

An Interview with Vice President – HR, M/s. ABB India Limited

Volume IV, Issue 3, April 2022



Interviewed by **Shekhar Ganagaluru**, *HR Professional & Author*

Linkedin [shekhar gn](#) [✉ shekhargn1@gmail.com](mailto:shekhargn1@gmail.com)

“In the way of facilitating employees to succeed in their careers, helping them for performing better, and to create a strong sense of belongingness within organization which will add to individual as well as organizational growth.



Mr. Ajay M.S is a senior HR Leader with over two decades of experience in all gamut of HR functions with wide exposure to industries like Chemical, Automobile, and Engineering, both in large Indian and Multi-National companies.

Ajay is a Postgraduate (MSW) in Human Resources and Industrial Relations from Karnataka University and Diploma in Training & Development from ISTD, New Delhi. Obtained Certification of Coaching from Erickson International and is a Certified Assessor for leadership assessments.

Ajay is currently working with M/s. ABB India Limited as Vice President HR for Robotics & Discrete Automation Division, Bangalore. Previously associated with Mysore Kirloskar Limited, Hindalco Industries, TATA Marcopolo Motors, and Volvo Buses.

Ajay is a versatile charming HR Leader with internal and external customer-centricity. He is a tactical and strategic business partner in conceptualizing and driving initiatives to manage the entire gamut of HR Business Partnering & Labor Relations, spearheading multicultural teams, and collaborating with Global and Business leaders to facilitate the changing environment with various HR interventions.

1 What would you do with a million dollars?

Always believe in giving back to society for needy ones, providing support to education for girls, and deprived children.

2 How do you help the average employee to perform better at work?

The HR Professionals must use the following guiding principle in collaboration with managers to help the average employees to perform better at their work:

- Make them realize the difference between average and good performance.
- Make them realize the factors contributing to their average performance.
- Ask them to have a self-prepared and committed “performance development plan.”
- Help them to identify a good mentor and associate with them for mentoring.
- Establish frequent structured “genuine feedback” sessions with superiors.
- Perform “role assessment” and fill the gaps, if needed.
- Recognize, encourage, and reward their improvements.
- Clearly conveying feedback and expectations to the employees in order to help them improve their performance and foster a culture of open communication.

3 Name important personality traits of a good leader.

- Humanistic business approach.
- Lead-by-example – Fair and Firm.
- Strategic vision.
- Strong emotional stability.
- Effective communication.
- Integrity, passion, and curiosity.
- People development.

4 The mistake, which you do not want to repeat, is...

- Trying to please everyone.

An Interview with Vice President – HR, M/s. ABB India Limited

5 What major threats do you anticipate for HR by 2025?

- The economy will grow but is constrained by the skilled workforce- War for talent.
- Increased gap between Gen Y and Z.
- Move from time-based pay to performance-based pay.
- Lack of bonding between employers and employees.
- Focus on data-centric HR rather than human-centric.
- Increased psychological problems at workplaces.
- Aligning with compliance requirements.
- High level of automation and upskilling of the HR capabilities.

6 The future of work is employee well-being. How would you describe it?

In my view, everything happens with purpose, and the COVID-19 too. COVID-19 urged each of us, and companies to think about the people's well-being. Companies are expanding the concept of employee well-being beyond physical well-being to build a culture of holistic well-being. This culture of well-being focuses on career, physical, emotional, financial, social, occupational, spiritual, intellectual, and environmental well-being. Thus, the future of work is the well-being of all these 9 aspects of well-being. The HR strategies must focus on these aspects to strengthen the culture of employee well-being in the companies in the future.

7 Skill-based hiring is surpassing experience-based hiring. Is this the right trend?

Organizations prefer employees with experience-based skill sets rather than just experience or skills. Therefore, the trend is a combination of both. HR focuses on finding the right candidate who can deliver results in line with organizational requirements. Here, "result" is the one and only focus. As it is said, besides experience-based skills, leaders focus on behavioral factors to fit the culture of the company.

An Interview with Vice President – HR, M/s. ABB India Limited

8

What strategies do you suggest for controlling the attrition of more potential employees?

Potential employees are the backbone for any company to achieve the next level of growth. Other employees are able to play operational and tactical roles but to manage unexpected challenges and uncertainties, the companies need potential employees.

These employees make the company able to survive and excel with the competition. Therefore, identifying and retaining potential employees should be a top priority for the company. Just as we protect company assets with insurance, we must protect potential employees to stay with the company. In view of this, the following "3 I" strategies are useful for controlling potential employee attrition:

- 1) **Identify:** Identify the right potential employees in a company with a systematic and scientific approach.
- 2) **Invest:** Invest in their personal and professional life enhancement to ensure they are passionately connected with the Company.
- 3) **Involve:** Strategically engage and make them feel safe and motivated.

9

How to work smarter and get ahead?

We are all full of multiple tasks and deadlines. To complete these targets, we extend our working hours more than permitted and often end up in poor work-life balance. It is essential to avoid this because work alone is not a life. For this, we must learn how to work smarter, not harder and I see the following ways useful in this direction:

- Master time management – know how to use time effectively. Remember all meetings are not important...!
- Enhance colligative working style – know the strengths of the people & utilize them.
- Know the pulse of the business and align your work – prioritize the tasks in line with business needs.
- Be a change agent – be proactive to accept and go with the change.
- Use technology – learn the latest technological tools and adopt to enhance work efficiency. Working in Collaboration with the stake holders.

An Interview with Vice President – HR, M/s. ABB India Limited

10

What are the most challenging problems that most HR professionals face today?

The following are a few major challenges:

- Embracing change with grace and ease.
- Adapting innovation.
- Gen Z & Alpha talent acquisition, development, and retention.
- Employee health and well-being.
- Developing the next generation of leaders.

11

What communication approaches can help enhance employee experience?

- **Cultivate trust leadership:** Communication from Top Management should always be honest, transparent, and inspiring.
- **Open internal job opportunities:** Offer growth opportunities through open internal job opportunities.
- **Work culture:** Ensure organizational culture with flexibility, inclusivity, diversity respect, trust, and transparent policies.
- **Listen and plan:** Capture continuous employees' feedback through various forums and implement suitable strategies.
- **Celebrate achievements and milestones:** Establish systems to celebrate achievements and milestones across the organization on both individual and team levels.

12

What is your advice to young HR professionals?

I strongly suggest the following 10 Tips:

1. Learn first and earn later.
2. Challenge fears, accept failures, and try again, again, again....
3. Identify the hidden talents and masters the same.
4. Sharpen the communication and presentation skills.
5. Be ethical, fair, firm & exhibit teamwork.
6. Understand the business, customers, and shareholders' expectations.
7. Connect with HR professionals and network.
8. Improve labour laws and industrial relations skills.
9. Facilitate business manager to develop himself/herself on the leadership competencies.
10. Don multiple hats. It helps fast tracking career growth.

An Interview with Vice President – HR, M/s. ABB India Limited