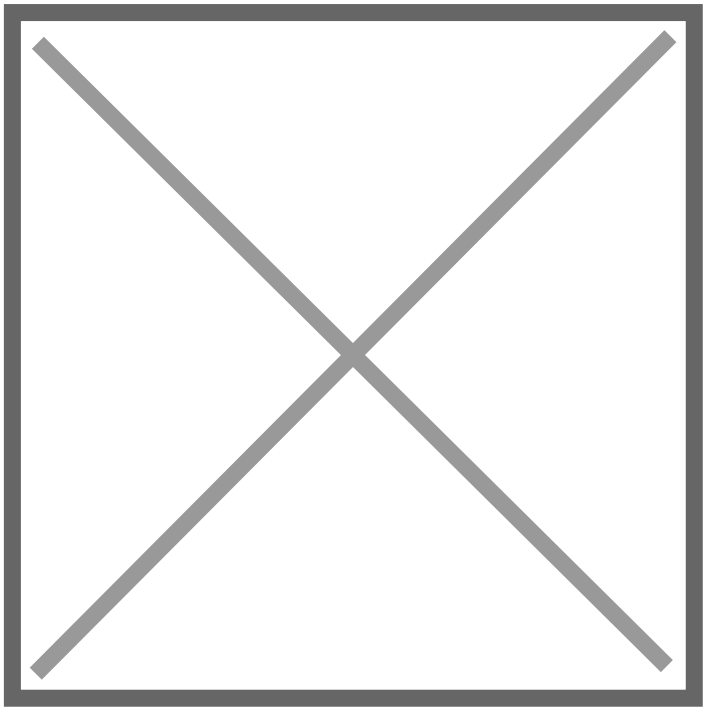


National Human Resource Life Science Forum

14 October 2008 | News



National Human Resource Life Science Forum

HR professionals from life sciences team up to address HR issues

Considering the astounding growth of the life sciences industry, a technological edge supported by knowledge workers has become a critical factor.

HR professionals are responsible for developing a scientific and behavioral culture that improves an organization's capability for growth and development. Managing HR in a knowledge-based industry like the life sciences is a significant challenge as it involves a multi task responsibility. However, these points are not understood by most of the companies. Therefore to maintain the steady growth of the biotech industry, there is a need for a new kind of drive and excitement. The old HR system and structure shall not suffice.

To address these issues, HR professionals from the life sciences have teamed up to form a National Human Resource Life Science Forum (NHRLSF). The forum is a representation of HR professionals from diverse life sciences organizations. HR professionals from leading life science organizations such as Advinus Therapeutics, Chembiotek, Dabur Pharma, Dr Reddy's Laboratories, DuPont India, GVK Biosciences, Jubilant Biosys, Matrix Laboratories, Orchid Chemicals & Pharmaceuticals, Quintiles Research (India), Sai Advantium Pharma, Syngene International and Veeda Clinical Research-India came together to take this initial step. George Selvam a senior HR professional and a management consultant facilitated the formation of this group.

"This is a very significant and important initiative from the industry's perspective because it is for the first time that HR professional from the pharma, biotech and CRO have come together at one place. We are seeking active participation from the industry for this forum," said Thomas Putti, head (HR), Advinus Therapeutics and founder president of NHRLSF.

The NHRLSF is formed with the basic objective of encouraging the HR professionals of this industry space to freely share their best and next practices in the HR forte. This has been done keeping in mind the exponential growth and change that this industry is going through not only in India or Asia but also globally. Additionally, NHRLSF will also focus in the areas of creating job opportunities, right talent development and CSR activities in the life science spectrum,. The forum has a well-defined scope under its formation and operation. Apart from providing a shared platform, there are initiatives for industry academic interface and recognition for organizations with best practices. The forum has also adopted certain cardinal principles, which influence its governance practices. It includes trust and transparency among the members, sustainability and growth of the forum, periodic review of scope, shared responsibility and decisions subject to audit.

Membership to this forum is restricted to registered life sciences companies with minimum 50 full time employees. There is a formal process of application that needs to be proposed and seconded by existing members. An approved member

organization is admitted on nominal fee.

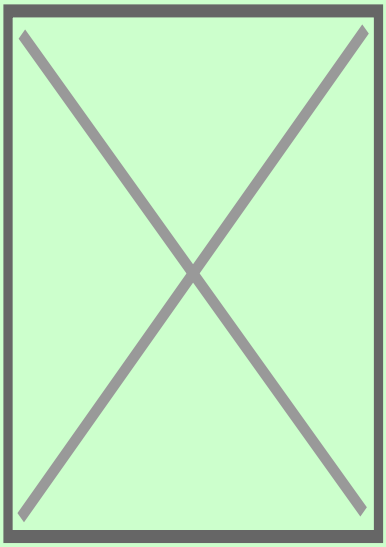
Human resources constitute an increasingly important and vital function in any life sciences company and biotechnology being a risky business the companies require managers and scientists with unique qualities.

Dr Goutam Das, COO, Syngene pointed out, "Within the HR function there are a number of processes that can be made better and faster.Finding and solving these processes is part of the work, and measuring the impact of HR initiatives is crucial." HR is predominantly more of a service within a service, he added.

The life sciences industry, which has been witnessing an impressive growth rate of more than 30 percent in the previous years, might face a break in its accelerated growth with an acute shortage of trained manpower. The current pool of scientific manpower engaged in the biotech industry, which is estimated to be 15,000, is expected to grow four fold to touch 60,000 by 2010. Therefore, there could be a huge gap between the industry's expectations and availability of quality manpower. "Life sciences has always played a secondary career path for the young generation. They prefer to choose other streams over biotech or life sciences. So there is a need to create an impact amongst the youth and thereby, attract a good human resource for this particular segment," pointed MA Mukund, director, HR, Quintiles Research (India).

The objectives of the HR forum therefore shall primarily include-- professional fellowship among members, encouraging sharing of best practices, benchmarking compensation, industry and academia interface, represent to appropriate bodies (government, industry, educational etc), participate in relevant corporate social responsibility projects and create NHRLSF as an industry of choice for future career aspirants. PC Pandian, DGM HR, Jubilant Chemsys said, "We expect this forum to be of strategic importance to the industry and country. This would also be a common body to represent to the government authorities. Though this is a small beginning but we plan to expand it and make a global footprint and that is our ultimate vision."

"Make India the destination for any career aspirant in life science sector,"



-Thomas Putti, Head HR, Advinus Therapeutics and founder president of NHRLSF

What prompted the HR professionals from the life science community to set up this forum?

The life science industry is in its inception stage in India with a huge growth potential. At this juncture every organization in this industry would go through the same challenges, possibly at different intervals of time. The HR Forum, an initiative by the HR professionals from the life science community, would avoid everyone from re-inventing the wheel as this serves as a platform for sharing their knowledge and experiences to help each other.

What are the issues that this forum intends to address?

The major objectives of the HR Forum shall include the following. However this is not limited.

- Instill professional fellowship among members.
- Encourage sharing of best practices.
- Represent the industry to appropriate governing bodies.
- Participate in relevant corporate and social responsibility project.
- Create life science as an industry of choice for the young career aspirants.

What would be the forum's focus areas in the coming years?

The forum was established in February 2008 and we are happy to have 13 organizations as members currently. The focus in the coming years is to give the forum the national presence and also to help the industry at large by attracting more talent. In the long run, we aspire to make India the destination for any career aspirant in the life science industry.

How difficult is the management of human resources in the life sciences industry compared to the other industries?

In any business, profit is the result of perfect product and services.

Perfection in product and service is a result of robust processes. The successful implementation of processes depends upon the capabilities and attitude of the people. Hence, ultimately the people make the difference. More so in a cerebral industry--be it software development or life science research.

Hence it is essential to appreciate, applaud and develop these talents in an organization. The