



TECH TOOLS TO WIN AND RETAIN TALENT

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Teo Teong Ho and **Mahendra Kumar Bodduluri** of iQDynamics explain how technology can help businesses successfully onboard and win the loyalty of their employees in a remote working environment

WITH THE global war for talent intensifying, it's the businesses that provide a great employee experience that will have the edge in attracting and retaining the best people. But with hybrid working, how do you engage your employees who you may rarely, if ever, interact with face-to-face?

"One of the greatest challenges is the need for human interaction," says Teo Teong Ho, co-founder of Singapore-based iQDynamics, which creates software to help companies develop employees to their full potential.

"In the past when someone came on board, you shook their hand, showed them around and explained to them administratively what to do, and this involved a lot of manual processes and physical documents. Now, working from home this is no longer possible, so your HR processes have to be structured to cover everything."

Teo Teong Ho and iQDynamics managing director Mahendra Kumar Bodduluri spoke to *HRD* about the new technological challenges and solutions for employers in choosing HR software – especially when employee experience needs to be front of mind.

Data security

With hybrid working, your system needs to be accessible anywhere, any time; however, security is at risk when people are logging on beyond the safe perimeter of the company's network.



Much of the sensitive data HR handles, such as employee records and payroll information, is like candy for telemarketers, scammers, hackers and identity thieves. Your employees won't be too happy if their private information falls prey to any of these, so investing in a solid HRM system becomes crucial.

"Does the software encrypt the data? Does the solution offer secure authentications, including two-factor authentications?"

says Mahendra. Web application firewalls, or WAFs, are specially designed for use on web-based applications and make it nearly impossible for hackers to gain access.

"But a security solution is not just a system. Your solution provider has to have the processes in place to manage your information securely. In addition to being ISO 27001 certified like iQDynamics, they need to have proper hosting and compliance thought

through, secure database encryptions, and transport layer protocol and technical IT aspects covered to ensure no penetration by hackers,” says Mahendra.

“Many companies in a rush to open up and digitalise may not realise the full risk and implications.”

Onboarding and workflow

“Everyone has a system to run their payroll, etc., but processes like onboarding are rarely fully automated,” says Teo. “At iQDynamics we do a roadmap for companies, starting from the baseline: where are their systems at now? We’re building functionalities designed to reduce human intervention, so you have to be sensitive about it. The system needs to be collaborative and user-friendly, allowing engagement with HR to be effective, then employees will feel more secure and self-assured.

“When we open that conversation with clients, we always start with onboarding – it ‘plants the flag’ and points to the direction you’re going in. First impressions matter a lot, and it’s hard to retain an employee if you can’t get it right in the first three months. So the onboarding experience is key.”

This is especially true in a remote working environment, as it helps the employee to feel connected, informed and sure of their role from day one.

“We can create automated step-by-step workflow for onboarding, from an online video to welcome new joiners to e-orientation courses and administrative task lists where each action step in the onboarding process is automated to notify specific managers, HR or the IT person,” says Teo.

Automated onboarding and workflow can also do away with any anomalies, says Mahendra. “For example, a new person may come on board and be forgotten for a few days, while another employee starts at a different time and the supervisor is very proactive with them. But our software’s structured approach and streamlined workflows mean every

employee gets the information they need – ‘who are my colleagues, who does what in the organisation, what am I supposed to prioritise today?’ Or sometimes it’s basic problems like ‘my ID card isn’t issued yet’, ‘my laptop isn’t up and running’. Automation enhances this onboarding experience for the employee and reduces the workload for HR.”

Performance and career development

“In Singapore, the economy moves fast, and people move around fast. If you don’t take care of the talent, they will move,” says Teo.

Because career progression and development are highly prized by employees, your software should facilitate this by enabling talent identification, strengthening and retention, and succession planning.

“It’s not just about your employee’s initial

and layouts for both standard and ad hoc appraisals to measure meaningful performance metrics.”

Calibration tools also ensure fairness; by calibrating the performance of the entire organisation at departmental or divisional levels, you moderate the overall results and eliminate any outliers.

However, it’s not one-way traffic, says Mahendra. Your software should allow you to ask the employee how they are doing with their skills, what they need from the company, whether they are satisfied with their job.

“Our software enables you to do this in both a structured way – ie with goal-driven feedback – or in an unstructured way, with general questions like ‘how are you feeling about your job, are you happy today?’



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Teo Teong Ho, co-founder, iQDynamics

competency development, because learning never stops. Your tools need to help you develop that competency from year to year.”

Good performance assessment tools can tell you where your employee is and isn’t doing well so you can sustain the former and find solutions for the latter.

Transparency and fairness drive a good, clean performance system, says Teo, so your performance appraisal system needs to have a clear methodology, be goal-driven, and focus on competencies.

“These things can be automated inside the system. iQDynamics can work with employers to configure appraisal templates

Dashboard design

With remote working, while dashboard data still needs to be easily accessible and digestible, the focus should be on supporting your employees.

“Most people are now looking beyond purely operational information to talent retention, recruitment, etc.,” says Mahendra. “So how much leave your employees have left, the time they’ve spent in the office ... that’s not the point any more. In a remote working environment you’re not going to say, ‘he started at nine and ended at five’ – you don’t want to police people. It’s about looking at the data more from a performance and goal-driven angle.



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Mahendra Kumar Bodduluri, managing director, iqDynamics



“Whether it’s presented using graphical methods or key performance indicators, the data should be quickly understood and be as real-time as possible so you can look at your dashboard and say, for example, how many staff are on leave today, what is my recruitment gap? We help clients get that information straight to the front – and just the data you need. We design dashboards in a very targeted way, so everyone – employees, managers and senior managers – can make sense of it.

“With remote working this becomes more important because you are no longer talking to each other in the office. And if I want to know more, the tools must allow me to drill down for extra information.”

Mahendra says many HR managers know what they want from the dashboard but can’t articulate it in software terms. So rather than saying ‘tell me what you want’, the software provider should facilitate the solution.

“We pride ourselves on understanding the HR domain, not just from the tech angle.

So we prebuild dashboards and deliver those to the customer so they can say, ‘yes, that’s what I want’, or ‘it needs to be tweaked or to meet other unique needs.”

Employee engagement

Surveys and pulse checks give you meaningful information and a ‘listening ear’ into what your employees are thinking, how satisfied they are with their jobs, whether there are any skills

UNIQUE SELLING POINTS OF HRIQ PLATFORM

- An HCM system designed to meet complex needs, with the flexibility to adapt in line with new organisational goals
- Well suited to organisations across all industries with 300 to over 12,000 staff
- Experienced in connecting with enterprise business applications such as SAP, Workday, Oracle, Microsoft Business Central, etc.
- Adheres to strict security protocols, conducting continuous testing and upgrades to minimise any security breaches or downtime
- An efficient tool that bridges the needs of different HR teams within a single platform that provides real-time data

gaps. Questions can be asked about learning needs and tools required to allow supervisors to raise concerns around ad hoc skills gaps caused by remote working.

“You can collect that over time and translate that information on the dashboard so managers can look at it and know how their team members are feeling.”

But Mahendra says this information gathering is a double-edged sword.

“With surveys, you have to know what you are going to ask for; be prepared for what you’re going to get and to take action. If you ignore the results, you might be causing more problems than by not surveying in the first place.” **HRIQ**

ABOUT IQDYNAMICS

Established in 1994, iqDynamics has won several awards, with HRIQ named Best HR Assessment Tool and Learning Management System in the Reader’s Choice Awards. The company serves more than 450 customers in Singapore and the APAC region. iqDynamics’ HRIQ human capital management system is a single integrated platform that handles both human resource management and talent management processes. The HRIQ HCM is designed to automate complex workforce policies and perform daily process-driven administrative functions. Within the same suite, HRIQ also handles strategic HR talent development processes concerning learning development, talent assessment and succession plans. The company is committed to delivering high-quality local services to customers using secure Microsoft technology, and to providing continuous product research and development and support in the HCM domain.