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Rahimafrooz's vision for 2015

HR boss focuses on developing talent pool to fill up key role positions through succession planning

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RAHIMAFROOZ, one of the country's leading conglomerates, aims to become a billion dollar company within 2015 through expansion of existing businesses and investment in other sectors including textiles, says a senior official of the company.

The conglomerate plans to grow operations as per its vision for 2015, says Arif Shahriar, chief operating officer of corporate division and group head of human resources at Rahimafrooz.

"We want to become a billion dollar company by strengthening our existing businesses and investing in new segments within the next four years," says Shahriar.

The diversified company is set to expand its operations to Dubai, America and India. It also aims to set up a home textiles unit by mid next year.

Rahimafrooz, founded in 1954 by Late AC Abdur Rahim as a trading company in Dhaka, now operates in four broad segments -- storage power, automotive electronics, energy and retail.

The group today has eleven operating companies, a few other business joint ventures, and a non-profit social enterprise.

According to the HR boss, the company houses around 4600 full time employees and nearly 1000 contractual and part-time employees.

Rahimafrooz, with annual sales of around Tk 1800 crore, is growing at 29 percent in the last few years, says

Shahriar.

The conglomerate is working on strategic management systems in the group, based on a framework pioneered by Dr David Norton, a renowned strategy management guru, and Dr Robert Kaplan, to achieve its vision in the stipulated time.

Norton has already held a session with Rahimafrooz's top management in Dhaka to share his insight on how to build an effective strategy management system.

Norton, who holds a doctorate from Harvard Business School USA, is considered an expert in the fields of business strategy and leadership.

Kaplan is the co-developer of the 'Balance Scorecard', an acclaimed tool for defining and executing business strategy.

The balance scorecard concept was selected by Harvard Business Review as one of the most influential management ideas in the past 75 years.

To join the billions club, the group already focuses on the best human resource practices in terms of recruitment, talent development, succession planning and performance appraisal.

Shahriar, who has more than 24 years of experience in human resources management, says the conglomerate pursues a four-step process in hiring people for entry-level positions.

First, it issues a job vacancy circular on online job portals such as bdjobs.com and prothom-alojobs.com.

Second, the HR department



Arif Shahriar

screens the resumes and shortlists candidates. Then, the HR and line manager conduct an in-depth preliminary interview to access the candidate's abilities. Finally, candidates are hired after a final interview.

For mid-level positions, the group generally hires people through head hunters. It generally hires people through an assessment centre for senior positions. Candidates passing the assessment are interviewed by top officials of the company including board members and then offered a position in the company.

Shahriar, an electrical engineering graduate from the US, says Rahimafrooz is committed to ensur-

ing the best in quality standards and making employees live up to the group's five core values -- integrity, excellence, customer delight, innovation and inspiring people.

The group head says the group spends around 0.25 percent of its net turnover, worth nearly Tk 4.5 crore, a year for employee training and development.

"Currently we have around 90 key role positions and most of them are filled up through outside hires," says Shahriar, who also worked as head of HR in British American Tobacco in Bangladesh.

The group is going to focus on developing its own talent pool to fill up key role positions through succes-

sion planning. The company plans to fill 80 percent of the senior management roles, such as heads of business units and executive committee members, by from its own talent pool and the rest 20 percent through outside hires within the next three years, says Shahriar.

The group also practices an effective performance appraisal system regularly. It offers different monetary and non-cash incentives for its employees based on their performance.

In the last couple of years, the group employee turnover rate has stood at less than 7.5 percent, he says.

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Employer branding

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PEOPLE generally require passports to travel abroad, as the document identifies the person's identify, country of origin and other details. But it is really interesting when a conglomerate introduces passports for its employees.

Rahimafrooz Group has undertaken this to brand the company as well as induct new recruits to the group's core values, guiding principles, aspirations and quality policies.

"We have introduced the passport mainly to the new employees to make them aware of the company's guiding principles and core value," says Arif Shahriar, chief operating officer of corporate division and group head of human resources at Rahimafrooz.

He says issuing passports for the new employees is one of the employer's branding initiatives.

It helps employees to understand the company's vision, organogram and business operations, says Shahriar.

The employees can easily get acquainted with the board members of the diversified company as there is a group picture of the company board members in the passport, he adds.

With the group founder's picture at the beginning of the passport, it welcomes the new recruits by giving a brief history of the company.

The passport reads, "We welcome you to the Rahimafrooz family and wish you all the

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best in maintaining and enhancing the quality of our services and products for our customers, patrons and well wishers."

It also explains the 'I + 10 programme' that is widely practiced in Rahimafrooz to enhance team performance and self-development.

The first part of the programme is the "I Plan". The main focus is the individual for success of all, that is, each person needs to act first by himself or herself to reflect success.

Three essentials of "I Plan"

1. I am the person who needs to change. (the focus)
2. I am the person who can bring the

change. (the belief)

3. I need to ensure honesty, fairness and impartiality in my actions and words for the change. (The ultimate actions)

The second part involves the use of 10 habits -- these habits have been identified from best practices in behavioural and management effectiveness.

The 10 habits:

1. Respond rather than react
2. Be purposeful
3. Choose to grow
4. Work towards success for all
5. First enter the other person's world before inviting them to your world
6. The even better, third alternative
7. Constant and never ending improvements
8. The magical right brain and the logical left brain
9. Lighten up
10. Give more than expected

A new recruit has to cover two sessions of the "I + 10" programmes initially. The first will be an awareness session followed by a 360 degree community session, where the individual is given feedback by his team members relating to these 10 habits.

This community session helps an individual develop and better himself in all aspects. After an awareness session, as a regular practice, an employee covers two community sessions every a along with his team members.

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