

An Interview with Senior Director, Human Resources, Biocon Limited

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*Interviewed by **Prakasha R.M.**,
Head-HR, SOLIZE India Technologies Private Limited*

**“Life is a journey not a destination.
Don't compare yourself to others you are Unique.”**



Mr. Jagannathan V., Senior Director of Human Resources at Biocon Limited, Mr. Jagannathan likes to be known as a Dynamic Transformational Leader. He is responsible for over 2500 people across three States - Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana. Mr. Jagannathan has legacy of commercializing two firms from the greenfield phase, with his expertise in business operations and effective Human resources management. Based on his more than 22 years of perceptive experience in HR, IR, and administration, he believes that one can create a measurable impact on business by influencing, collaborating, and orchestrating networks to create effective people strategies. Mr. Jagannathan has also been recognized as one of the top 70 “Young HR Leader 2020” by the Great Manager Institute.



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Please give us an idea about your early career. What influenced to pursue your career in HR?

My life has lots of turns and twists, but I realized very late that, God had great plan than what I originally thought of. MSW from Ramakrishna Vidyalaya, Coimbatore helped to have bi-focal learning approach in my early part of my career. I worked as a part time employee in THE PARK, THE RESIDENCY Hotels during my master's programme as Telephone Operator, Front Office Assist / Lobby Manager that gave an understanding of society, time management, communication skills, culture, business operations, customer centricity and importance of competencies required for business.

I had really enjoyed working long hours during my early professional life which made me realize that learning is everywhere, competencies required for HR and business can be developed by learning from people.

Being very open for learning and enjoying doing lot of projects and assignments which had strengthen my foundation to take up the next level assignments in future organization.

2

Looking back; what was the turning point that shaped your professional journey?

I had opportunity to meet Mr. S. Chidambaran- President Operations (LGSYS) and Mr. RK Chakraborty (Head HR – LGSYS) in Pondicherry and got selected as first employee for LGSYS Pondicherry and facilitated the project team and closely worked with Operations Head on the deliverables. Learned many different aspects including setting up a factory, Industrial relations, compliance, general administration, talent mobility from one location to new location. I also had opportunity to work with top bureaucrats from Pondicherry including Chief Minister and Ministers during those days.

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Give us an idea of the workforce and how you recruit and attract talent in companies?

Recruitment is very important for an organization. Selecting right talents from market will bring the competitiveness to the business. Use competency based assessment (CBA) to assess potential candidates, train and develop people managers and leaders to hire future ready talents, create meaningful career would help to attract talents.

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You have been an organization development specialist. What are some of the key OD initiatives you would like to share?

My OD interventions targeted interpersonal relationships, employee engagement and culture, compensation & benefits and union management.

These interventions are built upon the successful implementation of various change management initiatives, different aspects like performance management, leadership development and talents development.

Group interventions look at the way groups are formed and how they function to achieve their goals. Interventions like team building skills to change the dynamics within a group or evaluate and address intergroup communication.

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You worked in two companies wherein you lead HR from greenfield to commercial. You built businesses from concept to commercialization. Would you share key HR highlights on these projects?

I worked with companies like LG Systems, Kaveri Telecom on Greenfield projects. Few of my leanings are that in startup and initial phase, we should think like entrepreneurs only. Passion should drive us to build the business. We should have very positive attitude and achievement orientation with lots of self-initiative and self-motivation. Create meaningful Vision, mission and values that attracts right talents. Organisation values are imbibed in all HR process and systems from hiring, development and reward & recognition.

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You worked for long time in Pharma Industry. How HR agenda is different in pharma industries compare with other sectors?

Availability of key and critical talents and retention is the single most critical factor which determines success in the pharmaceutical industry.

Pharmaceutical firms require high-skilled employees especially in sales & marketing and research & development. High attrition rates in sales and marketing functions can be attributed to perceived lack of growth opportunities within organizations and increasing opportunities in the market due to competition.

Attracting and retaining talent has become a paramount issue holding great significance for pharmaceutical firms.

HR Leaders should know the business regulatory requirements, impacts of talents development. It requires continuously updating themselves on regulatory and business changes.

You have been talking about Talent Multiplication. Can you share more about that and how it is different from Talent differentiation?

Most of the organization try to differentiate the top talents (about 10-15%) by different training, development, benefits etc. Most of the time, they have been given special projects, stretch assignments. Due to many reasons these talents may also leave the organisation inspite of special focus on them.

But important aspect is remaining workforce is also very important human asset those to be leveraged for business growth.

Companies need to focus, how top talent's skill, knowledge and abilities can be transferred to other remaining talents in the organization, which will be the sustainable model and create the competitiveness for business. If top talents knowledge is not transferred systematically and regularly, organization can not create competitiveness. Effective team work and leadership help to multiply organisation talents. Inspiring and sharing the common purpose, values driven leadership team inspires the remaining talents in the organisation to grow.

If there is no talent multiplication practices, top talents will take the competitiveness to other organisations, wherever they join.

Team always wins than just one or two star performers.

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You also have worked on HR Analytics. How do you think HR Analytics can help organization in effective talent management?

HR needs to establish an integrated system for data generation, data analysis and inferences. HR Analytics should predict future based on the past trends rather than giving just metrics.

Example:- predictive attrition, predictive skilled talent requirement, skill heat mapping.

HR analytics and dashboard should be able to connect the talent and resources within the organization and empower the people to take right decisions.

HR leaders must focus on developing the HR team members on data science, changing the mindset from human touch to Hi-Tech, which will enable HR leaders to take data driven decision making.

9

You are certified six sigma green belt specialist. How Six Sigma can be applied in Human Resources? Can you give an example on this?

Six sigma can be applied to any functions. It helps in improved business performance and processes. In HR, it helps to simplify the various HR processes for predictable performance with decreased cost. Example:- SLA of MRF raising to on-boarding can be analyzed and improved.

10

What's the most important step you are taking to prepare for tomorrow?

Continuously learn from others, especially from young professionals. I believe in reverse mentoring.

Learn every day to get update from the market and active participation in different forums.

Always like the change and move towards uncomfortable zone.

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What is the next stage in your HR plans?

Continuous learning as required for future work and also support the startups / young HR professionals.

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