

Special Issue

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## BEST COMPANIES TO WORK FOR

**A BT-PeopleStrong  
Survey reveals  
what attracts the  
best talent**







# BEST COMPANIES TO WORK FOR



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**Employees** prefer a work environment that helps them **grow professionally,** honing and adding to **their skills,** reveals a Business Today-PeopleStrong survey.

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*Illustration by Nilanjan Das*

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etaining talent has always been a top priority for companies. High performers are known to be relentless in their pursuit of challenging job profiles and compensation alone isn't a big motivator. So, what drives the teeming, restless workforce of India Inc?

Our 'Best Companies to Work For' survey reveals that there hasn't been a seismic shift in what people want from their workplace over the past five years. Employees want to ensure that a company will give them opportunities to grow

in their job and also provide an environment that is fair and inclusive.

Some perks, seen as privileges in the past, are now considered standard. For instance, flexible timings, pay for performance, maternity and paternity leave, among others. Employees now want a transparent compensation structure, leadership mentoring, learning programmes and an entrepreneurial job that adds to their skill set. Small wonder, then, that companies are increasingly spending more on grooming





## LEAD ESSAY

inhouse talent. This assumes relevance in the wake of technological disruptions with the advent of artificial intelligence, big data, etc. Auto giant Tata Motors, for instance, is already reskilling its employees to make them 'future ready'. Its task is cut out – the company has a mammoth 40,000 strong workforce with a diverse age profile (the average age is 37).

What's more, this year, the expectations of employees have grown on two parameters. They want an organisation that offers room for innovation and creativity and is able to engage and communicate effectively with them. For employers, offering a complete package is important as their workforce is aware of the industry's best practices and is clear about what they expect from their job.

Indeed, given the talent shortage today, it is more important than ever for companies to work on their employer brand proposition. "A good reputation of a company enables employees to account for things that can't be described. For instance, does it have a fair and less political work environment or how it will treat employees," says Deepak Somaya, Associate Professor, Illinois University. In fact, such companies also get the benefit of doubt from employees when they make tough decisions, he points out. There is a presumption that the company is trying to do the right thing which helps to retain talent in difficult times.

The survey this year was exhaustive and detailed in an effort to capture the major trends. A detailed questionnaire – shared across social media and on various databases of *Business Today*, PeopleStrong and women's job portal Heroes – was filled by 14,000 employees from 10 industries. Interestingly, unlike the past, this year women too have rated compensation as one of the top



## TOP 25 COMPANIES

RANK	2017
1	Google India
2	Accenture
3	Amazon India
4	ICICI Bank
5	Infosys
6	Hindustan Unilever
7	Tata Steel
8	IBM India
9	Lupin
10	Bharti Airtel
11	Abbott India
12	Aditya Birla Capital
13	Deloitte India
14	Mahindra & Mahindra
15	Tata Motors
16	Reliance Industries
17	Apple (India)
18	Axis Bank
19	Lifestyle International
20	Oil & Natural Gas Corp
21	Cisco Systems (India)
22	Vodafone India
23	Maruti Suzuki
24	Wipro
25	Idea Cellular

reasons for accepting a job offer. This is in sync with the growing discourse around pay parity.

## Setting the Pace

Usually, the fastest growing companies are also the most sought after. It's largely because they are also the ones that offer their teams bigger responsibilities in terms of conceptualising new products, opening new markets, taking up new roles and innovating.

It's, perhaps, largely why the Indian units of Google and Accenture have been able to retain their positions at the top of the table – number 1 and 2 respectively. Their ranking has not changed for the past five years. These companies offer not just excellent salaries and a challenging work environment but are evolving consistently to become better workplaces. As Google India's Vice President and Managing Director Rajan Anandan puts it: "It is the amazing thing about the human spirit. You hire really smart people, get them excited. And then you empower them, support them. That's our model. Empowerment at scale."

Accenture stood out despite the churn in the software services industry as it was able to keep pace with new technologies. In fact, nearly 55 per cent per cent of its business comes from digital. Not surprising, perhaps, given that it spends a whopping \$900 million on training globally and recently set up a state of the art learning centre and an innovation hub in Bengaluru.

The two companies are also sought after as they have an ear to the ground and understand the importance of an open culture that welcomes all. Google has started two hour workshops to tackle unconscious bias in Googlers. Accenture is now focusing on inclusion of all types – gender, disabilities, colour, caste, sexual orientation. Their Chairman



## Best Companies To Work For

### LEAD ESSAY

and Senior Managing Director Rekha Menon says that people issues is her strategic priority and occupies "a large part of my mindscape".

Amazon has been able to retain its third position for the second consecutive year as it gives employees complete freedom to work and innovate and also switch to their preferred job profile. It's the reason for several innovations in the company, say company executives, such as 'Project Udaan' – its assisted shopping programme in rural and semi-urban areas. HUL and ICICI Bank's rankings jumped this year. They have moved up 5 positions to number 6 and 4 respectively. Interestingly, it is also the first time a bank has entered the Top 5 list in the past five years. It has usurped the place of TCS which was in the top five companies roster consistently over these years. Other companies moving up this year include Infosys, perched at 5 (7 last year) and Abbott (rose one rank to 11). The only company in the top 10 that has slipped in the rankings is IBM India, sliding two ranks to No. 8.

The debutants this year in the top 25 are Lupin (9), Aditya Birla Capital (12), Deloitte India (13), Apple India (17), Lifestyle International (19) and Maruti Suzuki (23).

Mahindra & Mahindra (14), Axis Bank (18), Oil & Natural Gas Corporation (20), Vodafone India (22), Idea Cellular (25) appeared in the list again after a few years. Big names that dropped out of the top 25 are TCS, Microsoft, Facebook, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, HDFC, BHEL, State Bank of India, Adobe, Capgemini, HDFC Bank, SAP and ITC.

Across sectors, the top positions were held by ICICI Bank (Banking), Tata Steel (Core Sector), Tata Motors (Auto), Arvind Fashions (Retail), Bharti Airtel (Telecom), HUL (Durables and Non-Engineering), DTDC (Others and diversified), Abbott (Pharma), and Accenture (Software and IT). These companies have raised the bar in rewarding



**Employees planning to leave are extremely dissatisfied with the growth opportunities and recognition for contribution made.**



**Top 5 parameters in the survey are Culture of Inclusion, Communication, Culture of Innovation, Challenging Work Opportunities and Fairness & Objectivity.**



**Higher Job Role & Responsibility, Compensation & Benefits and Work Culture make a job attractive.**

**50%**

**of employees in a company, on average, plan to leave their job after working for 3-5 years.**

and nursing talent in their sectors. Airtel, for instance, is offering learning opportunities customised for employees across levels and functions, enabling them to advance their career. Since April 2017, employees have completed 80,000 courses. ICICI Bank is connecting with its employees in remote locations digitally. FMCG behemoth HUL has divided itself into different business units that work independently to enable faster innovation and reduce the 'go to market' time by allowing employees to experiment and take risks. Arvind has grown exponentially by first giving its own employees growth opportunities instead of recruiting from the industry.

All the top 5 companies in Manufacturing, Retail and Others and Diversified were new entrants this year. It shows the churn in these sectors and how changing market dynamics is forcing companies to revamp human resource policies to capture talent.

A key trend is the revival of traditional sectors. Technology still has its 'aspirational' value and five out of top 10 companies are software, IT or internet firms. But there is also a presence of telecom, pharma, banking and steel in the top 10. Last year, nine of the top 10 were technology companies. Also, strong corporate branding has helped some companies remain sought after despite challenges to core business operations. For example, while telecom is not amongst the best performing sectors, three companies – Airtel, Idea and Vodafone India – have found a place in the top 25. Reliance Jio is number 5 in sectoral rankings of Telecom and Allied.

All said and done, people no longer work for run of the mill benefits but increasingly opt for companies with a culture of innovation, desired values and reputation in the market. Companies will have to pull up their socks and chart customised programmes for employees if they want to attract talent. **BT**

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