Catalyzing Change 2012
Shaping the Future

NASSCOM FOUNDATION
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Finally we would like to convey our appreciation to Green Evangelist, our partner agency for the design and data collection of the report and emaho consulting for their editorial and design support.

Team NASSCOM Foundation
I take great pleasure in presenting the 2013 edition of Catalyzing Change, NASSCOM Foundation’s series of publications on the state-of-play of Business Responsibility in the IT-BPM industry in India. Catalyzing Change is the result of substantial research undertaken by NASSCOM Foundation in recognition of the contribution of the industry to inclusive growth and the importance of further understanding business responsibility to accelerate its impact.

In the new millennium, the public sphere has been dominated by demands for businesses to play a greater role in climate change, environmental protection, poverty reduction and inclusion in general. Public expectation is growing in the global North and South, and more and more businesses have felt compelled to respond. This expectation is not limited to citizens and civil society but has been increasingly mirrored by investors and governments the world over, who have affirmed that businesses must work to redress this as they have a direct responsibility for their impact on society and environment. Investors, especially, have a key role to play through socially responsible investing (SRI). Traditional investment practices rewarded short-term gains at the expense of long-term returns. This practice must change if the financial system is to be truly sustainable. By integrating sustainability issues directly into the investment process, investors can form deeper engagements with companies on environmental, social and governance issues. This would directly address issues such as social inequity, climate change, resource scarcity and biodiversity loss.

In addition, it is imperative to tackle broader issues relating to the structure, function and governance of markets as a whole, if responsible investment is to be mainstreamed. This relates directly to the role of governments in formulating relevant and effective public policy. In India, for example, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs has made a unique beginning by proposing a 2% mandatory spend on CSR by companies of a certain size, as part of the Companies Bill, 2012.

The IT-BPM industry’s contribution to the growth of India’s economy is well known. In 2012 it provided direct employment to nearly 3 million people, and indirectly to 9 million. The revenues of the sector have grown from 1.2 per cent of the GDP in FY1998 to an estimated 7.5 per cent in FY2012. These successes are not limited to the economic sphere alone. NASSCOM member companies have taken several excellent initiatives to promote education, health and general development in rural and urban areas, especially for excluded groups like at-risk children, women and persons with disability. Further, the industry has been at the vanguard of efforts to engage with communities by involving employees in the communities they work in and around. Not that the young brigade that represents this industry need much encouragement in this regard! Previous years’ research has shown that volunteering and CSR grows organically within most companies and is a result of the dynamic spirit of ‘social intrapreneurship’ within. A social intrapreneur is a person who works inside corporations to develop and promote internal solutions to social or environmental challenges.

Given the topical nature of the subject matter, Catalyzing Change 2013 is well timed. This is especially true vis a vis the Companies Bill. While the move is unique, much remains to be done in terms of defining ‘on what’ and ‘how’ companies should disburse their funds. This report can help companies better understand the complex nature of Business Responsibility and its multifarious components. It presents nine aspects of Business Responsibility and best practices in these areas from NASSCOM member companies. Each of these facets has been specially chosen by the Foundation to represent areas where the IT-BPM industry has done significant work and which others can emulate. What is perhaps unique across all these examples is that they have been brought to life and moulded by enlightened employees. It is these social intrapreneurs who are helping shape the future.

We hope you find this document useful and look forward to your participation in this journey, which has only just begun!

Rita Soni
CEO, NASSCOM Foundation
The relationship between businesses and the societies in which they function has changed as people have become more socially conscious. In the information age, companies are no longer perceived as behemoths detached from the fate of societies, but as active stakeholders that are obligated to behave responsibly and contribute back to these societies through the products and services they provide. At the same time, businesses themselves have become more responsible, – both as employers and as providers of value-adding goods and services. Realization has dawned given the increasing linkages between a company’s conscience and the bottom line, and companies have begun to view social responsibility as an expansive concept, spanning both their external interactions with society, as well as internally to improve performance and employee engagement. This recognition – of the alignment of business sustainability and performance to development goals both within companies and externally in societies they function in – is at the very heart of the business responsibility (BR) Revolution.

What does Business Responsibility mean? Definitions abound and differ depending on whether it is approached by corporations, academics, civil society or governments. A broad definition is that business responsibility entails running a company profitably while aligning its business goals to those of its stakeholders, including customers, employees, local communities, society and the environment. It is not just about doing business; it is about doing business responsibly.

Why should companies want to do business responsibly? Besides being the right thing to do, it also makes good business sense. A company’s performance is now measured not just by its financial bottom line, but by its social and environmental activities – by the impact that they have on societies they serve. Investors, employees and customers are expecting more from businesses. This spotlight has caused the sustainability agenda to be discussed at the Board and C-suite levels. Companies focusing on business responsibility and sustainability can testify that it leads to innovation, employee engagement, customer satisfaction and operational efficiency. Indeed it can become a source of differentiation and competitive advantage for companies.

Indian companies are taking great strides to realise this ideal. In some companies, sustainability responsibilities rests with the CEO or the CFO aided by executive committees and councils that focus on setting sustainability policies and goals. At the same time, business responsibility implementation within an organization is becoming decentralized. More companies are empowering employees to drive their BR programs. Today, the focus is on aligning these activities with the company’s core competencies and materiality, and then diligently following up to ensure they have the desired impact. In some cases, these activities also tie in directly with the company’s business goals, leading to the development of new markets and customers and encouraging innovation in the process.

To combat groupthink and to encourage fresh ideas,
more companies are embracing the need for diversity and inclusivity, and are driving this agenda throughout the organization. From assistive technologies that make the world more inclusive, to ICT solutions that make the world more democratic, technology has become a silver bullet to cure all maladies. This is the reason why several companies are concentrating on digital literacy. Environmental responsibility is seen to be the driver not just of a cleaner planet, but also of operational efficiency and cost savings.

While companies are evolving due to changing market and societal demands, governments are increasingly putting more pressure as well. The Government of India, for example, in the new Companies Bill (2011) proposes that companies would need to spend 2 per cent of profits on corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities. Companies that would qualify are those that have a net worth of INR 500 crores, or a turnover of INR 1,000 crores, or a net profit of INR 5 crores. The government has left it to corporates to decide how to spend on CSR. This means that companies need to pause and think about the best way to make their CSR spend count.

India has had a tradition of corporate philanthropy. Companies and the trusts they have set up have donated to a range of causes, built schools, contributed to hospitals, supported deserving and meritorious students, etc. However, the issue at hand is that philanthropy and business responsibility are not the same thing. Philanthropy can and should remain a part of a company’s activities, but business responsibility is a much wider and nuanced term, which, as we have mentioned earlier, covers the gamut of activities undertaken in a company and every sphere it operates in. Philanthropic activities often focus mostly on reputation and have a limited connection to the business, making them hard to justify and sustain in the long term. In contrast, business responsibility is integral to a company’s profitability and competitive position. It leverages the unique expertise and resources of the company to create joint economic and social value.

The IT-BPM industry in particular has been at the forefront of the changing face of business responsibility in India. According to NASSCOM’s estimate (Strategic Review 2010), the industry has contributed toward social development to the tune of USD 50 million through CSR activities. While these are mainly strategic philanthropic projects, the industry has also helped in improving access to and delivery of services in healthcare, education and banking. It has helped bridge the digital divide by providing products and services which have benefited disadvantaged sections of society, and has helped in providing e-government services.

Philanthropy and business responsibility are not the same thing. Philanthropy can and should remain a part of a company’s activities, but business responsibility is a much wider and nuanced term, which covers a gamut of activities undertaken in a company and every sphere it operates in.

ABOUT THE REPORT
To discuss and study current industry practices in Business Responsibility, NASSCOM Foundation has selected nine elements. To showcase each, we approached companies that were considered to be leading exponents of that practice. They kindly agreed to share their journey and learnings with us. We hope you find these case studies illuminating. Each of them has been compiled with the objective of enabling our member companies to implement these salient practices in their own organizations.

1 **Synergizing strategic philanthropy with business goals:** Accenture provides a good example of linking business skills with business goals and sustainability needs. They bring their core competence of nurturing talent to skill-building programs.

2 **Teambuilding and improving employee engagement through corporate volunteerism:** While several IT companies invite their employees to volunteer and participate in BR activities, Cognizant Technologies and CSC encourage their teams to own and drive their BR programs. 'Outreach' is Cognizant’s social initiatives program, led and sustained purely by the voluntary efforts of its employees. At CSC, a committee of 40 elected employees, Binergy, drives its BR activities in India.

3 **Promoting corporate citizenship through emerging market solutions:** Microsoft shows that its BR mandate can also become a business opportunity. By tying up with NGOs to develop technology skills in communities, the company had a huge impact on IT literacy in rural areas, improving employability and increasing its pool of potential customers. KnowIT exemplifies how a company whose initial focus was providing a social service can also have great business potential at the base of the pyramid.

4 **Promoting a positive environmental footprint through an eco-transformation roadmap:** Environmental stewardship shows up on the radar of several IT companies. The case study on Genpact discusses its eco-transformation roadmap and various initiatives to reduce its electricity and water consumption. Dell leads the way in e-waste recycling.

5 **Enhancing access to essential services through social innovation:** Geodesic’s product GeoAmida promises to revolutionize the effect technology can have on the hinterlands. This is an interesting instance of how a combination of intensive needs and market research, a skilled technology team and smart implementation had significant results in the fields of banking services, and government schemes like the public distribution system and MGNREGA.

6 **Capitalizing on the talent pool through employee diversity:** Diversity is an engine of innovation and there is a general sense that organizations want their processes to be more inclusive. Wipro’s case study sheds light on how to implement an inclusivity framework in an organization - from ramping up physical infrastructure and information systems to make them disabled-friendly, to the need for sensitising employees to create an inclusive atmosphere. From MphasiS we learn that it does not require a mammoth investment to become inclusive and Aegis shows the way to setting and tracking diversity goals.
Bridging the digital divide though web accessibility: It is not just people with disabilities who benefit from Web accessibility guidelines. These guidelines also help senior citizens, people with low bandwidth and mobile access. Yahoo! and BarrierBreak showcase the best practices of making a company’s websites accessible.

Delivering the bottom line through sustainable value creation: Infosys shows us how they integrate their sustainability initiatives with their business mandate. Through a council that sets, implements and monitors the goals that drive their initiatives, they ensure their sustainability and business goals are inextricably linked. With Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) comprising 95% of its employees, Vindhya e-Infomedia shows how diversity and inclusivity can be the rule, not the exception. This case study describes how Vindhya’s operating principle has led to a sustainable and profitable business model.

Measuring business responsibility performance to optimize impact: We approached TCS to study how they monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their BR programs. The case study showcases their model based on the parameters of reach, outcome and impact.

Responsible business practices are a recognition of, and response to the understanding and acceptance of the fact that businesses and society are irrevocably interconnected and interdependent. It requires that business and organizational activity are accounted for - both financial and non-financial and require a process of accountability, transparency and comparability. These cases illustrate that IT-BPM companies are well on their way to establishing responsible business structures. Let us then celebrate the onset of this new era - the era of Business Responsibility!
Synergizing Strategic Philanthropy With Business Goals

“We bring to our corporate citizenship efforts the same principles of high performance that we apply to our work with our clients. As a firm, we are committed to help India transform and accelerate its journey towards becoming a high performance nation. We are approaching this with the same sense of purpose and focus that we bring to everything we do.”

Rekha M. Menon, Executive Director, Accenture India

Strategic philanthropy refers to donations in cash or kind designed around focused needs assessment of target communities, planning, proven implementation strategies, regular monitoring and evaluation of impact in order to achieve intended results. To be truly effective, strategic philanthropy must also reflect a company’s core values and business goals.

One model of strategic philanthropy is to leverage the company’s domain expertise. During the course of operations, companies acquire capabilities which are hard to find in the social development space. One of the most desirable ways for such companies to incorporate Responsible Business practices is to use these capabilities to create and disseminate socially and locally relevant products and services.

Given Accenture’s experience in developing and nurturing talent, focusing on a skills development program ties in perfectly with their business model and enables them to deliver real outcomes.

Technology companies in the services space have vast experience of rapidly training youth from varied backgrounds with a focus on employability. With an educational system that does not focus on vocational training, India is ripe for such training being deployed on a large scale. Technology companies can utilize their training teams to create content for such deployment without incurring significant additional expenses. Furthermore, delivery of this content can be handed over to the multitude of NGOs, private entities and government bodies which already have last mile engagement. A fully-free or a ‘freemium’ model can help drive the product deeper into the rural hinterland. Using this model, companies can create massive impact without having to invest heavily into either content creation or delivery.

**ACCENTURE | Creating value through skills development – the Skills to Succeed program**

India has one of the youngest workforces in the world but only 2% of the population in the age group of 15-29 has received any vocational training. Most jobs require skills-based training, not the knowledge-based training that the Indian education system focuses on. Recognising the critical need for skill development, the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) was set up in India with the objective of skilling and upskilling people. Skills to Succeed – Accenture’s corporate citizenship effort – resonates the national agenda to bridge the skill divide. In addition it mirrors Accenture’s global goal to equip 250,000 people with the skills to get a job or build a business by 2015. To implement the program the company collaborates with NGO partners, employers, government and other funding agencies.

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2 Freemium is a business model where a product/service is provided free of charge, but a premium is charged for advanced features or functionality
3 FICCI research quoted in Financial Express; see http://www.financialexpress.com/news/2-vocational-training-in-1529-age-groupunfortunate/505321
The program’s current focus is on building skills in high-growth industry verticals like Business Process Outsourcing, Hospitality & Facilities Management, Retail, Construction and Micro-Enterprise, where the potential for employment is high. In the retail sector, Accenture is working with Quest Alliance to build a blended learning curriculum that integrates best practices of classroom and e-learning, thus building a competent retail workforce. Accenture has also partnered with Dr. Reddy’s Foundation (DRF) since 2007, to train youth in BPO and basic IT skills. Placement rates are up to 70% with many trainees being placed in leading BPO companies, apart from those employed by Accenture itself. DRF and Accenture are in the process of scaling up the programs by working with an ecosystem of other Skills to Succeed NGOs.

Accenture partnered with Don Bosco Tech and ITC Welcom Group of Hotels – a leading hotel chain – as knowledge partner for providing training in hospitality skills to youth from low income backgrounds. Through LaborNet, a compilation of ten multilingual training videos in tile laying, carpentry, and water proofing were created to help informal sector workers gain access to meaningful employment in the construction industry.

As part of its work with the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India, youth from rural towns and districts are trained in leadership, business plan development and financial management. Accenture is also working with Enable India and Dr. Reddy’s Foundation to lessen the gap between employment rates for persons with disabilities and the general population through BPO skills training aimed at improving their job prospects.

In 2011, more than 60 people from Accenture India provided consulting services worth US$ 200,000 on a variety of projects, from developing scalability strategies to business plans such as for a partner to helping build a supply chain for a network of 45,000 female rural entrepreneurs. For some programs, Accenture subject matter experts train the trainers, and develop curriculum and content for training. Employees also volunteer for these initiatives and participate in fund-raising activities. By 2015, Accenture aims to equip 2.5 lakh people around the world with the skills to get a job or build a business.

Accenture Development Partnerships, the ‘not-for profit’ arm, helps develop sustainable solutions to global development challenges. For its employees, this is an opportunity to work on ‘non-traditional’ projects and clients in locations around the world.

**Key takeaways**

- Use your company’s core domain expertise to find an area of focus and utilize your people to set up a structure

- Partner with relevant NGOs to reach out to underserved communities

- Close the loop by focusing on outcomes (such as jobs post training) rather than outputs (numbers trained)
One of the biggest challenges technology companies face today is employee engagement and creating models for non-monetary engagement, learning and growth. Typically HR has risen to this challenge by attempting to make the workplace a stimulating and fun filled space which provides the necessary stimuli to employees. Further, reward and recognition systems have been put in place to keep the employee happy. However, increasingly HR departments have realised that in order to keep an employee truly engaged in his work, they need to address all aspects of an employee’s life, i.e. financial, emotional, and social aspects. While a reward and recognition program can fulfil an employee’s financial and emotional needs, the social aspects of her/his persona go unfulfilled. Volunteerism is one tool which has shown strong evidence of improved employee engagement in Indian companies, especially in IT-BPM companies. Volunteering their time for community service helps people realise much about their own skills (many of which may be unutilised or under-utilised in professional situations); this further helps increase personal confidence as well as provides a platform to showcase their talent/skills to others.

While providing funds and products for the use of the wider community is a relatively cost effective way for companies to fulfil their responsibilities, the bottleneck often is in the last mile of delivery. At the same time, the provision of funds is often decided by a small decision making body without any direct connect to the employees. Hence, such activities have little impact on employee motivation even as they help the company in the external environment. Volunteerism allows companies to bring the impact of their Business Responsibility initiatives to their employees and engage them more meaningfully.

Volunteering programs are typically conceived, led, operated and managed by employees even as companies provide overall direction and guidance to them. Volunteer efforts begin small, driven by passion of one or more employees, and grow organically. Employees can organize themselves using one of the many models available to ensure efficiency of operations. However, once they grow beyond a certain size and move out to multiple locations, most companies have found that they are best given a structure. The success of such programs depends on three factors. One, the companies support the programs with funds and create structures for employees to take time out of regular operations for volunteering. Two, there is periodic monitoring of activities and results are used to sharpen delivery methods and processes. Three, successes are celebrated and shortcomings addressed so employees feel happy and recognized for their efforts.

CoNIZANT | Creating a non-hierarchical employee-driven volunteering paradigm

Some of the best and brightest of India’s youth work in the country’s IT industry. What better way to harness their enthusiasm and give them a sense of satisfaction than by giving them avenues to volunteer? Cognizant encourages its employee to drive and sustain its Business Responsibility activities. The company’s Business Responsibility agenda is driven by three
programs – Cognizant Foundation, Outreach and Go Green. Cognizant Foundation is the BR arm that funds programs in the areas of education and healthcare. Outreach comprises social initiative programs that are led and sustained purely by the voluntary efforts of Cognizant employees. Go Green focuses on creating employee awareness on sustainability.

Outreach programs are sponsored by Cognizant and are directly monitored by the CFO. The critical success factor is that there is a strong alignment with the culture of the company.

Cognizant’s Business Responsibility initiatives started in late 2006 with the launch of the blogging platform – ‘Outreach’ - for its employees as they started sharing their experiences in community service. Understanding the Outreach initiative begins with Cognizant’s vision of “Educating the Future”. Since its launch, Outreach has received participation from more than 20,000 employees who have contributed to over 1000 community service projects and events, and have reached out to 4,00,000 children. Outreach programs are sponsored by Cognizant and are directly monitored by the CFO. The critical factor in the success of Outreach is that there is a strong alignment with the culture of the company. Since volunteering is not driven by the hierarchy of the organization, it is the culture that acts as the key catalyst.

Interested Cognizant employees are organized as Outreach Councils across its various offices globally. A council comprises a leader who is the practice or centre head, supported by a core committee of 7 to 10 members. This group consists of employees working on different projects, but sharing a common passion to work for the community around them. The core team coordinates with the employees across the business units or location and identifies volunteers who wish to be a part of the council’s BR activities.

Each local council assumes leadership for the Outreach programs in their community or locality. The council adopts underprivileged school(s) and extends support to them in terms of education and infrastructure development. They conduct regular classes at the school, orphanages or juvenile homes or with street children where there is a need for external tuition assistance. They also aid the adopted schools with infrastructure projects such as setting up a laboratory for science or computers, construction of classrooms and their furnishing and other initiatives. Outreach runs volunteer mobilisation campaigns and programs to suit the varied interests of volunteers like ‘You can Help a School,’ ‘Be a Teacher’ (BAT), Street Children Empowerment Programs (SCEP), TalHunt and Junior Achievement’s “Careers with a Purpose” (JACWAP).

Outreach has also created a Model School Blueprint for its councils and encourages them to adhere to the standards and benchmarks set in the blueprint document. However, the councils have been empowered to modify these guidelines. These standards and benchmarks have been adapted from the information contained in the Right to Education Act.

To automate operational activities, Cognizant has customised an ERP system to suit BR needs. The performance of the Outreach Councils in terms of volunteering hours, lives touched, type and number of activities are measured and tracked by the Impact Index. The Index helps the councils benchmark their performance, understand the impact of their work and has fostered healthy competition among the councils. This Index is published monthly to give councils a unified theme or goal to work towards. This has enhanced and streamlined the activities of the council to focus on creating a deeper and a more lasting impact through volunteerism.

To celebrate these achievements, Cognizant organises the Outreach Conclave, an annual gathering of key stakeholders of Outreach from across India. Each year, the top 200 volunteers and Outreach leaders are selected to participate in the conclave. The conclave provides a forum to volunteers for Outreach activities to come together to share ideas, best practices and gain knowledge from the professionals working in the area of education. There are sessions by CEOs of NGOs, presentations by volunteers...
Creating A Non-hierarchical Employee-driven Volunteering Paradigm

**OUTREACH**
- 20,000+ employees
- 1,000+ projects
- 400,000 children reached

**STRUCTURE**
Council with leader supported by 7-10 members in each location

**PROJECTS**
- Councils adopt underprivileged schools, orphanages, juvenile homes, or street children; extends support in terms of education and infrastructure development.
- Campaigns run: 'You can help a School', 'Be a Teacher' (BAT), Street Children Empowerment Programmes (SCEP), TailHunt and Junior Achievement's 'Careers with a Purpose' (JACWAP)
- Model School Blueprint with standards and benchmarks based on the Right to Education Act

**MONITORING**
- ERP system for Business Responsibility needs
- Impact Index for measuring outreach
- Index is published monthly

**IMPACT**
- 24% felt volunteering improved their work performance
- 82% felt that volunteering increased their awareness of social issues and desire to help society

**CELEBRATE ACHIEVEMENT**
- Annual Outreach Conclave of 200 top volunteers and other stakeholders to share ideas, best practices and gain knowledge from professionals
- The result - better knowledge sharing among councils and an increased desire to volunteer
and goal-setting workshops for council heads to plan for the year ahead. The councils also get the chance to showcase their best projects during the Outreach Carnival. The result is better knowledge sharing among councils and an increased desire to volunteer among all employees.

Cognizant conducts periodic social audits to gauge the impact on its Outreach programs volunteers. Findings of the audit have revealed that 24% of volunteers felt Outreach activities had greatly improved their work performance and 82% of volunteers felt that these activities had increased their awareness of social issues and desire for helping society.
“CSC India has played a conscious and active role in ensuring that the work done under CSR is effective and critical. Whether it is adopting villages or organizing relief programs, all our social causes share something in common — they are acts of self-realization from an organization committed to a greater cause, i.e., to create a better, uplifted society. We are happy to have associates who look beyond professional success, who are sensitive to social issues and actively contribute for the cause”

Brian J Manning, President and Managing Director, CSC India

CSC | Developing a strong culture of volunteerism

CSC has an unconventional take on employee-driven Business Responsibility activities. ‘Binergy’ is a 40-member committee of CSC employees who collectively drive these activities in India. The committee members (1 member per 500 employees) are democratically elected each year in a formal electoral process. The Binergy team is headed by a country mentor and each location has a committee advisor. CSC has seven locations in India and 6 advisors at these locations. Binergy conducts BR campaigns and voluntary programs throughout the year which are driven and managed by CSC’s workforce of over 24,000 employees spread across India.

CSC’s volunteer programs touch upon 5 major areas – Community Development, Education, Healthcare, Environment and Disaster Relief. CSC supports this effort in many ways. All Binergy members are given eight hours per month out of their work time exclusively to manage and lead BR efforts. Employees can even opt for a six-month sabbatical for social activities (like rehabilitating victims in disaster-struck areas) and still receive 50% of their gross salary, including benefits, during the period.

The major challenges with these initiatives are sponsorship and participation. In order to sustain these initiatives, CSC India has started a ‘Be A Cause’ program to generate funds. Through this program, employees have the option to donate a gift to the BR fund on their birthday. CSC reciprocates by matching the contribution.

The other challenge that CSC faces is the difficulty of regularly monitoring the NGOs supported by them if they are relocated far away from the office. Binergy members and volunteers, therefore, need to spend additional time to assess their progress and act accordingly. One of the most successful projects of Binergy has been the adoption of 3 backward villages - Sagarpaisa, Nayagaon and Lalpura - on the outskirts of Indore, Madhya Pradesh and ensuring 100% literacy among the children of Nayagaon and Sagarpaisa villages.

The volunteer programs have shown significant results. An internal survey noted that there has been an increase in the participation of CSC employees in both volunteering and making charitable donations. It makes them feel they are an active part of the organization, while at the same time elevating CSC’s brand and image. Employees believe that such BR activities allow CSC to give back to the community and maintain positive community relations.

All Binergy members are given eight hours per month out of their work time exclusively to manage and lead BR efforts. Employees can even opt for a six-month sabbatical for social activities and still receive 50% of their gross salary, including benefits, during the period.
Key takeaways

- Empower employees to choose, volunteer for and manage BR activities of their choice
- Support teams with a budget, time allocation from work and a platform to connect with each other
- Regularly monitor and measure impact of activities so employees see the results of their initiatives
- Showcase and celebrate achievements
Technology companies have a special role to play in furthering the Millennium Development Goals of women empowerment, universal education and health awareness. With spotty physical infrastructure and significant inefficiencies in service delivery in rural areas – digital delivery of services – both government and private has long been identified as the surest way of reaching the population with intended benefits. Such delivery efficiency is, however, premised on a sufficiently large digitally literate population in these areas.

Technology companies can occupy this space by using their capabilities in developing appropriate products to educate and train the semi-urban and rural population on the use of computers. Such initiatives often do not require significant new expenses. In most cases, creative and innovative modifications can ensure already existing products are relevant to the target population. There are numerous non-government entities (3.3 million at the end of 2009) which can aid in the dissemination of such products to the final user, saving the companies the expenses of creating a supply chain. New delivery channels, mobile delivery backed by the inexpensive tablets for instance, are creating new, less expensive ways to deliver digital literacy programs.

In the medium to long term, such measures impact technology companies positively in two ways. One, by creating a larger pool of computer users, companies find new markets to sell their products. Two, with a larger digitally literate population, the labour pool of employees becomes larger. The most interesting aspect of such an initiative, however, is that there is demonstrated willingness by end consumers to pay for products and services. With focused efforts, such initiatives can turn into profit centres for companies.

Microsoft believes that they can apply their technology expertise and resources to help solve societal challenges on both a global and a local scale.

Microsoft Community Affairs is one of the key programs Microsoft runs globally. It is one of the first corporate community investments in the tech industry. Through its...
activities - Community Technology Skills Programs (called Project Jyoti in India), Microsoft Authorized Refurbisher (MAR) program, Employee Volunteer Program & Giving Campaign, software and IT curriculum donations, among others – the company has had a huge impact on IT literacy in semi-urban and rural areas, and, consequently, improvements in education and employment.

In India, Microsoft’s first venture under Community Affairs was a partnership with 14 NGOs to set up information-cum-training centres and teach unemployed youth, marginalised women and other rural communities, basic IT skills. Examples are IT-enabled vocational training, training to set up rural IT kiosks, and access to information resources on health, education and legal rights. One particular success story is the use of Computer Aided Design (CAD) software by ‘Chikankari’ embroidery weavers in Uttar Pradesh for making better designs.

The training program itself is based on the company’s Unlimited Potential curriculum, and revolves around a Community Technology Learning Centre (CTLC), a low-cost (or free), conveniently located public place. The idea is for the local population to learn about computers, develop technology skills, use the internet or just further their education and awareness. With an investment of US$ 10.5 million to date, Microsoft has set up more than 1400 such CTLCs across nearly all states in the country.

The program is, unequivocally, a massive success. More than 3,80,000 local community members have undergone training, and 2,40,000 among them are now employed. But the program’s benefits go far beyond finding jobs: more than 35% students, and often their siblings, pursue further education. There is a positive correlation between the programs and the socio-economic status of student alumni and their families.
The program is estimated to have an economic benefit of US$ 24,000 every month, and each student alumnus employed earns a monthly average of US$ 100. All told, the programs indirectly benefit about 40 million people in India.

In addition to financial support, Microsoft also donates software products and refurbished PCs to eligible NGOs. The company’s NGO-IT program has trained more than 1600 such partners. NGO Connection, an online resource, helps partners make more efficient use of technology. Even so, a continuing challenge has been to make such programs sustainable beyond the project period.

There’s also an ecosystem of businesses that has emerged as a direct result. For instance, with basic software already introduced, the stage is set to market upgraded and newer technologies.

Microsoft’s programs have been recognized through many awards: Reader’s Digest prestigious Pegasus ‘Silver’ Award 2008 for BR work, Jury’s Choice Award in the ‘Digital Learning - Private Sector Initiative of the Year’ category at eRajasthan 2009, the Jury’s Choice Award for the ‘Best Skills Development Initiative’ category in e-India 2010 and Skoch Financial Inclusion Award 2012. These programs bear testimony to the fact that social impact and business benefits can, and do, go hand-in-hand.

Microsoft’s programs such as Partners in Learning (Project Shiksha in India, which trains government school teachers in basic computer skills, aims to accelerate IT literacy and enhance the classroom environment among government schools across the country), or Project Kshamta (a joint initiative of the Indian Army and Microsoft India to develop employability skills among the army jawans to help open avenues of a second career option post retirement), or DreamSpark (a software giveaway for students, providing them with access to the latest Microsoft developer and designer tools at no charge) or BizSpark (a program designed to accelerate the success of IT entrepreneurs by providing them with professional software at no charge), to speak of a few, are testimony to this. In the currently underserved sections of society lies Microsoft’s future potential to grow and expand; expanding IT literacy and skills expands the company’s future customer base.

And, finally, what are the benefits to Microsoft? Microsoft realises the potential of the people in this country and the fact that, at the rate at which technology is touching lives, everything will be digitized in a few years. India could be a huge emerging market. Therefore, investing now in digital empowerment makes fundamental business sense. The key point here is that Microsoft is investing in its core business and not necessarily its ‘competencies’, i.e., it is investing in increasing the number of people who are digitally literate, as opposed to just focusing on getting people to use its products.
“KnowIT – Digital Literacy Project is our CSR initiative to bridge the digital divide. Learners will be able to use ICT skills in their daily life and effectively participate in e-Governance, e-Commerce, e-Health, e-Education, and several other ICT Initiatives. We believe computer skills empower individuals and elevate families and communities!”

K.B. Sridhar, Co-Founder, KnowIT Learning Solutions

KNOWIT | Building a viable business model based on Digital Literacy Programs

KnowIT Learning Solutions creates affordably priced, self-learning software in regional languages that enable large masses of first-time computer learners to be trained in rural and urban areas. By creating a product that solves a pressing problem, KnowIT has helped lakhs of people become digitally literate. And with revenue targets of INR 5 crores in 2014-15, it helps prove that creating shared value can also lead to a sustainable business opportunity.

KnowIT started off as Indiss Infotech, developing self-learning content on Microsoft Office and Open Office suites. In 2007, it used the same content as the base, but added Tamil voiceover and script to train 30 underprivileged women as part of Anna University’s Centre for Women Empowerment. The training was a success and these first-time learners were able to learn with limited support from a teacher. KnowIT teamed up with corporate business responsibility programs and created a digital literacy project that now has nearly 300 centres and approximately 40,000 beneficiaries. The beneficiaries include rural and marginalized women, refugees, persons with disabilities, senior citizens, underprivileged students, rural youth, prison inmates and so on.

While its learning software created strong social impact, KnowIT realised its commercial impact as well. Several sponsors purchased the software for their own digital literacy initiatives. Students who completed the KnowIT course wanted to purchase a copy of it for future reference, or even as a gift for their friends and relatives. Seeing the demand for its products, KnowIT participated in the Chennai Book Fair in January 2011. Despite competition from established vendors, KnowIT reported strong sales of its products. What started off as a digital learning tool, became the cornerstone of a business dedicated to digital literacy.

In keeping with its new focus on creating a sustainable business, an investment of INR 75 lakhs was made to improve its software packages. On the back of these investments, KnowIT now has several products to meet digital literacy needs which are being disseminated through multiple channels – online platforms, corporate social responsibility projects of corporate entities, non-profit networks and the government. All of these fit well into KnowIT’s mission of making over one crore people digitally literate.

Key takeaways

• Choose activities that fulfil an existing need in a field that is your company’s core competency or tweak existing products to see if it can serve an unmet need

• Make the activity sustainable in the long run via strategic partnerships
"Genpact strives to provide a safe and healthy workplace for all its employees and stakeholders globally. By integrating economic and social progress with environment conservation and sustainability, we aim to improve the quality of life for all our employees and stakeholders."

‘Tiger’ Tyagarajan, President and CEO, Genpact

With hundreds, sometimes thousands, of employees and multiple offices across the world, Indian technology companies have a large carbon footprint. This footprint is not simply an environmental question but one of resource efficiency and, therefore, profitability. Companies stand to benefit hugely with comprehensive measures to improve efficiency and reduce consumption of natural resources – fuel, electricity, water and others.

The controllable environments in offices present perfect locations to put in place measures to conserve electricity and water. Using smart technology in devices, companies can significantly lower respective costs. Replacement of individual travel solutions with communication and combined travel solutions lowers the carbon footprints of individual employees as well as the company. Offices which reside in large campuses can make even larger changes by establishing waste and water recycling setups and initiating greening campaigns.

Recycling represents a large opportunity for technology companies both as manufacturers and consumers. With large quantities of computers and peripherals in use, companies can undertake large e-waste recycling projects with direct impact on company profitability and socio-environmental impact.

Hear the term ‘responsible business practices’ and you think about corporate giving or corporate social responsibility. Well, think again. An increasing number of businesses have demonstrated that such business practices – spanning policies, methods and systems – can result in a direct positive impact on operational efficiency and business performance.

Genpact has put in place a CEO-driven global initiative on eco-transformation. The major initiatives include water, energy, conservation, reducing paper usage and recycling waste.

Genpact, the business process and technology company has put in place a CEO-driven global initiative on eco-transformation. While the project is primarily led by the
Driving Operational Efficiency By Deploying An Eco-transformation Roadmap

Key Activities

**FUEL & ENERGY**
- Diesel generators
- LPG and charcoal
- Air travel
- Video conferencing/audio bridges
- Car pooling
- Public transportation
- Grid based electricity

**PAPER**
- Printouts
- Recycled paper

**WATER**
- Spring loaded taps
- Capping leaks
- Water recycling
- Water harvesting
- Self-sustaining irrigation system

**ARCHITECTURE**
- Energy efficient building
- LEEDS standard

**Journey**
- CEO-driven global initiative started in 2006, by developing a BPO/ITS-specific environmental policy
- Developed a BPO-specific EHS Framework and a maturity-based scorecard to evaluate its environmental performance
- Created an Eco-Transformation Roadmap that, since 2007, has guided its environmental initiatives
- Periodically reviewed performance; Submitted its first Communication on Progress Report under United Nations Global Compact in 2011

**Phases**
- **Phase 1:** Achieve ISO 14001 (Environment Management System) certification
- **Phase 2:** Capture and analyse carbon footprint of India locations. Genpact hired third party consultants to capture and then verify the results.
- **Phase 3:** Implement energy and environment conservation programmes to reduce carbon footprint. Major initiatives include water, energy and climate conservation.

**Results**
- Direct GHG emissions (almost 8.5% of their total GHG emissions) fell to 49% of their 2008 levels
- Travel carbon footprint reduced by over 60% for domestic and 30% for international travel
- Reduced water footprint by 21% from 3,48,228 KL in 2008 to 2,74,647 KL in 2010
- Electricity consumption savings of 16.5% in Hyderabad and 14% in Gurgaon in 2010 compared to 2008
- Electricity consumption increased by just 7.9% from 2008 despite 25% increase in square footage and 15% increase in employee strength
Environment Health and Safety (EHS) team, it also involves employees and the operations, processes, sourcing, and engineering teams. Genpact’s sustainability journey started in 2006, by developing a BPO/ITES-specific environmental policy. The EHS team followed this up by developing a BPO-specific EHS Framework and a maturity-based scorecard to evaluate its environmental performance. Over the last few years, Genpact has gone a step further and created an Eco-Transformation Roadmap that, since 2007, has guided its environmental initiatives. Genpact periodically reviews its performance and has submitted its first Communication on Progress Report under UNGC in 2011.

The company reduced its indirect GHG emissions by using Energy Recovery Ventilators resulting in huge savings on air-conditioning and energy bills. In 2010, Genpact’s direct GHG emissions (almost 8.5% of their total GHG emissions) fell to 49% of their 2008 levels. This was achieved by moving from diesel generator systems to grid-based electricity, transferring its employee base to bigger and more energy efficient sites, and reducing the use of LPG and charcoal in its kitchens.

Genpact’s eco-transformation journey unfolded in three distinct phases. **Phase 1** of the journey was to achieve ISO 14001 (Environment Management System) certification. By 2009, all of Genpact’s sites – in India and overseas – were ISO 14001 certified. **Phase 2** was about capturing and analyzing the carbon footprint of its locations in India. Genpact hired third party consultants to capture and verify the results. **Phase 3** focused on implementing energy and environment conservation programs to reduce this carbon footprint. The major initiatives included water, energy and climate conservation, reducing paper usage, and recycling waste.

These initiatives have yielded clear results by reducing both their carbon footprint and their energy costs. Despite a 25% increase in physical office space and a 15% increase in employee strength, electricity consumption has increased just by 7.9 % from 2008 – a direct result of Genpact’s energy conservation measures, which included lighting retrofits, smart cool technologies and occupancy sensors, computer hibernation, data centre restructuring, and server and computer virtualization.

The company reduced air travel by investing in audio bridges, video conferencing and web chats. It improved on its ground transport utilization, removal of day transportation, encouraging carpooling and public transportation. This brought down the travel carbon footprint by over 60% for domestic and 30% for international travel. Apart from this, four greenbelt projects (projects for preserving or maintaining a strip of natural vegetation, six sigma projects on energy conservation, transportation and paper wastage reduction) were identified and implemented, resulting in a 26% reduction of carbon footprint since 2008.

Despite increasing employee strength, Genpact has reduced its water footprint by 21% from 2008 to 2010 by implementing several individual measures: replacing spring loaded taps with normal taps, capping leaking hydrants and plumbing lines, and ensuring sewage treatment plants at each leased site (while developing them at owned sites) that recycle 70% - 80% of all water that is mostly reused for landscaping and, in some sites, even for toilet flushing. Three owned sites have water harvesting systems and its Uppal Hyderabad site even has a self-sustaining irrigation system.

Genpact’s environmental initiatives are embedded within their business processes. It focuses on green-sourcing its equipment, and its green IT and virtualization initiatives have already aggregated benefits of more than INR 20 crores. All new building constructions need to meet LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) standards. Genpact’s Sitapura site in Rajasthan has been judged the best energy efficient site for the state in the office building category for 2009-10.

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5 Green sourcing means acquiring equipment, products and services in the most environmentally friendly way possible.
Apart from this, Genpact believes that maintaining a safe and healthy work environment is everyone’s responsibility and therefore encourages its employees to live a sustainable lifestyle. ‘YES - You Environment and Sustainability’ – is an initiative that spreads awareness through conservation campaigns and employee blogs. The company also has a carpool initiative, and has launched a personal carbon calculator to drive employee accountability.

Looking to the future, Genpact plans to focus on new green technology, green-sourcing, green buildings and supply chain. It also wants to structure its conservation initiatives and report under the Global Reporting Initiative.
“Dell recognizes that climate change is real and must be mitigated. One of Dell’s primary goals is to minimize the environmental impact and reduce the carbon footprint through every stage of its product life cycle. Dell was the first IT company to commit to and meet this goal, and aims to reduce global greenhouse gas emission from its operations by up to 40% by 2015.”

Mahesh Bhalla, Executive Director & General Manager, Consumer & SMB, Dell India

**DELL | E-waste recycling**

What happens to your old laptop when you replace it? Does it find its way into a landfill, leaching chemicals into the earth? Is there a greener alternative? In 2006, Dell introduced a free and convenient recycling initiative in India to facilitate responsible product retirement. The company’s policy is to offer consumers free recycling for any Dell branded product at any time, and free recycling for other branded products against purchase of a new Dell product. As part of Dell’s free recycling policy, Dell picks up the unit to be recycled from the customer’s location at a designated, pre-fixed mutually convenient time. The customer also gets a discount voucher that can be redeemed on future purchases.

The recycling initiative is not limited to laptops and desktops. Earlier this year, Dell piloted a battery recycling program where customers get a discount on their purchase of a new Li-ion laptop battery if they return an identical non-working one. For their business customers, Dell offers an Asset Resale and Recycling program, a value-added service offering, targeted at companies with more than 20 assets to dispose of.

Its recycling program is not the only green feather in Dell’s cap. Its laptops and desktops are designed to consume up to 25% less energy compared to systems offered earlier. Dell estimates that customers using its desktop power management features and settings have saved more than US$ 4 billion in energy costs.

**Key takeaways**

- Ecological conservation steps have the potential to drive operational efficiency and reduce costs
- Growing company strength should be countered with efficient design and products to maintain and even lower the carbon footprint
- Going green can also be a great customer loyalty tool
Both government and non-government entities have struggled with efficient delivery to the last mile for key products and services especially in far-flung rural areas with patchy connectivity. While there are a number of entities working to create appropriate content and services to cater to this population, a massive opportunity exists to create scalable, appropriate technologies and products to allow efficient delivery of these services. The opportunity for such technologies and products spreads beyond India to countries with similar connectivity issues in Africa and South East Asia.

Products to cater to this market are not simply rehashed versions of existing products. The environmental, societal and physical ecosystems that these products need to work in are vastly different from those that exist in an urban, connected ecosystem. Therefore, these products require considerable research to understand requirements and innovative engineering to deal with all possible situations. For true impact, these products have to follow a comprehensive approach involving potential users, manufacturers and service providers. Finally, companies creating such products also need to innovate on pricing structures to cater to various categories of buyers.

The market potential for such products, however, is suitably vast. Apart from national and regional governments, a number of sales led companies across sectors will find use for products appropriate for rural areas. Companies do not only stand to base their business on the product but also become part of the growth and inclusion story in the country.

“..."The GeoAmida team takes both pride and pleasure in directing its efforts to further the country’s development agenda. GeoAmida provides enabling technologies to flatten the pyramid of over-served rich and under-served poor. We apply technologies innovatively and appropriately to deliver access to services and social benefits in the remotest corners. Our aim is to extend GeoAmida's capability to deliver more solutions.”

Pankaj Kumar, Chairman, Geodesic Limited

Geodesic carried out an extensive market survey, meeting users such as governments, micro finance companies, and banks to understand their needs regarding access to banking and social benefit schemes. The need - an innovative, versatile, easy to use, low cost, mobile computing platform.

GEODESIC | Bringing banking and e-Governance services to rural areas with the GeoAmida platform

Almost 70% of people in India live in villages, with little or no access to services such as banking and social benefit schemes. With the Government of India’s thrust on e-governance using ICT, the Aadhar Unique ID Project, and RBI’s strong push on Financial Inclusion, there was a pressing need for a last-mile technology platform that would be completely indigenous - designed and developed to suit Indian operating conditions. To understand what such a solution entailed, Geodesic carried out an extensive market survey, meeting users such as governments, micro finance companies, and banks to understand their needs.
What surfaced from this exercise was the intense need for an innovative, versatile, easy to use, low cost, mobile computing platform. The perfect last-mile platform would need to be a compact, single-piece device with a long battery life, and the ability to offer multiple services through the same channel. It would need to be simple enough to be operated by users who are neither IT savvy nor literate. It would need uncomplicated authentication requirements, while simultaneously being secure enough to engender trust. It would need to be proprietary technology free but Web, RFID, GPS and printer-enabled.

In 2007, work began on designing a new handheld computing device by a diverse team of hardware, software and domain experts headed by senior management at Geodesic. A year later, prototype devices were tested through pilot projects. The GeoAmida handheld terminal platform was launched in 2009.

GeoAmida is the world’s first handheld, Linux-based, biometric, smart-card integrated, multi-application platform. It is small, the size of a credit card terminal. It can be used for a full day without needing to be charged, and has a graphical interface that can support local languages. More importantly, it can be used for many applications.

Want to bring banking services to rural India? A large network of field agents with the GeoAmida handheld terminal and a bag of cash can provide banking services for the over 150 million unbanked Indian families. The inbuilt biometric and smart card-based authentication makes it trustworthy, while its multi-lingual interface makes it easy to use. Want to ensure subsidized kerosene is delivered at ration shops and not pilfered? Fit each tanker with a GPS-enabled GeoAmida device and use biometrics and smart cards to authenticate the parties involved and issue receipts. Want to make sure that the payments are made to the right persons under MG National Rural Employment Guarantee Act? Use geo-tagging to ensure that the person is at the right location and use biometrics to ensure that the right person gets paid.

GeoAmida has won many accolades, including the NASSCOM Social Innovation Honours, for its wide
range of applications. But when the device was first launched, there were a few issues, many of which rose from the improper usage of the device by the end-users. To mitigate such instances, a comprehensive training methodology was developed, which includes a ‘best-practices’ manual. Most users are from a rural, semi-literate background and adapting to new technologies is difficult. Hence, the company focused on local language display, voice prompts, and receipt printing. Their efforts have paid off – currently over 20,000 terminals have been delivered, covering 10% of India’s population.

With widespread deployments, providing pan-India support to customers became critical. So Geodesic set up Field Service Centres covering 130 locations pan-India to provide timely maintenance services. A dedicated support and helpdesk team operates out of Geodesic’s Bengaluru office. To ensure that their customers can go-to-market speedily, ready-to-deploy application frameworks were created on the GeoAmida platform. Geodesic undertakes implementations through its partners and supplies the handheld hardware along with the Development Kit. The GeoAmida team also has the capability to provide software development as a service to a customer or if the customer chooses, have the customer’s in-house team trained on the platform.

The business potential from the venture is robust. The RBI has mandated Indian banks to provide basic banking services across 6 lakh villages across India. There are nearly 5 lakh Fair Price Shops across India and, given the current gaps in the Public Distribution System, many state governments have initiated automation projects involving ICT. Various other social benefit schemes such as Employment Guarantee, Micro Insurance and Aadhar rely heavily on ICT to be financially viable and sustainable in the long run. GeoAmida can meet these needs more effectively.

In addition to the government, the product helps banks and financial services reach out to remote customers, sales personnel to capture and execute orders on the field or logistics and delivery companies to streamline the goods delivery process using bar codes. Fundamentally, Geodesic sees a large market opportunity for helping businesses and governments to “MOBILIZE” their services.

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**Key takeaways**

- Follow an ‘Ecosystem’ approach to scale up rapidly by collaborating with customers, manufacturing, service and delivery partners

- Expedite time-to-market for your customers by developing ready to deploy application frameworks
“Creating an inclusive environment for people from diverse sections of society who risk being marginalized is a priority for Wipro. Not only is it the right thing to do, it is also good business to have our organization mirror the culture and diversity that we see in our customers. An inclusive work culture also promotes employee satisfaction that translates to greater value and sustainable results.”

T.K. Kurien, CEO, IT Business, Wipro

48% of India’s population comprises women. Civil society estimates the total population of persons with disability as between 7-10%. Multiple religious, ethnic and economic minority populations exist within the overall structure. Given such a plural society, it is imperative that every business takes steps to ensure there is a level playing ground for all groups.

Ensuring such a level playing ground goes beyond a simple equal-opportunity-recruitment policy. Businesses need to undertake specific steps to encourage, train, and retain a diverse talent pool. In addition, businesses need to create infrastructure – hard (buildings, workstations) and soft (software, training material) - to assist such diverse talent with specific focus on people with disabilities (PwD) for a seamless work environment. The most important aspect of such an initiative is, however, sensitizing of employees towards the issues and needs of minority groups in the talent pool, in specific, and society, in general.

Research undertaken globally has shown that diversity is positively correlated to innovation. Further, studies have shown that PwD have lower attrition while both women and PwD have shown higher attendance statistics. Anecdotal evidence of a similar pattern exists in firms in India. Firms catering to a diverse customer base benefit greatly with such initiatives due to increased understanding of customer needs.

Success hinges on effective management of a diverse workforce. The challenges of negative stereotyping, poor communication, and poor integration can be overcome through the development of specific organizational processes aimed at providing employees a space within which their ideas can be shared and their voices heard. However, employing disabled persons requires planning and forethought to create a seamless and sensitive work environment. The additional cost associated with such initiatives can more than pay-off in terms of higher productivity, lower recruitment cost (due to lower attrition) and enhanced image. Customers across the world are also likely to factor in such a setup when transacting with firms.

WIPRO | Creating the infrastructure for an inclusive work environment by deploying a Diversity Framework

Diversity creates a situation where different people have different perspectives on the same issue. Inclusivity can help bring these myriad perspectives together to create a stronger solution. Diversity prevents groupthink, causes incumbents to examine their own assumptions and leads to better decisions. Given that the global customer base is no longer a homogenous mass, but an explosion of varied ethnicities, upbringings and physical capabilities, this melting pot effect makes diversity an engine for innovation. It also drives employee satisfaction by making the culture more vibrant, while simultaneously encouraging sensitivity and tolerance. As more companies embrace diversity, having systems in place to manage their diverse workforce becomes...
imperative. Studying Wipro’s inclusivity framework can be useful to a company interested in embarking on a diversity journey of its own.

Wipro Limited is a global service provider of information technology, consumer care, lighting, precision engineering and healthcare, with operations in 50 countries. Wipro’s diversity charter covers gender, nationalities, people with disabilities and underprivileged sections. Currently, Wipro employs over 300 people with different disabilities. Though diversity has always been part of Wipro’s hiring process, an inclusivity framework was missing. Several successfully implemented policies and initiatives at Wipro have had their genesis at the periodic brainstorming sessions within the human resources team. During one such discussion, the need for the creation and implementation of an inclusive framework was realised. The idea was simple, but its implementation would have a significant impact on the operations of Wipro, its people and customers.

To create this framework, Wipro formed a core team to design an approach and present it to senior management. A consultant was hired to refine their ideas and approach. A virtual team, involving influential personnel from each of the group companies, was formed to spearhead its implementation. To put governance measures in place, Wipro’s Diversity Council was formed, and is responsible for implementing and monitoring the framework. Wipro conducts periodic audits and reviews to monitor and improve the framework.

The resulting framework covered disabled personnel, need-based and gender-based support required by employees and adequate representation from various nationalities within the group companies. The framework was implemented by a combination of policy and infrastructural changes spanning people policies, recruitment, training, physical infrastructure, information systems infrastructure, and awareness generation.

Wipro’s focus on inclusivity has resulted in 56 of their policies being audited in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Wipro’s Reasonable Accommodation policy gives people with disabilities flexibility and helps them perform better. Some employees are also chosen to provide voluntary support to a PwD team member, like helping them to a bus station or to the elevator. Wipro also provides travel assistance, interest-free loans for hearing aids, assistive technology, special car parking, etc.

Wipro’s Recruitment Policy requires that vacancy announcements include not only its commitment to equal opportunity but also a statement that requests candidates to specify needs for disability-related accommodations. Their job application form was modified to remove potentially discriminatory medical history-related questions. Wipro’s recruitment practices include sensitising interviewers and using face-to-face interviews instead of phone calls for candidates with hearing and speech disabilities. Wipro hosts job fairs periodically for PwDs and is able to attract deserving candidates. Each year, Wipro hires about 80-100 meritorious PwD personnel in its workforce.

A key component of inclusivity is training. In keeping with its core value of ‘Act with Sensitivity’, Wipro has devised a web-based ‘Diversity and Inclusivity Workshop’ that meets Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0. This voluntary 90-minute course enables employees to understand the significance of a diverse work atmosphere and Wipro’s inclusivity framework. Wipro’s trainers are sensitised on the finer points of training an employee group that may also have PwDs. For example, care is taken that a PwD who can lip-read finds a location in the training room from where he/she can read the trainers’ lip movements and understand the subject being taught.

Making its infrastructure, both physical and IT, accessible to all employees was a focus area for Wipro. To enable this, it has developed its own set of building guidelines (inspired by the United Nations Building Guidelines) to develop infrastructure for PwDs. Sign boards, ramps,
Web-based intranet applications like My Wipro (web portal), cash claims and others have also been customised to accommodate PwD needs. Wipro also makes sure that its disabled employees have access to assistive technology. The Self Identification Form is a recently implemented tool that allows a disabled employee to request support from the company privately.

During the budget planning phase, accessibility and assistive devices budgets are discussed and incorporated into the operational budget of the respective departments and business units. For example, the civil infrastructure team includes in its overall budget, provision for modifications in buildings and an accessible campus, in case of new infrastructure. The Talent Transformation team includes training modules that are accessible to employees with disabilities and assistive devices such as magnifiers in the learning centre in their overall budget. The Information Systems team plans capacity building in the team for accessibility testing and development, and making applications accessible. In this manner, each of the process owners in the framework of diversity includes an accessibility budget in their overall budget.

Apart from the internal awareness generated by its sensitisation trainings, Wipro also wants to change how society perceives disability. It organizes corporate runs, wherein all employees, PwDs included, participate to influence the thinking of onlookers and participants. Many PwDs have no access to education and skill development programs, thus making it challenging for Wipro to find qualified candidates. To counter this, it supports NGOs and educational institutes that impart education and vocational skills to PwDs.

By incorporating inclusivity into its policies and practices, Wipro has created an atmosphere that is respectful of every individual, including those with disabilities. Its inclusivity policy engenders feelings of respect, tolerance, and sensitivity amongst co-workers, thus having a positive impact on employee satisfaction levels. A diverse, productive workforce also puts Wipro in a better position to serve its diverse customers.
“For MphasiS, diversity is part of the core DNA. We always wonder why diversity is dealt with as a noble pursuit outside the business sphere, in many places. MphasiS’ business has benefited by the talent pool that has diversity, be it gender, physical ability or any other factor of diversity. This has made our workplace vibrant and our output richer. Diversity and Inclusivity are core to us and will continue to be. Nothing to fuss about.”

Ganesh Ayyar, CEO, MphasiS

**MphasiS | Supporting training and stakeholder capacity building to create and nurture a diverse talent pool**

This no-fuss attitude is evident in MphasiS’ decision to employ PwDs – a decision that was consciously pursued by senior leadership. As of today, MphasiS has over 400 employees with disabilities working in various processes, functions, roles and departments, and it prides itself on the infrastructure it provides to aid inclusivity.

MphasiS has a Disability Inclusion Guideline Document ensuring adequate support for its PwD employees.

For employees with visual disability, JAWS Software\(^7\) and magnifiers are provided. Wheelchairs are available at all locations and teams with deaf employees have been trained in sign-language. Apart from this, all new buildings mandatorily need to comply with the National Building Code. Professionals are hired to audit and review existing buildings. MphasiS offers its employees a loan advance facility to purchase assistive and mobility devices, hearing aids and software for personal use. In addition, it has an annual earmarked budget for workplace solutions and accommodations which rarely gets utilized, indicating that not all employees with disability require assistive technology or physical accommodations.

MphasiS also partners with other organizations to improve PwD employability. Through Project Communicate, it teamed up with the Noida Deaf Society and Enable India to train 700 PwDs in English language communication, computer courses, etc. Many trainees have been employed by MphasiS, others by companies in the IT and hospitality sector. MphasiS has also collaborated with the Indian Institute of Management, Bengaluru to establish the Office of Disability Services (ODS) that aims to create an all-inclusive academic environment supporting PwDs.

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\(^7\) Job Access With Speech (JAWS) software is a computer screen reader program
“At Aegis, we believe that diversity at workplace is no longer a ‘nice-to-have’ phenomenon but a compelling business necessity in order to achieve sustainable bottom-line results. Diversity is part of our DNA and is reflected very strongly in the organization culture and value system.”

AEGIS | Seeing diversity as a business necessity

To ensure that priorities like diversity remain on senior management’s radar, Aegis has adopted a Diversity Model (see table below) that outlines the imperatives for a diverse workforce. The top priority in creating the Diversity Model was to instill a diversity mind-set and to ensure that strategic diversity planning and implementation touches the entire organization.

With a workforce of over 55,000 people distributed in 13 countries, consisting of 92 nationalities and speaking 79 languages, Aegis’ workforce is undoubtedly diverse. In 2009, when Aegis embarked on its diversity journey, it first identified six different dimensions of diversity and set specific targets for each of them. These targets are a visible manifestation of top management’s commitment to their diversity goals. Allocating a diversity budget is part of the annual budgeting exercise, though this is not a constraint for commitments that need to be fulfilled. A mechanism of monthly trackers and reports was put in place to constantly monitor and review these targets throughout the year.

This regular review process has shown great results. The 1.75% target for PwD employees has resulted in an increase in their numbers from 541 to 951 in the last one year, with women constituting a good portion. Aegis has created exclusive avenues for gender inclusivity, by adopting practices which provide affable work culture to both genders. Aegis’ Global Talent Exchange program has made a conscious effort to

### | Dimension | Indicators |
--- | --- | --- |
1 | Persons with Disability | 1.75% of total population |
2 | Gender Inclusivity | Gender mix to be in accordance with the available employable population |
3 | Socially & Economically Disadvantaged People | Mix of socially & economically disadvantaged people to be in accordance with the available employable population |
4 | Culturally & Linguistically Diverse People | Mix of culturally & linguistically diverse people to be in accordance with the available employable population |
5 | Mature Age People (employees aged 45 years and above) | 4% of total population |
6 | Inclusion of Indigenous People | 95% of total population |

Aegis has identified six different dimensions of diversity and set specific targets for each of them. A specific budget has also been earmarked to meet these goals.

S.M. Gupta, Chief People Officer, Aegis
provide global exposure to 22% women employees. By ensuring that 50% of their agent staff belongs to the Below Poverty Line (BPL) category, Aegis ensures social inclusivity as well. An option for part-time work provides employment opportunities to housewives and female students pursuing higher studies, while attracting more employees in this category. Flexi-time employment opportunities helped increase the inclusion of mature age people from 3.2% to 4.1% within 12 months.

While these numbers are impressive, Aegis maintains that diversity is more than a numbers game. Diversity priorities and successes are constantly communicated to all the stakeholders in an effort to institutionalize diversity as everyone’s business. The company also tries to garner external support from government, NGOs, vendors, clients and the corporate community to ensure the long-term success of its diversity initiatives.

**Key takeaways**

- Set and track diversity targets for a diverse workforce
- Investment in infrastructure is necessary to build an accessible workplace
- Diversity should not be the responsibility of just one department
- Offer employee sensitisation and awareness sessions
Bridging The Digital Divide Through Web Accessibility

“At Yahoo!, inclusivity is not just about inclusive recruiting or an accessible workplace. Being a consumer internet company serving millions of users, we have committed ourselves to an inclusive web, so that everyone can enjoy our cool products. In fact, we went ahead and established an Accessibility Lab that is doing pioneering work in this area. The work done here, in many ways, delivers on the original promise of the internet – democratization of information and technology.”

Shouvick Mukherjee, Head, Yahoo! India R & D

As one moves further away from the confines of the controlled home/office environment, it becomes increasingly difficult to provide an inclusive environment for people with disabilities. These difficulties remain, whether the environment is physical or virtual. While the physical environment – roads, public buildings and others – remain firmly in the realm of policy planners, a number of initiatives have started to make things easier in the virtual domain.

The internet’s growth and pervasiveness is quickly turning it into the mode of choice for delivery of information and services in India with its unique geographical, infrastructural and corruption-related challenges. This growth will, however, remain incomplete if the web interfaces do not adequately service the large disabled population. To promote inclusiveness on the web, several small but important measures need to be undertaken by webmasters for which technology is easily and freely (or cheaply) available. Guidelines for what needs to be done have been widely discussed and are available for webmasters to implement. Eventually, it is hoped, businesses would include disabled-friendly features at the design stage itself by paying heed to the web’s inherent democratic nature.

Such measures are not just ‘social’ in nature but have a strong business angle to them. Disabled employees of IT companies and outsourcing companies would be able to function much more efficiently. E-commerce companies will be able to target a much larger set of customers. Government services will be delivered much more effectively to those most in need.

The term web accessibility needs to be appreciated in its entirety – the ability to ensure that the web is accessible to all, irrespective of any sort of disabling factor, be it physical impairment, illiteracy, old age or limited bandwidth. With an estimated fifth of all internet users8 supposed to have either a disability or a disabling condition, building accessible websites makes pure business sense. After all, a website that displays structured content, has an easily navigable interface, and is accessible from a variety of devices and internet connection speeds will delight all customers, not just ones with special needs.

As the world’s most visited home page, Yahoo! understands this deeply. With a customer base as wide as the topics it covers - think Yahoo! Finance, Movies, News, Mail, and so on - the company strives to make all its products accessible to all users. Yahoo! started its web accessibility initiatives with Alan Brightman and Victor Tsaran in 2005 in the USA. Census 2001 revealed that over 21 million people in India have some kind of

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8 See http://nasscomfoundation.org/nasscom-foundation-programs/business-responsibility/accessibility-initiative/understanding-web-accessibility
disability (this is equivalent to 2.1% of the population\(^9\)) although civil society estimates make it around 7-10% (World Bank and NCPEDP). Taking a cue from the Indian census, Yahoo! founded its second Accessibility Lab in Bengaluru. By incorporating web accessibility features into its products, Yahoo! not only makes the web more democratic, but also increases its user base.

Yahoo!'s Accessibility Labs, known as Inclusive Design Labs, are a team of engineers who validate their products against web accessibility requirements. These requirements can be as simple as providing a text alternative for non-text content like images, providing captioning for videos and transcripts for audio, or simplifying layouts where possible. The guidelines are prescribed by the World Wide Web Consortium’s (W3C) Web Accessibility Initiative Group. Yahoo! has framed customised guidelines based on Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 for all its products. Since Yahoo! applies these guidelines during development, their products work well for people with disabilities (PwDs) who use assistive technologies like screen readers. For instance, Yahoo! uses ‘ARIA’ – Accessible Rich Internet Applications – to ensure that their dynamic portals work well with assistive technologies.

The key takeaway from Yahoo!’s design process is that web accessibility is not an afterthought. Accessibility is part of the product release life cycle. For instance, when developing the new interfaces of Yahoo! Mail, Yahoo! Lifestyle, Yahoo! India Small Business and Yahoo! India Campus, the company incorporated accessibility features during the product development period. This makes financial sense as well – incorporating accessibility considerations right from the design stage will increase a website’s cost by only 2%. Retrofitting accessibility requirements will cost as much as a new website. For their existing products, Yahoo! identifies accessibility issues and fixes them in phases.

Accessibility isn’t limited to just redesigning their websites and products. Yahoo! is also interested in having an active dialogue with its users. Users of various Yahoo! websites and products can use Y-accessibility, a Yahoo! group forum, to discuss their experience of the company’s accessibility features. Users can also engage with them through Twitter and Facebook.

![Web accessibility is not an afterthought. Accessibility is part of the product release life cycle.](image)

To drive awareness for web accessibility, Yahoo! participates in accessibility conferences like the California State University Northridge (CSUN) Conference and Techshare India. It organises workshops in association with W3C India for knowledge sharing. Yahoo! also offers various training programs to their teams to build awareness towards developing inclusive products. Taking its role seriously in making the web accessible to all, Yahoo! India R & D has developed a website for the office of the Chief Commissioner, Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India (http://ccdisabilities.nic.in). Yahoo! has been instrumental in suggesting guidelines for Indian Government websites too.

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\(^9\) See http://censusindia.gov.in/Census_And_You/disabled_population.aspx
“Accessibility is a basic need of persons with disabilities. This mindset change will then ensure that persons with disabilities are empowered. BarrierBreak aims to bridge the divide that exists in society and ensure that we create an accessible environment in India.”

Shilpi Kapoor, Managing Director, BarrierBreak Technologies

**BARRIERBREAK | Breaking accessibility barriers**

Technology today is pervasive and drives most aspects of our lives like banking, travel, shopping, entertainment, etc. However, many of these technologies remain inaccessible to people with disabilities (PwDs). This is where a company like BarrierBreak steps in. Specialising in accessibility and assistive technology for PwDs, their solutions have now been extended to ATMs, universities, libraries, and publisher services to create digital talking books for the print-impaired. Since the cost of assistive technology is prohibitive, BarrierBreak collaborates with educational institutes and inclusive libraries to provide technology access to end-users.

BarrierBreak’s impact can be easily measured: 25 disabled-friendly websites, including the National Portal of India and website of the Ministry of Social Justice, more than 2 million pages converted into Digital Talking Books, 1500+ registered users on Signntalk.org, which provides access to sign language interpreters, and 150 schools & educational institutes who have been provided with assistive technology. All this, in addition to the awareness generated through TechShare India, India’s only accessibility and assistive technology conference and exhibition.

BarrierBreak is also involved in policy building with National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) to ensure that the National Policy on Electronic Accessibility is put into effect by DIT. They are also actively working with NASSCOM, W3C India and other organizations to create an ecosystem in India that supports assistive technology.

BarrierBreak has built its business around a social need and looks at it as a sustainable business activity in a country that requires low cost assistive technology. This is a scalable proposition, based on the belief that creating this technology goes beyond just being a feel-good factor – it also makes solid business sense. Looking beyond physical accessibility requirements like ramps, the company aims to make technology as accessible to PwDs as they are to us. 75% of BarrierBreak’s workforce comprises PwDs. They cater to a diverse set of clientele ranging from academia and the social sector to corporates. Their approach is clearly working as reflected in their operating profit growth of 60-70% every year.

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<th>25 disabled-friendly websites</th>
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<tr>
<td>More than 2 million pages converted to Digital Talking Books</td>
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<tr>
<td>150 schools &amp; educational institutes provided with assistive technology</td>
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**Key takeaways**

- Incorporate accessibility guidelines from the design stage instead of retrofitting
- Follow WCAG 2.0 guidelines and use resources available online (see below)
- Keep channels open to communicate with your users and regularly hold dialogue with them to make sure their accessibility needs are being met
- Think creatively of what your competency/strength can create with technology

**Resources**

- http://w3.org/tr/wcag20
- http://www.w3.org/tr/wai-aria
- http://yaccessibilityblog.com
While Sustainability and Responsible Business Practices are now well entrenched in business discourse as ideals worth following, they are still largely considered distinct from ‘regular’ operations. Such an approach often, inadvertently, stunts the impact that these practices can have over the firm itself while benefitting the community at large. Firms which have integrated these ideals into their DNA have experienced the full positive impact of these practices on their bottom line.

Commitment towards the community creates a more satisfied and better quality workforce. Commitment toward better energy and resource utilization has a direct impact on the bottomline by streamlining and reducing costs. Innovative, socially relevant products and services have found paying markets even in rural areas and no longer need to be considered cost centres. Some companies have, in fact, based their entire business on creating such products and services and are experiencing more than satisfactory results.

Integrating Responsible Business Practices into a company’s day to day operations does require a thought-out and comprehensive approach. Instead of a piecemeal inclusion of disparate activities into its corporate social responsibility calendar, senior management needs to determine their agenda and formulate it into universal policies. Policies must involve all departments and employees to ensure company-wide buy-in. Budgets for programs and activities should form part of the budgeting exercise for operations. With a tightly knit sustainability agenda within the overall operations, the need for separate monitoring will also reduce significantly.

**INFOSYS** | Integrating sustainability into core business functions through scorecards and client-focused services

Amongst the companies who strove to make Responsible Business and Sustainable Value Creation a part of their DNA, Infosys has set an example through its ardent endeavors in linking ‘sustainability’ to its business mandate. Being the first private Indian company to release a sustainability report, Infosys had continued its journey with awards for accountable, transparent and ethical governance. To understand how serious Infosys is about linking business with sustainability, all one needs to do is study the leadership scorecard used to evaluate business units that drive Infosys’ growth. Sustainability is one of the strategic themes along with six others on the scorecard.

Sustainability has been woven into Infosys’ fabric. The company’s current strategy, ‘Building tomorrow’s enterprise’ features ‘Sustainable Tomorrow’ as one of its seven themes. According to Infosys, Sustainability in business can be driven by three key factors - Social Contracts, Resource Efficiency and Green Innovation.

The **Social Contract** focus is steered by the Infosys Foundation, which consolidates the company’s BR initiatives, and the Infosys Corporation that focuses, among other things, on improving the employability of engineering students and harnessing the potential of its employees through volunteering. Infosys’ 1.4 lakh employees are at the heart of this volunteering movement. By advocating and encouraging individual...
social responsibility, Infosys hopes to create responsible citizens. Infosys has built an ecosystem, primarily driven by leadership, where people contribute their personal time and money to projects of their choice. By decentralising Business Responsibility, not only do employees feel empowered, but the activities also become local-specific. A happy fallout of the citizenship focus is that employee satisfaction or ‘embeddedness’ has improved.

The **Resource Efficiency** focus is met by the company’s environmental initiatives, which target Water, Energy and Waste reduction. As part of the drive to improve supply chain sustainability, the company formulated a Green Procurement policy in FY2009-10. The policy focuses on reducing the consumption of water and electricity, diversity and human rights compliance, and accurate reporting on matters of relevance. An awareness and appreciation-building session on the policy was conducted in the company’s annual conclave for partner organizations.

As part of **Green Innovation**, Infosys uses sustainability to drive innovation in their products and services. The company has a range of innovation accelerators like the iSustain Environment Management System, which streamlines clients’ reporting requirements; InGreen Energy Management, which evaluates and identifies opportunities for energy optimization; and iSmart, a sensor-based power strip that detects energy wastage and prompts users to eliminate it. Infosys also helps its clients achieve their sustainability goals by collaborating with clients, partners and alliances in the areas of smart grid, intelligent building design, green logistics, and supply chain management.

What ties all these activities and focus areas together is the company’s sustainability policy. In 2009-10, a policy was crafted that complemented existing policies in the organization. It came into effect from July 1, 2010 and is based on the philosophy of maximizing value to stakeholders while adhering to company values. The policy covers all employees, vendor partners and contractual partners across various geographies. It talks about Infosys driving sustainability in its own business

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10 Infosys’ sustainability report at www.infosys.com

At Infosys, sustainability is driven by three factors - Social Contracts, Resource Efficiency and Green Innovation.
operations, and encourages the company to help customers achieve their sustainability goals. It drives environmental sustainability by talking about reducing consumption, and investing in green buildings and data centres. It drives social responsibility as well as supply chain sustainability by encouraging vendors to become more focused on their green initiatives.

The sustainability policy was the result of the efforts of the Infosys Sustainability Executive Committee (ISEC). The council engages with the company’s stakeholders to determine materiality issues and identify sustainability goals. ISEC members are drawn from across the organization and are responsible for driving the implementation of the company’s business, environmental and social goals and the code of ethics. It also helps the company track its progress against these goals.

By identifying focus areas and goals for sustainability, and ensuring that they are implemented throughout the organization, Infosys is on its journey to integrate its business mandate with sustainability.

Infosys’ innovation accelerators

iSustain Environment Management System: streamlines clients’ reporting requirements

InGreen Energy Management: evaluates and identifies opportunities for energy optimisation

iSmart: sensor-based power strip to detect energy wastage
“Vindhya has always been and will continue to remain a company which will employ more and more differently-abled people. We want our employees to increase in number and at the same time, work with a sense of ownership. Our aim is to work and also provide our employees with a safe and comfortable place to work without any discrimination.”

Pavithra Giri, MD, Vindhya e-Infomedia Pvt. Ltd.

VINDHYA | Setting up robust processes to recruit, train, encourage, and develop PwD employees

Keeping employees engaged and happy is an activity most companies struggle with. High employee attrition is a challenge faced by most Indian companies. In the BPO sector, the attrition rate is as high as 55%, while in retail and IT sectors it is 50% . Given this scenario, how does a business sustain its talent pool? Vindhya e-Infomedia Private Limited had a unique approach, which has turned into a full-fledged business.

Vindhya’s On-boarding Process

- Counsel families to support disabled employees to live and work independently
- Open access for families

Vindhya e-Infomedia is a BPO whose Philanthropy @ Work Business Model gives its differently-abled employees an opportunity to lead a life of dignity. What started as a two-member team of led by Pavithra Giri and Ashok Giri in 2006 has now grown to 250 people. What is special about this team is that 90% of the team members are people with disabilities. Currently, Vindhya operates out of New Delhi, Bengaluru and Hubli and has plans to expand to Mumbai and Chennai.

When asked for the inspiration behind the venture, Pavithra said it was to ‘provide employment to differently-abled people while inspiring them to live an independent life’. Vindhya has earned Pavithra many accolades such as Shell’s Helen Keller Award, ‘Stree Shakti Puraskar’ and Canara Bank’s ‘Successful Entrepreneur’ Award. But behind the gleam of accolades is a long story of passion for empowerment. It involves comforting families, recruiting and training PwDs, sensitizing other employees and convincing clients to take a chance on them.

Employing PwDs is a challenge in itself. Convincing families and community members to allow PwDs to relocate to Vindhya’s areas of operations can be difficult. Hence, Vindhya involves the families at every step starting with the interview process. New recruits’ families can visit Vindhya’s facilities to gauge their suitability and infrastructure. Vindhya also provides assistive housing, thereby ensuring that the employee does not have a long commute to deal with. The company also pays its employees on par with industry standards and makes sure that they receive adequate training.

Training is just the beginning. Vindhya makes sure that their employees grow within the company. The Vindhya Management Onboarding Council (VMOC), staffed with senior employees, is responsible for the new employees. The VMOC works with the Human Resources department to source and interview candidates, train and develop
Learning & Growth at Vindhya

- Customised week long training for new joinees
- Sensitization training
- Onboarding Council plans career path for each employee
- Council oversees promotions to ensure fair practice

With recruiting and training processes in place, the next step was finding out if clients were interested in this bold, new idea. In the beginning, Vindhya found it difficult to convince prospective clients to hire them, but with support from a few believers and its NGO partners, the company managed to find its foothold in the sector. Vindhya currently has 12 clients that include Ujjivan, Janalakshmi, Wipro, Mindtree, IndusInd Bank, Canara Bank and others. It has never tried to acquire any clients on the basis of being an organization that supports PwDs. It prefers its quality of service to speak for itself.

Employing PwDs has a tremendous social impact and provides a sense of satisfaction. It has also kept the attrition level low. When interacting with the employees, their sense of loyalty to the company is palpable, as is the camaraderie between them. Vindhya has been successful in its business without having to compromise on its operational model. Most of their operational costs go towards providing for staff training and welfare.

Vindhya aspires to grow organically. One growth goal is to have a large campus that could accommodate 5,000 employees. The company also hopes to provide higher education opportunities for its PwD staff, enabling them to move on to more complex roles and achieve career growth within the company.

new employees, and undertake career planning for experienced employees. It also oversees the promotion practice at Vindhya, ensuring that the participants are gauged at par with the able-bodied employees, thus ensuring equal learning opportunities for PwDs. The initiatives in place have paid off and now 80% of the team leaders in Vindhya are PwDs.

Key takeaways

- Determine relevant focus areas for your company and concentrate efforts and initiatives on those
- Chart out a Business Responsibility policy
- Set up a Business Responsibility Council responsible for setting, implementing and tracking sustainability goals

Sustainable Value Creation
Measuring Business Responsibility Performance To Optimize Impact

“As an organization, we have a strong foundation to build on. By nurturing values such as entrepreneurship, corporate social responsibility, etc., our leaders not only laid a strong foundation for the TATA group, but also for the nation. As a technology-driven company, we believe our activities in CSR should be monitored and measured to the extent possible and decisions and plans founded on empirical data.”

N. Chandrasekaran, CEO and MD, TCS

In a world that demands corporations have a meaningful impact on the world and which expect accountability for funds disbursed, efficiency and effectiveness in Business Responsibility spending are a must. But how does one measure RoI for Business Responsibility? Is this even a reasonable question to ask? The fact is that the two most common and oft-repeated criticisms of Business Responsibility programs are that they do not have tangible, well-defined outcomes and that it is very difficult to measure their return on investment to make calculated decisions. Evolution of BR activities across the world has created sufficient intelligence for organizations to counter both these issues.

Organizations can, and should, monitor and track their BR efforts and their results to ensure that the intended impact is being made. Such monitoring data can provide valuable insights to undertake course correction or determine if the organization can deploy more effective interventions. The data, however, needs to be matched against set targets and policies which clearly elucidate the organization’s goals. This requires that the policies are created in collaboration with senior management and employees and that it covers the entire organization. Such an approach has the favourable effect of aligning BR goals to the business goals of the company.

TCS’ Internal Monitoring and Evaluation Model precisely calculates the time and effort deployed, establishes short and long-term results, gathers lessons from the field to determine the course of future initiatives, while ensuring that programs undertaken and communities served are relevant to TCS’ goals.

TCS | Measuring the efficiency of BR programs with a Monitoring and Evaluation Model

In India, the Business Responsibility paradigm has matured to the use of core competencies. Organizations now recognise that the programs that contribute most towards sustainability are the ones linked to their materiality. While volunteering by employees is a strong component, the company also uses its core competencies to address developmental issues, offering products and services pro bono. As a result, TCS employees around the world identify target beneficiaries based not only on the needs of their locations but also on how well they are aligned with the corporate BR perspective.
Measuring Business Responsibility Performance To Optimize Impact

Old Model: Excel based Parameters
Focus area of initiative, proposed and utilised budgets, number of volunteers and senior management members involved, beneficiaries of the initiative and their satisfaction index

Implementation
Monthly reports of activities along with details of target audience, baseline details and incremental data on various parameters; financial support mapped against budget approved by management for fixed calendar of events

Driving Force
CSR Advisory Council
CEO, CFO, Global Head of HR and Global Head of CSR

New Model: In-house software created to determine RoI
The new model classified Business Responsibility activities into three

Operations
CSR Executive Committee
Global Head of HR and Deputy Global Head of HR, Global Head of HR BPO, Global Head of CSR, Global Head of Maitree (TCS’ employee engagement and volunteering arm)

Curative
Measures taken to compensate for the damage done to people and planet

Preventative
Measures taken to predict and avoid harm to communities and the environment

Promotive
Measures taken to do good and add value

Implementation
SPOCs
Model deployment and on-ground ideas from Maitree SPOCs

Metrics for Return on Investment
The ROI metrics have been fitted against software that will gauge the impact that BR programs in TCS have and whether the spend is justified

Reach
Number and types of communities reached

Outcomes
Quantifiable indicators for education, health and environment

Impact
Economic, physical, socio-cultural, political and mental impact on communities
However, given the diverse nature of the BR activities implemented in varied geographies, how does TCS manage to measure and track these programs? The method used earlier to track time and effort was descriptive. Data was recorded but it was difficult to gauge the effectiveness and efficiency of the activities, often for want of the required parameters. While there was an informal effort at recording feedback and addressing a felt need, there was no process of following up. A mechanism was needed that could precisely calculate the time and effort deployed, establish short and long-term results, gather lessons from the field to determine the course of future initiatives, and ascertain whether the programs undertaken and communities served were relevant to the work TCS does. That mechanism was an Internal Monitoring and Evaluation Model.

The model needed to be aligned strategically to business. Therefore, Senior Management and Corporate CSR department formulated the policy behind it. The direction and oversight for Business Responsibility came from the CSR Advisory Council comprising the CEO, CFO, Global Head of HR and Global Head of CSR. The operational aspects were handled by the CSR Executive Committee comprising the Global Head of HR and Deputy Global Head of HR, Global Head of HR BPO, Global Head of CSR, the Global Head of Maitree (TCS’ employee engagement and volunteering arm). Finally, to deploy the model and come up with on-ground ideas, SPOCs (single points of contact) were given the freedom to suggest and implement programs that were relevant to TCS’ business.

A major challenge was effective internal communication. TCS has a 225,000 strong workforce spread over 42 countries. Aligning all the components of information together was a mammoth task. Regular meetings and conference calls were held with deployment staff to discuss the activities and measures of effectiveness. Volunteers were familiarized and trained on the process to have a common understanding and avoid duplication. Maitree also had a robust framework for tracking activities and consolidating them into a report.

The current model has been in existence since 2007, when the policy guidelines for Business Responsibility in TCS were framed. The Excel-based model is quite simple. It documents the community initiatives undertaken, with fields to capture parameters like the focus area of the initiative, proposed and utilised budgets, the number of volunteers and senior management members involved, the beneficiaries of the initiative and a customer (beneficiary) satisfaction index. Lead volunteers submit monthly summary reports of activities along with details of target audience, baseline details and incremental data on various parameters. For financial support, a budget is approved by management for a calendar of events. By explicitly requiring that each initiative be mapped to one of its focus areas, TCS ensures that its BR initiatives remain relevant and material.

While the existing model has its own merits and helps to bring in a basic respect for data and numerical analysis, there was a need for an embedded model that rests on a vision of how business can be conducted in a more meaningful manner.

It started with the need to understand the nature of BR - Curative, Preventive or Promotive, and then map these needs to the stakeholders involved. It also needed to factor in the balance between economics and social right while aligning short-term sustainability needs with long-term needs.

- **Curative**: Measures taken to compensate for the damage done to people and planet;
- **Preventative**: Measures taken to predict and avoid harm to communities and the environment;
- **Promotive**: Measures taken to do good and add value

This embedded model of BR metrics was a natural result of the evolution of the work TCS does and the way it conducts its business. The metrics ascertain the ROI of BR spend (financial and man hours)

- **Reach**: The numbers and types of communities reached;
- **Outcomes**: The quantifiable outcomes of the program in terms of positive education, health and environment indicators; and
- **Impact**: The qualitative impact of empowerment of the communities reached, measured through shifts in economic, physical, socio-cultural, political and mental spaces
The ROI metrics have been fitted against software that will gauge the impact that BR programs in TCS have and whether the current spend is justified. The embedded model is ready for pilot testing, after which it will be deployed globally across TCS for all BR programs.

### Key takeaways

- Choose BR focus areas that are relevant and material to your organization
- Assess your BR spend using well-defined metrics for an objective evaluation of programs
- Parameters for evaluating your business responsibility activities:
  - **Monetary & Financial**: Value of cash and in-kind (also products and services) donations as well as contributions of employee time
  - **Quantitative**: Savings of energy-efficiency or environmental sustainability related activities
  - **Qualitative**: Types and descriptions of activities in the workplace and community; marketing value through media mentions for business responsibility practices or changes to consumer attitudes from marketing/corporate communication notices
Afterword

The case studies presented in this book represent the many facets of business responsibility. They showcase not only the commitment made by IT-BPM companies in India to being responsible corporate citizens, but also offer a glimpse of visionary corporate leadership and dynamic support from the workforce that the industry has become known for. The success of each example reflects the commitment of the entire workforce top down and bottom up.

NASSCOM’s member companies have a history of investing in philanthropy, long-term development projects, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief. More and more the top technology firms in India are donating products – hardware and software – as well as their time and expertise to developing underserved markets, communities and customers that serve their business interest in the long term. Companies have begun to see that they have a role to play beyond the economic sphere in the societies they operate in and that they must look beyond change in public policy in terms of socio-environmental development.

Readers will observe that these stories of change display not only specific aspects of business responsibility, but also the drivers that motivate companies to invest in business responsibility. These drivers can be addressing increasingly aware and demanding customers, recruitment and management of new-age talent, security of their supply chain, or even the notion of a ‘social license to operate’. The vital thing to remember is that companies see this as a part of business rather than something separate.

The examples here demonstrate a range of aspects leading to responsible businesses – focus on emerging markets, investing in tomorrow’s workforce, delivering a sustainable bottom-line, bridging the digital divide, improving competitive edge or creating shared value. The common denominator across these projects is that each displays complete synergy with overall business vision and goals. This synergy is the core element that companies need to put in place for business responsibility. At the heart of this strategy, as seen on the facing page, is to create a Business Responsibility policy which explicitly addresses how a company can plan for and achieve goals. The figure also establishes that the majority of the elements displayed cut across at least three of the four spheres a business operates in - workplace, marketplace, community and environment. From this, it is clear that BR is no longer narrow and limited to only philanthropic acts in the community and environment.

This report is NASSCOM Foundation’s effort to focus the spotlight on certain aspects of business responsibility and certain companies for their exemplary, if not path breaking, efforts in this respect. While we have only showcased a certain element of BR in these companies, it must be mentioned that they are equally active in other spheres. Further, Business Responsibility in terms of its full definition is, or soon will be, a reality in these companies. The sixteen companies referred to here are only the tip of the iceberg. There are many other companies that, given the scope and nature of this report, have not been referred to. Examples of these can be found in NASSCOM Foundation’s previous reports in the series - Catalyzing Change. A full impact of what can be achieved by this rapidly growing and influential industry, will be felt only when companies – large, medium and small – have imbibed business responsibility in its fullest sense.