
“Usage of Technology in HR Practices in Indian Hotel Industry”

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Abstract

Indian hotel industry has its own significance in strengthening the economy of India. The present Indian government is talking about “Make-in-India”. The mission “Make-in-India” is incomplete without the growth of hotel industry. India is currently ranked 12th in Asia-Pacific region and 68th in whole world among the world’s attractive destination. The future of hotel industry is bright. According to ICRA the Indian hotel industry will grow 11% in 2015-16 and the revenue is expected to grow by 5%-8% (IIFL, 2015). In this research paper the author will discuss the use of technology, social media and e-HRM practices used in Indian hotel industry. E-HRM is the use of technology for human resource activities and practices at organization. The human resource managers at hotels are using web-based solutions to change human resource management into real-time based human resource management (Swaroop, 2012). Another technological advancement is the use of social media at hotel industry. Social media is new tool of promotion mix of the industry (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Social media is providing an opportunity even to small hotels to adopt born-global approach from the time of their inception (Zhou, et al., 2007). Social media provides a platform for two-way communication between hotel managers and their customers. There are other tools of advertising too like print media, television etc. but there is no comparison of social media tools. On the social media customers can also provide their feedback and comments on the services of the hotels. The use of technology, e-HRM practices and social media is very helpful in reducing the overall cost of operation of hotel industry.

E-HRM practices in Indian hotel industry

With the help of e-HRM practices the human resource managers can easily implement HR activities, strategies by using the application of technology. The use of technology in HRM practices has various advantages. It improves the quality of HR administration and fasten-up the process. It helps to improve customers’ orientation and services. There is no need for additional

staff while using technology in HRM practices. It also reduces the additional or unwanted staff from the organization and the communication improves from top level to bottom level in the organization (Sharma, 2011). Recruitment is one of the major practices at Indian hotels and the human resource managers are using the technology to make recruitment faster. E-recruitment is new fashion in Indian hotel industry. Approximately 12 million people are working in hospitality industry which accounts for 8.5% of total workforce. Recruitment is the process of discovering potential candidates which suits the requirement of industry among all the applied candidates. The modern organizations are facing recruitment challenges because they are unable to retain candidates for longer duration. The human resource managers are looking for new cost-effective, less-time consuming methods for shortlisting and recruitment of candidates. The use of technology or e-recruitment has provided the speedy and cost-effective solution for India hotel industry.

The use of internet has been vastly increased post 2000 for recruitment of people. The Indian hotel industry consist of both medium level and large level organizations. Internet and technology has helped many small and medium level organizations in last decade in their overall growth (Dholakia & Kshetri, 2004). In fact, in developed countries the small level organizations which are owned by families are adopting born-global approach (Zhou, et al., 2007) since the time of their inception because technology is helping them in attracting massive number of customers. E-recruitment can be divided into two types. The use of company's own site for recruitment of candidates with applicants upload their profile on the carrier page of the company and the second option is the use of commercial website. The famous commercial website for recruitment are naukri.com and monster.com etc. In the last decade the use of technology has been increased among Indian hotel industry to upgrade the supply chain activities. E-recruitment is another example of advancement in Indian hotel industry. Internet recruitment is offering many advantages. Internet recruitment reduces cost of recruitment, reduce administrative burden and make administration faster. The applicants can access the internet from anywhere. The use of technology is very much helpful in finding right candidate from different corners of India. A large number of applicants can apply in e-recruitment process and it also adds to the image of the company. VRIO framework talks about valuable, rare, inimitable and organization supported resources (Jugdev, et al., 2007). The human resource or manpower are also valuable, rare and inimitable for any organization in this competitive era. Organizations are investing huge amount of money in recruitment and training of candidates. E-recruitment process is providing better results in terms of overall quality of the candidates and it is providing competitive advantage to the organizations.

Competition among the Indian hotel industry is forcing the business owners to think about new strategies for their survival. Technology has provided the necessary driving force needed for their survival. The e-HRM practices are not limited up-to the use of technology for recruiting quality candidates. The use of technology has improved the communication among the various departments of the organization and it also helped in avoiding the conflicts in hotel industry. The use of technology also helps the human resource managers in analysing vast amount of data. The record keeping and the use of technology also help in employee's talent management process. Many organizations are using 360-degree evaluation technique for appraisal of employees. The use of technology has helped the human resource managers from payroll processing to record keeping. The main goals of human resource managers adopted traditional HR practices are cost-effectiveness, enhancement of service for internal customers, addressing the tactics of business. Technological advancement of human resource practices has embedded fourth objective which talks about improving the global orientation of human resource management. The adoption of e-HRM practices have changed the goals of organization to transaction goals. The transactional goals have improved the time allotment and added more professionalism to HR teams. The employees have more detailed knowledge about the core capabilities of the organization. E-HRM practices have provided the necessary standardization process to the Indian hotel industry which is required for smooth functioning of various internal departments. The government of India is talking about "Make-in-India" (ExpressNews, 2016). "Make-in-India" mission is inviting foreign industries to invest their money in India and their investment will be fruitful in future. The foreign delegates are coming to India for exploring business opportunities and many foreign visitors are also coming to see the beauty of India. Hotels are providing all type of convenience to foreign visitors and investors. The hotels are making first impression on the minds of foreign visitors. The e-HRM practices have improved the overall image of the Indian hotels.

The e-HRM practices can be further divided into three types which include operational HRM, relational HRM and transformational HRM (Nenwani & Raj, 2013). The operational HRM takes care about employees' payroll and personal data, relational HRM focuses on employees' recruitment, training and appraisal. The transformational HRM focuses knowledge management and strategic re-orientation of employees. In the first half of this research paper the authors have talked about e-recruitment process. E-recruitment is one of the effective tool of the e-HRM process. The other tools of e-HRM practice involve e-selection, e-learning, e-training, e-compensation and e-performance management system. During the e-selection process human resource managers can conduct various psychometric test and other mental ability test to find the right candidates. E-learning involves the use of technology, computer and other electronic

devices to facilitate the learning process of individuals at hotel industry. E-learning concept is evolving in Indian environment. Educomp India private limited has earned enough profit in Indian market by selling e-learning software and hardware to private schools (NewsVair, 2015). E-training involves the use of virtual classrooms for providing training to the employees. Many employees find it more efficient because they can access training modules anywhere irrespective of their location. It also reduced the cost of the organization because this process doesn't require the physical presence of training managers or employees. The employees and trainers can communicate each other with the help of technology even at remote locations. The usage of internet and intranet can also be evident in the e-compensation and e-performance management of the employees. The integrated use of technology has also made the supply chain of hotels more effective in comparison to previous time. The e-HRM practices have improved the quality of work and the whole work is become paperless. The access to HR data is really fast by the use of technology.

Critically it can be said that there are certain disadvantages of e-HRM practices too. The company needs technically efficient and educated human resource managers, security of data is a major challenge, the data entry errors are very much possible by adopting technology. The major problem in implementing e-HRM practices is the rigid attitude of older human resource managers. The old managers didn't want to change themselves. Lewin's change management model can help in reducing the resistance of older employees. It involves three stages unfreeze, change and refreeze (Burnes, 2004). During unfreezing stage, the human resource managers can discuss the importance of change with the old age employees and accordingly they can implement the changes. The modern time and increased globalization process is demanding the use of technology in hotel industry. In the refreezing stage the human resource managers will observe the adoption of e-HRM practices for longer duration of time.

Use of social media channels

In this section the authors will discuss about the importance of social media from the perspective of hotel industry. Social media technologies are based on web-application, mobile and cloud based system. In last decade the use of social media channels has been increased across various businesses. The emergence of social media can't be denied in India hotel industry too. The major advantages of social media are that is helpful in reaching global audience and mass number of audience, fast and no-time lag, easy accessibility and ubiquitous everywhere (Khan, 2012). The social media channels are accessible twenty-four hours and all seven days. Social networking sites like facebook, twitter and Instagram are important part of business strategies of global managers around the world. The business owners and hotel managers in India have acknowledged the importance of social media channels for marketing their services

in India and abroad. The promotional activities on social media sites involve less amount of money and it has global reach. The social media channels help in connecting with mass number of audience. The promotion of hotel services on facebook and other social media channels provide an opportunity of two-way communication with the customers. Traditional marketing channel didn't provide the flexibility of two-way communication with the customers. The current customers and prospective customers can write their opinions and comments on social media channels. Those comments help the hotel managers in changing their approach as per customer's opinion. The effective use of social media will open new markets and opportunities for Indian hotel managers.

The social media channels are very much useful in incorporating the concept of global culture because the social media channels have reduced the cultural differences among the countries. It is an effective source of communication. Social media marketing is not only helpful for big hotel owners but it is equally beneficial for small hotel owners. It doesn't require heavy investment. Many bed and breakfast companies are earning good revenues by using social media for their marketing and promotion. The social media channels didn't require a permanent office so the office cost has also been minimized. In present economic times, many reputed Indian hotels are shifting from traditional marketing approach to social media based marketing approach. It improves the brand image of hotel among the customers, communication is easier and faster. The return on investment is higher by adopting social media channels for marketing purpose (Seth, 2012). The increased use of social media channels is also acceptable from customer's perspective. They can check availability of hotel rooms from any location, book orders, deposit advance and check the status on their mobile phones. Globally the consumers are purchasing more number of products and services online (Bosnjak, et al., 2007). The use of social media is the demand of time. The Indian luxury hotels have also started the use of social media in their main business strategies. For example, Trident hotels at Mumbai recently launched a social media campaign which was very much visible on twitter. The duration of campaign was for two days (Ajmera, 2015). Three social media influencers have participated in the social media campaign of Trident hotels.

The main objectives of Trident social media campaign are to reach out and build a community of like-minded people who love to travel, enjoy hotel cuisines and new experiences. The second objective is to directly engage with the customers and the third objective is to improve the reputation of Trident at global scale. This idea of social hotel has been proved beneficial for Trident because the hotel authorities was successful in attracting a huge number of customers through twitter hashtags. The use of social media channels in marketing and overall business strategies of hotels is still at very nascent stage in Indian hotel industry and there is scope of

improvement. Only few luxury hotels are serious about their digital marketing strategies. With the passage of time, the hotel managers, owners and other stakeholders will realize the importance of social media marketing for getting sustainable competitive advantage.

Challenges in usage of technology in hotel industry

Though technology has advanced the overall functions of human resource departments but there are certain challenges as well in the usage of technology. The major difference is in the attitude of young employees and old employees. On one hand generation Y employees (Cairncross & Buultjens, 2007) are very much comfortable with usage of social media channels and other technology in various HR functions on other hand old age employees have negative attitude towards technology. The old age employees especially the employees aged more than 50 years don't want to change their traditional style of working. They are offering resistance in the path of technology. It is key responsibility of the top management and owners to get them ready for the new technological changes. Lewin's change management model has three stages as shown in figure 1.

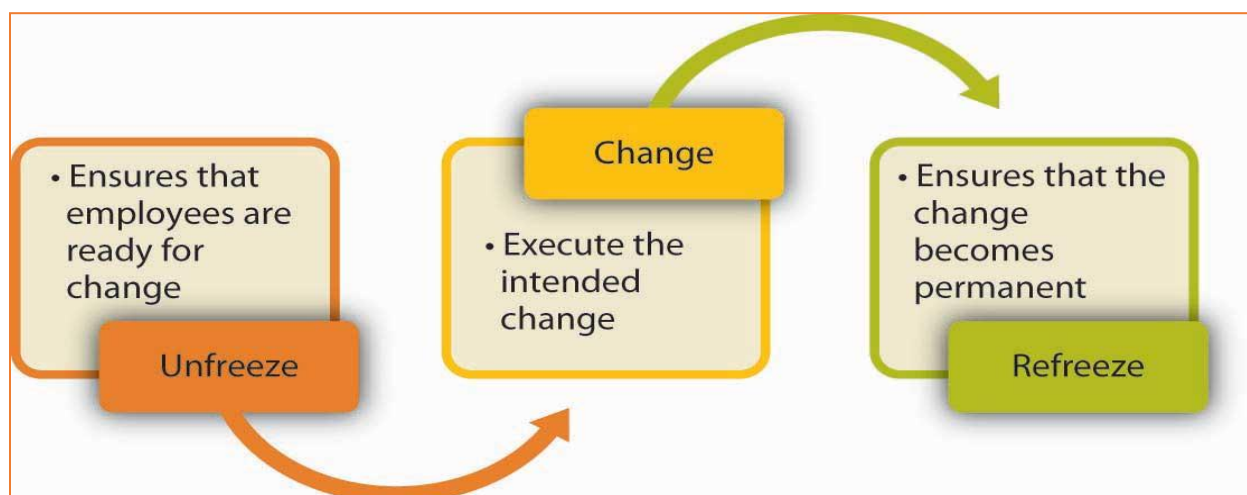


Figure 1 (Burnes, 2004)

Lewin's changed management model can be applied in Indian hotel industry to deal with the resistance of traditional old age employees. The first stage of the model is unfreezing. During this stage the owners and top level management can educate the employees about the need to technology and social media to make the overall process of human resource more advanced. They should openly talk with the old age employees about their fear and negative opinions about usage of technology. On the open platform the employees and employers need to talk with each other. Unfreezing stage will help in encountering the negative opinions; attitudes and stereotype thinking of old age employees. The second stage is change. During second stage company needs to introduce the technological changes at industry level. The training should be

provided to the employees. Social media tools' training is essential for all the employees. A learning environment needs to be created. The last stage is refreezing. In this stage the employers will see whether the new changes have been adopted over a longer duration of time or not.

Conclusion

On the basis of overall discussion, it can be concluded that the use of technology has helped Indian hotel industry in increasing its revenue, sales, customer-base and global reach. The use of e-HRM practices and social media channels is very beneficial in saving time and cost of the hotel owners and managers. The use of technology at hotels provide ample time to the human resource managers to think about process improvement and performance management of the employees. It also helps the organizations in fulfilling their corporate social responsibility because use of paper has been reduced to certain extent by using e-HRM and social media practices. The use of social media is new trend of service industry. Customers remain connected to their social media channels even during personal hours.

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