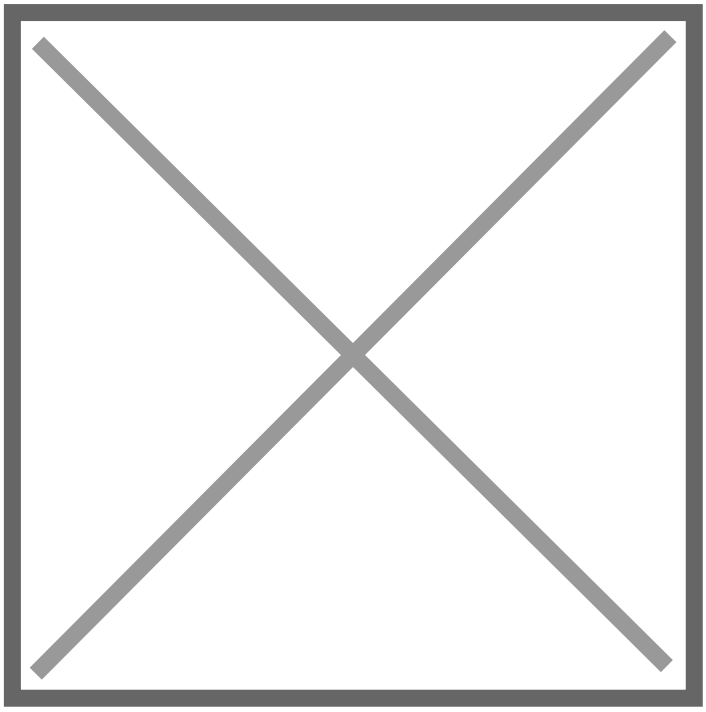
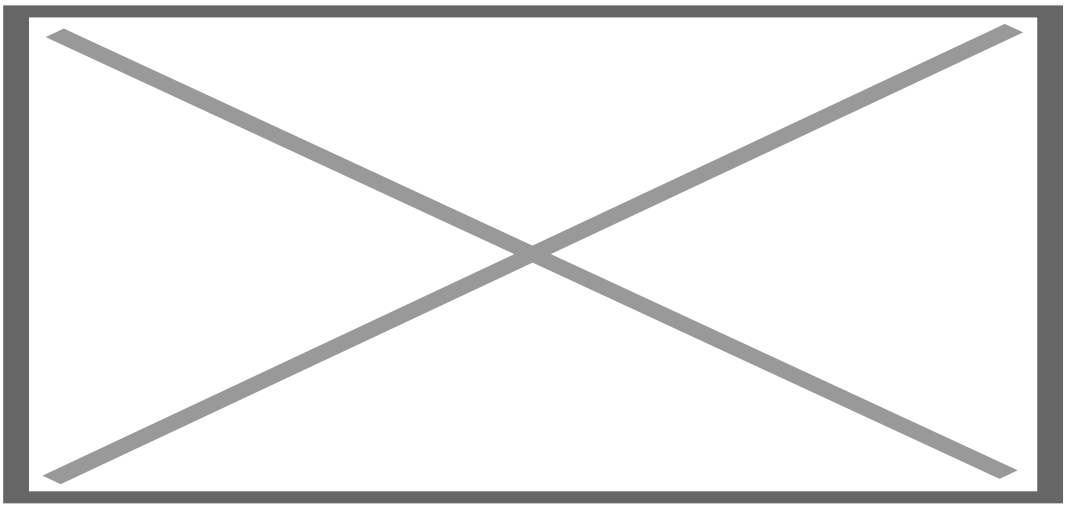


Companies train and hone talent

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Intense competition, rapid corporatization of companies, plus the technicalities that the life sciences domain brings with it, makes training programs an imperative for any company says an HR executive from a well-known company. The quality of training programs imparted to employees at all levels is directly proportional to a company's competitive advantage in the market. Ultimately, it is the employees who run the wheels of the organization.

Hence, training and performance assessment are critical for the DNA of the organization.

Strategies for training

Like this peers in other functions, HR heads in life sciences companies have now moved from merely conducting induction programs for freshers to conducting training workshops and seminars for levels upto senior management. Training programs rangeÂ from personality and brand building exercises, team building activities, working on interpersonal skills, creativity and innovation, managerial skills, senior management development skills to market knowledge skills.

The number ofÂ training programs areÂ not restricted to single digits. Monsanto India, for example, in order to leverage both internal and external resources, is conducting over 55 training programs including 785 employees this year. Atul Sharma, directorÃ¢â?¬â??HR, Monsanto India, says, Ã¢â?¬Å?We organize leadership forums for enhanced communication to serve as focus groups and increase business knowledge; leverage experience and learnings from our business colleagues and develop and deliver relevant programs.Ã¢â?¬?

Serum Institute of India gives emphasis on technical training programs both for its freshers as well as regular employees. Rammesh Patiil, HR head, Serum Institute of India, says, Ã¢â?¬Å?We subject freshers toÂ a rigorous induction course that goes on for 8-10 days. To churn their technical expertise, we give employees cGMP training and then accordingly after that gauge their performance. With changes in industry trends, our policies keep changing at regular intervals. Therefore, we conduct induction programs for all employees to keep them updated with the times.Ã¢â?¬?

Biocon has a healthy mix of programs, run internally as well as through external agencies. Ravi C Dasgupta, group headÃ¢â?¬â??HR, Biocon, says, Ã¢â?¬Å?Key behavioral skills training programs aim at enhancing communication skills, conflict management, influencing skills, teamwork, key technical skills. Other training programs include, latest trends in QC and QA, cGMP and instrumental techniques, strategic R&D management, project management, and technical report writing.Ã¢â?¬?

Apart from imparting skills that cover basic job requirements, majority of companies put extra effort on behavior-based training programs. Eli Lilly provides a bouquet of training programs aimed at honing not just the core expertise but even the soft skills of its employees. Sameer Bhariok, director-HR,Â Eli Lilly, says, Ã¢â?¬Å?From an intense three-weeks induction program for every new hire to numerous periodic refresher 'schools' at regular intervals-there would never be a dull moment in the learning and development journey at Lilly.Ã¢â?¬?

Companies have also adopted a meticulous approach in devising 'customized programs' afterÂ consultation with department heads and a detailed study of the skill requirements of employees across different levels in the hierarchy chain. Jubilant Drug Discovery and Development for instance, formulates programs that focuses on different levels of experience and are for a target audience to address a specific need. Kankana Barua, vice president and global head Ã¢â?¬â?? HR, Jubilant Drug Discovery and Development, says, Ã¢â?¬Å?In our L&D Initiatives, in addition to customized scientific training programs, we focus on building capabilities through our own in-house programs. We have team buildingÂ for employees across the junior and middle level, communication across junior and middle level, client relationship for the middle and senior level, business etiquette for the middle and senior level, stress management across all levels, and structured induction programs.Ã¢â?¬?

Conducting training programs overseas has proven to be a great incentive for employees, especially amongst the younger populace of a company. Life sciences companies are open to sending their employees even from the junior level for training programs abroad. Serum Institute prefers to send its star performers abroad.
Pradip L Gaekwad, vice resident Ã¢â?¬â?? HR , Maycho, says, Ã¢â?¬Å?We send some of our talented employeesÂ abroad for symposiums and seminars. We also sponsor our members, mainly heads of departments to universities like Cornell for training and developing skills.Ã¢â?¬? Biocon sends its high potential employees to participate in key management programs run by management institutes of global repute like Harvard, Kellogg, ISB and IIMs.

There has been a metamorphosis in the mind-set across HR headsÂ who are fast catching up with their counterparts in the IT and the FMCG sector. They have learnt to formulate HR strategies with a long-term goal in mind.Â Reliance Life Sciences has already chalked out its training agenda for the coming year. Commenting on this, KV Subramaniam, president, Reliance Life Sciences, says, Ã¢â?¬Å?The programs conducted in 2009-10 were on effective communication, ethics and etiquette, and leadership. The programs conducted in 2010-11 will cover self discipline, management of change, and management of innovation.Ã¢â?¬?

Performance evaluation

Conducting training workshops is not the end in itself. Top executives have realized the need to churn out actively engaged employees who can achieve desired targets and strategies. At the end of the day, business turnarounds can happen only from performance-oriented employees. This is where an optimal performance evaluation system becomes critical.

In Reliance Life Sciences performance assessments are based on a balanced scorecard system thatÂ involves a set of performance objectives on financial, customer, internal business processes and learning and growth parameters. Targets to be achieved for the year, which encompass all the above four aspects, are set out through a goal-setting exercise conducted at the beginning of the financial year.

Ã¢â?¬Å?The entire process, which includes the goal setting, quarterly reviews and performance assessment, is automated and accessible through a portal called 'employee self service'. This process ensures transparency across all levels,Ã¢â?¬? adds Subramaniam.

Biocon has a 180 degree performance appraisal system that includes self-assessment, assessment by one's immediate supervisor and review by the next level manager. The process was developed after administering in-depth surveys and focus group discussions on the desired performance management process. The current process is well-defined and communicated

to the new employees through training sessions every year. It is also very transparent as each form is reviewed by HR and grievances (if any) need to be compulsorily addressed along with the requisite documentation.

Jubiliant has adopted an objective process that is driven by SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound) objectives with periodic (half-yearly) reviews. Ã¢â?¬Å?From this year onwards, we have introduced 360 degree approach for all leadership positions in the organization,Ã¢â?¬? saysÂ Barua.

In India, Monsanto has adopted a whole series of performance evaluation processes. In addition to the regular appraisal system, it has put in place a 180 degree performance evaluation process that takes in feedback from the team, and a 360 degree appraisal process that is a performance management system, which includes people review meeting in every six months. Ã¢â?¬Å?We also have an L1180 review system which is conducted once in two years. The main purpose is to review perception gaps in the hierarchical order of employees,Ã¢â?¬? adds Sharma.

Indian Immunologicals has divided its performance management system (PMS) into three parts viz; Key Result Area (KRA), Development and Role Effectiveness (DRE) and Corporate Performance (CP).

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