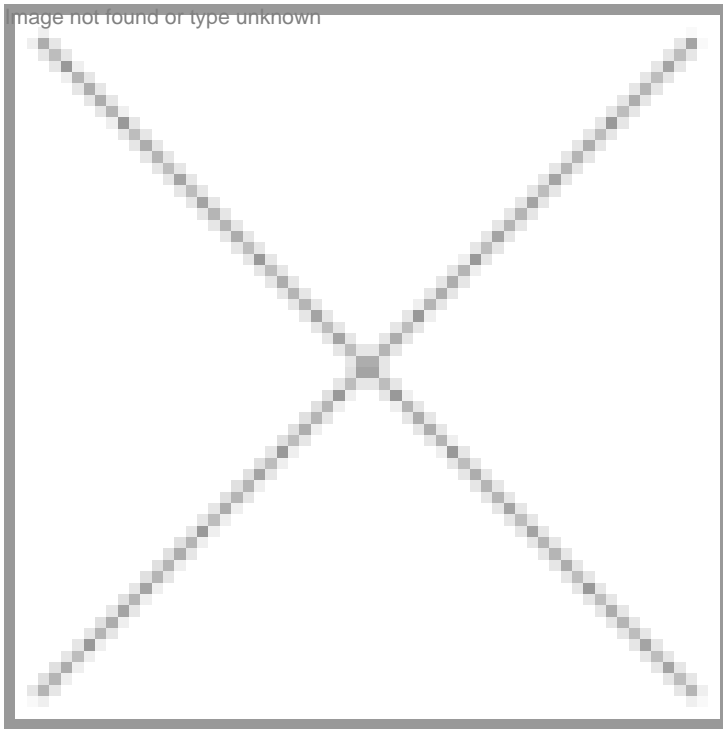


Work Environment-The winning formula

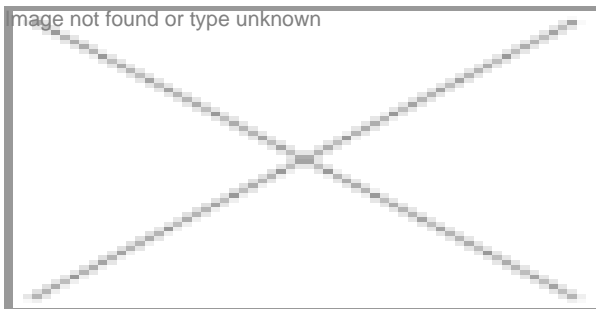
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The work environment and the incentives offered to employees are vital for the success of any organization and the same applies to biotech industry. Therefore, providing a comfort zone to the employees remains a top priority for all the biotech companies

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As the performance of the employees is directly linked to their work environment, maintaining a good workforce makes the companies strong both financially and also as an organization. Therefore, to keep the employees motivated and to boost their performance, providing basic

Almost every company provides free transportation facilities to the employees for ensuring their safety. Few of them even provide transportation facilities to the children of the employees as well. Besides that, the companies having the manufacturing and production units have additional responsibilities towards their employees, this

includes providing them with food and the in-house medical facilities.

Industry scenario

For Panacea Biotech, providing the best infrastructure facilities to employees remains the top priority. The company believes that comfortable work environment is essential for the employees to perform at their best. Kallol Chakraborty, vice president “ HR, Panacea Biotech, says, “We believe in 'Personal Touch' and this is what defines our company welfare policies that is derived from human values.”

The Biocon campus is a well-designed and eco-friendly one. It also has a cafeteria that serves hygienic and nutritious food to all the employees at a highly subsidized rate. The organization also has a round-the-clock transportation facility for the employees from the city to the campus as well as between various Biocon subsidiaries. The company has thus invested in enhancing the comfort level of its employees by providing them with special transportation, free lunch and snacks, and on-site health checkups; added with a strongly meritocratic hiring and performance management system. “Biocon has a very safe work environment with the EHS team working round-the-clock to make it more employee-friendly and secure; keeping in mind that it is a manufacturing organization,” says Ravi C Dasgupta, group head-HR, Biocon.

Reliance Life Sciences has made a lot of effort to create a friendly campus environment in terms of the architecture, landscaping, biological diversity and availability of various facilities for banking, health and wellness, and food and refreshments. Apart from this, a number of assistance programs are provided to address employee needs during exigencies. Similarly, Nuziveedu Seeds provides the subsidized lunch, free hot beverages and snacks to all its units across the country. In line with its safety policy, Monsanto India provides free transportation for office employees who are not provided with a company vehicle. “Monsanto has OHSAS 18001, ISO 9001, OHSAS 18001 and ISO 14001 certified offices, plants and R&D units for providing a safe and secure work environment to employees,” shares Atul Sharma, head “ HR, Monsanto India.

At Eli Lilly under its Female Safety Program, head office-based female employees are escorted by a security guard or a male employee during night travel. Biocon has two trained and qualified on-site doctors who are available round-the-clock to attend to any emergencies; if at all they arise.

Providing laptops is also emerging as the trend in companies. Monsanto has provided laptops to over 40 percent of staff to help increase their productivity and work-life balance. Similarly, besides flexi-timings for the employees, Eli Lilly provides the laptops and broadband connections for all employees.

Eli Lilly has a generous leave policy to improve work-life balance. In a year, an employee is entitled to almost 54 days off over and above regular weekends. The company has paternity leave of five days and adoption leave as well in its policy.

Lachi Reddy, general manager “ HR, Indian Immunologicals, says, “Besides offering housing colony or rented accommodation, our company provides soft loans for purchase of vehicles and transportation for employee's children. The company provides the group personal accident policy, superannuation scheme, benevolent welfare fund, leave accumulation and encashment for all levels of employees.”

In the same way, Nuziveedu Seeds also provides transportation facilities for children of the employees. N Krishnamurthy, assistant general manager-HR, Nuziveedu Seeds, says, “Besides the subsidized lunch and free hot beverages and snacks all units of Nuziveedu provides personal loans and scholarships for the employee's children that forms an important part of HR policy towards the employees.”

Inculcating leadership

Encouraging leadership skills in employees remains as the major objective of top biotech companies. Jubilant believes in providing the high level of freedom to employees through empowerment to take decisions, supported by the leadership.

Kankana Barua, vice president and global head “ HR, Jubilant Drug Discovery and Development, says, “Since science is the outcome of different natural elements within one's system, we believe that high motivation levels is the adrenalin for such altruistic outcomes.”

The welfare policies at Reliance Life Sciences also focuses on addressing developmental aspects. “The roll out of enterprise-wide competency development programs that include health and safety-related programs, statutory programs (GCP/GLP) and personality and leadership development programs are aimed at this objective,” says KV Subramaniam, president and CEO, Reliance Life Sciences.

At Biocon, employees are encouraged to avoid hierarchies in the interest of getting the best out of them. This instills trust, mutual respect and takes away insecurities from the minds of employees.

“Biocon strongly believes in its people values and tries to inculcate an entrepreneurial spirit in its employees. Considering the importance of innovation and intellectual capital, emphasis is given to respecting one another, honesty in decisions, recognition of talent and social responsibility towards each other and the society in general,” says Dasgupta.

Boosting health

Staying fit and healthy makes the employees feel good and also decrease the number of employees falling sick annually.

Therefore, keeping the employees fit is also an important part of the healthier work environment.

To make Biocon more employee-friendly and help them strike a healthy work-life balance, the company provides its employees with a well-equipped gym with an experienced trainer. Apart from the fostering environment, there are other perks and benefits as well. It is mandatory for all employees to attend the annual health check-ups organized by the company.

Panacea Biotec has well-equipped gymnasium and expansive greenway. In the same way, Reliance Life Sciences has implemented an employee healthcare program that covers all employees for an annual check-up, including vaccination programs.

Eli Lilly creates an all India 24x7 helpline to provide medical assistance and guidance round-the-clock in case of an emergency. Eli Lilly provides on-site physician consultation.

Sameer Bhariok, director- HR, Eli Lilly, says, "A physician has been contracted to provide in-house medical consultation for our employees. We also have regular communication on outbreaks/epidemics to ensure that the employee is well aware of these medical conditions and also how to take care of themselves and their families."

Monsanto India provides all employees with ₹6,000 for domiciliary expenses on a reimbursement basis. Atul Sharma, HR, Monsanto India, says, "We increased the limit of coverage for dependent parents from ₹1 lakh to ₹2.5 lakh. Apart from this, we have an in-house doctor at our office locations where one can consult the doctor for any health-related issues."

Kankana Barua of Jubilant says, "As a scientific organization, we ensure safety, health and environment are of primary importance to the organization and hence we provide benefits that not only cover the employee but also his/her family members, at certain coverage for dependent parents and in-laws as well."

Motivational factors

To motivate the employees, different companies follow their own unique set of policies. Biocon organizes the annual Biocon Day that is a grand festivity for all the Biocon employees. It is the biggest day on Biocon's calendar with activities ranging from sports, dance, music, skits and special performances from renowned artists.

"On this day each one ranging from the top management to the junior most employee, celebrate the legacy of Biocon together, without any hierarchy affecting their enthusiasm. On this day, outstanding performance is recognized and felicitated by the way of special awards known as the 'Biocontribute Awards', which are awarded by Biocon's CMD, Kiran Majumdar-Shaw herself," says Ravi C Dasgupta of Biocon.

Reliance Life Sciences holds monthly events, which are fun-filled celebrations planned and organized in-house. "Monthly Retreats are organized and serve as a platform for internal communications, wherein updates on business development/performance are shared. The retreat provides employees an opportunity to stay abreast of developments across various groups in the organization, while giving many youngsters the opportunity to present their work. The organization will be celebrating its 100th Retreat shortly," shares KV Subramaniam of Reliance Life Sciences.

Periodic celebrations are a part of our work-life at Panacea Biotec. The annual day is celebrated across locations. Many locations celebrate the monthly birthdays and all new joiners are welcomed in a monthly meet. Few companies such as Indian Immunologicals have the Employees Recreation Clubs in place for the employees to relax and enjoy.

Zero tolerance against women harassment

Reliance Life Sciences has a defined grievance and open door policy to ensure freedom to female employees to express issues within the workplace. There is an 'Employee grievance cell committee' to encourage transparency through open communication. The company has a zero tolerance approach towards sexual harassment in any form. The employee handbook contains disciplinary policy and procedure for handling issues on any misconduct.

Scope for higher education

Various innovative forms of rewards and recognition of contribution is one of the key aspects in HR function. Providing an opportunity to employees to go for higher education is also followed in few top biotech companies.

Reliance Life Sciences has tied up with educational institutions to provide opportunities for higher learning to its employees.

At Biocon, performance rewards are based not merely on an individual's achievement but on the performance of his/her

team, so as to foster excellence and reinforce collaboration. Biocon has been continuously aiming at a healthy and overall progression of its employees as professionals. Ravi C Dasgupta says, "We have developed a very sturdy training center which imparts training related to technical aspects of the job as well as 'quality of life'. The employees can either self register or can be nominated by their supervisors based on the training calendar for that month."

Since the employees form an inseparable asset of any biotech company, one can rightly conclude that if a company has to grow then that should reflect in the growth of its employees.

Rahul Koul

Inputs: Nayantara Som and Jahanara Parveen