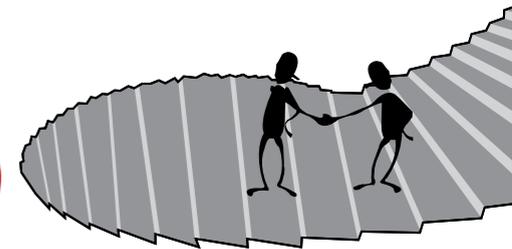




# BEYOND HR LEADERSHIP



**SUJOY BANERJEE** (PRESIDENT – GROUP HUMAN RESOURCES & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, MCNALLY BHARAT ENGINEERING COMPANY LIMITED) TELLS **SANGHAMITRA KHAN** HOW HR AT MCNALLY ENSURES THAT EMPLOYEES FEEL HAPPY ABOUT COMING TO OFFICE EVERYDAY

**C**arrying many challenging assignments off, Mr. Sujoy Banerjee in his career spanning 22 years has handled various HR processes, such as, industrial relations, organisational development, organisational restructuring, performance management, talent development and employee engagement. Prior to McNally, he has worked with Eveready Industries India Ltd. as vice-president, HR. He has been actively involved in developing young professionals through his association with various business schools in Kolkata.

**Q. What prompted you to shift to personnel management after a degree in political science from the Jadavpur University?**

**A.** I wanted to do MBA, but did not know much about HR. Unlike present generation, we were less informed and did not have the exposure to what alternate career options were available.

Finance is not my cup of tea. The second option was marketing. I had seen a lot of sales and marketing people in my family and it was not very appealing to me. I also had some family members who were in HR (*personnel management*), so I went for it without knowing what it was all about. Today, I think it is a stroke of luck!

**Q. As an HR leader, what have been the major changes in your work style?**

**A.** It has not changed because leadership styles change with circumstances and situations. But then, the evolution of the HR function has not influenced my leadership style because I have always believed in inclusive leadership method. I had always, unknowingly of this terminology of shared leadership, practised it as I was the captain at school and in the university's cricket team. Now, I can call it shared leadership but in those days I thought that since I was the team captain I should make other people accountable for their respective roles and responsibilities.

**Q. What are the key considerations for a prospective employee? Can you list out the trainable and non-trainable aspects?**

**A.** Irrespective of the position, emotional quotient, ability to influence people, teamwork are some key considerations. Besides, the ability to manage change – because only change is constant and therefore one has to be attuned to accepting and adapting to change and be prepared when it happens. A subset of that is learning orientation because one has to constantly learn, unlearn and relearn.



They should have the fire in the belly to achieve their goals in life. I always look at what they have done in life to stretch themselves to get something. What was the burning desire and have they faced and overcome odds in terms of winning that something.

A lot of people talk about integrity, but integrity cannot be measured. Either it is there or it is not there at all. I also check for honesty, ethical values, value structure of an individual and how has that value structure evolved over time.

**Q. What are the factors that help retain employees at McNally? What is the USP of people management here?**

**A.** One of the factors that drives people to stay is the way they are treated in the organisation, i.e., with dignity, respect, transparency, fairness, and clear objectivity in their performance evaluation. The organisation also gives them an opportunity for exploring themselves to enable them to think laterally, give them cerebral or creative space to operate in and allow them to take risks within their framework of accountability. Certainly, repeating mistakes is not encouraged but they are allowed to make mistakes so as to come up with opinions, decisions and are provided with the bandwidth. Besides, we care for our employees' professional and personal requirements.

**SHORT TAKES**

**BOOK & AUTHOR:** *Great by Choice* by Jim Collins  
**CUISINE:** Japanese  
**HOLIDAY DESTINATION:** Switzerland  
**GADGET:** iPad  
**MOVIE:** *Seven Samurai* by Akira Kurosawa

The HR team at McNally is closely integrated with the business plans and understands what will be required in future. We look at what kind of people will be needed to deliver and support the organisation and the competency availability within the system. We also provide a lot of T&D opportunities.

**Q. What are the ways, apart from money, by which a leader can motivate his people?**

**A.** A leader has a major role to play in terms of adding value to the individual. In today's environment, professionals are looking for opportunities where their professional skills are appreciated. Leaders can motivate them to stay back with the organisation by adding value to them.

Leaders should be in a position to give an individual opportunities for career growth in the company by providing

learning opportunities, cross-functional exposure in-line with the company policy and framework, or giving additional assignments. A leader should be a mentor whom the team can look up to even in case of personal crisis.

**Q. Are there any personal projects you want to take up in future?**

**A.** If money and time permit, I would want to engage myself in education because this is one thing close to my heart in terms of nurturing the youth for tomorrow. I feel, there is a gap in India in what academic is churning out and what future demands. This is despite a number of institutes in the country. My efforts will be if I can help these institutes become ethical and honest in their approach towards education.

Besides, I want to work in the area of HR process consulting for HR people.

**Q. How differently does the HR need to work for creating tomorrow's organisations?**

**A.** HR has to move out of the operational mode, has to talk about the future, and create the organisation for the future. It has to constantly look beyond what it is today and create systems and sub-systems which are going to support the sustainable growth of the company. It might have to develop linkages with the educational system, and engage itself with the social system where we can talk about alternate employment generation through CSR. HR has to look beyond HR and look at the various elements that impact business.

Earlier, HR was limited to organisations and employees. Now it has to be inclusive and reach out to the stakeholder of the environment in which the organisation exists. It has to look beyond the organisation and engage itself in skill building of the nation where it partners with business goals, engineering colleges and create the talent pool for the future.

If the organisations need a sustainable growth, they need to engage with the stakeholder around them and here HR needs to play a strong role. **hrf**