

#Future Ready Talent

CONSUMER CONNECT INITIATIVE

Going beyond conventional curriculum

Beyond the regular academic curriculum, millennials need to be equipped with new tech, data analytics and digital marketing skills that will give them an edge and make them industry ready

Shalija Katyal

Over 60 per cent of India's population is in the working age group which is expected to cross 65 per cent by 2036. This demographic dividend can be a huge advantage, but only if leveraged properly.

There is a serious dearth of skilled employees across all sectors, yet, there are thousands of graduates who are unemployed. Hence, it has become crucial to overhaul the education system and create a new model that better aligns with industry imperatives.

This was the overriding sentiment at the roundtable discussion, jointly organised by The Times of India and NIT, to drive home the need to skill the youth of today for jobs of the future.

EVALUATING WORKPLACE REQUIREMENT
Priyanka Srivastava, Senior Asst Editor, BCCL, co-moderated the first session with Udal Singh, Chief Strategy Officer, NIT Ltd.

"The intelligent workforce of the future will be a mix of humans and bots working together to deliver higher levels of innovation, agility, and productivity. Core foundational and disciplinary knowledge will always be important. However, it is the ability to put this knowledge into action through creativity and innovation, problem solving and critical thinking, and communication and collaboration while building high ethical and



L to R: Steven Murray, Sachin Kapoor, Namita Bharadwaj and Udal Singh

emotional awareness, that will be the mark of successful professionals in the future," Udal Singh said.

Talking about the 7 million odd students passing out of colleges and universities and the changing employment scenario, Sachin Kapoor, Director & Head of Business Development, Asia Pacific and Japan, LinkedIn, said: "More and more organisations are hiring for skills than for academic qualifications. I personally see this transition happening in terms of the difference between supply and demand. There is a lot of supply for generic roles, especially generic IT services roles, in the engineering segment. Every organisation wants to recruit the best talent. But they also want to recruit from a limited pool that is above a certain bar."

Concurring with the view that there is a serious skill gap, Namita Bharadwaj,

Principal India Products & Career, Mercer, said: "Based on what we are hearing from our global clients and also here in India, the skill gap is glaringly evident. Companies want to hire, but from an extremely limited pool. We need to build capability so that two or three years down the line when their course finishes, the students coming out of these institutes are able to fulfil the requirements of the job, and the learning curve is much shorter than what it is right now. More and more organisations across industries are adopting colleges and institutes so that it becomes their captive ground and the students coming out fit the purpose to the maximum extent possible."

Emphasising the need to develop the mindset of self-learning, Steven Murray, Global Head Recruitment and People Develop-



Having worked with the industry and young aspiring professionals for over three decades, we understand the changing workforce requirements in today's fast-paced business environment. Organizations today seek candidates with complex problem-solving abilities, understanding of data, new-age digital technologies and client facing skills. The ideal candidate today is a lifelong learner who can adapt to the change and value add at work from day one.

Bimaljeet Singh Bhasin
President, Skills and Careers Business (India), NIT Ltd

ment, Zomato, said: "In a company like ours, having the right mindset is everything for us. Within an industry like ours that's evolving, busy developing as we go, often the skills that you enter a company with, become irrelevant in six months. Your educa-

tion is just a foot in the door. You might have some sense of entitlement from the school that you went to, but if you do not have the right attitude or if you do not have the propensity to self-develop, it is not going to last you very long."



L to R: Surhid Brahma, Narayanan Ramaswamy, Rajeev Batra, Jacob Singh and Bimaljeet Singh Bhasin

UPSILLING FOR THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

Bimaljeet Singh Bhasin, President, Skills and Careers Business (India), NIT Ltd., co-moderated the second session with Narayanan Ramaswamy, Partner and Head, Education, KPMG in India.

Kicking off the discussion, Ramaswamy said: "Our economy is going to be 5 trillion dollars in the next ten years. Today we are at about 2.5 trillion dollars. Technology and technology-led industries will have a significant role to play going forward. Employers and the academia will have to find the answers to the workforce supply side and demand side conundrum."

Surhid Brahma, CTO, WNS, said that with automation and robots set to take over routine jobs, schools and colleges are now focusing on building innovation, creativity and problem-solving skills in

students. "Learning has become more experiential. It is less classroom and more of what you see and do. Also, the ability to self-learn has increased by leaps and bounds. In our time we had to go to a class and sit through a lecture. Now, it is a constant catch-up game," he said.

Talking about the growing industry-education partnership, Rajeev Batra, CIO, BCCL, said: "The basic shift that I see between the past and present is that even school kids are coming into our organisation these days for apprenticeship. There is a deep connect that is developing between the industry and education at the nascent stage itself. The capacity of the new millennials is much larger than what we have seen in the past. The digital natives are comfortable with using devices and they are highly adaptive." Delving into the changing

Key Takeaways

- Intelligent technologies will reshape the demand for tasks, skills and jobs.
- Employers are increasingly looking for candidates with the right blend of technical or hard skills, soft skills and life skills.
- Academic curriculum has not kept pace with current demand for skills, let alone new demands of future workplaces.
- New approaches to learning are needed if organisations are to achieve the growth promised by new technologies.
- There is an urgent need to speed up experiential learning techniques.
- Women and gender-diverse talent will be vital in filling the skills gap.

workforce dynamics, Jacob Singh, CTO, Grofers, said: "There is a lot of strength that India has right now in terms of talent. It is easy to find people of pedigree, but it's very hard to find somebody who would be willing to take responsibility for their own skill development. The way I look at the problem of supply is less about skills; it's more about attitude."
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