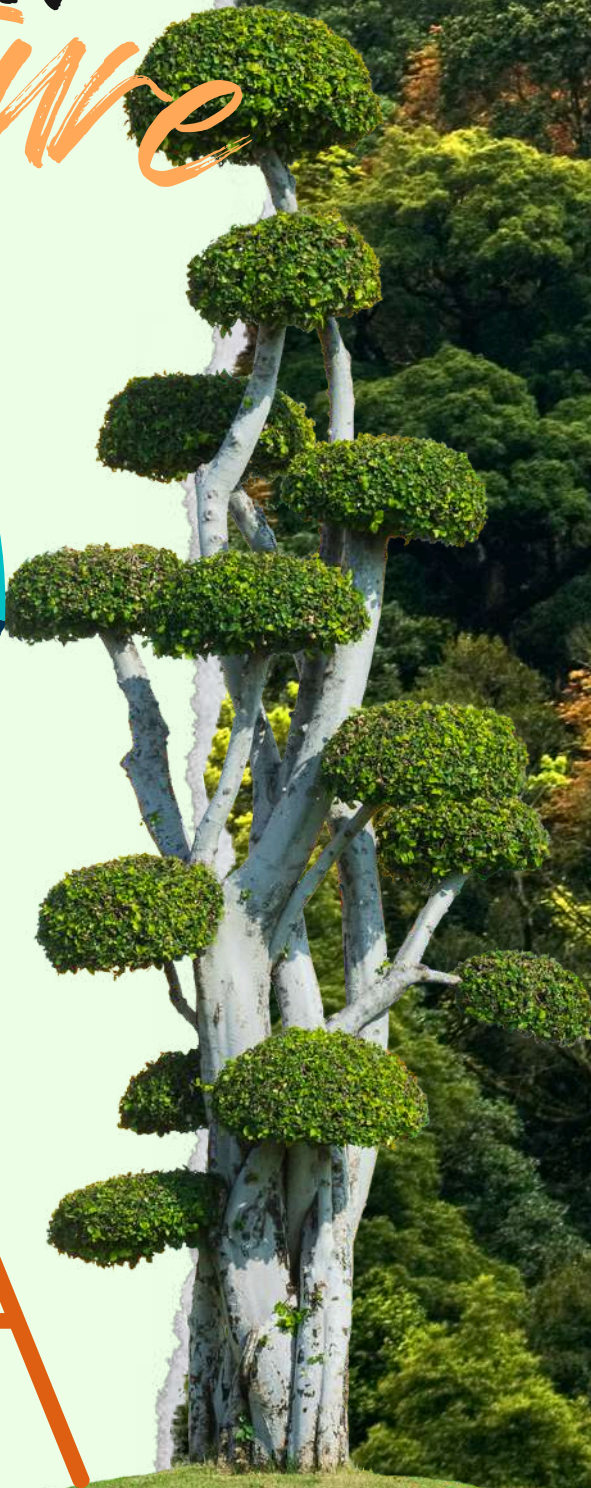




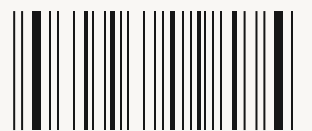
FACTION<sup>TM</sup>

*Growing together!*

Growth  
& Nurture



June 2024 | S 4 E6



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# PANEL SHOW

## STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH YOUR EXECUTIVE



Nayab Memon



**EA FACTION**™

PANEL SHOW

May 25, 2024 3:00 pm

**Strategic Partnership with your Executive**  
Create a difference to your EA career path

Moderator - Maulik Vyas

Training Administrator - Crystal Pinto



Pattamal R



Lalita Tims



Ankita Khamar



Janani K

# PANEL SHOW

On May 25, 2024, EA FACTION organized a panel discussion on "How to be a Strategic Partner to Your Executive" covered several key areas.

**Ankita K.** emphasized the importance of understanding the business and the organization's strategies.

**Nayab M.** discussed the need for confidence in presenting one's perspective during strategic discussions.

**Pattamal R** highlighted the significance of effective communication and coordination in forwarding strategic matters.

**Janani K.** challenged the notion of strategic vs. non-strategic tasks, arguing all tasks contribute strategically.

**Lalita T.** linked productivity and saving the executive's time to being strategic.

The discussion also explored existing strategic partnerships, their objectives, and metrics for measuring their success, as addressed by Pat and Lalita respectively. Nayab connected strategic partnerships to overall business goals, while Janani K. focused on how Executive Assistants can evolve as strategic partners. Nayab M. concluded with advice on establishing trust with an executive if it is lacking. Overall, the session provided actionable insights on enhancing the role of an Executive Assistant as a strategic partner.

# EMBRACING THE EVOLVING ROLE OF EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS IN THE AGE OF AI

Deepali Rai

Change is the only constant, and the pace at which the market evolves, innovation progresses, and global dynamics shift is astounding. In this context, the role of CXOs has become incredibly versatile. In simple terms, they are responsible for almost everything happening around them. With AI's advent, which has the potential to automate nearly everything, the landscape is transforming rapidly.



As Executive Assistants (EAs) working closely with the company's drivers and direction-givers, we are directly exposed to these changes. Our role has transcended beyond merely organizing schedules and ensuring everything is well-managed. Today, EAs are seen as the alter egos of their bosses. Gone are the days of a laid-back attitude; now, we are expected to have a strategic mindset, preparing reports with a top-down approach and contributing to optimizing processes.

EAs are now strategic partners, empowered and entrusted with significant responsibilities. This shift is driven by the automation of routine tasks and the abundance of data. The key is how we perceive and utilize this data. CXOs seek EAs willing to share their loads, guiding us but also giving us unprecedented opportunities to contribute. How cool is that?



However, with great power comes great responsibility. What does this mean for our role? Let's take managing a calendar as an example. It's no longer just about booking meetings. We need to step up and analyze how much time is spent on:

Sustaining current processes

Evolving existing methods

Innovating new and different approaches

We must dive deep into their calendars, preparing reports to reveal trends. This analysis can show how their time is split, highlighting the current versus desired allocation. Understanding how much time is spent on ad hoc versus preplanned meetings can lead to more efficient planning.

Data insights from calendar analysis can provide valuable information on how time is utilized across different management levels. For instance, were middle management needs overlooked? Was adequate time allocated to senior leadership teams? Did new teams require time but didn't receive it? These insights, combined with current data mining tools, enable us to save their time – the most valuable resource with the highest monetary value.

In my experience, working closely with CXOs has made me more mature and changed my perspective. They seek business managers with an EA's skills, blending strategy with a top-down approach. They are looking for representatives, not just assistants, who bring involvement, ideas, and perception. This opportunity to contribute at such a strategic level was never available before.

CXOs are looking for EAs willing to go beyond the traditional role. As EAs, we should be the first to seize this opportunity, grow into our roles, and set new benchmarks. The current technological advancements provide the perfect platform for us to step up and support our leaders in ways previously unimaginable. Let's embrace this evolution and redefine what it means to be an Executive Assistant.

# FEATURED EA

## **1. HOW DO YOU PRIORITIZE AND HANDLE MULTIPLE TASKS OR REQUESTS FROM DIFFERENT EXECUTIVES?**

I differentiate tasks on the basis of importance and the time they demand. My mantra is focussing on one task at first, then moving to the rest. I also feel that it is important to form connections and encourage them to understand that certain tasks can be time-consuming and they should be patient to allow me some time to complete those tasks.

## **2. HOW WAS YOUR FIRST DAY AS EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT?**

My first day was very light, in terms of work load. In my previous organisation, I was required to do a “10-7” work job in accounting, which involved sitting for a long duration. Being an EA was a bit lighter and an amazing experience. The first day was all about understanding my KRA and my manager’s expectations.

A full-length portrait of Mehak Arora, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a leopard print long-sleeved top and black trousers, standing with her hands clasped in front of her.

# MEHAK ARORA

### **3.WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO PURSUE A CAREER AS AN EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT?**

After graduation, I realized that I wanted a career that would allow me to explore various fields simultaneously and leverage my multitasking skills. When I discovered the role of an executive assistant, it struck me as the perfect opportunity to do just that. The position offered a unique blend of responsibilities, enabling me to apply my diverse skill set in a dynamic and impactful way

Now, with two years of experience as an executive assistant, I can confidently say that this career path has been incredibly fulfilling. I enjoy the challenge of managing multiple priorities, supporting top executives, and contributing to the overall success of the organization. The role has allowed me to grow professionally, continually develop new skills, and make a meaningful impact on the team's efficiency and productivity. My initial motivation has only been reinforced by the satisfaction and growth I've had in this profession

### **4.TELL ME ABOUT A CHALLENGING SITUATION YOU FACED WHILE SUPPORTING AN EXECUTIVE. HOW DID YOU HANDLE IT?**

The challenge is when you are handling two executives simultaneously. For example, in one of my previous jobs, I was reporting to one director but was also asked to handle tasks of the other director. In instances where the tasks clashed, I prioritised as being in two places at once was simply not possible.

However, there were other instances too where I could manage both of their tasks smoothly as they were at different intervals.

### **5.WHAT STEPS DO YOU TAKE TO STAY ORGANIZED AND ENSURE YOU MEET DEADLINES CONSISTENTLY?**

There are certain ways I follow while working.

I always keep a diary and notepad with me handy. I note down whenever someone assigns a task.

I keep looking at all the tasks and strike or tick the tasks I have completed to give myself a sense of satisfaction after work. I use technology such as Google Calendar, Google drive and Google sheets to manage meetings and travel. They are handy and easily accessible on phone.

In case I am traveling and there is a urgent call, I note down the details in my Phone notes so that I don't miss things.

## **6.WHAT ARE YOUR STRATEGIES FOR STAYING UPDATED ON INDUSTRY TRENDS AND BEST PRACTICES IN EXECUTIVE SUPPORT?**

I feel there are two things we can use to stay updated. These are technical learning means and mental learning.

For technical learning – I prefer linkedin Courses, Youtube and follow some pages providing knowledge. I believe that I am quick learner. Whenever a new task comes up, I do my research, learn and complete the task.

For mental learning – I simply socialise with EA community either or linkedin connections or the groups that I am part of. I also check out new content posted by CEO's and EAs.

## **7.WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT QUALITIES OR SKILLS FOR AN EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO POSSESS?**

Attention to Detail

Loyalty

Confidentiality

Time management

Communication and Influencing skills

Problem solving

Decision Making

Multi-tasking



## **8.WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT BEING AN EA, AND HOW DO YOU HANDLE THE CHALLENGES THAT COME WITH THE ROLE?**

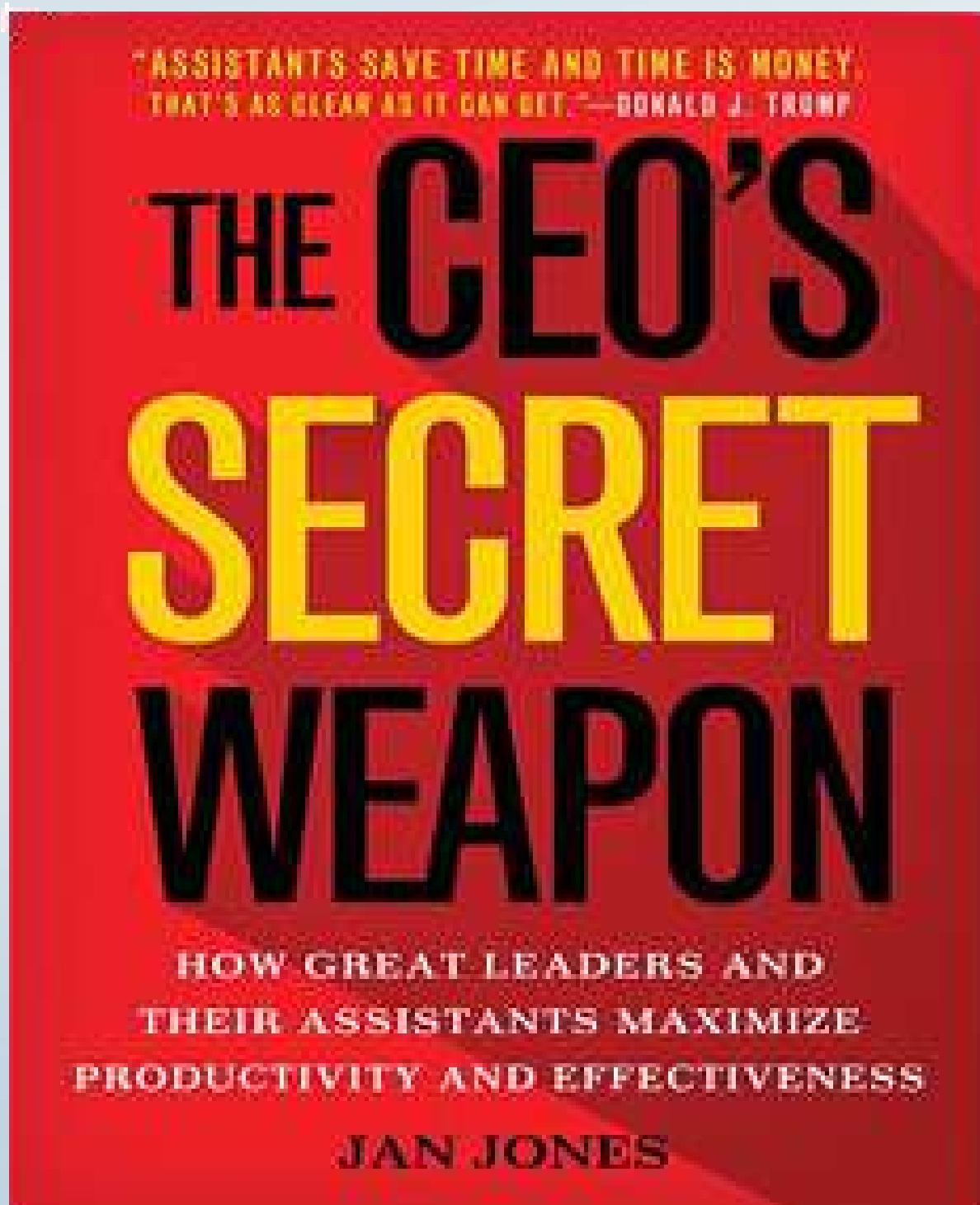
The one thing that I enjoy the most is learning new things. My job has changing dynamics that require me to learn and adapt to new changes every day. I feel that working with top professionals and assisting them in their tasks help us learn things that are not possible with our own designation. I also like networking with people. Part of my job requires me to coordinate all the things - in between the top executives to other departments.

With all the responsibilities, come the challenges. But with simple and clear communication, nothing is confusing, rather things becomes simple. I also try to manage office tasks in office hours, unless there is some urgent work past my shift. I set my priorities straight and follow the strict time schedule to complete the assigned tasks.



**Are you a Secret Weapon or Just a Support Staff to your Executive?**

**Are you holding the key of your Executive Success?**



## Key Takeaways:

### 1. The Power of a Great Assistant:

- o Jones emphasizes that a high-performing executive assistant is not merely a support role but a strategic partner. Such an assistant can significantly impact a CEO's effectiveness and success.
- o Executives should recognize the unique skills and talents that exceptional assistants bring to the table.



**SAMEER  
KHAN**

### 2. Identifying the Right Assistant:

- o The book provides insights into the characteristics executives should seek in a top-notch assistant. It's not just about administrative skills; emotional intelligence, adaptability, and problem-solving abilities matter too.
- o Jones encourages executives not to settle for anything less than an outstanding assistant.

### 3. Balancing Individuality and Alignment:

- o While the book promotes a strong assistant-boss relationship, it also acknowledges the importance of maintaining individuality and boundaries.
- o Jones cautions against a one-size-fits-all approach, urging assistants not to sacrifice their uniqueness for the sake of appeasing their boss.

### 4. Maximizing Productivity:

- o The book offers practical tips for executives and assistants to work seamlessly together. From effective communication to task delegation, Jones covers strategies to enhance productivity.
- o By leveraging their assistant's skills, CEOs can focus on strategic decision-making.

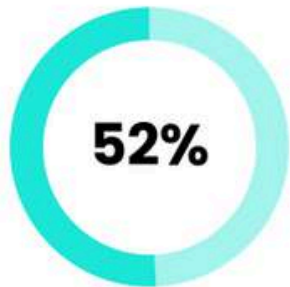
In *The CEO's Secret Weapon*, Jan Jones masterfully unveils the hidden potential within the executive assistant role. References and examples from top executive assistants in her book are amazing.

recommending all EAs and their Executives to read this book.

# Opinion Poll

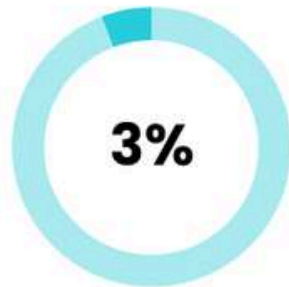
## ORGANIZATIONAL ENGAGEMENTS

That As feel are beneficial for them



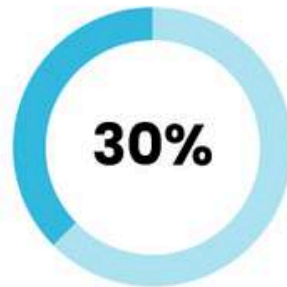
### INDUSTRY OUTLOOK

Company Offsites  
place to connect well  
and understand  
global business  
landscape



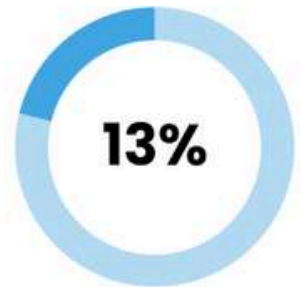
### SOCIAL

Networking Events  
and forums (not EA  
forum but industry  
ones)



### CAREER

Career oriented  
trainings fun learning  
exercises. Ex  
tempore, role play,  
use cases etc etc



### ORG CULTURE

Involvement in  
activities,  
organizational  
engagements

As an EA, I found the Industry Outlook sessions during the company offsites / lunches & dinners highly beneficial. These sessions provided an overall understanding of the global business landscape through discussions which allowed me to align my tasks, priorities and learnings with the industry trends and the company's direction.

By connecting with senior peers, i gained insights in emerging technologies, market shifts, and best practices. This knowledge came handy in understanding and anticipating my executive's needs, plans and required support. Also, understanding the global industry also fostered a sense of purpose and direction which enabled me to perform more efficiently.

### Ganesh Mate

Companies should engage each & every employee irrespective of their job roles. Activities which should refresh their minds & souls. When we feel valued & appreciated, automatically these engagements will help in growth & Productivity of the organisation.

### Sarika kalia

### Sharanjeet Kaur

I am working with HUL and on a daily basis interact with many EAs around the company but with most of them I never met in person. Industry outlook gives us an opportunity to meet them in person, build relationships strong and interact more efficiently with the people around u virtually on daily basis and makes our bond strong which ultimately works in our favour whenever we are in need or any other favour.

See may be your prospective is different but the type of company I am working for they play the cards of seniority not according to their experience but according to the person's level with whom they are designated.

### Krishna Kumari

I opted for this option as I believe engaging in such activities broadens my knowledge of how the company functions and operates. This way, I will be able to add more value to the stakeholders.



Organisation's engagements in terms of

1. Future business plans

2. Line of focus

3. Priorities - both short and long-term

This will help assistants to understand the bigger schema if things.

For me, I prefer to know the intent, purpose, and consequences of an action/thought.

So, when I understand both my bosses' and organisation's priorities, I will be in a good position to revisit my tasks and sort my priorities in line with the bigger picture.

Eventually, supporting better.

**Revathy M.**

Industry Outlook is crucial for strategic planning, investment decisions, customer engagement, and competitive analysis. It helps companies align their strategies with market trends, identify growth opportunities, manage risks, allocate resources, and make strategic acquisitions. It also helps in customer engagement by anticipating changes in customer needs and preferences, adjusting value propositions, and benchmarking performance against industry standards. Understanding competitors' strategies and market position helps in identifying unique market positions. Regulatory compliance is ensured by anticipating changes and being proactive in industry groups, allowing companies to influence policy decisions.

**Shelley Sharma**

I opted career - coz after all we are working, switching jobs for our good career and for which the company should provide us a time to time training to enhance our skill set, and in such trainings we met different people we learn something from them they also learn something from us which also help us connecting with people and if i talk about fun learning sometime they give us some team task in which we learn team work

As you know, after a certain period, you may not understand what the next profile you can try to achieve growth in your career.

**Priyanka S. Tomar**

**Jaffar Hameed**

Career related engagement activity is based on the following a) Learning & Development b) Growth Opportunities and C) Career Growth

**Learning and Development:** Organize workshops or seminars on industry-related topics, soft skills like communication and leadership, and provide training sessions so employees can learn new skills or improve existing ones. In addition, experienced employees can be paired with mentees to share their expertise and facilitate discussions about industry books or thought leader articles with mentees.

**Growth Opportunities:** A) Shadowing: Allow employees to shadow colleagues in different departments to explore career paths B) Cross-functional Project: Provide employees with challenges that push them outside their comfort zone and help them develop new skills by establishing cross-functional project teams that allow employees to work outside their usual roles and gain new experiences.

**Career:** A Employees should schedule regular meetings with managers to discuss their career goals. B) Establish a peer-to-peer recognition program to allow employees to recognize and appreciate one another's contributions, especially in terms of career development. C The Achievement Award recognizes employees who take on leadership roles in career development initiatives or who show exceptional commitment to their development.

**Janani K**

Socialising or networking event helps us to understand the market, the new technologies. We can also learn solutions to a lot of problems through other experiences. Having good industrial knowledge is important no matter in what role we are in because it helps us in understanding the business in dept and perform better which in turn will help in our personal growth.

As an Executive Assistant, attending company offsites and events provides me invaluable opportunities to broaden my understanding of the global business landscape. These gatherings bring together colleagues from various geographical locations, each offering unique perspectives that can enrich my own viewpoint.

By engaging with these diverse insights, I can better comprehend different approaches to business challenges and strategies.

Moreover, these events serve as a vibrant platform for interaction, where I can exchange ideas, discuss innovative solutions, and learn from the experiences of others.

This not only enhances my professional knowledge but also significantly expands my network, fostering relationships that can be beneficial for both my personal growth and the company's success.

Thus, participating in such events is essential for my role, enabling me to support the executive team more effectively with a well-rounded, global perspective.

## Sujata Thakur

I have opted for this because recently I have experienced this kind of interaction...joined new office in July and hardly interacted with employees as to was learning Phase and during that tenure yearly event took place and I was leading from Founders Office. This gave me chance to engage with people and good exposure.

## Rekha Ishpunani

## Laveena Ebenezer

I feel to grow, move up the ladder, you ought to know the business well. Be involved in all activities.

## Bhavna Kalyani

By others, I meant all the above points I think are necessary. So, it should be mix of all, it gives a platform for EA to showcase there hidden talent as most of the times we are doing back office jobs, networking is important for everyone in the organisation, certificates, monetary rewards or any form of gift cards certainly boost the employee to work hard and perform better. Rewards and recognition and offsites are key for change in the daily routine. Trainings in office or outside gives exposure and enhances skills. Inter department and intra department both are needed for self-growth. If a person is not outspoken or introvert, it makes them feel more connected and gives them a chance to express their thoughts.

## Jessy Manu

If EAs are involved in the activities and organizational engagement, they will get a clear picture, and this will help them to make the presentation for the board meeting, etc. Also, they can give suggestions to the management team for further improvement/enhancement in many areas where they got experience.



**YOUR  
OPINION  
MATTERS**

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in our polls!  
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know your opinion  
and share with the  
global EAs





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Editor  
**Minakshi Mahesh**

Content Manager  
**Sujata Thakur**

Design Manager  
**Muskan Chaurasia**

