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# In Conversation With Mehernosh Mehta, CHRO, Gati Limited



*The CHRO's responsibility now includes creating and organizing processes that lead to engagement and development, integrating people data, technology, and organization. Collaboration with the CEO on organizational structure and design is essential says Mehta in an exclusive conversation with Krishnendra Joshi, Editorial Lead, BW People.*

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by Krishnendra Joshi

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Could you please walk us through your career journey and highlight key milestones and experiences that shaped your approach to human resources?

I have over 21 years in the HR domain, starting as a management trainee at Asian Paints. Progressing through various roles, I served as an HR Business Partner for sales, handled R&D, and Supply Chain functions. I eventually took on the role of HR VP for factories and, in my last position at Asian Paints, served as the Head of HR and Industrial Relations for the Mumbai factory. My journey also led me to Sanofi, a French pharmaceutical multinational, where I managed talent, organization development, and learning for the South Asia affiliate. Simultaneously, I acted as an HR business partner for the pharmaceutical operations division, gaining comprehensive exposure to the employee lifecycle. Later, I transitioned to the Tata Group, where I designed the leadership architecture for the Tata Administrative Service (TAS) Group, focusing on career development for the officers. Subsequently, I managed the Tata Management Training Centre in Pune, working on leadership development projects for various Tata Group companies. My aspiration to become a CHRO led me to Mahindra Logistics, where I served as the CHRO, contributing significantly to the company's growth, particularly in the area of diversity and inclusion. For the past two years, I have been the CHRO at Gati Limited.

In dynamic industries like pharma engineering changes constant, how have you effectively managed and facilitated change within organizations from an HR perspective?

In the pharmaceutical industry, particularly during my tenure at Sanofi, we navigated constant change by investing heavily in creating a learning culture. We initiated this process by focusing on employees' core strengths rather than weaknesses, fostering a positive environment. This approach aimed to encourage self-reflection, promoting a language of strengths within the organization. The introduction of strength cards and the Strengths Finders test facilitated this shift. This not only broke down barriers but also became a tool for recruitment, career coaching, and performance feedback. Additionally, we implemented programs such as managers as coaches and projects for early potentials to gain business experience. This

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implemented programs such as managers as coaches and projects for early potentials to gain business experience. This emphasis on learning and development, coupled with leadership initiatives, positively impacted engagement, retention, and talent development. The culture of trust that emerged played a pivotal role in the organization's success.

### As the head of HR at Gati, what are your key priorities and focus areas for the HR function within the Allcargo group?

Since taking over at Gati, my primary focus has been on building the right culture within the organization. In response to high attrition rates and organizational changes, we implemented an employee engagement framework, emphasizing HR managers' regular visits to operating units and addressing employees' concerns. This initiative aimed to create a more approachable HR function, leading to a significant reduction in attrition. The development of an employee development framework, including programs at various levels, further contributed to building a positive culture. We are also investing in technology, exploring AI-driven digital solutions to enhance the employee experience, streamline processes, and provide valuable insights for career paths. Another critical area is workforce management analytics, where we are setting up an HR analytics dashboard to enhance process efficiency and cost savings. Lastly, we are evaluating the organization's structure and design to ensure alignment with customer requirements and optimal performance management processes.

### What strategies have you found most successful in attracting and retaining top talent?

Diversifying our talent pool has been a game-changer. Previously, biases hindered our approach, but now, embracing diversity and inclusion has allowed us to attract a broader range of talent. Creating a diverse workforce positively impacts retention. The focus shifts to providing a compelling employee experience throughout their career. Leveraging technology and analytics enhances this experience, ensuring the right career paths and continuous learning opportunities. Rewards and recognition also play a pivotal role, even during seasonal hiring, fostering a culture of appreciation.

### With your extensive experience, how do we maintain high levels of employee engagement, and what initiatives have we implemented?

Employee engagement is a continuous effort. We've implemented various initiatives, emphasizing a learning culture and leveraging technology. It's crucial to align HR functions with the overall business strategy. The role of a CHRO goes beyond traditional people management. Today, it involves integrating data, technology, and organizational processes to drive engagement and development. Working closely with the CEO on organizational structure and design has become crucial in this dynamic landscape.

### How do you leverage technology in your day-to-day HR functions?

Technology is at the core of HR functions today. Analytics, especially, plays a critical role in making informed decisions that impact costs and the bottom line. The CHRO's responsibility now includes creating and organizing processes that lead to engagement and development, integrating people data, technology, and organization. Collaboration with the CEO on organizational structure and design is essential.

### How do you ensure that HR functions align with the overall business strategy and goals?

The role of a CHRO has evolved significantly. Beyond people management, it involves integrating data, technology, and organizational processes. Collaboration with the CEO on organizational structure and design is crucial. HR needs to focus on eliminating non-value-adding processes and enhancing business processes. Prioritizing meaningful work and purposeful engagement over superficial activities is essential for sustaining employee engagement, irrespective of the work setup.

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