



Putting people first!

Nirmala Behera Udgata, Head – Group HR, RSB Group, says that her organisation cherishes effective inter-personal relationship, team work and supportive leadership.

By Niranjana Mudholkar

Q How would you describe the overall HR policy at the RSB Group and what are its driving principles?

Our HR policy is not only all impersonal rules and regulations, but also consists of systems and procedures that have a humane connect and provides ample space for growth. It gives opportunity to our people to take ownership of their areas of work and responsibility. Innovation and empowerment are two driving principles followed in RSB in this ever changing business environment

The path to individual growth is open, unending and unhindered with focus on building and imbuing 'Quality and Customer Service' in all respects in their areas of operations; and opportunities for perpetual 'Learning and Training' to remain contemporary and compatible with needs of the emerging times. These traits have not only helped our company to emerge as a global player, but also have embedded the never-ending quest for excellence as the DNA of the organisation.

Q Many manufacturing companies in India have faced major challenges with regards to labour related issues. How has been the situation with RSB?

We have an open door policy with walk-in access to members irrespective of rank and file to air grievances and to offer ideas and suggestions. Grievances and ideas are respectfully and seriously evaluated and implemented according to the merit. We are proud to say that many of our organisational and business improvements have their origin in these grievances and suggestions.

We look upon our employees as our prized assets that constantly change and grow. People, without any fear of reprisal, can question old ways, challenge old ideas for betterment and move beyond their ambit. No barriers hinder the development of their skills as we want to tap untapped potential and resources. Everyone is made to learn and unlearn



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through a chain of unending training so that they excel and grow higher and higher. We cherish effective inter-personal relationship, team work and supportive leadership. We give authority and responsibility, which always go hand-in-hand, and we allow people to take calculated risk.

We have mass meetings at all our plants every month, which are chaired by the Plant Head. At these meetings, our shopfloor colleagues are open to voice their grievances and spot solutions are given. Such meetings are also chaired by our Vice Chairman & Managing Director at planned intervals where every shopfloor associate gets an opportunity to talk directly without protocol or fear.

Participatory approach of shop-floor representatives is encouraged in weekly or DWM (Daily Works Meeting) where issues/grievances are

thrashed out on the spot. Besides, we have regular employee satisfaction survey, where our colleagues are encouraged to speak up openly without bias or hindrance and feedback is taken by HR in a positive sense.

We ensure that our counselling extends beyond the ambits of the organisation to the family members of our people as well. Through annual get-togethers, we connect with the family members and also understand their well being and get valuable feedback.

Acronym "RSB Parivar" runs through every communication channel and stream of HR, which makes RSB an IR-free unique entity.

Q How can an effective HR team help a manufacturing company's bottom line, including developing a positive and engaging work environment for the company?

Every individual should be respected, trusted and governed by self-discipline rather than constant vigil and monitoring through external control. Self regulation and discipline assume paramount significance. Believing in individual or collective



ideas and suggestions should precede the policy formulation on any issue.

Regular 'Heart to Heart' interaction across rank and file, encouraged from the top, should form a part of HR process, which keeps a tab on pulse of people for gaps, if any, and consequent corrective course, with targets and regular review of its impact. Such approach, in its wake, brings ideas and suggestions for umpteen improvements in various shopfloor practices like Monthly Suggestion Scheme, Improvement Projects and QC Stories. Inculcating Deming's PDCA (Plan Do Check Act) cycle approach in every activity, sense of ownership in every individual, pat-at-the-back, awards/accolades for live and implemented ideas/suggestions, felicitation through 'Employee of the Month' awards/rolling trophies, for the best Kaizen projects, etc improves the bottom line, as we at RSB Group have seen live.

Besides positive work environment, individual and group accountability with defined KRA (Key Result Area) and review at planned intervals, multitasking with robust IT systems in the competitive scenario play major role in improving the bottom line.

Q Attracting and retaining talented people has always been a big challenge for the manufacturing industry. How have you been tackling this issue?

Our attrition rate is hardly in the single digit pan India! With open culture across rank and file inculcated in the HR system, every employee - right at the time of induction/orientation - is given clarity of role, career progression, culture, code, ethics of the organisation and sense of ownership, dignity as a family member of RSB Group and the opportunity to speak-up. An RSBian remains an RSBian, in many cases, right up to superannuation.

Q Training and skill upgradation are very important in today's competitive environment. What are you doing on this front?

Training and skill up-gradation is in-built in our system through TQM (Total Quality Management) process which

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Q The RSB Group has a fairly wide geographical footprint including a couple of plants outside India. How do you bring about a cohesiveness in terms of implementation of HR related policies and strategies?

RSB Group's India and overseas plants have separate policies moderated in line with respective countries' culture, ethics, work style, statutes, rules and regulations. At the same time, we ensure that our basic HR philosophy speaks across with one tone.

Q How big is the RSB work force and what do you think differentiates it from other players?

We have 3000+ strong and motivated work-force whose career moves up in consonance with RSB's growth. We have an open culture and people empowerment. We respect every one's feeling, coming out of differences and close the gap by logical improvement in relationship. While Group encourage 'Speak Up', we expect the issues involved are brought up with a sense of responsibility and maturity. We understand that all cannot be always right; what we impress on every one is 'What is Right'.

Besides, a personal rapport at planned intervals from the top across rank and file, gives us a unique niche. 