

CASTLE

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PREFACE

In today's rapidly evolving business scenario, organizations face unprecedented challenges and opportunities. The dynamic interplay of global markets, technological advancements, and shifting consumer preferences demands a comprehensive understanding of core business functions.

Crafted for the discerning minds at Jansons School of Business, this book equips future leaders with a deep understanding of how various business functions contribute individually and synergistically to success. Each case offers a deep dive into real-world scenarios, challenging students to analyze, strategize, and implement solutions that drive growth and sustainability.

Jansons School of Business is committed to developing leaders who are adept at managing the complexities of modern business. Immersing in these case studies enhances analytical and decision-making skills and cultivates a deeper appreciation for the interconnectedness of core business functions.

Approaching these case studies not just as academic exercises but as opportunities to develop practical solutions and innovative strategies that can be applied in real-world settings is highly encouraged. Let this book serve as a catalyst for growth as a business leader, inspiring a critical mind and a creative spirit when tackling problems.

FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Dear Readers,

It is with great pleasure that we present to you the 3rd volume of CASTLE - Case Studies in Management, bearing the ISSN: 2321-8673.

As the saying goes, **“The only people who achieve much are those who want knowledge” - C.S. Lewis**

Indeed, case studies provide one of the most effective ways to translate knowledge into actionable insights.

In this latest volume, our aim is to illuminate both exploratory and illustrative business situations across diverse domains. Each case has been carefully selected to offer deep insights into real-world challenges and strategic decisions faced by organizations today.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the authors whose dedication and contributions have made this volume possible. Your insights and expertise have enriched the content and provided valuable perspectives for our readership.

As editors, we envision CASTLE as a platform for continuous multi-disciplinary learning. By presenting a variety of cases that span different facets of business management, we strive to raise a deeper understanding of how various disciplines intersect and influence each other in today's dynamic business environment.

We invite you to explore into these case studies with enthusiasm and curiosity. May they inspire you to think critically, innovate boldly, and apply strategic thinking to your own professional endeavors. Whether you are a student, educator, or seasoned practitioner, we hope this volume serves as a valuable resource for enhancing your knowledge and practical skills in management.

Thank you for joining us on this journey of exploration and discovery. Here's to the ongoing success of CASTLE and to the advancement of managerial education through the power of case studies.

Happy Reading!

Warm Regards,

Dr. Dhamayanthi Arumugam

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Medicina Labs - Ethics and personal selling

Dr. M. Balathandayuthapani, Professor, Jansons School of Business

Doctors and their families must not receive any gifts, travel facilities, hospitality, cash or access to recreation from pharma companies or their representatives, commercial healthcare establishments and medical device firms under any pretext, the NMC has said in its new regulations, and passed by the government under the uniform code for Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP) 2024”.

This particular news published by The Economic Times on 12/03/2024, caught the attention of Mr. Durai the regional head of Medicina Labs. Incidentally he remembered the request raised by his team member Rakesh, the Sales Manager covering the southern districts of Tamilnadu. Mr. Rakesh informed Mr. Durai that Galaxy hospital at Tirunelveli had come with a request to sponsor a team of 6 doctors to attend an international conference on advancements in cardio vascular treatment at Paris scheduled by the 2nd week of July 2024. Galaxy hospital is one of the popular hospitals in Tirunelveli.

About the company:

Medicina Labs is a mid-tier pharma company situated in Hosur. It is one of the fastest growing pharmaceutical companies in India. Its principal activities include the manufacturing and marketing of prescription pharmaceutical brands, surgical and medical devices. The company is engaged in the manufacture of a wide range of pharmaceutical product through research and development and also in the manufacturing and marketing of diverse products through licensing agreements with international pharmaceutical companies.

Medicina Labs has a strong presence in the therapeutic care. Its products fall under Anti – Alzheimer, Anti- Asthmatic, Anti cold and Ant allergic, Anti diabetic, Anti-Obesity, Cardiovascular, Anxiolytic and Anti-Malarial treatments to name a few. The company wants to emulate some of the best practices adopted by leading pharma companies including the code of conduct, however till date no code of conduct is in practice.

Medicina Labs has been working on a new molecule with varied dosage to combat Malaria and it was planning to launch its new molecule “Artemocleocin” in the form of tablets. As part of the product launch, it was planning for a doctor's meet at Chennai in ITC Grand Chola. The company was planning to send an invite to 1000 doctors across South India. The invitees included doctors from leading corporate hospital chains like Apollo and Manipal hospitals and independent hospitals like KMCH, KG, Life Spring, Meenakshi Mission hospital, Galaxy hospital etc.

The dilemma:

Galaxy hospital in Tirunelveli is a 300 bed hospital, providing services in trauma care, emergency care, cardiology, cancer therapy, orthopaedics, neuro care and infectious diseases. The hospital has gained reputation for its effective treatment in infectious diseases. Mr. Durai is wondering if he has to consider the request from Galaxy hospital or should he brush it aside?

Question:

If you are the regional manager (Mr. Durai), what will be your decision and give reasons for the same.

Teaching Notes:

This case deals with the ethical issues involved in personal selling. Past studies on ethics have revealed that sales professional face a variety of ethical issues. People heading sales functions come across ethical dilemmas in carrying out their duty in the personal selling domain, the challenges vary from sales people cheating on expense voucher to clients seeking favours in kind to authorise a purchase. The clients can range from big corporates to government departments and divisions.

Some of the commonly faced ethical issues are

Relationship with the channel members and with the company:

In order to maintain the relationship, some sales people and sales managers may authorise credit for damaged products when no damage has taken place. When a key account manager resigns from a company, he/she may take the key customers to the new company, which might be a competitor to the previous organisation.

Favours in kind:

Some sales people and managers might give gifts/money to win a sale from a key account like big corporate or government departments. On the other hand, some government departments, purchase department of a corporate entity may demand a favour in kind namely cash, sponsoring a vacation, gifts etc to authorise a purchase.

Setting ethical guidelines:

Every organisation can set up a code of conduct or ethical guidelines to direct its employees. It should be endorsed and enforced by the top management.

The code of ethics adopted by American Marketing association is a good example for organisations to frame their own code of ethics.

The code of ethics of American Marketing Association are

1. Do no harm. This means not only consciously avoiding harmful actions or omissions but also striving to benefit all stakeholders and society at large. We must embody high ethical standards and, at a minimum, adhere to all applicable laws and regulations in the choices we make.
2. Foster and maintain integrity. This means striving for transparency and fairness in all aspects of the marketing ecosystem.
3. Embrace ethical values. This means building relationships and enhancing stakeholder confidence by affirming these core values: honesty, responsibility, equity, transparency, and citizenship.

Conclusion:

This case highlights the importance of setting clear ethical guidelines and making decisions that uphold the integrity of organisations in the face of challenging requests. Going ahead the company can establish a formal code of conduct to guide its employees and ensure consistent adherence to the ethical standards and legal obligations.

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Interview Preparedness and Performance

Dr. M. Balathandayuthapani, Professor, Jansons School of Business

Background

Mr. Harivenkatesh, the Regional Sales Head – South, at Indianjobs.com, India's largest internet-based service provider, was reflecting on the campus placement events of the past quarter. Mr. Harivenkatesh has been associated with Indianjobs.com for the last 25 years and he is based out of Chennai. His recent experiences had been quite different from earlier years. During the last three months, Mr. Harivenkatesh visited 25 tier-3 and tier-4 business schools to recruit Corporate Sales Trainees. Despite interviewing 1150 candidates, the recruitment team could only select 6 students, whereas the company aimed to recruit 30 trainees. This stark contrast to earlier experiences, where students were well-prepared and highly motivated, led Mr. Harivenkatesh to question about the current generation's preparedness for the job market.

The Recruitment Drive:

The latest recruitment drive was at a tier-3 business school in Chennai. The event was a pooled drive designed to benefit students from ten other institutions. Out of 450 registered students, 365 attended. The recruitment team, comprising the Regional Manager, Branch Manager, Account Managers, and an Assistant Manager HR, observed that many candidates were casually dressed and showed little regard for personal grooming.

Despite these initial impressions, the team proceeded with the process, shortlisting 60 students for the personal interview round. The first round of interviews was conducted by the Assistant Manager HR and the Account Managers, after which 18 students advanced to the final interview round with Mr. Harivenkatesh and the Branch Manager.

The Interview with Sadhan:

During the final interviews, Mr. Harivenkatesh encountered Sadhan, a candidate whose demeanour and responses exemplified the concerns he had about the current generation's preparedness.

Interview Transcript:

Mr. Harivenkatesh: Hi Sadhan, take your seat.

Sadhan: Hi Hari, thank you and how are you doing?

(Looking at the casual attire of Sadhan – Mr. Harivenkatesh and the Branch Manager exchanged a silent look)

Mr. Harivenkatesh: Do you think your attire is appropriate for this interview?

Sadhan: Sorry, I was on a vacation, had to rush today for this process, did not have much time to prepare.

Mr. Harivenkatesh: Good, tell me about yourself.

Sadhan: I am a management graduate looking for a job.

Mr. Harivenkatesh: Ok, we are not sure if you are looking for an opportunity in Marketing or Sales?

Sadhan: Oh! You are offering a role in Marketing also? I will be interested in the Marketing role.

Mr. Harivenkatesh: Sadhan, we have clearly communicated that we are recruiting for the role of Corporate Sales Trainee. I am sure you are aware of that.

Sadhan: Hmmm..

Mr. Harivenkatesh: Can you tell me the responsibilities of the Corporate Sales Trainee as communicated?

Sadhan: I think it involves selling your services in the market.

Mr. Harivenkatesh: Ok, can you tell us what do you know about our company?

Sadhan: I think your company is a recruitment firm.

Mr. Harivenkatesh: Anything else...

Sadhan: Hmm...

Mr. Harivenkatesh: Can you tell about our competitors in the market?

Sadhan: Newspaper is your competitor.

Mr. Harivenkatesh: Why should we hire you?

Sadhan: I am smart and ambitious, that's the reason you need to hire me.

Mr. Harivenkatesh: Ok, but you do not know the roles and responsibilities of the position and you are not sure about the domain in which you would like to build your career.

Sadhan: That's true. I would like to try my hands in this profile for some time. If it is not working out, I don't mind switching to any other opening in your organization.

Mr. Harivenkatesh: Fine then, can you talk about your strengths and areas of improvement?

Sadhan: My strengths, certainly being social, and on the areas of improvement part, I get annoyed when people don't complete the task I share with them.

Mr. Harivenkatesh: We have an opening in Mumbai; if selected, will you relocate?

Sadhan: I think the job description briefed that the recruitment is for operations only in South India. My first priority is Tamil Nadu, if not, I can settle with Bangalore. I am not interested in relocating now.

Mr. Harivenkatesh: Ok, where do you see yourself, five years from now?

Sadhan: I don't know, maybe after joining the company I will give it a serious thought.

Mr. Harivenkatesh: Would you like to ask us anything?

Sadhan: Yes, what is the compensation for this role and can I have the details.

Mr. Harivenkatesh: The information was shared with the corporate relations in charge of your institution.

Sadhan: Sorry, I have not checked.

Mr. Harivenkatesh: Anything else?

Sadhan: What will be work timing and am I selected for this role?

Mr. Harivenkatesh: We are in the process of interviewing other candidates; we will let you know later.

Questions:

1. Explain what is wrong with Sadhan's behaviour and answers.
2. If you are in Sadhan's situation, how would you have performed?

Teaching notes:

Analysis of Sadhan's Behaviour and Responses

Casual Attire and Informal Greeting:

Sadhan's casual dressing and informal greeting ("Hi Hari") showed a lack of professionalism and respect for the interview process. Appropriate attire and respectful address (Mr./Ms./Sir/Madam) are fundamental to making a positive first impression.

Lack of Preparation and Awareness:

Sadhan admitted to rushing for the interview without preparation, reflecting poorly on his commitment and seriousness. It is crucial to be well-prepared for an interview, understanding the company, the role, and the responsibilities involved.

Inadequate Knowledge of the Role and Company:

Sadhan's lack of clarity on the Corporate Sales Trainee role and limited knowledge about Indianjobs.com and its competitors indicated a lack of research and interest. Candidates should thoroughly research the company's business, its market position, and the specifics of the role they are applying for.

Unclear Career Objectives:

Sadhan's uncertainty about his career path and preference for a Marketing role despite applying for a Sales position showed a lack of direction. Clear career objectives and alignment with the role applied for are critical to demonstrating commitment and fit.

Casual Attitude towards Job Responsibilities:

Sadhan's response about trying the role temporarily and willingness to switch roles if unsatisfied indicated a lack of dedication. Employers seek candidates who are genuinely interested and committed to the role.

Reluctance to Relocate:

Sadhan's refusal to relocate contradicted the company's requirement, reflecting inflexibility. Flexibility regarding job location can be a significant advantage in securing roles.

Focus on Compensation Without Prior Research:

Sadhan's question about compensation without prior knowledge displayed a lack of seriousness and preparation. Understanding the compensation package beforehand and focusing on other aspects of the role during the interview can create a better impression.

Appropriate Interview Preparation and Performance**Research and Preparation:**

Gather comprehensive information about the prospective employer, including its products, services, market position, and competitors. Understand the role and its responsibilities to demonstrate readiness and interest.

Professional Appearance:

Ensure proper grooming and attire suitable for a professional interview setting. Attention to details like polished shoes, combed hair, and minimal makeup is essential.

Practicing Answers:

Practice answering standard, behavioural, and situational questions to articulate responses confidently. Prepare to ask relevant questions about the role, training, support, performance metrics, and potential challenges.

Typical Questions for Interviewers:

1. Can you outline a typical day-to-day activity of this role?
2. Can you please brief about the initial training structure for this role?
3. What type of support can I expect to perform my job efficiently?
4. When will you be taking a decision about my candidature?
5. What metrics will be used to measure my performance?
6. What kind of challenges might I face in this role?

Conclusion

Mr. Harivenkatesh's encounter with Sadhan highlights the importance of thorough preparation and professional conduct during interviews. Sadhan's casual approach, lack of research, and unclear career objectives underscored his unpreparedness, leading to a poor interview performance. In contrast, candidates who invest time in understanding the company, role, and required skills, while presenting themselves professionally, are more likely to succeed in securing job offers.

By focusing on both the science (knowledge and skills) and the art (presentation and communication) of performing in an interview, candidates can enhance their chances of making a positive impression and advancing in their careers.

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Harnessing the Power of Peer Recognition for Employee Engagement

Dr. J. J. Savithri, Professor, Jansons School of Business

Hilton has recently been awarded the prestigious title of the No. 1 World's Best Workplace by Fortune magazine and Great Place to Work. This remarkable achievement not only signifies Hilton's eighth consecutive appearance on the 'World's Best' list but also highlights the fact that it is the first hospitality company to receive this esteemed recognition.

Hilton boasts a worldwide reach, employing 460,000 individuals across the globe who are committed to ensuring that the 7,400 hotels are a warm and inviting destination for all their guests. With a history spanning over a century, Hilton's enduring legacy is upheld as they strive to cultivate a robust culture centered on inclusivity, offering ample avenues for personal and professional growth, driven by a sense of purpose, and providing unwavering support that empowers the team members worldwide to flourish each day. Consequently, Hilton prioritizes a comprehensive framework encompassing these four pillars to foster a truly human experience within the organization.

Over a century, the members of the Hilton team have played a crucial role in realizing Conrad Hilton's original vision of spreading the essence of hospitality across the globe. Even today, this vision remains vibrant and alive. Hilton employees have always remained steadfast in their commitment to providing extraordinary experiences for the guests and making a positive difference in the communities they serve.

They consistently find occasions to commemorate, whether it be acknowledging lifeguards, the engineering team, or individuals who successfully enroll the highest number of guests into the Hilton Honors loyalty program.

Every year, the Hilton team comes together to celebrate each other during team member appreciation week. In addition, there is an initiative called "Catch Me at My Best" where guests, managers, and coworkers are encouraged to recognize hotel employees by filling out a recognition card, known as a catch. Catch Me at My Best, a spontaneous recognition program designed to acknowledge Team Members for providing exceptional hospitality. The introduction of eCatch allows guests to acknowledge employees online.

Additionally, the Team Members are recognized during International Housekeeping Week and Team Member Appreciation Week. They foster an inclusive environment by offering top-notch Team Member Resource Groups and regional inclusion councils that support our diversity and inclusion strategy worldwide. Within the Heart of House areas at hotels and corporate offices, they create inspiring spaces where Team Members can come together to collaborate, innovate, and thrive. Team Members also receive new Under Armour wardrobes tailored to help them dress for success, comfort, pride, and individuality.

The organization believes that to deliver exceptional guest experiences, it is essential to acknowledge the individuals who contribute to making those experiences possible. Recognition and celebration are key components of the culture, and they strive to express gratitude to Team Members in a fun and engaging manner for bringing the vision and purpose to life.

In the latest announcement, Hilton has revealed the recipients of the prestigious CEO Light & Warmth Award. This esteemed accolade serves as the highest recognition bestowed by the company, honoring team members across the globe who exemplify Hilton's values through their remarkable leadership and unwavering dedication to delivering exceptional hospitality. Notably, in 2023, over 700 team members were nominated by their peers for this esteemed honor.

Regardless of industry, it is the team, leaders, and culture that make a company a great place to work. Employers have the responsibility of bringing that culture to life and making it a reality for our team members across all aspects of their career journey. Hilton, is committed to delivering their promise to the team members to continue to place them at the forefront of everything they do.

Questions for Discussion

- Examine how Hilton's peer recognition program contributes to higher employee engagement.
- Discuss how these initiatives help the organization and its employees.
- Analyse the role that peer recognition has in enabling performance.

Teaching Note

Harnessing the Power of Peer Recognition for Employee Engagement

1. Synopsis of the case

Hiltons, 'Catch me at my best' program that encourages peer-to-peer recognition regularly. The company rolled out this program which provided an opportunity for the employees to recognise and reward their fellow colleagues when they did a good job. The case also highlights Hiltons employee engagement initiatives. The efforts fetched the company the top spot in World's Best Workplace by Fortune magazine and Great Place to Work.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Culture, Performance Management

2. The target learning group

The target learning groups for the case suggested are undergraduate final-year BBA Students, MBA students, and students specialising in Human Resources Management.

3. Learning Objectives

Learning teaching objectives of the case are as follows:

- Learn about peer recognition programs that support and improve employee engagement.
- Explore the advantages of having peer recognition programs in performance enablement
- Know about the importance of engagement initiatives to create a work culture that focuses on feedback and recognition

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Unveiling Zappos' HR Practices for Competitive Advantage

Dr. J. J. Savithri, Professor, Jansons School of Business

Zappos.com is a billion-dollar, online shoe and clothing store currently based in Las Vegas, Nevada. It's also one of Fortune's Top 100 Best Companies to Work For. The company's current strategy in a competitive online marketplace is fast delivery, great quality, and to provide the best customer purchasing experience possible. Zappos focuses on customer service and to achieve that they care a lot about employees. The company takes all efforts to make employees feel at home. The work environment is not just fun but where the employees' wishes and concerns are listened to.

Zappos has an unconventional way of managing HR. Right from the flattened structure which replaces the top-down approach with a new way of distributing power across the enterprise is a much-appreciated practice. The hiring process at Zappos is not based on educational background but on whether the individual is a good fit with the company's values. For Zappos CEO Tony Hsieh, maintaining their corporate culture is an important part of their hiring plan. Candidates go through a social test, the nice guy test.

Zappos understands the importance of sufficient training and submerges each new employee in its in-house program to learn about the dynamic company culture, business processes, and strategy. After about one week of what appears to be a normal training, things get kind of insane. The ultimate test is that about one week into their call center training, Zappos offers employees \$3,000.00 to leave the company. If candidates haven't become Zappos insiders, committed to the values and culture, then the company prefers that they leave. There is however one stipulation – take the money and you can never come back. While this may sound like a very attractive offer, according to Tony Hsieh, CEO of Zappos, only 2% to 3% of people take the offer. The other 97% say no deal. They choose the job over instant cash. Ingenious to say the least.

Performance management goes beyond a manager recognising and rewarding an employee. The company gives much importance to peer-to-peer recognition. The company has instituted a co-worker bonus program through which employees receive \$50 per month to give someone else within the organization who has wowed them through their service. It also has a Wishez program, where employees can anonymously post their wishes on their company portal. The wish could be anything from just a hug to furniture. The others will help them make it true.

The best employee engagement practice at Zappos is to give employees the authority and autonomy to do their work the way they want. Zappos culture influences engagement levels and thereby drives performance.

The Zappos Insights team helps other companies to rethink what they are currently doing for their employees by suggesting new and different strategies. Colleagues from other employers visit Zappos to meet the companies culture and to see how a 'weird' company looks from the inside and out. They see what it is to have satisfied and happy employees, which is the goal of all companies. The tour of Zappos makes companies realise what they need to do to be successful internally. A company that allows you to be 100% yourself and get appreciated, you will never want to leave the company. The company is able to take the best care of its customers because they have the best employees doing it.

- Examine the challenges to Zappos to maintain its competitive position.
- Understand how the HR practices and the culture of Zappos can help the company meet the challenges.
- Analyse whether the company's culture would be put at risk as it grew in size.

Teaching Note

Unveiling Zappos' HR Practices for Competitive Advantage

1. Synopsis of the case

HR is important as it helps in creating a strong competitive advantage through their personnel management policies – productivity and employee happiness is an advantage that often results in superior customer service, which helps drive sales. The unique and unconventional HR practices that has given a competitive advantage to the company Zappos has been outlined in the case study. A company whose brand is not very famous has positioned itself among the most-known companies and the top 100 best places to work for, by establishing a culture that is desired by everyone.

Keywords: HR Practices, Competitive Advantage, Hiring, Culture, Training and Development, Performance Management

2. The target learning group

The target learning groups for the case suggested are undergraduate final-year BBA Students, MBA students, and students specialising in Human Resources Management.

3. Learning Objectives

Learning teaching objectives of the case are as follows:

- i) To make the students understand the idea of competitive advantage through HR practices
- ii) To familiarize the students with the concepts of Culture, Competitive Advantage and HR Practices followed by companies.
- iii) To come up with the required intervention for the challenges in the case study.

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Enhancing Sugar Cane Farming in Maharashtra through Geographic Information System (GIS)

Dr. Devi Premnath, Professor, Jansons School of Business

Background of the case

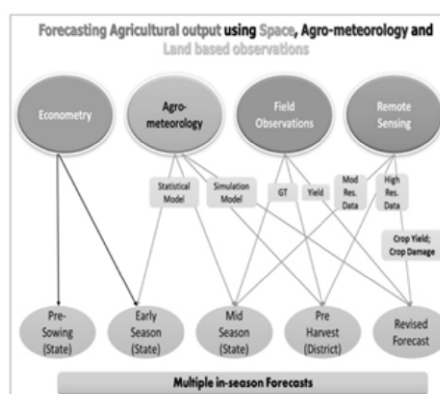
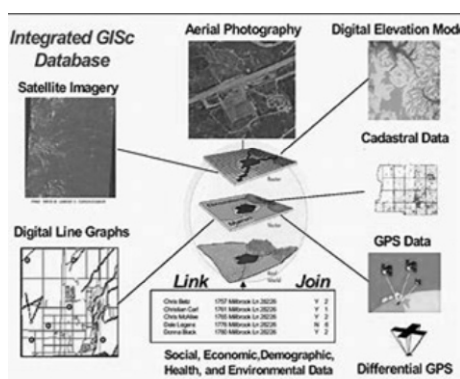
Shankar, a small-scale sugar cane farmer in Maharashtra, India, faced numerous challenges in his agricultural pursuits. The region's erratic weather patterns, soil degradation, and water scarcity posed significant obstacles to its yield and profitability. However, Shankar's fortunes took a turn for the better when he adopted Geographic Information System (GIS) technology to revolutionize his farming practices. Recognizing the need for innovative solutions, Shankar embraced GIS technology to address his farming challenges. With the help of local agricultural extension services and technology providers, he embarked on a journey to integrate GIS into his agricultural practices.

The Challenges encountered by Shankar

Maharashtra experiences variable weather conditions, including unpredictable rainfall and temperature fluctuations, which directly impact crop growth and yield stability. Continuous cultivation without proper soil management practices has led to soil erosion, nutrient depletion, and reduced fertility, affecting crop health and productivity. The availability of water for irrigation purposes was limited, exacerbated by inefficient water management practices and the overexploitation of groundwater resources.

GIS a Glimpse

1. **Spatial Analysis and Mapping:** GIS allows farmers to create detailed maps of their sugarcane fields, including information on soil types, topography, and drainage patterns. By overlaying different layers of data, farmers can identify optimal planting locations, irrigation needs, and areas prone to pests or diseases.
2. **Precision Agriculture:** GPS (Global Positioning System) combined with GIS enables precise field measurements and targeted interventions. Farmers can use GPS-guided machinery for planting, fertilizing, and harvesting, leading to resource efficiency and improved yields.
3. **Yield Prediction and Monitoring:** Remote sensing data from satellites provide valuable insights into crop health, growth, and yield estimation. By analyzing vegetation indices, such as NDVI (Normalized Difference Vegetation Index), farmers can predict sugarcane yield and adjust management practices accordingly.
4. **Environmental Protection:** GIS helps manage interactions between cane farming and environmental conservation. For example, it assists in identifying sensitive coastal floodplain ecosystems and planning conservation efforts.
5. **Decision Support Systems:** GIS-based decision support tools aid in land-use planning, crop rotation, and pest management. These systems enhance overall farm productivity and sustainability.



Scenario after adoption

The adoption of GIS technology yielded significant improvements in Shankar's sugar cane farming operations:

1. **Increased Yield:** By optimizing site selection, resource management, and irrigation practices, Shankar achieved higher sugar cane yields, leading to improved financial returns.
2. **Resource Efficiency:** GIS-driven precision farming techniques helped conserve water, fertilizers, and pesticides, reducing input costs and environmental impact.
3. **Risk Mitigation:** Enhanced weather forecasting capabilities enabled Shankar to proactively respond to climatic challenges, minimizing crop losses and ensuring greater income stability.
4. **Market Access:** Access to market analysis tools empowered Shankar to make informed decisions about crop marketing and distribution, enhancing his competitiveness in the agricultural marketplace.

Teaching Notes:

1. **Introduction to Agricultural Challenges:** Begin the case study by providing context on the agricultural landscape of Maharashtra, highlighting common challenges faced by small-scale farmers like Shankar.
2. **GIS Technology Overview:** Introduce students to Geographic Information System (GIS) technology, explaining its applications in agriculture and the potential benefits it offers to farmers.
3. **Case Study Analysis:** Encourage students to analyze Shankar's farming challenges and the specific ways in which GIS technology was employed to address them, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
4. **Future Implications:** Encourage students to consider the broader implications of GIS adoption in agriculture, including its potential to drive sustainable development, enhance food security, and empower smallholder farmers in resource-constrained environments.

Discussion Questions:

1. How can GIS technology enhance crop management in regions with erratic weather patterns?
2. What role does GIS play in soil health assessment and soil degradation mitigation?
3. How does GIS contribute to water resource management for small-scale farmers?
4. What other innovative technologies could complement GIS for small-scale farmers?
5. How can local agricultural extension services support farmers like Shankar in adopting GIS technology?

Conclusion:

Shankar's success story exemplifies the transformative potential of GIS technology in agricultural development. By leveraging spatial data and analytical tools, farmers like Shankar can overcome traditional farming challenges, improve productivity, and build resilient agricultural systems for the future.

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The Hotelier's Dilemma

Dr. Devi Premnath, Professor, Jansons School of Business

Introduction

Ram owns a mid-sized hotel located in Gandhipuram, Coimbatore. For years, his hotel has been a staple in the community, offering comfortable accommodations and delicious meals to both locals and tourists. However, in recent times, Ram has noticed a decline in business, and he attributes this to changing customer habits.

Background of the case

Ram's hotel, once bustling with activity, now struggles to attract customers. He observes that modern consumers have different preferences and priorities compared to those in the past. Factors such as the rise of online food delivery services, changing dietary preferences, and increased competition from newer establishments have all contributed to the decline in his hotel's business.

Hotel operation is an exhilarating adventure that demands constant vigilance, as the hospitality industry is ever-changing. One of the crucial aspects is the maintenance of a competitive edge in this fluid sector and adapting to the evolving preferences of guests. Of late the patterns of consumer behavior in the hospitality sector is highly volatile. The technological progress, changes in social and cultural norms, and significant occurrences such as the pandemic, have profoundly affected the functioning of the hospitality industry.

“Today's hotel guests are looking for more than just basic accommodations; they anticipate a tailored and frictionless journey from their initial hotel search. Influenced by their digital engagements and past lodging experiences, guests have heightened expectations. Grasping the psychology of guests and evolving in response is essential for fulfilling these new demands” reflected Ram.

This case focuses on Ram's mid-sized hotel struggling to keep up with the rapidly changing customer expectations and intense competition.

Situational Analysis -The ever-evolving customer expectations

Today's travelers seek a stay that caters specifically to their preferences, from customized in-room features to bespoke suggestions for eateries and leisure pursuits. They desire a distinctive touch that renders their visit both singular and unforgettable. The millennial customers are mindful of many things.

The concept of **sustainability** is now deeply etched in their minds. The environmental impact of recent years is well-known, and today's travelers are increasingly mindful of their ecological footprint. Guests often prefer accommodations that reflect their commitment to the environment.

Technology integration is a buzzword now. In today's world, technology is deeply woven into our daily experiences. Guests now anticipate modern technological amenities, including options for seamless contactless check-in, keyless room access, reliable Wi-Fi service, and intelligent room automation. The significance of **social media** in influencing consumer behavior is immense. In the current era of digital connectivity, social platforms serve as hubs for exchanging experiences, evaluating reviews, and shaping decision-making processes. Contemporary travelers anticipate prompt replies to their questions and a transparent view of what they can expect as guests.

Competition The hotel industry in Gandhipuram, Coimbatore, has become increasingly competitive, with newer establishments offering innovative services and amenities to attract customers. The hotel sector in recent years opened a wide range of alternative accommodations for travelers all over the world. Homestays, vacation rentals, boutique inns, and Airbnb models also resulted in a transformative shift in the choices that customers make.

The declining revenue has put financial pressure on Ram, making it difficult for him to invest in necessary upgrades or marketing efforts to revive his business.

Teaching Notes

This case study encourages students to think critically about the challenges faced by traditional businesses in adapting to modern market dynamics and consumer behavior. It also highlights the importance of strategic planning and innovation in staying competitive.

1. Discuss the importance of conducting market research to understand changing customer preferences and habits. Encourage Ram to gather data on customer demographics, preferences, and spending habits to tailor his offerings accordingly.
2. Emphasize the role of technology in the hospitality industry and the need for Ram to embrace digital marketing strategies, online booking platforms, and social media to reach a wider audience.
3. Analyze the competitive landscape in Gandhipuram, Coimbatore, and identify strategies that Ram can implement to differentiate his hotel from competitors. This may include offering unique amenities, collaborating with local businesses, or targeting niche markets.
4. Highlight the importance of delivering exceptional customer experiences to encourage repeat business and positive word-of-mouth referrals. Suggest ways for Ram to enhance the quality of service, personalize guest interactions, and solicit feedback to identify areas for improvement.
5. Encourage Ram to think beyond short-term fixes and develop a long-term strategy for sustainability. This may involve investing in eco-friendly initiatives, employee training and development, or diversifying revenue streams to reduce dependence on room bookings or restaurant sales.
6. A SWOT analysis can be done on Hotel Coimbatore Inn, or models like Porter's Five sources can be utilized.
7. Students can conduct brainstorming sessions on innovative ideas that Hotel Coimbatore Inn can adopt.

Conclusion

Ram's dilemma highlights the challenges faced by traditional businesses in adapting to changing consumer behaviors and market dynamics. By understanding his customers' needs, embracing technology, and differentiating his offerings, Ram can position his hotel for long-term success in Gandhipuram, Coimbatore's competitive hospitality industry.

Discussion questions

1. What steps can the hotel take to understand and adapt to the evolving needs of its guests?
2. How can the hotel use technology to enhance customer satisfaction?
3. In what ways can the hotel differentiate itself from the competition?

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Technology's Impact on the Insurance Industry: A New Era of Innovation

Dr. Dhamayanthi Arumugam, Associate Professor, Jansons School of Business

Overview of the Insurance Industry's Financial Impact

The insurance industry plays a crucial role in managing risk and protecting assets. In India, for every Rs 100 collected as a premium by general insurers, Rs 118 is paid out, illustrating the significant impact insurance has on the lives of millions. This indicates that insurers are dedicated to providing financial support when needed, despite common misconceptions about claim denials.

Addressing Awareness and Accessibility with Technology

One of the primary barriers in the insurance industry is awareness and accessibility. Traditional insurance policies are often complex and filled with legal jargon, making it challenging for customers to understand. Technology has changed this landscape dramatically:

- **Online Information and Generative AI:** Customers can now find comprehensive information about insurance products online, including coverage, exclusions, and policy terms. Generative AI-powered chatbots make it easier to understand these policies by explaining complex terms in simple, conversational language.
- **Online Purchasing and Mobile Applications:** After gathering information, customers can purchase policies online without visiting an insurance company's office. Leading insurers offer mobile applications that allow policyholders to manage their insurance plans seamlessly, enabling them to purchase, renew, or modify their policies with a few clicks. This enhanced accessibility saves time and ensures customers have instant access to essential policy details.

Revolutionizing Claims Settlement with AI and Drones

Claims settlement is a critical aspect of the insurance journey, and technology is revolutionizing this process:

- **AI and Machine Learning:** Gone are the days of lengthy paperwork and cumbersome processes. With the integration of AI and machine learning algorithms, insurers can assess claims much faster and more accurately. Some insurers even offer on-the-spot claims settlement, allowing customers to upload images of damaged parts and receive compensation within minutes.
- **Drones for Natural Calamities:** Insurers are also using drones to settle claims during natural disasters like floods, providing a more efficient method for assessing damage in hard-to-reach areas. This technology ensures that customers receive prompt support and payouts during challenging times.

The Health Insurance Domain and 'Cashless Everywhere'

In the health insurance domain in India, the industry has united to simplify customers' lives through a unique initiative called 'Cashless Everywhere.' This initiative gives customers access to network hospitals across all insurance companies, allowing them to avail cashless claims settlement facilities in any hospital within the network. This move significantly reduces the financial burden on policyholders and provides access to quality medical care with unprecedented ease.

The Rise of Personalized Insurance Solutions

Traditionally, insurance products offered little or no customization, forcing customers to choose from standard coverages. However, with the advent of Generative AI, machine learning, big data, and analytics, a revolution is reshaping the sector:

- **Tailored Responses and Solutions:** Insurers can now offer personalized insurance solutions that precisely match individual customer requirements, enhancing satisfaction levels. The next generation of AI promises even greater precision, leading to more personalized and efficient service experiences.

Conclusion: Embracing Innovation in the Digital Age

Technology is fundamentally reshaping the general insurance landscape, providing customers with greater convenience, efficiency, and personalization. As technology continues to evolve, insurers must embrace innovation and adapt to meet the ever-changing needs and expectations of customers in the digital age. This commitment to innovation will drive the future success of the insurance industry, ensuring it remains a vital resource for managing risk and providing financial security.

TEACHING NOTES

Synopsis

These teaching notes explore the impact of technology on the insurance industry through the lens of business research methods. The notes focus on how technological advancements such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, drones, and big data analytics have transformed claims processing, policy management, and personalized insurance solutions. The objective is to help students understand these changes and learn how business research methods can be applied to study the evolving insurance landscape.

Target Audience

Undergraduate and graduate students studying business, finance, insurance, or related fields.

Business students with a focus on research methods, data analytics, or technology.

Aspiring insurance professionals interested in understanding the role of technology and research in the industry.

Learning Objectives

- Understand how business research methods can be used to explore the impact of technology on the insurance industry, focusing on data collection, analysis, and interpretation. ∴
- Explore how technology-driven innovations are changing the insurance industry, particularly in areas like claims processing, policy management, and customer satisfaction.

Discussion Questions

- Discuss how AI and machine learning have improved the efficiency and accuracy of insurance claims processing.
- What might be the benefits and challenges of providing customized insurance solutions to individual customers?

Business Research Methods Approach

These teaching notes incorporate business research methods to examine technology's impact on the insurance industry. The approach focuses on both qualitative and quantitative research techniques to gather comprehensive insights.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Literature Review: Students conduct a detailed literature review to understand current trends in technology and insurance. This includes examining academic journals, industry publications, and news articles to gather background information and identify key themes.

Qualitative Research Techniques:

Students use structured or semi-structured interviews to collect qualitative data from insurance professionals. Topics might include the role of AI in claims processing, technology's impact on customer service, and the use of drones for damage assessment.

Organize focus groups to discuss policyholders' experiences with technology-driven insurance products. This helps gather in-depth feedback on customer satisfaction, claims processes, and the value of personalized insurance solutions.

Quantitative Research Techniques:

Design and distribute surveys to insurance customers to collect quantitative data on their experiences with technology in insurance. Questions can cover claims satisfaction, ease of policy management, and opinions on personalized insurance offerings.

Use statistical methods to analyze survey results and other quantitative data. This analysis provides insights into trends, correlations, and customer preferences within the insurance industry.

Classroom Discussions and Group Activities: Facilitate discussions based on the learning objectives and discussion questions. Group activities, such as collaborative problem-solving or role-playing, can help students apply business research methods in a practical context.

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Strategic Alliance between Tata And Uber To Drive Digital Business

Dr. Dhamayanthi Arumugam, Associate Professor, Jansons School of Business

Synopsis

Uber Technologies CEO Dara Khosrowshahi and Tata Sons chairman N Chandrasekaran are exploring a strategic partnership to drive digital business on Tata's platform, Tata Neu. Initial discussions began at Davos earlier this year, and further talks are expected in Mumbai during Khosrowshahi's upcoming visit to India. Although the exact terms of the partnership are not yet finalized, and there's no guarantee of a concrete outcome, the collaboration could lead to a significant strategic alliance.

Strategic Discussions for Tata Neu

The Tata Group is in discussions with Uber Technologies to integrate Uber's services into Tata Neu, which is positioned as a "super app." Tata Neu has faced challenges in achieving user growth and customer engagement. The potential alliance could help boost traffic and engagement on the platform, providing a win-win situation for both companies.

Uber's Growth and Expansion

Under Khosrowshahi's leadership, Uber has expanded into new areas such as grocery delivery and high-margin advertising, leading to substantial growth. The number of Uber users increased from 45 million to 150 million in just seven years, demonstrating the company's successful diversification. This growth trajectory has supported Uber's recent share buyback and its first full year of operating profit.

Tata Motors' EV Partnership with Uber

In a related development, Tata Motors signed an agreement with Uber in February to supply 25,000 electric vehicles, marking the largest electric vehicle commitment between an automaker and a ridesharing platform in India. This aligns with Uber's zero-emission objectives and Tata Motors' aim for a predominantly electric fleet by 2030. This agreement might play a crucial role in facilitating the strategic alliance, offering Uber a reliable source of electric vehicles to meet its needs in the Indian market.

The Scope of the Potential Alliance

Although Tata Digital, which manages Tata Neu, has denied ongoing talks with Uber, executives aware of the matter suggest that discussions are taking place. The possible partnership may encompass the integration of Uber services into Tata Neu, providing a substantial boost to user engagement on the platform. Additionally, the alliance could involve equity participation, as Uber projects a need for 150,000 to 200,000 new vehicles in India over the next 3-5 years for expansion and fleet replacement.

Challenges and Opportunities for Tata Neu

Tata Neu, designed to cater to 50% of an average customer's daily needs, has faced issues with stagnation and customer complaints regarding glitches, user experience, and payment issues. In response, Tata Digital is revising its strategy to enhance app performance and user satisfaction. The strategic partnership with Uber could be the push Tata Neu needs to increase customer engagement and achieve its super-app goals.

Conclusion

The potential alliance between Tata and Uber presents significant opportunities for both companies. For Tata Neu, integrating Uber's services could be a game-changer in driving user engagement and expanding its service offerings. For Uber, the partnership with Tata Motors aligns with its broader electrification strategy, reinforcing its presence in India. As the talks continue, the collaboration could signal a strategic shift in the digital business landscape.

Teaching Notes

Synopsis

This case study explores the potential strategic alliance between Tata and Uber, focusing on the business research methods used to analyze the implications of such a partnership. It delves into the ongoing discussions between Uber Technologies CEO Dara Khosrowshahi and Tata Sons chairman N Chandrasekaran regarding integrating Uber's services into Tata's digital platform, Tata Neu. The case study also examines the recent agreement between Tata Motors and Uber to supply electric vehicles and how this agreement aligns with Tata's and Uber's broader business goals. The teaching notes are designed to help students understand how to use business research methods to evaluate the potential impact of strategic partnerships in the business world.

Target Audience

- Undergraduate and graduate students in business, management, marketing, or related fields.
- Students with a focus on business research methods, strategic management, or corporate alliances.
- Business professionals seeking to understand the research methods behind strategic partnerships.

Learning outcomes

Examine how integrating Uber's services into Tata Neu might influence the super-app's growth trajectory and user base.

Develop a framework for analyzing the strategic fit, operational integration, and expected return on investment (ROI) in the context of the Tata-Uber discussions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Develop a set of questionnaire to collect information on user demographics, app usage patterns, preferences for mobility services, and expectations from super-apps. Include both multiple-choice and open-ended questions for comprehensive feedback.

Select survey participants representing Tata Neu's current user base, Uber's user base, and potential new users. This ensures a balanced perspective on how integration might impact the growth trajectory and user base.

Choose a sample size that provides statistically significant results, considering the desired level of confidence and margin of error.

Distribute the survey through various channels, such as email, social media, in-app notifications, or other platforms where your target audience is active.

Use statistical tools to analyze closed-ended questions. Look for patterns in responses, such as the percentage of users interested in Uber's integration or the likelihood of increased app usage.

Based on the data, propose strategies to enhance the success of the integration, considering user preferences, operational challenges, and expected ROI.

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Hendry Corporation

Dr. B. Arul Senthil, Assistant Professor, Jansons School of Business

INTRODUCTION

HENDRY Corporation, a global leader in the manufacture of electronic goods, has seen its market share steadily drop over the last five years. Despite its great brand awareness and extensive product portfolio, the corporation faces strong rivals, rapid technological breakthroughs, and changing consumer tastes. This case study investigates HENDRY Corporation's strategic management planning method for addressing these difficulties and reviving its market position.

BACKGROUND

HENDRY Corporation, founded in the late twentieth century, soon rose to prominence because to its innovative products and strong global network. However, by 2019, the corporation was losing momentum to agile competitors who had capitalised on emerging technologies such as AI, IoT, and renewable energy solutions.

PRESENT SITUATION

In 2023, HENDRY Corporation's executive team launched a comprehensive strategic management planning process. The major purpose was to create a five-year strategy plan to boost the company's growth and competitiveness.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Environmental Scanning

- Internal Analysis: The SWOT analysis indicated several strengths, including brand loyalty, considerable R&D capabilities, and skilled employees. Weaknesses included a slow innovation pipeline and expensive operating expenses.
- External Analysis: The PESTEL analysis identified potential in renewable energy products as well as risks from rivals' aggressive pricing and regulatory developments.

Strategy formulation

- Vision and Mission Update: The vision has been revised to "Innovate for a Sustainable Future, indicating a dedication to sustainability and technical advancement.
- Strategic Objectives: Key goals included increasing R&D spending by 20%, establishing a new line of environmentally friendly products, and expanding into emerging markets.

Strategy Implementation

- Action Plan: Specific measures included creating strategic connections with technology firms, modernising manufacturing facilities to environmentally friendly standards, and increasing digital marketing activities.
- Resource Allocation: Budget modifications were made to cover higher R&D and marketing expenses.

Evaluation and Control:

- Performance Metrics: KPIs were developed, including market share increase, revenue from new goods, and customer satisfaction levels.
- Review Mechanisms: Quarterly reviews were scheduled to assess progress and make any necessary improvements.

CONCLUSION

HENDRY Corporation's strategic management planning approach emphasises the need of responding to changing market dynamics through thorough analysis and well-defined strategic initiatives. By focusing on innovation, sustainability, and global expansion, HENDRY hopes to restore its position as the global leader in electronics manufacturing. This case study focuses on essential aspects of strategic planning and encourages discussion about how to improve strategic management effectiveness in a competitive environment.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How can HENDRY Corporation enhance its internal capacities to promote innovation while lowering operational costs?
2. Which external factors should HENDRY Corporation prioritise in order to stay ahead of its competitors?
3. What are the major hurdles that HENDRY Corporation may face in implementing its new strategic plan?
4. How can the company ensure successful engagement with tech startups and other strategic partners?
5. What additional performance measures could be used to assess the success of HENDRY Corporation's strategic plan?



The Personality Transformation of James

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Introduction

Personality is a complex and multifaceted component of human psychology, described as the distinctive patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that distinguish a person. This case study looks at James, a 35-year-old software engineer whose personality changed dramatically as a result of a series of life-altering experiences. This analysis will look at the factors that are driving these changes, the theoretical frameworks that apply to his situation, and the consequences for understanding personality development and change.

Background

James was known for his quiet and reserved personality. Throughout his early adulthood, he was diligent and meticulous. He rarely engaged in social activities and preferred stable routines. James's acquaintances and colleagues viewed him as trustworthy yet emotionally detached.

James's life changed dramatically as he went through a series of traumatic events, including losing his work due to organisation downsizing, going through a terrible divorce, and losing a close friend unexpectedly. These experiences had a tremendous impact on his mental health, prompting him to seek therapy.

Personality Assessment

Before getting into the personality changes, it's important to understand James's personality profile prior to these events. According to the Five Factor Model (FFM), or the Big Five personality traits, James scored high in:

- Neuroticism is a tendency to experience negative emotions.
- Introversion is a preference for isolation and low levels of social interaction.
- Conscientiousness entails a high degree of self-control and organisation.
- Agreeableness is a moderate level of trust and cooperation.
- Openness to experience, yet a lack of innovation and curiosity.

Events Leading to Change

The following events resulted in substantial changes in James's personality.

- Job Loss: The loss of his employment broke James's sense of stability and self-esteem. It compelled him to reconsider his professional path and identity.
- Divorce: The breakdown of his marriage caused mental upheaval, loneliness, and a reassessment of his personal ties.
- Friend's loss: The unexpected loss of a close friend prompted existential reflection and a yearning to discover a deeper purpose in life.

Theoretical Framework

To understand James's personality transformation, several theoretical frameworks can be applied.

- Trait theory: This theory suggests that personality traits remain consistent over time. However, big life experiences might cause modifications in these characteristics. James's experience calls into question the stability of trait theory.
- Psychodynamic Theory: According to Freud, inner tensions and past experiences shape personality. James's traumatic experiences may have pushed unresolved problems to the forefront, causing changes in his behaviour and views.

- **Humanistic Theory:** Carl Rogers's approach emphasises self-actualization and personal development. James's search for purpose and identity after the tragic events corresponds with the humanistic perspective, which holds that tragedy can lead to personal progress.
- **Social-Cognitive Theory:** This theory emphasises the influence of cognitive processes and social contexts on personality. James's exposure to new places and social situations following trauma altered his thoughts, behaviours, and ultimately his personality.

Personality Transformation

Post-therapy and personal introspection, James exhibited noticeable changes in his personality traits:

- **Decreased Neuroticism:** James developed coping methods to deal with stress and anxiety, which resulted in a calmer demeanour.
- **Increased Extraversion:** He participates in social events, looking for new friendships and experiences.
- **Sustained Conscientiousness:** Despite the changes, James retained his organisational abilities and work ethic, which he now applies in diverse circumstances.
- **Increased Agreeableness:** James became more empathic and cooperative, emphasising relationships and emotional ties.
- **Increased Openness to Experience:** He became interested in new activities, such as travel and artistic hobbies, demonstrating a more open and curious mindset.

Conclusion

James's case demonstrates that while personality usually remains stable, it can change significantly as a result of life-altering circumstances and personal introspection. His transformation from an introverted, neurotic individual to a more balanced and socially involved person exemplifies the dynamic aspect of personality development. The interaction of many theoretical frameworks provides a full explanation of his transition, emphasising the complexities of human nature and the capacity for growth and change.

Discussion Question

How do essential life experiences and stresses affect the stability and change of personality traits, and what role do therapeutic interventions and personal resilience play in promoting positive personality change? Discuss with relation to James's case and relevant personality theories.



Women bring diverse skills to the table

Dr. J. Shanthilakshmi, Professor-HR, Jansons School of Business

Introduction

Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has committed to enable 'Insurance for All' by 2047, where every citizen has an appropriate life, health enable 'Insurance for All' by 2047 and property insurance cover and every enterprise is supported by appropriate insurance solutions and also to make Indian insurance sector globally attractive. To attain this objective, efforts are being made towards creating a progressive, supportive, facilitative and a forward looking regulatory architecture to foster a conducive and competitive environment leading to wider choice, accessibility and affordability to policyholders. This reform agenda taken up by IRDAI derives inspiration from the Government of India's vision of financial inclusion and strong emphasis on accelerating reforms.

IRDA's Initiative – Bima Vahak

As part of its goal of "Insurance for all by 2047," IRDA aims to improve the accessibility and availability of insurance products throughout India. Hence, they have launched an initiative called "Bima Vahak," a women-centric insurance distribution channel. The Bima Vahak program offers a promising avenue for increased women's participation. This program aims to establish a network of women agents, particularly in rural areas, by providing them with training and support. By capitalizing on the strengths and reach of Bima Vahak agents, the industry can bridge the insurance gap in underserved communities and empower women to become key drivers of financial inclusion. Women agents can play a crucial role in raising insurance awareness, particularly among women in underserved communities. By leveraging their understanding of the financial needs and challenges faced by women, they can become effective advocates for financial protection.

The Indian economy is estimated to become a \$30 trillion powerhouse by 2047. One of the facts is that there is a significant role played by women in Indian economy and to encourage the financial independence among more women many opportunities to be unlocked.. The life insurance sector can play a crucial role in this journey by providing employment opportunities for women as advisors and agents. This will help women gain control over their finances, build successful careers, and contribute meaningfully to the economy. However, traditional perceptions and a lack of targeted recruitment strategies have often deterred women from entering the insurance sector.

Culture of Inclusion:

Fostering a culture of inclusion by strategic recruitment initiatives which attract and retain talented women. This requires a mind-set to create a genuinely inclusive work environment. Revamping job descriptions : To attract a wider audience, highlighting the flexibility, work life balance, and earning potential that the insurance industry offers.

Targeted outreach programs: Engaging with women's colleges and professional organizations can create a pipeline of qualified female candidates.

Mentorship programs: Aims at connecting experienced women leaders with aspiring agents can provide invaluable guidance and support.

The power of diversity:

Women bring the following diverse skills to the table, proving to be valuable assets to the insurance industry.

Empathy and relationship building: Women often excel in building strong rapport and deeply understanding client needs. This empathetic approach results in more robust customer relationships and higher policy retention rates, benefiting both clients and the company.

Financial literacy champions: Women often serve as the primary financial decision-makers in their households. Their personal experiences and insights make them particularly effective advocates for financial planning and risk mitigation, especially when working with other women clients.

Innovation and adaptability: Women are typically adept at navigating changing market dynamics and devising innovative solutions to meet diverse client needs. Their ability to think creatively and adapt swiftly can drive the industry forward, fostering resilience and growth.

Nurturing by Investing:

Cultivating women leaders within the insurance industry is vital for long-term success. The following practices may be focussed.

Leadership development programs: Offering comprehensive training and mentorship opportunities equips women with the necessary skills and confidence to excel in leadership roles. These programs should focus on enhancing both technical and soft skills.

Flexible work arrangements: Implementing flexible work schedules and remote working options can help accommodate the unique needs of working mothers, encouraging more women to pursue and sustain leadership positions.

Recognition and rewards: Celebrating the achievements of women leaders acknowledges their contributions and serves as a powerful motivator for others. Publicly recognizing their successes can inspire a new generation of women to strive for similar accomplishments.

Data Driven decisions: Measuring the impact

Data plays a vital role in evaluating the effectiveness of gender diversity initiatives. Tracking metrics such as recruitment rates, agent retention, client satisfaction, and policy sales for women agents provides valuable insights. By analyzing this data, insurance companies can identify areas for improvement and refine their strategies for empowering women.

Special initiatives:

Financial incentives: Offering competitive compensation packages, commission structures, and bonuses tailored to attract and retain women agents.

Training programs: Developing training programs specifically designed for women, addressing their unique needs and concerns regarding the insurance industry.

Support networks: Creating support networks for women agents through peer-to-peer mentoring programs and online communities fosters a sense of belonging and professional development.

Community outreach: Partnering with women's organizations and NGOs to reach out to a wider audience and bridge the insurance protection gap.

Conclusion:

The Indian life insurance industry has a golden opportunity to unlock its full potential by empowering women agents. By implementing strategic recruitment initiatives, nurturing talent, and leveraging data driven decision-making, the industry can bridge the gender gap and achieve sustainable growth. It's time to break the stereotype and recognise the power of a diverse workforce. When women thrive, the industry thrives, and ultimately, Indian society thrives.

Empowering women as insurance agents can bridge the industry's gender gap and drive significant growth by leveraging their unique skills in empathy, financial literacy, and adaptability

Teaching Note:

The Indian life insurance industry stands at a pivotal juncture. While it has witnessed significant growth in recent years, engaging more women workforce in the insurance salesforce will bridge the gender gap within the industry and also propel its future growth. Bringing the culture of inclusion in any organization will start with strategic recruitment initiatives. This case specifically focusses on including more women workforce in place which ultimately leading any workplace to have diversified skill sets. Once diversified skills are in place it becomes very important to match the potential skills of the workforce with the skill requirement for the industry. Nurturing the skills of women workforce to develop them as leaders in future in the industry, data driven decisions on the various aspects of managing this workforce and taking special initiative to retain this work force has to be focussed by IRDAI.

Target Audience:

MBA Students – HR Elective Students

Learning Objectives:

Differentiating the conventional recruitment and strategic recruitment.

Understanding the need for adhering the Diversity and Inclusion policies for future growth.

Discussion Questions:

1. Analyse the need identified by IRDAI to employ more women agents.
2. Evaluate the recommendations given in the case to foster the culture of diversity and inclusion in the insurance sector.
3. What is your understanding on data driven decisions in managing the workforce?

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Decrease in head count - Invest in workforce

Dr. J. Shanthilakshmi, Professor -HR, Jansons School of Business

Introduction

The Indian tech industry is facing with economic headwinds, automation, and a significant slowdown in hiring. Tech giants like TCS, Infosys, and Wipro all experienced substantial hiring declines in 2023 due to these factors. In just one year, over 67000 jobs gone at Infosys, TCS, Wipro and Tech Mahindra 2023 was a challenging year for tech professionals across the globe due to large-scale layoffs announced by various tech companies. In line with industry trends, during the financial period – April 2023 to March 2024, the IT giant's total headcount dropped by 25,994 with its total employee base down by 7.5% to 317,240.

As a heritage brand established over 35 years ago, Tech Mahindra has built pioneering systems, processes, and solutions for enterprise clients across the globe. Tech Mahindra, India's fifth-largest software exporter, was not immune, reporting a decline in revenue and net profit for Q4 FY2024, accompanied by a marginal decrease in headcount. In response to these evolving dynamics, Tech Mahindra has doubled down on its investment in its workforce. From AI reskilling to meeting evolving employee needs Tech Mahindra is prioritising future-proofing its global workforce to navigate disruptive industry shifts.

People strategy amid disruptions

The company recently implemented hybrid work policies welcoming staff back to offices while also exempting new parents from return-to-office mandates - mothers up to 1 year after birth and fathers up to 4 months. This is aimed at allowing new parents to balance professional duties with caring for new-borns.

They appointed a 'wellness officer' to steer holistic employee wellness programs and healthcare access initiatives. It also utilised an AI tool to identify unconscious bias in communication and provide recommendations.

Tech Mahindra workforce comprises over 70 nationalities, emphasising its workforce's cultural diversity, through progressive policies celebrating demographic differences..

Tech Mahindra reskilled over 50,000 employees through a well-defined AI proficiency framework, investing in AI-learning platforms, high-capacity labs and training infrastructure.

New leadership programs like Manager as a Coach (MaaC) and Maximizing Personal Effectiveness (MPE) aimed to empower people managers and enhance customer focus respectively.

Project Fortius, a fresher induction and training initiative, will consistently onboard and train 1,500 new graduate hires per quarter on next-gen technologies, he said.

The way forward

Tech Mahindra is exploring holistic well-being solutions, and digital health programs and using AI to personalise employee benefits recommendations based on individual profiles, he said.

The significance of "leading-edge people practices" in attracting and retaining talent during periods of disruption is well recognised in Tech Mahindra and these practices encompass continuous reskilling initiatives, progressive company policies, and fostering an engaging employee experience.

Despite facing short-term business challenges, Tech Mahindra remains committed to strategically investing in empowering and developing its workforce. This focus on employee development is crucial for long-term preparedness in the face of rapid industry changes,

Teaching Note:

Digital adoption is a key drive to be more optimistic about future growth. In response to these evolving dynamics, Tech Mahindra has doubled down on its investment in its workforce. Tech Mahindra, the leading IT services company had 1,46,250 in the third quarter of financial year 2023-24 which is lesser

(4,354) than second quarter of the year. In quarter 4 (2023-24) Tech Mahindra had added 2,307 employees and they have implemented various strategic initiatives to empower emerging talent and enhance organisational capabilities across all levels. Those initiatives are discussed above.

Target Audience:

MBA Students

Learning Objectives:

To understand the fast changes in the technology based industry and requirement for updated skilled workforce.

To analyse the trend in IT sector in hiring and laying off.

Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss the reasons for layoff across the industries.
2. Discuss the manpower planning strategies at Tech Mahindra.
3. "Decrease in head count ... Invest in workforce..." is this right strategy?- Discuss.

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Who's Rich ?

Mr. S. M. Srikrishna, Assistant Professor, Jansons School of Business

It was a fine Friday evening on a breezy October. You were getting off from work and looking forward to the weekend. You just boarded the metro back home. You miss the worry-free student life you recently came out from, but also enthusiastic about what lies ahead of you in the corporate world. Fresh out of college, many things to learn!

Friday, rush hour, metro - wanting to blow off some steam, you reach out to your AirPods but realise it has run out of charge. You are now at the mercy of the crowd to keep you entertained.

Metro stopped at a station, some people got out, and more got in. You still don't have a seat. In the crowd were two middle-aged men grabbing the handrails, cramped closer to you and continuing their conversation...

- "Both of us will reach 40 next month, eh Gopal? Man, the time flies!"
- "Yes, Ranjith! We were basically kids when we joined the job together"
- "And now we're both VPs in our respective domains!"
- "Feels like I'll turn around and it'll be my retirement soon!" They both chuckle.

A couple of seconds later, triggered by the ongoing discussion, Ranjith enquired.

- "Hey, have you started planning for retirement yet?"

Gopal expressions, transitioning from the light moment they shared earlier to a serious one now, shared.

- "Dude, I used to save regularly every month right from the age of 25. It was almost like a ritual for me to first save Rs. 10,000 from my salary and only then think of my expenses. I am also happy that I earned a respectable 12% CAGR on my investments. Now, reaching the midlife years I guess, I want to splurge a little bit. I want to buy the new SUV I have been eyeing for some time, take my family out for international vacation trips, experience some luxurious hotels and basically just enjoy life I guess. I won't be adding any more to my nest egg. I just want whatever I have accumulated so far to be kept invested, without withdrawing it, growing at the same rate of 12% YoY. I believe it can support me in my later years. What is your story, Ranjith?"
- "Hey Macha, I was enjoying my 20s and 30s like crazy. Always bought the latest and greatest gadgets and stuff, bought a car much earlier, partied most weekends. Now I want to get serious and start saving up for retirement. I met with an investment advisor last week. I shall be saving Rs. 20,000 every month till my retirement at 60. I am also expecting it to grow at 12% CAGR. But yeah, I'll have to cut down on some of my expenses and lifestyle tastes to accommodate the savings. So that's my plan, I guess."
- "Good for you, bro! Saving twice as much as I used to. Wish you well." - "Hey, thanks, my man! Great job you started saving early on! Gimme a ride in your new SUV once you buy. I call shotgun!"
- "Will do, will do. Okay, here comes my station. Happy weekend!"
- "See you on Monday!"

You heard their conversation. The smart analytical student in you was intrigued. You wanted to figure out how much would Gopal and Ranjith have at the time of their retirement. For all you know, it can help you manage your finances right! Having the concepts of MBA Finance fresh in your mind, you started figuring it out.

Teaching notes:

This is used to teach the concept of the Time Value of Money
Future Value and Future Value of Annuity

Stating the facts :

Gopal

- Starts investing Rs. 10,000 per month.
- From the age of 25.
- Keeps contributing till he is 40 years old.
- Then stops further contributions, but keeps his investment till he retires at 60.

Ranjith

- Starts investing Rs. 20,000 per month.
- From the age of 40.
- Keeps investing till he retires at 60.

Discussion points (Assume they stuck to their plan and no drastic changes happened)

1. How much was each of their corpus at their retirement?
2. Who was richer?
3. Who would have lived a better life?
4. What did you learn?
5. What will you do?



Case Submission Guidelines

Contributions for the forthcoming issue will be accepted up to December 10, 2013. The authors can follow the guidelines given below for the submission of their work.

Format:

Caselets and Full-fledged cases will be considered for possible publication in CASTLE. Caselets can have a length of around 600 words and Full-fledged cases can have a length of around 5000 words. It should be an original and unpublished work. The completed work should be submitted as a word document. The text should use single-spacing and the Calibri -11 size font, with equal margins on all the four sides of the page. The tables and drawings need to be included at the relevant places in between the text.

Source:

The work can be based on either primary data or secondary data. While the primary-data-based cases (written based on the interviews/discussions with the company officials) should obtain case-release permission from the organization, the secondary-data-based cases (written based on information available in public domain like newspaper, magazine, internet sources etc) need not have to obtain this. However due credit needs to be given to the source at the end of the case in terms of references.

Narration:

The cases need to take a story-telling style and should end with a thought-provoking question for the readers. The content should be written in the past tense and should take an unbiased neutral stand throughout.

Additional teaching material:

Each case needs to be supplemented at the beginning with (i) Teaching objectives (what concepts/models/theories can be explained through this and what course this is suitable for) (ii) Key issues (what main issues/problems are being addressed) and (iii) an Abstract of not more than 100 words.

The case needs to additionally have at the end (iv) A Teaching Note (to explain as to how this case can be administered to students, what possible approaches are available for solving the key issues and how a specific solution can be executed).

Copyright:

The author needs to provide in writing that the case is his/her own original work and is not submitted to any other publication. The author needs to assign the copyright to the Journal. However, the authors are permitted to use the cases for their personal requirements of teaching.

Submission:

The soft-copies of the Cases can be submitted at editorcastle@jsb.ac.in. The cases submitted before December 10, 2013 will be considered for possible publication in the issue of March, 2014.

Review process:

Each case will undergo a blind review process and the feedback given by the reviewers will be discussed with the authors subsequently.



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