

STAY INTERVIEWS - THE SECRET WEAPON IN EMPLOYEE RETENTION TOOLBOX

SPECIAL FEATURE

Shabana Khan is the CHRO at TM International Logistics Limited. She is a seasoned human resource professional with over 19 years of work experience across industries like hospitality, banking, Media and Telecom. Adroit in leading team with an excellent decision-making ability and expertise in solving people and culture related issues and challenges. Prior to joining TM international logistics limited. She was the Director of Human Resources at the Marriott Hotels and was instrumental in Commissioning the property – The Westin Kolkata Rajarhat. Shabana has worked as HR Business Partner in Vodafone and was also the Regional Head – HR at HDFC Bank. She also worked with Organisations like Hyatt Regency, Tata Teleservices and Star News. She has graduated with PGDBA from Symbiosis – Pune. Shabana is a Certified Thomas Profiling Assessor with an interest bent in Personality Development and Image Consulting.

In an exclusive interview with All Things Talent, Shabana Khan, CHRO at TM International Logistics Ltd, talks about her journey so far, the importance of talent refresh strategy needed to build a robust Performance Management System and how to attract the right talent. She also shares her insights on how design thinking can help in designing and refining the talent acquisition process.

JOURNEY

Q Having worked as an HR leader in the industry for many years, how has this journey been so far? What were your initial main challenges when you started out? How did that help you evolve into a leader?

A It's been an enriching journey so far, I have been fortunate enough to work across industries like Hospitality, Banking and Telecoms and a very short stint with Media. I

started at the Age of 19, bubbling with passion, it was very difficult to prioritize between work and home. My focus was career, but responsibility was my Mom – who was suffering from Hepatitis B. I struggled to live up to my responsibility because of a demanding manager that I was working under. In the bargain, I lost my mom. This incident left a deep impact and matured me personally as well as professionally

and hence the realization of setting priorities right. Over the years I have had the privilege to work under HR and Business Leaders like Ashish Ghatnekar, Ranjan Banerjee, Rahul Maini and Ashish Kr. Gupta. They have been very inspirational and impactful Leaders.

I am grateful to all my leaders, team members, colleagues that I worked with and also currently working with and my family above all who have partnered and contributed in my journey of success and growth all along.

TALENT STRATEGIES

Q Do you think by integrating talent management fully into the organisation, companies can closely connect their talent planning to their strategic planning and perform better financially? If so, how?

A A strategic Talent Management Plan allows you to align individual goals with Corporate Strategy. Companies like us are constantly evolving. Change Management Strategies integrated with Talent Management ensures talent adapts to change. Talent Acquisition and

Talent Management are aligned with the growth plan of the organisation. HR today is seen as a Strategic partner towards Business Growth and has the ability to impact culture, people and financials.

Q Also, how can 'Talent Refresh' strategy help in building a robust Performance Management System which is deep-rooted and creates a high performing workforce?

A Talent Refresh strategy should be an on-going process and not time-bound and I am of the strong



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opinion that it has to be related. Yes, it does help in building a high performing workforce. Having said that, Talent Refresh is a sensitive subject and draws fair linkages to impacting the very fabric of core values and employee value proposition of any organisation. Particularly in most emerging markets where the separation of employees based on performance is embryonic & taking roots could evoke emotional sentiments, impact motivation and engagement levels, increase regrettable attrition and expose employer branding/ increases reputational risk. This makes Talent Refresh an agenda to be handled with kid gloves rather

than just an essential statement on the HR strategic presentations.

TALENT MANAGEMENT

Q With a growing age demographic and shrinking talent availability, today's workplaces are challenged by talent shortages. How are you attracting the right people? Why is it important to get the right people?

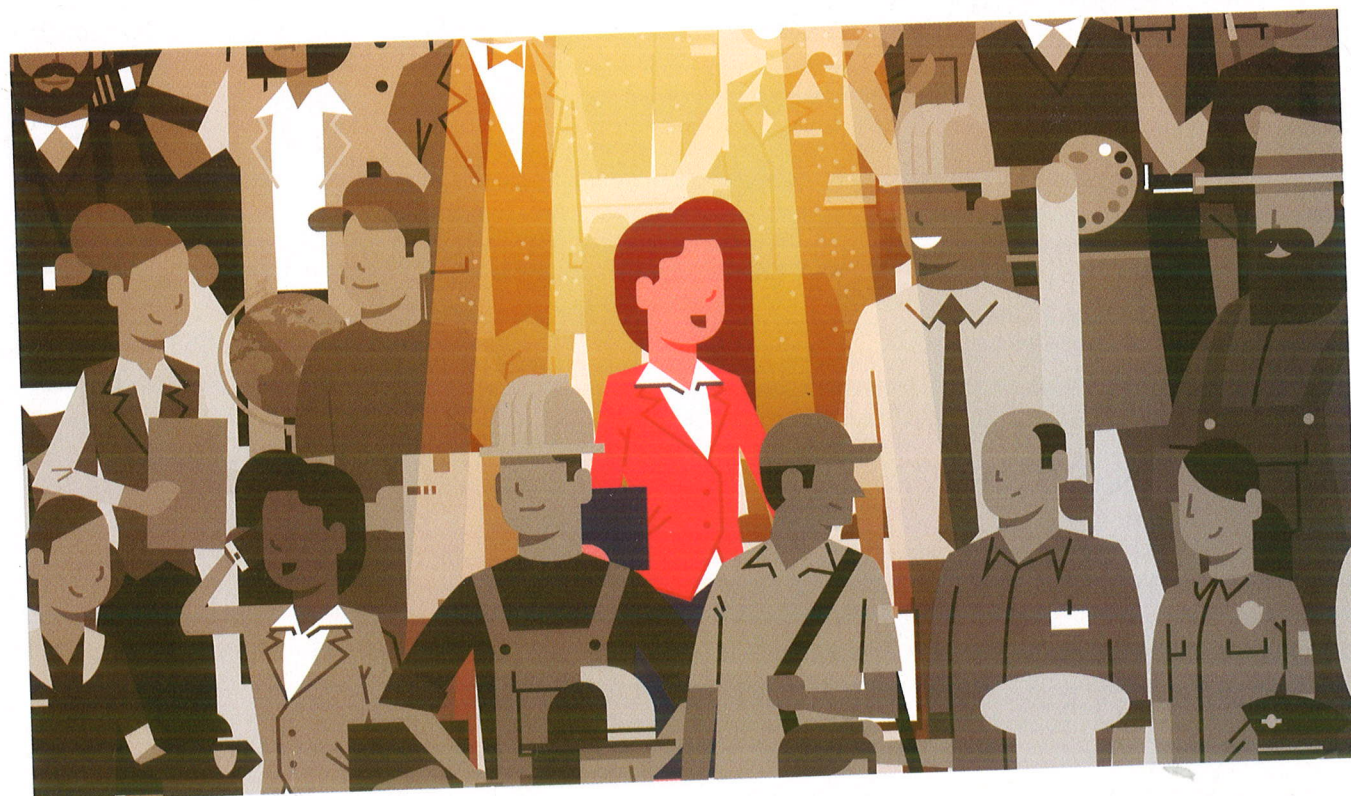
A I do not agree with the statement considering India is a nation with approximately 130 crore population -- I do not see it as a challenge. The challenge lies in attracting the right talent. It is important to get the right people to do the right job and responsibility lies jointly with HR

and the management. Employees who are a good cultural fit in a company will tend to fare better than those who aren't and we in our company do this through various assessments -- which targets the company's cultural aspects which in turn effectively identifies employees, who will be a great fit for the company. These assessments also have the ability to quantify the data so as to determine how well an applicant fits into the culture of the organisation. We enjoy great brand equity and are proud of the kind of people-focused processes and policies that we have. Attracting talent has never been a challenge for us. Thankfully!

Q Speaking of talent availability, what are some of the creative solutions that HR professionals will require to lower turnover and increase retention at all levels of staff?

A Employee turnover is something that every business with workers experiences. Even our company

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experiences employee turnover, but we enjoy an attrition rate of 5-6 % only, hence turnover has never been a challenge for us. It is about creating a culture where people like to stay and not think of options outside the company. This starts with hiring the right employees. When you hire employees who are behavioural and cultural fits for the job, the chances of them sticking around are more. Also, if you don't pay your employees well, they'll find a company that will. Policies like Work from Home, Holiday Plan, Honeymoon Package, etc can be incremental in creating a happy and flexible environment to STAY ON!! It should not be the sole responsibility of HR, but the company's collective effort -- organisational strategy, policy & processes which should be robust enough to ensure stickiness.

Q Stay interviews have emerged as a secret weapon in employee retention toolbox. How can stay interviews offer opportunities to build trust between the manager and employee? Why are they crucial for the success of a business?

A A company's policies and people connect program should be extremely robust, they should periodically connect with their people to understand the happiness quotient. It's a two-way process and feedback should be shared with People Managers for improvement and development needs if any. Career discussion on a regular basis can enable us to connect with the employees personally, help us to understand their journey, expectations and aspirations. The crux of Stay Interview is to learn why people stay in the organisation or what factors make them leave. In our company, it is driven by HR to ensure continuous

connect with people and business. It is a mandate with a target in the annual goal sheets of my HR Team.



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DESIGN THINKING

Q Organisations have started leveraging design thinking in recruiting and talent processes. According to you, how can design thinking help in designing and refining the talent acquisition process and rethinking talent strategy?

A Design Thinking is the need of the Hour. Our organisation is undergoing Business Process Re-engineering, where design thinking is a crucial part of the process. We always seek to understand the user and the end need and redefine problems in an attempt to identify alternative strategies and solutions. It is about managing expectations and change. As an HR leader, I endeavour to leverage and implement design thinking in multiple ways to provide a solution to the various challenges faced by the business

(related to HR) like finding the right fit for the right job or ensuring an experiential interview process.

HR TECH

Q With India's highly diverse, robust, and tech-savvy workforce, how can technology and evolving practices of HR redefine the workplace and the definition of desirable talent?

A As organisations, we should be geared up and prepared to be future-ready and tech-savvy. In our company, we are already following a data-driven approach to manage HR. Technology will change the way we work by providing agility that is needed in the gig economy. However, relationship management cannot be done through technology. I strongly believe that the rise of Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning and People Analytics will further integrate human resources to business with its creativity & innovation.

INNOVATION

Q As someone who holds the experience of working across all HR functions, which set of skills do you think HR professionals should possess which makes them highly efficient and competent?

A HR Professionals should spend qualitative time to engage with people and build a network that would provide a competitive advantage to an organisation in the long run. HR should have a human touch and start treating people as capital and not resources anymore. Another essential human resource management skill is -- problem-solving and conflict management. It is also expected out of HR to have functional expertise and business acumen which is the key to HR effectiveness.