

Landing top IT jobs

Topical and foundational knowledge is a must

KRSANJIV

The total number of job openings in the US alone rose to 7.1 million in August, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Forecasts suggest that there will be 3.5 million unfilled cyber-security positions by 2021. Having said that, are job-seekers today equipped with the right skills to pursue the best jobs in IT?

With rapid advances in technology, what one learnt at university or at the workplace over the last few years may not be enough to survive in today's ever-evolving business scenario. There is a pressing need for skilled workforce. Businesses need to make significant investments in training and upskilling employees so that they meet the IT industry requirements.

Reskilling is based on two key fundamentals — foundational and combinatorial skills.

The first one is to improve the talent's foundational skills. For instance, there is an increasing requirement for business intelligence/data visualisation tools like Cognos, MicroStrategy, QlikView, Tableau, Jaspersoft and others. There are certification programmes on most of these.

A talent with strong knowledge of the fundamentals such as how databases work, how cubes are created, how to optimise these data stores, will have the ability to master any one of these tools with ease, switch from one to other, or pick up a new one with minimum challenge.

Today, the challenge before businesses is to create a workforce that has strong foundational skills in Java or C++ or Python or Swift. If the talent has proven records in writing high-performance code, unbreakable codes, an ability to frame the logic optimally, has proper object design skills, memory management concepts, they can build their foundational skills in any of the languages. A

strong foundation will also help them switch between these languages easily and pick up new ones like Rust.

Over the years, enterprises have trained people on the last mile — the tool syntaxes or the IDE — and deployed them on projects. Such trainings have resulted in a narrowly compartmentalised workforce who can do programming only in Java, or C++ further restricting the opportunities that come their way. Businesses now need to build a curriculum where these skills become well entrenched in employees. In addition, they need to re-skill employees who have over a decade of experience in the industry and now find their skill sets becoming obsolete.

The second point is on the need for breadth. Agile, small, high-performance team configurations and a vast amount of use cases that demand a confluence of emerging technologies are the norm. The industrial application of these technologies could come as combinations. Combinatorial skills are, therefore, key to staying ahead of the curve. It is a mandatory skill for an employee involved in projects that require data sciences, blockchain and IOT, or projects that require AR/VR, deep learning and UI design. Projects in the 5G space require an understanding of core networks, micro-services, virtualisation and building cloud native applications. The broader the 'topical' skills become, the better are the chances of finding long-term success.

Besides these foundational skills, 'elite' skills such as cyber-security, analytics, machine learning, computer vision, artificial intelligence, blockchain, internet of things (IoT), 5G, cloud, AR/VR, and encryption will help improve the talent's marketability. These elite skills will dominate the next decade of digital.

The writer is Chief Technology Officer at Wipro

Good corporate conduct begins at the top

If a CEO or MD speaks straight from the heart, all the board agenda papers would reflect the same

RANAND

A few years back, I happened to meet the CEO of a large company and asked him: "In your daily MIS which is the single item that you track closely?" Without batting an eyelid, he replied: "Emails pending reply by the senior management team including myself!" I almost fell off my chair. He went on to say that courtesy and conduct are exemplified by replying to all mails within reasonable time. Good conduct automatically results in good governance and bad conduct is the prescription for corporates to go downhill over a period of time.

Most corporates ignore the virtues of the behavioural aspect of governance in their quest for rapid growth and profits.

This set me on the journey of discovering the difference between corporate governance and corporate conduct.

Governance

Governance is the process whereby elements in society wield power and authority and enact policy and decisions concerning public life, and economic and social development. Extending this concept to corporate governance, it means the manner in which the management prescribes conduct of the organisation. This also means that governance is overarching, and conduct is the way of executing governance.

By design, good corporate governance means abiding by the laws and regulations in letter and spirit and ensuring that all statutory obligations are discharged on time.

Corporates that are obsessed with full compliance will leave no stone unturned in adhering to the letter and spirit of laws and regulations. They probably constitute 10 per cent of the corporate population.

At the other end are corporates that take a considered view that penalties are cheaper than adhering to regulations, more so considering the overall cost of compliance. These constitute, say, 10 per cent of corporate population.

The balance 80 per cent form the safety net group where compliance is respected and followed in letter but may not be fully in spirit. They would take multiple legal opinions for an adventurous route and back themselves that it will finally succeed. There is an overall feeling that there are too many regulations and the costs of compliance and litigation are disproportionately high in India compared to global standards.

Transparency

Good corporates believe in a full and fair disclosure of their approach to all stakeholders. Chairman's speech, board report, management discussion analysis, and notes on accounts to financial statements are areas where one can judge the quality of full and fair disclosure of corporates.

Disclosure of all accounting policies, managerial remuneration and related-party transactions in a fair and transparent manner is a requirement in today's corporate regulations. What is probably a grey area is the disclosure in a proper manner of actual liabilities as against contingent liabilities. This item in some sense is a lever in determining the right quantum of

profits to be reported to shareholders. The list of items in contingent liabilities is a minefield today and, in many cases, the actual liabilities are camouflaged as contingent liabilities.

Also, disclosure of other non-financial matters such as conservation of energy, technological absorption, etc., are reported more like a statistical information



Good corporates believe in full and fair disclosure to all stakeholders ISTOCK

rather than in a detailed cogent manner. There is also a tendency to park unwanted lengthy information in notes to accounts — for example, depreciation policy runs into pages but vital information like R&D, related-party transactions, and amount unspent on corporate social responsibility is explained in just three lines.

Corporates fall victim to the danger of selective transparency. It is again a function of the personality of the CEO or MD. If he speaks straight from the heart all the board agenda papers would also reflect the same. If by nature he is not that type, then the papers will also showcase it.

Evolved organisations ensure that full and fair disclosure is made in respect of each item in the agenda papers and a sign-off is obtained from the CEO or MD that all material information is provided to the board.

Conduct

The value system of a company is imbibed in the day-to-day conduct of the top management. Corporate conduct consists of two parts: conduct vis-à-vis internal management (workforce); and conduct vis-à-vis external stakeholders — other shareholders, vendors, regulators, customers, etc. Corporates that spend enough time and en-

ergy in adhering to good conduct emerge clear winners in the race to the final destination of excellence. Corporate conduct also flows from the personal attributes of the leader. If he swipes the access card first coming into office, then others will follow and come on time. There are corporates focussed on ensuring that every small creditor is paid immediately. This is an example of exemplary corporate conduct. Courtesy and warmth displayed to all parties visiting the office — notably vendors, customers, service providers and prospective employees — leave a lasting impression in the minds of people. Organisations that are focussed only on good behaviour with regulators and indifferent behaviour with other stakeholders are not endearing themselves to good conduct or good governance.

Exit interviews, particularly of senior management personnel who leave the organisation, are valuable pointers where conduct of superiors come into focus. More often than not, corporates ignore the importance of feedback coming in via these exit interviews. Dilution in conduct becomes visible when corporates transition to the next generation, more so when the executives taking over the reins do not attach

importance to good conduct.

Another example of good corporate conduct is where companies ensure that no element of personal expenses is charged to the company's account.

However, shades of grey are visible where some of the expenses have both official and personal elements. The feeling in corporate sector is that "all expenses are official, unless proved otherwise". Corporates with good conduct ensure that every item of expense is official and there are no shades of personal element involved.

Model code of conduct

Tata Motors: The TATA code of conduct embraces the spirit of i-PURE, namely Integrity, Pioneering, Unity, Responsibility and Excellence. The box relating to integrity epitomises ideal corporate conduct. It says, "We will be fair, honest, transparent and ethical in our conduct; everything we do must stand the test of public scrutiny."

Google: The Google's code of conduct has two distinct compartments: The first relates to the external world which can be termed as PRAISE-U: Privacy, Responsiveness, take Action, Integrity, Security, freedom of Expression and Usefulness. The integrity of Google is built on trust. The second compartment deals with internal management which includes, among other things, harassment and safe workplace. The common link in both the codes of conduct is customers.

With so many first-generation and start-up companies coming up it is vital to instil in them the importance of good governance and good conduct. Training sessions on corporate governance should have modules on good conduct which alone will ensure sustained and profitable growth for corporates. Swachh corporates should be an integral part of the Swachh Bharath Mission.

The writer is a chartered accountant

5 THINGS to WATCH OUT for TODAY

■ **All Unions** and Associations of BSNL (AUAB) will go on a one-day hunger strike to protest the non-payment of September salary. They are also seeking timely payment of their salaries every month. The BSNL unions will also hold lunch-hour demonstrations across all circles.

■ **NCP leader** and former Civil Aviation Minister, Praful Patel, will be questioned by the Enforcement Directorate in connection with a money-laundering case. He has been summoned for his alleged links with the Iqbal Mirchi, an aide of underworld don Dawood Ibrahim.

■ **The Supreme** Court will hear a plea seeking 100 per cent insurance protection for the deposits of over 15 lakh customers of the Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative (PMC) Bank. The former chairman of PMC Bank, Waryam Singh, and HDIL directors, Rakesh Wadhawan and Sarang Wadhawan, have been sent to judicial custody till October 23.

■ **Indian Oil** Corporation will stop supplying aviation turbine fuel to Air India from today. This decision comes after Air India failed to comply with the ₹100 crore/month payment. Air India stated that the move will not affect the schedules or movement of its flights.

■ **The US** will begin imposing tariffs on \$7.5 billion worth European products. This comes after the WTO had authorised the US to do so, to revoke the issues surrounding decades of illegal government subsidies to aircraft manufacturer Airbus. The European Commission, however, said that it would like to enter into negotiations with the US to settle the dispute without resorting to tariffs.

A THOUSAND WORDS



Excitement ahead A child looks out of a door as a potter carries earthen lamps to dry for the upcoming Diwali festival, in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh AP

EASY

ACROSS

01. Solemn ceremony (11)
07. Document of privilege (7)
09. Stalk (4)
11. Oil tree (5)
12. Secret, confined place (6)
14. Instructive (11)
18. Of the mail (6)
20. Of the nose (5)
22. Name of a thing in grammar (4)
23. Former, erstwhile (3-4)
24. Restored to youth (11)

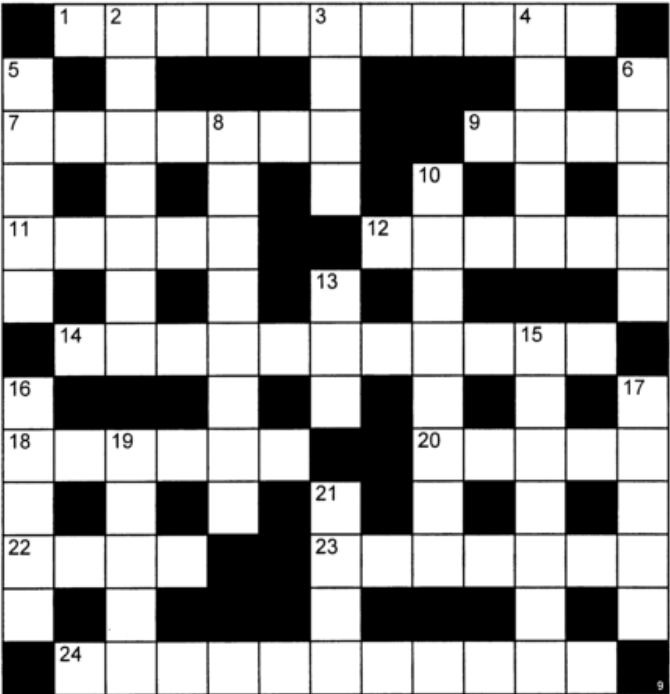
DOWN

02. Excuse, attempt at escaping (7)
03. Undercooked (meat) (4)
04. Many times (5)
05. Bailing-vessel (5)
06. Trim, spruce, fine (5)
08. Abstaining from alcohol (8)
10. Resume, go on with (8)
13. Mischievous child (3)
15. Surviving trace (7)
16. Backbone (5)
17. Foreign, strange (5)
19. Dressing for food (5)
21. Push against another (racehorse) (4)

SOLUTION: BL Two-way Crossword 1468

- ACROSS** 01. Injures 05. Paved 08. Spangle 09. Right 10. Stop-watch 12. Leg 13. Three 17. Asp 19. Reputable 21. Manna 22. Outcrop 24. Royal 25. Decayed
DOWN 01. Insist 02. Jealous 03. Rug 04. Sheet 05. Parchment 06. Vigil 07. Dotage 11. Waterfall 14. Liberty 15. Hammer 16. Heaped 18. Pansy 20. Proud 23. Tic

BL TWO-WAY CROSSWORD 1469



NOT SO EASY

ACROSS

01. Joyous time to get bracelet out and put one on (11)
07. The car turned right, being on hire (7)
09. Part of a pipe to stop the flow in (4)
11. Sort of green oil mixture have half of it (5)
12. Where lines meet for a free shot (6)
14. It tells a lot about motive in RAF formation (11)
18. Of letter service to Alps, perhaps (6)
20. Nosy way to get back in gaol as a mark (5)
22. In grammar, a word universally found in French negative (4)
23. Former I'm to indicate with 'nee' (3-4)
24. Under jet, Eva could have been made young again (11)

DOWN

02. It could be an excuse to be so naive (7)
03. Uncommon entry in opera rehearsal (4)
04. Two and five are factors, frequently (5)
05. Exclusive story one may shovel up (5)
06. Feel the pain of being elegantly turned out (5)
08. Doesn't drink tea to let it get blended (8)
10. Go on with unit once it is reassembled (8)
13. Wicked spirit that makes one a politician (3)
15. A trace to give set of variations (7)
16. It shows book title may be prickly (5)
17. How strange to have a right to distract on property! (5)
19. The impudence that may come in a bottle (5)
21. To use drill may prove tedious (4)