

Managing Young Geoscientists in the Oil Industry: A Gen-Next Perspective*

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Abstract

Managing young and restless geoscientists can be one of the most challenging jobs for an oil industry human resources (HR) department. The recent downturn in the economy has added to these woes. This study provides a methodology to address the concerns of geoscientists in the upstream oil industry.

The prevalent HR management practices might need some tweaking to extract the best from young geoscientists while keeping them focused. A geoscientist is not only a geoscientist by training, but develops into one by nature as well, perhaps influenced by the immensity of the timescale and spatial size. And the younger generation at times finds it difficult to focus on the alignment of their aspirations with the business needs. Managing their capabilities and aspirations within the organization's limitations is of paramount importance.

An ICE theory is being proposed that consists of Intent (I), Content (C) and Execution (E). It advocates a strategy where the intent of the organization is augmented with HR policies to be executed by top management. A three-pronged strategy can be devised to address the issue of managing young geoscientists in the ICE framework.

The first one deals with the students fresh out of a University where the efforts start as early as getting involved with them during their internships, or in some cases even in deciding their curricula. Addressing the concerns of mid-career hires is the second cog in the wheel of strategy. This is as important as managing the fresh-outs, since they are new to the system. The most important aspect of the strategy is managing the established talent pool of geoscientists, who are potential mid-career hires for other organizations.

The strategy discussed here can be helpful in keeping young geoscientists motivated and dedicated towards achieving goals of mutual benefit for themselves and for their organizations.

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Outline

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- **Geoscientist by Training: By Nature?**
- **Talent Management**
- **ICE Theory**
- **Three-pronged Strategy in ICE Framework**
- **Way Forward**

Young Geoscientists

The word Geoscientists as discussed here is a superset of
Geologists
Geophysicists

The term Young Geoscientists covers all the Geoscientists in the age group of 21 to 35

The Young Geoscientists are the backbone of the Upstream Oil & Gas Industry

They are the “Real Workforce” of the industry; managed by the Senior and Experienced Professionals

In Oil-industry this age-group is the dominant “hands-on” staff; working in the industry with the help of experienced staff for guidelines

The Human Resources department finds it increasingly difficult to manage the young geoscientists population; since the performance is a function of ability and motivation.

Ability is there undoubtedly, what about Motivation!

Geoscientist By Nature?

The Geoscientist is trained in earth – sciences and its various aspect related to Geology and Geophysics.

The enormity of time scale (Millions of years is just a small number for geological agencies to leave their imprint!) affects the way a geoscientist takes things in his/ her stride

The scale of features one looks at; from thousands of square kilometers to a few micron also impacts the thinking process towards life and career

Usually, the Geoscientists starts accumulating some traits different than other professionals and it reflects in their behavior.

Most of the times, they tend to be more patient, more calm and less troublesome compared to professionals from many other streams.

It's not rare to see a Geoscientist by training ... turning into a **Geoscientist by Nature!**

Talent Management

The term **Talent Management** was coined by David Watkins of SOFTSCAPE published in an article in 1998; since then has been used extensively by Human Resources people across the world.

The Talent management for the Young Geoscientists is Key to the success of the company.

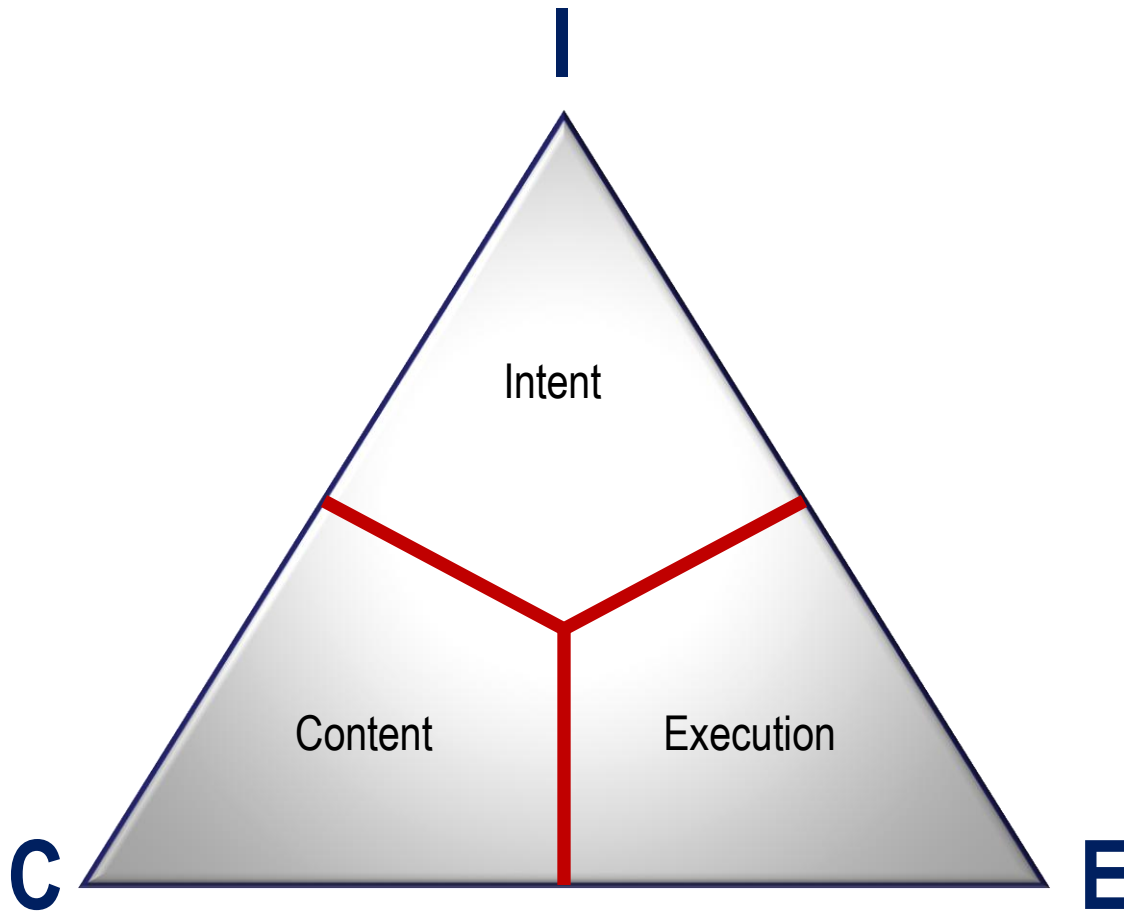
The Young Geoscientists being the backbone of the industry, there is always a war of talent in the industry.

The **War of Talent** is a term coined by Steven Hankin of McKinsey & Company in 1997; and refers to an increasingly competitive landscape for recruiting and retaining talented employees.

An **ICE Theory** is being proposed here to manage the Young Geoscientists amidst the War of Talent.

The study believes that there is no dearth of ability; it seeks the motivational aspect since Performance is a function of ability and motivation.

ICE Theory



ICE Theory* (Chandramani; 2012) being proposed here is a way from Management and Human Resources team to ensure that the young geoscientists are contained.

I = Intent

C = Content

E = Execution

ICE = Execution of Content built with clear Intent

Intent	Content	Execution
<p>Clearly formulated plan, with visible willingness of management.</p> <p>A clear and good intention from management is a great start point to affirm that the management does care for the Young Geoscientists in the organization.</p> <p>This intent should be visible in the form of a roadmap, with clear message to inspire confidence.</p> <p>INTENT makes the foundation stone for the Talent management of young Geoscientists.</p>	<p>The content of the roadmap that management INTENDS to roll-out should be very clear.</p> <p>It should define how management plans to groom and reward and develop its Geoscientists.</p> <p>With a futuristic vision, the CONTENT should be strengthening the confidence of the team.</p>	<p>The Execution of the Content with a clear Intent of the roadmap is the most important aspect of the ICE Theory.</p> <p>The EXECUTION could be in the form of Rewards (Cash and others), Career Growth, Training & Development etc.</p> <p>The intent of management needs to be seen in the content formulation by the HR people; followed by execution from the company for the Young Geoscientists to win their confidence.</p>

A three-pronged approach wrapped in ICE framework is proposed to address different population of the Young Geoscientists.

Three-pronged Strategy

Fresh-Out	Mid-Career Hire	Probable Attrition
<p>The selection of young, energetic and enthusiastic geoscientists through the University is the best way to tap the potential early.</p> <p>Getting involved with University in designing of curriculum, and co-curricular activities for the students in their formative years is the first step. Sponsoring the research work while providing the technical support makes the next step.</p> <p>A well-defined ICE framework helps to earn the loyalty early in the life of a youngster, where one can see through the kaleidoscope of hopes, motivated to perform.</p>	<p>The experienced professionals from other companies are regularly hired in the industry.</p> <p>The challenge is to adapt them to the cultural difference, while allowing them the flexibility to streamline with the new organization gradually.</p> <p>This group KNOWS its value in the Market (~10 yrs experience); and can not be treated as Fresh-Outs in terms of thrusting new policies and procedures in one go.</p> <p>The ICE framework needs to take special care while managing this group.</p>	<p>Attrition probability should be looked at separately for</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Fresh-out Attrition2. Experienced Attrition <p>The selection process at the time of recruitment should be intelligent enough to gauge the possible behavior of the geoscientist with time. That's where the psychology of the geoscientists need to be understood; which is tad different than other professionals.</p> <p>Work-Life balance plays more important role, and a sense of belonging; than Money in most of the cases. The ICE framework needs to ensure minimal attrition, allowing for some release for better health of the team.</p>

How ICE works?

The ICE Theory believes that the Young Geoscientists have a different psychology than the other professionals, in the sense that they do not tend to jump the ships at the throw of a hat.

They can be managed with a well defined Intent, Content and its Execution in step-wise manner.

What matters for most of the Young Geoscientists is an Honest intent from the company. They do appreciate that procedural changes do not happen in a jiffy (their geological grooming in the University!).

A well-documented content of the roadmap helps them realize that the employer is serious about their concerns and there exists a guideline to address their issues.

A prompt execution of the plans is what keeps the young geoscientists loyal to the employer. They have been observed to be quite patient for management to work on its promises; before calling it a day.

ICE framework is applied separately to fresh-outs, Mid-career Hires and Probable Attritions.

The ICE theory works as an Add-on to existing HR-policies

Way Forward

The ICE Theory adds to the existing HR-Practices

It focuses on the Young Geoscientists; trying to understand the behavioral developments

It is being developed to refine the implementation of this practice in an organizational set-up so as to arrive at a Win-Win situation for both employers and their young geoscientists.