The Right Man For The Right Job!

Anupam Jauhari, Vice President - HR, Infogain, in his vast experience stretching more than two decades in the corporate ethos has always managed to latch on to the steering wheel, either in the development of the HR process or in its successful execution. He holds on to the firm belief that the 3Rs—right people, right place and the right time—are the vital cogs for effective business development.

- BY S. AJAY KUMAR

How do you look back at your professional journey so far? Please share some of your most enriching experiences that you came across.

I started my career in HR nearly two decades ago, and, it has been a journey filled with many fond memories. I had the honour and privilege to work with some of the most seasoned individuals during the span of my career, and, have learnt a lot from them. My work profile has taken me around the globe frequently, and has thus presented me with the opportunity to interact with people from different nationalities, culture and work environments. This experience has given me the added advantage of being able to understand work centre dynamics, people management, work ethics and corporate culture.

I started my career 22 years ago as an HR Coordinator for Saudi Aramco, and, since then have held many assignments and had the privilege to work with different organizations in various HR roles from recruitment, talent management to employee engagement, formulating HR policies and processes for organizations. All the work and people experiences have been enriching and helped me to endeavour to perform better each day.
What were some of the challenging times in your career that gave you the most important lessons of life? We all face challenges in our day-to-day life - professionally and personally. What you need is a positive attitude towards the situation and an open mind to resolve the same at the earliest. Each time I faced a challenge, I realized that, more than failure, it was the fear of failing that created problems. I eventually learned that we have the ability to overcome all challenges, and, not let the fear of failure take over. Some of the most challenging times were when I had to set up an HR practice for a startup organization right from the scratch, along with hiring niche skilled resources for critical business needs etc. The most important thing is to effectively manage conflict and prioritize towards talent development, as every challenge is unique, and therefore requires a different approach. Engaging people is important for an HR leader because despite having the best possible engagement policies and strategies, gaps will remain, so we need to work around it as a team.

How was working across industries made your professional journey more interesting? I feel that if you are passionate about what you are doing; it takes you a long way and the nature of the industry does not matter then. My experience is primarily in the IT industry, and, I feel if one is happy coming to office each day, that’s Nirvana.... The journey is exciting and fulfilling only if you are energized and able to motivate the team to feel the same way as you are feeling as a leader.

How different have been the two experiences for you regarding setting up HR from scratch in an organization to managing well-established HR frameworks? I must say that they are different in some ways. We should realize and accept that one approach, process or framework is perfect for one particular situation. Managing well-established practices is much easier than setting up a new one from the scratch. Having said that, one needs to be flexible to adopt strategic changes. These changes may be driven by a shift in company goals or a particular paradigm shift. Organizations should continue to constantly look at market driven realities and embrace those new changes and accompanying challenges. Any organization, new or old, needs to be focused, agile and driven by goals and targets.

What inspired you to steer your career towards HR? My ability to make a difference in someone's life or ability to influence someone to pick up the right career. I feel immense satisfaction when I guide someone with career choice and see that individual growing so well in his role.

How do you like to spend your free time? With my family and friends - relaxing, eating and sometime with myself- reading and writing.

What was your learning from the B-School? Dignity is the strongest element, which drives leadership and management. When you treat people with dignity and respect; whether it is your co-workers, subordinates or seniors, you are actually capable of managing people well and demonstrating your leadership quality. Value people, they are bound to be loyal to you - so leadership and management automatically follow dignity.

Has someone from your family deeply inspired your values and growth as a human being? My parents. They have always displayed confidence in me and given their complete support to help me achieve my professional goals.

Who would you credit in your life as a great influence in shaping the man that you are today? My parents and my family. I feel that success or failure depends more upon attitude than individual capability. Successful individuals enjoy and take pride in what they do. Act, look, feel successful, conduct yourself accordingly, and one will be amazed at the positive results.
This quote by Mr. Narayan Murthy of Infosys says it all: "Our assets walk out of the door each evening. We have to make sure that they come back the next morning." People are the most important asset for any organization. If you have the right resources, right leadership and management team, you are the most successful organization, delivering amazing products and services. After being a part of the IT industry for more than 15 years, I can say that in my experience HR policies in the IT sector are far more progressive than any other industry. Flexible work policies, work from home, company transportation, canteen facilities, special benefits for women employees in terms of crèche facilities, extended maternity leaves - are some of the facilities Infogain provides to ensure a healthy work-life balance.

Some of the challenges that I feel are very specific to the IT sector involve:

1. Selecting the right candidate from a large pool of applicants with the specific skillsets.
2. Setting up the right mix of HR practices and policies that will help retain the right talent - on job training, teamwork activities, chance to work on exciting projects and maintaining the right balance or work and leisure at office.

In brief

NAME : Anupam Jauhari
TITLE : Vice President - HR
AGE : 48 years
ORGANIZATION : Infogain
EXPERIENCE : 20 years
YEARS IN HR : 20 years
EDUCATION : MBA from the University of Allahabad

1. Discovering skilled people in niche or evolving technologies.
2. Training programmes.

Who have been your figures of inspiration during this professional journey? What do you think are the values and ideologies about which leaders should definitely walk the talk to win stakeholder confidence?

During my journey, I have come across different sets of leaders, many inspiring human beings each with a different facet of leadership and style. My learning from them has been the "head in the sky, feet on the ground" approach. To be an effective leader one needs to be polite, compassionate and be able to "walk the talk."

I believe very strongly in the following two quotes:
1. "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader" - John Quincy Adams.
2. "Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality" - Warren Bennis

As a leader, I have always had a very clear thought process for any assignment or job that I take up and follow a 3-step approach:

G Conceptualize the actions
G Goal Setting to translate vision into reality
G Execute Flawlessly

A clear approach and planning is very crucial for the success of any task, whether personal or professional. It helps you to focus on your ideas and firm up the steps needed to achieve a particular goal. It gives you clarity of thought, you know where you are, and what you want to achieve over a period of time and the actions needed to reach your goal/objectives in life.

"Best HR practices are built on a futuristic vision." What are your views on the same and how have you practiced this during your stint with various organizations?

HR plays a strategic role in guiding succession management, knowledge retention, and other enterprise-wide initiatives. HR along with the senior management is
HR PERSPECTIVES

Some gaps that HR Organizations need to bridge
True Team Building and Communication Gap. The surprising part is that we all work in teams and still we are overloaded, this is because of improper delegation or teamwork. When we really work as a team, each person in the team knows what is important for the other one and helps each other prioritize tasks to meet professional and personal commitments. Life is like sports and the more you value teamwork, the more the chances that you will emerge as a winner. As any world-class athlete, you need to rest and recover for sustainable performance. Making time for yourself should not be the last priority in your list. It should be woven into the way you live and work in today's world.

Common errors companies commit while designing engagement practices
The roles and responsibilities of an organization's HR team are constantly evolving due to the new challenges faced that are beyond operational HR issues. Instead of trying to search for the right talent it is better to find and retain existing talent, providing them with the necessary skills and experience required to keep productivity levels up. This involves maximizing the resources, optimum utilization of people power and investing significant time and money into ensuring maximum productivity wherever possible. HR needs to act as a balance between the company and employee creating the environment and reiterating the work culture among employees. These, along with a few other essentials including recruitment initiatives, productivity metrics, training and compliance procedures, Health and Safety measures, and others helps to maintain the momentum and engagement level with employees.

in instrumental in creating the right organizational climate of spirit and energy that will in turn encourage skill development inside as well as attract the right skilled workforce from outside. Futuristic vision is a very key factor for business growth and since HR strategies are formulated on the business requirement, HR needs to be futuristic and know how the business is evolving. Until you have a vision of how the organization would grow or how the market would change, you cannot hire the right people or develop the right skill sets required in an organization. I am proud to say that since the time I have been with Infogain, we have changed very facet of HR. HR at Infogain plays the role of an enabler. Each of the HR verticals is managed by a professional and a thinking leader. We have dedicated teams, and every manager is an expert in creating a culture of change in the organization and align them to business goals.

LEARNING POINTS

- One need to continuously learn to sustain in today's fast moving digital world. Learning is a constant process and one should never let go of the desire to be inquisitive. Learn new skills and keep exploring different areas of work and you will be amazed at your own success.
- We have all faced difficult situations and find ourselves at crossroads in life. I have learnt that the resilience to overcome the odds is not possible if we are not motivated enough or have a positive attitude towards life.
- Family and friends are your pillars of encouragement and support. Don't ignore them.
- I have always believed that in order to grow and succeed in life you have to set a goal and move out of the comfort zone. I have realised every time I set a goal and achieved it I was pleasantly surprised.

As a part of the Infogain family, what will be your focus for 2017? Are there any organizational goals that you have set for yourself?
Infogain is one of the most employee friendly organizations. We aim to achieve the right mix of fun and work that is essential for attracting and retaining quality talent. We follow an open work culture where employees are encouraged to ask questions to their managers or feel free to approach anybody from our senior management team. Apart from regular work, employees are encouraged to pursue activities of their own interest. I believe there is a firm link between employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction and profitability. Some of the initiatives we are particularly very proud of include:

- Balance at work that involves hard work along with fun, idea generation
- Open Culture - Executive accessibility via regular open house sessions
- Policies that encourage maximum employee participation and feedback to enable engagement, operational efficiency and a constant sense of collectiveness.
- HR policies that include leave pooling, maternity leave, free child care/crèche, flexible timings/recreational activities, management/training sessions, after office hobby courses, CSR activities and development programmes etc. All these policies help in retaining people, hence it is our constant endeavour to research and search for innovative practices and methods to retain and attract talent.