

Exciting Opportunities for Fresher

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ABSTRACT

Should we hire a fresher or experienced associate is the corporate version of hen or egg phrase? Everyone wants the experience in his/her team. Ironically, no one wants to groom a fresher into an experienced resource. The feeling that experience will add to richness of best practices learnt and better execution strategies keeps us blinded to many positive facets of the fresh energy, which the entrants can add to any industry. The advantage of being the lowest in hierarchy and no earned badges to lose gives the freshers innovative edge and higher risk appetite. This keeps their fear of mind more open to new ideas and think out of box. We are living in VUCA(Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous) world. Most of our experienced associates are not much comfortable with VUCA world. They have evolved into a particular way of working which was part of their experience journey. With no doubt on their capabilities to learn the new way, they will always be behind the current generation who has lived this way from the start itself. Freshers are still free to try different things before being specialized into a particular domain. They can be groomed as per the current needs with positive and inclusive mentoring and growth opportunities. The perks of learning and growth will always attract their loyalty and the team will stay with you longer. Therefore, the need for a balanced team has and will always be an adequate mix of experience as well as the freshers.

INTRODUCTION

In this paper, authors want to share their observations and experience for fresher associates in the organization. While doing so, authors want to share some suggestions for organizations as well as the associates for making it win-win situation for both. A comparison between experienced versus fresher associates along with advantages for staying long with the same organization over jumping too quickly are shared.

WHY SHOULD AN ORGANIZATION HIRE FRESHER ASSOCIATES?

In any organization, whenever resourcing for a project is discussed, first question which comes to mind is, do we have anyone with prior experience? However its not always possible to have someone with relevant experience. Especially in ever changing today's environment, where we are exploring new ways, new tools and technologies, hence we need to enhance skillsets of our associates, which makes way for fresher associates. Below table provides some comparison between these workforces:

Category	Fresher Associates	Experienced Associates
Learning Agility	High	Medium
Earned badges	No	Yes
Energy Level	High	Medium
External responsibilities(marriage, kids, own health, aged people at home)	Relatively on lower side	Relatively medium to higher side
Financial Needs	Medium	Mostly high
Mobility/Travel restriction	Almost none	Usually yes
Comfortable with change	Very much	Not so much

Table 1 – Fresher Associate Vs. Experience Associate

In today's VUCA world, there are many areas where fresher associates have an edge over experienced ones. Keeping future strategies in mind, where today's fresher will be playing an important role as an experienced resource, it's a good idea to maintain a good balance of diverse talent in the team.

ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Current pandemic has made a great impact in shaping the corporate world. Work style has changed big time and as a result working culture and model has changed a lot. Many organizations, which were saying BIG NO to work from home, are having this as an open option now. In first year of COVID, attrition was at very low level. However, as the world started recovering from COVID, attrition rate has been increasing consistently.

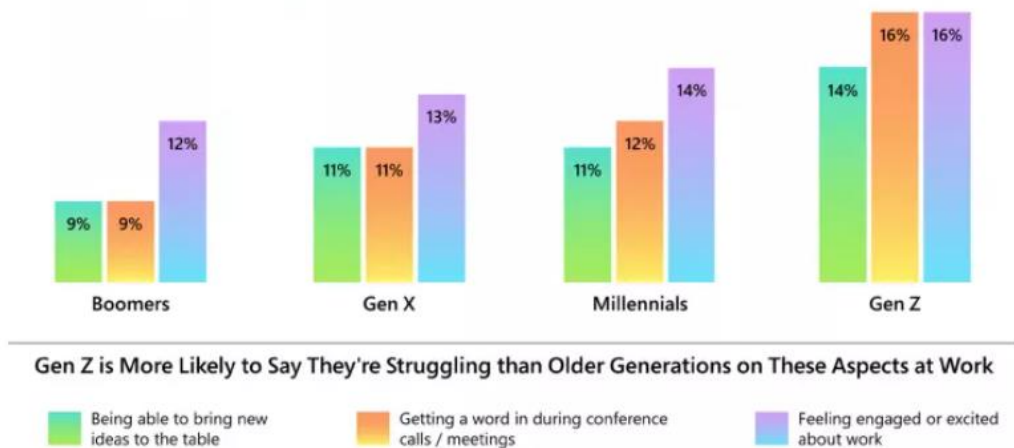
A recent survey from **World Economic Forum**¹ of more than 9 million employee records at 4,000 global companies revealed two trends:

- Resignation rates are highest among mid-career employees
- Resignation rates are highest in the technology and healthcare industries

Lets take a dig at finding out major reasons behind the high attrition rates. Freshers or relatively new entrants to the organizations are more prone to change the job due to digital burnout. Who were dreaming to join the office, enjoy the work culture, being parts of many initiatives, meet new people and had planned to take good care of their shape after getting first job, are finding it exactly opposite in reality. Below data from **Microsoft-Work Trend index:2021 Annual Report**² gives a glimpse of struggles faced by different generations:

Gen Z is struggling more than other generations

The last year has been more challenging for Gen Z in many ways — from bringing new ideas to the table, to feeling engaged or excited about work.



Research shows Gen Z has had more work-related problems last year than any other generation. Image: Microsoft - Work Trend Index: 2021 Annual Report

Figure 1- Work related problems for different generations

One can say, more or less things are same for all the organizations. Does that mean it is old wine in the new bottle, nothing else? Where are all these employees going?

If we believe, **World Economic Forum² 2020** data, where shift of domain is another major reason behind these changes. Many of the employees are interested in more challenging roles, with latest technologies and roles, which are in more demand and above all, gets them paid more. Below data shows the top technologies adopted by 2025.

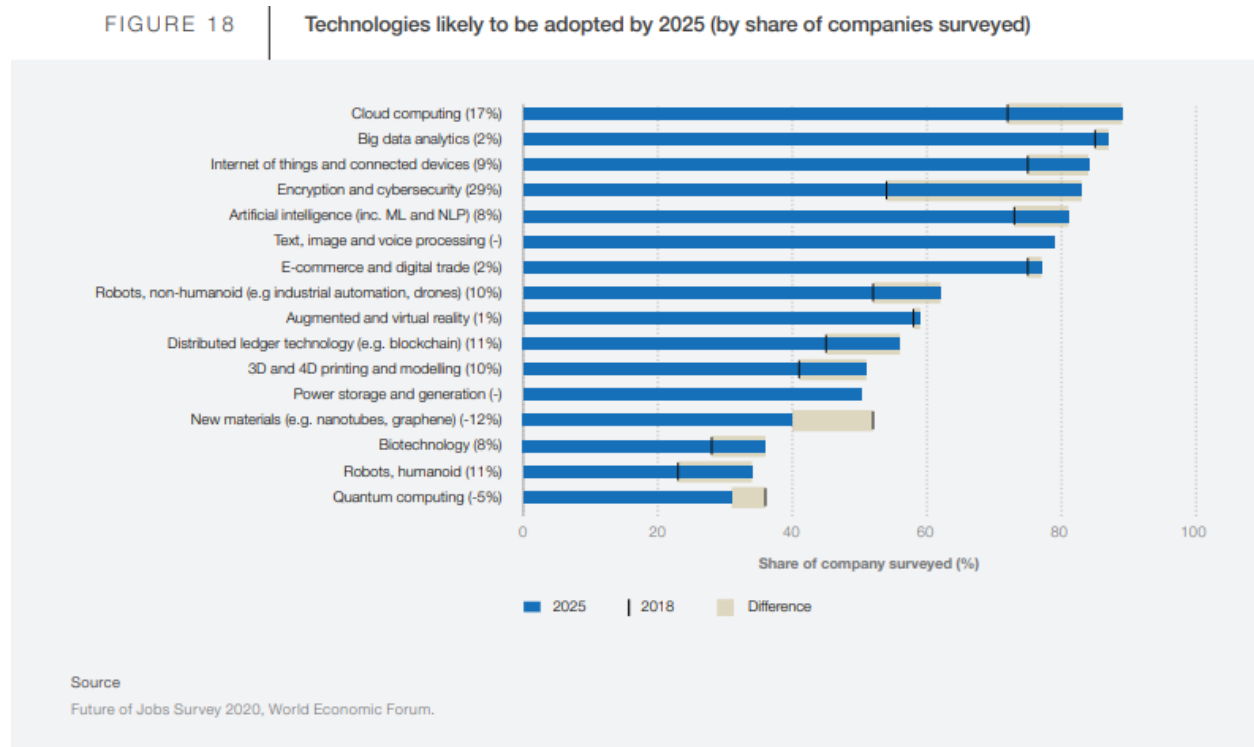


Figure 2 – Top technologies to be adopted by 2025

In 2021 and later, attrition started shooting upward and most of the organizations are putting efforts for better retention. As per us, entire life cycle can be divided in 4 parts as below:

- Attract talent
- Hire talent
- Groom talent
- Retain talent

Irony is, most of the organizations end up talking more about the last part, whereas this is last in this order. Which is heavily dependent on first three. Lets take a dig on each one of them to understand it better.

ATTRACT TALENT

It all depends on the work culture, growth opportunities, industry competitive pay-package and feedback from existing employees, who are brand ambassador for the organization. Now a days, due to social media, external engagement through multiple conferences, surveys, LinkedIn etc., most of the organizations have access to employees from other organizations and external forces always try to attract them. The staffing organizations add more competition to it.

HIRE TALENT

Once an organization is able to attract the right talent, it needs to be identified and hired. Usually it is observed, most of these talented associates, who are looking out for a change, have multiple offers in hand. Again, tough competition, here overall employee proposition comes in to picture. Its not only the cost to company, which derives the decision in such cases. Other factors such as work life balance, learning and growth opportunities, empowerment, external engagement, work culture, tools, standards and technologies used with respect to industry standard, job security etc. also play an important role here. Most of the organizations(especially managers) complain about lack of availability of skilled(so called best fit) associates in the market. They find, most of the times same CVs keep on doing the rounds, whom they have rejected/ignored earlier. Even many of the hiring managers go with 60%-70% match to desired skills and rest take as a calculated risk based on attitude and potential. With this regards, freshers are best bet. Who are like blank book and you can write the best possible story by molding them as per the organization's vision, strategy and goals.

GROOM TALENT

Once an associate is hired, initially he/she is under probation period. This is tricky period. As per us, managers should trust the decision of their hiring team and should provide the best support to these new hires. Now focus should be on grooming these associates as per the business needs. Here connecting the dots for right talent to right task and future development plan, can bring amazing results for the organization as well as associate. Whenever an associate, who is new to the project(whether being new to organization or industry or to the task), should be properly guided with clear roadmap and timely support. We would like to quote an example from "**The New One Minute Manager**" book* from Ken Blanchard & Spencer Johnson. Which is about encouraging a kid, when it first time says a word or start walking. We know, its not at all perfect in first instance, still even if it is somewhat resembling to what we want, we are very happy. When a kid first time starts crawling or stands up(of course with wobble), we hug it and kiss it and share our happiness with everyone. Child who is unaware about this, finds it encouraging. He tries to do it more. We try to have a video call with our relatives and friends or show this to guests at home. Everyone is super excited and claps for the new member in the family for taking those baby steps.

Same enthusiasm is needed while encouraging the new associates, they can be new to the industry(even fresher), team or task. Their small steps towards partial correct things, needs to be applauded, without waiting for the perfection. Their efforts and progress need to be shared with wider audience(team meetings or any other appropriate platform). It will inspire them to do it more. Which will help them in moving in right direction and achieving the desired result for self and the organization. While doing so, they may end up making few mistakes, lets help them in overcoming by following the same way, as parents do for the kids at home.

These freshers/new associates, who are home grown and lived the culture of the organization from day 1, along with being well aware of the long term vision of the organization, with proper guidance, support, encouragement and inspiration, will be flag bearer for achieving the long term targets of the organization. They are potential candidates for leadership team.

RETAIN TALENT

Most of us talk about this a lot and find it most difficult task. However, if the preceding three processes are followed correctly, this will be their final product/result. On frequently basis, a pulse check for the comfort and satisfaction level of the employees can be done for better retention. Better alignment for associates' career aspiration and development plan with organizations goals, will give wonderful results in long run. If psychological safe environment is provided, which helps associates in speaking up their mind without

thinking about the after results, will lay foundation for open dialogue between the manager and associate for their aspirations and opportunity along with sharing any concerns with respect to career goals, work culture, comfort levels etc.

As these employees move up the ladder in the experience, enhance their knowledge by providing proper trainings and guidance for required upskilling, get them engaged in external engagement for the organization, getting them involved in hiring, training etc. will do the wonder. Even some of the organizations have tie up with academic organizations for higher studies. Which helps in strengthening the bond between employee and the organization.

As shared above about the top technologies to be adopted by 2025, organization can also find ways to implement the same in the organization. Which will provide the associates an opportunity to explore the desired world within the organization and at the same time organizations will have those roles filled with less financial burden. Existing experience of tools, technologies and work culture will be added advantages.

End of the day, organizations/managers should think like a farmer, when it comes to making a good team:

- 'Don't shout at the crops
- Don't blame the crop for not growing fast enough
- Don't uproot crops before they've had a chance to grow
- Choose the best plants for the soil
- Irrigate and fertilize
- Remove weeds
- Remember you will have good seasons and bad seasons-you can't control the weather only be prepared for it.'

Source: LinkedIn-Tariq El Yassouri, Head of Data & Digital Marketing, Mercedes-Benz

ASSOCIATE PERSPECTIVE

Based on the details shared above, it looks like entire onus is on the organization only. However as all of us know, for better results collaboration is key. Same is applicable here. Associates(especially freshers) should do their homework, before deciding to join an organization. Once you have identified your dream organization and secured an offer from it, join without any doubt in the mind and keeping long-term perspective.

These employees are brand ambassador for their previous organizations. In case of fresher, it is either academic or upskilling institute. If they stay loyal and invest their time with the organization, reciprocally they will be in the larger schemes of the organization and will benefit from the same. Even it will give a good message to the organization, in visiting the same campus for hiring more employees in the future. It will also take it to the next level by setting up realistic expectations with the academic institute and with a collaboration of academic and corporate, better employable students will be made available in the future by these institutes. For example, our industry is moving towards R language and many of the academic institutes from science or statistics background are providing basic R courses to their students. Which is an added advantage.

We would recommend fresher associates to show more maturity and loyalty towards the organization that has offered the first job. Whatever offers they are finding now, a big reason behind this is their experience and learnings at the current organization. More the time they stay with the organization, higher the market value will be. Initially for some time, it may seem like a slow growth with current organization and lucrative offers from external market are difficult to say no. However in long run, it remains more or less same, even in most of the cases those who jumps the organizations too frequently, they end up with lower side of their career after 10-15 years of starting their career. However, those who stays with the organization for longer duration, end up climbing the ladder and getting better opportunities and visibility. Of course, being in larger schemes and having the trust of leadership team, will allow the organization to invest heavily in those employees and rest would be history. In general, employees who stays longer with the organization have

better chances to take roles of higher responsibilities. Which is a win-win situation for employee as well as the organization.

As per random data collected, below is the comparison between market value of an associate over the period.

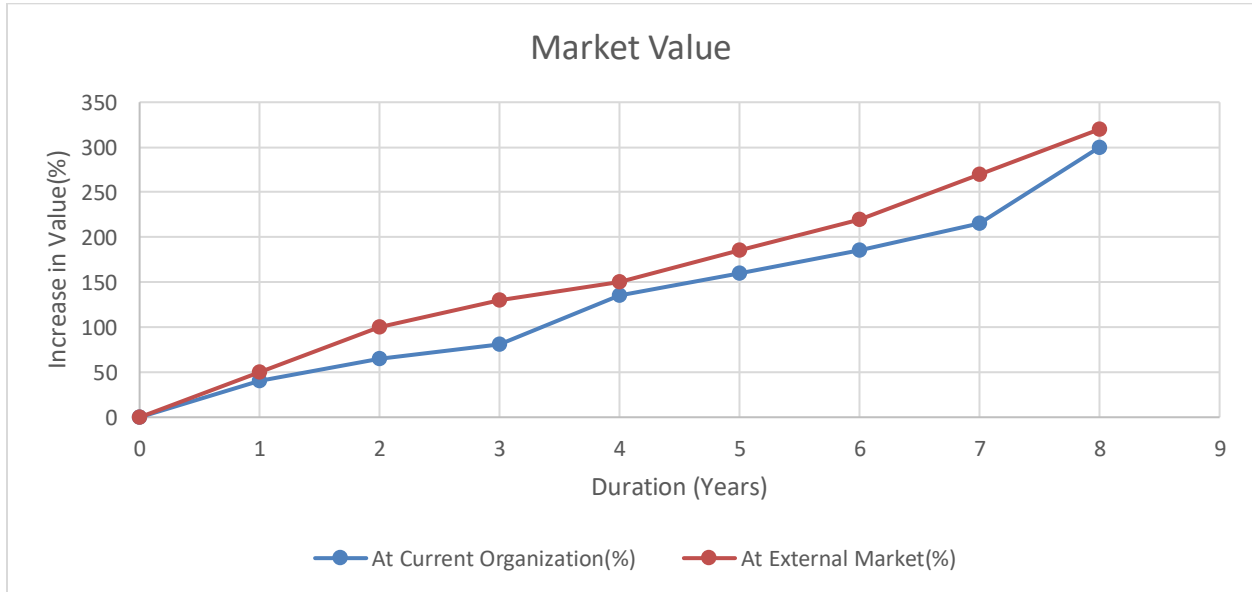


Figure 3 – Market value over a period of time

From above graph, we can see, market value of an associate moves in parabolic form. At different time points, it keep on coming closer to the realized value at current organization. We have used the term realized here, because at current organization, every associate has intangible value in terms of rapport, trust, networking and sustained performance. Which brings better opportunities and puts one in front race for larger scheme of things. At new organization, these things needs to be started afresh. Market value of an associate is increasing in the same proportion as the learning enhanced by the associate.

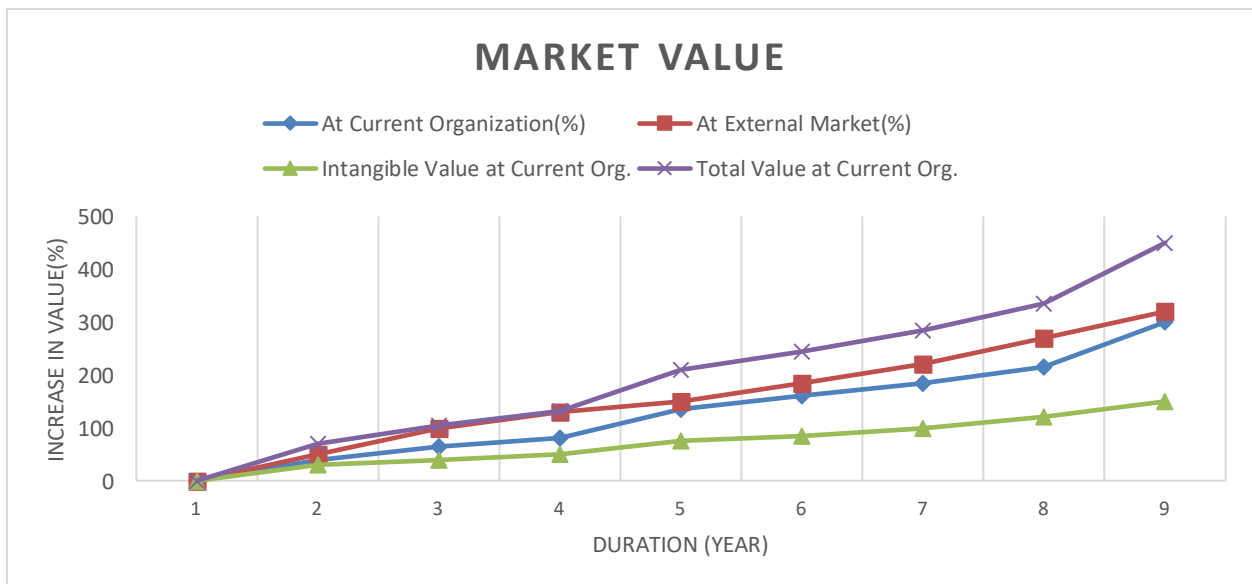


Figure 4 – Total Market Value

Above chart shows overall value of an employee, including the intangible. Intangible value would be quite low at new organization, with time, it will be increasing and if we consider this factor, then total overall value at current organization is going to be mostly higher than value proposed by external market.

TIPS FOR FRESHER

Below are few tips from motivational speaker, author and former top sports agent Molly Fletcher, which doesn't need any extra talent, still they can bring wonderful results.

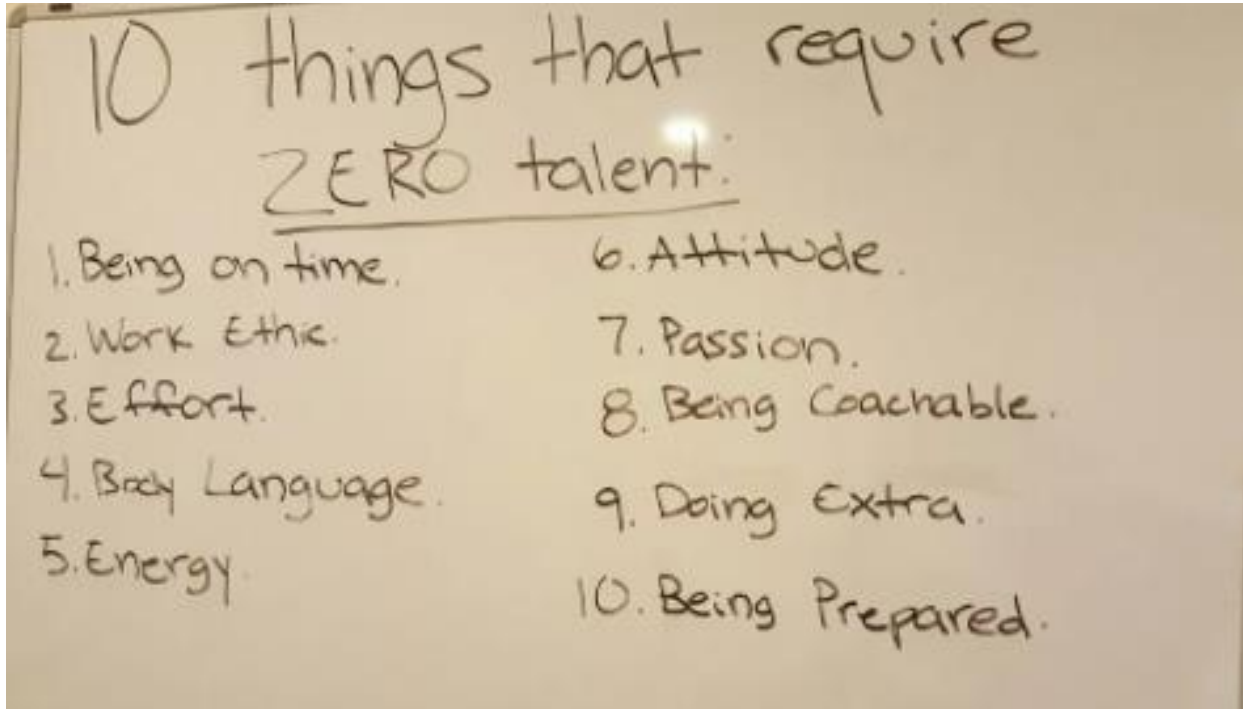


Figure 5 – 10 Things that requires zero talent

CONCLUSION

We would like to conclude by asking the fresher associates to look beyond the pay package and short term benefits. Try to have a look at larger picture and seriously sit and think, where you want to see yourself after 10-15 years and whether your current organization can help you in reaching there. At the same time, organizations should show more transparency while discussing the larger picture and create a development plan of the associate, which will keep both aligned. As a result, future roles, opportunities and benefits will be coming in a planned way than a surprise. Which will make the journey more assured and enjoyable.

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10 things that requires zero talent

<https://mollyfletcher.com/zero-talent/>

LinkedIn

Think Like a Farmer from *Tariq El Yassouri, Head of Data & Digital Marketing, Mercedes-Benz*

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DISCLAIMER

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RECOMMENDED READING

1. www.growinside.blog
2. <https://mollyfletcher.com>

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