

## XPLORATE SESSION II, 2021

### CONDUCTED BY HR ALUMNI COMMITTEE

#### Details of the Speaker

- Name: Sudeep Patnaik
- Educational Qualification:
  - BA-English Literature Honours (SKCG (Autonomous) College, Parlakhemundi, 2002-05)
  - PGDM, HR and General Management (XIMB, 2006-08)
- Present organization: TDCX
- Designation: HR Head – India and Director – Group Talent Acquisition

#### About the Event

- Date: 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2021
- Time: 10:45 am
- Duration: 2 hours
- Online Platform: Zoom
- Batch Addressed: 2021-23
- Theme: Business, Technology and HR

#### Feedback

- **Students:** The students of the batch 2021-23 were highly enthusiastic for the session as was evident from the interaction they had with the speaker. The speaker was able to provide interesting insights into the use of technology in HR processes and the changes that it has brought along with it. The students definitely look forward to more such learning opportunities.
- **Alumni:** The alumnus had a very good experience, walking down the memory lane and addressing a batch of budding professionals at his alma mater. He was very keen on giving his complete attention to each and every student who had an interaction with him. He threw a lot of light on the realities of technology and how people figure in that process as an essential element.

#### Special Highlights of the Event

- The speaker started with a walk down the memory lane, mentioning how he went from a small-town boy to an established b-school like XIMB, where he had his initial brush with technology. He highlighted the importance of learning for the sake of excellence and not for the sake of grades or recognition while talking about his journey in XIMB and at Idea, where he was placed post his MBA.
- At his first corporate experience, he was a part of a small workforce, working out of a small city where he looked after various HR processes from scratch. Once that unit started to flourish, he was moved to the Chennai unit where he began his journey in

recruitment, helping the new unit find talent. He talked about his key takeaways, which were appreciating cultural diversity and being resilient.

- The speaker, while answering a student's question, talked about the two important things to look at while recruiting someone – the trainable aspects and the untrainable aspects. The trainable ones can be developed but the untrainable one, which was having a right attitude and mindset, was rare. He advised the students to look for those in any candidate.
- The speaker shared with the students what he considered were a hindsight judgement of his days at XIMB. He talked about the need to understand financials so as to understand the pain points of the CEO and that OB wasn't just a theory paper, the concepts of motivation and team building actually had immense ramifications in corporate. "HR is all about people" he stressed, because no matter how much a process gets automated, it's always the people who make a difference.
- In the interactions with the students, he talked about the challenges of connecting the people to their organizations in the hybrid mode, the need to go the extra mile to be able to empathize with the employees. Professional and personal barriers break, but that's okay. "Bring your whole self to work" was the highlight.
- While answering a question about consultancy, the speaker said "never let the apprentice culture die". We should always, like an apprentice, be learning things around us to be able to advise people, provide them with insights. The best knowledge comes from experience. He talked about the abundance of data and the need to make data speak.
- The speaker talked about the cruciality of knowing the ground level job before moving into a strategizing mode. Even if it was a routine HR operations task or sourcing a candidate. He shared real-life examples of how only when we have ground level knowledge, we can make big changes in the big picture. He gave instances of how the smallest creativity can solve big problems and hence, innovation is about the spirit and not the complexity of the solution.
- Moving into the formal question and answer session, the speaker talked about the little innovations done by his company which improved processes by leaps and bounds for example they cut down the interview time by 62%. He attributed it to AI and NLP systems, however, those only shifted everyone's focus from repetitive tasks to actual value addition. "Technology will ease your life, not eat your life" was the takeaway.
- Talking about the biggest challenges of recruitment, the speaker discussed the current trend of the Great Resignation and because of this gap in supply and demand, there could be no guarantee of the return on resources and time spend on any candidate. He talked about the precarious condition of the talent pipeline, highlighting the immense responsibility on the shoulders of recruiters.
- Answering a query by a student, the speaker shared his experience of building the Asian wing of TDCX from scratch, setting up processes and framing policies. He said there were two sides to the coin – while he and his team had no help and were the first men to break the ground, they were also leaving behind the foundation on

which the entire Asian division was built. He also talked about sustainability caused by digitization of processes by citing examples of paperless processes and reduction in energy consumption due to remote working. He also

- The speaker reminded us about the importance of an open, innovative mind and that AI was here to ease our jobs, so that we could focus on adding more value to the processes in HR. He emphasized on the importance of knowing basic operations of HR because without HR Ops, there's no strategy. He concluded by saying "Keep practicing. Never think you know everything because you've done it a few times."