

Startups nudge staff to change work culture

Cos Rework KRAs As They Gain Heft

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Mumbai: Employees at startups, which were once fledgling firms but are now established in their fields, are being given challenging KRAs — key result areas to measure performance. A highly competitive operating environment is driving this shift towards a new work culture.

While Bigbasket has told its employees that 50% of their increments will now de-

pend on customer feedback, e-tail giant Snapdeal, which not only faces competition from Amazon and Flipkart but other vertical players as well, wants employees to gear up to its new vision of 20-million daily transacting users by 2020, for which the company has drafted new KRAs. It has broken down the target into individual goals for employees.

Its digital marketing team looks solely at “users” (how many/how frequent/conversions), way more than any other metrics. And to meet this vision, employee behaviour and KRAs had to be changed. The company has put in place a structure to ensure there are periodic reviews and feedback is given on individual KRAs and goals. A programme on mentoring and development too has been rolled out.

Saurabh Nigam, VP-HR,

critical. This was easier when the organization had a couple of hundred employees. As it expanded to become a 3,000-4,000-strong company, Paytm realized it needs to do a lot more. So it introduced new parameters to evaluate people, in addition to measuring performance based on KRAs.

Amit Sinha, VP-business planning & people, Paytm, said: “People at Paytm were always empowered to take decisions and execute them quickly. But with a large number of

DIFFERENT GROWTH STAGES OF A STARTUP

1 Growth comes through an idea. The founders come up with a disruptive idea



2 The startup gets established after reaching critical revenue of \$1m



3 There's leadership crisis. In initial stages, the founders have a strong control and there's not much delegation of work. At this stage, the startup doesn't attract too many good people



4 Once the startup is out of the leadership crisis, the founders empower managers to take decisions. It helps attract good talent. As the startup scales up, regional heads are appointed and they run ops independently like entrepreneurs



5 Corporate functional heads are brought in. This is the stage when the startup, now a large co, wants to bring in a set of values, put performance management systems in place and build a new culture to bind everyone together



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Paytm too has introduced new parameters to evaluate its people, which include leadership principles such as ownership, speed, trust and transparency.

Such changes, say experts, have been necessitated by the stage of growth these companies are in — when the founders believe they need to weave in a culture that binds everyone together.

Snapdeal's new vision is to focus on “unique users”.

Snapdeal, said: “The visioning exercises involved multiple sessions involving both the founders wherein they recounted their personal journeys. They clarified what Snapdeal means to them and where they want to see it in the future. Once articulated, the same was refined further with different function heads.”

Snapdeal roped in EY to help through multiple interventions and arrive at a new vision of making it the “most reliable and frictionless ecommerce company”.

“As an organization grows, it's very important that there is a uniform culture. If we don't do that, it would be very difficult to build synergy,” said Nigam.

For online payments and e-commerce platform Paytm, propagating and sustaining a culture of ethics & values is

new hires, the company found it difficult to maintain this culture of swiftness. New joiners were not comfortable enough in taking decisions. They would wait for approval. We have started re-emphasizing the need to execute with speed. If we don't do that, things will move slower.”

Similarly, online grocer Bigbasket, which is present in 8 tier-1 and 19 tier-2 cities, is on an expansion mode. Thus customer feedback becomes a key parameter to judge employee performance and the company has decided to align this to employee increments. Hari T N, HR head, Bigbasket, said: “We have identified certain core values. These are taking ownership, respect of personal freedom, acting with speed and focusing on internal customers so that they can keep the external customer happy.”