

White Paper



Managing Talent in the Flat World

An Infosys Perspective As Practitioner & Consultant

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Background

In the globalized business environment, historical sources of advantage have diminished in value to the point that they are now fast becoming irrelevant. Research indicates that sustainable competitive advantage in the future will come through investing in people to build organizational capabilities.

Infosys believes in the progressive reality that HR is much more than a support function. A fact of economic life, HR needs to be used as a springboard to drive business. No more about merely dealing with HR issues, it has a strategic role that requires dealing with business issues – truly elevated to a “seat at the table”. The challenges thrown up by this fast-changing business environment have also opened a window to a plethora of opportunities like dramatic shift in costs through global talent sourcing and de-risking through global task distribution, achieving global operational excellence through a judicious mix of technology and service delivery models, etc.

Solving the talent paradox is not an impossible task. But it requires an integrated, strategic approach to talent management, from planning and sourcing to training, development, and retention. Insightful, integrated talent-management practices can not only help an organization overcome a talent shortage, but also deliver financial results that will win the approval of all stakeholders.

This White Paper takes a look at where HR is headed and offers insights into some key strategies to capitalize on the consequent opportunities – from the combined perspective of Infosys as a practitioner and a consultant.

“Workforces Gone Global – 77% respondents say globalization factors are making a difference in their talent management strategies”

- Talent Management Trend Survey 2007 by BPM Forum, SuccessFactors & Human Capital Institute

Emerging Trend

**Talent Management is top of mind
–72% respondents say
Talent Management is a strategic
focus area in their organization.**

- Talent Management Trend Survey 2007 by BPM
Forum, SuccessFactors & Human Capital Institute

Infosys Insight:

Talent will be a strategic differentiator

- Given the diminishing national and economic advantages, the ability to scale human talent globally will be the only sustainable edge to drive business strategy
- A dramatic shift in the way HR sees itself “on the table” will be necessitated – from being a business support entity to a business partner. How well the People strategy is aligned with the Business strategy will be a critical success factor
- The spotlight will be on the business impact of HR that would need to be measured in a way to reflect the value it adds. High potential and high impact activities like Talent Management will be key to sustained business growth
- For a global workforce to serve diverse, global needs of customers deriving the highest value at the lowest cost, a strategic shift in terms of talent deployment will be essential

For Infosys, Strategic Talent Management Begins at Home

At a time when organizations are debating the strategic importance of their human resources, Infosys’ human capital figures on its balance sheet affirming their asset value. As a knowledge-driven organization, Infosys recognizes the key role of its human assets in sustaining and increasing its competitiveness.

In addition, to ensure that talent is optimally harnessed to stay ahead of the curve, innovation is a constant process at Infosys. One such initiative is the Infosys Leadership Institute (ILI) with its vision of making leadership and managerial development integral to business. The mandate of ILI is to:

- Enhance managerial capabilities for increased customer satisfaction
- Develop leaders to take the organizational vision forward
- Partner with customers to build high-performing multicultural teams

ILI’s dedicated campus in India offers a unique atmosphere that encourages thinking, learning and executing. Through multiple initiatives like Pravesh (a continuous learning program for first-time project managers) and Global Business Finishing School (a learning initiative to make every new entrant into Infosys ready for the job in quick time), ILI has ensured that Infosys maintains its edge in talent over competitors for superior business results.

Consulting experience:

One of the world's largest grocery retailers with more than 24,000 associates at 140 stores was faced by mounting market challenges and intensifying competition. It needed a long-term HR roadmap aligned with its business strategy leveraging its human capital to become more competitive.

Infosys helped the client develop a 3-year HR roadmap aligning strategic business challenges, HR outcomes, process requirements, and metrics by

Identifying the key processes impacting business strategy

- Finalizing a long-term HR action plan with high impact initiatives
- Designing a future state HR technology roadmap

The Outcome:

The HR roadmap enabled the grocery retailer to:

- Create a cool, fun place to work
- Sustain and leverage culture
- Successfully enhance performance and utilize potential
- Improve employee health and wellness
- Ensure scalability of HR processes and technology
- Enhance effectiveness of HR programs

Emerging Trend

29 percent of employers worldwide report they would have hired more professional staff over the past six months if candidates with the right skills were available.

- Manpower Talent Survey, Aug 2006

Infosys Insight:

Talent will be at a premium

- There will be a scramble for talent due to low availability. Contributing factors include the growing number of retirees, changing business requirements and competing job offers
- Companies will have to innovate to develop a global talent sourcing strategy. It will also be critical to develop an employee value proposition to attract talent and employer branding to retain talent. Also, a dramatic shift in costs will be achievable by sourcing from a global pool that will also provide access to a wider range of talent.
- With customers and suppliers demanding more global services, companies will need people with the right skill-sets and competencies to address the challenges of a globalized environment. Having the right people in the right place at the right moment will significantly increase the odds on achievement of sustained growth

At Infosys:

With changing employee demographics in the flat world, the entire recruitment and deployment landscape has changed. It has become essential to source talent where it is most cost-effective and deploy it where it creates the maximum value. To achieve this objective, Infosys has developed an innovative workforce-management strategy – the Global Talent Program. This is the largest sustained effort by any company to recruit from campuses outside of India and develop the skills of a global workforce through training assignments in India. Post-training, these resources are deployed by Infosys in their home countries. Increased profitability, reduced costs, increased market share, improved customer service, higher stock value, increased productivity, and higher retention rates – these were the criteria that the Optimas team looked at when evaluating the initiative which led to the initiative winning the Optimas Award in the GLOBAL Outlook category for 2007.

Consulting experience

Infosys is partnering with a large UK-based retailer to transition around 1000 positions to their captive facility in India over four years. Having assisted the retailer set up and operate world-class offshore development centers for 25 years, Infosys has also assisted the client with its talent sourcing strategies including setting up captive units. In the first phase, Infosys ODC personnel are managing the processes. This will be followed by ‘reverse knowledge transfer’ to the retailer’s personnel as per the transition plan.

The Outcome:

Money is only one factor. Having access to T&D, as well as creating the appropriate culture, are key. Being more flexible and adjusting employees’ various requirements are essential.

- Talent Management Trend Survey 2007 by BPM Forum, SuccessFactors & Human Capital Institute

Infosys Insight:

Talent will demand more

- Fading boundaries and time zones along with demand for faster response require real-time coordination and HR service delivery beyond physical constraints
- Along with an enriching work experience that affords enough opportunities for growth and learning, employees seek flexibility for an acceptable Work-Life balance
- Technological advancement and increasing productivity requirements make acquisition and continuous refreshment of skill-sets critical, demanding focus on development as a learning organization. The ever-changing business landscape will force companies to develop hitherto unknown skill sets.

At Infosys:

Infosys keeps its employees engaged and enthusiastic in the demanding 24/7 work environment necessary to serve its global clientele. A key challenge is countering competition that eyes Infosys-trained personnel. To meet these challenges, a wide variety of programs foster an environment that provides the best aspects of universities, but with professionalism that a workplace requires. These programs have helped stem attrition, which is well below the industry average and have made Infosys a top employer of choice. Business Today and its knowledge partner Mercer Human Resource Consulting rated Infosys the ‘Best Company to Work for in India’ in 2006, based on a methodology built on four quadrants of HR metrics, employee satisfaction, perceptions of key stakeholders, and HR processes and policies.

Consulting experience

One of the world's largest retail pharmacy chains with more than 1,60,000 employees was grappling with employee and manager service delivery challenges. It needed to evolve employee service to enhance operational efficiency by reducing manual intervention and making information processing and transfer easy.

Infosys helped the client develop an innovative online Employee and Manager Self-Service delivery vehicle by

- Analyzing existing processes and applications
- Creating an online information architecture for consistent, location-and-time independent access to information for all employees

The Outcome:

The self-service delivery solution offered:

- An interactive application giving employees access to and control over information, independent of time and location constraints
- Direct savings through employee time saved per HR transaction by automation of manual tasks, and savings of managerial time through employee empowerment
- Increased responsiveness and faster decision-making through online communication channels
- Direct cost savings by reducing paper documentation using online document storage

88% respondents will increase their use of technology to deliver transactional support while 59% will increase global alignment of HRProcesses & Systems.

- Survey of US companies, Buck Consultants, 2006

Infosys Insight:

Increased need for Global Operational Excellence

- Distributed information poses challenges in real-time access, reliability and accuracy that can be addressed by the right technology. To build a structure that fosters a collaborative work culture across geographies and time zones, seamless communication is critical.
- Transnational operations driven by the global presence of customers and suppliers will necessitate global HR processes along with technology systems to enable these processes
- There will be more avenues for cost optimization through deployment of global processes in best cost locations, global technology deployment, outsourcing, and shared services. Organizations will be able to achieve dramatic shift in costs and significant de-risking through global task distribution.

At Infosys:

As a global software services provider, Infosys' employees work across continents (Americas, Europe, APAC) to be nearer to customers for timely response. It achieves zero-delay service and collaborative team work across the globe by leveraging information and communication technology. Real-time Employee & Manager Self-Service applications ensure faster and accurate decision-making while saving employee time from tedious manual activities.

Infosys leverages technology to improve employee service delivery through multiple initiatives. The intranet is a case in point. Sparsh, the Infosys Intranet, has been voted among the “Top 10 intranets of 2007”. It is the primary channel for news and provides employees a platform to express themselves. It also opens up avenues for networking and collaboration among employees. Sparsh has reduced helpdesk operation costs through improved user experience leading to a 65% drop in helpdesk calls.

Consulting experience

HR technology decision-making at a global CPG leader with over 45000 employees was largely based on immediate automation / improvement requirements. The client's HR and IT organizations wanted a long-term HR Technology strategy to directly support the HR strategy.

Infosys helped the client create a long term plan by:

- Closely interacting with the HR and IT organizations to understand the ‘As-Is’ state and draw up a desired future state perspective
- Leveraging a best practices framework, identifying high level strategic opportunities and mapping initiatives on a 5-year roadmap.

The Outcome

The following high potential, high impact initiatives were identified as top priority for immediate action:

- Support HR processes for international employees covering employee data, compensation, local retention programs, expat processes, etc.
- Leverage IT to improve employee productivity and managerial effectiveness through self-service and enhanced communications
- Apply technology solutions to improve hiring processes and integrate talent management processes
- Adopt information reporting standards to reduce complexity and enable technology-based information maintenance

“Companies are being forced to deal with increased operational complexity as a result of intensified global competition and growing expectations and HR will need to partner in driving achievement of business goals!”

The Infosys Value Proposition

“Gear up your greatest asset – Human Capital – to achieve your Business Strategies @ home and around the world!”

Leverage Talent as the Strategic Differentiator

- **Align People Strategy with Business Strategy** to drive business results in an increasingly level playing field
- **Measure HR contribution to Business Growth** by identifying the right metrics and through continuous improvement
- Shift to a business performance focused **culture**

Acquire and Deploy Talent Globally

- Establish the **right value proposition** required to attract global talent by becoming an “Employer of Choice”
- Design and implement scalable processes to **acquire talent globally and deploy it** where it offers best value

Scale up to Serve Increased Demands of Talent

- Design and implement **robust and scalable HR processes to engage, motivate and retain talent**
- Continuously **augment workforce competency** by imparting new skill-sets and revitalizing existing ones
- **Enable high performance, collaborative culture** through automated information and self-service applications

Achieve Global Operational Excellence

- [Align HRIT Strategy to People and Business Strategy](#) and leverage it for optimal business results
- Identify and leverage appropriate [Global Service Delivery Model](#) to optimize operational efficiency and maximize benefits

About the Author

Nandish Patil is a Senior Consultant at Infosys. He has more than 7 year's experience in creating talent management solutions for various companies, both in India and abroad. He has diverse experience in various Organization Change Management / Development Interventions, HR Systems and Processes, Performance Management, Organization Assessment, Talent Management, Employee Communication and Training.



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About Infosys

Many of the world's most successful organizations rely on Infosys to deliver measurable business value. Infosys provides business consulting, technology, engineering and outsourcing services to help clients in over 30 countries build tomorrow's enterprise.

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