

ENGAGING STAFF IS A TOUGH TASK



MANUEL D'SOUZA, chief human resource officer, Intelenet Global Services, has led several HR and

finance functions in his stint of 24 years. Having worked across industries in manufacturing, telecom and FMCG, his expertise lies in manpower planning and cost budgeting. He talks to *Vanisha Joseph* on the growth prospects of HR professionals in the IT-ITeS sector during the slowdown.

Comment on the growth prospects for HR staff in the IT/ITeS sector?

The current slowdown has not had any major impact on the HR industry. The sector looks promising with companies remaining optimistic about the prospects for the year ahead. This is a good time for anyone building a career in HR as potential changes in the economy will present a variety of opportunities and challenges and seek varied skill sets from HR professionals in the industry. Companies will certainly depend on HR for bringing innovative employee practices and in ensuring that the workforce remains engaged and motivated.

Comment on the challenges the current period holds for HR staff.

The key challenge for any HR profes-

sional today is to keep the workforce engaged especially in the ITeS sector, which is a people-driven industry. The challenge for any HR professional is retaining employees by keeping them motivated and engaged enough to be committed to the organisation and client delivery. The focus has shifted from managing attrition to proactive retention and employee engagement. **Having worked across verticals in manufacturing, telecom, FMCG and IT, how did each experience help you grow?**

Each vertical has presented unique facets, challenges and added knowledge, learning and expertise to my career. The current period has a lot of pressure on the HR sector to fulfill business aspirations and employee expectations.

How does an HR professional make both sides meet?

There is a saying that employees do not stay in an organisation for the same reasons that they join an organisation. Employees may join an organisation for the brand name or remuneration but they stay on for things like care and sensitivity the organisation shows towards them in time of need, career development and growth.

What advice would you give HR professionals in IT/ITeS sector?

Follow the industry religiously to understand and imbibe its business, work culture, growth, challenges and most importantly its people. The HR entrants should focus on team-building and creating a culture of collaboration and co-operation, practice interpersonal skills and master resolving difficult issues to strengthen bonds in the organisation. They should be able to understand the business as a whole and get a perspective of the challenges faced by its employees at different levels — junior, middle and senior level — to address concerns faced by employees and work effectively as an organisation.

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