CHALLENGES IN NETWORKING HUMAN RESOURCES
A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Networking refers to creating a group of allies to engage in an active manner by means of frequent interaction for mutual benefit. 'Networking' strongly emphasizes on 'How can I help?' rather 'What can I get?'. Networking is being stimulated swiftly in every sphere of individuals' / groups' lives. Face to face networking and social media networking have become the very essential aspect of modernity. Harvard Business Review states that networking has been existing since 2000 years which has facilitated our existence. Networking promotes communication in new forms and widening the knowledge. Hence networking needs to be nurtured and cared well as psychological aspects have impacts in networking. The primary aspect is 'building relationships'. If contacts and relationships are successfully maintained and sustained as well, the network would be very much inclined to extend assistance at any point of time. The billion dollar question arises when it comes to the successful maintenance of the network. The proposed research paper makes an attempt to explore the challenges in networking human resources and possibilities to overcome the challenges involved by applying the psychology of human temperament.

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Networking, the inherent need of humans which is meant for humans tosocialize has been so active since 13th century through various modes. The study of ceramic and obsidian artefacts has led to the discovery of long

distance social networking prevailed prior to the advent of technology. More than 8, 00,000 painted ceramics and 4800 obsidian artefacts have been studied in the research. Further, the research states that similar kinds of painted artefacts were made with a distance of 250 kms difference between villages. The social networking during the ancient days was maintained well irrespective of the distance and fastest means of transportation.

Networking is mandatory which requires skills for career as well as personal life. Face-to-face networking and social media networking have become an integral part of the modern world. Networking provides private information, access to diverse skill and power. An article in Psychology Today by Darcy Rezac says,"Networking is not about you and how others can help you. Instead, it's about others and how you can help them."

Networking is considered as the best boss of the world. Networking helps in widening ones circle of influences that is beneficial in career growth as well as self-growth, increases confidence, helps in building relationships, keeps updating industry knowledge, enabling others to succeed, getting to know others and letting others get to know you.

Networking allows to run through communication skills in multi-dimensional professional settings. The aptitude to converse about career, business and oneself gets transformed as a second nature, an aid to the quest for professional growth.

Networking, be it professional or personal, serves as a gateway to learn something new and enhance one's skills. Networking with like-minded individuals is likely to open new opportunities in the future. Further, being a professional doesn't mean that he/she is aware of 'know-hows' in the industry. Networking events offer professional advice and assistance besides real life experiences. Networking is a never ending business which involves time as the capital investment. Networking has various roles like helping tosolve a difficult problem, providing perspective, teaching new things,supporting your efforts, informing new opportunities, celebrating successes, giving your valuable feedback and helping to relieve stress.

In spite of understanding the benefits offered by networking, many still find it uncomfortable and frightening. People are unsure of how to start a conversation, uncomfortable particularly with people they have just met, fear of rejection. Networking of the introverted individuals with low self-esteem is comparatively less as they areunlikely to engage themselves in networking. To add more, the factors that affect the networking are 'Peoples' busy schedules' (Become impatient or lose the persistence), quantity of relationships over quality, being afraid to ask others for help, poking nose in others' business. However, it's possible to overcome the barriers to networking so as to enhance networking ability and level of comfort. The proposed research paper

makes an attempt to explore the challenges in networking human resources and possibilities to overcome the challenges involved by applying the psychology of human temperament.

Psychology is the study of behavior and mental processes having associated in every sphere of life. Understanding of the behavior helps is association with people. Hence the psychology of humans in work place plays a vital role as the resources are to be networked with care and nurtured with right perspective of motivation.

Motivation is the driving force that engages the employees to stay committed, focused, productive and engaged with a sense of belongingness. Individuals' psychological attunement is also related to motivation. The sense of belonging binds the individuals into a family of network. Employees with the attitude to encounter challenges, extend and exercise their abilities and potentials by exploration and learning. Without a channelized networking among work environment, success of an organization or individual tends to be a failure.The reasons associated with networking are increased ability to do the job well, ability to build reputation and credibility and facilitate trust.

The term 'networking' viewed by most of the HR professionals is to relate with the external consultants. It is assumed as it is nothing to do with 'internals'. The assumption is dangerous as the individuals possess the ability to foster relationships, have supporters, building relationship and integrity, establishing frankness and trust. In the words of Gilbert (2005), the Psychology of Management is 'the effect of the mind that is directing work upon that work which is directed, and the effect of this undirected and directed work upon the mind of the worker. The emphasis in successful management lies on the man, not on the work'.

Human Resources is correlated with psychology in depth. The American Psychological Association opines that human resources are characterized by study of human behavior in work place. The psychological factors impacting the organizations' values are the commitment of the employees, reliability, motivation and performance. Management is associated with the resources of an individual that are reflected in his activities. The mentality and temperament of an employee is determined by the networking factors in turn exhorting the success of any organization.

There are innumerable reasons for reluctance to network with a spherical reference to outside the HR department. A HR who is thought to be regulating, best practice, training and saying 'no', can be felt as safe by staying within HR rather venturing outside – where it's all about business and not about people. The networkers' interpersonal skills enable to guide others in meeting their goals and objectives and enabling the business to increase its performance.

Workplace environment is where people with different attitude and personalities and communication styles interact. The differences of attitudes and opinions in workplace may lead to stress and tension. All the employees have the right to be treated fairly and feel secured in the workplace.

Impartiality meted out by top management in terms of 'Disparity in Compensation, Irrational Promotional Policy, Exploitation of Human Resources, De motivating Factors' lead to decreased performance and satisfaction. Low compensation not only hinders motivation and performance, but also paves way for creating vengeance among employees. The truth of being paid inadequateobviously tends to shift their attention on theinequitableness of the work environment.

Dissatisfaction in work environment ultimately leads to mental health issues. The practicality of life is that, sometimes people will have to work with people whom they don't like. Communication through social media though mandatory and unavoidable and discussion of sensitive issues in Social Media leads to misunderstanding. Further, addiction to Social media has led to inhumanity in the world of high tech and low tech.Modern Network thinks that ideas can be developed by email and I-chat. But Creativity comes from spontaneous meetings and from random discussions - (from Walter Isaacson's book, Steve Jobs). Networking should ultimately aim at building relationships; not links.

EY (Ernst and Young) a multinational professional services firm headquartered in London, England recently commissioned research to look into how professionals are networking now. The study states that networking is now seen as a "Core Business Skill", apparently 1 in 4 professionals DON'T network at all and 65% of people prefer to network in person.

Naomi Bloom, Managing Partner at Bloom & Wallace, a consulting firm specializing in the application of HR technology, opines that in the increasing technological world, human resources are assigned to find out when automated processes should be dealt with versus when face –to- face as the best route.

The value of face-to-face is appreciated as one of the most powerful tools to be used to enhance one's personal revelation, constructing meaningful relationships and therefore offering chances for growth at a personal and professional level.The aspect of face-to-face networking is to build and strengthen relationship. When the network is well maintained, it sustains. Such networks will be motivated to help when one is really in need of. How to build up a network in a right way is a great art which every individual should be acquainted with. To begin with, 'introverts', preferably could engage is small talks. They could get engaged in asking open-ended questions that would provide a land to have meaningful exchanges rather than one word answers. They are suggested not to rely on clichés and fillers. Areas to be noted for avoidance are nodding and saying nothing.

Networking can be strengthened by offering assistance, encouragement and support, sharing of knowledge, providing an introduction to others in your network,mailing an article they may be interested in, offering help subordinates, sending a thankyou note, enquiring so often to see how they are doing.

Building Network can be done in many different ways which include: attending meetings and events on campus to meet new people, getting to know the colleagues in your department, inviting colleagues to lunch, coffee, etc., working on cross-functional or cross-departmental teams, attending training classes and programs and furthermore.

Probing into the next area of networking is posed with a question of really lacking in networking skill or forced to believe oneself that he/she doesn't possess the skills. A strong false belief may weaken the confidence level. Overcoming self-limiting beliefs demand the establishment of successful network. Understanding the cohesions between two individuals can develop rapport at the beginning of relationship. Mattson's comment on networking states that quality of the networks is mandatory than the quantity. "The key is to focus on what networking really is, relationship building. Instead of using networking simply as a tool that can help you find a job, delve deeper. Make sure your focus is on that relationship building first," says Jayne Mattson, Senior Vice President of Client Services at Keystone Associates.

Judith Germain, Founder and Principal Consultant of Dynamic Transitions Ltd, a leadership company specializing in working with Troublesome Talent®, suggests essential networking strategies: building networking muscle, developing thick skin, being nice to everyone, be giving, growing one's relationship database, communicating, building rapport and access to available and reliable sources. Further, one has to keep expectations realistic instead of being let down, being flexible and dependable, expressing warmth, avoiding gossip, being a clean slate, forgiving nature, knowing the time to talk / be quiet, building oneness, understanding the communication in right perception and socializing attitude are the other factors that have the greatest impact in positive networking.

Networking, both a competency and a process, demand to hone the skills in order to be successful.Networking is an attitude, not an event. Hence, begin to break out of comfort zone and start engaging with more people, cease the Blame Game and bind to moral responsibility, transparency in organizational Functioning. The most needed principle of 'team work' – you do your work; I do my work' is to be practiced. Though the surface meaning of the principle seem ridiculous, allowing others to do one's work and contributing to the success of the organization is the other way of viewing 'teamwork'.

Every person is unique and so he/she has to be looked beyond the externals. Networking is the gate way to enter into a larger family, especially in HR and aims at creating positive environment.

Building up positive relationships with peers at work place contributes to make the environment more conducive and enjoyable to work in. Feelingcomfort in a communication, freedom to express thoughts and secured work place offer a platform for sustainable work environment.

"Fire can warm or consume,

water can quench or drown,

wind can caress or cut.

And so it is with human relationships;

we can both create and destroy,

nurture and terrorize,

traumatize and heal each other"

―Bruce D. Perry

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