



Brandon Hall Group
**EXCELLENCE
AT WORK**

Executive Interview

with **Vivek Ravichandran**,
Head of Talent,
North America-Tata Consultancy Services

Using Data and Analytics for Workforce Planning

About Tata Consultancy Services

[Tata Consultancy Services](#) is an IT services, consulting and business solutions organization that has been partnering with many of the world's largest businesses in their transformation journeys for over 50 years. TCS offers a consulting-led, cognitive-powered, integrated portfolio of business, technology and engineering services and solutions. This is delivered through its unique Location Independent Agile™ delivery model, recognized as a benchmark of excellence in software development.

A part of the Tata group, India's largest multinational business group, TCS has over 616,000 of the world's best-trained consultants in 55 countries. The company generated consolidated revenues of US \$25.7 billion in the fiscal year that ended March 31, 2022, and is listed on the BSE (formerly Bombay Stock Exchange) and the NSE (National Stock Exchange) in India. TCS's proactive stance on climate change and award-winning work with communities across the world have earned it a place in leading sustainability indices such as the MSCI Global Sustainability Index and the FTSE4Good Emerging Index.

Recognition

Tata Consultancy Services won 35 Brandon Hall Group Excellence Awards in 2022.

EXCELLENCE IN HCM AWARDS



Learning and Development

11 Gold Awards | 3 Silver Awards | 3 Bronze Awards

Leadership Development

2 Gold Awards | 1 Silver Award | 1 Bronze Award

Human Resources

1 Gold Award | 1 Silver Award

Future of Work

1 Silver Award | 1 Bronze Award

Talent Acquisition

1 Silver Award

Sales Performance

1 Gold Award

Talent Management

1 Gold Award | 1 Bronze Award

EXCELLENCE IN TECHNOLOGY AWARDS



Learning and Development

2 Gold Awards | 1 Silver Awards | 2 Bronze Awards

Future of Work

1 Gold Award

About Vivek Ravichandran



Vivek Ravichandran aspires to bring about technology transformation in Enterprises and drive a culture of strong analytics. He is responsible not just for enabling upskilling/cross-skilling employees to drive the technology-led growth and transformation of TCS but also for deploying various strategic interventions to link learning with appropriate career growth and workforce transformation. He's a design thinker at heart and passionate about shaping the future of work and crafting exciting user experiences across people functions for TCS and its customers. Vivek plays cricket and has been a part of various state and university cricket teams. He's also a scuba diver and has an advanced scuba diving instructor license.



About Rachel Cooke

Rachel Cooke is Brandon Hall Group's Chief Operating Officer and Principal HCM Analyst. She is responsible for business operations, including client and member advisory services, marketing design, annual awards programs, conferences and the company's project management functions. She also leads Advancing Women in the Workplace and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives, research and events. Rachel worked in the HCM research industry for 20+ years and held several key management and executive positions within the Talent and Learning Research, and Performance Improvement industries.



RACHEL

How have you built your ecosystem despite all the challenges that Learning leaders are facing?



VIVEK

The broad challenge that a lot of us face when it comes to designing learning ecosystems is, fundamentally, the modern world needs a different breed of talent. Gone are the days when you needed multiple unistack engineers to deploy a medium-complexity digital project. With most modern digital projects, you just require one or two people with adjacent skills; front-end engineers who could also do some development and back-end engineering. Those people are the gold standard. This first challenge is: How do you build an ecosystem that enables people to become multi-stack engineers and not encourage them to stay as unique stack specialists? Secondly, most businesses today do not need technology solutions. Businesses need the technologies to work with them to understand business problems, apply the technology that they know and provide solutions to business problems. Learning ecosystems today must foster that mindset in people. Concepts like agile DevOps are not a luxury anymore. They're the basic way most businesses operate.

Businesses are restructuring. The whole concept of teams in an organization is becoming archaic. Today, organizations are being structured as clans and tribes — people of similar interest groups and skill sets spread across different teams. How to break the traditional organizational constraints of teams and bring people from these clans and tribes to work together to solve business problems? A lot of organizations are taking steps toward breaking these silos. Learning ecosystems today need to fundamentally overcome some or all of these challenges for business growth. At a slightly higher level, we are dealing with a workforce that is used to hyper-personalization in their everyday lives. If you open Facebook or Amazon, there is intelligence built into what you really like and nudges you to buy. Learning ecosystems are not there yet. Combine this with today's world, where the average attention span of a user is about 8 seconds. So, how do you package learning content in such small nuggets?



RACHEL

What are some best practices that have been successful?

A

VIVEK

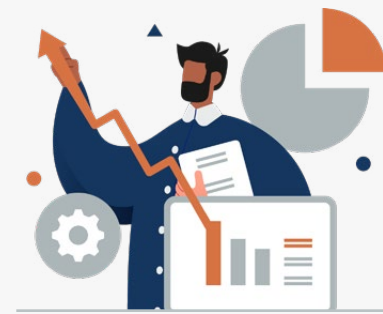
We built a platform internally called FrescoPlay. We have a number of content providers and learning platforms on top of our own elements and built a friction-free experience for people. It's as simple as not having to log in multiple times to different platforms to learn. We have learning cards with multimedia content. If there's a YouTube video, it's right there. If there's faculty running a webinar, it's right there. If there's content that needs to be curated from 15 different learning content providers, it's in one place. The platform is gamified; it provides you with points and contests. It has a bot that nudges you if you don't learn.

The first year that we built this, we started it as a small experiment. We wanted to build about 100,000 digital competencies in the first year. We built 160,000. We surprised ourselves because that was the first time a learning platform had such an organic uptake. When we went back to check what we had done right, we did a lot of number-crunching. This is where analytics really helped us. We found out that the peak usage time for this platform was between 9 and 10 at night. We went back and asked people, "What is that you do between 9 and 10 on a learning platform?" A lot of users said they use this for 10-15 minutes before they go to sleep. That put a new question in our minds: Is this app helping people sleep or is it helping them learn? We did further number-crunching to realize that people with consistent usage patterns of 15-20 minutes a day learned a lot more than the ones trying to burn the candle while learning 10 hours over a month, then just not coming back. So we started urging people to spend 15 minutes every day on the app. We use

data-driven techniques to identify people who are not doing that and nudge them.

But how do we nudge people to learn what is relevant to them and the company?

We do a lot of analytics to match company demand with an adjacent skill for the skill sets a user has and roll out an AI-based learning journey for them.



If you go into the platform today, you can literally say, "I want to be a data scientist." The platform will let you know what kind of data science skills are in demand in the company and can put together a real-time learning journey for you, telling you here are 15 courses that you need to complete. This is going to take you about 50 hours to go through this step by step. You can access it from any platform. We're very proud that we're using data not just to drive learning but behavior, as well. There is a lot of analytics that go into estimating the demand we need three or six months out based on what customers are needing and the skills that are going to be in demand. We call that our Skip Quarter Talent Planning Exercise. We can bridge the gap and make sure we always have a surplus of talent.

(continued)

We also have what we call mid-level reskilling. We discovered that people with 10 or 20 years of experience find it more difficult to unlearn or relearn. Based on demand, our analytics engine gives us a view of what percentage of our mid-level folks do not have market-relevant skills. We can design interventions to upskill and reskill our mid-level folks to have at least one market-relevant skill and certification. With all this, the reliance on market talent outside TCS is considerably reduced. In the peak of the pandemic or even The Great Resignation, when talent availability from the market was a challenge, we had a very robust pool given the size of our company.



RACHEL

How do you measure success and impact?



VIVEK

The proof in the pudding is what we call training-led deployment. We've always believed in looking at talent internally when it comes to growth. You will find a number of top executives, including the chairman of Tata Group, who joined as trainees and graduated to the roles they are in today. You will find that across different levels of the company. This mechanism for strong continuous learning and purpose-led talent development is the key and what we have as a principle. We measure ourselves on what percentage of requirements we are able

to fulfill through cross-skilling. We can fill 30 to 40 percent of all growth requirements in a year through internal cross-skilling. We nudge a lot of people to build their brand in the company through our internal systems. For example, when there's an open requirement for a data scientist, the Resource Management teams look at who's available with really high scores in data science. We have a gamified T-factor that is used to identify these people. There's also the Associate Satisfaction Index. We use learning as a very serious lever of engagement. An average TSCer learns about 120 hours every calendar year organically. Another lever is the Customer Satisfaction Index. Is all the learning effort actually impacting our customers? Are our customers looking at us as real growth and transformation experts? The last lever is attrition. How has learning helped us curb attrition? Has it positively impacted high-potential attrition? If yes, how can we identify such target groups and create customized interventions for them? Our Elevate program not just incentivizes people for work performance, but also for learning performance. This is a one-of-its-kind program in the industry where you can get steep rewards just by learning along with having a decent work performance. A lot of these have been designed as a constant feedback loop for us. We keep experimenting to make them better with more customized things for a specific set of people.



RACHEL

What are some critical things that correlate to your success?

VIVEK

A Our learning is not a force-driven program; it's persuasive. There is no real mandate on you what you need to learn. There are courses on how to play guitar if you want to learn that. But we've found a data-driven way to nudge people toward taking them where we want them. There are dashboards and a view of your quantified self as to where you compared to your peers, how close you are to where the company needs you, how many market-relevant skills you have, etc. These subtly persuade you to learn more in the right direction. There's a bar that tells you on the first day that what you haven't learned in a day, come back and learn. On the second day, it tells you a couple of your friends are learning and you're getting left behind. On the third day, the bot says, "Hey, you know what? I've nudged you for two days and you seem to be ignoring me. I am not going to nudge you anymore." Duolingo says more people return to learning after day three than they do on days one and two. The right nudges persuade people to come back and learn, and continue where they left off.

There is a lot of scope for gamification in all of this. Our learning platforms throw festival offers based on your usage patterns. Instead of waiting for the next year to complete the learning courses that are pending right now, you can earn 5X credits instead of one. There was a 300 percent uptake in the number of people completing learning courses in just one week during the holiday season. We use analytics and persuasion to drive user behavior and that's extremely critical for user success in the future. The two things that are mandatory in all this are to keep evolving and

improvising. I don't think anything we say today will stay relevant for more than a year — a year-and-a-half at tops. Keep building iterations and make it more infusing for people to come back and keep learning. The best learning content is available through open-source, so the focus can just be on content curation. I don't think many of us can create learning content better than a lot of YouTubers out there. Make the content more consumable and amazing. Finally, none of this can be done by just a learning team or a technology platform. It needs buy-in from the users and the business sponsors; it's about building allies. How can we make it a win-win proposition for different people?

Here are some ways to listen to the interview on Brandon Hall Group's Excellence at Work Podcast:



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About Brandon Hall Group

With more than 10,000 clients globally and 28 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

Professional Certifications

Self-paced certification programs. Virtual group sessions for companies. In-person conferences and summits.

Membership

Individual and Enterprise Membership Options: Includes research assets, advisory support, a client success plan and more.

Advisory Offerings

Custom Research Projects, including surveys, focus group interviews and Organization Needs Assessment for Transformation, Technology Selection and Strategy.

Excellence Awards

Two annual programs recognize the best organizations that have successfully deployed programs to achieve measurable results.

SOME WAYS WE CAN HELP

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

recognizes world-class HCM programs that transform their organization and achieve breakthrough results. This designation is the next step beyond the HCM Excellence Awards, which focus on a single program, and looks at the department as a whole.

SMARTCHOICE® PREFERRED PROVIDER PROGRAM

uniquely places HCM service and technology companies at the top of organizations' consideration list of vendors. It adds an unmatched level of credibility based on BHG's twenty-eight-plus years of experience in evaluating and selecting the best solution providers for leading organizations around the world.