

# India Inc ready to give 60% hike to good talent

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**Mumbai:** From commanding salary hikes in low double-digits to a marked improvement of up to 60% for premium talent today, the hiring market is making a clear shift to become an employees' market. A change in business sentiment, early signs of a revival of the economy and a boom in new-age sectors like e-commerce and digital are said to be driving this change, said executive search firm experts.

After a lull of almost two-three years, hiring officials said it was a welcome shift towards talented candidates calling the shots. Earlier, the tilt was more towards the employers.

Elaborating on this shift from an employers' to an em-

ployees' market, Ronesh Puri, MD, Executive Access (India), said: "The last two to three years were bad from the talent perspective as there were far fewer opportunities for candidates. Today, good candidates with great track record are commanding a huge premium with some getting 50-60% increase in salary as compared to earlier levels of 20-30% as everyone is looking to hire premium talent and these exceptional performers are getting inundated with offers."

While this would not be possible without the recovery in industrial growth, another factor that is playing a major role is the upsurge in e-commerce and digital space which is attracting talent from other sectors. "This is clearly leading to

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## EMPLOYEES' MARKET

a war for talent. The next 18 months will see industries trying to retain their top talent and one of the ways in which they would do so is by incentivizing high-potential leaders with long-term growth and value-creation incentives," said Gauri Padmanabhan, partner, Heidrick & Struggles.

Puri said six out of ten of his clients are demanding good

talent from outside their industry. The demand is largely for talent from the consumer goods industry. "The high-potential talent from consumer sectors, such as FMCG, has many takers from diverse sectors like telecom and healthcare. The sectors that have seen a marked pickup are retail, e-commerce and digital where there are specific requirements for CXOs," said Pallavi Kathuria, consultant at Egon Zehnder, a premier leadership advisory firm.

Kathuria, however, said that high-caliber leadership talent always had multiple options to choose from because talent is scarce here. "Overall, the trend is more towards a slightly improved sentiment in hiring," said Kathuria.

Life sciences and pharma are other sectors that are heating up, while healthcare services and hospitals continue to remain hot. "In the past two years, due to regulatory challenges, there was a lull in the pharma sector. But in the past three months, we have seen a greater jump in terms of requirements from pharma and medical device firms. Aggressive hiring has begun now and where earlier the salary hikes for mid- to senior-level positions in these sectors were 20-25%, now the companies are willing to give even up to 40% hike to great talent," said Mayank Chandra, managing partner, Antal International.

"Now is the time for good talent to command their desired pay packet," said Chandra.