

# *An Interview with Group Chief Human Resources Officer, First Steps Babywear Pvt. Ltd.*

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*Interviewed by **Ramesha M.H.**,  
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Youth Facilitator & HR Professional*



**Prashanth G B** is an experienced and thorough Human Resources Professional. Prashanth is the Group Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO), heading the Human Resources & Administration Function at FSB Group. He oversees and contributes in the areas of People Processes & Strategy; supporting them implementing to meet operational priorities aligned with the overall organizational goals and objectives.

Prashanth has over 26 years of experience and has led HR function in Indian and Multinational organizations like Kirloskar Ferrous, Arvind Brands, GO GO International. Prior to associating with First Steps Group, Prashanth was Director – Human Resources at The Akshaya Patra Foundation. During his tenure as a HR Professional, he has led the transformation of HR into a strategic partner, facilitated organization-wide transformation and capability development, and was instrumental in building a strong talent pool through a series of leadership development initiatives.

Prashanth holds a Masters in Social Works (MSW) from Mysore University.

Prashanth enjoys Hindi serials with humour, reading mythological books and travelling. He is passionate about developing People to excel in their Area of Interest and work for community. Prashanth is based in Bangalore.

**1**

## **Name the top 3 skills that HR professionals should possess.**

While an HR Professional whether a starter or a seasoned professional, he / she should have most of the Management skills. However, being a people's person to ensure that People contribute for the overall wellbeing of the organization that they are associated with and to bring positivity around the people, an HR Professional need to possess the following 3 Cs that will determine his / her career –

**Character** – the HR professional being a custodian of ethics, culture, confidentiality, must possess an impeccable character which will be emanated by people who are around him / her.

**Compassion** – People look up to HR professionals not only as a resource persons but also as a trouble-shooters. While he / she needs to be a non-discriminatory representative of people in the organization, he needs to be more cautious when interacting with and solving people issues. It is the essence of HR profession to make even difficult conversations to be positively memorable, hence being compassionate is very important.

**Credibility**–Employees at all levels trust and repose confidence in the HR persons for everything that they need in the organization. In a role that demands Influencing without Authority, credibility plays an important role for all HR professionals. Being a highly credible professional and building strong and long-lasting partnerships with business leaders are critical to shifting an organisation's thinking about HR and improving the strength of the HR team's ability to influence.

**2**

## **The HR department should have labour law expert in the team. Do you agree with this?**

In today's context, Governance is becoming an important and integral part of any growing organization to exceed customer expectations and also doing ethical business. HR being the custodian of ethics, champion of company culture, it is also necessary to ensure that Organizations are insulated by adopting and complying all laws of the land. Being a law abiding organization, it not only helps to be a good governance organization but also helps to build an Employer Brand as a Preferred Employer locally and globally.

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**3**

### **What do HR professionals need to do to build a sustainable good IR culture?**

In the High-Tech, High-Touch environment, where HR is continuously faced with the challenge to work with Knowledge Workers; Employees equipped to work with advanced technology driven machineries; HR has to focus on building a culture of Inclusivity, Collaboration and Participation. A good Industrial Relation is nothing but a good Employee Relation. Employees are aware of their rights and duties and are also well equipped to represent their expectations in an organization. If HR professionals are able to develop and implement a congenial work environment through Employee Connect and Engagement programs, Industrial Relations will become the way of life.

**4**

### **What motivates you the most?**

I am a very demanding, result oriented people's person. I always believe that making a "difference" to ones life is important – teaching someone to fish is better than lending a fish. I draw my motivation from the challenges that are laid out in front of me, findings suitable and timely solutions to those challenges. I am also fascinated by the variety of solutions that each problem can have when you are involved in solving those challenges. Standing outside the problem and dissecting them gives tremendous amount of confidence, room for creativity and innovation which leads to my self learning and self-motivation.

**5**

### **How do you connect with people at every level of the organization?**

Humility, truthfulness and walk the talk qualities makes me a person welcomed by all people in the organization. I don't have that "magic" stick in my hand, but I will not disappoint any individual who needs support or guidance. I will ensure that promises are made to fulfil and where I am unable to resolve, I admit them humbly. This enables me to be honest and transparent in my approach to people resulting in long lasting relationship and bond.

**6**

### **In your experience, what do you think makes a great team member?**

Inter-dependent yet independent; collaborative; self-motivated; we can list the desirable and essential qualities of a team member. But to be great in anything, you need to be thinking that you are great and you have dreams to be great. Any team member who is able to understand the dynamics of a team and its members, respect their individuality, engage and encourage them to work towards the common goal by contributing for collective success can be a great team member.

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**7**

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

I believe in "Extraordinary Performance from Ordinary People". I am aware that no individual is born with all competencies, some of them are learnt, gained and mastered over a period of time. At the workplace or otherwise, I will ensure that a person who is keen to learn, change and demonstrate a positive attitude, will definitely worth investing time to develop further. Employees who work with me get focused attention and guidance in their day-to-day work. Identifying the gaps / improvement areas in skills and knowledge collectively and working towards bridging them appropriately makes my team member to perform better, though he is not a very high IQ individual.

**8**

## **Can HR professionals take the top position of the organization and succeed?**

Yes. Any HR professional can assume the top position of the Organization and will be more successful than any other professional. My primary belief is that Successful Organizations have a Strong HR person at the top, as employable people are the most valued and scarce resource in this competing world. Any organization's success is dependent on the people strategy and people policies which are driven by the Top Executive of the Organization. It is clearly myth that HR Professionals cannot run the businesses. However, HR professionals who chose only to be doing the HR Job, may find it difficult to get to the top.

**9**

## **What should colleges/universities do to produce good future HR and IR professionals?**

Yesterday's Performance and Competencies cannot make you achieve tomorrow's goals and objectives. It is true to the learning and education also. Many Colleges and Universities have already commended the work of integrating their learning / education solutions with the Industries to meet the demand and expectations of the industries in all streams of qualifications. Organizations are moving away from the practice of hiring for Experience to hiring for Attitude and Skills. This approach increases the demand of producing more graduates mastering the art of demonstrating excellent Character; Competence; Creativity and Willingness to learning new in an ambiguous environment.

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**10**

## **Do you think HR professionals need to focus on "reskilling" to handle the upcoming challenges?**

Learning is for Life. Any professional need to focus on reskilling not only to manage the change but also to excel and achieve personal and professional goals. Sharpening the Saw is the key at any stage of life. The advancement of technology has shrunk the time; increased the availability of information at click of a button to all. Every individual is unique and brings a different perspective to every people issue. It is important for HR professionals to be updated and live in current to resolve such issues. The knowledge available in books; internet easily accessible by all. Being innovative; creative and inspiring is the key for being a successful HR professional.

**11**

## **Most business leaders do not consider HR as the backbone of the organization. How do you convince them?**

I think today that is no-more a scenario. Great Organizations do understand the importance of people and people strategies. Every successful business house today is able to retain its position only with talented and engaged team members. HR plays a vital role in identifying and implementing suitable solutions for creating a place where HR is a way of life and employees are able to discover their potential and contribute for the overall growth of the organization. Though there is no HR as a Department, many organizations have realized the importance of HR and are adopting strong people strategies that help them building brand to attract and retain the right talent.

**12**

## **What are the top things you learned from your father?**

My Father has been a role model for me from my childhood. He has been in the Service of State Government and has made remarkable contributions during his tenure. He is known for his transparency, discipline and ethical principles.

I have been influenced by all the above tenets and have learnt many more life values including focusing on Excellence in everything that I do; focused and to be independent in my journey of life; ensuring that my action speaks about my work than words and also to be able to live a contented life. I simply follow his foot-steps when it comes to going the beyond the call of duty. If someone is in need, Just Help without any expectations. Believe in the teachings of Lord Krishna, but also redefined my own philosophy:

“Karmanyevadhikaraste Ma PhaleshuKadachana,

Ma KarmaphalaheturbhurmaTeSangostvakarmani”.

“do your bit and also ensure that the results are reached the deserving one”.

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# Leaders Talk

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The "LEADERS TALK" interviews being published by "Niruta Publications" will be brought out in the form of book and this book will be released in the Sixth State Level Human Resource Professionals Kannada Conference.

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6<sup>th</sup>

State Level

Human Resource Professionals  
Kannada Conference



Conference Theme:

Employee Retention and Development – Strategies and Challenges

Date: 12th November, 2022 (Saturday)

Time: 09.30 am to 05.30 pm

Venue:

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