

COVER STORY**“GREAT
BUSINESSES ARE RUN
BY GREAT PEOPLE”**

THE people agenda in HUL has undergone a sea change, and for **B. P. Biddappa, Executive Director, Human Resources** of the company, it is a reflection of the changing industry and a culture deep rooted in HUL's DNA. In a chat with **Noor Fathima Warsia**, Biddappa outlines some of these changes and how the company views its people power. Edited excerpts:

On the ownership of the people agenda in HUL...

In HUL, talent acquisition, capability building and talent development, are all driven in partnership with the business, on the premise that great businesses are run by great people. The business heads of the company help drive the talent proposition. Our philosophy is, leaders build leaders.

Employees create their Individual Development Plans that help focus on building skills and capabilities for their immediate roles as well as for the future. Our 70:20:10 capability-building approach ensures blended learning with 70 per cent capability built on the job through live assignments, 20 per cent through coaching and mentoring, short-term projects and exposures, and 10 per cent through classroom, virtual and e-learning. The most exciting part is that since the role itself is 70 per cent of the development process, much of the leadership time is invested in making a series of roles for a person. It essentially becomes a patchwork of great experiences that make an employee's career. This process is led by business leaders, and the HR acts like a *sutradhar* — to ensure the whole thing comes together.

The HR business partner is also expected to understand the business context and career aspirations of each individual to ensure synergies. We are privileged that this has been a HUL tradition and is now part of our DNA.

On changes in the talent framework...

An important shift in our business came with the launch of our Winning in Many Indias (WIMI) framework and the initiation of the Country Category Business Teams. Consequentially, this led to the opening up of bigger jobs at a much earlier stage, addressing the need for young managers with strong leadership skills and the ability to run their teams like general managers. This also meant a market-up approach.

The second shift was the opportunity of international exposure given to talent at an early stage in their careers. The company now sends management trainees to international locations in recognition of the fact that a diverse market experience is important.

In today's day and age, and in a VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity) market, strategies are not made once in five years. One is continuously looking at evaluating how to lead the curve. Digital, for instance, is a curve, we have invested in significantly. There is a whole pipeline of projects that the company has created, and teams are working on leveraging digital capabilities.

On setting the right ambitions...

The first level is ensuring equal understanding of targets. We have transparent target setting — leadership teams discuss the targets, and the team has visibility on each other's targets and what is expected through the year. A formal mid- and end-year process helps employees to understand

Applying USLP in HR

"Prabhat is a USLP-linked programme that contributes to the development of local communities around HUL's key sites, including manufacturing units. The key areas of Programme Prabhat are enhancing livelihoods, water conservation, and improving health and hygiene. Prabhat's Swachh initiative is led by our brands such as Lifebuoy and Domex. Our employees become ambassadors of change and as 'Swachhata Doots' spread awareness about the three important hygiene habits among their communities: i) washing hands with soap five times a day; ii) using toilet for defecation and keeping it clean and iii) adopting safe drinking water practices."



HUL'S HALLMARK PEOPLE POLICIES

Career by Choice Programme
It allows women to structure their work in a way to comfortably integrate their professional and personal commitments

Career Break Policy
Women can take a break for a duration of six months to five years for a slew of reasons

Maternity/ Paternity Policy & Daycare
Six months maternity and two weeks of paternity leave. Also a state-of-the-art daycare

Agile Work Policy
Flexible work hours and the choice of work place thus saving on commuting time

Diversity Initiatives
The Winning Balance Council comprising senior and mid-level male and female leaders

gives inputs and drives diversity in a holistic manner

Wellbeing Policy
It looks at employee well-being from a physical, mental, emotional as well as a purposeful perspective

Entrepreneurial Mindset
It offers employees the opportunity to experience the startup ecosystem first hand and then come back and be an in-house entrepreneur

their progress as part of the team, what is working, what is not, where they may need help, and what is expected at each stage. There are also constant multi-source tools that help people to get feedback at any point in time — with the aim to ensure there are no secrets or surprises.

We also encourage people to think of their purpose, and the impact they would like to create. There is individual purpose, and connected to this is the overall team purpose. What is the impact that you want to cre-

ate over the next five to ten years. We find that people are driven much more when they work towards a purpose they feel strongly about. This also helps our people connect with the business and the larger footprint in our communities. **BW**

noor.warsia@digitalmarket.asia;

@NFWarsia

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