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Dear Reader,

Greetings!

I am happy to share with you that the first two editions of our initiative Sodexo ‘Engage’ were well received by the HR fraternity and it gives me immense pleasure to share with you the third edition. We look forward to your continued support and patronage.

Sodexo recently released a first of-its-kind publication titled ‘HR Best Practices 2015 - Transforming the Thinking’ at 3 launch events held in Mumbai, Bengaluru and Delhi in February, which saw a participation of over 800 senior personnel from the HR fraternity. The success of these events reaffirms our belief in driving the ‘Engage’ initiative for the HR community.

We thank all of you who have come forward to contribute to the newsletter. It is through our collective effort that we will be able to make the newsletter an interesting platform for sharing our experiences and learning.

This third Issue of Sodexo Engage covers the following sections:

- **HR Best Practices** features an interaction with Mr. Amar Sinjhi, Head - Human Resources, Tata Capital Limited on the HR practices in the company
- **Global Insights - Innovative HR** features innovative people practices at the US-based The Container Store
- **Quality of Life** discusses how to keep the multi-generational workforce engaged
- **Work Matters** brings you face to face with Mr. B Vijaya Bhaskara Reddy, General Manager - HR, J.K. Fenner (India) Limited
- **The Executive Life** gives the readers a peek into the life and career journey of Ms. Dev Deepika, Director - HR, KPMG in India
- **Event Update** presents a round-up of the launch events of the HR Best Practices 2015 publication held in Mumbai, Bengaluru and Delhi recently.

I hope that you find this newsletter insightful and informative. I would also urge you to contribute in the coming issues of this newsletter to make it a truly participative effort and a shared platform for the business community.

Best Regards,

Rajiv Warrier
MD - Benefits & Rewards Services,
Sodexo SVC India Pvt. Ltd.
Please tell us about the work culture at Tata Capital. Can you elaborate on your focus on creating a winning culture?

Tata Capital is a young organization belonging to a Group with a 140 year old legacy, and our culture is shaped by these two aspects. We are working towards building a Culture that is centered around 3 pillars – Know, Care & Do. These pillars encompass the values that we wish to be known for and create an environment which fosters a spirit of excellence while ‘doing right’. To support and bolster this culture, we have laid down a strong HR policy and framework that also focuses on a high level of employee engagement and transparency. At a very broad level, our focus is on creating a “High Performance Culture” supported by the Values & Ethics of the Tata Group.

Please tell us about your key initiatives towards talent acquisition and retention.

Tata Capital has a proven and well established set of talent acquisition programs like our Graduate and Management Trainee Programs along with CA and Legal Trainee programs. We have also recently initiated a partnership with IIM-Ahmedabad for hiring from their PGPX batch. This will help strengthen our mid management talent pool. A key programme to identify talent from our younger employees and put them on a ‘fast-track’ is our “Emerging Leaders Programme”. Each of our Talent Management programs is well-rounded and structured, giving our recruits a comprehensive view of the company/ function, as the case may be. The talent pipeline in the company is viewed with the highest importance and in an end-to-end manner. We have leadership development programs, structured career planning and strategic learning & development interventions across our hierarchy.

What are the key training & development initiatives at Tata Capital to bridge skill gaps at all levels?

We have a dedicated Learning & Development vertical which looks at training and knowledge management needs of the organization. It looks at the training needs of the business and functions and prepares a 12 month plan accordingly. Along with this, each employee has an “Individual Development Plan” worked into his/her profile for the year. We do undertake specialized training workshops and programs for employees in niche areas, which are done through tie-ups with leading institutions in India and around the world.

Please share details of the key initiatives employed in the areas of Performance Management.

Tata Capital has a robust Performance Management System which kicks-in twice in the year – mid-term and year-end. The system allows for an employee to be appraised on his Key Responsibility Areas, Tata Group values and other softer aspects. A specially designated committee then evaluates the consolidated appraisal of the Company in a structured manner. Our Performance Management system is sharply aligned with the company’s Balanced Score Card and all individual Key Result Areas flow from there.

What are your company’s best practices to boost employee motivation and engagement? Please tell us about your R&R programmes.

We have multiple levels of reward & recognition at Tata Capital. Our ‘Star’ awards award and recognize exceptional performances on a quarterly basis. These cover the business units as well as the functions. They are awarded not just monetarily, but also with company-wide recognition. The Tata Capital Achievers are annual awards that are given for excellence across business performance, innovation, CSR etc. We also have a property called ‘Hats-off’ which recognizes good work done by employees on a case-to-case basis. Over and above this, individual business units are encouraged to give spot recognitions / awards. We also recognize long service with the company with our annual Long Service Awards - where even families of long service award winners participate.

Would you like to share insights on any other HR practices followed at Tata Capital?

We have a consistently rising Employee Engagement score, which is measured by the Gallup Organisation and benchmarked globally with financial services companies. We also have a unique “Culture Index & Score” to measure our employees’ views on where we are with regard to our culture. Tata Capital is currently in the process of getting itself accredited under Carnegie Mellon’s People Capability Maturity Model system and we are (at this moment) the only NBFC in the world to be P-CMM Level III accredited – this is a big recognition from one of the world’s leading universities about the robustness of our HR processes.
Texas-based The Container Store Group Inc is a leading retailer of storage and organization products. It started its journey in 1978 with a 1,600 square foot retail space in Dallas. Today it has 69 store locations across the US that each average 25,000 square feet and offer more than 10,000 innovative products.

It calls itself “an employee-first, yummy company”. The 5,000-employee strong company believes that putting employees first and staying true to its seven Foundation Principles has enabled it to make it to FORTUNE magazine’s 100 Best Companies To Work For® - 15 years in a row, with being No. 1 twice.

The hiring and payroll philosophy at The Container Store is driven by one of its foundation principles of ‘one equals three’, i.e. one great employee is equal to three good employees, in terms of business productivity. This explains why the company enjoys a 10% annual employee turnover, in an industry which suffers from steep turnover rates. The fact that it hires a mere 3% of the applications it receives reflects its policy of hiring the best. Even the most entry-level job applicants are required to go through up to 7 or 8 interviews, many taking place with a group of the company’s employees.

The ‘one equals three’ philosophy also drives the generous remuneration practices for store employees. The company pays its employees well above the industry average, with its salespeople earning an average $48,000 a year. This is more than double the $23,690 average national salary of a retail sales worker in the US, as per the 2013 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Focus on training & development
The company believes that it enjoys low employee turnover not only due to the high monetary rewards it offers its employees, but also through the continuous training and development opportunities it provides. For instance, full-time employees receive 263 hours of formal training in their first year in the company!

Recruitment with a twist
The Container Store has a distinctive approach to recruitment. Its own customers are the first place the company looks for, for talent. Also, employees carry recruiting cards to give to friends, family members, even extra-attentive restaurant waiters and others who seem like they would fit perfectly into the company’s culture.

Putting employees first
The Container Store's dominance in the market can be attributed to its intense focus on building strong relationships with employees and, ultimately, with customers. The company's ‘employee first’ culture has resulted in an environment where not just the employees, but also the customers, vendors and the shareholders win.

To quote Kip Tindell, Chairman and CEO from an interview to Forbes “… if we take better care of our employees than anyone else – by paying them better and training them more - that they in turn will take better care of our customers than anyone else.”
Generational diversity at the workplace is both a challenge and an opportunity for companies. Each generation brings its unique set of skills, values, priorities, attitudes, experiences, and approach to work-life balance, style of working and ways of communication, amongst others. If handled appropriately, it can foster greater interaction, thus leading to increased creativity, innovation, cross pollination of ideas, and thus better collaboration and synergies, thereby giving the organisation a competitive edge. To engage this multi-generational workforce and retain the best talent, organisations need to adapt their talent management strategies to respond to their peoples’ changing needs.

Strength lies in differences, not in similarities - Stephen R. Covey

Bridging the generational gap

The “one size fits all” approach will not work, as different generations respond differently to situations and strategies. Moreover, the complexities of communication have become far more pronounced in the workplace of today. Communication being a key driver of employee engagement, companies should adopt the appropriate vehicle(s) of communication which would appeal to all generations.

Several barriers stand in the way of knowledge transfer within a multi-generational workforce. To tackle this, it is critical that HR managers pay special attention to understand the differences in learning styles between generations and devise appropriate learning & development programmes. Generational differences can also be bridged through constant interaction by increasing collaborations and strengthening the bonding between employees across generations.

Mentoring: A tool to improve cross-generational employee engagement

Mentorship can open effective channels of communication between generations. Companies are facilitating interaction/mentoring between employees across different generations wherein the younger employees benefit from the wisdom of the tenured employees, while the older generation understands fresh perspectives from their counterparts. Reverse mentoring, wherein the older generations learn from their younger counterparts, is also a successful strategy adopted by companies in bridging generational gaps, breaking down barriers and improving engagement levels.

Designing an inclusive rewards & recognition strategy

Rewards & recognition programs are a powerful tool to engage the workforce and achieve business objectives. The R&R programme of an organisation should be responsive to the changing organisational dynamics and workforce composition. The different aspirations, preferences, work styles and goals of a multi-generational workforce make it even more important for the people managers to design a rewards strategy which appeals to all the generations. By capitalising on the strengths and values of a multi-generational workforce, recognition programs can realise the true potential of an organisation’s talent base and create an enduring competitive edge.

End note

Multi-generational diversity is here to stay. Organisations should leverage a generationally diverse workforce to their competitive advantage. This is because it is this mix of various generations that would bring in the relevant experience and the right attitude to drive businesses of tomorrow. Businesses which nurture this unique workforce blend and exploit it as a competitive tool will be in a win-win situation. Hence, it is prudent for managers to deploy relevant engagement tools and practices and use generational diversity as a valuable strength to create a more attractive, cohesive and productive workplace.
Please tell us about the talent crunch scenario in the industry you operate in. What talent management practices have you implemented to mitigate these challenges?

Attracting and retaining talent is a serious concern for any manufacturing organization today. Shortage of the desired talent remains a major challenge for us. Often, parity of new hires with internal talent with regards to position, compensation and role is a challenge. Also, the size and location of industry has an impact on attracting talent. To counter this, J.K. Fenner has developed a system of identifying employees based on their contribution of previous two years and developing them with specific Individual Development Plan (IDP) which includes a Breakthrough Project. The identified talent is provided with desired inputs from time to time, which ensures the availability of talent pool in our industry. From the last 5 years, the average attrition rate in our Hyderabad factory is negligible, a landmark achievement amongst all neighbouring industries.

What talent development initiatives do you undertake to foster a culture of innovation?

Innovation is in the DNA of J.K. Fenner. It is mandatory for all the identified talent to be a part of Cross Functional Teams. Every year, J.K.UDAAN, an organization-wide competition on innovation is held and awards are given to the most innovative initiative. The outcome of these initiatives is reduction of process cycle time, cost reduction, usage of alternate material & methodology, manpower reduction and deskilling, amongst others.

There exists a severe mismatch between the skills that the education sector provides and the skills that industries require. What are J. K. Fenner’s key initiatives for the training & development of its employees?

We have been practicing a concept of Graduate Engineer Trainee (GET) wherein GETs are recruited directly from reputed colleges and deployed on rotation basis for a period of one year, in which they cover all the fields such as manufacturing, marketing, quality assurance, technical etc. We then give them an opportunity to explore their areas of interest so as to enable the organization to make the best use of the available resources.

What are your HR team’s topmost effective practices to boost employee motivation and engagement?

“HR Reachout” i.e. availability of HR personnel to all employees 24 X 7 gives lot of motivation to the employees and creates confidence among them that they are cared for. On “People Gallery” we post employees’ triumphs and achievements. “Wish on Event” is an initiative where the HR Team sends greetings to employees on their birthday, marriage anniversary etc. “Spot Recognition” recognizes individuals on the spot basis for their special efforts for their department. “We Care” is an initiative in which we support our employees in all possible aspects such as giving moral and financial support when they are in need, etc.

Please tell us about your Leadership Development initiatives and about the Krishna-Arjuna Mentoring Initiative.

Our organization ensures that the leadership pipeline is filled and flowing. To develop the leadership pipeline, we have developed a unique platform called ‘Krishna-Arjuna’, wherein the reporting manager acts as Krishna and the subordinate acts as Arjuna. This is a journey of 18 months, focusing on Managing Business, Managing People and Managing Self for a period of 9 months, followed by undertaking High Impact Project for 9 months and ensuring monetary/qualitative benefits for the business as well as developing young leaders in the organization. To make this initiative more impactful, Krishna cannot have more than 3 Arjunas at any point of time. Quarterly reviews are conducted by senior officials. Due to this initiative, a lot of knowledge transfer is taking place also tapping the potential talent.
Please take our readers through your professional journey.

Having started off as an equity research analyst, I had to make a choice very early in my professional life on what will drive me the most, will keep me motivated and will give me a sense of fulfillment - people or numbers. I decided to listen to my inner calling and since the last 18 years there has been no looking back.

In my current role, I am the HR Business Partner for one of the businesses at KPMG in India and also lead the KNOW initiative i.e. the KPMG Network of Women.

Past Associations: Avendus, AP Moller Maersk (GSCs), Reuters, Ambit, ILFS Investsmart, Wockhardt, Gufic Labs.

What do you like to do in your off time?

While there is so much that I wish to do, at the moment, my son occupies most of my free time. If I am left with some time for myself, I simply venture out to capture the world around me with my Canon. Also, I blog once in a while and pen down my thoughts on subjects that capture my attention.

What is your fitness mantra?

It is walk, yoga or swimming. I do try and watch what I eat and when I eat.

Please share tips on handling stress at work.

It is not only work, that leads to stress, and reasons for the same can be few or many. No stress is good and one needs to snap out of it at the earliest. There are many ways in which stress can be managed and this is situational, e.g.: being better prepared for situations that can be anticipated, time-management, communication, having a bouncing board, stepping back and bringing in a fresh perspective, could be a few ways to deal with it. It is always better to handle tasks before they move to the ‘urgent & important’ quadrant.

Leadership Lesson

Be human while dealing with people, no one makes mistakes because they like to. It is important to get into damage control mode first and then carry out the root-cause analysis. A debrief covering what should not be repeated is a must.

Ms Dev Deepika,
Director - HR, KPMG in India

Which is your favorite holiday destination?

Copenhagen

Your favorite quote.

Attitude of Gratitude

The social cause you care for/support.

I support the Cancer Aid Research Foundation and educate a child.

Your take on work-life balance.

The defined hours that one spends at home and at the workplace are blurring. While some of us may want to define them, with the changing demands at all fronts, it is becoming increasingly difficult to demarcate. One needs to find harmony in them. It is important to be in the moment wherever one is and try to give it one’s best.

What advice would you like to give to young leaders?

Have a Personal Advisory Board (PAB): A board of friends, mentors, colleagues, seniors, with whom you can bounce off your feelings and thoughts – someone whom you can rely on and trust. This reduces the stress and definitely adds a fresh perspective to your thoughts/to the given situation/s. While you have your PAB, be one too.

Please share some tips on time management.

Maintain a To-Do and capture everything that needs to be done in that list. Prioritize, every day spend some time going through the To-Dos and judiciously prioritize. Delegate, check what can be delegated or outsourced and do it. Understand and Use Technology, e.g. set-up outlook rules to separate out mails which are ‘To’ you and in which you are in ‘cc’, you know which ones to handle first. Say No, at times, it is important to say ‘no’ to meetings, tasks that can be effectively managed by others. Always bear in mind, how much ever you plan, you have no control over interruptions, so allow room for these exigencies while planning your day.
Sodexo - Dun & Bradstreet HR Best Practices 2015

Sodexo India and Dun & Bradstreet India released a first of-its-kind publication titled 'HR Best Practices 2015 - Transforming the Thinking' at three launch events held in Mumbai, Bengaluru and Delhi in February 2015.

The publication ‘HR Best Practices 2015’ is intended to serve as a ready reckoner on HR Best Practices that can be shared across Corporate India; for re-visiting their existing policies and adopting new and innovative tools towards managing its human resources. It emphasizes on aspects relating to HR including the importance of engagement to have a healthy retention ratio, creation of a well-developed process for identification and implementation of the feedback taken from the employees about their leaders, and for conceptualising leadership development strategies.

The events were divided into two distinct parts; the first part being the launch of the publication ‘HR Best Practices 2015’ and the second consisting of a panel discussion on “Transforming the Thinking: Approaches to Retention and Engagement”.

With the objective of creating a knowledge sharing forum, the events witnessed an interactive and engaging panel discussion with active participation from the audience as well.

HR Best Practices 2015 book launch events

From L-R: Mr. Kaushal Sampat, President & Managing Director - India, Dun & Bradstreet; Mr. Adil Malia, Group President - HR, Essar Group and Mr. Rajiv Warrier, Managing Director, Sodexo Benefits and Rewards Services.

The event saw participation of over 300 senior and distinguished personnel from the HR fraternity. Mr. Adil Malia, Group President - HR, Essar Group, the Keynote Speaker asserted that among employees, even high-performing teams display passive resistance. They won't speak up even if they are unhappy with the system. And that behaviour will not help the organisation to achieve the goal. He also highlighted that HR managers globally perform five tasks - the 5Gs: Get, Give, Grow, Guard and Guide. Their styles and approaches will differ depending on the culture of the company though.