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Headline:

India's best workplaces of 2016: GCPL sets template in caring for staff

Description: GCPL appeals strongly to the young lot, but demands excellence in return

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There's a good reason why working with the 119-year-old House of Godrej appeals so strongly to the young lot, says Prachi Kulkarni, general manager - HR, India & SAARC at Godrej Consumer Products, "What gets noticed here is the quality of your work, not the number of hours you put in. There's flexibility, a very open and approachable leadership team, as well as an environment that keeps challenging you," she says.

Kulkarni has experienced first-hand what the organisation has to offer: bosses who pitched in to help out during her pregnancy; out-of-turn conversations on her future role before she went on maternity leave, and the easy transition back when she returned. But it's all about Tough Love, for at the end of it all, the organisation expects its employees to put in 100%. "When I came back, my deliverables were as challenging as before. But whenever I needed support that was there too. For instance my job involves a lot of travel, so when I need it, I can take days off to be with my child."

Vivek Gambhir, managing director, Godrej Consumer Products says he's creating an organisation that's not just a great place to work, but an inspiring one. "Inspiration is about making people feel charged and excited," he says. Like a jigsaw puzzle, all the pieces need to fit:

attracting high quality talent and then energizing and developing them through challenging stretch roles and then rewarding high performance. It's also about the work environment, creating the right kind of culture and value systems, and giving individuals a sense of purpose. After all, the company competes against multinational giants in the home and personal care segment and that requires agility, not just in terms of marketing, but also in terms of the HR. "What is core to our DNA is that we are never quite satisfied with the status quo," says Gambhir.

If Godrej Consumer has been consistently finding a place in a list otherwise dominated by information technology and hospitality companies, it is largely because of the empowerment that it offers to its employees, coupled with the fact that it has seen a huge build-up in business, globally. "There is a strong career system that allows movements across businesses as well as geographies. We're giving responsibility early. If someone is even 60% ready, we take a bet on that person," says Rahul Gama, executive VP-HR.

As part of its 100 leaders programme, Godrej Consumer identifies the top 100 people in the organization by performance and potential. Then there's a conversation about the career development plans, which goes right to the level of the MD. Another initiative that has been a big draw is Godrej's campus initiative called LOUD (Live Out Ur Dream), to identify some of the most passionate and creative individuals and the kind that would be the next generation of Godrej employees. Then there are the company's initiatives around diversity and inclusion, not just in terms of gender on which it has already been focusing, but also LGBT and disability. "Empowerment, quick decision-making, early responsibility is what we talk about. While we demand excellence, we also give space for other things. That allows you to be well-rounded," says Gambhir.

Gama says the company implements a people asset scorecard at the leadership level, where 25% of the leader's goals is related to people: how he/she manages engagement, how he nurtures people, how he looks at succession planning. "We want inspirational leaders who give their heart, soul and passion into the workplace," he says.