More Opportunities Await Startup Employees in 2018

LEARNING CURVE Companies have planned programmes to help employees learn new technologies, develop leadership qualities and gain multifunctional skillsets

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Bengaluru: Employees at Jombay have something to look forward to in the New Year: an opportunity to get skip-level promotions.

Employees can volunteer to be put through an extensive six-month learning and development programme. They will be taken through case studies, role-playing sessions and mentoring from senior board members, who will identify the gaps in their leadership abilities and advise them on how to plug those.

"At the end of six months, we will shortlist those who have the potential to take on higher responsibility and give them skip-level promotions," said Mohit Gundecha, cofounder of the Pune-based talent assessment and capability building company.

The year 2018 promises to be a busy one as startups like Jombay, Jabong, Doctor Insta, NoBroker, ShareChat and Razorpay look to up the ante on their learning and development agendas. Plans include teaching emerging technologies, developing strong capabilities to lead teams, driving multi-functional skillsets and rolling out bite-sized learning modules.

UPSKILLING

At Jabong, the learning and development strategy next year will be focused on encouraging employees to pick up new technologies to keep up with a dynamic work environment. Employees will be given opportunities to upskill themselves in emerging technology areas like artificial intelligence, big data, and machine learning.

"Training programmes and external learnings through the year will take employees through these subjects to show them how to apply the technologies in their roles," said Gunjan Soni, head of Jabong.

SPOTLIGHT ON NEW EMPLOYEES

At Doctor Insta, employees joining the company will be asked to shadow different teams over the first couple of

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months, to get a holistic understanding of how each cog in the wheel functions. New recruits will spend time with the teams of technology, customer service, business development and products, and even sit in on interviewing of candidates.

"We want to develop 'plug-and-play' managers — or employees who can work seamlessly across roles and teams. It is essential to be able to don multiple hats while working in a startup, to keep up with the frenetic pace of growth," said Amit Munjal, founder of the virtual healthcare company backed by RoundGlass Partners and BrahmaX Ventures.

New employees are also the focus of the learning and development agenda at No-Broker. The Bengaluru-headquartered

startup is introducing full-time trainers who will work with new joinees across sales, customer service and operations departments, to take them through large amounts of content. Employees will have the opportunity to learn from presentations and videos being rolled out on their intranet.

"We observed that assigned buddies and mentors can only go so far in helping new recruits learn the ropes at the company, because employees — especially millennials — like to learn at their own pace and want to use technology to give the learning structure," said Amit Agarwal, cofounder of NoBroker.

INTERACTING WITH USERS

At social network startup ShareChat, employees in technology and product teams — who do not otherwise get to interact with customers — will be attending community meet-ups across different states, to get a pulse of their requirements and what they can do better. This, says co-founder Ankush Sachdeva, is especially important for them as a multilingual social network platform where users create content.

"We believe that learning directly from those who use our platform can develop better skills in employees to go the extra mile in working towards enhanced user experience," Sachdeva told ET.

TWO-WAY MENTORING

Two-way mentoring will be the strategy for payments platform Razorpay in the New Year, with cofounder Harshil Mathur focusing on giving employees across levels and age groups better exposure in the company.

"We are building processes around two-way mentoring, where veterans will be able to learn about emerging technologies like blockchain and artificial intelligence and discover new hacks from the newbies, and the newcomers can soak up invaluable product knowledge and process requirements from company veterans," Mathur said.