

MANAGEMENT OUTLOOK

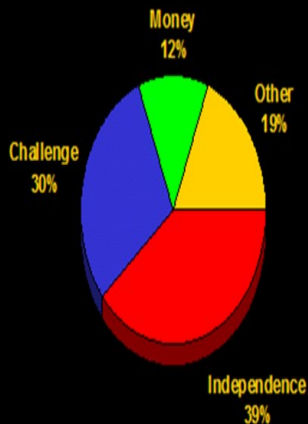
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Career prospects in start up firms are much more



**High-Tech-Entrepreneurs
Main Motivators**



While dark clouds continue to hover above several industries of India Inc., experts say that the start up sector in India is actually a silver lining. Could this be a starting point to a glorious career ahead for many job aspirants today?

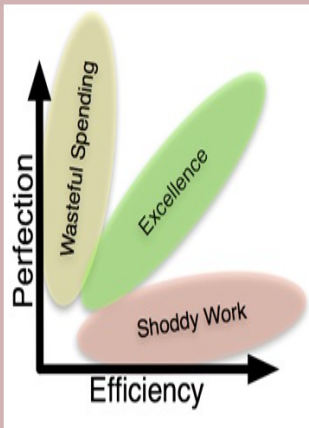
While many may conveniently assume that many industries bearing the brunt of the slowdown, the start up sector too could be experiencing a crisis of its own. But experts suggest that this may not be entirely true. The growing interest in entrepreneurship and willingness to work for a startup are a few positive outcomes of the economic meltdown. At a time when the corporate world is reeling under the pressure of lay-offs there are many enterprising ventures mushrooming, with every passing day that are also offering exciting opportunities to aspirants.

There are many untapped territories and fundamental ideas waiting to be explored. The foundations of start-ups are built on the very concept of innovation and exploration of the same. The willingness of such industries to survive and grow in today's tough market through innovation gives them an edge over the rest. They are focused on project execution and deliverables and are equipped with an urge to excel despite being a small fish in a big pool. A startup in the space of collective intelligence and semantic technology, the freedom to ex-

periment despite the risk involved and the creative satisfaction that one derives during the implementation stage are a few factors luring aspirants towards start ups.

The career prospects in startup firms are much more as it gives employees the opportunity to learn as they work. Also, as opposed to large organizations, start ups do not consist of more than 20 to 30 employees; hence work is performed like a close-knit family.

However there is no denying that working for large organizations has its share of advantages. They could offer a brand name, thus adding more credibility to your resume, provide fancy pay packets and also allow you to explore opportunities of working on large projects. But experts also suggest that they designated defined roles and responsibilities and employees may not attain an independent status of their work in a large organization; not to forget the career growth, too, takes place at a slower pace. The situation is quite otherwise in a start up. Since an employee has direct access to his/her higher up seniors, the rate at which his/her work gets recognized is faster. Also, one has to don multiple hats at the same time;



this can help employees gain experience in diverse activities and even hone their multi-tasking skills. But does money continue to be the biggest issue of concern for employees planning to pursue a career in a start ups? Gone are the days wherein money was the sole parameter against which a decision was being made by an aspirant; today they want to learn as they work and seek training opportunities.

Even though there is a rise in the number of people willing to join start ups, according to experts getting a job in one is a daunting task. They have very stringent hiring policies as start ups don't have the luxury of making hiring mistakes. Job seekers are scrutinized thoroughly for perfection one must be willing to adopt a

smart approach to deliver against all odds and must learn on the job and grow while taking up new and multiple responsibilities. Time lines and milestones typically are very aggressive in a start up and call for enormous time management abilities, besides technical know how.

In a start up growth is always exponential. Though the initial pay packet might be relatively small, employees enjoy huge financial success along with the growth of the organization. Even if a start up fails as an organization, one might not grow financially but as a professional you still grow exponentially.

IDPs

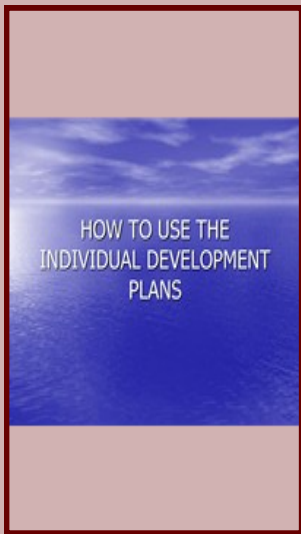
An employee's growth begins right from the time he/she steps into an organization. And keeping this in mind, organizations are now initiating and creating 'Individual Development Plans' (IDP) right from the start.

Growth is the yardstick of success for an employee, regardless of one's position. And while organizations know the importance of this, very few think of creating a plan for the employees. However times have changed and now organizations are taking the extra effort to draw up a development plan for the employee.

Though the importance of the same is not really mentioned during initiation or orientation, every organization creates an Individual Developmental Plan (IDP) for their employee right from the start. So how can an IDP help an employee? IDPs help employees in many ways. They provide direction to career

development as they are not generic, but based on assessment of areas for improvement given the employee's current role and perhaps the immediate future role. Also, they are prepared jointly by the employees and their managers. Hence, there is a commitment on both sides to realize the plans. IDPs normally state what competencies are attempted to be built or what gaps are aimed to be closed and therefore, they help employee to build competence, confidence and comfort with their roles.

IDPs focus on the strengths and developmental areas of an employee. It encourages the employee to look at ways to leverage on his/her strengths, document the same and write out action steps. It also looks at the developmental areas of the employee and encourages him/her to look at ways to move the needle on these through special



assignments focused training, executive development programs and coaching. An individual development plan ensures a readily available framework for the individual to think about his/her strengths and how best the same can be utilized given the myriad roles available.

Various IDP programs in organization symphony have implemented a web based application called 'PEARL' (Performance Appraisal Review Learning system) that the HR tracks and reviews periodically. They also have a competency framework that is widely implemented across the organization through yet another web based application called 'CORAL' (Competency Review and Learning system) Gaps are identified in the IDP and employees concerned are required to attend the training/mentoring programs designed to fill these gaps.

While an IDP helps in career growth and mapping experts say that it also acts like a motivational tool for the employees. They say that it provides an inspiration to be better workers. It is a reassurance to an employee that the organization is interested in and committed to his/her development. An IDP is the first and a very important step in helping a person grow.

IDPs have tremendous motivation potential. Since the knowledge workers are worried about becoming obsolete in a fast changing technology landscape, they value learning more than money. And IDPs provide them with a structured and focused opportunity for learning and overcoming their fear of obsolescence. IDPs when taken seriously and implemented well

protect against what is known as contribution plateau which is critical for continued contribution on the job.

In this process employees identify their career growth themselves and organization supports them to achieve it. With a self chosen and well defined career path in front of them employees have just one effort to make it happen. This is by actually working on it and re-skilling themselves for the new role and challenges. The mere feeling that the entire organization is backing them to achieve their dream career definitely motivates the employees. Moreover, as the career path is chosen by employees themselves without any force, this very factor also motivates the employees to achieve something which is defined by none other than themselves. It helps for an employee to know his/her growth plan. So if you see your employee de-motivated map out his/her success graph. You just might see a sky-rocketing change.

