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Making HR People Complete

Highlights
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APARNA SHARMA



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APARNA SHARMA



"Reality Bytes-The Role of HR in Today's World" is a book launched in Mumbai on 20th March 2015, written by **APARNA SHARMA**, a leading HR professional working in a MNC. The book has received great accolades from HR and Business fraternity in the country. Devoid of management jargons, written in a very simple, easy to understand style is the unique feature of Aparna's book. In a conversation with BM, Aprana Sharma talks about why this book, how new comers and early managers can increase their credibility among workforce at work and few do's and don'ts for women professionals. Here is an edited excerpt of conversation.

Credibility of HR comes from Competence, Connect and Care



BM: What motivated you to write this book when there are crowd of books on HR and people are losing the habit of reading?

AS: Every author claims that his/her work is unique...however; it's indeed true in case of my debut as an author of 'Reality Bytes - The Role of HR in Today's World'.

There was a time when machines or equipments were the most important asset/resource an organization could possess. People were more or less required only to run these machines and maintain them. But as we raced through time, we have left all those traditional thoughts far behind.

In my quest for learning & sharing, I have made a humble attempt to write this book. It is meant to be a simple contemporary ready reckoner covering the entire employee life cycle in an organization ('What' & 'Why' aspects) with practical caselets illustrating concepts that work in organizations in today's times.

It has something for everyone - whether an HR student, a budding early career HR manager, a line manager who needs to be an HR manager in his/her own right to manage people or even a teacher or an entrepreneur trying to understand what HR is all about.

Going back to my college days, I did not have the privilege of access to options; details to make informed choices were limited. I made the best of guidance of elders and reading magazines like the Competition Success Review, Employment News etc. Looking back, am grateful to all who have helped me in understanding the nitty-gritties of human behavior at work and grow in my professional journey of 18+ years.

Vishwakarma Publications of Pune persuaded me to write a simple, handy book & this request ignited my desire to once again reach out & help Gen Y, especially the student community who are confused, not sure what HR is since there are so many preconceived notions. Most think, it is only for females and then there are those who are sitting on the fence not being able to choose from different disciplines of management.

BM: There is much gap between ground reality of HR and what is preached and read all through. How a new comer/early manager should prepare himself to absorb the shock which he receives while landing in people management world?

AS: Firstly, every new comer in the field needs to be grounded & come into the profession with an absolute open mind. Stereotypes, wishful thinking of an ideal world & pre-conceived notions make it difficult for new comers/early managers to deal with harsh reality on the ground. Their ideologies & dreams based on fancy expectations come crashing down like a pack of cards. When the mind is open like a parachute, learning by one's own experience is a lot more fun & enjoyable. Why only HR, no other discipline of management or role is a bed of roses. Each one has to walk on the path & carve out one's own niche. New Comers and early managers need to unlearn, learn and relearn the "art of managing people" while at work and develop their own style. Text Book managers generally fail as human behavior is unpredictable; managed and motivated by numerous factors not found in the various theories of management.

BM: What makes an HR person to be loved and respected by all in the organization?

AS: Every HR person must strive to be authentic in their thoughts, actions & deeds. Employees need to experience the genuine concern & support from every HR colleague. Here's my take- The 3 "C" mantra-Competence, Connect & Care help establish Credibility of HR with employees. All three are equally important---Only Competence without Connect &/Care does not help the culture (soul) of the organization. Only Connect & Care without a Competent HR leader/team is sheer populism which harms the credibility of HR. So, it's a delicate balance that every HR person in an organization needs to bring in & maintain.

Respect & affection comes once all 3 C's are in place & employees experience the impact through organizational culture of learning, growth & development which HR has a key role to build in along with the CEO & Line managers. HR has to be a friend, philosopher and guide of employees. What HR managers need to develop is that instead of keeping distance from HR, employees prefer to share their issues/concerns and treat them as their sounding board and most trusted one in the organization.

BM: Something about your book?

AS: Today and in the future too, the single-most competitive edge for an organization is its "people". In today's dynamic times, managing turnover in terms of people is as critical as



increasing business turnover. This is because, inspite of being the most valuable resource, manpower is also the most difficult to manage, maintain & retain, and many organizations fall short of managing their people well.

Probably, the reason for this is that formal education in HR does not prepare the young, would-be HR manager or even a line manager who needs to be an HR manager in his/her own right to manage people, to face and deal with the Reality at the Workplace. This book has been written to achieve this very purpose. 'Reality Bytes - The Role of HR in Today's World' has something for everyone - whether an HR student, a budding early career HR manager(1-3 years), a line manager who needs to be an HR manager in his/her own right to manage people or even a teacher or an entrepreneur trying to understand what HR is all about.

This book is for you! With the market for talent available in the country as well as abroad, today's employees are besieged with offers and have a huge choice as compared to earlier times. The new thought that this book tries to bring forth is that today, the employee is less of an employee and more of a customer for the organization. Needless to say, he/she is second to no other business customer in importance.

Finding and attracting this 'talented customer' to the organization, developing his/her skills and keeping him/her interested and happy in order to achieve business results is what HR is all about today. The book gives the reader a clear idea of the strategic role that HR plays in attaining the business goals of the organization. It tries to highlight relevant concepts and makes them easy for the reader to understand. Beginning with the Employer and Employee Value Propositions (which is where the employee is introduced to the organization) and ending with the challenges faced by HR, it tries to cover all aspects of HR that are relevant today and tomorrow as well.

It is meant to be a simple contemporary ready reckoner covering the employee life cycle in an organization ('What' & 'Why' aspects) and balancing them with practical caselets illustrating concepts that work in organizations in today's times. The caselets also aim at getting the reader to think and find his/her own solutions based on learning/s in each chapter. Key points (leads) which are thought-provoking and bring out the crux of the matter have been separately highlighted to give them prominence.



BM: Any do's and don'ts for women making their career in HR while at work?

AS: Do's-



1. Be a professional first, woman later! Knock out the cobwebs or doubts in your mind.
2. Work hard. There is no shortcut to success for anybody- man or woman.
3. Stay abreast with the latest tools, techniques & knowledge in the field. Competence is the bedrock.
4. Network! It's a good skill to develop.
5. Learn to be politically savvy.
6. Ask! Ask for your due raise/promotion if you deserve it.

DON'T'S

1. Expect or pitch for concessions on grounds of gender. Do your bit to make it a level playing field.
2. Don't portray an image of being weak or vulnerable. You're gifted.
3. Don't make gender an alibi for competence.
4. Don't shy away from asking if what is due is not given...Assert yourself.
5. Don't be hard on yourself. It is okay to make mistakes. You were not born perfect.
6. Don't wallow in self pity. Each one of us is unique in more ways than one. **BM**

