

INNOVATION OFFICER

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Why Companies Need Innovation Officers?

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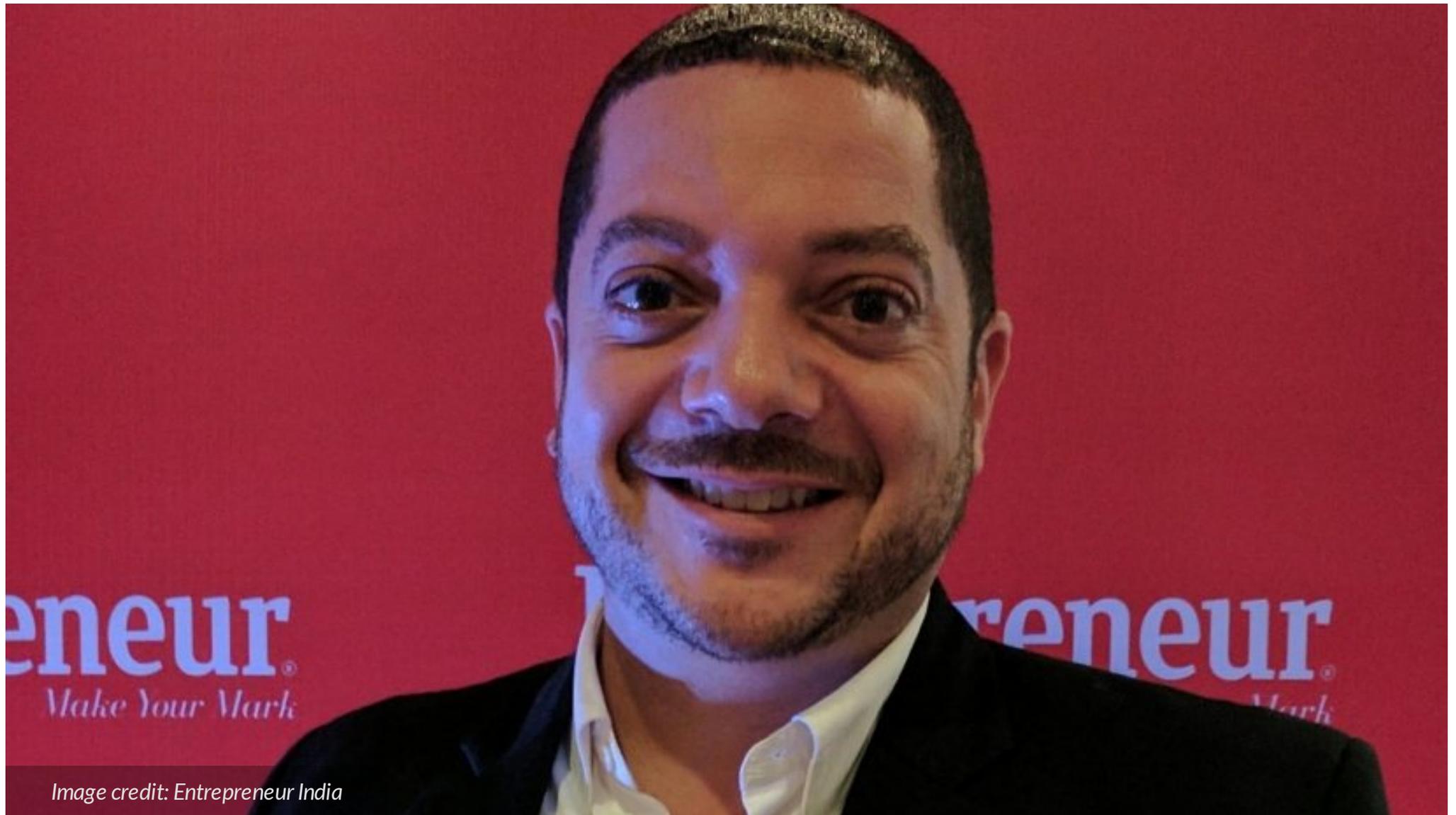


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JULY 19, 2017

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Innovation officers are the latest breed of specialized recruits seen as nurturing a culture of ideation and creation within a company's corporate set up. But what is the role of these officers and how much do they contribute to shaping a strong culture of innovation in workplaces.

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Farid Talhame, Chief Innovation Culture Officer for Godrej & Boyce, in an interview to the Entrepreneur India on the sidelines of its 7th Annual Convention, said as we move from economies of scale to economies of choice we need to be more customer centric and focus on users needs.

According to him, companies benefit from having innovation officers for the following reasons:

Communication

"Communication is Innovation because without good communication it's just a bunch of ideas. Sometimes, a good innovation gets missed due to poor communication and sometimes terrible products are brought to market based on great communication," said Talhame.

He harps on the need for these officers to strive to imbibe a culture of innovation in all stages, right from the newest trainees to the senior management, so that great ideas get communicated.

Strategy Building and Focus

As manufacturing techniques improve and become more accessible, companies now have the ability to make just about anything but often struggle to know what to make.

"The innovation strategy of a company depends on the organizations overall strategy, and innovation officers help align the two. The more businesses within an organization, the more strategies are at play. It's important to assess where their core competencies lie and determine what level of innovation is required," added Talhame.

Detecting the Need of the Market

"Due to globalization and increased connectivity, customers have a stronger voice than ever before," said Talhame.

According to him customers want exactly what they want at precisely the moment they want it and are no longer satisfied with democratized mass marketed products that are pushed upon them. This sometimes poses a problem for large consumer focused companies that are only comfortable operating at scale, and that is the root of the shift towards choice.

"There is no use of an innovation if it doesn't serve the needs of the user and innovation officers can help guide companies towards understanding what these future user needs and aspirations are" he added.

Balance

While innovation is important, there is also a need to be practical. You never want to get complacent but Innovation Officers should establish a balance between radical ideas and the feasibility of implementing them.

Talham stresses on this need for balance and says, "Every organization needs its dreamers, realists, and critics. Without these, the company may lean to far in one direction and Innovation Officers help maintain that balance."

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