



Wednesday, January 21, 2015

The LOST ART of CORPORATE CREATIVITY (Jpeg)

Publication: The Times of India, Edition: Ahmedabad/Chennai/Bangalore/Delhi, Agency: Bureau, Page No: 19, Location: Top-Right, Width(cms): 25, Height(cms): 20, Size (sq.cms): 500

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Journalists, advertising professionals and those engaged in seemingly 'creative' pursuits, often invite a lot of envy from their less fortunate (or so they believe) peers. Because, a corporate job cannot possibly involve any aesthetics, right? But a few voices from India Inc are out to prove this assumption wrong. "This may be completely true for the industrial-era corporate jobs but the situation is changing in the post-industrial world. In today's business world, design and aesthetics are increasingly becoming dominant. As a matter of fact, design is emerging as a distinct business discipline. The success of Apple is a prime ex-

ample. Apple leads through design innovation and not technology and has amply demonstrated that even in the world of computer geeks, design has a place. This is true for most of the industries or functions including public services, utilities, consumer durables, marketing, human resources, etc," says Sha-trunjay Krishna, director - talent management and organisational alignment, Towers Watson India. The question of whether corporate jobs are meant only for the unartistic begs an answer in an era when more and more professionals are beginning to question their career choices and craving for jobs that are creatively satisfying. How many times have you heard an accountant or an HR executive express their desire to pursue

something artistic? Our personalities and lives are no longer unidimensional and yet, when we have to put in so many hours at work, it becomes difficult to compartmentalise our different selves effectively. A better solution would be to allow the different selves to mingle and produce better products and ideas.

Krishna believes that we are in the early stages of a 'design revolution'. Yet, the exodus of engineers-turned-authors leads one to believe that one can never give complete rein to one's creativity without quitting the corporate field altogether. Yet, the very same authors usually return to the field as they see the opportunity to turn into 'artistic

entrepreneurs'. Giving up a salaried job is not an option for everyone and besides, being a full-time artist comes with its own challenges and pitfalls. Why not find a middle path that is actually more enriching? "Wherever young people show initiative and ability, they are being given more and more responsibility and freedom to take decisions. That responsibility never comes from just one kind of skill or ability, but from the ability to synthesise different kinds of information - financial, accounting, strategy, business relationships, brand, emo-

ditional associations, visual and aesthetic," says Dr Aditya Dev Sood, founder and CEO, Adianta School for Leadership & Innovation.

An individual who is able to find scope for creativity and innovation in any job is a true asset to the organisation. Such an individual is not bound by conventional ideas of what defines 'creative' and what doesn't. "To gauge the pulse of your employees and teams and truly recognise what gets them ticking, you have to step up to the mantle and take charge of being the catalyst for innovation and be the change that infuses enthusiasm, motivation and happiness into the work environment of your institution," advises R Anand, VP - global rewards, people and leadership, HCL Technologies.

Speaking about the field of engineering in particular, Dr T C Ramesh, head - technology excellence group, QuEST Global says, "Engineering by nature is a cre-

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ative field. However, when the activities are broken down, they may seem to be monotonous. This does not mean that engineering is meant for the unartistic. It is important to realise that to be able to reach the levels at which one will do the highest level of a creative job, one has to start from the lowest task and work one's way up." And that brings us to perhaps the most important point of all: the level of creativity you can allow yourself varies at different levels of the organisational hierarchy and if you're going to be in it for the long haul, you have this to look forward to - a time will come when you're not just a cog in the wheel; but the entire wheel depends on your ideas and contributions. Of course, if you plan to go the entrepreneurial way, that time might come sooner than later.

Sood concludes, "To succeed in work and life, it will never do to have only one kind of ability, either the aesthetic or the analytic, but rather, both must be integrated to develop one's executive functioning." So if you've been feeling 'trapped' in your monotonous job, do a rethink on whether the monotony is stemming from the job or you. If it's you, then adding some zest to your job may be the solution.

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Let's face it. For most of us, 'corporate' equates with boring, analytical and mentally draining. But what if you're an artist trapped in the body of a corporate professional? Can you be both, or does it have to be one or the other?

