

NEWS RELEASE

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Issues of trust and transparency raised in UK-India business relations: Research

Though UK-India partnerships are thriving, research indicates that Indian businesses feel they are not respected enough and UK companies yearn for more transparency and innovation in Indian companies.

Indian and British companies face particular challenges in developing successful strategic alliances, not least because of differing perspectives. According to ***East meets West – the challenge and potential of global partnerships between India and the UK*** – a report by Global Business Partnership Alliance (GBPA), supported by the UK India Business Council, many major British companies consider it ‘business critical’ to have partnerships in India. This is mirrored by India now as one of the biggest investors in the UK.

Commenting on the research, UKIBC CEO Sharon Bamford said, “We are witnessing a global shift in business environment. For successful partnerships and business ventures, UK and Indian companies will have to respect each others’ concerns, commitment and objectives and strive to gain trust and transparency. This is an excellent piece of work which highlights the perceived and real challenges in UK-India business partnerships.”

GBPA CEO Amanda Crouch states: “Many relationships between UK and Indian companies originated with the desire to drive out cost, particularly in outsourcing. This led to relationships being very transactional in nature. It is clear that there is now a mutual desire to develop more collaborative relationships, and to discover how to establish truly effective strategic partnering relationships.”

Most companies participating in the research – in India and the UK - expressed a positive view that partnering with each other can be extremely beneficial. When done well, it unequivocally realises the desired vision and outcomes for all concerned.

However, research also revealed several differences in perspective between Indian and UK companies that actively enhance or disable the ability to create and sustain effective business partnerships. Trust emerged as the foundation of a successful partnership.

The research also revealed other areas – such as transparency, respect, equality, employee loyalty, cultural differences, use of English language, decision-making and innovation – where Indian and UK organisations have significant differences in understanding.

Research states that such disconnects in understanding can severely undermine the ability of the parties to work effectively together. Especially where an issue is not even on the radar of the other party – and this is exacerbated when there are not sufficiently good English language skills to enable the issue to be fully explored and resolved.

The report reveals that specific key enablers – alignment of objectives, collaborative mindset, sponsorship and commitment, environment, engagement approach, and value add – are critical to partnering success. At the same time, it surfaces obstacles that undermine these relationships: cultural awareness, relationship approach, operations and processes, and change management.

“Trust and transparency are essential for a successful partnership and, we, at the UKIBC hold workshops and seminars addressing the practical and cultural differences that UK companies face while doing business with India,” adds Bamford.

Crouch concludes, “In this turbulent and competitive global market, it is absolutely essential for Indian and British companies to assess the nature of their critical business relationships. Never before have organisations had to rely on their partners to such an extent and this research will help them to identify the areas where change is required in order to create world-class partnering relationships.”

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

About: ‘East meets West – the challenge and potential of global partnerships between India and the UK’

This research is one in a series of GBPA *Discovery* reports that explores the challenges and enablers for partnering success. GBPA interviewed business leaders in India responsible for critical relationships with companies mostly in the UK; and to get a balanced perspective, GBPA also spoke to UK based business leaders, many of them UKIBC members, that have significant relationships with Indian companies. Participants came from a wide range of organisations and industry sectors to identify the key enablers and obstacles to partnership success. This report will be followed by one on the challenge and potential of global partnerships between China and organisations in the West.

About: GBPA (Global Business Partnership Alliance)

GBPA’s mission is to help organisations deliver superior business results and reduce risk through the development of improved collaboration in their key internal and external relationships. Through accessing GBPA’s exclusive research-based *Discovery* programme and advisory services, and participating in GBPA facilitated events, senior executives access best practice, independent advice and practical solutions to their partnering and collaboration challenges - with particular focus on inter-functional, outsourcing and critical customer / supplier relationships.

About UK India Business Council (UKIBC):

The UK India Business Council (UKIBC) is the lead organisation supporting the British Government in the promotion of bilateral trade, business and investment between the two countries.

UKIBC seeks to play an influential role in creating and sustaining an environment in which free-trade and investment flourishes. A key objective in this regard is the highlighting, and dismantling, of bureaucratic and regulatory barriers to entry.

Through the facilitation of partnerships, and with the support of an extensive network of influential corporate and individual members, UKIBC provides the resource, knowledge and infrastructure support vital for UK companies to make the most of emerging opportunities in India.

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