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BUILDING A GREAT PLACE TO WORK: INTUIT INDIA

Vijay Anand, Senior Vice-President and Head, Global Development Centers, Intuit, was all smiles on July 3, 2017. Intuit India had ranked first in India in the “Great Place to Work” rankings published by the Great Place to Work Institute (GPTW) among 600 companies competing for the coveted recognition, and Anand was quick to e-mail his employees and congratulate them on the achievement. The staff at Intuit India burst into celebration — this was a long-awaited dream come true.

Intuit India, a fully owned subsidiary of Intuit Inc., a US multinational company, was in the business of developing financial software for small businesses, accountants and individuals. Intuit Inc. was founded in 1983 and employed over 8,000 people across the world. Intuit India, established in 2005, had 1,050 employees on its rolls by 2017.

Only a year ago, Intuit India had ranked number 10 on the list. It had been a steep climb to first place, toppling giants like Google and American Express (see Exhibit 1) who had ranked first and second, respectively, in 2016. The Monday following the announcement, Intuit employees were taken by surprise when they found their workstations decorated with balloons, and on their desks a copy of the day’s special edition of *The Economic Times*,¹ with the proud Intuit India team featured prominently. It was a reminder of their journey to the top and a celebration of their accomplishment.

The India leadership team was scheduled to be away on an offsite engagement that Monday, but seeing that it was their employees who were at the heart of this milestone and had made it happen, they wanted to share the occasion with them in a special way. Overnight, they canceled the offsite visit and planned bite-size celebrations on every one of the 10 floors of their office. Anand wanted

¹ *The Economic Times* is a leading financial daily in India.

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every team to know how proud he was of them, and personally thank each one for their outstanding work, so he went floor to floor with his leadership team, meeting employees. The trophy traveled with him, and employees took turns holding it and taking pictures.

Intuit India's participation in GPTW had started in 2008. Reminiscing about the arduous, nine-year journey to the top of the rankings, Anand said, "When Intuit started operations in 2005, there were already a lot of product development centers in Bengaluru. We knew that we were coming in late and that we had to distinguish ourselves." He was convinced that highly engaged employees' delighted customers and delighted customers kept shareholders happy. He had heard Brad Smith, Chief Executive Officer of Intuit Inc., often say, "Shareholders are like food — critical to your survival, but you can go three weeks without food. Customers and partners are like water — you can go three days without liquid. However, employees are like air — three minutes and you are done". These words inspired Anand at every step in his journey to develop a world-class culture to attract, hone and retain top talent.

When Intuit India broke into the top 10 and reduced the variability it had seen in its rankings over the years, there was evidence that the company might have got its formula right (see Exhibit 2) However, now that it was in first place, new questions arose: Could the company sustain its excellence and stay in the top five in future years? Could Intuit India have a more predictable outcome on the Great Place to Work scale?

Company Background

Intuit Inc. was founded in 1983 by Scott Cook and Tom Proulx in Palo Alto, California. Cook's idea for the company was sparked when his wife groused over the repetitive chore of clearing bills and balancing the chequebook. She complained, "I hate paying bills, really Scott, this has to be the most tedious, repetitive task around." Mulling over his wife's complaint, Cook thought that bill payment could be an excellent chore for a computer and went on to establish Intuit.²

Intuit was thus built on the idea of listening to customers and delivering products that "wowed" them. It developed financial software for small businesses, accountants and individuals to help them with accounting, tax preparation and related tasks. In 2017, Intuit Inc. had revenues of US\$5 billion and around 8,500 employees spread across the world. Ninety-five percent of its revenue came from its activities in the US. Apart from the US, Intuit had business operations in eight other countries, namely, the UK, Australia, France, Singapore, India, Brazil, Canada and Israel. Intuit India was the company's first venture in the Asia-Pacific region. Launched in 2005, Intuit India had its headquarters in Bengaluru, which housed a development center and acted as a regional hub for in-country engineering, marketing, sales and support operations.

In 2017, Intuit India had 1,050 employees (see Exhibit 3) with around 400 people working on a contingent or contract basis. Intuit India was a microcosm of Intuit Inc., where employees spread across multiple businesses worked together as one boundaryless team. Its workforce was predominantly made up of top tech talent hired from India's premier colleges and supported by functional groups in the areas of Human Resources, Finance and Marketing. Intuit India was a young and diverse organization; 60% of the workforce was made up of millennial (Generation Y) or early

² Schroeder, K., & Taylor, S. E. (2003). Inside Intuit: How the makers of Quicken beat Microsoft and revolutionized an entire industry. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

career talent, and 27% were women. For most of its employees, Intuit was their first or second employer.

Indian IT Industry: Hiring Challenges

In the years 2014-16, India had delivered strong economic growth in contrast to its emerging country counterparts. Every year, India trained 1.5 million engineers. Ironically, however, a study found that 85% of Indian IT companies identified a mismatch between the skills required and skills available as their second most critical challenge.³ On the one hand, there was an abundance of certain skills, and on the other, there was complete shortage of vital new age skills. There had been a steep demand for skills in the areas of cloud, automation, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning.⁴

Consequently, there was a limited talent pool available to many of the technology companies in India. These companies not only had to compete against each other to acquire the best talent but also to retain it. The winners in this competitive hiring environment were companies that were “talent magnets”. Being recognized as a “great place to work” (GPTW) provided a clear competitive advantage to win the battle for talent. Thus, GPTW had become an industry-wide imperative.

A study found that there was a strong correlation between employee experience and the financial performance of companies.⁵ It was evident from the research that great workplaces had a significant impact on shareholder value. Great workplaces consistently outperformed major stock indices in India by a factor of two.

The GPTW Framework

“In great workplaces, something happens that transcends policies and practices. It isn’t what the companies are doing, it is how their leaders are doing it. And one cannot predict that organisations with the most creative practices, the best bottom line, the least stressful jobs or the most generous compensation packages are the ones that employees will most appreciate.”⁶

— Great Place to Work Institute

The GPTW Institute’s annual research “was based on data representing more than 10 million employees in 50 countries, representing about 6,000 organizations of varying sizes, industries, maturity and structures.”⁷ The GPTW Institute studied two aspects of an organization in assessing it as a great place to work. First, it had devised a unique employee-centric framework that measured the levels of **trust, pride and camaraderie** prevalent in an organization through an employee survey. The second aspect of the assessment was a culture audit designed to understand the people practices, philosophy and values of an organization through an elaborate questionnaire that the organization had to prepare and submit.

³ Manav, S. (2017, January 20). Indian IT faces the talent challenges. *People Matters*. Retrieved from <https://www.peoplesmatters.in/article/hr-analytics/indian-it-faces-the-talent-challenges-study-14856>.

⁴ Dixon, L. (2017, March 20). Like U.S., India faces host of tech talent challenges. *Talent Economy*. Retrieved from <https://www.clomedia.com/2017/03/20/like-u-s-india-faces-host-tech-talent-challenges/>.

⁵ RSM Astute Consulting. (2015, June). *Study on shareholder returns of great workplaces — 2015*.

⁶ Great Place to Work website. Retrieved from <http://www.greatplacetowork.in/our-approach/how-do-you-do-it>.

⁷ Great Place to Work website. Retrieved from <http://www.greatplacetowork.in/get-certified/role-of-trust-in-workplace-culture/>

In 2017, the 14th year of these assessments, the Great Place to Work Institute had recognized 100 best places to work in India and ranked Intuit India number one among them. Over the years, applications for GPTW assessment had only increased. In 2017, more than 600 companies across various sectors and industries in India had applied to the Institute to benchmark their workplace culture.

Intuit India: The Beginning

Intuit entered India in 2005 and set up its country headquarters in Bengaluru, a city in the south that was widely known as the “Silicon Valley” of India. At the time, a multitude of development centers established by various multinationals had been in operation for over a decade. A typical development center was known to scale quickly and follow the directives of its foreign parent. However, Intuit decided to be different and empowered its India development center to take its own decisions.

Anand came to the company in 2008, having already set up two large product development centers of 1,000 plus employees in India, first for Sun Microsystems and then at Oracle. Recalling his interview with Cook, Anand said, “[He] told me: ‘We will not tell you what to do. You will actually tell us what to do, what is right for Intuit to do because we will tell you our vision, we will tell you what we aspire for, and you will tell us what to do.’”

Globally, Intuit Inc. was known for fostering the spirit of individual empowerment, its focus on innovation, and adoption of best human practices. In India, however, Intuit was a late entrant facing a different challenge. Unlike in North America or Australia, where Intuit products had been around for a while and the brand was known, Intuit was not a household name in India. As a little-known brand in the Indian technology landscape with a niche product, Intuit India was faced with the stiff challenge of attracting top talent in the face of intense competition, especially from startups and monolithic and consumer facing global brands, which were much better known and were multinational captives. Intuit's India leadership team needed to create a strong employer brand to be able to attract the top technology talent.

At that time, the Great Place to Work GPTW framework was relatively unknown to Intuit India employees. All this changed when, in 2008, Sudhir Patnaik, Vice-President and Head of Strategy & Operations at Intuit, attended a Great Place to Work conference in Hyderabad where the top 10 companies in the GPTW rankings shared their experiences and journeys. Having gained an understanding of the framework, Patnaik shared his views with Anand and said, “Why can’t we be in the top 10? We seem to follow most of the best practices the top great places to work follow.”

And with that, Intuit India embarked on its GPTW journey. The following year, it started to benchmark itself against the industry’s best practices and align its own employee practices with them. The goal was to be in the top 25. In 2011, Intuit India climbed 13 places on the GPTW rankings and reached number 26. The following year, it broke into the top 10 at number eight. But in 2013, Intuit India dropped to 37 on the GPTW rankings. Patnaik reasoned, “For [our employees], there was no new experience. The world was changing around them. While we had good practices that got us to number eight, we merely continued them. But I guess this was not enough.” The company’s senior management began to feel that they had taken short-term, populist measures to achieve the rank and realized that Intuit India would have to be more innovative in its people practices and think long term. Also, over the years, applications for GPTW assessment had risen. Virtually any organization, within a wide range of industries from hospitality to manufacturing and retail, had the ability to disrupt the ranking. Moreover, it was easier for small- and mid-sized companies with, say, 250-300 people to

create a strong employee culture and mobilize resources than a large company with more than 1,000 employees.

The GPTW assessment became a benchmark to demonstrate the progress Intuit India was making in comparison with the best of the best companies in the industry. At the same time, while the rank was an expression of intent, it was not the goal itself. Somnath Baishya, Head of Human Resources, described it this way: “If you do things right 364 days of the year, the spotlight will be on you on the 365th day. What I mean to say is that it is not about the rank, but about investing in building the best experience for our employees throughout the year and wanting to continuously improve.”

Establishing a Culture of Listening

According to Patnaik, “In an employee-friendly organization, the power of the organization is the voice of employees. If you can get the pulse of the employee, I think you can create wonders in terms of creating a strong culture of listening.” To make sure the voice of employees (VOE) reached the leadership, Intuit focused on building systems that enabled and empowered employees to express themselves. For instance, it was found that while people admired Anand as a site leader, they felt there were not enough opportunities to interact with him. In fact, it was not possible for him to meet everyone personally. So in 2010, the company created a portal called “Ask Vijay” for employees to post complaints and queries. However, no one used the portal because the login was tied to their email addresses. Hence, Intuit took a bold step to make the posts anonymous. Shortly thereafter, employees started posting their queries and grievances, which ranged from questions on strategy and the future of the company to complaints of “no coffee in the coffee machine”. Intuit believed that even the most mundane questions and complaints were important as they allowed employees to voice their concerns no matter how big or small they were, without fear or inhibition, and helped the leadership understand what really mattered to their people (**see Exhibit 4**).

An important intervention introduced in the early days was Intuit’s Annual Employee Survey, which had created a platform for employees to anonymously and candidly share their thoughts on their Intuit experience across diverse themes such as engagement, innovation, leadership, strategy, career development and more. While the idea was good, the frequency of implementation had not been sufficient. To obtain more timely feedback, in 2016, the company moved to a three-times-a-year survey titled “Pulse”. While the surveys were designed to listen to employees, they also gave leaders the chance to analyze responses and respond to their teams faster and in a variety of ways. CEO Brad Smith himself made time to read thousands of comments with detailed feedback from employees from across the globe. Anand did the same for the site in India. The larger themes emerging from the study eventually became strategic priorities for him and his leadership team.

Talent Acquisition

Early Career Talent

“Intuit’s talent proposition was to create an environment where the world’s top talent can do the best work of their lives. The belief was that the best people hire the best and so involving the employees was a critical component of Intuit’s talent acquisition efforts,” Baishya said, commenting on Intuit’s hiring practices (**see Exhibit 5**).

Intuit hired early career talent from the top engineering and business schools in the country. A dedicated team for early career hiring engaged with and invested in the top talent through

thoughtfully designed internships that enabled students to get firsthand experience of the culture at Intuit and the business challenges that employees solved. Many of these interns later returned to join the company. The campus hiring team also organized Intuit's "Design for Delight" innovation workshops to give students practical experience of the company's culture of innovation. The Next Generation Network, one of Intuit's most vibrant employee networks, as part of its charter, engaged with early career talent on campus through technology workshops at leading engineering colleges across the country.

Interestingly, these workshops were introduced in response to feedback from new hires on what Intuit could do to attract fresh talent, such as: "It would be great if Intuit conducted workshops to give people practical experience of the working environment. If I join Intuit and I get a role, then what will I be doing as a Java Script engineer?"

Experienced Hires

To facilitate the recruitment of talent with experience, Intuit had initiated a framework titled "Assessing for Awesome (A4A)". This model empowered top employees, called "Awesome Assessors", to quickly pinpoint the best candidate for a particular role, thus ensuring that the company hired only the best talent. As part of the process, Awesome Assessors specified the must-have skills and values needed for a particular role. These values also tied into the company's core values (see Exhibit 6). Based on the skills and values demonstrated by a candidate, the team would make a hiring decision on the day of the interview itself, thus exceeding the expectations not only of the hiring managers, but also of the candidate.

Performance Management

At Intuit, performance management was framed as a "High Performing Organization Review (HPOR)", an exercise that covered an entire gamut of activities from reviewing talent in the organization, understanding the talent landscape, gauging the strength of the talent and the talent gaps, if any, to analyzing the readiness of talent to be promoted to the next level, and building a high performing organization. Goal setting, coaching and providing feedback to employees was a year-round process.

All employees met with their managers for "monthly check-ins" to review and update goals and discuss progress and performance. In these meetings, both employees and managers shared feedback gathered from peers and stakeholders. Iterative goal setting helped employees assess their performance against their goals, gather feedback and work towards their goals with fresh feedback. The Situation-Behavior- Impact⁸ model was used to give effective feedback both by managers to their team members and by employees to their peers.

Leading by example, Smith, Intuit's chief executive, put up for public view his own unedited performance review from the board of directors. In addition to that, he also displayed his personality analysis, feedback from his executive team, and a breakdown of how he spent his time.

Recognition and Rewards

⁸ The Situation-Behavior-Impact (SBI) model is a feedback model used by managers to deliver more effective feedback that is focused on specific situations/contexts, identifies the observed behaviors and then outlines the effect of those behaviors on others. Source: Mind Tools website. Retrieved from <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/situation-behavior-impact-feedback.htm>.

In 2017, Intuit India gave all its employees an unexpected day off in recognition of their hard work throughout the year in making the company the best to work for in India. Over the years, the company had held various events to commemorate employee milestones. For example, on the five-year and ten-year service anniversaries of employees, their entire business unit and the leader of the business came together to celebrate. During these celebrations, they not only shared anecdotes from the employee's journey, but also highlighted the impact the individual had on the team and on people in the organization. Similarly, business units invited family members of executives who were promoted to vice-president to celebrate the proud event together. (**See Exhibit 7**)

Creating personalized experiences: The CEO Leadership Award, Smith's recognition of game-changing leaders, and the CEO Sales Club, the Chief Marketing Officer's recognition of high-performing sales team members, rewarded winners with an all-expenses paid trip to an exotic location. During these trips, both leaders would host a thoughtfully designed experience for the winners and their accompanying guests and also spend quality time with them.

Recognition in the moment: Employees who were deemed role models were awarded "Spotlights" to recognize behavior that was aligned to the company's values. The reward component of the "Spotlight" was in the form of redeemable vouchers that employees could use as they chose across multiple categories (e.g., travel, lifestyle, etc.), making them feel valued. Spotlights could be awarded by managers or even cross-functional/cross-business teams.

Diversity and Employee Networks

Intuit India had set up several vibrant networks of employee communities, such as the India Women Network, the Next Generation Network, the Special Needs & Abilities Network and the Pride Network, with an aim to strengthen its culture of inclusion.

The structure of such communities was cross-functional and transcended hierarchy. A young engineer who led the Next Generation Network stated:

For me to take a leadership role in my own day-to-day work would not always be possible as there were seniors involved. However, being part of the Next Generation Network gave me an opportunity to rally people behind me, push ideas, and even get VPs aligned to certain events that may not be technical in nature but would still require the same level of execution and planning.

Members of these communities could come from different functional areas. Each community had an executive sponsor from the India Leadership Team, who played the role of a coach and helped to remove any barriers that came in the way of their plans. Any community member was free to apply for an open network leadership position. A network leader usually had a maximum tenure of two years, following which they were encouraged to take on new roles.

Two key programs reinforced Intuit's commitment to fostering greater workplace diversity and inclusion. During a coffee break conversation between Anand and employees, one of the participants shared how difficult it was for her, as a technologist, to return to an active career after a break. This inspired Intuit to launch "Intuit Again", an initiative to help female technologists who wished to restart their careers after a break, upskill themselves through a six-month internship and subsequently find meaningful opportunities at Intuit and elsewhere in the industry (**see Exhibit 8**). This commitment to

recruiting and developing technical women helped increase the percentage of women employed at Intuit from 13% to 27% in just three years. Intuit Again candidates alone accounted for 10% of the female hires in the last two years.

The “Intuit Ability Program” was another attempt to create employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. The HR department ensured that the interview process accommodated the differently-abled and that the job descriptions were thoughtfully crafted to cater to this group. Through this program, in 2017, Intuit recruited three differently-abled candidates to the HR team.

In addition to employee networks, Intuit also had engineering communities such as the developer community, testing community, architect community, application operations community, product management community and design community. They served as learn-teach-learn platforms, fostering a boundaryless culture where engineers could come together and share their concerns, knowledge and ideas.

Benefits

Intuit offered a range of benefits to its employees. The notable ones included providing employees with a Wi-Fi-enabled, free company bus facility to commute to work, free food at different food courts throughout the day, and advanced conferencing technology to foster work-life flexibility. Intuit was among the first organizations in the country to embrace the six-month maternity leave benefit, long before it was mandated by the Indian government. The company also took extra care of expectant mothers and provided them with special cabs for pick-up and drop-off to and from work as well as reserved parking in the company’s parking lots. New mothers could also access a flexible workload policy on returning to work. Another special benefit was a fully paid, four-week caregiver’s leave that was granted to employees who needed to attend to ailing members of their families. Beyond health, wellness and work-life balance, Intuit also promoted employees’ financial wellness and made a contribution amounting to 5% of an employee’s salary to the National Pension Scheme. Intuit India's high performing employees were also awarded restricted stock units as an incentive.

Infrastructure

The Intuit office housed an open-plan workspace for all employees including the senior leadership. The company’s office facilities included flexible, ergonomic desk spaces; collaborative innovation zones; breakout areas equipped with a pantry; cafeterias and free gaming zones. Intuit’s buildings were subjected to periodic workplace audits and evaluated on the basis of established standards. The offices were also equipped with inclines for wheelchair movement, voice-enabled lifts to guide the visually impaired and low-rise sinks and accessible washrooms for the differently-abled. Intuit had also introduced gender-neutral washrooms, a rare facility in the Indian context (see Exhibit 9).

Employee Experience

In 2016, Intuit organized nearly 270 events of varying scale which aimed to create experiences that would delight employees. Jerry Martin, an event manager said, “We always look at things from the employee’s perspective. We look at what makes sense for the employee and then work backwards.”

Additionally, there was a strong focus on delighting the families of employees as well. In 2015, when Intuit was celebrating 10 years in India, the leadership team presented every employee on their team

with personalized “thank you” letters acknowledging their role and the role of their loved ones in the company’s journey.

Based on employee feedback requesting opportunities to share the Intuit experience with their families, the company came up with the idea of Little Intuit Day, where employees’ children got to spend the entire day on the Intuit campus with their parents. The second edition of the event, in 2017, saw 400 children visit the campus (a near two-fold increase over the previous year). Employees themselves served as volunteers to pull off an event of this scale and went out of their way to ensure that the children had a good time.

Employees as Brand Advocates

In 2014, when Intuit made the Great Place to Work Institute’s top 10 list of the “Best Companies to Work For”, Intuit designed an employer brand campaign that celebrated the values it stood for as a company and featured employees sharing their pride and belief in the organization.

The campaign, called “I am Intuit”, invited employees to be the face of Intuit as ambassadors in various manifestations — digital, on-the-ground and out-of-home — in prominent locations in Bangalore (see **Exhibit 10**).

Taking the campaign to all 1,000 employees, the team created a web application which allowed employees to design their own personalized messages based on elements of the company’s value statements and share them on their social media networks (see **Exhibit 11**).

The team revived and refreshed this campaign in 2017 to celebrate their number one rank milestone and leverage it to attract top engineering talent in India.

Further, they invited employees to launch these campaigns via their own social media networks. The company’s internal assessment showed that this activity generated an employee engagement level of more than 85% — much higher than when the company had managed the posts. Baishya commented, “By transferring the ownership of the campaign to the employee, the company moved them from being a participant to becoming an advocate.”

The Role of Leadership

Back in 2007, Intuit’s employee engagement scores had witnessed a decline. And then, in 2008, when Anand joined Intuit India as the site head, there was a further downward trend in the scores. At the time, Anand had reflected, “Maybe people don’t know me yet, but once they do get to understand me as a leader, I will be able to influence change.” However, the following year the scores dropped further.

A conversation with Smith inspired him to change the way he thought about leadership. He realized that he needed to accept the fact that he didn’t have all the answers and that, as a leader, he needed to learn to be vulnerable. Asking for help was not a sign of weakness but of immense courage. To his surprise, when he sought help from his team on the ground, he realized that they were very forthcoming with insights and became willing partners in driving the transformation along with him. For both Anand and the team, this remained an important lesson in embracing vulnerability and giving up control.

During the inception of ILEAD, a community that comprised all the managers at Intuit India, the core team members brainstormed themes that would make their charter more meaningful and purposeful for the members. “Vulnerability” surfaced as the universal theme. Being vulnerable was seen as a sign of leadership; if managers were to improve through collective experience sharing and learning, they had to let their guard down and be transparent about the real pain points they were facing at Intuit. They asked each other simple questions such as: “When was the last time you stood up in front of a junior engineer and said ‘I don’t know?’”

As one employee put it, “We actually put managers on the spot. We made them feel uncomfortable. We made every manager make elevator pitches on diverse themes to overcome the fear of public speaking.”

Jharna Thammaiah, HR Business Partner for one of the business groups at Intuit India, explained:

Managers were invariably the first go-to point for most employees. How managers show up and the leadership they display influences the environment we aspire to create at the workplace. This expectation certainly places a lot of pressure on managers who have to balance both people and business priorities. The ILEAD community attempted to create a safe haven for managers to express their vulnerability and learn from each other.

In another instance, Anand once decided to set up a technology environment for QuickBooks Online, one of Intuit’s flagship products, on his machine. He wanted to understand the product better and experience the challenges that a developer faced while handling the product. His exercise was inspired by employee feedback on the need for leaders and managers to have a good sense of the product they were building. When Anand asked a senior manager for help, he was startled by the request. The manager in turn assigned the task to a young new hire and asked her to be a buddy to someone who needed help with the software. On discovering that she was to help Anand himself, the new hire at first feared she would be unable to do the job, but she eventually agreed. For the employees of Intuit, it was powerful to see a leader being humble about accepting what he did not know and willing to learn like anybody else.

Anand also had the challenging task of growing his leadership team from two to two dozen and building synergies among them. “How could a leader help build a highly engaged site comprising teams that worked like 10 startups under one roof? How could he possibly create a boundaryless environment to help them feel connected and inspired to deliver on the collective business outcomes?” he had asked himself.

To this end, he created the India Directors Forum. This team could come forward and share their successes and opportunities, become sounding boards for each other’s challenges and help each other grow by sharing best practices. This forum had soon expanded to acknowledge and include more senior managers and functional group leaders beyond the business units, to make it a cross-functional, inclusive community that was collectively invested in the site’s business and employee engagement priorities. In the last three years alone, three of these leaders had been elevated to vice-president of their respective business units.

As the site continued to grow, Anand gradually ceded control of his employee-engagement operating mechanism to his leadership team, enabling them to drive the conversations with their business units, own the wins and even hold every little celebration on their respective floors. Not only did this create

greater visibility for his leadership team, it also strengthened their connection with their teams and made them more accessible to their people.

The Role of Employees in Transformation

2016 was a hat-trick year for Intuit, having placed in the top 10 in the GPTW rankings for three years in a row. It was a proud moment for Anand, but he also felt that it was no time for Intuit to rest on its laurels. “I feel that we can get much better”, he said. Anand appealed to the employees: “We have done amazing work here and you have helped us get this far. But if we want to look at the road ahead and the challenges that are ahead of us, we need a huge army — we need *you* to be part of the conversation.”

Anand explained his thinking as follows:

I feel that every significant accomplishment that I see in the world, every major transformation has been a result of volunteer organizations. I am a big believer in bottoms-up rather than top-down transformation. To me, companies need to have a strategic vision. And then our role is to empower the people to achieve that vision and build capability; we have to remove barriers.

One hundred Intuit India employees (almost 10% of the employee strength in India) from diverse, cross- functional teams, volunteered to be part of what was called the Great Place to Work Ambassadors program. The objective for these ambassadors was to help champion transformation by inspiring more and more of their colleagues to share their feedback and be the voice of change, that is, share and cross-pollinate best practices from their own teams across key people themes for the Great Place to Work Culture story.

The Great Place to Work ambassadors played an important role in helping mobilize employees to be more vocal about their experiences and journey at Intuit. In smaller groups, they helped peers in their respective business units understand how their participation was important to the process, without influencing their perception of Intuit, and helped encourage employee participation. The same applied to the ease of sharing stories and best practices from their teams with the rest of the network.

The ambassadors program thus took a decentralized approach, as described by one ambassador:

If you are a part of a small, central group, we don’t generally know what is happening in the smaller nooks and corners. But because we had ambassadors from different teams, they were like our hands and feet on the ground. They were talking to people, mobilizing efforts everywhere and getting all those stories and getting the excitement going.

The ambassadors also helped drive several employee engagement efforts to foster a sense of belonging and make employees feel they were part of the journey.

The Great Place to Work Council

To ensure that employees and managers jointly shared responsibility for the GPTW efforts, Intuit India put in place a Great Place to Work Council. Intuit believed that this council would serve as a platform

where cross-functional teams of leaders came together and collaborated on the company's most important people-focused outcomes.

From designing site-wide events, to engaging with and leveraging employee networks and communities, to addressing employee feedback on their experiences, this team played a key role in enabling employee-powered transformation. The council had two executive sponsors, representing the voice of the India Leadership Team, to catalyze the efforts of the team.

Looking Forward

Thus far, Intuit's progress on its Great Place to Work journey had been driven primarily by passion and energy. Going forward, the company needed to build a mechanism that would help it build and sustain excellence in this area. "The company has to understand that there is a need to combine science and art. Studying metrics and identifying the trends between years is paramount for making the outcome more predictable in the coming years," explained Baishya.

In the past 10 years, Intuit had grown ten-fold to become a company of 1,000 people. With scale and yearly attrition, one-fifth of the workforce comprised new recruits, creating a continuous need to immerse employees in the company's people practices and Great Place to Work efforts. Additionally, striving for a consistent employee experience across different teams that were at varying stages in their journey was a challenge. As Baishya observed, "It is not enough to have world-class practices and processes unless they enhance the experience of your employees".

According to Anand, what was most important was to ensure that they stayed true to their mission and model of empowering employees through their culture:

"The amazing thing is that as we bring in people, they bring new ideas and get energized by what we do. So, in my mind, the more we scale, the better we are. The input metric is this: Are we giving an amazing experience to employees and truly providing an environment where they can do the best work of their lives? If we focus on this input metric, then the output metric — shareholder delight — will follow naturally. The challenge before us is to make sure that we do not become complacent. As we scale, we need to make sure that no one is left behind, that everyone has the same consistent experience and not assume that it will happen organically."

Commenting on Intuit India's success, Stephanie Carroll, Vice-President, HR, Intuit Inc., had said:

"We are extremely delighted and also humbled by the rankings. GPTW is more than the rankings itself. It's about the pride our employees feel about working at Intuit. It's about sharing with the world their experiences and being able to bring their whole selves to work. Being ranked #1 is a responsibility. We have to be relentless and be ahead on thought leadership compared to industry. If we do these right, the rankings will improve."

However, she cautioned, "As we scale, we want to leverage the advantages of being big, but at the same time, it would be extremely important not to lose the gifts of being small."

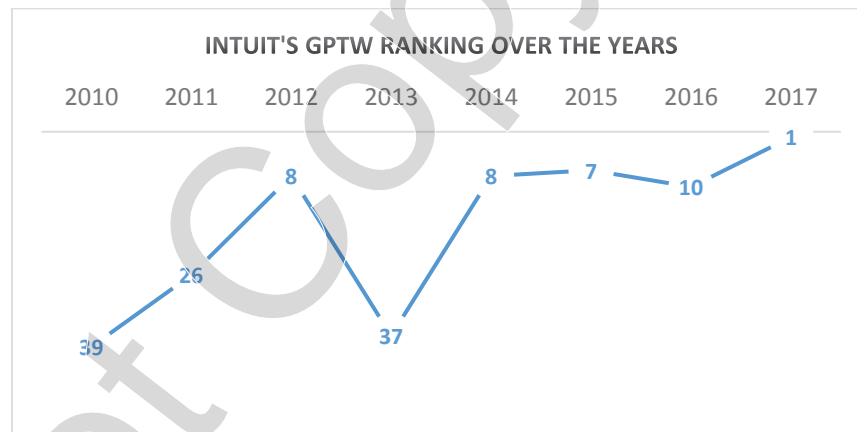
Intuit's efforts at building a great place to work had been successful. But would it be able to sustain this success and stay at the top as it scaled? Could Intuit India transfer its best practices to other sites? What would ensure that it remained a great place to work globally for a long time to come?

Exhibit 1
2017 GPTW India Rankings

Rank	Company
1	Intuit India
2	American Express
3	Google
4	Lemon Tree Hotels
5	SAP Labs
6	Adobe Systems
7	NetApp
8	Tele-Performance
9	Pitney Bowes
10	DHL

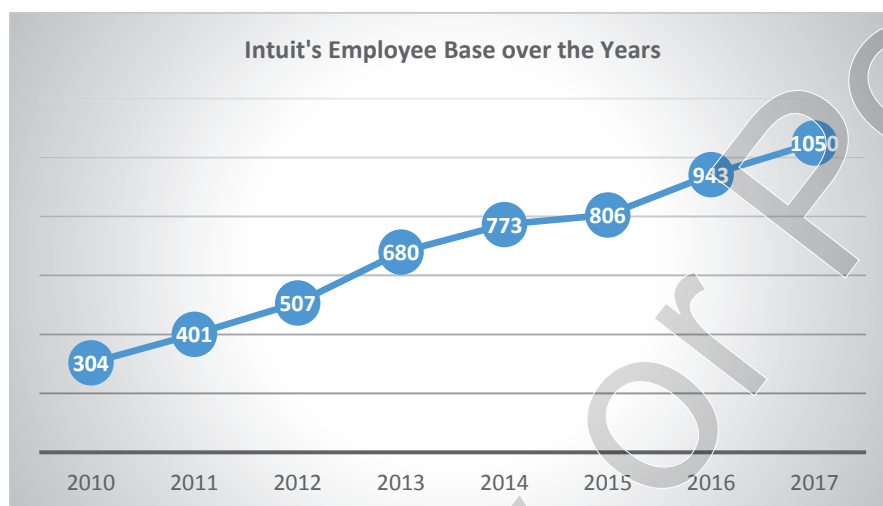
Source: India's best companies to work for 2017: The complete list. (2017, July). *The Economic Times*. Retrieved from <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/company/corporate-trends/indias-best-companies-to-work-for-2017-the-complete-list/articleshow/59419981.cms>.

Exhibit 2
Intuit India's GPTW Rankings over the Years



Source: Created by the authors.

Exhibit 3
Intuit India's Employee Base over the Years



Source: Created by the authors.

Exhibit 4
A Query and Response on the “Ask Vijay” Portal

QUERY

Did we get any update on having Wi-Fi across all cabs? Looks like many have asked the same question here, but still it is pending. Do we know the exact dates? As it's been more than 2 months now.

VIJAY ANAND'S RESPONSE

Hi,

Thanks for checking.

Wi-Fi devices have been delivered and activated in all pending cabs as of 17th July 17. Could you please reach out to Krishna_singh@intuit.com providing more details about your route/ cab so that we can check?

Thanks & Regards,

Source: Company.

Exhibit 5

Intuit Hiring Criteria: What the Company Looks for in a Candidate

Cultural Fitment:

- Values
- Drive for customer success
- Ability to thrive in an environment of fun
- Know their strengths and gaps and are self-aware
- Relationship management skills, given a people-centric organization

Skill Set Fitment:

- Hold of the core skill set
- New technology trends awareness
- Business acumen

Behavioral Fitment:

- Pragmatic thinking
- Self-starter
- Decision-making
- Pragmatic thinking
- Change management
- Ability to think beyond boundaries
- Behavior as a team player
- Self-awareness and openness to feedback

Source: Company.

Exhibit 6

Intuit Values

Integrity without Compromise

We speak the truth and assume best intent. We value trust above all else. We hold ourselves and others accountable to the highest standards in all we say and do.

We Care and Give Back

We are stewards of the future and will do our part to make the world a better place. It is our privilege to help others and we do it wholeheartedly.

Be Bold

Solve big customer problems. Create a vision that inspires. Think beyond what is accepted as possible.

Be Passionate

Personally embrace and role model change. Inspire with your insights and initiative. Strive to perfect your craft every day.

Be Decisive

Choose what we will and will not do. Be transparent with your logic and judgment. Be direct and respectful.

Learn Fast

Lead with a hypothesis. Measure and act on what matters most. Savor the surprises

Win Together

Deliver exceptional results so others can count on you. Develop yourself and others to do the best work of our lives. Be boundaryless in our thinking and actions.

Deliver Awesome

Delight our customers and partners with experiences they love. Nail the fundamentals and sweat the details. Never stop short of awesome.

Source: Company.

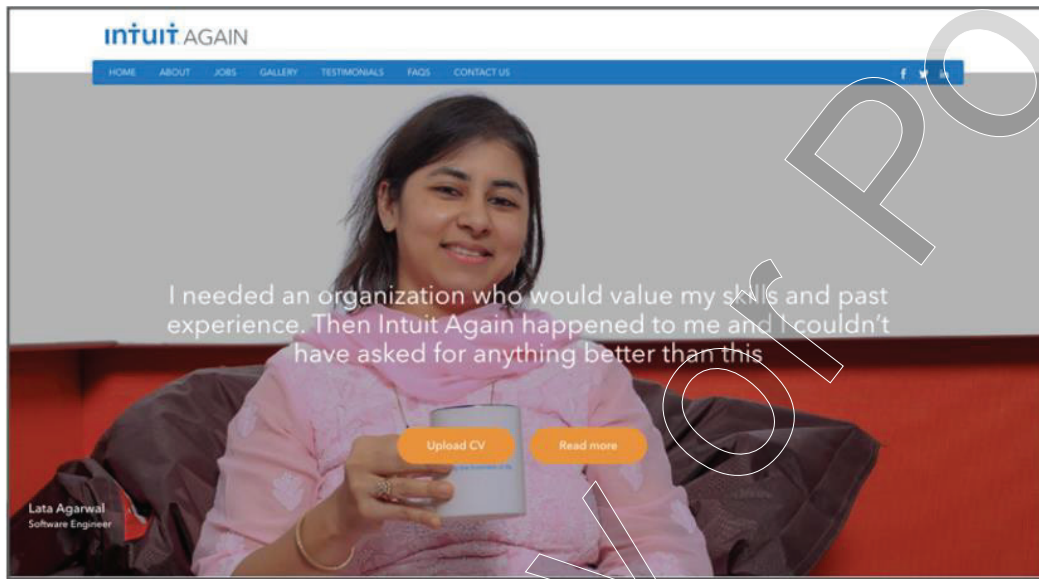
Exhibit 7
Rewards and Recognition



Source: Company.

Exhibit 8

Intuit India's "Intuit Again" Program



Source: Company website.

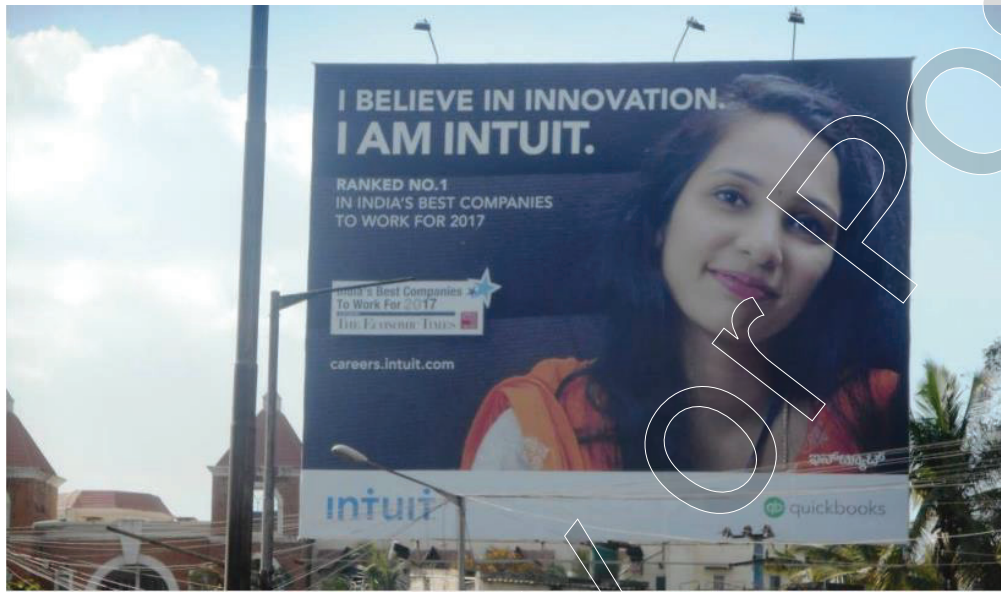
Exhibit 9

Gender Neutral Restroom

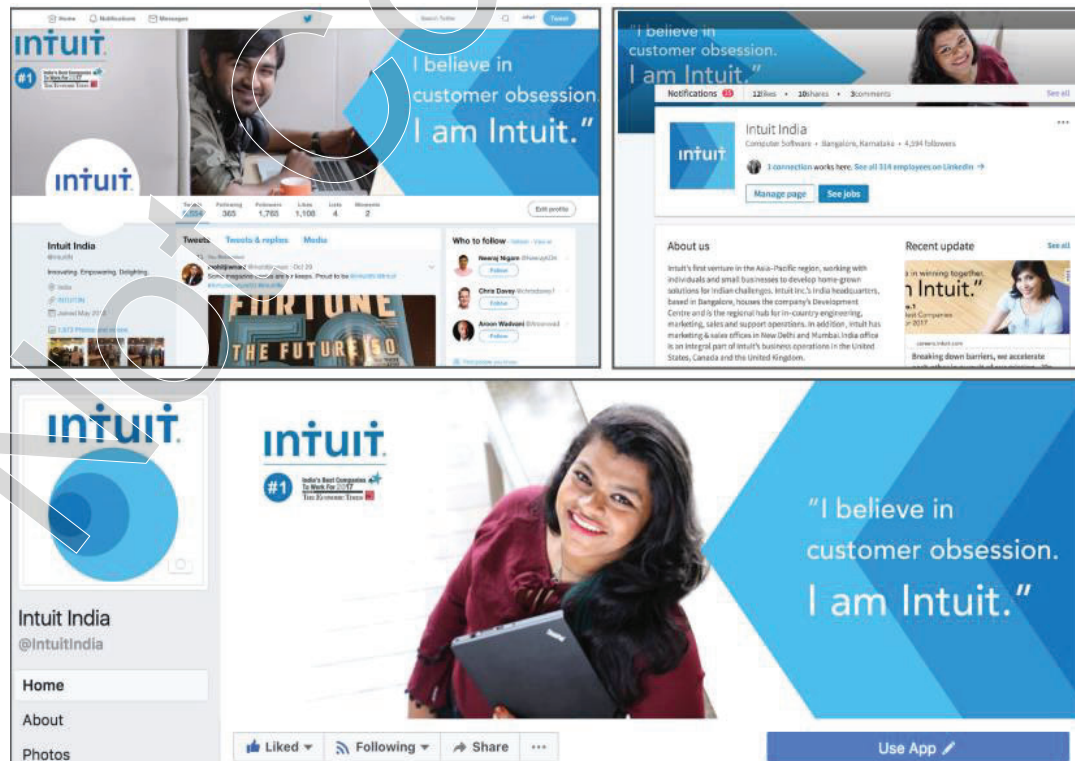


Source: Company.

Exhibit 10: Intuit India's "I Am Intuit" Campaign



Source: Company.

Exhibit 11
Intuit Employer Branding on Social Media

Source: Company website.