

## **Hyderabad: Creating a professional work culture**

**By A.V. Vedpuriswar & Surajit Pal**

According to the famous management guru and founding dean of Indian School of Business, Sumatra Ghoshal, the business paradigm in recent times, has shifted from the top-down 3S (Strategy, Structure and Systems) to the bottom-up 3P (Purpose, Process and People) framework. Today's world-class companies are driven by a strong corporate purpose backed by good management processes. And such organizations assemble extraordinarily good people, who can work with an entrepreneurial mindset and deliver results. The 3P paradigm has become even more relevant in today's knowledge-driven business environment. Unfortunately, most of the Hyderabad based companies have been traditionally weak on all the three Ps. They lack vision, are more personality-centric than process-centric and are extremely thin on management talent

The picture is however not all that bleak. A new breed of corporates that are committed to a professional work culture seems to be evolving. Take the case of Scotia Bank, one of Canada's most famous global banks. Branch Manager DVV Satish feels that, Hyderabadis are no longer the laid back people of 1980s and the early 1990s. They are becoming more aggressive with the rapid growth of the city in recent times and the new opportunities thrown up by the arrival of new players especially in the services sector. Satish also feels that the work culture is shaped more by the organisation than the city.

Scotia has taken a number of initiatives to attract and retain good people. Employees are moved across departments as part of a job enrichment scheme. In deserving cases, some of them are also sent to Scotia's regional headquarters in Hong Kong for advanced training in global banking practices. The top management has a strong people orientation and attends to employee grievances in no time. Lunch is provided to all employees. The bank actively encourages the

staff to find the right balance between family and professional life.

Ranjit Sen is Advisor, Strategic Planning, Shanta Biotechnics, one of Hyderabad's most successful and admired start-ups. The company has had the courage and vision to take on MNCs by developing cost effective drugs, like Shanvac-B, for the masses. Sen admits that despite the company's good reputation, attracting good people from outside Hyderabad is a big challenge. His company fills up 70% of its senior management positions with locals. But Sen feels that Hyderabad's perceived image as an emerging knowledge hub is gradually making professional managers realize the attractive career opportunities in the city. Which is why 50% of Shanta's middle and junior level positions are occupied by non Hyderabadis.

An employee friendly work culture is a critical success factor in attracting and retaining good people in knowledge driven businesses. Sen points out, "Our organization encourages intrapreneurship. Our working climate is conducive and most importantly there is a great degree of transparency." Shanta has an open-door policy, which encourages employees to contribute new ideas. The company organizes in-house training programs on a regular basis. In some cases, employees are also sent abroad for specialized training.

No doubt, Hyderabad as a business centre is still behind cities like Mumbai and Bangalore. But it need not be disheartened. Developing a professional work environment takes time. If senior executives like to work in places like Mumbai, it is because of greater opportunities. And opportunities are more in such cities mainly because of their early mover advantages. Over a period of time, Mumbai for instance has attracted several players into industries like pharmaceuticals, financial services and petrochemicals. As a result, professional managers have greater opportunities to change jobs, network with their counterparts in other companies and even launch their own start-ups. This is also the case with Bangalore's software industry. According to T Muralidharan, Managing Director and CEO of TMI Network, the disadvantages which Hyderabad currently has can be corrected over a period of time, provided systematic efforts are made to attract entrepreneurs.

In short, Hyderabad does have the potential to become a center of professional excellence in a

range of industries. But for this to happen, companies must not only offer competitive remuneration but also be more transparent and more employee-oriented. They must demonstrate over time that they are there for the long haul. Ultimately, as Muralidharan puts it, it is vision, passion and commitment which will attract the best people and create a vibrant corporate culture.