

BLOG

People & Business

Balmer Lawrie
Organisational Gazette

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TALENT
MANAGEMENT



EMPLOYEE
CONNECT

REWARD AND
RECOGNITION

*Excellence Driven with
Personal Touch*

COMPENSATION
AND BENEFITS



TEAM WORK



PERFORMANCE
MANAGEMENT



SUCCESSION
PLANNING

LEARNING &
DEVELOPMENT



EMPLOYEE
LIFE CYCLE



EDITORIAL

Balmer Lawrie has stood the test of time and will step into its 150th year of Foundation eight months from now. Mark Salsbury in his book - "Human Capital Management: Leveraging Your Workforce for a Competitive Advantage" - wrote that while extraordinary products and unique services still afford a competitive advantage, the one advantage that stands the test of time...is People. We can proudly say that if today we have faced the many challenges thrown at us by changing times and seized every opportunity that came our way, it is only because of our People. It is our leaders and employees who have always worked together to drive the vision of our Founders and steer the Company to newer heights. Now, if people are the organisation's long term sustainable advantage, it becomes imperative to focus highly on Human Capital Management. Balmer Lawrie values its Human Capital and Team HR plays a significant role in partnering with the Businesses / Functions to develop and nurture talent and drive maximum organisational performance.

This issue of BLOG focuses on the various aspects of the Human Resources function and the very talented team members across regions. Today each and every member of the HR Team is playing a critical role in handholding the employees through the process of change that the organisation is going through. Be it managing people excellence, maintaining a diverse talent pool, combating the challenges of succession planning, upgrading policies, keeping pace with technology or coaching and mentoring people to change before they have to, Team HR has been managing it all pretty well. Hope you enjoy reading this issue of BLOG.

To sustain any initiative, feedback is a must. As always, I will look forward to your suggestions, contribution and feedback. Do not hesitate to email me at mukhopadhyay.mohar@balmerlawrie.com.



LEADERSHIP SPEAKS



Viren Sinha
Chairman &
Managing Director

Today we are going through a phase of transformation and I strongly believe that the key to success lies in being a highly focused performance driven organization. I have constantly endeavored to drive excellence along with the other members of the leadership team. However, I feel Balmer Lawrie has to be a more customer centric and a technology driven organization in order to combat competition and be future ready. We have finalized our strategy plan for the next five years and are investing around Rs 500 crores in various projects across businesses. These projects will be leveraging the organizational capability aligned with the strategy and industry specific functional expertise in the respective business areas. Hence, it will be of utmost importance to hire Human Capital with the right kind of industry specific skills and competencies and train existing employees. HR has a major role to play in not only addressing the competency gaps in Human Capital but also in systems and processes.

Transformation has several uncertainties and anxieties associated with it. Thus, each member of the HR Team will have to act as change enablers in making this transformation process smooth. HR has to promote transparency and fairness at every step and create a culture of learning and development, such that employees are able to withstand the challenges of this transformation and emerge successful. Proper talent management, leadership development and succession planning will automatically lead to a foolproof performance management system.

With our foray into new projects, we are seeing many new people joining Balmer Lawrie. Meanwhile, we are close on the heels of stepping into our 150th year of Foundation. The organization has fostered the time tested values of Integrity, Trustworthiness, Fairness, Transparency, Discipline and Openness. HR has to take forward these values and instill them in the new comers. HR will have to play a strategic and meaningful role in developing and nurturing talent, encouraging innovation, motivating and rewarding performers, creating leaders and brand ambassadors of Balmer Lawrie.

LEADERSHIP SPEAKS



Manjusha Bhatnagar

Director [HR & CA]

Gone are those days of referring the Function as Personnel or Human Resources. Today, we say, "It is management of business through Human Capital", as our people are the most important resources. All other things in the organisation remain static; Human Resources are the only dynamic asset of the organisation and I strongly believe that we cannot make a difference without our people.

The task of the HR department is to help employees give their best at the workplace and that can happen only if they feel attached to the Company. If they are unhappy, then they are not able to give their best to the organisation. It is the contribution of the people which is visible in the form of business results. As we enter into the new challenge of Strategy Roadmap 2020, the function of the HR department becomes more important to align the people for executional excellence.

With the onset of new business scenario, the times are exciting and we have to gear up for new challenges, heightened expectations of stakeholders, be it customers, vendors, the Government, shareholders or the public at large. Therefore we have to work on a model where employees feel challenged, where they have the right tools for learning to deal with the uncertainties and complexity of market and also be prepared with the new competencies required for the same. This would entail creating an enabling mind set – a can do spirit, which has been the basic mantra for keeping Balmer Lawrie alive for the last 149 years. In order to be future ready, we have to look ahead to the future skills profile of the people, manage competencies and provide learning avenues to employees through training, job rotations, networking and closer interactions with knowledge experts in the industry.

The HR function should strive to create happy people to enhance employee engagement and productivity. High sustained growth being the demand of the day, it makes sense to link performance, innovation and cost consciousness with business results and part of the benefits should be ploughed back to investing in Human Capital. Therefore, it makes sense to reward the people in tandem with their contribution and motivate others to aim for better performance and rewards. Last but not the least, in Balmer Lawrie, the strategy for growth and success is going to be through its people, the most valued resource.

VISION & DREAMS FOR HR

"Good business leaders create a vision, articulate the vision, passionately own the vision, and relentlessly drive it to completion." —Jack Welch

These words are the guiding factors for any function and HR is no exception. In Balmer Lawrie the HR function today has a clear Vision and also dreams to fulfil the Vision. It is said that to understand the past we should read journals. To understand our present and prepare for the future, we need to look honestly and seriously in a mirror. And, to understand our future, we also need to examine our dreams. Dream Analysis has two parts. One part focuses on our daytime dreams which symbolize our hopes and aspirations and define where we want to go. For leaders this focus implies having a Vision, Mission, or purpose statement that sets a direction for where their organization is headed. The other part of dream analysis examines the subconscious elements of our night-time dreams. These dreams often deal with the implicit challenges we face and give our mind a way to ponder what challenges we face and how we might deal with them through dreams. So by analysing our night-time dreams we can begin to accomplish our daytime visions.

The Vision statement 2020 of Balmer Lawrie reads "To be a leading diversified corporate entity having market leadership in chosen business segments, consistently delivering value to all stakeholders, with environmental and social responsibility".

The BL-HR team has a clear cut vision drawn out from the above corporate vision statement of Strategy Roadmap 2020, wherein the focus areas of the organization are defined and have paramount importance in the HR area. These are :

- a) Human Capital b) Operational Excellence c) Execution Focus d) Customer Centricity

The HR of Balmer Lawrie will strive to concentrate on these focal areas and provide adequate support systems for various SBUs to achieve their goals to realise the vision of the Company, leveraging Strategy Roadmap 2020.

Capability building in various SBUs is going to be the thrust area. Acquiring niche skills for SBUs to meet their business requirements is going to be a challenging task which the HR function must address. Keeping the Leadership pipeline filled for specific SBUs is going to be a challenging task.

VISION & DREAMS FOR HR

Readiness of the SBU and Support Functions in terms of meeting the Strategy Road Map 2020 will be taken up by the HR team in terms of re-structuring/rationalization of existing roles by creating a role directory, and embarking on Leadership Development programmes at various levels. Identifying the Critical roles, most suitable successors Organising Assessment and Development Centres shall receive inputs. Retention of existing talent is also going to be a challenge in the coming years. BL needs to nurture the internal talent pool by grooming them, rotating them through various jobs, keeping them involved and constantly assessing them and bridging learning gaps.

Having actively engaged employees will fulfil all our dreams and vision set out for the Company. BL HR Team will do everything possible to keep a connect with employees and give them growth opportunities. My dream is that all HR employees should be customer centric. Any employee who gets in touch with HR team member across India should get the same positive feeling of "One Team and Great Experience."

The business world is changing. It requires HR professionals to contribute by creating value. The Strategy Roadmap 2020 is day dream for HR at BL. It lays the formation of HR and provides a direction as to where HR should be headed. It lays out challenges ahead and how HR can respond to those challenges. The HR function in Balmer Lawrie is set to play a key role in taking the Organisation forward and ensuring its success.

—A. Ratna Sekhar, SVP [HR]

History of HR Function in Balmer Lawrie

Balmer Lawrie has evolved with changing times since its inception in February 1867. With the evolution of the organisation through various phases, the human resource function has also metamorphosed, and in retrospect, it should be mentioned that it always remained ahead of times. This has stood the company in good stead to attract and retain talent and thereby helping it to weather competition, and to be the leader in its chosen fields of businesses.

The Human Resource function in the olden days was known as personnel, administration or welfare department. BL took the first step in this direction by establishing Personnel & Welfare Dept. in 1949. In the initial phase, the function primarily focused on appointing (the term is consciously used as appointments were primarily based on references from other employees or known persons), computation and disbursement of salary, taking care of statutory welfare/compliances and other hygiene factors, factory and office administration and coordination with the government/statutory authorities, to ensure that we were not on the wrong side of the law.

In general, it was the responsibility of the Personnel and Welfare Department to ensure that a conducive atmosphere was maintained to run the business smoothly without disruption from the workmen or non-compliance of rules/regulations. The Dept. used to ensure that the "trouble spots" were identified and "fixed".

However, it appears from the past history that even in its early days, BL believed in bipartism and considered its employees as assets and treated them in a very humane manner. This statement is based on the fact that provident fund scheme was introduced in 1949 (whereas statutory enactment took place only in 1952). Similarly, gratuity scheme was introduced in 1969 (statute came into being in 1972). So BL was always ahead of times in its human resource policy. The first long term settlement was signed in 1951 in Kolkata which was a testimony to the fact that BL had treated the workmen well and believed in bipartism.

With Balmer Lawrie becoming a subsidiary of IBP and hence a PSU in 1972, the HR policies had to align with the guidelines issued by the then Bureau of Public Enterprises (DPE now). Even during this transformation stage, the company believed in maintaining its distinct identity, and the HR policies were crafted to comply with the government directives, but this did not deter it from following the people friendly policies that it always pursued.

Whilst the larger policy issues were finalised at the Group HR (IBP, BL, Biecco and Bridge & Roof), matters related to employee relations were handled by the Company HR. People in the know of things vouch that HR philosophy in BL was superior to that followed by even the other three companies in the group.

The late 70s and 80s saw a spurt in professionalising the HR function with induction of more and more professionally qualified and experienced personnel as well as management trainees from premier

History of HR Function in Balmer Lawrie

institutes. From a maintenance function, HR was positioned to be a strategic partner. HR policies had also metamorphosed to provide the right kind of manpower for the growing business needs and the joint ventures that were established in the 80s and 90s. More focus was given to human skill development and management development. To supplement the internal resource, the company had also engaged HR consulting firms to conduct HR surveys, organisation study and to chart out recommendations to help in building a competitive edge. In order to fill the skill gap, the company had started recruiting professionals at all levels in the Company.

With the unleashing of economic reforms in the 90s, the Company had to tweak its HR policies. This led the company to go in for a massive restructuring during the period 1999 to 2002. The restructuring exercise was preceded by an internal organisation study. The study identified a large number of redundant positions and low value jobs. This was followed by skill assessment of the existing personnel. The study also revealed that the average age of employees was very high. Whilst identifying surpluses and redundancies, it also threw up a challenge to bring in fresh talent to man future openings.

In order to make the above changes less traumatic, the company introduced voluntary separation schemes; by 2002 end, the direct manpower strength was reduced by 50%. In 2002-03 the company came out with a scheme to outsource low value jobs. This had the twin advantage of cost competitiveness and flexibility in operations.

Simultaneous with the above, the company had also started induction of fresh talent by recruitment of management/executive and supervisory trainees as well as at lateral levels to take care of new and emerging skill requirements.

The 90s and early 2000 had been tumultuous for BL with the opening of the economy and advent of MNCs; we were affected in all our businesses. The HR department was burdened with restructuring exercises across locations. The result is today's lean and agile structure. This period was also marked by a moratorium on induction of fresh blood through regular recruitments. While these actions helped us to overcome the pressure of that day, it left the Company with gaping holes in its talent/leadership pipeline.

Beyond 2005, the story, which is that of the last decade, has been a story of re-invention where the BL HR Team has broadened the focus from efficiency to effectiveness. The thrust has been on building capability, managing morale proactively, focusing on results and more importantly leveraging technology in every sphere of people management!

—With inputs from S D Barman

Significant milestones and achievements in the last couple of years

- During the last couple of years the organisation has focused on creating a performance driven culture and HR has played a key role in driving this and setting strong performance standards.
 - Timely completion of the appraisal process across the Company, since June 2012 in a time bound manner.
 - Focus and priority on setting Key Performance Targets (KPT)— All executives have been brought under the coverage of the KPT based appraisal mechanism effective FY 12-13. With specific mandate from the Top Management, the HR resources since FY 12-13 have been providing dedicated support to line functions to help them set KPTs appropriately.
 - Through a remodelling exercise, the PMS process was made robust effective FY 13-14 with involvement of Deloitte and today it includes Competencies, balancing the needs for evaluation and development for better performance.
- First Town Hall Meet was organised in April 2013, when C&MD and Directors interacted with all the Executives and Officers of the Company with an objective of Employee Engagement enhancement based on recommendations given by Deloitte. Since then, every year town hall meetings are being organised across locations in the country. It has been an excellent platform for building and nurturing employee connect, which has been very ably supported by the RHR Heads and their teams.

Significant milestones and achievements in the last couple of years

- HR was one of the first functions to adopt SAP when the Company decided to implement ERP across businesses and functions. Over the period, the team has adapted to it well, implementing E-Rec, LSO and DMS functionalities during the 2014-15 period. In recent times HR has been improving processes through technology induction.
- During the last couple of years, HR has played a major role in supporting the business more proactively; the HR Manual for the executive category was reviewed and revised during FY 13-14. Among other things the function has partnered with the business in meeting its manpower augmentation requirement and have generally been meeting client system expectations. HR supported the business through an innovative approach when FTC terms were brought in and facilitated integration of Vacations Exotica post its acquisition in February 2014.
- In keeping with the Strategic Plan devised for 5 years, the HR Department has drawn out broad plans for the next three years with detailed fortnightly plan for 2015-16 for all the four regions.

Team HR has embarked on many journeys during the last couple of years to address the Company's diverse business needs.

Team HR



Glimpses of the HR Meet held at Raichak, Kolkata on 2nd & 3rd April 2015



Campus to Corporate

It is a journey of starry eyed youth, from the cacophony of classes to cauldron of stiff collars. It does not matter what one eventually does, every participant in the economy, be it an ITI pass-out or IIT alumni or for that matter professionals, viz. Civil Servant, Doctor, CA or Lawyer; has to take this journey! It is one journey that leaves an imprint in the professional DNA and hence for greater good, the Organisation must take proactive steps to manage it well.

The objective of any campus to corporate induction process is essentially to carve out a professional! The Germans historically have done a great job of it through their famed and hailed apprentice-ship practice. The idea is to take an uninitiated individual through a controlled environment, passing on to her/ him knowledge, knowhow, hands-on experience and wisdom to do an excellent job over a period of time. Alongside the German, in the Indian context, the IAS training protocol has been a success.

In Balmer Lawrie, we absorb relatively small numbers as compared to other PSUs in the fraternity. Consequently, our approach to managing the campus to corporate journey has been different when compared to others. In most organisations, the recruits move from campus to 'bench' and then to 'job'. In Balmer Lawrie we directly move freshers from campus to role, Executive Trainees are moved fairly fast into business roles and then they are helped to absorb the 'Balmer Lawrie way(s)', even while they would be learning the basics of the job. The primary assumption is that those who join us as Executive Trainees, possess the ability to think and act logically, what they need is incremental enrichment, in terms of knowhow of existing processes, the exposure to absorb the culture and imbibe the values of the Organisation. We consider top driven transfer of Organisational value as an extremely important element in the process of grooming. On the date of joining of the Executive Trainee, every functional Director interacts with them. The first meeting happens in the heritage Board Room of BL at the Corporate Office, where all the Directors personally engage with the young brigade and share their values and vision about the Company. Here it is more of action learning, and the results are there to showcase, we have Executive Trainees emerging as deputies to unit heads within five to six years and there are instances where individuals have been assigned independent profit center responsibility in their very second year in the Company.

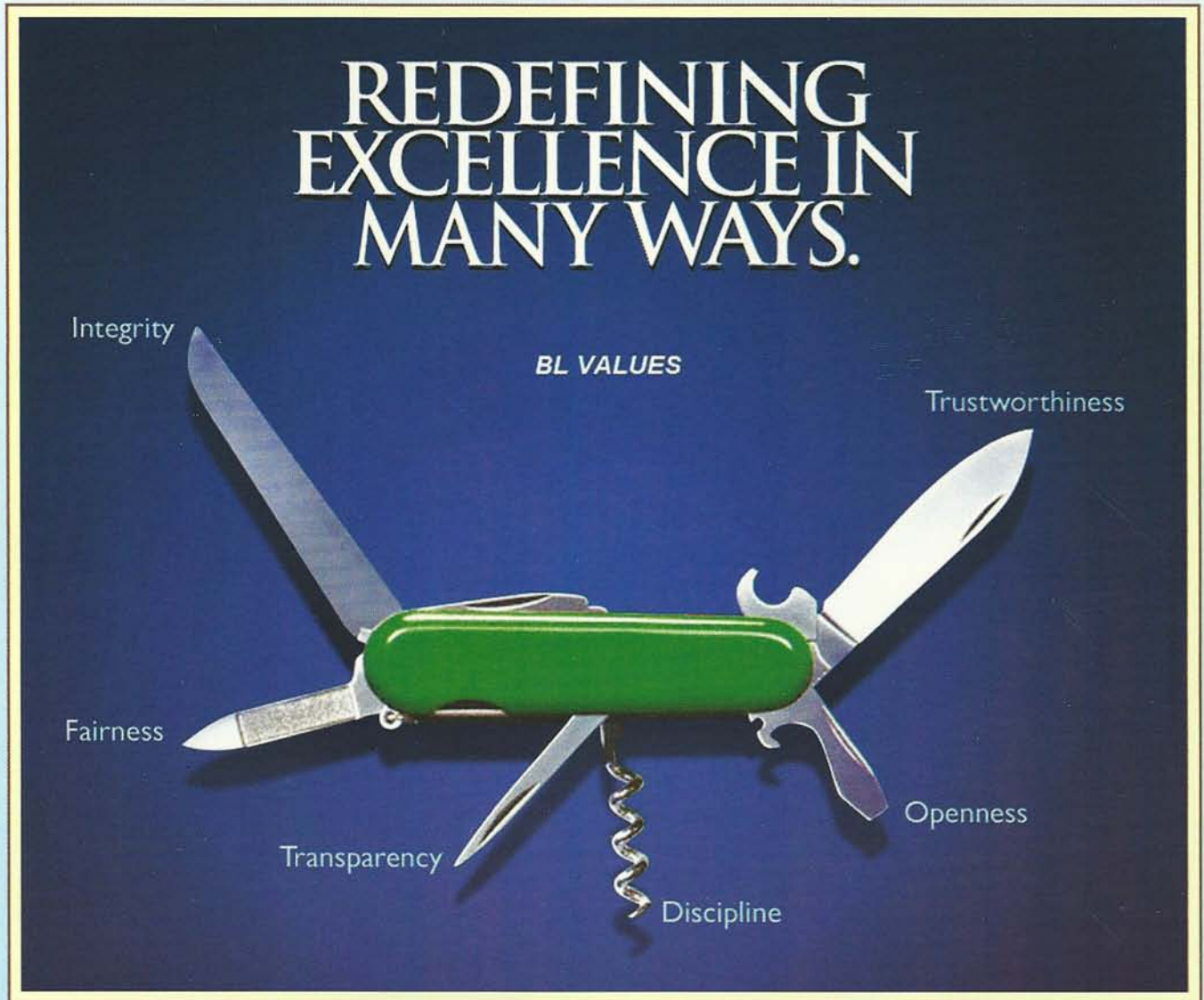
The Balmer Lawrie framework for managing the campus to corporate has been evolving over the years. Today it operates at three levels, spread across a period of one year. On joining, the uninitiated 'rookies' are taken for a tour of the four regions with a fairly tight schedule. The idea is to make them aware of the more-ness of Balmer Lawrie and tight schedule is to drive home the realisation that a manager in Balmer Lawrie is expected to operate in mission mode. More importantly this period is also leveraged to create a homogeneous team of young minds who come from diverse socioeconomic and family backgrounds. The second tier of the program, involves multifunctional deployment for two months, which exposes the trainee to the business that they would eventually work for. It helps them to appreciate how each function/ department in the SBU/Function complements each other. The objective is to sensitize professionals on interdependence and the need to appreciate how diverse functional priorities must be aligned to achieve the common goals. At the end of the 2nd stage a three day experiential learning workshop is conducted, which focuses on equipping the future leadership on life skills. The idea is to focus on self-management and enhancing interpersonal skills through greater self-awareness. Finally they are placed in the role to learn the job, during a nine month stint, akin to German apprentice-ship, the purpose of which is to help the young minds to learn execution, grow bonds in their immediate system that eventually becomes a pedestal to success. Towards the end of the nine months stint, every individual is required to undertake a live project, which primarily provides an ET an opportunity to work on one's own idea(s). They are challenged to think out-of-the-Box on business issues and finally, make a presentation to the management which not only explores their idea but also provides a plan of implementation. The Trainees are required to present the project report along with the SBU/ Function Head to the concerned Director. Experience of the past indicates that these presentations are reflective of the mettle of the individual.

Balmer Lawrie believes in lean structure necessitating reliance on the apprentice-ship model. The challenge in this format is that it is a people depended format, which in a way is similar to the Gurukul model. Success depends highly on the commitment of both the Guru and the 'Sishya'. So one would often

Campus to Corporate

hear Mr. Viren Sinha, C&MD, who joined Balmer Lawrie as a Management Trainee, talk about how his first boss would monitor the date-of-postage of his DSR (Daily Sales Report) to ensure that he is there in the market every day. In short, today the Company needs superiors who act as mentors, while the 'young Turks' need to understand and uphold their personal responsibility for better integration into the Organisation culture and ensure their individual development and growth.

—Siddhartha Das Barman, Chief Manager [HR], CHRD - Kolkata



Talent Management

Balmer Lawrie is a rather unusual public sector undertaking, in the context of the extraordinary diversity of businesses and processes that we handle, and consequently, the extraordinary diversity of people that we have on board. This extraordinary diversity calls for innovative strategies for attracting and retaining the best talent available in the market, which translates into putting in place an effective talent management strategy.

Talent Management is said to have been brought into focus through a study conducted by McKinsey & Company in 1997, published under the title, "War for Talent". While the study has had its fair share of detractors, there is something to be said of the title. It is indeed a "war" for talent, and corporations which are able to sustain themselves, in the long run, in the areas of talent acquisition and retention, are more likely to emerge victorious.

The challenge begins with getting the right people on board. When we say "right" people, it does not mean the "best" people, but rather the best who would fit into the role, and at the same time, fit into the organizational culture and climate, and be comfortable in it. It does not make much sense to hire a brilliant

Talent Management

candidate who will clearly not fit into the role and culture. Both sides will end up very unhappy. In the context of our organization, the challenge is for us to understand the myriad roles, and look for the best candidates who would fit into them, and into our culture.

Next up, would be the learning and development opportunities that we offer. Young people today are not loyal to their jobs. They are loyal to their professions. It might be easy for us, as an organization, to tie a person to a job, and be happy that the job is getting done. But, in the long run, it would work to the advantage of both the organization and the employee, to have him or her grow in the profession, by offering a variety of enriching assignments and avenues for learning. At some point in time, the employee might leave to further grow in his profession, but he would be leaving our organization a richer place.

Employees, today, like to be recognized and rewarded for their performance. This would call for a robust performance management and rewards/recognition system to identify and reward outstanding performance. At the same time, employees also like to work with people whom they respect and look up to. It is said that employees leave their bosses, not their jobs. It is the bosses who create the golden moments in a person's career. It is also the bosses who create the darkest moments. We therefore need to sensitise seniors on this aspect and train them to be better coaches and mentors.

Another key factor these days would be the kind of work-life balance that the organization offers. From a time when government and public sector jobs were shunned, we are now in a time when young people are actually looking at public sector jobs as preferred options. While public sector jobs are, by no means, less demanding, there is still a balance in being able to adequately attend to familial and social responsibilities as well. We will need to focus on creating an atmosphere where the employee feels wanted and cared for in the organization, which in turn, will usher in commitment and loyalty from the employee's side.

Those, then, were just a few thoughts on talent acquisition and retention which would be pertinent to our organization. How effective have our talent management strategies been at Balmer Lawrie; the proof of the pudding, they say, is in the eating. We have been attracting talent from other organizations across all levels, which is rare for a PSU. Besides, we just have to look at all the bright, young, enthusiastic and energetic young people who hold front-line positions in our Company. They tell the story. And, we know, we are on the right track.

—J P Ambrose, AVP [HR] - SR

Human Resource Partnering Business in Balmer Lawrie

HR business partnering is a process whereby HR professionals work closely with business leaders and/or line managers to achieve shared organizational objectives, in particular designing and implementing HR systems and processes that support strategic business aims as well as the overall aims of the organization. This process of alignment is known as HR business partnering and involves the top level of HR among the board of directors.

In the context of changed business scenario coupled with tremendous competition and recession in world economy, HR business partnering has now become an integral part of a successful business organization, and Balmer Lawrie is no exception to this.

To fulfill a strategic business partner role, HR at Balmer Lawrie realized the importance of the business, the environment in which it operates, the competition, and the circumstances that could influence the progress of the organization as early as in mid 80's. In doing so, instead of focusing not only on the day-to-day tasks required to run an organization, HR Dept ensured that its strategy, goals and priorities are driven by and aligned with the overall business needs of the organisation. Perhaps, that is why, till date, in spite of all negativities of business economics, Balmer Lawrie have been able to sustain its positive growth, when many of its contemporaries have either been closed or struggling for existence.

Human Resource Partnering Business in Balmer Lawrie

Initially during the 80's, Business heads at Balmer Lawrie used to treat the HR department as more of an administrative department and an isolated function from the business. HR department was assumed to be more of a Policing department and any problems pertaining to employee or IR situation was redirected to the department without even making a preliminary assessment. During this period, the HR department was neither involved into Business planning nor was it kept in the loop about how the business is performing. Thus the HR department never interfered. During this period, it was felt essential that decentralization of HR functions is needed to support the employees across units which in turn will lead to support business growth.

However, with the advent of the new economic policy in India followed by globalisation, this process of HR business partnering, or strategic partnering, strengthened during the mid-late 1990s, when, the HR department went through an evolution. With the advent of various multinational companies flooding the Indian Market with similar products like ours, HR at Balmer Lawrie as a part of business strategy bifurcated the department by creating a separate wing for Human Resource Development (Currently CHRD) which concentrated primarily on the areas of Learning & Development, OD interventions, Policy matters and Recruitment at management level, while the Regional RHR Departments handled Salary, Benefits & Perquisites, Recruitment at Supervisory & Non-Officer level, maintaining a positive IR environment and implementation of various HR initiatives.

It was during this period, the Unit HR concept was adopted whereby day to day benefit and perquisites including salary and administrative support was provided by unit HR. The Unit HR was considered as part and parcel of the business and thus providing support in a way which suited the nature of the Business the unit was into including its statutory compliance. The reporting and reviewing of the unit HR except functional reporting was to the Business Heads.

During this period, the company also inducted an HR head as a compulsory member in the Budgetary Committee for all businesses. At every level of HR and Business Meets, consolidation and expansion of business became the focus of discussion and many HR initiatives were undertaken primarily focusing on the business need of the organization. The basic concept that HR survives only if business survives was thoroughly imbibed in the minds of the human resource team by the HR leaders in the organization. HR was also guided then to be more proactive in terms of providing employee service, which in turn would not only lead to retention but also the employees of the other functions were able to dedicate more time and focus on key tasks as their HR related issues were resolved in time. Nowadays each and every unit HR head is roped into crucial business decisions which have an impact on the employees and business performance. Also, many HR initiatives have been taken by the company where the benefits and perquisites are aligned to unit's nature of business.

With the passage of time, HR, in Balmer Lawrie has gradually moved from being a support function to a core business function. In line with the same, change was also visible in Balmer Lawrie when in the late 90's our the then GM [Personnel] was entrusted with the responsibility of GM [Tea] for our Tea Division and served in the role for years as head of the business. To recall another instance, our ED [HR] also took over charge as Director [Service Businesses] and lead the service businesses of the organization for a considerable period of time.

HR leadership has also been seen at many times supporting the business through its strong network in the industry and taking initiatives that are aligned to business requirement. They have also been putting conglomerated efforts to mobilize their channel towards business development at many occasions. Recently, in an HR Forum of Balmer Lawrie, D [HR&CA], in presence of other Board of Directors has unveiled the Strategic Plan 2020 in which the role of HR, partnering the business in future was amply clarified by setting up proactive HR plans and goals with timelines to make a positive impact. The key activities to be taken up by HR on a monthly basis were detailed so that there is clarity on activities to be taken up by each region.

Thus, to sum it up, HR business partnering has become an integral part of organizational strategy in Balmer Lawrie as it becomes more important for the organization to become people-focused and see the value in aligning agendas toward a common goal.

—Subrata Deb, Chief Manager [HR], RHR-East & Nabarun Mukherjee, Dy. Manager [HR], G&L-Kolkata

Gen Y Speaks



The journey with BL has been very special since the time I joined as DM-HR on 16th July 2014 from 3M India. It's been close to 10 Months and the exposure in the areas of HR in a PSU environment has been huge. Since my joining I have been

a part of CHRD and currently supporting the HR areas of RHR-East. The conglomerated role of being the Business Partner (SBU-HR) for G&L & ROFS are challenging as well as learning. The organization gives a lot of importance to the youngsters by guiding and handholding them in crucial assignments. They are also invited in important brainstorming exercises and their innovative ideas are taken into reckoning for decision making which boosts their morale as a budding professional. Although we are adopting a lot of industry practices in HR but there are many processes that can be streamlined. Pertinent to mention is the most different Organization Culture that we have, which not only binds you as a Team but also as an extended family.

Prasenjit Roy, Dy. Manager [HR], RHR East



"My journey with Balmer Lawrie since I joined in June, 2008 has been very enriching. This journey has been a great learning experience coupled with different challenging and fulfilling assignments. Balmer Lawrie has taught me the practicalities of the corporate world and the application of college education. The work environment is

very positive and conducive to learning and performance. We, in the HR function, have taken a lot of initiatives to constantly grow with the times and meet the changing needs of people. Being involved in these initiatives has added to my knowledge and made my experience richer. I feel privileged to be a part of the HR team that supports the backbone of any organization i.e. people. It has been an honour to be working with such a prestigious organization."

Prakriti Ojha, Dy. Manager [HR], CHRD



I joined Balmer Lawrie in February 2015. Since then, what I enjoyed the most being a part of this HR team, is the process of transformation of ideas and the immense scope of learning. It teaches you to think positive! Tell yourself that you can change and you can do the things you desire! The daily work pressure and challenges just seem to melt away with great mentors, colleagues and an excellent work culture, boosting every individual to give their best at all times. I just want

to say that I am proud to be a part of this wonderful team.

Soumik Mukherjee, Asst. Manager [HR], LI - Kolkata



It's been a superb experience till now. I had gained tremendous support and guidance right from the day I joined Balmer Lawrie. I heard many in Balmer Lawrie saying, this is a "people friendly organization" and am sure that HR had played a vital role in creating such a wonderful culture across the organization. Without any hesitation, I can tell that HR is the most vibrant team

across all functions/departments in BL and I feel privileged to be part of this Team. The business challenges that we have today, needs HR as a Business Partner, rather than being a Support Function only. So this creates high expectations among others and provides us an avenue to perform and deliver over and above such expectations.

Ferozkhan, Dy. Manager [HR], LI - Mumbai



I am a part of Balmer Lawrie HR Team since July 2014 when I joined as an Executive Trainee and currently am placed in the RHR Department- Eastern Region. The association with the organization and the team though very recent has been

extremely enriching and exciting. I have been provided with enough opportunities to participate and work on various projects, initiatives and processes to leverage my skills and knowledge which gives me a holistic learning experience. An open work culture and warm nature of people around enhances an individual's intellectual and personal growth. I take immense pride in being a part of the Team HR at BL and look forward to my stay here in the years to come!

Shweta Shridhar, Executive Trainee, RHR [East]



I joined Balmer Lawrie in May, 2013 and it has been an adventurous and engaging tenure since then. I have been involved with all the eHR initiatives in BL and have supported the go-live for HCM, revamping of HRMS and integration all eHR systems. I never felt like a

newcomer and everyone around was very warm and welcoming. The support received from all quarters helped in better performance and smooth execution. I feel honoured to be part of a 150 year young legacy and look forward to a long and successful innings.

Santanu Biswas, Asst. Manager [HR], CHRD

Gen Y Speaks



The human resources is sine-qua-non to the success of any organisation. For me, no other function would be more rewarding than being a part of a function that is quintessential to any

modern day organization. As a person, I like change and I like to experiment. HR has given me the scope to learn diverse things and grow professionally. It is a proud feeling to have witnessed and be a part of some of the firsts in the organisation like, Intranet, HRMS, on-line PMS, Development Centre, e-rec and LSO to name a few. Hope to grow further with HR – larger and stronger!

Saloni Sahi, Dy. Manager [HR], CHRD



As part of Team HR, I feel a sense of purpose, an unputdownable drive towards giving the best for our people - in this shared journey towards excellence. I have this need to be in a helping profession and being part of Team HR helps me fulfil it, and more. It means a lot to me to be able to listen to my colleagues attentively or just untangle stuff and bring about common

sense solutions to work issues. I feel responsible when I get bogged down with the routine and sorely miss that opportunity to meaningfully connect with my internal customers. Being part of Team HR also gives me this sense that business leaders look at me and what I represent – in a certain way. It is like – “what this guy is saying is true.. and we are getting there... we must. But we would take time to reach that space.” - That can be very frustrating at times. Being part of Team HR gives me a sense of ownership of all that Balmer Lawrie stands for – a sense that cuts across businesses and geographies, a responsibility so overwhelming, but one I cannot deny either. Lastly, as part of Team HR, I feel fortunate to be able to learn from a diverse group of HR colleagues, each with his or her own strengths and idiosyncrasies, and each a member of my extended family.

Sourish Chatterjee, Dy. Manager [HR], WR

Tete-e-tete with V R Rayamane, Regional HR Head – Western Region

How many years you have spent in HR and how has your experience been?

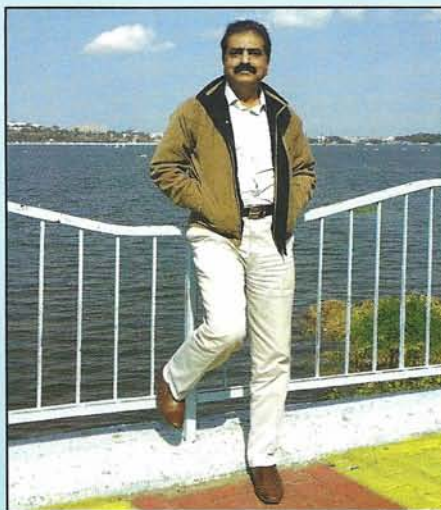
Prior to joining BL, I worked with Bombay Oxygen Limited for a year. I joined BL in 1985 as Officer (Trainee) at Mumbai Office. In 1986, I was transferred to Sewree Mumbai.

In 1989, I was promoted and transferred to Talaja Plant. In 1996, I was transferred to G&L, Sewree and was taking care of all the G&L Plants in Western Region i.e. Sewree, Talaja and Silvassa.

In the year 2000, I was transferred to SBU: Industrial Packaging as Regional HR Head for Sewree, Talaja and Silvassa. Subsequently, I was given responsibilities of Manufacturing of IP Sewree from the year 2006 to 2010.

In April 2010 I was reverted to HR Dept as Chief Manager (HR) in Western Region for IP and G&L Plants. From August 2013 I have been shouldering the responsibilities of Regional HR Head – Western Region.

During my tenure of service, I gained exposure in the field of Industrial Relations, Human Resources, administration and liaisoning with Government authorities. Having handled various Unions independently, I acquired and developed many skills in the area of collective bargaining and change management, which helped the company to take a leap from the old to the new culture to



keep pace with the changing and competitive era. I have extensively contributed in settling and implementing approximately 10 Long Term Settlements in WR. My experience in BL so far has been very challenging, and rewarding which has helped me to build leadership qualities. I have successfully completed 30 years of service in BL.

I had the opportunity of working under various leaders of P&A/HR, SBU Heads and Directors. Their experience, motivation and guidance have helped me to explore my potential of becoming

a successful HR personnel in the Company.

How have you seen the HR function evolve over the period of time at Balmer Lawrie?

Way back in late 1980s, the HR Dept was known as P&A dept and used to work under tremendous mental and physical pressures, external industrial threats – multi aggressive Unions, strikes, Court matters, wage settlements, grievances etc. There was no threat or competition in the businesses.

The major issues between the Union and the Management used to be on changes in traditional practices, productivity, redeployment on machines and multi-tasking. However, in the present scenario the Union and the Company are on the same wave length and together they work on fulfilling customers' demand, quality of product, and cost effectiveness.

Tete-e-tete with V R Rayamane, Regional HR Head – Western Region

The entry of computers brought changes and our systems were upgraded through introduction of Central Processing of Payroll, Computerized attendance, etc. Today we are into Fixed-Term Rolling Contracts, Processing Contract, etc. where the jobs/functions are handled by outsourced manpower, thus there is reduction in permanent manpower on rolls, which saves cost for the Company. With up gradation, we are also moving towards paperless office by introduction of Document Management System in SAP.

Today's approach is more focused towards Health Safety and Environmental aspects, elimination of risky practices, automation, multi-tasking, cross function movements, and productivity linked incentive plans.

Today the HR Department acts as a business partner working and functioning closely in line with the targets and goals rolled out by SBUs in their business plans.

What according to you is the biggest strength of HR?

Our biggest strength in BL is the unique work culture. Yes, businesses are different, but the themes and the objectives are always the same. The human touch to the employees, positive attitude towards grievance handling, willingness to settle issues across the table, imbibing systems, work processes and practices in the changing business scenario drive the wheels of our culture.

We always believe in encouraging youngsters and grooming them to become our future leaders; as seen in Balmer Lawrie all our seniors who steered the Company to great heights started their innings as a Trainee.

What steps are being taken to keep pace with the changing trends and act as business partners for all the SBUs/Functions at Balmer Lawrie?

Human capital management is the key business driver for all SBUs and Functions. In BL, the HR function has taken various new initiatives, to drive the vision and keep pace with the changing scenario.

In the last ten years, concept of HSE, CSR and

Corporate Communications have evolved and bloomed. Introduction of SAP system as ERP, Positive Time Management, On-line HRMS are the e-initiatives that have been taken. Celebration of Foundation Day across locations have helped in bonding the employees, and creating a stress free working environment in the Organization.

HR plays a major and vital role in bringing about cultural and environmental changes. For example at G&L Silvassa, there has been recent introduction of Processing Contract, standards of HSE have been raised and continuously improved, and this has contributed to turnaround in the profits.

The acquisition of Vacation Exotica has been a big challenge to HR. The concept of FTC is taking shape and we are witnessing the results in terms of reduction in manpower and minimizing overhead costs.

What will be your message for newcomers in HR?

The Company will be completing 150 years in 2017 and its survival till date bears testimony to the fact that the members of the organization are closely knit in its culture.

My message to newcomers as well as senior colleagues is to accept the changes and learn to adapt to the changing scenario. One should have broad views and always urge for self development, enhancing knowledge and acquiring new skills.

Align your goals and targets with business requirements. Accept, support and contribute in taking forward the new initiatives in the areas of HSE, CSR, Corporate Communications and be a active partner in making BL survive and sustainably develop for another 500 years.

We should have the passion and positive attitude to become an energetic leader of the Organization.

I love music. Music flows out with the synchronization of group of instruments whereby the rhythm, harmony and melody are played to bring out a common tune. In the same manner, I believe that HR has to play the orchestra, which will synchronize and align Human Resources with the Organization's Business Strategies to bring out the harmonious tune of "*Mile Sur Mera Tumhara*".

Tete-e-tete with A K Gupta, Chief Manager [HR] – Northern Region

How Many years have you spent in HR and how has your experience been?

I have been in the HR function since 1990. I joined BL in October 2007 and am totally engaged in the HR functions in the Northern Region. My journey in this function has been very interesting and challenging especially in the area of Industrial Relations. My role gives me an opportunity to interact directly with the workmen/ employees at various levels in the Northern Region and to



get to know about their mindset towards the Organization vis-à-vis their expectations from HR. This is such a profession where one requires continuous and updated job knowledge and skills so as to be a competent professional. I have received excellent exposure in this Organization. The HR Team is a mixture of Gen X & Y. All Senior and Junior Team members are friendly and cooperative. They always remain ready to extend their hands at any time.

Tete-e-tete with A K Gupta, Chief Manager [HR] – Northern Region

How have you seen the HR function evolve over the period of time at Balmer Lawrie?

In my views

- Till 80s, HR in BL was in the Maintenance mode ensuring harmonious Industrial Relations and providing administrative support to businesses.
- Post liberalization focal role of HR was to rationalize the businesses and to right size the manpower. In BL, loss making units were closed down through introduction of special Voluntary Retirement Scheme-first of its kind among PSUs and successfully marketed by HR that resulted in drastic reduction of permanent manpower strength from 3330 in 2000 to 1500 in 2003.
- Thereafter, the focus shifted to building organizational capabilities through employee development by pursuing Skill Development Program for workmen and T&D Programs for Executives.

In BL, HR has taken various initiatives over the period of time such as:-

- Putting in place BL Competency Framework thereby evolving Role Directory for improving the effectiveness of the employees.
- T&D program for Executives got linked to Competency Gaps
- Implementation of KPTs based robust Performance Management System replaced the

normal/generic subjective approach to appraisals

- Individual Development Plan [IDP] Exercise was carried out
- Launch of Development Centre was a major step in identifying top performers, leadership in pipeline etc.
- Implementation of Profit Sharing Scheme for Executives in 2007
- To assess the satisfaction level of each employee, Employee Engagement Survey was conducted and subsequent training programs were organized based on the outcome of the survey/ initiative
- In the recent years, a remarkable step has been taken by the Leadership to closely interact with employees at large in the respective locations through Town Hall Meetings.

What according to you is the biggest strength of HR?

In my view, HR has to play a pivotal role in Talent Management of the organization which includes acquisition, development, transition, motivation, promotion and removal. The success of the Organization will highly depend upon these factors.

What steps are being taken to keep pace with the changing trends and act as business partners for all the SBUs/ Functions at Balmer Lawrie?

BL HR is very proactive in adopting the best HR practices. In order to

achieve desired results, structure of HR has been changed to make it more relevant to businesses. The HR personnel [Executives/Senior level] were given the responsibility of business HR and Regional HR.

The Company also understood the need for taking HR at the strategic level and as such position of D [HR] was approved and filled up to represent the HR at the Board level where Strategic discussions/policies are getting framed.

In today's highly dynamic business environment, HR in BL has transformed to align with Strategic and Business centric needs to keep the SBUs constantly profitable. HR is getting integrated with business understanding, business nuances to become an effective business partner. To keep pace with technology, on line PMS, for recruitment – E Rec and for employees benefits – HRMS platforms are being used. HR believes in laying better systems and making them e-enabled. In this process, the feedback received from all levels of employees has been encouraging and result oriented.

What will be your message for newcomers in HR?

One should set an example of diligence, dedication and commitment. One must continue to upgrade professional knowledge/skills and put best efforts in making BL a leading Organization.

Know your Leader



Manjusha Bhatnagar
Director [HR & Corporate Affairs]

1. Your corporate journey prior to joining Balmer Lawrie

My corporate journey has been very exciting. This is my fourth job. I took up my first job in 1980 in a company called MPCON, an IDBI and SBI joint venture, soon after completing my education. My stint there was full of challenges and extremely fulfilling. As a youngster I wanted freedom to operate and

showcase my talent.

I was placed in a committee of 3 executives for conducting feasibility reports. I was the HR person

and the other two members were from Finance and Technical functions. In those days the committee had the authority to recommend loans upto Rs.4 crores. We were assigned the task of setting up factories on barren land at Devas, Madhya Pradesh. We set up 26 leather goods factories in a span of one year. I was entrusted with the responsibility to assess the parties, check their background, determination and will. None of the loans was bad and the factories are running successfully till date. This project gave me immense confidence and made me enterprising.

My dream Company was IOC. Those days IOC did not opt for campus interviews and would recruit HR persons every 3 yrs. I had seen IOC from close quarters and was eager to join the company due to its dynamism. I got my lucky break and joined the company in October 1981 as a Management Trainee. I got field, regional and Corporate level experience in IOC and underwent extensive rotations. In 2007,

Know your Leader

an advertisement was released by MRPL for the post of GM [HR]. I was happy in IOC but just wanted to prove that I could make it to the position and hence, applied for the post. It clicked and I was brainwashed and convinced by the interview committee that I would save 4 to 5 years of my career if I joined MRPL. With a heavy heart I bid goodbye to IOC and took up the transition management related challenges in MRPL. There I got the exposure to work closely with the Board and facilitated the task of migration of the company from a private entity to a Public Sector company, creating policies, systems and processes de-novo, in sync with various guidelines issued by the Department of Public Enterprises. I learnt to work with minimum manpower, keep my cool and handled hurdles that accompany change management. In 2013 I was selected by PESB and joined Balmer Lawrie.

2. How does it feel to be part of the Balmer Lawrie family?

I feel very comfortable; Balmer Lawrie is like a cosy family. Much credit for this goes to the existing board members. They have never allowed me to feel like an outsider. My journey at Balmer Lawrie has been pretty exciting till now, and I feel I have a lot of challenges ahead of me because of the roadmap to 2020.

3. Significant professional and personal achievements

I was thrilled when I was recognised the 'Best HR Executive of the Year' in 2005 by Hindustan Times-IGI Group. My Company felt very proud. The news was flashed in newspapers and it was overwhelming to receive many congratulatory messages and bouquets. I always wanted to make a difference by making life easy for other women. In 1997, I pioneered the Child Care Leave in IOC by convincing the Management about its benefits. This was later adopted by the Government of India in the 6th Pay Commission Report effective January 2006 and also by many private sector companies for which I was honoured by the Forum of Women in Public Sector during its annual convention some years ago. I was given a scroll and a standing ovation by all present. It felt very good and was a humbling experience.

4. Who all are there in your family?

My family is small. My son, Nalin is a lawyer from the famous National Law School, Bengaluru and my daughter, Ananya has passed her Risk Management Course from the Institute of Insurance & Risk Management, Hyderabad. She is working with

Mphasis, Bengaluru. My mother, Mrs. Usha Devi is 82 years old and I stay with her. She is an avid reader and is extremely meticulous. For me she is an iron lady who imbibed right values in me.

5. Who is the person who influenced you the most and why?

My father was my biggest inspiration. Being in the teaching line, he focused highly on education. He also sponsored education of many students who went on to achieve great heights in their careers. My parents' influence was very strong; they have been like touchstone, converting ordinary into extraordinary.

Another person who influenced me a lot was my teacher in school, Mrs. Kunti Mathur. She was my guru, mentor and guide. When I left my parents' home at Bhopal to study in Maharani Gayatri Devi Girls' School in Jaipur, she took me under her tutelage and turned me into a confident person from a shy child. She played a major role in changing my personality and groomed me for the world. My schooling transformed me completely.

6. What is your favourite one liner?

"Every day offers new opportunities"

7. What are your hobbies?

Listening to music, reading and travelling.

8. Which is your favourite travel destination?

Nainital – I love the place, the setting, the Naina Devi temple, the walk around the lake, the Bhaironath temple, the low flying clouds, the line of shops selling pastries, coffee and samosas, the mountain peaks, the treks, boat rides in the lake and so many captivating things. I love to hike up to the various peaks and sneak a view of the surrounding mountains.

9. Two things that you would want your colleagues to know about you

Failure to deliver quality work on schedule is totally intolerable.

I appreciate truth, even if it is bitter.

10. Your management style or mantra

Be true to your Profession and your Company. The organisation is above all and that is why even if I am asked to do anything wrong I don't do it.

11. Message for all Balmer Lawriens

Let's be determined and more customer centric to take the Company to newer and greater heights. Let's be proud of being Balmer Lawriens.

Know your fellow Balmer Lawrien...



Aniket Preetish

Assistant Manager [HR], WR

How long have you been working with Balmer Lawrie and currently what is your role/dept?

I joined Balmer Lawrie on 18th June, 2012 as an Executive Trainee after I was directly selected from campus [Xavier

Institute of Social Service, Ranchi]. I am going to complete 3 years in the Company soon. I am currently heading the Human Resource function in Silvassa as Assistant Manager [HR] and managing HR/IR and admin functions of Greases and Lubricants and Industrial Packaging at Silvassa.

What do you like about Balmer Lawrie?

With its warmth and unique culture, BL always encourages youngsters to shoulder big responsibilities and take new initiatives. Seniors support you in every way and appreciate your noteworthy efforts.

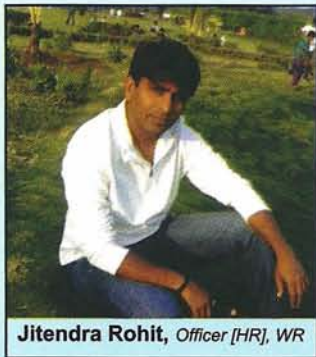
Know your fellow Balmer Lawrien...

What is your most memorable moment in Balmer Lawrie?

The glimpses of the first Annual HR Meet in 2013 at Chalsa, North Bengal that I had attended still linger in my mind. During the evening get-together our Ex-Director Manufacturing Businesses, Mr Anand Dayal came to me and said, "We are happy to have you in Balmer Lawrie". That moment has been the most special moment for me.

Who is your inspiration in life and why?

I draw my inspiration from my family, specially my mom and dad who have brought me up in such a way that I can adjust living anywhere from village to town or metros. They have always taught me to be down-to-earth and humble.



Jitendra Rohit, Officer [HR], WR

How long have you been working with Balmer Lawrie and currently what is your role/dept?

Having joined Balmer Lawrie & Co. Ltd. on 16th August 2012 as Jr. Officer [HR], I am on the verge of completing 3 years in the company. I am currently looking after the Human

Resource and admin functions of Greases and Lubricants – Silvassa.

What do you like about Balmer Lawrie?

Previously I was associated with Lupin Pharmaceutical Ltd. and Huntsman looking after Human Resources. The uniqueness of Balmer Lawrie which I experienced during this tenure is the "Freedom to apply the learning from private organisations and implement new initiatives with support from seniors." BL has an accommodative culture which accepts new things in its endeavour to excel.

What is your most memorable moment in Balmer Lawrie?

The most memorable moment in Balmer Lawrie

What are your hobbies?

I have nurtured my talent in Music, which I consider is God's gift for me. I play the synthesizer, guitar and sing. I love to travel and explore new places and learn about different traditions. I have a deep passion to be an efficient Trainer one day.

Place you belong to and who all are there in your family?

I am from Dhoni's place, Ranchi, Jharkhand. My family comprises Dad, Mom and two brothers. That's why we call ourselves "Hum Panch".

Any message for Balmer Lawrie employees.

If you have the potential and faith in yourself, no one can stop you from excelling and BL will definitely provide you the platform to perform and the opportunities to grow.

was the day on which the twelve "Company Owned" flats were made available for accommodation to officers and executives at Silvassa. I still remember the happiness on the faces of officers and their family members, when we had allotted the keys to their homes for their company provided family accommodation in December 2014. I thank the management for this initiative.

Who is your inspiration in life and why?

My inspiration are my parents because of whom I am able to stand on my feet today; my wife and my brother who have always been very supporting and sportive in every venture of my life.

What are your hobbies?

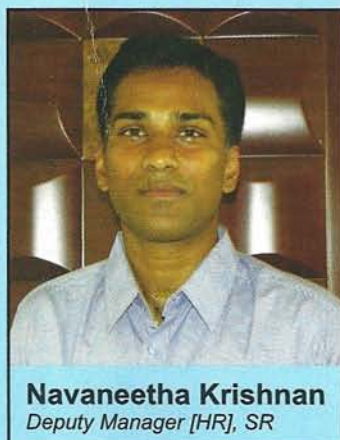
Though a "kind-hearted" person, I am very good at martial arts. I love making new friends, travelling and organizing group activities.

Place you belong to and who all are there in your family?

I am from Bharuch, Gujarat. My Wife, Mom, Dad and two elder brothers comprise my family.

Any message for Balmer Lawrie employees.

Do not fear life; be tough to tackle hurdles that might come your way. Treat your colleagues as your family members and the Company as your family to grow and excel in your life.



Navaneetha Krishnan
Deputy Manager [HR], SR

How long have you been working with Balmer Lawrie and currently what is your role/dept?

I joined Balmer Lawrie on 23rd July 2014, and I am a part of the Southern Region HR Team. I am responsible for IR, Statutory Compliances, PMS, T&D and CSR.

What do you like about Balmer Lawrie?

While joining Balmer Lawrie I had a perception that

the work culture will be like a typical government organisation. But after working here for nine months I could see no difference from my previous employment which was with a private organisation. It is great that we are competing with both government and global players and have sustained for 149 years in multiple businesses.

What is your most memorable moment in Balmer Lawrie?

I had never dreamt of working in a PSU and also hadn't applied for a PSU job prior to Balmer Lawrie but my family wanted me to work for a Public Sector Company. The day I joined BL is the most memorable moment.

Who is your inspiration in life and why?

We all come across many inspirational personalities

Know your fellow Balmer Lawrien...

in our life time. One unforgettable person in my life is Mr. R Doraisamy, my ex-boss. The punch line of Raymonds, "The complete man" perfectly suits him; he is the best in all the roles he plays. I have not experienced the company of such a good person in my life so far. It is because of him that I have improved and developed the habit of reading books, maintaining good health, and have learnt the value of treating a fellow human well.

What are your hobbies?

Gardening, keeping pets and getting lost in Ilayaraja's music are my hobbies but now in an apartment lifestyle, the first two are not possible.

Place you belong to and who all are there in your family?

I'm a native of Coimbatore, which is known as the Manchester of South India and has the world's second sweetest water resource "Siruvani River". We are five of us in our family, my father, mother, wife and my adorable son.

Any message for Balmer Lawrie employees.

Customer satisfaction is the mantra to survive in the market; retaining every single customer and fulfilling their expectations will take our business ahead. Internal Customer satisfaction is also equally important for any organisation. This will help in creating a conducive work environment and increase productivity. Let us satisfy both our internal and external customers and be a part in driving Balmer Lawrie's growth.

Recreation Club @ Balmer Lawrie

All of us know the old adage, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy". At Balmer Lawrie, employees are encouraged to pursue games and extracurricular activities beyond work hours to enhance bonding and camaraderie. Balmer Lawrie Recreation Club at Kolkata organises various activities involving employees and their families throughout the year. The year begins with organizing the "Annual Sports" where all the members, their spouses and children actively participate. The club organizes the annual drama staged by employees and the cultural evening, besides indoor games tournament and cricket competition. Occasionally the Club also organizes small tours for interested employees. This Club is generally driven by a member of the HR Team and the current general secretary is Mr. Achal Kumar Mitra, Manager [HR] - CHRD, Kolkata.



सोचती हूँ हैयन होकर
 कैसा वो लम्हा था
 रुके रुके से देखते
 ऐसा कुछ हुआ था
 चुपचाप सी हवा
 दुपट्टे को उड़ाने लगी थी
 बारिश न जाने कैसे
 आग लगाने लगी थी
 वक़्त रुका था या पलके
 अजीब सा मज़ा था
 होंठ चुपचाप थे
 पर दिल बोल रहा था
 शायद शिष्टके होंगे वो
 शायद सिर्फ़ नशा था
 पर उस पल में
 कुछ तो हो गया था।

—Priya w/o Sanjeev Padhee

Fortunes

A friend of mine was broken by constant failures. Despite tremendous efforts, he couldn't succeed. He went to a temple to pray. There he asked the priest about his future. To his dismay the priest said, "You don't deserve the target". According to the priest, fortunate lines were missing from his palms. I saw him crying irresistibly. After I came to know the entire episode from him, I asked him to accompany me to the temple. I also took a child of around five years along with us.

I asked the priest about the future of the young child, to which he replied, "Future cannot be predicted as the lines of the palms change during the growing years. It will change according to the path this child chooses, and finally the line gets stagnated." I asked, "Is this applicable for grown up people too?" To which the priest smiled and said, "Yes, provided they keep growing".

I looked at my friend; he finally had his answer!

—Girish Chand Gupta, Asst Manager [IT]

The Watch

She gifted me a watch one day.
 The time was good, back then.
 "The dials would remind you of us," she said.
 "Once in a while, we would cross and kiss each other."
 Standing there smiling she was,
 And I looked at her,
 Staring at those bright dreams in her eyes.
 Of us together. Forever.
 The time was good, back then.

Love had engulfed us both, in its pangs.
 Fear of separation had been inside us back then.
 "But I don't like us to be the dials" I said.
 "Kissing good-byes is not my cup of my tea."
 Instead, I could be the hours and you could be the minutes."
 And I looked at her.
 It was a perfect picture indeed.
 Of us together. Forever.
 The time was good, back then.

She parted with me for reasons oblivious to me, one fine day,
 The time in my watch stopped back then.
 Years passed away swiftly.
 Moments melt together, memories get lost in transit.
 The hours and the minutes too get separated.

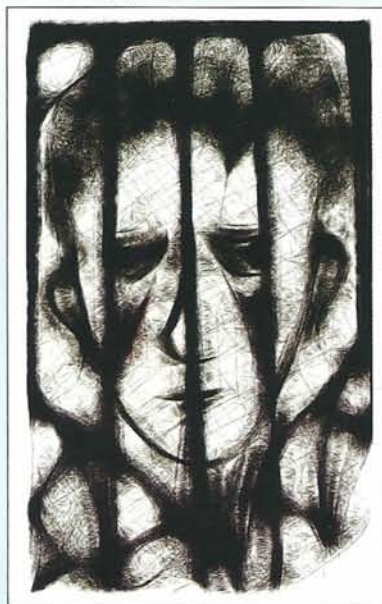
Looking at the rusty old watch one day,
 Memories painted her in my mind.
 And I looked at her.
 We would still, today, have a perfect moment.
 Of us together. Forever.
 But alas! The time was only good, back then

—Sidharth Udani, Asst. Manager, LI - Kolkata

TALENT UNLIMITED



Paintings by Manisha, d/o Mintu Dey, CHR D – Kolkata



Charcoal Sketches by Prasenjit Roy, Deputy Manager [HR], RHR – East

About my Inspiration in Life

A long time ago a bright and idealistic girl was in the final year of her master's course in computer science at the Indian Institute of Science, the then Tata Institute. The time was April 1974. Gulmohars of IISc Bangalore campus was in full bloom. She was preparing to go to US to complete her doctorate in computer science. She had numerous scholarship offers from universities in US. She had not thought of taking up a job in India. One day she was on her way back to the ladies hostel from the lecture-hall complex and one advertisement on the notice board caught her attention. It was a job – requirement from the famous automobile company Telco now Tata Motors. It stated that the company required young, bright engineers, hardworking and with an excellent academic background. At the bottom was a small line "**Lady candidates need not apply**". She was very much upset as she was up against gender discrimination for the first time in her life. Though she was not very much interested to do a job in India she took this as a challenge. Her academics was better than any male counterpart. She decided to inform Telco's top management about the injustice. But she didn't know who was heading Telco those days so she posted her protest directly to JRD Tata, head of the Tata group. Afterwards she was allowed by the management to appear in the interview at Pune. She eventually cracked the interview and became the first lady to work in the shop floor of Telco. She took up the job, shifted to Pune and worked for Tata Group many years. She met a gentleman in Pune and got married to him. After a long time since the interview episode, the lady with her husband, an intelligent but shy person went to meet JRD as they decided to start their own software company named "**Infosys**". The shy person was none other than Mr. Narayan Murthy and the bright young lady of this story is his wife Mrs. Sudha Murthy, my inspiration in life.

—Dhritiman Nandy, Dy. Manager [Civil]



Our People Our Future

*This House Journal contains information relating to Balmer Lawrie and is published for circulation amongst its employees.
This has no commercial value and is not sold to the public.*

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