

HUL Goes All Out to Make Employees Future-Ready

Staff to get a taste of immersive experiences with other cos, new-age tech & work culture

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Kolkata: Hindustan Unilever (HUL), the country's biggest consumer goods company, is offering its employees a range of exposure opportunities, from immersive experiences with other companies to exposure to new-age technologies and work culture, so as to make them future-ready.

Under this initiative, HUL employees get to work with other companies, including startups, to gain exposure to business problems faced by other industries; to be part of some critical projects led by company MD Sanjiv Mehta; to work with government organisations; or, even take up international stints.

"We want our people to go out there, experiment and work on things that are not part of their regular day job, but part of a larger ecosystem that is gearing up for the future," said BP Biddappa, executive

director — human resources at HUL. "Secondly, we are giving our managers experiences outside HUL while working here. It could be experiences of working with customers, digital companies, (and) organisations that could play an important and strategic role in the future," he told ET.

This is about making employees and the organisation ready for the next leap in business, and the way forward to ensure that business remains contemporary and ahead

ing our people from being limited by hierarchy or level, allowing them the space to work on something they'll be interested in. The driver for this is that it will take the business forward; keep it ahead of the curve."

A lot of the people involved are young managers, including those straight out of campus.

The company currently has 70-80 such experiments running, each with different teams, under the initiative built up over the last 18 months.

Under external immersions, HUL talent gets to work in a host of companies, from startups such as robotics firm GreyOrange and grocery delivery firm MilkBasket to big names such as Google, Facebook, Amazon, Taj Group of Hotels and mobile marketing firm InMobi.

Areas worked on include everything from how to get robotics and AI to play a part in the business, to how to use consumer data more effectively and using data points for better hiring.

HUL uses external immersions to build the capabilities of its next generation business and functional leaders. There have also been immersions in government organisations such as Quality Council of India (QCI). HUL managers are seconded to QCI for a period of 6-12 months to work on key government priority areas.

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of the curve, he said.

The FMCG major is providing its people such experiences irrespective of their level or function, and not just high-potential candidates.

"People put their hand up and say that's exciting, can I work on it?" Biddappa said. "It's about free-