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NEXT STEP

Common workplace trends

Every year brings in unique and sometimes unusual trends in the workplace. These emerging workplace trends impact the business strategies and can bring about changes in the organisational culture. The dynamic clock speed of technology, demographic shifts, increasing mobility, etc. affect the business and subsequently the larger industries. Businesses today are adapting to these changes and trends.

TECHNOLOGY ON-THE-GO

It would be impossible to talk about workplace trends without acknowledging the role of technology as a key enabler. The development of technology has made it possible for people to work outside their main offices, thanks to the ubiquity of Wi-Fi and mobile devices such as smartphones, tablets, laptops, etc. It is thus possible for employees to carry out their tasks and remain cost effectively connected with their team or their management.

THE MILLENNIAL EFFECT

The changing workforce is impacting workplace culture. As newer generations are growing up and invading the workplace, they are bringing in their own set of values. Their attitude towards work-life balance is introducing and dictating the norm in the workplace. Millennials, belonging to a generation that is completely aware of how impossible it is for them to switch off technology and make themselves unavailable for even a few hours, are making use of this phenomenon to complete their work tasks freely from any location they choose.

FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS

From spending more time with families and friends, to cutting down on commute time and finding more time to relax, employees prefer flexible working for a number of reasons and it has become a key differentiator when people are faced with a choice between similar jobs. This trend is important for employers who are seeking to acquire top talents, as today it's not just salary that makes a difference.

THE CHANGING FACE OF THE WORKFORCE

Today's workforce is increasingly composed of freelance workers and consultants as well as part-time workers who actively seek out opportunities to work more flexibly and remotely according to their own terms.

THE RISE OF GIG ECONOMY

As more and more companies are seeing increased turnover, gig economy is on the rise globally and Bangladesh is no exception. Younger employees indicate that they are significantly more likely to leave their organisations within five years or less, than to stay behind beyond that, which is why businesses are moving away from trying to get employees to stick around for longer and are instead opting for gig economy. This trend is prominent in industries that

have changing labour demands for different projects.

COLLABORATION

As connectivity increases, so does the number of platforms through which employees, employers and clients communicate. Increased collaboration is what the workplaces are trending towards. Collaboration centralises communication and reduces inefficiency by saving time, energy, resource and effort.

DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

As companies grow more transparent, the diversity conversation takes a step in the right direction. Progression of women is being taken seriously, despite the slow pace at which it's happening. Difference in the male and female participation rate is an important feature. Female labour force participation has risen substantially in the recent years and although the rate declined slightly in 2010-2013, the participation has since grown consistently. More and more

females are taking up diverse roles and job positions in the workplace.

THE HIKE IN PAID LEAVES

More and more companies are beefing up their paid leave policies to tend to the needs of increasing number of millennial parents each year.

ALL ABOUT YOU

Consumer data has been a hot issue for businesses but companies are starting to gather more information about employees. With a greater presence of technology and social media in the workplace, employers now have a greater ability to collect employee data and analyse employee behaviour. It is necessary to be careful about the data being collected and used. Employees should be educated and informed regarding data collection at workplaces, as they would be in their personal lives.

RETHINKING TRADITIONAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

Traditionally, performance reviews are

held once a year. According to this, people would work on a year-end basis, collaborate with colleagues, finish projects and meet deadlines. Now, employers are starting to give more detailed and responsive feedback through monthly reviews. More frequent performance reviews clarify objectives and help to improve employee morale.

The trends discussed above are some of the most prominent new changes experienced by employers and employees alike. Other trends like employee well-being programs, valuing team performance over individual performance, etc. are also on the rise which are affecting how companies and businesses are shifting their processes and business strategies.

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ILLUSTRATION: EHSANUR RAZA RONNY

THE BOSSMAN

BY E. RAZA RONNY



GOOD GOVERNANCE MUST BE ENSURED

A constructive discourse among students and academicians on the 2nd Bangladesh Economics Summit

The three-day long "Bangladesh Economics Summit" organised by Economics Study Center on the theme of "Inclusive growth and sustainable livelihood: In Bangladesh Perspective" began with the opening ceremony on 31st October 2019 at Muzaffar Ahmed Chowdhury Auditorium, Social Science Building, University of Dhaka. The chief guest of the opening ceremony was Dr. K.A.S. Murshid, Director General, Bangladesh Institute for Development Studies. He encouraged and inspired students to go into the field of research over civil service or banks. "Research is good, especially if you want to make a contribution to knowledge," he said.

The three-day long summit had various segments including six panel discussions, paper presentation competition and a policy debate. In the paper presentation competition, six of the best papers were chosen for presentation among those that were submitted for consideration.

The panel discussions had diverse themes surrounding the central theme of inclusive growth and sustainable livelihood. The panel discussion focused on issues like quality education, institutions and good governance, women empowerment, healthcare, youth entrepreneurship and skill development and inequality. Academicians and professionals from relevant fields chaired and participated as panellists in the discussions about these crucial issues that need addressing for appropriate policy making in the country. Dr Sayema Haque Bidisha, Professor of Economics, University of Dhaka said during the panel discussion on women empowerment, "Over time with structural transformation, for instance in the RMG sector, there has been a change in male labour participation but females have not reaped the benefits of the said transfor-

mation. Most women are employed in low productive jobs and only 12% of working women hold managerial positions." Dr. Fahmida Khatun, Executive Director, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) said during the panel discussion on youth entrepreneurship and skill development, "About 17% of the Bangladeshi population is youth population which despite the huge demographic dividend, hasn't been utilised to its full potential yet. What's even more alarming is that about 10.6% of the youth population is still unemployed."

All of the panellists have emphasised on the role of the government and good governance. Dr M M Akash, Professor, Department of Economics, University of Dhaka said during a panel discussion, "Although the lack of good governance seems like an unsolvable problem, it actually is not. This can be done by teaching people in the lower hierarchy to question and challenge any corruption in the upper hierarchy."

On 2nd November, the last day of the summit, a policy debate was organised where students and young professionals participated on the motion 'This house believes that the economic future of the people of Bangladesh is uncertain'.

The chief guest of the closing ceremony was Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman, Chairperson, BRAC Bangladesh and Executive Chairperson, Power and Participation Research Centre. The special guests were Professor Dr. M M Akash and Professor Dr. Sayema Haque Bidisha. Dr. Zillur Rahman said, "The students' intellectual leadership defines the quality of education in any institution and the organisers of BES have proved so." The summit ended with distributing prizes to the winners of the paper presentation and essay competitions.

Making a DIFFERENCE

Bangladesh is rapidly moving towards middle income status by 2021. Our businesses definitely offer immense opportunities for the growing economy and this diversity needs a stage for the stories untold. See Bangladesh make its mark on the global map as Making a Difference brings you our proudest success stories from across the country.

4 WAYS TO FOSTER BELONGINGNESS AT WORK

CREATE ALLIES AT WORK

You don't need someone constantly defending your actions. But you do need someone who makes active efforts to be inclusive towards you. Your ally could be anyone- a peer, a supervisor or even a subordinate.

ENGINEER EMPATHY-BUILDING EXPERIENCES

Even if exclusionary action isn't intended, the impact may still hurt someone. It's difficult to measure this impact, unless you're in their shoes. Hence, it's a good idea to structurally design activities keeping that in mind.

ENCOURAGE HEALTHY INTERACTIONS

High quality connections have the power to induce positive feelings among parties concerned. While you can't control whether someone will make such interactions, what you can do is choose to initiate or reciprocate one.

PROCESS EXCLUSION VERBALLY

When it's not possible to avoid exclusion or to resort to an ally to cushion oneself from its negative effects, it's wise to verbally and proactively process exclusion. This enables the excluded to bounce back and resume engagement.

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