

HCL Technologies Limited

Closing the Gender Gap:

The Gap:

Type of Gap: ...at middle management level

At HCL we believe that we need to create platforms for men and women to participate and contribute ideas for enabling gender inclusion in an equal and equitable manner.

Research at HCL indicates that progression of women in the middle management is often challenged by certain life situations like marriage and motherhood. Such situations are best managed when women are able to speak up about their issues openly and get their co-workers support in managing work-life priorities. Hence we created "BlogHer", a platform for HCLites to connect, dialogue and suggest gender inclusive policies and practices.

The Practice:

Type of practice: Awareness, incentives & accountability

Based on the 'Employee First' philosophy at HCL, we provide platforms for employees to network and share their views, where decisions are taken collectively. Such networks get established through our social site "MEME" and "BlogHer" is available on this site.

Blog themes can be initiated by each individual employee in this self moderated group. Themes also get started by the Diversity Team, based on any gender issue that the business shares with them. The Diversity Team in HCL is a part of the CEO's office. The team works on strategies, initiatives, program and business intervention to create an inclusive work environment at HCL. During the Team's interaction with the business team and during period focused group discussions we come across many viewpoints, suggestions and dilemmas which are posted as new threads on BlogHer. Outcomes from such discussions help to understand many ground level realities.

Once a new thread has been initiated on BlogHer, the new topic gets flashed in HCL's daily news digest sent to all employees. Any employee can then join the group to share their views. Once an employee has joined a particular group, they will be notified of any new posts regarding the topic. Employees start sharing perspectives, invite their colleagues to join and debate on expectations regarding their work environment or suggest solutions to unique situations that women face. Thus the platform is used both as a channel for advocating gender inclusive practices as well as for peer mentoring of women on work life priorities.

Metrics:

There are around 1000+ employees who share their views on "BlogHer". Issues ranging from stereotypes in the work place to policies get discussed. Women in senior management share success stories and enable women in junior-middle management positions. Decision makers and Human resources teams get new perspectives on promoting a gender neutral work environment and enhance employee productivity.

Implementation Date:

BlogHer is a long term program, but will have new ideas for engaging employees every 4 months.

The Success:

The blogs helped us revise policies such as flexible work arrangement and telecommuting. We have put together a new set of guidelines based on reasonable accommodation for situations that were discussed in the blogs. More than 50% of the employees enrolled in this platform are men.

The hard metric is that we see a steady sustenance of female-to-male ratios in the middle management. In the past one year period we notice a steady increase in gender ratios across all levels. This increase is due to many aspects, and BlogHer definitely compliments the trend.

Success factors:

1. Participation of employees across all levels; no hierarchy
2. Free and open discussion of gender issues, and peer mentoring through experience sharing
3. Equal number of men engaging in gender discussions

Barriers:

1. Technical - enabling employees working in secured IT networks
2. Propagating the idea of open discussions on gender issues
3. Positioning the channel among male employees

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