online courses give managers a lot of flexibility as these allow them to explore a wide variety of courses on offer. These courses also let the managers respond to new training demands more quickly. Organizations have been able to cut training cost substantially because of the availability of various online courses. A major advantage of e-learning is that unlike traditional training, it is not specific to any location or time.

An inherent advantage of social networking and web applications is that they facilitate collaboration and sharing of knowledge before, during and even after the completion of courses. All these aid and encourage reflective learning and implementation of tricks and techniques learnt during the course. Thus, learning continues even after the course has ended.

A fundamental benefit of online learning is that not only does it help in cutting the costs linked to imparting training to employees; it also increases the effectiveness and efficiency of the learning environment. All this helps training thus imparted add

**© Associated Asia Research Foundation (AARF)**

A Monthly Double-Blind Peer Reviewed Refereed Open Access International e-Journal - Included in the International Serial Directories.

value to business goals of the organization. Online learning, in spite of all these advantages can be totally ineffective and annoying, if the training content is not appropriately designed.

Digital learning plays a major role in workplace learning in the present era. Augmented reality, micro-learning, adaptive learning, and massive open online courses are the modern day training methods used in corporates these days. General Motors have used augmented reality to launch videos, presentations, PDFs, and quizzes in training sales force using their own smartphones. Other companies in the manufacturing, construction, medicine, architecture, and oil and gas industries are have also been using augmented reality in training their workforce.

Micro-learning is another new way of learning which consists of short bursts of information through videos, podcasts, and self-paced e-learning. The videos and podcasts need not be studio-production quality and can be quickly created.

Adaptive learning is another new trend in the business world. It uses technology that automatically customizes online content based on how a person answers questions in real time. A series of algorithms is used by the platform to adjust the course material based on the accuracy of the person's answers course questions.

The web-based classes, often free, have been around for a while in academia, and very popular amongst HR professionals to develop new skills and advance their careers. It's a robust form of training that has gained grip in the workforce in recent years.

## **RECRUITMENT AND TECHNOLOGY**

Recruitment and selection process form the foundation of an organization. The advent of technology has reformed the very nature of recruitment. It has opened numerous new opportunities for organizations to source talent; certainly not substituting traditional methods, but instead supplementing them, as and when needed. Many organizations use a blend of these evolving technologies. Using these technologies help the organizations throw their net wider by not only targeting skilled candidates

---

who are actively seeking jobs, but also tapping into the unknown universe of passive job seekers. Social media has made the HR managers' job easier and more successful. Not only are they able to post about the job vacancies on all the social media sites of the company, but they are also able to glance the social media sites of potential candidates to assess their fit in the company culture. Thus, the digital technology has brought about a new revolution in the recruiting ecosphere.

The internet has successfully reduced the search time, costs and offers a transparent method of information for candidates (Salmen, 2012). E-Recruitment is not just the easiest method of hiring people from across the globe, but it also encourages equal opportunity. It also helps the business firm to be acknowledged worldwide. E-recruitment enables organizations to speed up and improve the recruitment process (Tong and Sivanand, 2005). Well-known social networking sites like Facebook let users create a highly personalized profile, with features that allow communication and collaboration with other users various modes like chat, messaging, email, whatsapp, video, voice, and discussion groups.

Social media has changed how to brand oneself, apply for jobs and move ahead professionally. LinkedIn, Facebook, and other social networking sites are becoming popular sources of recruitment. LinkedIn offers organizations with a platform to post job vacancies and search for suitable candidates. It provides both free and premium service for the purpose. The premium service of LinkedIn offers an premium collection of tools to recruiters. If the company wants to be economical, it can use the free resources LinkedIn has to offer. Like LinkedIn, Facebook also offers services such as Facebook ads and Facebook market place. Facebook ad requires some basic information such as location, job category, subcategory, title, reason to fill the position, job description and an option to post an image along with the job posting. A major drawback of a free job advertisement is that you cannot reach out to a specific target group.

## **EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE AND PRODUCTIVITY**

The evolution of technology has provided the HR manager an easy of access of all services. The performance of all employees can be monitored by HR managers in a much faster and less complex manner.

Performance management is a less complicated process because of the automated performance management system. This tool allows the HR manager to incorporate the organizational, and departmental goals, and make them easily accessible to employees. Employees in turn are able to considerably align their individual goals with the business goals of the organization. They are also able to record their individual progress on their goals. It also allows HR managers to give an effective, objective and timely feedback which further enhances the performance of the employees. Automatic performance management tools provide makes the whole process of performance management very transparent that employees perceive process to be fair and objective. Thus, it helps employees take the feedback more seriously and constructively.

The modern communication in the form of internet and cell phones has entered all business organizations along with its consequences. Networking through social media has become an integrated part of everyone's personal as well as professional lives. However, if not used sensibly, it can have an adverse impact on the performance of an employee. Several studies have been conducted to comprehend the consequence of using social media by employees during office hours. Conflicting results have been reported by these studies. Some have shown that the usage of internet enhances employee productivity while others show how internet use has brought about a decline in employee productivity. Warnakula & Manickam (2010) found that 98.9% of the employees surveyed in Sri Lanka visited social networking sites while at office. Sometimes this usage of social networking sites by employees can become a cause of distraction for them and they are not able to perform the tasks assigned to them due to receiving constant notifications about new Facebook posts, tweets, whatsapps messages, etc. (Mastrangelo et al., 2006).

In a study by Towers Watson and Co., it was found that employees who use social media tools during work hours, about 41% reported improved productivity. The

---

availability of Internet connections and its easy accessibility in the workplace can improve business operations and employee communications. It provides an opportunity to the employees to share knowledge, understanding and collaborating with others (Skeels & Grudin, 2009). It also provides a way of relaxation for the employees when they are in stress during office hours. It is obvious that an employee who is free of stress is more likely to deliver better performance than an employee under stress. Social networking logically should stimulate collaboration and knowledge sharing amongst individuals, which should ideally lead to better productivity. For instance, Boyd and Ellison (2007) reported that being connected to others led to potential benefits such as improved collaboration and information sharing, greater productivity and enhanced communications among coworkers, business partners and customers.

The modern work environment, with better and faster communication, helps us work more efficiently comes with its downsides too. The continuous stream of disturbances and disruptions in the form of phone calls and text messages can lead to increased stress and anxiety. It can also hamper the creative thinking capabilities of the employees by preventing them from getting into the reflective and divergent thinking mode. It is the divergent thinking that brings bursts of inspiration that give impetus to invention and innovation. One important issue that is of concern is how employment opportunities for older workers are affected by invasion of technology. A perennial problem with the advent of technology is its adaptability. Not everyone is comfortable in adapting to new technology readily. It is not very convenient for older workers to get adapted to any new technology quickly. Unfortunately, the architects of most modern systems do not consider older adults as vigorous users of technology and therefore many interfaces are designed without considering the needs of this set of people. Older employees are often sidestepped when opportunities for training arise in the organizations.

Thus, a judicious usage of social media sites by employees during work hours may be beneficial for their productivity. However, Organizations must formulate norms and measures pertaining to the usage of internet during office hours. Cox and Rethman

(2011) have recommended that employers should cautiously contemplate incorporating social media usage clause in their contract with the employees.

Conclusions:

Technology brought with it both positive and unintended implications for HR managers. While technology brings with it speed, efficiency, better communication, better connectivity, it has also to deal with the inherent human tendency to resist any change. At the core of any productive relationship, lies the sense of belonging and feeling of being valued. Technology can never surpass the far-reaching effect of human interactions. However, technology has definitely disrupted all aspects of HR from administrating to performance management and learning. In spite of all these influences, technology can never be a sole substitute for connected, present, or voice-to-voice interactions that impacts hearts and minds.

## **REFERENCES**

- Ashbaugh, S. and Miranda, R. (2002) Technology for Human Resource Management: Seven Questions and Answers. *Public Personnel Management*, 31, 7-20.
- Boyd, D. M, Ellison, N. B. (2007). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(1).
- Cox, J. T., & Rethman, K. M. (2011). Setting expectations: Social networking at work. *Ohio Lawyer*, 17-19.
- DiRomualdo, T., Leuchter, S. & Osle, H. (2017). Raising the World-Class Bar in HR Through Digital Transformation. *HR Executive Insight, Management Issue*, The Hackett Group.
- Markos, S. and Sandhya Sridevi, M. (2010). Employee Engagement: The Key to Improving Performance. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 5, 89-96.
- Mastrangelo, P. M., Everton, W., & Jolton, J. (2006). Personal use of work computers: Distraction versus destruction. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*

Salmen, S. (2012). Einleitung - Die Suche von Top-Mitarbeitern im War for Talent! In B. Rath, & S. Salmen, Recruiting im Social Web (pp. 30-40). Göttingen: BusinessVillage GmbH.

Skeels, M. M., & Grudin J. (2009). When social networks cross boundaries: A case study of workplace use of Facebook and LinkedIn

Tong, T. Y. K., and Sivanad, C. N (2005), "E-recruitment Service Provider Review", Employee Relations, 27(1), 103-117.

Warnakula, W. M., & Manickam, B. (2010). Employees' behaviour in online social networking websites (SNSs). Tropical Agricultural Research, 22(1), 94-106.