



Have you ever reconfigured the work areas at your office?

A study conducted by Carnegie Mellon University shows getting people to sit near a new group of colleagues is likely to help them generate fresh ideas and come up with innovative product solutions

IANS

Reconfiguring their work spaces can push people out of their comfort zones, placing them in a situation where they have to learn from those beyond their regular circle of colleagues, and thereby helping them generate more innovative ideas – that's the key finding of a recent study by Carnegie Mellon University.

The study showed that in a reconfigured workspace people were forced to sit closer to co-workers with whom they were not naturally inclined to have any interactions.

And, having to interact with a new group of colleagues, they were now able to develop new product ideas that benefited the company, said Sunkee Lee, assistant professor at Carnegie Mellon University, who was part of the team that conducted the study.

The study group

The study primarily involved 60 salespersons at a South Korean e-commerce firm; the company changed these employees' seating arrangement

There were other sales employees in the firm who were allowed to continue



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with their old seating arrangement. The findings, published in *Organization Science*, showed that those who sat near new colleagues started exploring new ideas and there was experimentation of these ideas.

In terms of meeting sales targets, they outperformed those individuals who did not experience much change in their seating

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arrangements.

In addition, the employees who seemed to learn the most from their new neighbours were those who had higher levels of experience in the organisation. These employees with

higher levels of experience were better at imbibing new knowledge and applying it to their own tasks and new interactions with unfamiliar colleagues prompted more learning, the results further showed.

"Companies have to always prepare for the next 'big thing' The problem is that many ideas never even make it to the market and that failure is an essential part of exploration," said Lee.

However, Lee noted that open work spaces could include privacy issues, fast spread of illness and that people could experience more distractions.

Flexible working hours, the most preferred feature

Flexible working hours, the option of working-from-home option and a sabbatical leave policy, ranked high as the best of impressive company policies that are aimed at helping women grow in their career.

For a study conducted by JobsForHer as part of the 'Diversity Award 2019', more than 300 companies were surveyed.

According to a press release, a proprietary weightage system was developed to rank companies on various gender diversity parameters.

This awards-based initiative was aimed at showcasing and rewarding best practices by companies, creating benchmarking for gender di-

versity in India and inspiring other companies to start their own diversity & inclusion journeys, added the release.

On what companies can do to enable women to make a comeback, 47% of the respondents said flexibility in timing and location were a big plus factor. More than 30% of the participants wanted companies to provide reskilling opportunities and 12% wanted recruiters to be sensitised to the challenges faced by women returning to work.

More than 70% of the companies surveyed said they had started a returnee programme between 2015 and 2018.

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Around 56% of enterprises said they were hiring women returnees; among small and medium enterprises and start-ups,

it was 47% and 39% respectively.

The average paternity leave in 7% of the large enterprises ranged between

one and three months; and 42% of the companies said they ensured a fair process when employees went on maternity leave.

A good number of companies, close to 66%, said they had network groups for women employees to share ideas and knowledge as well as to improve their job prospects.

NEWS BYTES

Solutions from a hackathon

SHRM India is inviting start-ups, coders, entrepreneurs, researchers, designers and technologists to take part in a hackathon that seeks to address workplace problems. The objectives of the hackathon include finding clues to creating an engaged workforce and chalking out an effective talent acquisition programme, and drawing up an engaging learning and development strategy. The best innovators will get to showcase their technologies at the 'SHRM HR Tech APAC 2019'. The shortlisted teams will be given a busi-



Representational picture

ness problem and they have to come up with a technological solution in two to three days to tackle it. One winner and one runner-up will be chosen through voting.

For details, visit www.shrmtech.org/hackathon.html

Skilling software engineers

With the support of Google, TalentSprint is offering what is called "Women Engineers Programme".

According to a press release, 600 software engineers from a disadvantaged background will be trained over the next three years. College students, who will be identified through a selection process and groomed through a training programme, will be supported by 100% scholarship and an annual stipend of ₹ 1 lakh each, says the release.

The one-year programme is ideal for students entering their third or fourth year of engineering programme. Shortlisted participants will have live

online classes, mentorship, certification and team-based project work, all of which are aimed at enhance their problem-solving skills and computational thinking. For details, visit: <https://talentsprintwe.com>

An intrapreneurship conclave

With the support of CII Karnataka, Unfold Consulting is hosting an intrapreneurship conclave in Bengaluru on April 24.

The sessions at the event include: 'How to build a dynamic culture of intrapreneurship and promote it at the workplace' and 'What does it take to convert ideas into employee ventures and have a startup culture within the organisation'.

According to a release, at the conclave, Unfold Consulting, Accenture and Unisys will release the findings of India's 'Intrapreneurship Survey and Study of Accelerators'.

For details, visit www.intrapreneurshipconclave.com

How much do they want?

Here is a study about city-wise expectations of salary raises, ahead of the appraisal season

Do salary expectations vary from city to city? This question partly underpins a study conducted by Shine.com ahead of the appraisal season.

One of the findings of the study is that professionals working in Mumbai, Pune and Chennai are looking for higher pay hikes, compared to their counterparts in Delhi-NCR and Bengaluru.

According to the survey, in Mumbai almost 37% of people are expecting an increment of over 20%, while in Pune and Chennai, the number is 36% and 38% respectively.

Sector-wise analysis

A sector-wise analysis of appraisal expectations has revealed professionals from the BFSI and BPO/KPO/ITES sectors display the highest



appraisal sentiment, with over 35% of the employees in these sectors expecting more than 20% increment, added the release.

Respondents in the sur-

vey are: Mumbai (19.49%), Delhi/NCR (20.89%), Bengaluru (20.08%), Hyderabad (16.43%), Pune (9.34%) and Chennai (11.64%).