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Breaking the Gen-Divide - Understanding the Indian Woman Professional

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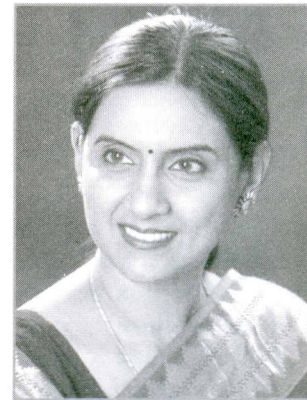
A little more than one year ago, the top theme on most recruiters' minds was whether they would be able to reach their target hires. Today, we are going through a phase which is if not radically, at least widely different. Quality and not quantity has become important and the war for talent is being fought in the minds of individuals. Companies have realized that it is exactly during times such as this when revenues are tight and cash flows tighter, that employee engagement – that wonderful Utopia of having a committed, loyal, productive and high-performing employee is all the more critical.

The Business case for Diversity has long been emphasized and a large number of companies today are clear that Diversity and Inclusivity is critical for an organization to operate effectively among multiple customer segments. Hence we find employee groups which are hugely different in their orientation and mindsets, working together in the Indian workplace, especially in the knowledge sectors. I believe that the role of the Talent Manager has changed irrevocably and is more challenging than ever before. What adds the spice and meaning to every HR practice and OD intervention is a deep understanding of these different diverse groups which populate the

workplace. This, in my opinion, is the route to sustainable employee engagement.

When we work with companies that are keen on creating a diverse atmosphere filled with all the exciting benefits of an inclusive culture, we request them to use multiple lenses while viewing their employee demographics. When a company tables Gender Diversity as a goal (and we have several clients of ours who aim for as high as between 40% to 45% inclusion of women employees), one of the sure ways in which to ensure that the budgets spent obtain a robust ROI is to begin with a complete employee demographic study.

Often product marketers are accused of doing a paranoid slice-and-dice of their markets, to reach that perfect target audience. But I agree with what David Ogilvy once said - that if you wish to please everyone, you would end up being special to no one. Segmenting – of markets and employees – is here to stay. And it is a win-win solution to begin the process with a 2-step



goal – 1) by identifying which employee group dominates your workforce and 2) What is the ideal employee mix you wish to pursue.

This could be basis any of the many characteristics which an employee subgroup demonstrates. Gender, Life-stage, Generation, Education and Personal Value systems are some of these. AVTAR has created solutions for several organizations in the area of Diversity and Inclusion and one of my favorites is the project which we ran for the Future Group in 2007-08. While the broad mandate from the client was to ensure Diversity in the workforce and access to non-conventional target pools, what happened serendipitously was the inclusion of a whole group of generationally diverse women employees. We ended up creating a workforce which had

