



Overcoming top myths in HR **pg 6**



Failure is a learning opportunity **pg 4**

## Look for jobs which are compatible with your skills

The Garment industry has undoubtedly put Sri Lanka on the world map, the trade has a humongous workforce and has seen its significant share of ups and downs over the years; yet it victoriously brings in a substantial portion of financial injection to the country, creates thousands of employment opportunities and promotes Sri Lanka beyond borders as a country that has all ingredients to cater to the global fashion trends and markets.

It is understood that over the last few years the industry suffered some severe setbacks; but we have flipped the coin for the better and the industry is back on the race to success, says Lasantha De Silva, Group Human Resources Development Manager of The Timex and Fergasam Group which is quintessentially one of the biggest players of the Sri Lankan apparel market. While he was a student at Royal College Colombo his contribution towards many extra & co-curricular activities was praiseworthy. He has played for the college cricket team at all age levels and scouting was another field in which he excelled. He has represented college & Sri Lanka at international events & his overall contribution to the college has indeed been commendable. Lasantha's leadership qualities & being an all rounder has enabled him to be an effective prefect of the college. Lasantha obtained his Engineering Degree and possesses a Postgraduate Degree in Engineering Management in HRM from Kingston University and Brunel University in the United Kingdom respectively. Having had a total of eight years of HR tenure of which five years in Senior Management positions in UK, he is an ardent proponent of employee equilibrium between work and personal life.

■ Are you satisfied with the level of Knowledge employees have of Human

### Resource Management?

The current job market doesn't satisfy our demand. I think our education system has to encourage more of team building activities within the curriculum so we are able to instantly and easily attract the calibre of employees we are looking for. I remember, in school it was all about writing as much as we know at the exam without making those sitting next to us aware. I am not for once saying we must encourage the copying culture, but assignment based study methods are very productive in instilling team working ability amongst students and this means they can easily fit into a competitive yet rewarding work atmosphere where sharing of best practices enables the completion of tasks faster and those who initiate the best ideas get rewarded attractively. The lack of team playing in applicants that are only academically driven; obviously attracts me to those who have been involved in some type of team sport during school, this is the only evidence that convinces me of their attentiveness to instructions and willingness to work as a team and hence are employment worthy. They will blend into our culture and work force of approximately 9000 employees smoothly and I am sure this is what many HR managers want out of job applicants. Sadly, we constantly find ourselves caught in this vicious circle of mismatching of job requirements against job profiles.

Whenever we have sought assistance from vocational training institutes, the most popular answer we receive is, that they are unable to cope up with the number we



**Lasantha De Silva;**  
Group Human Resources Development Manager of The Timex and Fergasam Group

request. So somewhere down the line, students have lost faith in the system and hence take to other avenues such as self employment etc to earn their living. Currently, they cannot select the subject combinations they want, their Advanced Level results enable them to select only certain courses and these may be ones that the particular student does not have an aptitude for, perhaps they will pass the course exam well but they will not be able to use their learning experience effectively in the working world. Be it employees, potential employees or students, they must have more awareness about the job profiles HRM attracts so they can gear themselves from the roots of education and work on con-

structing attractive job candidacy.

■ You spoke about team sport being an attractive attribute of employment, are other co-curricular activities equally important?

Definitely, anything parallel to academics count. We are simply interested in those who have multi skills. It can be music dancing or anything else. Not being confined to just one area of school, make them successful interviewees so participation in these activities must be promoted.

■ Given the highly contributory nature of the Garment industry to our economy, how can HRM help achieve sustainability?

The global financial crisis hit us very badly, rightly so because our customer base is overseas, but the big fish in the industry managed to stay afloat and HRM played a significant role in manoeuvring this situation. Managing employee expectations was important throughout that difficult time but we kept staff motivation at reasonable levels. Since its inception in 1967, the group has been unbending on prioritising its employees and it is the same prioritisation that got us

through the anomalies of the global recession. Further, the reiteration of job security was a must during this period; staff had to feel secure about what they were doing so they do not fear losing their jobs due to the changes that were taking place in global markets to combat recession. Nevertheless, we are glad that we have turned things around and today we have enough job opportunities for youth, but we have a scarcity of candidates. Timex caters predominantly to the high fashion market, so our units per order need not always be enormous but the customisation that high fashion clothing entails; helps our turnover and we will continue to have an advantage over other players due to this factor. We have knowledge, skills and infrastructure; the three most imperative features to flourish in the industry and helps us achieve efficient Standard Minute Values (SMV), a parameter that measures our productivity. All these are reinstated in employees through regular refresher training programmes and we constantly appreciate their contribution, this is how HRM has aided our sustainability.

Contd. on Pg 2

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## GENERAL MANAGER

### The Job

The ideal candidate should be a professional who strives for excellence with varied and high level of experience in the industry. Individuals with foreign exposure will have an advantage. He should have a proven track record, the potential to achieve stretch goals and the desire to excel in his achievements while being able to work independently. He will lead a motivated team of professionals and will be required to actively participate in the training activities to achieve the company's vision.

We are looking for the best talent and compensation will be commensurate with qualifications, experience and be amongst the best in the industry. The selected candidate will be entitled to all benefits applicable to a Manager of a similar property.

An age limit of 40 years will apply, but those candidates with exceptional credentials will be considered up to 45 years.

If you have the right kind of motivation, desire and determination, you are invited to lead our dynamic team of professionals.

### Applications

Applications containing detailed resume, outlining qualifications, experience and contact telephone numbers, together with the names and contact details of three non-related referees, should be forwarded to reach us on or before 11<sup>th</sup> February 2011. We will be considering applications as and when they are received and therefore you are encouraged to apply early.

**Chairman & Managing Director**  
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