

Chevron Lubricants Lanka takes giant strides in HR best practices

By Gayani Perera

Global changes due to volatile markets, recessions and technology changes, among many things have contributed to rapid growth in certain cases and more often lay-offs, and restructures by organizations to remain competitive. Most organizations are constantly changing. Therefore the challenge to HR divisions and leaders is to retain good talent and keep evolving while achieving business objectives. The Sunday Times Employment Section spoke to Mr. Tissa Nanayakkara, Group Human Resource Manager of Chevron Lubricants Lanka to find out more about their HR policies and best practices.

"Employees are an organization's greatest asset and in a knowledge worker economy like today they can be one of your key competitive advantages. The challenge is for us to attract the right employees and ensure that we have good HR practices in place to retain and capitalize the available talents. Creating a performance based work ethic is hard work, while processes are placed for retention and development of employees, one needs to have a process to deal with under performers as well", says Mr. Nanayakkara.

Chevron Lubricants Lanka PLC (CLLP) as at end 2009 recorded a SLR1.5 Billion (OEAT). The company has been successful over the years for many reasons; a world class blending plant, cutting edge technology, excellent products, an efficient distribution system and systems and procedures for almost every process. However the role of employees and leadership stands out as the key factor for the organizations success.

This level of success has not come easy and has been a journey of continuous improvement. Back in 1994 when Chevron acquired the business, safety and working conditions were of poor standards. There were 2 separate cultures that existed within the company, the first one being a state sector mentality and the other comprised of the new employees who represent a more private sector orientation. The biggest challenge was to get them all to think as one. In addition to this challenge the company also suffered from a massive excess staff situation as well as a unionized work force. The transformation of the plant to what it is today is therefore often cited as case study of a very successful story of privatization.

"After sixteen years we have made giant strides, thanks to the direction from our MD/CEO and other business unit leaders", states Mr. Nanayakkara.

The company's present position includes the following achievements

- Positive Organization Culture
- No HR issues. (For the past six years the company has not had a single HR dispute)
- Attrition below market norms.
- Considered an employer of 'Choice'
- One of the Highest profit per employee figures among listed companies

Commenting on their current HR status Mr. Nanayakkara said, "In order to achieve our present status, apart from the market competitive compensation and benefits that we offer there are many other reasons that have contributed. HR as a service provider has teamed with BU leaders and contributed with the required professional input to ensure that we have the peo-



Tissa Nanayakkara,

ple processes in keeping with Chevron expectations and local norms"

- Best practices:
- Recruitment and Selection Comp & Ben
 - Training and Development Policies & Procedures
 - Talent Development
 - Performance management
 - Leadership development
 - Employee Engagement - Reward & Recognition
 - Labr Relations

Recruitment and Selection

As a part of the Chevron recruitment Policy the company is considered as an equal opportunity employer which encourages diversity in the workforce. The sole criteria are the suitability of the candidate who meets the selection criteria. Decision to fill a position with internal or external candidates is done after exploring the different options and business needs. A comprehensive process is followed before short listing candidates for the final interview, short listing of candidates, and preliminary interviews are all conducted as per guidelines set. The HR Division helps the business by identifying the competency based questions which are derived from the Chevron Competency framework.

The Induction Process

It has been widely written how a good induction impacts a new employee. This first impression helps create a positive mindset from the beginning. At Chevron this activity is given due importance by explaining to the employee the organizations expectations, norms, behaviors and values, to avoid any ambiguity. Employees are given an overview of the company policies and procedures and follow the many compliance requirements. During the first few days the newcomer meets with all Business Unit Heads and visits the manufacturing plant and is given an introductory knowledge of its products. In addition to this the newcomer follows a new employee induction programme in order for them to have an understanding of the global company and its business. Discussions will take place between the employee and supervisor to set expectations on roles and responsibilities.

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