

Transition In Orientation Towards 'Work'

Energising Organisations through Wholesome Leadership

The Young are Young. They've got camera phones, branded clothes, latest CDs, money to enjoy and invest. The new generation in the Indian workforce is redefining both - the workplace and orientation towards work. In the old work orientation, people were expected to postpone gratification; it was not assumed that they would find their work interesting or enjoyable. Work would mean a fixed routine to the extent of monotony and linear progression.

The new work orientation revolves around the idea that people should derive personal satisfaction from their work, which should be enjoyable, challenging and fulfilling. Work is endowed with meaning and does not symbolize only economic exchange. The workplace is no longer being recognized as a place of earning livelihood but is now being recognized as a place where one's meaning of life is created and shaped. Now, more and more people have started looking at work not only as a job but are seeking 'meaning' from it. Work is increasingly being recognized as a way of expressing one's true self and as a means to contribute towards a larger goal. This is the movement that Daniel Yankelovich dubs the 'instrumental' view of work, where work was a means to an end, vs. the sacred view, where people seek 'intrinsic' benefits from work.

Driven by a larger purpose at work is an expression of spirituality of the new workforce. Fortune magazine's analysis of the best places to work reported that these places are where people find a purpose to work other than just their pay cheques. My own research work at MDI, Gurgaon showed that 'best places to work' are organizations where people find that while working they are contributing to the larger society.

The companies which are able to acknowledge this fact and harness this side of the employees through meaningful work and opportunity to contribute to the larger social and natural environment are increasingly emerging as the best places to work.

They are able to provide their customers better service experience and are also showing better business performances in the long run.

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