

SPECIAL : ALL INDIA CHILD CAREER DIRECTION SURVEY REPORT INSIDE

Gray Matters

Quarterly



Quarterly Newsletter from Gray Matters Consulting Pvt. Ltd. Volume 2, Issue 2, January, 2010

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What is good for a crowd-puller, popular Hindi film may not be all that good for real life. Rajkumar Hirani's 3 Idiots sends out a message to all who are joining career race to stop, pause, think about themselves, and, only then, race ahead. At a time when suicide notes from young, brilliant students are piling up on the coroner's table, and parents are worried about their children's careers, the film's release and its subsequent success were foregone conclusions. The quasi-real, cinematic feel good created by the film will do little to erase the furrow lines of worry from the viewers' forehead. Everyone wants to enjoy life on their own terms, but existing realities are frequently against that inner drive. Do you dare to hold your own in the face of your life and career circumstances? In many cases, we don't have a reasonable choice to be ourselves.

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Reducing one's life to a handful of words is a mighty challenge. Creating a six-word memoir, a concept inspired by a project conducted by Smith College's magazine, can be a useful exercise in self-analysis, particularly if you apply the process to reflecting upon your goals and your results. Did we achieve what we set out to achieve? Did I help them and the team to succeed? Did our results stand the test of time?

20 Business Cappuchino

What is the potential for comic books in India? There are many possible answers to this question, depending on who's asking and who's answering. Let us look first at the positives, ie the reasons why comic books should take off in a big way in the next ten years. In fact 2010-2020 could well be the decade of the comic book in India, provided, of course, that the negatives can be dealt with. Rimi B. Chatterjee a writer and academician discusses the strengths and weaknesses in the Indian context.. Her third novel Black Light will be out in April 2010. Her first book was Signal Red, and the second (shortlisted for the Vodafone Crossword Book Award) The City of Love. She teaches English at Jadavpur University.

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Happy New Year



From MD's Desk

It seemed the message from the Copenhagen Climate Summit has hit home with car manufacturers the world over. If the hybrid and concept car launches at Delhi Auto Show are anything to go by then soon the Suzukis and Hondas would be the toast of the green community.

With the economy back on track, albeit a huge fiscal deficit, the car makers are all sizing up the market with gusto. Car sales have zoomed ahead like Michael Schumacher on the F1 circuit and with Dr Manmohan Singh predicting a double-digit growth, car manufacturers are rubbing their hands with glee. However, there are some clouds of doubt on the economic horizon; the finance secretary is not singing a tune to please the market watchers: he wants the economic stimulus to go.

The industry is caught in a bind, on one hand the economic recovery was largely stimulus fed so its removal may cause some pain, on the other the deficit can have a cascading effect on the economy and that may lead to a long period of economic uncertainty. Interesting are the times indeed.

In these times of high hopes and despair, we decided to launch a few services and products. These services we believe would help us get a better grip of business we are in – People Solutions. Accelerated. Right now, we are in the process of lining up our Education and Knowledge Management Services. Soon we would put them out of our garage for the world to see.

As our first offering from the Education services we did an all India survey on 'Child's Career Direction' the detailed report is presented inside.

Hope there would be a longer period of sunshine for the economy. Here's wishing all a very Happy New Year!

"Economy has frequently nothing whatever to do with the amount of money being spent, but with the wisdom used in spending it"

– Henry Ford

Au Revoir

Sanjay Roy Chowdhury
Managing Director
Gray Matters Consulting Pvt. Ltd.



CHANGING THE WAY
'WORK' WORKS

Last Sunday, my wife, kid and I had to travel to Andheri from Bandra. When I waved at a passing auto rickshaw, little did I expect that this ride would be any different.

As we set off, my eyes fell on a few magazines (kept in an aircraft style pouch) behind the driver's back rest. I looked in front and there was a small TV. The driver had put on the Doordarshan channel. My wife and I looked at each other with disbelief and amusement. In front of me was a small first-aid box with cotton, dettol and some medicines. This was enough for me to realise that I was in a special vehicle. Then I looked around again, and discovered more -there was a radio, fire extinguisher, wall clock, calendar, and pictures and symbols of all faiths – from Islam and Christianity to Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism. There were also pictures of the heroes of 26/11- Kamte, Salaskar, Karkare and Unnikrishnan. I realised that not only my vehicle, but also my driver was special.

I started chatting with him and the initial sense of ridicule and disbelief gradually diminished. I gathered that he had been driving an auto rickshaw for the past 8-9 years; he had lost his job when his employer's plastic company was shut down. He had two school-going children, and he drove from 8 in the morning till 10 at night. No break unless he was unwell. "Sahab, ghar mein baith ke TV dekh kar kya faida? Do paisa income karega toh future mein kaam aayega." (Sir, what's the use of simply sitting at home and watching TV? If I earn some money, then it will be useful in the future.)

We realised that we had come across a man who represents Mumbai – the spirit of work, the spirit of travel and the spirit of excelling in life. I asked him whether he does anything else as I figured that he did not have too much spare time. He said that he goes to an old age home for women in Andheri once a week or whenever he has some extra income, where he donates tooth brushes, toothpastes, soap, hair oil, and other items of daily use. He pointed out to a painted message below the meter that read: "25 per cent discount on metered fare for the handicapped. Free rides for blind passengers up to Rs50?.. He also said that his auto was mentioned on Radio Mirchi twice by the station RJs. The Marathi press in Mumbai know about him and have written a few pieces on him and his vehicle.

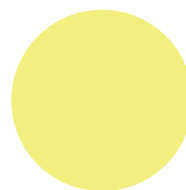
My wife and I were struck with awe. The man was a HERO! A hero who deserves all our respect. I know that my son, once he grows up, will realise that we have met a genuine hero. He has put questions to me such as why should we help other people? I will try to keep this incident alive in his memory.

Our journey came to an end; 45 minutes of a lesson in humility, selflessness and of a hero-worshipping Mumbai – my temporary home. We disembarked, and all I could do was to pay him a tip that would hardly cover a free ride for a blind man.

I hope, one day, you too have a chance to meet Mr Sandeep Bachhe in his auto rickshaw – MH-02-Z-8508

A friend has shared this inspirational encounter with an auto rickshaw driver in Mumbai

***"In every success story, you find
someone who has made a
courageous decision"***
Peter F. Drucker



Tip

Maths tells Risk Players to attack

In games of Risk, aggression pays. So says a US mathematician in a fresh analysis of the popular board game.

Jason Osborne, of North Carolina State University in Raleigh, calculated the probabilities involved in the game's battles, in which players compete for world domination. His conclusion overturns an earlier one implying that the odds were stacked in favour of defenders.

Risk was devised in 1959. Like most successful games, it uses simple rules but permits a wide range of strategies. It has since spawned many variants, including Martian Risk, Nuclear Risk and Revolution Risk. Each player has several armies, deployed among 42 territories on the world map. The aim is to invade and conquer neighbouring territories.

Dice determine the outcome of an assault. If an aggressor attacks with more than three armies, he or she rolls three dice; with one and two armies, the attacker rolls two dice. The defender rolls one dice if he or she has just a single army in the invaded territory, and two dice otherwise.

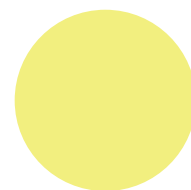
The dice are then ordered in descending value and paired off - the attacker's highest roll with the defender's, and so on. The attacker loses an army for every die lower than or equal to that of the defender; the defender loses an army for every die lower than the attacker's. The struggle continues until one force either is eliminated or withdraws.

Scrabble vowel shortage revealed

Charles Robinove has guts, but chutzpah would get him a better score. If only he could count on a fair shake of the Scrabble letters. But the tile draw in an electronic variant of the game is not statistically random, his experiments show. After playing his handheld Scrabble Express game about two dozen times, he noticed he had difficulty making words. He was often missing a most necessary component: vowels. "It just seemed kind of odd," says Robinove, a retired geologist with the US Geological Survey.

So he compared the first seven letters drawn from the handheld Express version and his Windows 1997 CD-ROM version, 100 times each, and calculated the frequency of drawing each letter.

ping Point



A potential to become a 'cult'


The key question is: when to attack? What is the chance of an attack succeeding, and how many armies should you expect to lose in the process? The probabilities are calculable for various combinations of the sizes of attacking and defending forces.

In 1997, Turkish mathematician Baris Tan made these calculations to help players formulate rules of thumb for how to deploy their forces. Tan posed the problem as a chain - a series of numbers in which each depends only on the preceding one.



Osborne argues that Tan's analysis overlooked a crucial point. Tan assumed that each die roll is independent. Although generally true for successive rolls, this is not true for Risk because of the ordering and pairing, says Osborne.

When this is taken into account, a bold strategy is a better bet. "The chances of winning a battle are considerably more favourable for the attacker than was originally suspected," says Osborne.

For example, despite the defender having the advantage when pairs of dice are equal, an attacker turns out to have a better-than-evens chance of winning a territory even if the initial number of armies on both side is equal - provided that this initial number is more than four. 

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— Philip Ball, *Nature News*




Of the 100 letters used in the game, 42 are vowels - giving him a 42% chance of picking a vowel. The expected norm, given that seven letters are chosen each round, is 2.94 vowels per hand. The CD-ROM game varies only slightly from that, with an average of 2.84. The Scrabble Express game averages a measly 1.36.

Of the 100 hands, there were 23 in the Scrabble Express game that had no vowels at all - the CD-ROM game only had 2 such hands. If similar picks occurred during a traditional board game the shaken bag would effectively become a "death rattle" for the serious player, says Robinove.

Scrabble players alternately build words in a crossword-fashion on a board. They obviously need vowels. And, to

make high scoring words, it helps to get some high scoring letters, such as Z, Q and X - those used least frequently in the English language.

"Anybody who plays Scrabble has one common lament and that's getting lousy tiles," says Mark Morris, director of public relations for Hasbro Games, which makes Scrabble.

He does not dispute Robinove's findings, but says that there was no intention to engineer the electronic game that way. He adds that Scrabble Express is no longer manufactured. Like many new games introduced each year, it didn't catch on. 

— Virginia Gewin, *Nature News*



Lifestyle



Say NO to Stress

Executive stress is here to stay. But there are ways to manage it. Once you make the resolve, stress will cease to stalk you. It's the New Year eve & here is how to go about it.

Deadly facts

Not exactly a new year greeting, but the World Health Organization has a figure to share: By next year, 100 million Indians would be cardiac patients, nearly 60% of the global pool. That's mainly because we are genetically three times more vulnerable to cardiac problems as compared to Americans or Europeans, says ace cardiologist Dr. Devi Shetty. Worse, such stress related disorders don't spare even those in their early 20s. The usual suspects are high blood pressure, diabetes, smoking, high alcohol intake, high stress, obesity, faulty food habits and lack of physical activity. But even as you change your life style and roll out the yoga mat, be on guard and go for cardiac check ups twice a year.

Are You Stressed Out?

Yes, if you have difficulty in making decisions; feel constantly drained of energy; sleep more than usual or have difficulty getting sleep.

External Cause

Major life changes, work, relationship

difficulties, financial problems, being too busy

Internal Cause

Inability to accept uncertainty, pessimism, negative self-talk, unrealistic expectations, perfectionism, lack of assertiveness.

Strengthen your relationships

When you have trusted friends and family members, life's pressures don't seem as overwhelming. So spend time with those you love and don't let your responsibilities keep you from a social life.

The Art of Reaching Out

Help someone else by volunteering. Go for a walk with a workout buddy.

Schedule a weekly dinner date. Take a class or join a club.

Warning Signs for Stress

According to the American Heart Association Discomfort in the centre of the chest that

US is the only industrialized nation that does not have a mandatory minimum vacation time

50% of Indians Work More Than 48 Hours a week

Lifestyle

Canada and Japan scrap the bottom, with a legal minimum of vacation days.

Americans poll more hrs at work, surpassing even the Japanese.



The F&B factor

Have small size meals. Skip large servings of fried stuff like French fries. This switch alone can save 300calories.


- It is always better to carry handy food like wholesome fruits, vegetable sandwiches or nutritious salads in office.
- Skip aerated drinks which usually contain more than 10000 calories. Remember, there is no substitute for plain water.
- The amount of 'low risk drinking' for Indians is up to 14 units per week for women. Here one unit is equal to: 250ml (about half a pint) of ordinary strength beer 30 ml (half-a-peg) measure of whisky, vodka or rum 100ml of wine.
- Avoid binge drinking. It affects the liver. Regular drinkers should stay off drinkers at least two days a week.

Doctor's Tips

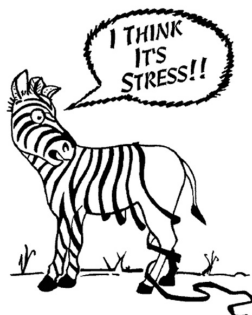
If possible, take small cat naps during the day for 15-20mins. Relax.

- Meditation and light exercise of 2-3 mins always help. This rejuvenates the system, freshens up memory cells, the mind and ensures proper oxygenation of the body.
- Don't take work home.
- Convert weekends into small holidays.
- The golden rule of exercise to beat stress is to go for a walk/exercise at least four times a week for 40 minutes each day.
- Change lifestyle, but be on guard. The cumulative benefits of exercise, good diet and medications are negated with just a couple of cigarettes, giving up smoking can improve health by nearly 80%.
- Regular check ups.
- At least once a year do a comprehensive check up if you are 40 plus. This threshold is lower for those with a family history of cardiac problems.
- Remember, blanket lipid profile and blood sugar test are not just not enough.

lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and come back. It could feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain. Pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach

Breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or light-headedness. 

With 30 paid vacation days a year, Finland is most employee-friendly nation.



"Sleeping is the best remedy for stress. It may be useful once in a while to catch up on your sleep in the weekends, but don't compromise on your daily sleeping habits"

Srividya Rajram, Clinical Psychologist, Escorts Heart Institute and Research Centre, New Delhi

"Families and friends act as a great cushion for stress. And try to socialize without office colleagues which will help one to get out of the office loop"

Jairanjan Ram Leading Psychiatrist, Kolkata

This article appeared in The Economic Times, 30th December, 2009

Lifestyle



GUEST COLUMN



Measuring HR Performance



Judhajit Das

Judhajit Das currently heads the Human Resources function at ICICI Prudential Life Insurance. He started his career with the RPG Group, in the Group Human Resources function and then later as Head of HR at Saregama Ltd. Thereafter, he moved to GE Capital as a Manager in the HR function.

Judhajit graduated in Economics from JU, Kolkata and is a PG in PM&IR from XLRI, Jamshedpur.

One of the more frustrating things I have encountered in all my interactions with business managers is their demand to understand the impact of HR initiatives in terms of financials. In many cases, the agenda was simply to nix the proposed initiative and the tactic was simply a short cut to make one go round in circles. Given the whole confusion that surrounds the measurement of intangible assets such as human capital on enterprise value creation, it is not very surprising that in company after company, the Finance department is vested with the responsibility of ensuring that the “ROI templates” are duly filled in, scrutinized at multiple levels and then approved by the powers that be before the budgets are released to support investments in human capital. Over time, the initially naïve & unsuspecting HR manager learns the art of creatively stating assumptions that pass the most rigorous ROI examination. Ironically, in most cases, the templates are rarely, if ever, examined in the future for the ROI claims that were originally made.

Why are financial measures so compelling to business managers whilst appearing as perhaps Greek & Latin to most HR managers? I am tempted to say that it's because of the widely prevalent illiteracy amongst business managers who fail to understand anything related to business performance unless defined in terms of financials and also, of the HR managers who stubbornly refuse to learn the jargon of bean counters.

Well, it's certainly not my case to argue that we should fritter away hard earned profits on initiatives that do not contribute to value creation. We all understand that financial

measures are expressed in rupees and that directly reflects the bottom line. Also, we cannot forget the adage that a rupee saved is a rupee earned. The challenge as we all know, is that most of the work we do around human resources management yields results only over a longish period of time and that the impact on value creation depends on a whole host of variables which make any kind of sensible modeling or ROI calculation difficult.

Again, it's not as if business managers & leaders do not appreciate the importance of intangibles in value creation. In the absence of an overarching measurement system that effectively explains the cause effect relationship between strategic HR drivers and financial results, business managers struggle to accept investment in human capital as an investment and not as an expense, the litmus test for resource allocation especially when they are struggling to rein in costs and report profits.

To exaggerate this point, say, if one had to develop an ROI proposition for launching a new skills development program for front office operations staff. The impact of enhanced skills should ideally get reflected in lower error rates or improved process efficiency measures which should then ideally translate to superior customer satisfaction leading to higher revenues for the business. Whilst the causal relationship between skills training and higher revenues maybe obvious to most, the difficulty lies in quantifying the impact of every rupee spent on skills training in precise revenue terms. Many other factors such as technology, brand image, product design, competitive



actions also impact customer satisfaction and revenues and in most business situations, the pace of change is fairly rapid and one is not working in a laboratory context where the impact of all other causal factors can be suspended to isolate the impact of that one factor which one wants to measure.

Whilst it's true that mathematics and statistics have been able to explain the world of physics, chemistry and engineering in terms of laws, the same level of accuracy is yet to permeate across the domain of life sciences and social sciences. Thus, whilst its possible to explain the importance & causality of HR strategic drivers on business performance, the task of quantifying same remains an intractable challenge and one seriously wonders whether the current set of tools and techniques are adequate and hence, it leads one to wonder if the entire effort was futile.

Despite the assertion that 'people are our biggest assets', the role of human capital in value creation is perhaps the least understood, least amenable to measurement and hence, least susceptible to management. However, given that there is now greater appreciation of the importance of intangibles & for our purpose, of that of human capital in creating sustainable competitive advantage and shareholder value creation, the central question is whether HR managers can and for that matter, whether they should even try and evolve a measurement system that showcases HR's impact on business performance. However, significant progress has been made over the last decade to examine business performance in more

holistic terms and it would be useful to take a quick look at some of the developments in this space.

With the growth of the services sector and the knowledge economy, a variety of professionals across academia and business have been engaged in trying to evolve a framework that explains the relationship of HR value drivers to business outcomes in terms of financial & operational metrics. As per the science of the new age performance management, metrics hold divine status and are key to linking strategy to business outcomes. The mantra that 'you measure what you want to get done' has spawned enormous amount of research in establishing causal models.

In 1987, H. Thomas Johnson and Robert Kaplan published *Relevance Lost*, a critique of how accounting systems were disconnected from the drivers of performance and, thus, failed to assist companies in long term planning and strategy formulation.¹ Subsequently, concepts such as Activity-Based Costing, which Johnson² went on to champion and Economic Value Added (EVATM)³ by Stern, Stewart & Co. became popular as companies struggled to understand where and how value was being created and destroyed.

In 1996, Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton published *The Balanced Scorecard: Translating Strategy into Action* which became a seminal model to systematically track metrics linked to financials, customers, internal processes and the learning and growth of skills in an organization.⁴



The “Competency” movement launched by C. K. Prahalad and Gary Hamel in their book, *The Core Competence of the Corporation* laid emphasis on seeing internal resources as the source of strategy and value creation, adding strength to the focus on identifying the value stored in people.⁵

Research in knowledge management, focused on methods to try and capture value created by ‘knowledge workers’ and there was renewed interest in the work done by Gary Becker on measuring the economic value created by education.⁶ Interestingly, one knows intuitively & perhaps empirically, that at a societal level, investment in education and healthcare are critical for long term economic growth and this constitutes a foundation for making other investments for driving economic growth. However, to explain whether higher GDP growth leads to better education and healthcare outcomes or vice versa is a bit like the chicken or egg situation.

Questioning the primacy of intangibles on value creation now appears to be a thing of the past. Where does it leave measurement of HR performance? Numerous studies have attempted to move beyond conjecture to establish direct, causal links between human resource practices and improvements in financial performance.

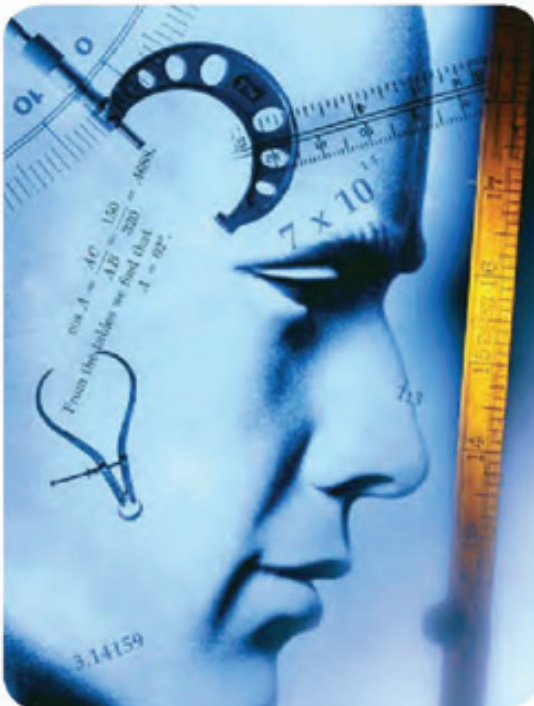
However, there has been frustratingly little success in proving this connection. This may be because the actual link between human resource initiatives and business performance might be the opposite of what most researchers believe. Testing for reverse causality, (i.e., the proposition that good firm performance may lead to better human resource policies*) is not such an implausible idea.

leadership & the correct strategic choices might, for instance, create strong financial performance and thereby the resources for

investment in human capital development which then adds to the overall performance of the Company. One of the few studies on reverse causality showed that firm performance preceded improved human resources practices. This led the researchers to conclude that “high performing organizations by their nature possess slack resources...Firms that are profitable may share these profits with employees in a number of ways.”** The analysis revealed that none of the positive correlations between human resource actions and future performance remained significant once the propositions were tested for reverse causality. The results maybe concluded to suggest that any link was at best tentative and should be treated with great caution.

Finding a correlation remains an elusive goal. Despite this high level of interest among both academics and practitioners, human capital measurement is still work in progress. There is no denying that employee costs which include training and development, contribute to financial performance in ways other than as a number to be subtracted from revenue on the way to calculating profits.

Recruitment & selection costs, team building initiatives, competency design and other expenditures clearly bear resemblances to spending on research and development or marketing in that they build a reservoir of value for the future. They are, in some sense, assets. But what is their value? And if that can’t be determined, how can we understand which efforts lead to improvements in productivity and, ultimately, financial performance? Intuitively, we know that attrition of good performance leads to drop in productivity. The task of isolating the cost of attrition for every employee however is a very difficult ask. The obvious ones are the cost of recruitment and cost of training. One could also account for cost of management time. But, how does not one quantify the impact on employer brand, the consequent impact on productivity, customer satisfaction etc. etc. Despite these difficulties, the search for *predictive* metrics continues and, as with the earlier quest for improved accounting procedures, a number of new alternatives have emerged to meet this demand.



Boston Consulting Group uses a system it calls “workonomics” to assess value creation by employees. “From an employee-oriented perspective, value creation is the number of employees multiplied by the difference between employee productivity and cost per employee.”⁷


The hope persists that an “ideal” list of human capital measures, especially prospective human capital measures, could exist and that these measures could prove how investments in people can deliver bottom-line results for business strategy. Rather than continue this possibly quixotic search, companies might find it more practical to investigate the role that the human resources function plays in strategy.

In a survey, conducted by The Conference Board in 2006, only 22 percent of respondents claimed that the human resources function is a full partner in developing and implementing business strategy. More than half of the respondents responded that the function had “no role” in strategy or simply implemented business strategy “once it has been developed.” Not only does this lack of involvement in formulating or implementing strategy limit the ability of human resources to understand managers’ business KPIs & concerns, it could also explain why only a few companies create human capital metrics to gauge the organization’s capacity to innovate or to identify new business opportunities. Human resources departments still play a limited role in strategy development. With the human resources function having limited participation in setting strategy, it becomes even more difficult to link human capital metrics to strategic goals.

In conclusion, one may say that measurement of HR performance is a journey and the difficulty of explaining the impact of each & every HR initiative on business performance need not distract HR managers from the primary purpose of making the people agenda an integral part of the business agenda. To do this effectively, HR managers need to acquire skills of understanding and interpreting data, provide actionable

insight on people and people related decisions based on data and more importantly, integrate their findings and knowledge of employee insight into business strategy. As an example, organizations focused on differentiating themselves through offering unique products or services may choose innovation metrics; companies primarily interested in cost may concentrate on efficiency measures.

While many progressive companies nowadays use dashboards to report HR data, the ability to explain causal models that show the impact of human resources on business outcomes in a coherent manner will be a core skill expected of HR managers. Likewise, business managers need to get familiar with HR metrics and these metrics need to form a part of their performance KPIs and reward plans to ensure alignment across all levels in the organization. Simultaneously, HR metrics need to be visible to all employees as per the relevant cuts appropriate for them for action planning.

HR will have to take up the role of disseminating information on HR performance, support line managers with actionable insights and help them in action planning. If well done, the impact of HR on business will be felt at all levels and HR will not need to struggle to explain its importance. This will however, require a new breed of HR professionals who think and act as business managers and who have made a choice to be in HR as they love the job. 

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G' NOME





"Many things can wait; the child cannot. Now is the time his bones are being formed, his mind is being developed. To him, we cannot say tomorrow, his name is today"

- Gabriela Mistral

YOUR

Child's Career Direction

All India Survey Report

What is good for a crowd-puller, popular Hindi film may not be all that good for real life. Rajkumar Hirani's 3 Idiots sends out a message to all who are joining career race to stop, pause, think about themselves, and, only then, race ahead. At a time when suicide notes from young, brilliant students are piling up on the coroner's table, and parents are worried about their children's careers, the film's release and its subsequent success were foregone conclusions. The quasi-real, cinematic feel good created by the film will do little to erase the furrow lines of worry from the viewers' forehead. Everyone wants to enjoy life on their own terms, but existing realities are frequently against that inner drive. Do you dare to hold your own in the face of your life and career circumstances? In many cases, we don't have a reasonable choice to be ourselves.

On the other hand, we parents love to see our children happy, pursuing their own career choices; we want them to be wealthier than us; we want them to be well-groomed individuals; the wish list is long and complex. There is, however, one common perception that binds our wishes: we, as parents, are the best judge of our children's future growth.

How close is 3 Idiots to life? That is for the film critic to judge; on our part at Gray Matters Consulting we wanted to look for some answers through a survey that went live last year on Children's Day. What follows are some real answers from real people on career direction for their children.

So, what have we come up with?

For a week starting from Children's Day 2009, 692 professionals in 75 organizations across India were surveyed for the factors that had influenced their career decision-making, and the kind of support their children were getting in their (the children's) career selection process. This short report presents the key findings of the survey. The report examines the different ways in which today's professionals define and evaluate their career success.

Our research model contends that environmental, opportunity and self factors differentially influence a person's choice of career. So, a part of the survey identifies key environment, opportunity and self influencers in career decision-making, and discusses the different degrees of future career success associated with each. We have also presented different support activities that the children surveyed, through their parents, have access to in choosing their career directions.

We've also made recommendations, based on the survey response, to help children best manage or leverage their career selection influencers in leading successful future careers. The report reveals specific parental attitudes and preferences that can have great impact on their child's career direction setting. The impact of the parent's age, gender and income on such parental attitudes, and their underlying rationale are explored. Some ideas for future research and implications for practice are also presented at the end.

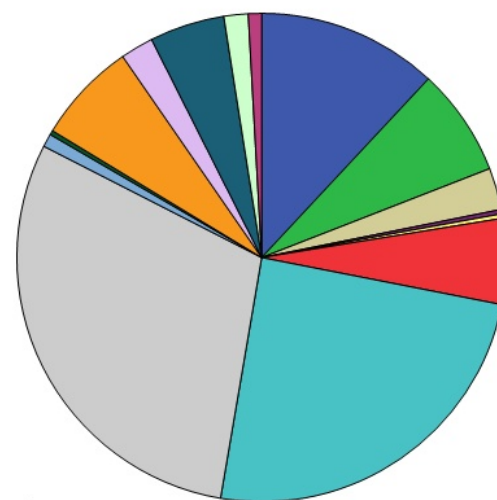
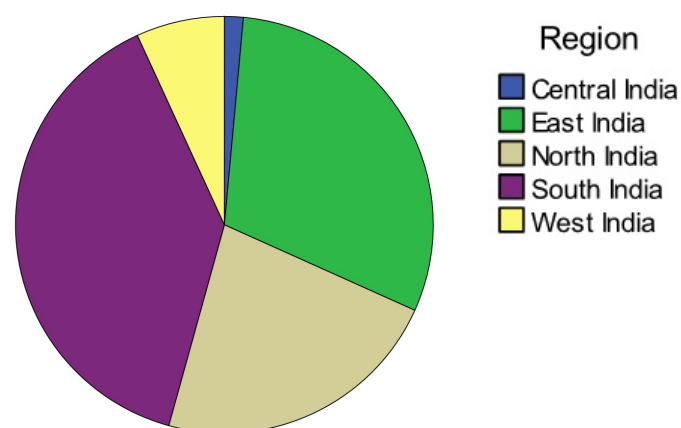
Who did we ask?

692 professionals participated in this study, 84 % of who were male. The sample was roughly normally distributed in age and income. East, North and South India were well represented in the sample; but we had only 2 % and 7 % of participants respectively from Central and Western India.

The participants were selected from a diverse mix of industries; however, their largest concentration was in the IT & ITeS (25 %) and manufacturing (30 %) industries.

Most of these professionals were either graduates (50 %) or post graduates (35 %).

Since the participants' age was quite normally distributed, the age of their children also had a normal range and pattern of spread (from below 12 years to above 21 years).

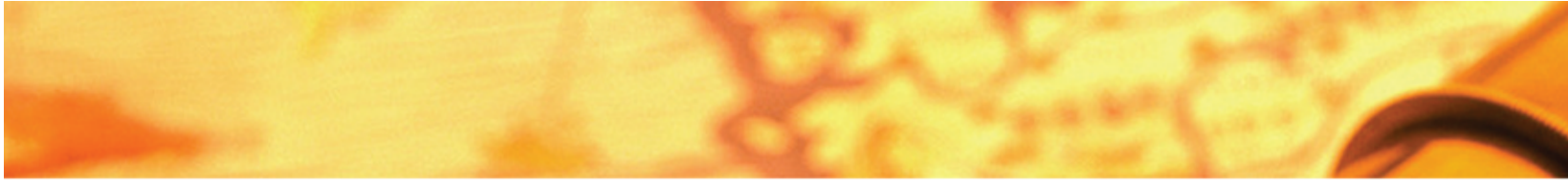


What were we looking for?

When we had first planned this project, we wanted to decode the career decision making process of children. What factors does a child consider in making her career choice? Which of them are more or less important vis-à-vis her future career success? What are parents' most common attitudes and preferences in supporting their child's career decision making? We were inspired by some of these questions.

We felt that the process of understanding and analyses cannot all rest in the future; in order to understand the factors behind career choice and success, we need to have given individuals the process time to make those choices and experience their success.

So, although we were trying to explain a child's career selection process and success potential, we decided to focus a large part of our analyses on what their parents did to choose their careers and how such decision making affected their later career success.



In a nutshell, we investigated the following questions:

I - How successful were an individual's career choices?

1. What's the most common definition of career success among today's middle to senior professionals?
2. What percentage of these professionals feel they have been 'successful' in their career so far?

II - Which career choice factors led to greater career success?

3. Which of the environment, opportunity and self influencers of career choice have led to greater future career success?

III - At the start of career decision making, what actions can best leverage such career choice influencers?

4. What are the most common support activities that the (indirectly) surveyed child population has access to for capitalizing on or managing such career choice influencers?

5. What are the recommended action plans for the (indirectly) surveyed children to best leverage their career choice influencers?

IV - What factors influence parent attributes that in turn influence their child's career decision making?

The last part of our survey considered specific parental attitudes and preferences that can have a great impact on their child's career direction setting and success. In understanding such parental attributes, the following research questions were of interest to us:

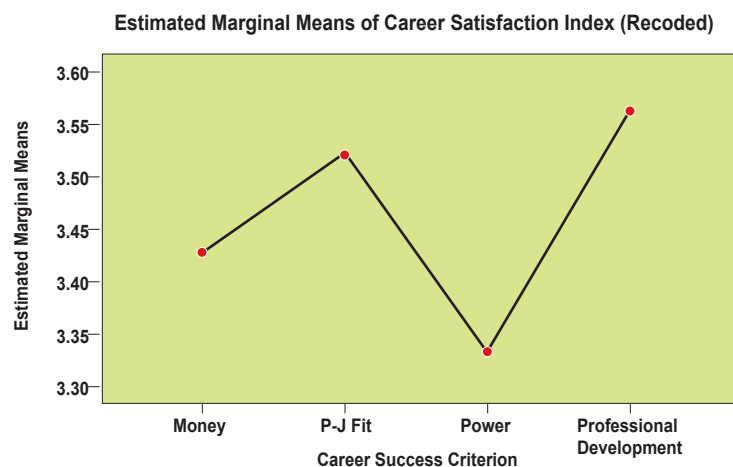
6. What are parents' predominant attitudes and preferences regarding their child's career interests, non traditional preferences, and career planning start timeframe?
7. How do the parents' age, gender and income influence such attributes?

What did we find

In summary:

For most of the surveyed professionals, career success meant 'Professional Growth and Achievement' or 'Right person-career fit'. 'Monetary achievement' or 'power' was considered far less important for determining career success.

Maybe a lot of the surveyed professionals felt past a certain point in income and power. For them, factors in job and professional enrichment are now pivotal descriptors of career success.

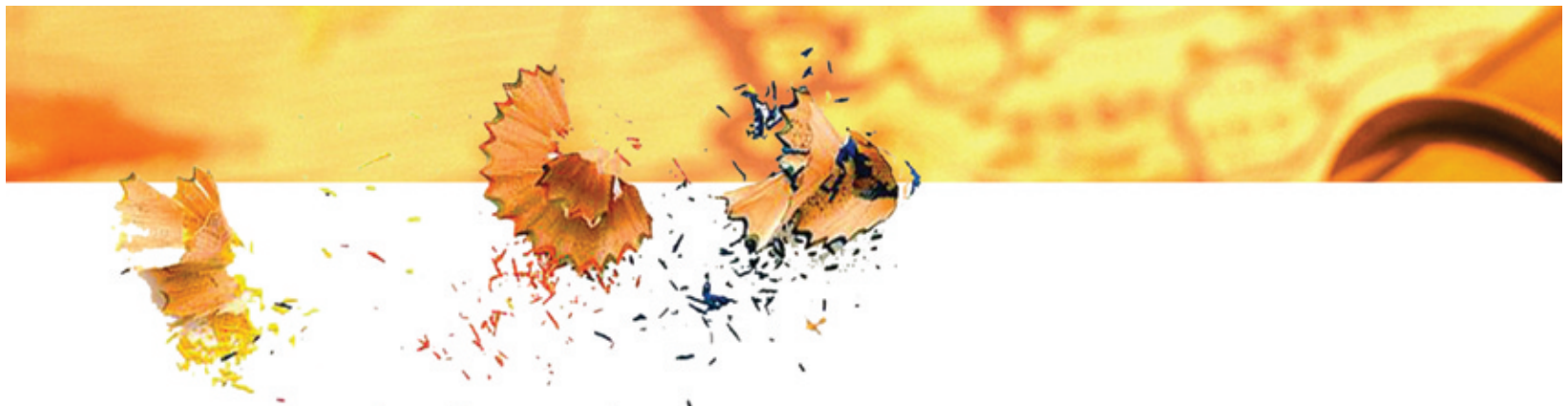


Most people felt they were successful in their careers. However, individuals who defined career success in terms of their professional development or person-career fit perceived themselves to be more successful, on an average, than people who identified career success with high income or power.

This might be indicative of a deeper psychological phenomenon: people who set success standards in terms of their job fit and professional expertise feel more easily satisfied and fulfilled than those who identify more with money or stature.

In the domain of one's **environment and surroundings**, people who were most influenced by their 'parents' occupations' experienced the highest career success, followed successively by groups driven by 'peer career interests', 'role models' and 'local region occupations'. However, differences in future career success were significant only between groups that chose 'parents' occupations' and 'local region occupations'.

Thus, parents have a much larger scope to influence their children's career decision making by the nature and success track record of their (parents') occupations. And, if your child is asked to choose her career guidepost between the 'occupational diversity in her local region' and her 'deeper understanding of her parents' professions', she's likely to profit more from the latter.



In the domain of the individual's opportunities, people who were driven most by 'past or current work experience at the time of making their career selection' landed up with the greatest career success, followed consecutively by groups driven by 'family socio-economic status (SES)', 'education/employment opportunities in local area', and 'gender'. However, these differences are not significant.

If your child has had opportunities in terms of an enriching past work experience, a stereotypical gender vis-a-vis his career interests, multiple education and employment opportunities in his local area, and a high family socioeconomic status, he's likely to be served best in later career success if he's most influenced by the work experience. However, since all of these opportunities have an important role to play in his decision making, our studies did not indicate the associated career success differentials to be significant.

In the **self** domain, people most driven by their 'motivation for high SES' during the career decision making phase achieved the highest future career success, followed successively by groups that were most led by their 'analysis of own capabilities', 'self interest awareness and career planning', and 'academic scores and achievement'. People most influenced by 'motivation for high SES' achieved significantly higher career success than those driven by 'analysis of own capabilities'; other differences in career success among factors were not statistically significant.

So, if your child is clear of that his career success motivation lies in high income vs. career fit right at the time of career decision-making, he's likely to land in a future career that he would find the most successful.

When starting out in one's career, being guided by one's degree of motivation for a high SES has highest returns. If your child is clear of that his career success motivation lies in high income vs. career fit right at the time of career decision-making, he's likely to land in a future

career that *he* would find the most successful.

To best leverage environment factors influencing a child's career choice, we have recommended the following action prescription for the surveyed population:

- Maintain discussions of the pros and cons of parents' occupations
- Maintain opportunities of mentorship by children's role models or siblings
- Increase mutual peer discussions of career choices and interests
- Decrease explorations of occupations and career choices beyond those of local area

The data clearly indicates that proactive discussions in the career decision making phase with people in close access – parents, peers, siblings, and role models – can play a more important role in future career success than less interactive, research based explorations of alternative, non local occupations.

To make the best use of the opportunity factors influencing the child's career selection process, we have the following suggestions for the sampled parent-child groups:

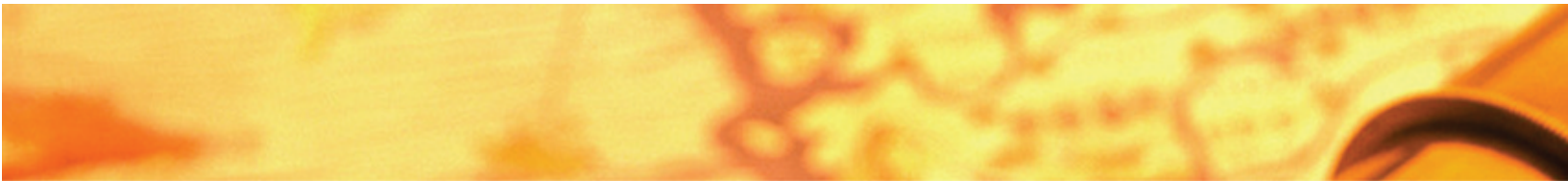
- Decrease activities that make use of joint school-industry initiatives
- Maintain current level of activities involving parents' exploration of financial alternatives for supporting their child's career decisions
- Decrease activities that make use of vocational training and work opportunities
- Increase discussions on non traditional and non mainstream careers

Although practical experiences provide children with some knowledge of specific professions and their field realities, what is also needed is a deeper discussion of the benefits and challenges of different occupations. Even here, career decision making seems to respond positively to critical discussions and analyses.

To best capitalize on the self factors that influence a child's career direction, we recommend the following for the surveyed children:

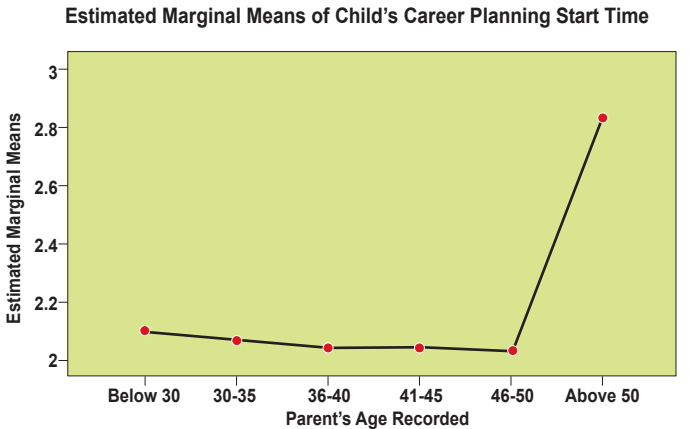
- Decrease activities involving choosing career value priorities
- Decrease activities involving analyses of own capabilities
- Increase activities involving career planning and self discovery
- Increase activities involving understanding of the impact (opportunities and limitations) of academic scores

The need seems to be to take a more specific approach to career related self awareness and get more proactive about planning the child's steps towards his career goals.

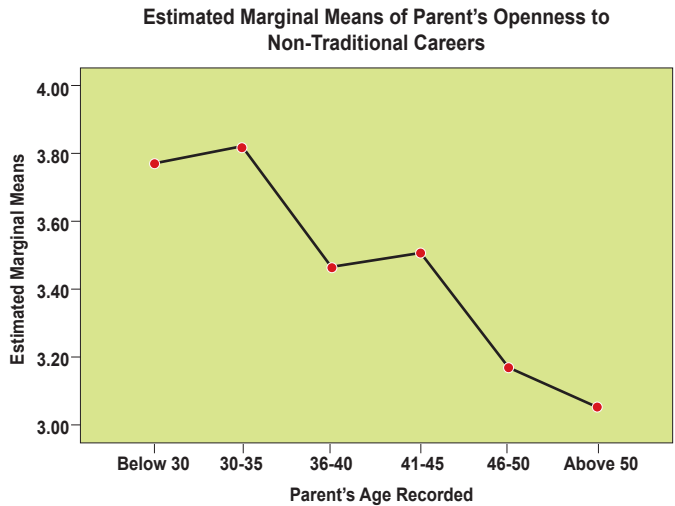


The parent's income or gender is unrelated to his or her preferred start time for the child's career planning. The parent's age, however, has a quasi-significant relationship with the desired child career planning start time. Although there's no relationship between the two variables until the parent's age of 50, beyond 50, the younger the parent is, the earlier he's likely to want the child's career planning process to begin.

The parent's age or gender does not have a significant impact on his or her preference towards the child's independent interests vs. parental perceptions vs. societal expectations in supporting the child's career decision making. However, richer people are more likely to be predisposed towards their child's interests vis-a-vis societal expectations in this process.



Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values : Income Recorded = 2.50

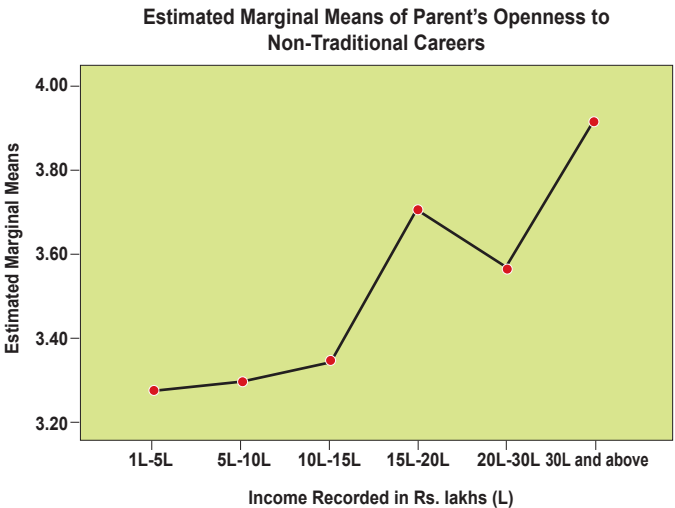


Younger and richer are likely to be more open towards non-traditional (non-mainstream) career choices of their children. The parent's gender does not have any significant impact on such openness.

Mothers and fathers are surprisingly alike in some of the key parental attitudes that can impact the quality of support the child has during his career direction setting.

Richer parents might feel more liberated and secure to remain more open to their child's independent interests during this process, even if such interests are non-traditional.

Younger parents seem to do better in providing a more open, liberal support to their children in choosing non mainstream careers.

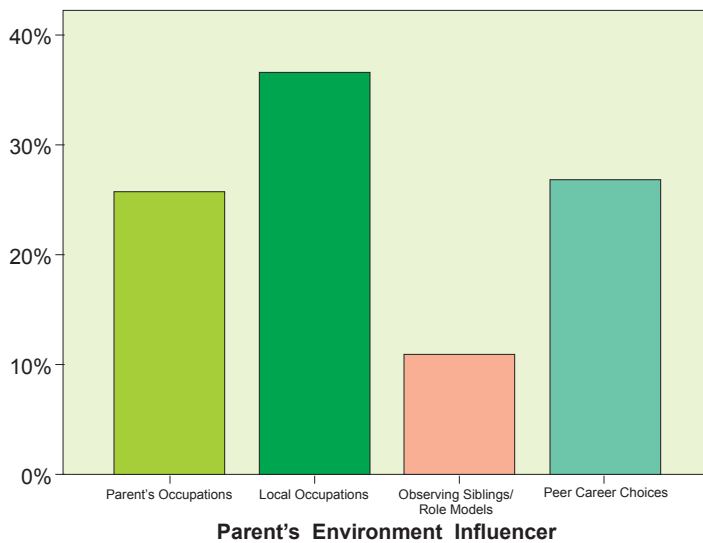


In Conclusion

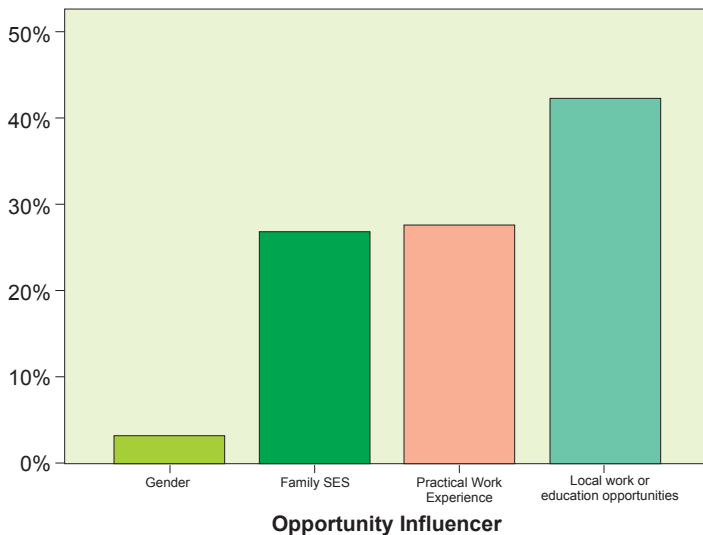
There could be a Rancho of 3 *Idiots* in our families waiting to be discovered, but are we equipped enough as parents to make that discovery? The survey reveals that there is no shortage of effort to find our own Ranchos and also many of us are geared to find out non-mainstream careers for them. The crucial piece of a child's career direction puzzle is her parental support. It seems there are oodles of it. We could take that vital step, discover our child's passions and interests and put her on a path of self-discovery.

You would have read our recommendations based on the survey responses. These are windows of choice that may help you take certain decision pertaining to your child's career plans. If you have any further queries on the survey elements and recommendations, we would be happy to be of help.

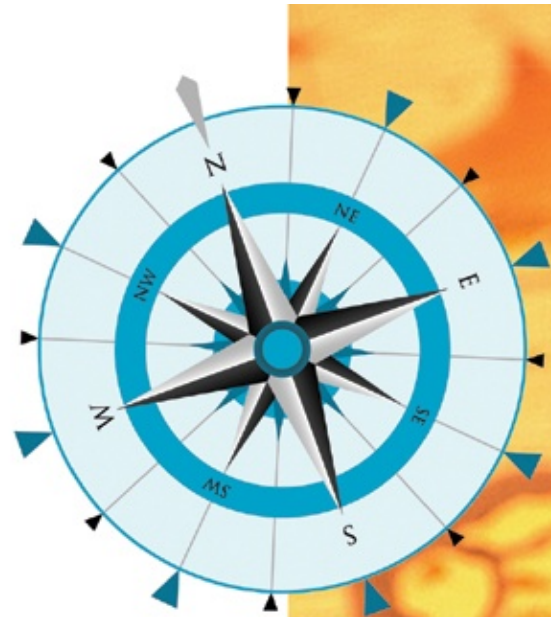
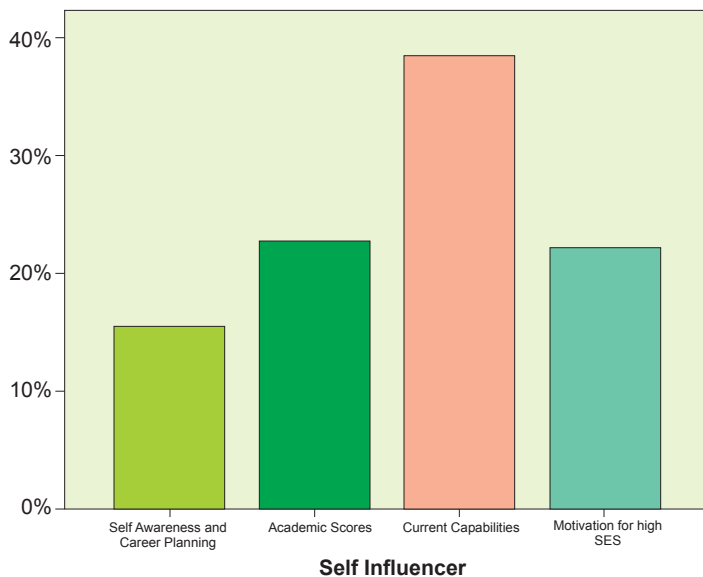
Sample distribution across key environment influencers



Sample distribution across key opportunity influencers



Sample distribution across key self influencers



SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Individuals who defined career success in terms of their professional development or person-career fit perceived themselves to be more successful, than people who identified career success with high income or power.
- People who were driven most by 'past or current work experience at the time of making their career selection' landed up with the greatest career success
- Proactive discussions in the career decision making phase with people in close access – parents, peers, siblings, and role models – can play an important role in future career success
- The parent's income or gender is unrelated to his or her preferred start time for the child's career planning.
- Younger and richer are likely to be more open towards non-traditional (non-mainstream) career choices of their children.
- *Richer parents might feel more liberated and secure to remain more open to their child's independent interests during this process, even if such interests are non-traditional.*

Principal Investigators – **Ayantika Paul**, Senior Consultant, Gray Matters ; **Debkumar Mitra**, CEO – Education & Knowledge Services, Gray Matters ; **Sanjay Roy Chowdhury**, Managing Director, Gray Matters

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Sum up your Leadership in 6 words

Once upon a time Ernest Hemingway was challenged to write a story using only six words. Impossible, some thought. Not for Papa, as Neal Conan explained on NPR's *Talk of the Nation*. The next day Hemingway produced this: "For sale. Baby shoes. Never worn."

Clare Booth Luce, according to columnist *Wall Street Journal* columnist Peggy Noonan, once told President John Kennedy that "a great man is one sentence." Noonan writes that Lincoln's life could be summed up as "He preserved the Union and freed the slaves." My colleague, Scott Eblin, adapted the concept to summing up one's leadership legacy. "It takes time and effort to boil down the essence of what you're trying to do to a short and memorable idea."

Reducing one's life to a handful of words is a mighty challenge. Creating a six-word memoir, a concept inspired by a project conducted by Smith College's magazine, can be a useful exercise in self-analysis, particularly if you apply the process to reflecting upon your goals and your results.

Did we achieve what we set out to achieve?
Did I help them and the team to succeed?
Did our results stand the test of time?

The million dollar question for any leader is this: did you leave the organization in a better place than when you found it? Sadly we have discovered that the great recession we are enduring was in part due to senior executives who did not leave their companies better off, even though they themselves exited with pockets full of cash.

For leaders, this six-word exercise works well as a form of aspiration, that is, how do I want to be remembered? So if you are early or mid career, you have time to make changes so that you can become the leader you are capable of becoming. Consider the following three questions to help you consider how you would sum up your work life in six words or less.


What gets me up in the morning? A very basic question! What do you do and why do you do it? For some, the answer is the opportunity to work with others on a project that has real meaning, that is, improves the quality of life for others. If this question throws you, then you need to consider what you don't like about what you do. Is it possible to change something, or must you change careers?

How can I help? We humans are motivated to work for goals greater than ourselves. Leaders achieve through the efforts of others. It is imperative that they create conditions for others to succeed. They help others achieve intentions that enable the team, and by extension the organization, to succeed.

What is my influence? Line authority over someone on your team is a point of leverage but its effect may be limited. For organizations, particularly in challenging times with dwindling resources, leaders need to exert their influence. Such influence is built upon good example but transmitted through effective persuasion rooted in trust.

You can adapt the six-word memoir exercise to fit other needs. For example, how might you describe a challenge facing your team using just six words? "Tough job.

Committed people. Keep working." Or "Need ideas. Sooner than later. Help." You can even make a game of it at your next staff meeting. Encourage your people to contribute their six words as a means of getting to think about the issues, the challenges, and the opportunities you face.

Summing up your career in six words may not produce a eureka moment of sudden clarity, but the exercise challenges you to think about what work means to you and how you influence the way others work. "Big idea. Profound thoughts. Truthful moment." 



BUSINESS CAPPUCHINO

Graphic Novels & Comics



Rimi B. Chatterjee

Rimi B. Chatterjee is a writer and academic. Her third novel *Black Light* will be out in April 2010. Her first book was *Signal Red*, and the second (shortlisted for the Vodafone Crossword Book Award) *The City of Love*. She teaches English at Jadavpur University. She's working on a graphic novel, *Kalpa: Shadowfalls* and is one half of the team that will launch *Project C*, a new comics magazine. She has also published an award-winning history of Oxford University Press in pre-Independence India.

What is the potential for comic books in India? There are many possible answers to this question, depending on who's asking and who's answering. Let us look first at the positives, ie the reasons why comic books should take off in a big way in the next ten years. In fact 2010-2020 could well be the decade of the comic book in India, provided, of course, that the negatives can be dealt with. First, our strengths:

India's tradition of visual storytelling.

Telling stories in pictures is familiar to the Indian mind. Indian religious sites of whatever description usually include a fresco or frieze telling the story of a significant event. Kalighat pata makers in the nineteenth century copied the techniques of German oleographs and scurrilous French pictures to give us glimpses of the decadent babu culture of Calcutta that were all their own. Many folk traditions use a mix of pictures and words. We may no longer be able to read Pali, but we can scan the Jataka tales on the walls of the Ajanta caves. When these were still living monuments, guides would take visitors round and tell the stories that went with the pictures, thus becoming the oral 'letterers' of the comics.

A way of bridging the linguistic divide.

Given the linguistic diversity of India, a comic book has an advantage in that it is less dependent on the word, and a picture needs no translation. With more than 30 major literary languages and a vast illiterate population, India has need of comics as a communicative device across boundaries. It would be comparatively easier to translate

comic books for a pan-Indian market than text-only books. The iconic Amar Chitra Katha series of the 1950s to the 1990s showed how this could work, although it seems to have lost steam now, perhaps because it looks a little out of date in the post-liberalization era.

India has very accomplished practicing artists.

A search of the web throws up hundreds of accomplished creators of web comics of Indian origin. Our artists still have a freshness and a reverence for the human form and for colour and line that has come under attack in the past century in the West, such that Western 'high' and 'low' art have quarrelled over realism and parted ways. The Indian understanding and practice of art is more congenial to the idea of high art as a storytelling medium. Animation studios have already made India a destination of choice for high quality work, precisely because our artists work well with realism or symbolism.

India has great writers. I don't need to stress this point. Indian literature is taking the world by storm. If established writers, or new writers with talent, could be attracted to the genre, we would have a winning formula. Many younger writers are also fans of comics, but are hesitant to enter the genre because they are unsure how to collaborate with artists or manage the project. Here institutional backup and high visibility is essential.

Narrative power and universal appeal.

The comic is a very powerful storytelling medium. Done well, a comic book provides pleasure on many levels. When you turn



a page, the double spread of the facing pages hits you first with its beauty. Then you read sequentially and pick up the story, going panel by panel. You appreciate how the panels work together. Then you get the tiny thrill, the little moment of suspense as you turn the page, and again the moment of holding one's breath as a new spread appears. This is a very complex process, yet it is also simple because of the universal appeal of pictures.

A good creator can furthermore use this all-at-once-yet-sequential experience to produce irony and disquiet, to comment on the story as well as tell it. There can be visual jokes and references that are subtle, as well as the obvious gags. Thus readers of different levels of sophistication can get different levels of pleasure from the same text. The creators can also chop time in a way that a film cannot: one single moment can fill a whole page, or a year can be packed into twelve small panels, or the act of raising a glass to one's mouth can be drawn out into an agony of suspense. Words and picture can be at odds, so that the voice tells one story while the face denies it. And one can read at one's own pace, go back and forth, or follow multiple lines on the pages, in a way that film does not allow. Imagine a bloody dagger drawn as if resting on a page that tells the story of a murder. Given a sufficiently powerful story and a daring artist, such as in David B's *Epileptic* or Alan Moore and J.H. Williams's *Promethea*, this medium can go places no other artform can dream of reaching.

Increasing interest in the genre. The Indian media has been paying more attention to comics recently, and there is now a trend towards studying comics in academia. At

Jadavpur University, comic books/graphic novels are on the syllabus of the undergraduate core course, and there is a postgraduate optional course that studies them in detail. Parallel to this, a creator-owned black and white print magazine, *Drighanchoo*, is now being published by a group of people, not all from JU. This is doing very well. There are ever more fan groups on Facebook, and each new title or project ratchets up the visibility of Indian comics.

This brings me to the 'con's of my analysis. What are the factors preventing comics from taking off in India? Here are some points.

The low status of the genre in the West.

Comics and cartoons have till now not received the recognition due to them as art forms, and if this is true in the West it is doubly true here, since so far we haven't come up with our own idea of what comics is, and are likely to end up passively accepting Western ideas on the genre. The problem is, the low prestige of the medium tends to drive away established writers who fear to sully their hard-won reputations. There is also the impression among Indian writers that scripting graphic novels or comics is a specialist job. Writers will consider doing film scripts (in so far that Bollywood movies invest in a script at all) but not comics.

Perception of comics as 'kid's stuff'. This is a Western hangover; in Japan, for example, manga is read by everyone. The Japanese system is probably a better model for India than the Western one. India has had some exposure to these cultures through anime, many of which are based on manga, that air on channels like the Sony-owned Animax.





Japanese manga is nearly always monochrome and artist-authored, and sales are phenomenal. The Japanese market is well developed and differentiated according to age group or content. Japanese manga are more story-driven than Western comics and show more experimentation with ideas. They are also much franker about sex and adult topics. The Japanese experience shows that comics can appeal successfully to any age group and social class.

The dominance of the 'superhero' in people's mindsets. This is both a hangover from the West and a facet of 'comics are for kids'. It would be well for us to look beyond the superhero for future stories. Even mythological heroes in India are resolutely human: witness the heroes of the Mahabharata, who agonise, do wrong, mess up, make mistakes and regret their actions in a way that Western audiences find disconcertingly post modern. Ignoring this narrative tradition runs the risk of giving Indian readers dumbed-down content.

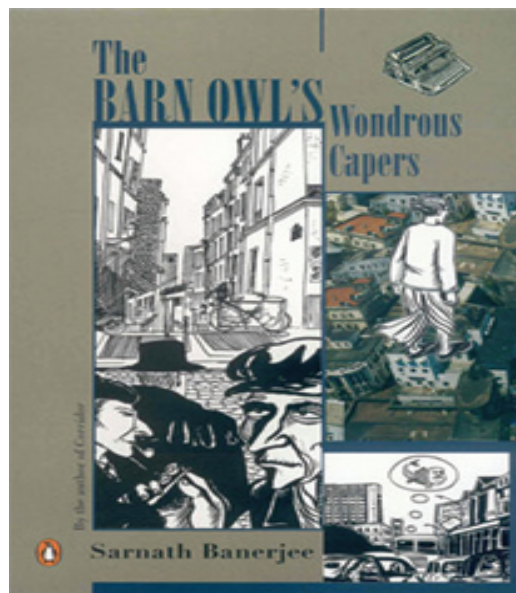


I believe that the question that every Indian comics-reader should ask is: Why can't I find the stories I want to read? This was the question I asked myself which led me to script the first book of my comics series, *Kalpa*. I wanted *Kalpa: Shadowfalls* to be a different kind of story, one that would be anchored in everyday life but would have enough fantasy in it to be visually rich and emotionally appealing.

Lack of a publishing infrastructure and paradigm.

Here in India, there is only one fully functional publisher of comics: Kalyani Navyug which publishes the Campfire imprint for children. There was Virgin Comics India, which lived for a very short while, and Phantomville, which published only two titles before going into hibernation. Virgin was doomed to fail because of the conservatism and timidity of its stories. 'Bad' artwork—that is deliberately rough, stylized or distorted art—can tell a good story in a comic book, but good artwork cannot save a bad tale from being rejected by the reader. The Virgin serial numbers looked good, but story-wise they were going nowhere. Sarnath Banerjee's *Corridor* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2005) and *The Barn Owl's Wondrous Capers* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2007), and Amruta Patil's *Kari* (New Delhi: Harper Collins India, 2008) are published by mainstream publishers, namely Penguin and Harper Collins. It is no accident that these books are artist-authored and mostly monochrome, the form of comics that is closest to the prose fiction paradigm (ie the text-only novel we all buy and read). This form is the cheapest to produce and the most easily handled by mainstream houses. A full-colour comic book produced by a scripter, penciller, inker, letterer and colourist is legally and technically a different proposition from the monochrome single-author work, and till now the Indian publishing industry has had no models to deal with it.





Mainstream publishers do not pay creators until a book is published and royalties are coming in. Writers of novels work for free, but artists of all kinds are usually professionals who get paid per page. Since publishers in India are unwilling to pay development costs for a comic book, who will pay the artist? At present mostly the writer funds the artist from his or her pocket, a very grueling proposition and impracticable in many cases.

Lack of a magazine culture or serial publication. In Japan, stories often reach a readership first through magazines supported by advertising, subscription and sponsorship, and in the West, through serial publication also supported by ads, allowing people to buy and read them with a small investment. Only the most popular and commercially viable stories then get collected as trade paperbacks, ie books. Without a magazine culture, publishers end up taking too much risk publishing graphic novels without prior market exposure, and since book publishers don't run ads the huge developmental costs cannot be met except from sales, pushing up cover prices. Since magazines get advertising revenue, they can help underwrite the high development costs of comics, allowing publishers to publish the collected books (without the ad copy) only by paying printing and distribution costs in the usual manner. This is what has led me and Avijit Chatterjee to come up with the idea for *Project C*, a new


comics-only magazine that we intend to launch by 2011. It will publish both fiction and nonfiction in comics form, bimonthly, for a general (non-juvenile) audience, and we intend it to function as a launch pad for comics creators and a get-it-here-first platform for readers.

Lack of a forum for sharing creator experiences. Since there is no institutional support available in India, authors who can't or won't draw, and artists who can't or won't write, have to find each other and team up on their own. This is technically demanding and requires one to learn the skills of collaboration. I am not an artist, I am a writer, and that was my first problem with *Kalpa*. At a very basic level, I had to find artists and get them involved on a creative level.

Giving them the script to read did not work: they were not used to dealing with large quantities of prose. I had to sit them round a table and tell the story to them in the good old fashioned way. That worked, as did my drawing of numerous stick-figure thumbnails at which they very generously forbore to laugh. So we had to learn by trial and error how to do comics. Many other creators are having to emulate our experience, thus endlessly reinventing the wheel.

Without a comics community, we don't have a way to pass on our hard-won knowledge and to train up newcomers. An interactive magazine culture, supported by comics conventions, fan sites, competitions, seminars, letters to the editor and google groups will help here. It will also allow for market-testing of new concepts and help investors to decide on what are good prospects for development.

Conclusion

You will note that most of the setbacks or obstacles are 'lacks' which can be remedied by building the resources needed. What has really been lacking till now is the vision and drive to take a few startups through to completion and success. We need new entrepreneurs who will capitalize on our strengths and build bridges between capital and the market, generating first class content for a wide readership along the way and building a community of creators, fans, sponsors, publishers and readers. For this, good business plans that promote creativity while maximizing commercial success are essential. When that happens, the comics giant of India will waken and take the world by storm. Watch out for the giant in a bookstore near you! 



INSIDE GRAY MATTERS



HR On Site

An IT organization devoted to check internet security systems for organizations, sought Gray Matters' assistance in examining, re-designing and implementing HR systems and processes in their organization. It was good to see that those who look at the durability of other organizations' systems were equally keen in seeking help from experts in domains which were not their area of expertise – i.e. people processes. Gray Matters 'HR On-site' was the product of choice. Here Gray Matters was the 'internal' HR function for the organization. The work involved examining existing HR systems, defining and implementing processes and policies and actually acting as the 'HR' interface for all staff matters. The assignment also included facilitating implementation of innovative performance improvement initiatives. The situation was 'win-win' for both the organization and Gray Matters.



Education and Knowledge Management Services

In the New Year, Gray Matters team have added two more items to its basket of products and services – Education and Knowledge Management Services.

With these two services we hope to cover a large section of audiences from school children to senior level executives. Currently under development is a new, exciting product for schools and colleges as our first offering from education services.

We are also actively engaged in bringing in the best HR practices to the Education sector. The products and services are aimed at better delivery and management of human resources in this fast growing industry.

Gray Matters Knowledge Management services helps organizations and educational institutions in exploring new and creative ideas for their Branding and Communication needs. We help in idea generation for in-house employee engagement events or external marketing and branding events.

We are in the process of giving Knowledge Management a new meaning by stretching its definition and pushing the envelope. We are currently actively engaged in developing focussed content for industry and education; managing existing knowledge within an organisation and doing surveys.

We are also looking at knowledge events. Gray Matters Knowledge Management Services team would help you in creating interesting and extremely innovative ideas for conferences, tradeshow, meetings and other interesting ideas specifically for your organization.

Our team is known for its ability to help Institutions bridge the existing structure and systems with the future goals that have been envisioned our impact in the field of education has been recognized by clients and partners on a national level.

LEISURE PAGE



NWORDS

Pronounced N-U-O-R-D, nword is a new word or phrase that appears suddenly in speeches, articles, news reports or literary writings. Nwords that appears in this column have a stickiness of at least a couple of years. Here are 8 such gems.

CHATTY PACKAGING: Faux-friendly marketing blurb that aspires to a casual, cheeky, and personal tone.

MIS-LIT: Misery Literature, recounting abuse, degradation, or harm.

RETAIL JAILS or TESCO JAILS: 'short-term holding facilities' in malls or other areas of 'high-volume' offending.

PHILANTHROPRENEURS: Sponsors of non-profit ventures; often young tech billionaires. Also **FILANTHROPISTS**. Philanthropists who finance socially aware films. Also **MINIGARCH**. Not quite an oligarch (annual income = \$50m).

PAY-AS-YOU-THROW: Charging for rubbish disposal by quantity.

VULTURE FUNDS: Companies that buy cheap the debt of poor countries, and then sue for the full sum, plus interest.

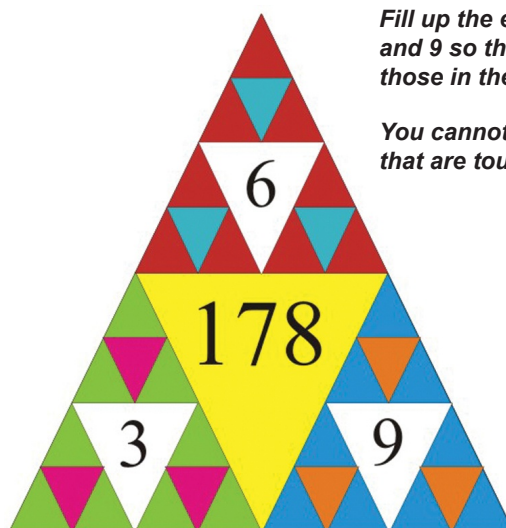
PITCH BEST: animals used in advertising: usually cute, like penguins.

SANDWICH GENERATION: Those caring for young children and elderly parents at the same time.

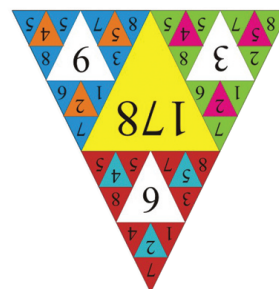
mindstretch

Fill up the empty triangles with numbers between 0 and 9 so that the sum of all the numbers (including those in the white triangles) is equal to 178.

You cannot use the same number in two triangles that are touching each other – otherwise you can.



Solution



brain strain

quizzing your grey cells



1. His famous order 'a vodka martini – shaken, not stirred' notwithstanding, which beverage did James Bond, quaffed the most in his films?
2. In a recent Teletext poll on books that readers often leave unfinished featured only one Indian author, which is the book?
3. After viewing what do some travelers suffer from Stendhal Syndrome?
4. At various places across the city London finds blue plaques; what do these plaques signify?
5. People of which professions are awarded the Pritzker?
6. In 'Leet Speak', an internet slang language, what does m3 stand for?
7. On Geenpeace's list of most eco-friendly electronics company, which organization is at the top of the pile?
8. We all know about "Glass Ceiling", what is "Marble Ceiling"?
9. Royal Mail issues Christmas Stamps in which month of the year?
10. Four Asian economics are jointly known as Asian Tigers; Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan are three of them, which is the fourth?

- Answers**
1. Champagne
 2. The God of Small Things, Arundhati Roy
 3. Art of great beauty.
 4. Places where the great have penned their master pieces, developed new technologies, lived or died.
 5. Architects
 6. Me
 7. Lenovo
 8. A barrier to those in politics
 9. November.
 10. Hong Kong

EXCITEMENT — FUN — LEARNING FEEL THE THRILL !



OUR OFFERINGS

Individual Effectiveness

- Communication Skills
- Presentation Skills
- Time Management
- Workplace Etiquette
- Assertiveness Skills
- Influencing Skills
- Work-Life Balance
- Transactional Analysis

Functional Effectiveness

- Negotiation Skills
- Selling Skills
- Interviewing Skills
- Problem Solving & Creativity
- Conflict Management
- Customer Relationship
- Perf. Feedback & Counseling

Organizational Effectiveness

- Culture Building Workshops
- Competency Management
- Balanced Scorecard
- Basic HR Training
- Advanced HR Skills
- Compensation & Rewards

Leadership Development

- Basic Leadership
- Facilitative Leadership
- Transformational Leadership

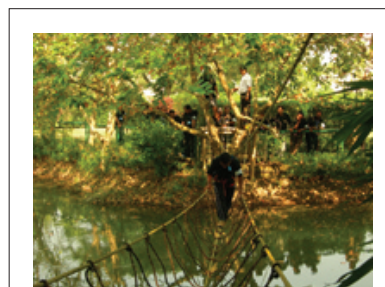
Signature Programs

- Winning Ways
- High Performance Teams
- Silver Screen-Management thro' movies
- Human Process Labs
- Talking Tomorrow
- Performance Feedback & Counseling

OUR OFFERINGS



Rock Climbing



Burma Bridge

WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU?

If you need any information of our products and services, you can mail us and we will surely respond to you with adequate details.

DO YOU WANT TO SHARE?

If you have an interesting concept in your organization which you would like to share with the community, do write to us and we will get in touch with you for details.

OUR CLIENTS

ABP Limited

Bangla Trac Limited (CAT)

Bengal Aerotropolis (BAPL)

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd

Bharti AXA Life insurance

CGPL (A Tata Power Company)

Dassault Systems

Descon Limited

Eveready Industries India Ltd.

First Climate India Pvt. Ltd.

Gontermann Piepers (I) Ltd.

Indian Chamber of Commerce

IXIA Technologies Pvt.Ltd.

ICICI Prudential Life Insurance

IFB Industries Limited

iViz Techno Solution Ltd.

KDS Group (Bangladesh)

Kotak Securities Ltd.

Landis Gyr

Lafarge Surma (Bangladesh)

Lafarge Umiyam Mining Pvt. Ltd.

Mercy Hospital

Pepsico India

Siemens Limited

SKP Securities Ltd.

SREI Infrastructure Finance Ltd.

Standard Chartered (Priority Banking)

Subhas Projects & Marketing Ltd.

TIL Limited

Techno Electric & Engg. Co. Ltd.

Tata Steel

VIP Industries Limited



BACKPAGE

For more information on Gray Matters offerings, visit our website at: www.graymatters.co.in



Gray Matters comprises of consultants who understand the challenges that businesses face in attracting, retaining and motivating people in this competitive environment. We work in partnership with our clients to deliver people solutions which would help accelerate growth for the organizations, based on our knowledge of businesses and expertise in HR leading practices.

Our solutions and approaches unlock the full potential of an organization – and deliver real, measurable, substantial and meaningful business results.

Organization Vision, Mission & Values

Job Banding & Evaluation

Balanced Scorecard Design & Implementation

Compensation Strategy & Structures

Leadership Development & Transformation

HR Effectiveness

Organization design and Mapping

Performance Management System

Competency Mapping & Assessments

Reward Strategies

HR Strategy formulation

HR Communication & Branding

New Additions to the team

Debkumar Mitra
CEO-Education &
Knowledge Services
Gray Matters

Experience: Formerly Director — Research and Development at Derek O'Brien & Associates, a Kolkata-based media infotainment company; Currently a consultant editor with Penguin India since December 2006. Invented a mathematical tool — Knowledge Quotient — to measure an individual's information base vis-à-vis information base of her immediate environment; Designed soft skill programme for children — KQ School Advantage; heading a 15-strong research team; Led the team that created the content for Penguin Yearbooks 2005-2009, The Penguin CNBC-TV18 Business Yearbook 2006-2007 and 2008-2009

Previously worked with The Statesman and The Telegraph in the Editorial department. Have been involved in organising knowledge shows to promote KnowHOW; Authored a recreational mathematics column Brainstorming (that appeared uninterrupted for 14 years in "The Telegraph")

Education: Graduation in Mathematics from Jadavpur University. Post Graduation in Applied Mathematics with specialization in Mathematical Biology from Jadavpur University International Fellowship: Gordon M. Fisher Fellow at the University of Toronto, Canada, studying 'Science and Pseudoscience,' 'Bioethics,' and 'Impact of Digital Media on Culture.'

Visiting programmes: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Media Lab and Harvard University under US Visitors' Program; purpose of visit: a better understanding of 'Affective Computing'; Department of Agriculture, University of Helsinki, purpose of visit: understand crop patterns and ecology of the Arctic, 1999

Publications: Published Mindstretch a book on mathematical puzzles and miscellany, The Mad, Mad world of Elections with Sudhir Dar, Penguin India Fact File, Business Traveller's Guide, States of India with Penguin India. Published poems in many little and literary magazines Uses postage stamps to popularise science and mathematics for school children.

Ayantika Paul
Senior Consultant
Gray Matters

Experience: Formerly Talent Consultant with Cambria Corporation, Boston, USA. Have worked with organization like AON Corporation, New York, USA, SHL Group, India, Oracle, Vienna, Austria and Arambagh Corporation, India.

Consulting exposure in USA, Austria and India.

Consulting areas: Visioning, Organization Design & Structuring, Organizational Effectiveness, Performance Management System, Balanced Scorecard, Competency based solutions, Talent Management, Succession & Workforce Planning, Leadership Development, Job Evaluation, Manpower Rationalization, Policies & Systems

Academic background: MA in Organizational Psychology, New York University, Master of Business Economics, University of Delhi, BSc Economics, Presidency College, Calcutta.

Madhushree Bhattacharyya
Senior Analyst
Gray Matters

Academic background: MBA in HR from IISWBM, MA in English from Calcutta University

Work exposure: Worked in Spencer's Retail Ltd. for a Project on Comparative study of the performance appraisal process of three retail companies Worked in Sagitarius. Inc as Public Relations Executive handling media events for major corporate houses like Tata Metaliks, WBIDC, BSNL, Keventer group among others.

Industries worked with: Service Industry – Information Technology, Education and Hospital

**BOUQUETS
& BRICKBATS**

Through this newsletter, we intend to bring to you "interesting stuff" from the world of business, nationally and internationally. Please send in your comments and critique on the newsletter. We would like to improve with your suggestions and make this newsletter a "better read". Send your mail to contact@graymatters.co.in

“
*It is not in the stars to
hold our destiny, but
in ourselves*
”

– William Shakespeare



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