

GLOBAL INTEGRATION - A KEY FOR SUCCESS

RANI DESAI (VICE PRESIDENT AND GLOBAL HEAD, HUMAN RESOURCES & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, GEOMETRIC LIMITED) TALKS ABOUT HOW HR CAN LEAD TO THE GROWTH OF AN ORGANISATION

On this shrunken globe, people can no longer live as strangers, and we can no longer work in isolation. Smooth functioning of a company is interdependent on the various facets that make up that organisation, and the global marketplace that we work in. While we cannot control the external environment, it is imperative to ensure that the different cogs in the company are well-oiled and smoothly work in conjunction with each other.

While the need for integration arises with the growth in the size of an organisation, including its expansion across geographies, this need is stronger during and post a merger or acquisition (M&A). When an organisation sets up a unit in an alien territory or goes for an M&A, it has new set of employees, with a different culture and outlook. The HR function plays an important role in bridging these differences to create a global workforce. It is important to look at integration of an acquired organisation from a human and humane perspective.

I feel the real challenge lies in bringing about consistent processes, policies between the two entities, which give a clearer perspective of the organisation. The common policies reduce the feeling of discrimination and the 'we' versus 'they' syndrome. In our case as well, we have taken measures in bringing about common policies for local employees as well as those deputed from here. While in many cases an acquiring organisation



tends to overhaul the existing processes in the acquired company, I believe it is important to evaluate the processes of the acquired company – you may be pleasantly surprised to find policies that would benefit the acquiring organisation as well.

But integration is not a one-stage process and every person in the organisation works towards it in their daily interactions with their teams sitting in various parts of the

world, and by being sensitive to cultural and ethnic differences. Moreover, the crux of a successful integration is in the commitment of the management and the leadership in making it happen. It is, therefore, essential to ensure the 'walk the talk' attitude is prevalent and easily seen in the company.

As HR, the key is to build 'faith' within the workforce - faith in the organisation, its leadership, its growth potential and its values. It is important to have common communication platforms and to unite the company through the proliferation of the common objectives for the growth of individuals and the company as a whole. At Geometric, we have an internal eMagazine that carries stories from across BUs, and geographies; and includes the fun elements of a newsletter, while also serving as a corporate and business mouthpiece to give updates about the company.

The role of HR begins with creating an inclusive environment and providing soft skills training for cultural and language sensitisation; and extends to carrying out employee engagement activities. For example, we had a recent initiative called 'GeoMom', in celebration of Mothers' Day, wherein the 'mothers' in our employees' family (*the employee herself, employee's spouse, or employee's mother*) shared nostalgic anecdotes about their children with other employees in the company. The initiative was very well received, especially by our American colleagues and made them feel that they were a part of a wonderful company.

Similarly, last year we had organised a global drawing contest for our employees' children, called Little Geometricians. This competition gave parents

an avenue not only to show-off their children's talent to their neighbours in office, but the entire company. And since the entries were used to make corporate New Year and birthday greeting cards, as well as a calendar, they felt that the organisation was also proud and appreciative of their kids. 

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