

<b>PUBLICATION:</b> Wall Street Journal Online- India	<b>DATE:</b> February 24, 2012
<b>EDITION:</b> Online	<b>COLUMN:</b> Career Journal

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FEBRUARY 24, 2012, 10:00 AM IST English

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By Nikita Garia

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*Pictured, Saumen Chakraborty, President and Global chief of human resources, quality and information technology at Dr. Reddy's Laboratories.*

Can good performance be taken as a parameter to judge an employee's happiness?

Not really, says Saumen Chakraborty, president and global chief of human resources, quality and information technology at Dr. Reddy's Laboratories Ltd., one of India's largest pharmaceutical firms with around 15,000 employees.

Mr. Chakraborty says that if managers don't recognize the achievements of their strong performers, or if they favor some employees over others, it can de-motivate the top performers. Ideally, a manager should periodically check in with his team-members, and gauge their happiness meter. If there's a problem, "he needs to act on it, otherwise he loses his credibility," says Mr. Chakraborty.

In conversation with India Real Time, Mr. Chakraborty shares common mistakes that managers make, and tips on how to rectify them. Here are edited excerpts:

**IRT: What are common mistakes managers make?**

**SC:** The worst mistake a manager can make is to take his or her employees for granted.

It's a mistake to assume that an employee who is doing well at work and is highly motivated doesn't need your support and attention. Be sure to appreciate this employee's effort; appreciation is important for everybody's self-esteem.

Also, favoritism can create discontent, so managers need to be careful about not showing their bias even unconsciously.

A manager should never assume what his or her employees want. For instance, if you want to implement a new idea which is likely to affect your employees, don't assume that they would be okay with it. The manager needs to discuss the details of the new policy or idea with the employees and get feedback.

**IRT: How can managers ensure their best performers are motivated?**

**SC:** As a manager, you need to keep asking your employees whether there is anything that is hampering their performance. Just ask simple questions like “Are you enjoying your work?” or “What can I do to make you more effective?”

Act on the answers to these questions.

For instance, if there is a lack of resources, make sure the employee gets them and is able to discharge his or her duties properly.

There should also be periodic communication sessions, outside the work environment, where people can open up.

At Dr. Reddy's, there are quarterly communication sessions at every business unit. These sessions can be used to explain to employees how the organization is performing and any new initiatives underway. Use this opportunity to listen to the concerns and suggestions of your people, and answer any queries they have.

You can also have a sort of role-play, where you can ask the employee what they would do if they were in your, or another, role. Put them in that situation and listen to the suggestions.

**IRT: What makes a great leader?**

**SC:** There are three major areas where a leader works — strategy, execution of that strategy, and dealing with people.

A good leader sets specific targets for employees so that it is clear what is expected of them. This person also makes sure that he or she addresses any dilemma an employee may have.

A great leader is one who develops more leaders. He or she has a fundamental belief that people have inherent potential, ability to excel, and would work on their self-development. The leaders know that they have to simply act as facilitators.

**IRT: What are Dr. Reddy's hiring plans for this year and what is your preferred mode of hiring?**

**SC:** Our hiring plan is quite similar to last year.

This financial year, we plan to recruit nearly 1,000 people, of which 80% will be for jobs in India. We have more than 500 people in the U.S., which is the biggest market for our products. This year we are looking at adding more than 100 people there.

Globally, the number one source of hiring for us is employee referrals. We have attractive incentives for employees if their referred candidate gets selected.

We also look for suitable candidates through professional networking sites like LinkedIn. For senior-level recruitment, we might engage a search firm.

Broadly in the pharmaceutical industry, there are niche functions like intellectual property management, research and development or experts in specific domains like crystallization.

For this, we may look for doctoral fellows or those who have these specific skills.

We also do reference checks, and speak to previous employers because they know them better in work situations.

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