

# Yeshasvini Ramaswamy

**Radha** 00:11

Welcome to Mrigashira Thanks for taking your time out to talk to us today.

**Yeshasvini Ramaswamy** 00:19

you. Thank you for having me over.

**Radha** 00:22

Now that the pandemic is behind us, right? Is it in a way that we are back to pre-pandemic work culture, or something has changed drastically that, you know, we will never be able to go back to those days? What has been your observation and specific to communication sector?

**Yeshasvini Ramaswamy** 00:50

Yeah. I mean, great question, just start off our dialogue. I don't think we will ever go back to the pre pandemic times. You know, work structures, like work from home, were there earlier to the pandemic. Also, it's not as new as we're trying to talk about it. But the pace of adoption of technology, and connectivity at the workplace, I think the pandemic has just accelerated that. So what we like to call it as a hybrid kind of model is your best day. And that will certainly reflect on the communications that every organization would want to do. Because, you know, language communication, and words are some of the most powerful tools we can utilize, in not only a professional setting, but a personal setting as well. And it is important to create a consistent company tone, and use language that is inclusive of the diverse workforce that every organization is employing today. Because the pandemic has also made us very diverse, because our hiring pool is now becoming borderless, not only within India, but across the globe. So we are all having to deal with talent, that is diverse, that is multicultural, that belongs to different race, language, color, sexual orientation. So that's the word we will have to navigate henceforth,

**Radha** 02:39

From communication industry perspective, what has been, you know, your observation of diversity here in the sector? And how does that play a critical role in becoming a great workplace?

**Yeshasvini Ramaswamy** 03:20

Yeah, like, let me let me share some data with you. Right, and this is a McKinsey's research that was recently published that said that, you know, racially and ethnically diverse companies outperform industry norms by a huge 35%. And you may have heard about Glassdoor, and they just released a survey which said, like almost in today's world, 67% of job seekers have said that, you know, a diverse workforce is important for them when they're considering job offers, and almost a healthy 57% of employees think their company should be more diverse. So I don't think it is a topic any more of summits and conferences, it is becoming a society dialogue, if I may say so. And that will affect every industry. And I think the communications industry is no different. You see, communication has the ability to also trigger or elicit an easy responses when it is not done in a respectful and comfortable manner. Right? Your employees,

I mean, I can't stress enough the investments that companies have to make into communications, right, because your employees can feel that they're being undervalued, or trivialized, or judged or stereotype or even excluded when the language and the words aren't inclusive. So as we're trying to navigate Get these times Communications has to become center stage because look, we are navigating a workforce as a people manager today, you know, a good percentage of the team is not going to report to work in office, whereas there will be a section of the people whom I will be meeting face to face. So language connectivity belongingness, all center stage and, and, and we've begun the journey, but I think it's a long road to travel for all of us.

**Radha 05:41**

That's interesting. And also at praxis, you're talking about, you know, your talk was also about equity and equality. And I'm, you know, how often one doesn't sort of strike a balance between the two. So can you just explain more, more about this?

**Yeshasvini Ramaswamy 06:04**

I mean, just to help our, you know, our listeners understand, or maybe they already know, there is a, there is a difference between these terms equality and equity, right. Equality, in very simple words, is, let's say, I order T shirts, black colored T shirts, small size for everybody, I can say look, I'm being equal, right? Everybody gets an equal sized t shirt, but does it really fit everybody. And equity is about making that extra effort to ensure that everybody gets the color they want the size they want. So when I'm talking about the need for equity in the workplace, what I'm actually stressing on is for the business leaders to be very mindful about the people practices that they are created. In the post patent pandemic world with the lens of equity, how do you treat an employee who is in an essential service, say power energy, they had to report to work every single day, they did not have the luxury of working from home. Right. So of course, we cannot treat all our employees the same way. Because their work environments, their business challenges have become different. And some of them very visibly. So gone are the times where traditional practices on compensation on benefits on allowances will work, they're not going to work anymore, because they environments have changed. So I think, I think looking or re looking at some of the practices that we have around employee engagement has to be from the lens of we driving equity in a responsible manner.

**Radha 08:06**

Is it that in all the surveys of, you know, great place to work? Is it that usually it is easier for services industry to create such an environment, whereas the conventional or the traditional organizations that also have a manufacturing setup or something else, it becomes difficult for them to across the board create a great place to work kind of a world work culture?

**Yeshasvini Ramaswamy 09:11**

think, no, not necessarily manufacturing and services, rather, I think, Well, that's true. And of course, that's a perspective that a lot of us have our conversations on. I think the lens, we need to see this is from how close we are in the value chain of customer engagement. Right so if you talk about, say the services sector, and let's say, you are in in work that needs to do reconciliation at the end of the day, right, it's a back end process. So those kinds of jobs, you know, we're actually seeing some of the organizations announced a permanent work from home. Because necessarily, you know, the office is not

adding value. And I think that has changed, right? The Office as a place of work has been discussed very differently than the pre pandemic time. So, now when you're doing roll segregation, a lot of us are asking the question saying, does a physical presents add value to that job role. So if I'm in in a role, that gives me the luxury of a turnaround time, and I really don't have to be innovating every day, you know, coming up with solutions every day, etc. I can afford to work from home. But if I'm in an environment that needs me, to be at office to be in front of the customer, to meet the customer to innovate products, I have to turn up the work. So I think we're going to be seeing three very different models, one type of businesses where they will be a permanent work from home. The second will be the other extreme, where a lot of the businesses will call back their employees mandate really to report back to work. And the third type where they're actually trying to see, and these are typical, typically, large, multinational organizations where there are the, you know, the job architecture is very, very different and multi layered, they would be the ones who would really be focusing on what kind of job roles can work from home? How, what are those roles that need to come into office for a couple of days a week? And what are those roles that have to report back to work? So I'm saying that they're going to be all these three types of work environments that will be emerging? And in this, how do we sustain a language of inclusion will be very important for us to deliberate.

**Radha** 12:02

But when you're talking about this kind of segregation, what happens to, you know, the all important human interaction like, you know, there is a set of employees who are working from home? So how does one strike a balance by taking some jobs? You know, sort of completely remote?

**Yeshasvini Ramaswamy** 12:36

You see, what we call us FOMO Right Fear Of Missing Out human psychology. And, in fact, studies have now even started of how does one review performance of an employee that you really don't meet physically everyday visa vie, you know, somebody who reports to Office, you sit down, you go have a cup of coffee, and you have that and, and interestingly, and this is still under study, but some of the variance of scores is as high as 8%. So, so I think, for us going forward, if there is a hashtags I need to talk about, it will be hashtag intentional collaboration, I think we have to make that extra effort. Look, I think for us, the problems have just become pre pandemic, everybody was at work, and during the pandemic, you know, everybody became virtual, where they could write, it's only now that we have to make that extra effort to intentionally collaborate between different groups of employees. So, for me, I would track in addition to employee engagement or metric called belongingness do I do I feel Do I still feel that I belong to this team, you know, do I belong to this company, and that metric will be important for us to track and there has to be more support given to people managers, because their jobs have become tougher, they have to ensure productivity, they have to ensure engagement, goodwill, manage performance all in, in a multi layered work environment, right. So, I think the need of the hour is for us to create those support structures around people managers today.

**Radha** 14:41

But now with this kind of a complex organizational structure. You know, talent management, attrition, etc. A internal communication will probably become more important, and probably become more aggressive and be communication per se and the complexity of that increases. So, how do you see that?

**Yeshasvini Ramaswamy 15:19**

Yeah, of course. I mean, the simple answer would be yes. But really, the question is, how do you communicate with diversity? Right? So, in the workplace, it's all about creating an environment of inclusiveness, which I think nobody is debating anymore as to do really needed, everybody acknowledges that it's here to stay, and we need to do it well. So it's all about creating an environment is inclusiveness where every employee feels like they're welcomed, valued, and that they have the power to be the true self. Because the millennials and alpha, the generation alpha, for them, you know, they're looking at jobs and careers very differently than a Gen X. So for them, it's all about being authentic. You know, so authentic leadership is becoming center stage. And, you know, I borrow it from Hubert who says that, if you really want to communicate, and practice authentic leadership, just remember this formula, it is honesty, because you have to be honest at the table minus self righteousness. Because we don't know. I mean, we don't know what we still don't know, we're all trying to evolve together. Right? So honesty, minus self righteousness plus vulnerability, I mean, got your ability to get people on the table and say, Guys, let's figure it out. Together, I don't have the answers to everything. And I think authentic leadership and authentic communication that is becoming center stage, so organizations will need to create an inclusive atmosphere to ensure that every individual within the organization from top to the bottom are treated equally respectfully, regardless of the differences and communication teams need to take a mindful approach to the language, to the visuals, and even you know, their decisions around the channels of communication for the audience that they're targeting. It's the same brushstroke is not going to work for everyone anymore.

**Radha 17:42**

There are several new age PR agencies and digital marketing companies that have been coming up in the last few years. How can this start looking at being a great place to work either right from the start? Well can they make that part of the culture?

**Yeshasvini Ramaswamy 18:19**

The I think, I think great work place cultures is a journey. It's not a destination, and it's all about nurturing it from day one, I don't think there is a particular point to say now that we're so many employees are now that the business is mature, we need to take a look at culture, I think fundamentals of culture have to be set in from day one. And that means valuing differences, that means respecting, you know, different generations of workforce, that are working within the organization. Because your clientele is diverse, right? Yeah. And they are multi generational and, and a lot of businesses in India, and thereby the clients of communication companies, they're still family run. And the next generation always has a very, very different perspective to how the previous generation ran things. So if you really want to partner and be a trusted partner, of your client, you have to practice it at home. And it begins with you and it begins today. And it's all about it's all about having a mindset. If I were to put it very simply rather it is as a leader if I'm able to communicate that Add, there should not be any real fear of failure. Yeah. That for me is the cornerstone. Because if my employee does not have a real sense of fear, to fail, it does so many things beautifully. It allows them to experiment, it allows them to share. It allows them to be bold, it allows them

to take risks. And all of these behaviors are fundamental to being an innovative company that wants to grow rapidly. So I think I would really encourage, you know, people to create that kind of a work culture where, where there is a mindful communication, where you're supportive, and your employees feel encouraged to do all of these things. Great. It

**Radha** 20:57

was pleasure talking to you. Thanks for making time to talk to us.

**Yeshasvini Ramaswamy** 21:13

So I wish you personally all the very best and I hope you're able to get more meaningful and purposeful voices to this post podcast series of yours.

**Radha** 21:31

Thank you so much. Thank you.