



### Upcoming Issue Nov - Dec: Employee Engagement - a Super-strategy for Sustainability?

Companies of all sizes and across several industries have realised that business sustainability now goes far beyond environmental issues, as the need to behave responsibly becomes a key aspect of strategy and operations, maintaining brand and reputation and seeking good growth.

It is clear that managing in a more responsible way is essential, for both individual organisations and the economies and societies in which they operate. However, on the other hand, the major focus of all organisations today, is around employees in business sustainability. It is a fact that fully engaged employees are actively involved in and enthusiastic about their work. They are willing to go the extra mile to ensure customer satisfaction and make the organisation a success, spreading enthusiasm within the team and beyond.

To gain an insight on the role of human resources in business sustainability and responsible business practices, the Nov-Dec issue of People and Management brings you the views of HR experts, representing different industries.

Find out what experts say:

#### Santanu Chatterjee, Senior VP – HR and Admin, Himadri Chemicals & Industries Limited, India

The paradigm shift from viewing Socially Responsible and Sustainable Business Practices as a peripheral issue related to Brand Perception and Public Relation to a strategic issue beckons significant leadership challenge to HR Professionals. The relevance of Sustainability as a concept of HRM now stands on postulates:

- Organisations operate in Economic and Social Environments and HRM cannot neglect societal issues on Sustainability;
- Due to scarcity of Human Resources, ageing populations and increasing work-related problems, Sustainability of HRM itself becomes essential;
- HRM must implant sustainable approach to managing employees in Business Strategy and Employees' Growth, Gender Equality, Fair Rewards, Health and Safety issues etc should be accorded value;
- Holistic HRM should address the diverse objectives of Business: Financial and Social. Through Community Development, HR Department can bring out sensitive issues of the Community where Organisations can play a Proactive, Co-operative and Collaborative Role and HR Professionals act as a strategic Business Partner and contribute to CSR Policy Formulation and Implementation.



Armed with a strong and committed Business Culture reinforced by responsible HRM Practices, an organisation can gain societal approval for its existence.

#### Manmohan Bhutani, Vice President – Human Resource, Fiserv, India Region



Today HR not only works as a catalyst to promote CSR but also is a strategic partner who helps formulate the CSR strategy and actively participates in driving such initiatives. 'Fiserv Gives Back' is an enterprise-wide philanthropy programme to encourage our employees to volunteer in CSR activities. We also have created a portal to post ongoing CSR projects, which are shortlisted after the due diligence process, and our employees can login the volunteer hours. Fiserv CSR intent is directed towards contribution through voluntary efforts and hours of our associates for the identified projects rather than just providing financial support. We have empowered our employees to drive this programme and it has helped us to positively engage our employees.

**Aparna Sharma, Country Head- Human Resource, Lafarge India**

The HRM function can use its skills, knowledge and HRM tools in three main ways to help the organisation embed sustainability – APE.

**Aligning:** HRM possesses the most important tools to support implementation of a sustainability mission. All core HRM processes in an organisation must be brought into play to support sustainable business strategy.

**Partnering:** The experience of many organisations suggests that HRM leadership can play a vital role in helping articulate the organisation's social mission, expressing the role of the business in society beyond that of simply making a profit.

**Engaging:** HRM must engage both internal and external stakeholders to identify the ways in which the organisation can contribute to the social and environmental vitality of those most affected by a company's actions. Engaging may include building partnerships with external organisations, such as non profit associations that can help identify or address the impacts of the company's operations.



**Mervyn Raphael, Managing Director, People in Business India Pvt Ltd**



In a VUCA world, Employee Engagement is more than just a good strategy for sustainability. It is a necessity. If employees do not feel an emotional connect with the organisation they serve, or feel that there is a gap between their values and that of the firm, they feel disconnected. People represent the most significant, valuable and dynamic resource for the organisation. All other sustainability drivers, including processes and technology can be easily replicated. However, building a robust culture takes the right mindset, sustained time and consistent effort which leads to attracting and retaining the best talent.

**Pallavi Pareek, Founder, iLeaders**



Not all businesses need to lose their sleep over employee engagement. However, if your business is dependent on highly talented and motivated people, then you must seriously invest in activities that will cultivate towards the health, mind and spirit of your employees. A talented and intelligent employee will not be satisfied merely with offsite trips, picnics and drama clubs, but will require engagements that will enhance his skills, self-esteem, lifestyle and public image. In the planning stage, introduction of behavioural psychology can be a real game changer.

