

## DFCC-The ideal place for growth and stability

Established in the year 1956, DFCC Bank stands tall and proud today, with over 50 years of momentous service to the nation and having successfully transformed itself to a premier financial services group in Sri Lanka. Over this period it has helped establish and nurture many a striving entrepreneur and has extended not only financial assistance but also advisory services to a host of projects established throughout the country.

Speaking to the Group Vice President-Human Resources of the DFCC, Mrs Jayani Amarasiri, Sunday Times Employment Section gained valuable insight in to the institution and its employee selection process and benefits on offer. The human resource function of DFCC Bank and DFCC Vardhana Bank is centralized and is administered as a common service. As such both banks follow the same HR policies and procedures.

DFCC Bank which is rather particular not only about providing the best service to its clients, but also in producing the best banking professionals that the country has to offer, recruits staff primarily into its executive and non-executive cadres, all of whom are provided with extensive training after being recruited. The primary qualifications for recruitment to the executive cadre are professional and academic qualifications such as a degree or a full professional qualification relevant to the areas where openings exist. As the first selection step shortlisted applicants are put through an internationally developed ability test, con-



Group Vice President-Human Resources of the DFCC, Mrs Jayani Amarasiri.

ducted by licensed administrators, which will test their numerical and verbal skills. Thereafter successful candidates face several interviews with the middle and senior management as well as the CEO. Thus, the Bank ensures that those with a high potential and the desired fit will be employed by the institute.

The DFCC Group management trainee programme is much sought after by young professionals. The programme is designed to provide the selected candidates with a challenging and broad learning experience with classroom sessions, on-the-job training, job rotations and continuous assessments. They are trained for performing executive functions and on conclusion of the

training period are confirmed in service subsequent to ascertaining suitability for absorption into the regular cadre. Thereby, it is guaranteed that the uncut diamonds that are carefully chosen to adorn DFCC are indeed burnished to a very high luster prior to delivering on to their hands, DFCC's much cherished customer base.

Joining DFCC has many other benefits as well. The Group's commitment to nurture inherent talent and maximize individual potential of employees ensures that the bank invests substantially in training and development of staff. In addition to the training provided locally executive staff are also provided with training overseas where the

programmes are tailor made to suit the competency requirements of both the individuals and the bank. Mrs Amarasiri stated that every year, 30-35 persons per batch are sent abroad for managerial and technical skills development training sessions which are primarily conducted in Malaysia and India.

With regards to remuneration schemes, every three years, DFCC conducts a salary survey to benchmark itself with competitors after which adjustments to the remuneration packages are made. This process ensures that the employees of DFCC are generally on par with the market. In addition to the salary DFCC also provides its staff with many other benefits including housing, staff and vehicle loans, insurance schemes, encashment of unused leave and holiday allowances.

Working with DFCC not only entitles its employees to ample benefits which have a tendency to go beyond expected levels, it also provides them with many opportunities to interact with the rest of the DFCC family and come together and enjoy life together with their families. DFCC has a robust welfare club which ensures that all its employees are well and happy within the organization by conducting various events during which they can unwind and have fun. DFCC organizes annual trips to which one can join with their families, an annual dance and Christmas parties all of which makes sure that the employees' families too are well entwined within the unparalleled bounty of the organization. While at work

employees are provided with an environment characterized by open channels of communication, transparency, equity and inclusiveness. Mrs Amarasiri stressed that DFCC adheres to the highest standards of ethics and compliance in its internal as well as external dealings, while at the same time striving to create a dynamic and exciting work environment for its cherished employees. Mrs Amarasiri said that DFCC follows a core value system and all employees are required to adhere to these six values, viz. accountability, be ethical, passion for innovation and excellence, respect for individual, be socially responsible and team work.

Joining DFCC as a first level executive, Mrs Jayani Amarasiri herself is an economics honours graduate of the University of Peradeniya, holding a masters degree in women's studies. As the Group Vice President-Human Resources of the organization, she is the very epitome of perfection of professionalism, mingled with humanity and comes across as someone who is proud to be a part of this esteemed organization. She takes pride in having grown and developed herself along with DFCC, standing by the company unflinchingly throughout its many endeavors for twenty six years and states that she has indeed become who she is today because of this magnanimous institution which she believes is one of the most just and humane organizations that any employee can wish to work for. She credits DFCC for her personal achievements, stating that commit-

ment to the organization that she works in, hard work and perseverance are qualities that had placed her where she has reached today and encourages all her employees to inculcate these values in themselves as well. Mrs Amarasiri further says that employees have recourse to the management, including the CEO at all times and that the senior management is readily available for mentoring, counseling and advising staff on any issue that might crop up. This is a rather remarkable trait that most organizations today do not boast of. As a gender issues enthusiast holding a masters degree in women's studies, Mrs Amarasiri as the Group Vice President-Human Resources, is highly sensitive to the gender related issues that spring up within the organizations and thereby makes sure that it is a friendly place which provides a supportive environment and equal opportunities for both males and females to work in. She is rather empathetic towards the dual role that a female is endowed with in this society and provides her support and understanding regarding many aspects of life that individuals are often forced to face. Thereby, she assures that DFCC is indeed a healthy and a joyous environment which harbours zero workplace hostility or discrimination of any sort and attributes it all to the DFCC culture and management leadership in whose hands DFCC and its employees are being shaped and modeled throughout their careers with DFCC.

- Jayani Chaturika Senanayake

## Motivating top talent

Two recent reports offer guidance on motivating and developing talented employees in the current global economic downturn.

### Motivating And Retaining Top Talent

A report from OnPoint Consulting identifies strategies for motivating and retaining top talent in the current economic climate when the emphasis on bonus payments is no longer possible or appropriate. Previous research has found that earnings and benefits have a 2 per cent impact on job satisfaction and engagement compared to 70 per cent provided by job quality and workplace support.

The report suggests the following survival strategies:

- Create a sense of purpose - Engagement and retention improves when people understand

how they connect to the "Big Picture" and how they make a difference.

- Provide meaningful work - Allowing people to do what they do best and make a significant contribution is key to engagement and retention.

- Solicit ideas - Involvement in decisions gives people a sense of control in uncertain times, shows them their opinions matter, and improves decision acceptance.

- Let people know where they stand - Setting tough but realistic goals is motivating even in a tough environment.

- Enhance trust and communication - Trust is built when leaders improve credibility by being candid, demonstrate reliability by ensuring their actions are consistent with business objectives and values, and



and are accessible.

Rick Lepsinger, president of OnPoint Consulting commented:

"Feeling connected to the people you work with also helps create a sense of purpose...."

Providing opportunities to learn and grow is icing on the cake...."

Clear goals are only part of the equation. People need regular feedback so they know when they are on track and recognition when they achieve key milestones...."

## Goals make you more challenging, and expand your growth and help to keep you focused

Always have some goals that are easy to reach. Simple goals and short-term goals will motivate you as you achieve them and keep you headed toward larger goals.

### Make yourself stretch with long-term goals.

Long-term goals are usually two years or longer. These goals set the stage for your plan of success. They challenge you, expand your growth and help to keep you focused.

### Share your goals with affirmations.

Speaking your goals out loud in the form of affirmations will not only help to feed your own sub-conscious mind, it will also allow others to support your efforts too.

You are more likely to achieve your goals if your friends, business associates and family know about them. Only share your goals with people who encourage your growth and success and avoid negative forces.

It always amazes me how many goals I achieve by sharing them with others. My friends, family, business associates and even my audience attendees help me to stay on track and keep me moving toward my goals with continuous positive encouragement.

If you have a tendency to disappoint yourself before disappointing others, you may not feel comfortable sharing your goals. Yet, most



people who don't share their goals often don't really believe that they can accomplish them. This negative self-doubt feeds your sub-conscious mind and begins to sabotage your results. To avoid this, move away from any negative self-talk and start sharing more often.

**Prioritize, yet be flexible.** It is best to decide which

goals are most important for you to achieve. Date your goals accordingly in the areas that will reap you the largest return on your investment of time and money. Ask yourself, is this task moving me toward my goals faster or holding me back from reaching my peak potential?

### Be open and flexible to changes around you.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, you may need to adjust the due date of your goal or reevaluate and cancel it altogether. Often, the goals that receive the most attention are most likely the goals that will change frequently too.

Understand why you want to achieve your goal.

Why do you really want to achieve your long-term goal? What will it do for you or how will it change your life?

Clarify the root of why you want to achieve your goals.

Is it to earn respect from others or to create a better lifestyle for your family? Will your goal have a profound impact on your life or others? Don't let your ego get in the way of setting big goals.

Honest evaluation of why you want to achieve your goals will bring valuable insight and newly discovered personal development. The more you understand why you want something, the more motivated you will be to keep working at accomplishing your goals.

## Blueprint for success

Having a strong foundation enables you to build a thriving, profitable life and business. A simple method to create this foundation is with Discovery, Vision, Planning and Benchmarking, the four cornerstones of your life as well as your business. **Discovery is defined as examining where you are now and where you are going.**

It helps to look at everything as if you were a beginner. Always know why you are in the business of your choice. If your strategy is not clear, you won't recognize the destination when you get there. This is the time to bring in your outside Vision Team. **Vision is who you are about and what your life is about.**

This is where you determine values you need to experience on a continuing basis. Vision is also where you become the expert in your field and decide the purpose of your business. Remember, the smaller the niche, the larger the reward. Abandon any pre-conceived beliefs you have about this or any other business. They can restrict your thinking. Live out of this new vision, not your past comfort. **Planning creates the strategies that help you arrive at your destination.**

A simple system is to - Show Up, Be on Time, Keep Your Word and Tell The Truth. It's like riding on that train, sometimes there are hills to climb; sometimes there are curves and other times you're flying rapidly down the mountain to your destination. In any



instance, you must remain focused on what you want and where you are going.

### Benchmarking helps you stay on track.

Once focused, you set up a system for accountability, self-management and self-renewal. You can create goals or optimum wants that may be on the outer edge of possibilities or a goal that is far bigger than you think is attainable. Going into new territory can unlock your potential and increase your development. When goals or optimum results are achieved, you can acknowledge success and learn to be satisfied. Again, put it in writing; the goals, the results and the acknowledgement. Rules require exceptions, so even if you follow the above and create a strong foundation, you must be prepared for chaos. Chaos can aid in your personal and business development if you have eliminated all toxic people or commitments from your life. Chaos can then become the opportunity to progress rapidly into new territory. You can be the architect of your own life. Build a strong foundation and you can always remodel.

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## Fluency: Leading in the Midst of Change

Some of you may remember the 1985 hit song, "We are the World," produced by Quincy Jones and an inspiring cast of musicians who sang about working together, past our differences. Or perhaps you remember the tremendously successful United Colors of Benetton ad campaign back in the 1980s, celebrating young faces of every color; signaling the look and feel of a world without borders. Media images like these showed us the world and nation, as we wanted ourselves to be - pictures and soundbites of many races cooperating, communicating, and sharing opportunity and fortune.

If only it were that simple. Almost 25 years later, we are still struggling to make that vision real - in our business practices, in the running of our cities, and, now, in the context of great cultural, demographic, and economic changes brought on by globalization.

As 21st century leaders, you know that building, guiding, and sustaining truly diverse communities is tremendously difficult work. Over the last decade, city populations and workforces have changed faster than at any point in history - job relocation, mobile commerce and ease of travel have changed our cities' demographics quickly and often. Immigrant and new communities continue to influence and change the culture of our cities. Young families



and children supplant the aging baby boomer generation, again, changing the character and priorities of a community.

At the same time as we become a more diverse, more prosperous nation, our cities have also become more segregated. In fact, studies from SUNY Albany, UCLA, and the Harvard Graduate School of Education have reported that segregation of our children has worsened over the last decade, even as we live in more integrated areas. As newcomer groups grow in critical mass, so does the tendency to organize along racial, ethnic, or other group-affiliated lines. Changing demographics and the growth of ethnic enclaves have made race awareness and identity politics an effective means of voicing the needs of some

of our cities' otherwise marginalized groups.

Amid all of this, civic and corporate leaders are confronted with difficult choices every day. Worthy projects from different community sectors must compete for limited resources. Appointments and commissions must be assigned in ways that satisfy all the interests represented in our constituency groups, assuring each of them adequate representation. From time to time, leaders also face crisis-fueled change, forcing them to guide their communities quickly through controversies.

Does this sound stressful? Indeed, scenes of a diverse community can be those of chaos, fiefdoms, even balkanizing, as some futurists and scholars predict. Alternatively, some see these times as momentous, opening the door to the grandest and most inspiring of challenges.

How does one lead a community, whether local or global team, in the midst of huge demographic and economic shifts? How do leaders create communities where all constituents feel included, counted and equally receiving of the opportunities offered by a community? And how do we have difficult conversations that turn our best intentions into action and accountability, not only from our leaders, but from ourselves?

The answers to these questions are certainly many and varied, depend-

ing on a community's specific composition and the issues it faces. Nevertheless, one of the most important skills of a leader through changing times will be a skill set of cultural fluency. This is not necessarily language fluency, as that term is usually used. Fluency is the skill set of understanding and being understood past apparent borders. To know one's constituents and address their needs effectively, 21st century leaders must practice and hone their fluency skills.

Over the past few years, I've talked to many fluent leaders: opinion shapers, thought leaders in business and communities, artists, teachers, media creatives, all who understand that their ultimate success depends on how deeply and quickly they can identify common ground and transcend boundaries between their constituents. Fluent leaders are servant leaders who willingly assume the place of liaison, the diplomatic negotiator, the arbiter of compromise.

What are some of the qualities of a fluent leader? They understand the value of nuance. They readily deal with complexity, knowing that solutions to real problems require many levels of information and analysis. Every one of the fluent leaders I've interviewed is also insatiably curious. They are lifelong learners who have honed their vision and their life's purpose through constant exposure to different experiences.