



KALINGA INSTITUTE OF INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY

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SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

# kontempore

## A CONSULTATIVE REPORT

Co-creating a Sustainable  
Approach for **Talent  
Management** in  
**IT/ITES Sector**



# kontempore

July, 2019

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## About Kontempore

**Kontempore**, drawn from the words contemporary and relevant, is a movement to bring industry professionals together to explore, evolve and co-create a next generation talent management plan. Organizations are going to go through a huge talent transformation in the next decade because of automation, digitization, artificial intelligence etc. The type of talent the industry required and the opportunity the industry provided in the past will go through a huge transition with more part-time, contractual and consulting jobs.

India needs to add more than 300 million employable individuals across industries by 2022, over 2013. That is a herculean task, but holds great promise to take our country to the next level. Kontempore aims to bring industry professionals together to explore, evolve and co- create a next generation talent management plan. It also aims to bring different stakeholders like academia, industry, consulting bodies and government organizations together to evolve a holistic change management agenda.



**Kontempore's mission** is "To revolutionize talent management practices by igniting engagement and building cohesion between industry stakeholders". Eminent people have been involved with it from the beginning to design this entire movement. With initial support from KIIT School of Management ([www.ksom.ac.in](http://www.ksom.ac.in)), KIIT University as Academia Partner and Think Talent ([www.thinktalentindia.com](http://www.thinktalentindia.com)) as Knowledge Partner, many more partners are expected to join up to take this movement forward.

**Kontempore** plans to organize a series of events engaging Industry Leaders from different industry segments, from time to time. These sessions will not be just about networking and discussions. The purpose of these discussions is to have both moderated and un-moderated discussions which focus on the talent challenges, capture the main points and create documents, blog posts, proposals and memorandum for the larger audience, including academicians, small businesses and the entire corporate world in general, who are grappling with talent and resource challenges.

## Editorial



Dear Reader,

Talent is the underlying value creator in any industry. The IT/ITeS industry is one of the most significant employers of talent, certainly in terms of numbers. However, employers still lament the lack of 'good' talent, and employees of really satisfying careers. This industry is also characterized by a somewhat silo behaviour with regards to talent- while the talent and people issues are very common, there is really no common approach, or even forum, where different institutions can come together to create a meaningful and collective action plan. The talent challenges, among other things, may have resulted in

- The industry not attracting the best of talent, especially at junior levels.
- Limited availability of really good and multi skilled people.
- A limited leadership pipeline, especially at senior-middle (CXO-1 and CXO-2) levels.
- Industry consistently battling the Talent challenge by cutting costs and investments on people.
- Very little mobility of talent between sub sectors in the financial industry.

Kontempore has tried to address the Talent Challenges through a unique Large-Scale Interactive Process format. It allowed all participating minds to come together, all with a significant stake in the challenges facing the industry. The group came up with ideas and suggestions, applicable and relevant at different levels - organisational level, value chain level, educational eco-system level, and government level. The format, unlike tapping a few minds, as in a typical conference, is aimed at tapping minds and ideas from many professionals at the same time. It allows practitioners at different levels to come together and debate real issues, and more important, gives them the ability to home in on to a prioritised set of issues and possible actions.

The outcomes, as presented in this document, are being shared with the participants, other industry and eco-system leaders and professional and government bodies. We hope that this will help us in creating a momentum in dealing with the Talent issues in the IT/ITeS Sector at every level and, with a collaborative approach, even better them. It would also allow:

- Further building of ideas from this event
- Individual stakeholders to mull over and take action where necessary from the ideas generated
- Creation of networks of various stakeholders through this process for collaborative action

Kontempore events are being planned in other cities (like this one in Bangalore) and the various events will provide a route to collate even more ideas, momentum and action points for the various stakeholders. We look forward to your continued contribution to this topic and to Kontempore.

With Best Wishes,

**Bimal Rath**

*Chief Editor*

*Editorial Board, Kontempore*



## Introduction



Business leaders and talent professionals have intuitively known for long that investments in talent management drive business results. Yet while the positive effects of this investment are real, measuring the impact of talent management on business outcomes has proven elusive. Our recent findings during the Kontempore event illustrate that organizations with higher levels of talent management maturity tend to perform better on critical talent and business outcomes. More importantly, these findings hold true not only for global organizations but also for Indian IT/ITES companies.

As per one of the studies by Goldman Sachs, India will be the largest contributor to the global labour force in the coming decades and will add about 110 million workers by 2020-22. While highlighting this fact, there also seems to be an agreement around the need for quality talent to drive the economic

engine at a pace which keeps the GDP and the India Shining story alive and relevant for the next couple of decades.

The need to initiate processes and creates a mechanism that supports existing talent infrastructure & creates more employable human resources as per the requirements of the industry and future trends are imperative. This requires a closer partnership of industry and government (local/national) and also exploring or building other channels to create a smooth supply of deployable talent in specific vocational areas. Taking a long-term view on talent, which is broader in its scope and devoid of typical corporate "self-aggrandizement", is the need of the hour.

The mindset of the so called "elite" talent in India has also undergone a lot of change. There seems to be

a clear preference or bias for specific career options and industries, leaving other industry segments to recruit and develop the second layer of talent. In the larger context it results in an inequitable distribution of high-quality talent and therefore may have a bearing on the growth, sustenance and competitiveness of a majority of Indian industries in the coming years.

The socio-economic landscape of urban India comprising of cosmopolitan and metro cities vis-a-vis the tier 2&3 cities is quite different. This leads to a significant difference in terms of the mindset, behaviour and expectations of these two types of workforce from the job and the organization, especially in the formative professional years.

The motivators for contribution and performance in today's workforce seem largely influenced by external factors, especially in the initial years of their career. The extremely competitive environment coupled with increasingly consumerist lifestyle results in cultivating a "short term, instant win" kind of an orientation. This has impacted the employee loyalty phenomenon which was so prevalent with the earlier generations.

In the current scenario when India is gearing up to move from being a developing nation to a developed nation, one of the expected outcomes is its reliance on service sector growth. As the service sector starts fuelling the economic growth, the impact of knowledge led or driven services/solutions will be a great contributor to a country's economic success.

Joining the different pieces of the puzzle, we have a mobile and consumerist workforce that is perhaps not adequately skilled. We have deep potholes in the leadership depth especially at middle and upper middle levels of the organizations. We have corporates perceived to be skewed towards short term gains and their investment in people is limited by the 'use readymade talent' phenomena.

To make this potpourri more interesting, we have insufficient infrastructure to provide an adequate supply of talent, to say nothing of the eternal debate between hiring for skill or for attitude.

The people who manage the talent pipelines are playing the role of a juggler and their task is to ensure all the balls are in the air while more balls get added after every round, along with the never-ending demand of increasing the pace of juggling.



## Impact of Growth on Talent

The pace of economic growth in the last decade or so has been superfast. This has resulted in people quickly moving up the corporate ladder. In the initial career stage, people usually get promoted for their functional expertise and also because of the growth of the business.

The self-image of many such professionals is that of a highly competent employee. By the time they reach the rungs of middle or senior management, a lot of them face the issue of lack of broader skills and/or leadership depth.

The gap in self-image versus who the professional really is and what s/he brings to the table translates

into misplaced expectations, workplace stress, conflict, lack of adequate effectiveness in higher level roles etc. The zipping through of people in the leadership pipeline without systemic ongoing development seems to be the real cause of a lot of the problems mentioned above.

Another interesting aspect is of hiring people for the immediate need or role. In the process, not enough importance is given to the basic attitudinal dispositions required by the individual in the next role(s) and to organizational fit. This issue gets compounded when one of the tenets of talent management of an organization is 'promoting people from within'. It results in serious business challenges when the organization is on a rapid growth path.

## Future Elements Which will Impact Business and People Strategy in IT/ITeS Sector

**Information Technology:** We are living in interesting times. Constant innovation and investment in the area of platform architecture, cloud computing, analytics, cyber security, AI, blockchain etc. are now on the cusp of a hyper-personalized era with fundamental changes in terms of choice, consumption, ownership and our overall experience of products and services.

Thanks to disruptive technologies like Internet of Things, we are moving towards "Everything as a Service". For example, the convergence of software can ensure that we enjoy a seamless entertainment experience of say, watching a movie at home and continuing to see the rest of it in the car, telemedicine that continuously analyses a patient's condition, etc.



Source: Accenture Technology Vision Survey 2018-19

**Globalisation 4.0:** Future globalisation would be very different from the globalisation we know today and have known in the past. Currently, it is majorly about the things that we make and not about the things we do. Digital Technology is gradually changing that reality. Globalisation 4.0 is all about the service sector. This will alter productivity and competitiveness of companies & countries.

Today, goods worth \$700 billion are traded through Alibaba and Amazon, having grown at a compound annual growth rate of more than 33% since 2013.



This shift reflects the growing value of services in many industries, driven by the growth of digital technologies. Finally, the rapid growth of digital platforms has started to make country boundaries and traditional country-based business models vanish.



**Future of Work:** The future of work is impacted by a number of elements, including the adoption of digital tools in the workplace, the expansion of the workforce to include full-time as well as contractual workers and globalization. As people look for more flexibility and greater work-life balance, gig economy workers, and therefore jobs, are on the rise. The rapid evolution of technology allows people the freedom to choose the what, how, when and where of work within their requirements, a trend that is increasingly pushing organizations to look beyond the conventional.

*“We are now facing a revolution in the way we work... This is not just about the impact that a low carbon economy will have on the way we work. It is also about how the nexus of technology and globalization will work together with demographic and societal changes to fundamentally transform much of what we take for granted about work.”*

- Lynda Gratton, London Business School



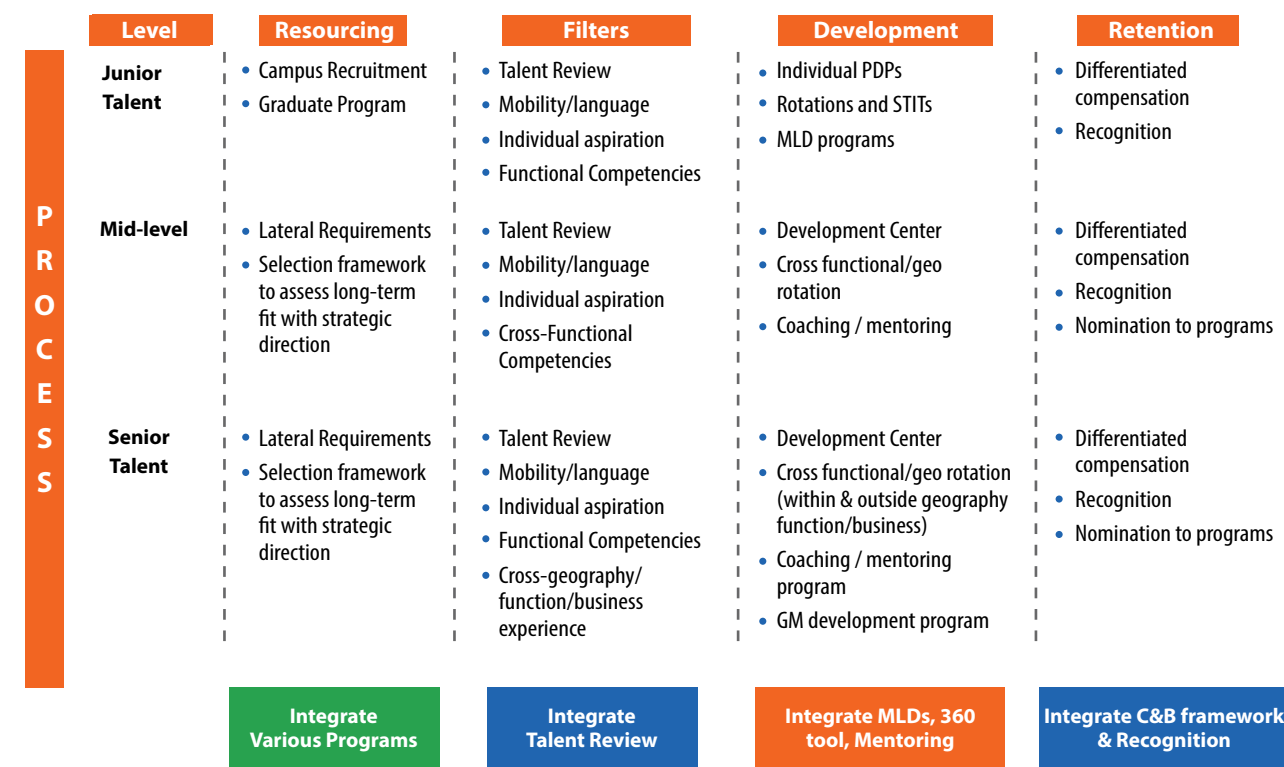
**Future Talent Management:** Talent management of the future will depend more and more on looking at potential rather than an employee's past performance, focusing on soft skills rather than hard ones and cultivating a culture of curiosity. Along with this, adoption of technological platforms and tools will play a large role in how effectively talent

management practitioners engage with their workforce.

According to Mercer's Talent Trends 2018 Global Report, two-thirds of employees say that state-of-the-art digital tools are critical to their success.

### Constructing an Integrated Talent Pipeline (Example)

**Talent Productivity = Entry - (Organizational Filters + Employee choices)**



## Matching Individual and Organizational Needs Through ActiveHR and Business Partnership

### Various Problem Statements

Should my organisation nurture talent from within or attract it from outside?

How successful is my organisation in engaging and retaining key employees?

Does my organisation have a talent-retention strategy and are current processes aligned to it?

Is employee performance directly affecting the financial performance of my organisation?

Is my talent strategy directly contributing to the business plan and delivering value? What metrics should be tracked to ensure ROI?

What is the best approach to identification and management of high potential employees?



In order to manage growth and complexity with the aforementioned talent situation, developing talent through a practical multi-pronged approach becomes a critical business agenda. In an environment where everything seems to be in abundance and there is a plethora of choices available for individuals, retaining and developing talent is becoming extremely difficult.

Where employees have started giving more importance to the immediate and short-term, the challenge is to help employees align their aspirations and potential to the roles and career options existing within organizations. What is required is a “compass” that enables employees and managers to navigate effectively. This requires highly skilled and mature managers to start with.

What is also required is the dire need of integration and participation of HR in the overall business strategy, decision making and execution, and helping bring the talent agenda upfront. Along with this, the ongoing involvement of HR with the business and employees would go a long way in breaking the notion of HR either doing purely administrative work or of sitting in their ivory tower and creating a people strategy devoid of ground reality.

When it comes to people development, what matters towards the end is an ability to understand the business, contextualizing and customizing talent solutions and ensuring a high degree of simplicity and practicality. Each business and its need will be different, while some common factors may apply.

At Kontempore, discussions and deliberations took place through a large-scale interactive process where senior leaders came up with the various ideas for actions relating to some key talent challenges.

## Anticipated Future Trends in IT/ITeS Industry in India

According to industry representatives, the following are some of the major foreseen future trends in IT/ITeS industry:



### Ready Workforce with Current Technology Skills:

Emerging Technologies, regulation and changing customer expectations are challenging traditional business models within the IT/ITeS sector and with this, comes a whole new set of skills and organisational demands. Bringing people strategies up to speed with disruption and change is an opportunity to innovate, differentiate and engage more closely with customers' fast changing demands.

### New Skills, New People:

While demand for data analysts, robotics engineers and other tech specialists is clearly growing, it's just as important to ensure that leaders understand the possibilities of today's ever more sophisticated technology. As automation gathers pace, the value of skills that can't be replicated by machines is also increasing. Ultimately, the future workforce will see human and machine working side-by-side, which calls for a completely new way of thinking, operating and collaborating.

### More informed workforce planning:

Just as the ways in which IT/ITeS organisations manage customer relations are evolving, talent management is also set to become more huge unstructured data-driven and emerging technology savvy. As IT/ITeS organizations rethink their fresher hiring, it is important to ensure investments in skilling both fresher and experienced workforce on emerging technologies like data analytics, RPA, Machine

*“There has to be a Shift in the way industry recruits' fresher / employees. For example, by conducting hackathons recruit directly to get people who can do practical implementation of job assigned acquiring knowledge simultaneously.”*

- Mr. Krish Shankar, Group Head- Human Resources, Infosys



Learning, Deep Learning, AI, IoT, Blockchain, Cyber security and tools like DevOps, Selenium, Tableau, RapidMiner etc.

**Dealing with upheaval:** Within the workforce, many employees are worried about how headcount reductions and the impact of automation will affect their jobs and future roles. There are also concerns over the impact of regulatory and political upheaval. In this time of uncertainty and disruption, the importance of informing, assuring and engaging with staff has never been greater. A defining aspect of leadership will be how well CEOs communicate their vision for the future of the organisation and bring their workforce together behind it. And a key element of organisations' social responsibility is the support they provide for the people they re-assign or let go.

**Digital Business Adoption Challenge:** The question remains as to whom to train and how to train for delivering the need of digitalization of business processes across domains. As Cloud Computing based applications and real-time cloud based online systems become more and more pervasive in human life, skilling becomes inevitable. Digital adoption is so vast and varied, it brings in the necessity to adopt digital support enterprise frameworks and architectures. Business' highly volatile and disruptive situation demands developing process agility, with complete synchronisation to business process.. It is an opportunity to make ready a next generation work force with digital readiness and industry 4.0 compliance.

**Diversity and Inclusion as a differentiator:** In a competitive job market, transparency around

progress on diversity can also strengthen the brand with customers and potential recruits. Yet barriers to diversity remain in areas ranging from the difficulties of winning buy-in from middle management to a tendency among leaders to favour people like themselves for promotion ('unconscious biases'). Diversity, including bringing back experienced women after their breaks, are great initiatives to encourage them to be back in the mainstream of work. Women can be facilitated to get upskilled online during their break while applying concepts like work from home increases their overall productivity within the team.



*“Employability can be achieved by spotting the right talent, keeping them relevant, re-skilling and up-skilling talents in an authentic way by industry academia collaborations with flexible workforce policy.”*

– Mr. Sabyasachi Das, Director of Product Engineering, DXC Technology

## Process: Large Scale Interactive Process (LSIP)



Clarify the scale and nature of the skills issues facing the sector and working in groups towards co-creating a practical road map



Providing insights to govt. and govt. bodies on talent side future and how the resource can be used in more optimized manner



Focus the response from employers and the skills system and converting the broad ideas into more specific and action-oriented plan



Finally, stimulate and support industry ownership for its future success through commitment and investment in skills



### Step 01

The first step was an individual activity where each participant had to think of key challenges facing IT/ITeS industry related to talent, and suggestions to address these challenges.



### Step 02

Subsequently, each sub-group discussed and debated individual ideas and came up with 'Challenges', 'Impact of these Challenges', and 'Mitigating Action Points' to address these challenges at the group level and displayed their table output on a flip chart.



### Step 03

As the next step, each table group moved around the room, stopping by at each table to learn about the work output of other groups. As part of the process, each participant asked questions for clarification and made suggestions for sub-group to consider.

### Step 04

After the entire room had the opportunity to view every group's output, the groups had an opportunity to further sharpen their work output and finally come up with the Top 3 Challenges and associated mitigation strategies that the combined group thought to be most compelling.



### Step 05

The final step was a panel discussion among the team leaders of each large-group. There was subsequent opportunity for audience questions on this discussion that served as both clarification of the ideas and provided additional comments & suggestions.

Fig 1: Steps of Large Scale Interactive Process (LSIP)



## The Result:

This highly participative and iterative process resulted in the following output:

Challenges	Actions
<b>Employability</b> Skill gap Communication Global work culture Campus to corporate conversion/ readiness/employability Career path/growth	Integration with Universities Direct connection between Industry & University more frequently Flexi benefits in employment contract & life events Distinction
<b>Talent</b> Quality of talent in Universities Deployable talent Need of Hybrid engineers Meeting employee aspirations & expectations Lack of Business acumen	Coaching Getting accustomed to volatility of talent Stability Vs Risks Flexibility/ part time work Design customized courses to meet industry needs Initiatives like hackathons to on board / spread awareness
<b>Diversity &amp; Inclusion</b> Diversity challenges- global cultural alignment Gender Retention Maintaining appropriate diversity	Unconscious bias program Encouraging women to return after their social commitment leave by skilling them through online platforms. Diversities across human barriers should be considered Tie-up with Tier 2&3 areas, train before joining & prepare for corporate readiness

Challenges	Actions
<p><b>Diversity &amp; Inclusion</b></p> <p>Contd...</p>	<p>(Early engagement)</p> <p>Well defined training program for women who join back after gap due to personal reasons - assign a mentor</p> <p>Incentives, Support &amp; facilitate choices</p> <p>Assigning responsibilities so that employees have a feeling of associativity towards organization</p> <p>Hard target with Challenging projects</p> <p>Flexible work models &amp; Gig environment</p> <p>Managing millennial</p> <p>Honest feedback</p>
<p><b>Career</b></p> <p>Attrition management of Gen Z employee</p> <p>Instant gratification</p> <p>Managing millennial</p> <p>Changing career choices</p> <p>Gap between different generation in expectation w.r.t work</p> <p>Definition of career growth expectation</p> <p>Changing mindset in campus</p> <p>Time invested in training</p> <p>Talent shortage for start-ups</p> <p>Creating good managers</p>	<p>Reverse coaching</p> <p>Behavioural&amp; sensitization meetings</p> <p>Creating different roles according to the skills in which people excel</p> <p>Disconnecting roles from titles</p> <p>Flexible policy making / dual employment</p> <p>Manager enablement/incubation programs</p>

## Conclusion

The talent landscape in India presents a mix of challenges and opportunities. On one side there seems to be a huge pool available, on the other side there are questions about whether this pool is or will be ready to perform at international standards. The efforts put in by the corporates and the government in this area are a testimony to the relative importance of this issue vis-à-vis many others that we face as a society.

“The right set of leaders are required to handle the intelligent energetic talents”.

Like many other areas, even in the talent sphere there are two India’s, one which is the urban metro/cosmopolitan face, the other being the rural Bharat. The value that the two bring to the table and challenges associated with each of these talent pools are unique and therefore need to be addressed through a mix of different approaches and strategies. The people who manage talent pipelines in organizations have juggled with multiple models, some seem to work in some situations and some have turned out to be a cropper. Nevertheless, there seems to be an overall sense of optimism linked to the Indian talent pool and its contribution to the economy.

Irrespective of all the differing views, there is one point of confluence which is related to the attributes/qualities/attitudinal dispositions that are a hallmark



of a high-quality talent. This cuts across all levels of industries, companies, genders and geographies. This quality is a high degree of learning ability and a strong need for self-development.

The suggestions need to be worked upon jointly by the industry, the talent supply community, government agencies and the major education players for the industry to create a definite action plan. Roll out of the plan should be done with all these stakeholders in sync. Kontempore believes that this paradigm shift in looking at talent will help make the IT/ITeS Sector in India at par with the rest of the world. Kontempore will keep driving and supporting such change using relevant and insightful discussions.

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