

Collaboration at Collabera

While collaboration seems to be the principle message for Collabera employees, client value creation, innovation, integrity and passion are the values that they treasure.

Renuka Vembu takes a look at the work culture in the organization



Keeping collaboration as the focal point of their business operations and organizational vision, Collabera functions around the same principle—with their employees, customers and all associated stakeholders. The needs of the 21st century have also called for basic tenets like integrity, professionalism, an open-door policy, transparency, skip-levels which give 360 degree feedback and an atmosphere which encourages employees to think innovatively.

Ways of working

Kavita Rao, Head, Global Human Resource, Collabera, said, "The Collabera way of working is founded on our vision of building client value for life. We focus on delivering highly responsive and asset based business solutions that bridge our client's execution gaps through a culture of collaboration and shared commitments. We create a dynamic environment of growth, advancement and learning for our employees and significant returns for our stakeholders while accelerating the value delivered to our clients."

Some of the values that are treasured in the company are:

- Client value creation—designing quantum leaps for a client's business
- Innovation—making a difference through creativity
- Passion for excellence—relentless pursuit to achieving better

results every time

- Integrity—ethics, trust, fairness, transparency and honesty
- Collaboration—power of working together

People processes

Transparency in dealings, a platform to learn and innovate, rewards and recognition system based on performance, a quest for further improvement, are some of the principles by which they embark on their day-to-day working. While the rewards and recognitions are quite regular—on-the-spot, monthly, quarterly and annually, they have a clear nomination process to take employees through this. Communication is in the form of skip-level meetings, town halls, project team meetings with the senior management, one-on-ones with employees and managers to bridge gaps, etc.

In Rao's words:

- Transparency with regard to policies and evaluation
- An open door policy which our senior management breathes and lives by
- Opportunity to innovate and learn
- Reward system based on performance
- The drive towards continuous and never ending improvement—recognizing that no matter what the current state—things can always be improved

Employee development in the company happens on four levels:

- Intellectual—through their Knowledge Club which focuses on innovation and knowledge enhancement through talks, discussions, quarterly quiz competitions, fortnightly online quizzes, contests, etc.
- Personality—through the Culture Club which focuses on activities that increase environmental, social, cultural awareness through fun activities
- Physical—Sports committee organizes cricket, football and table tennis tournaments for employees. They also have a gym on campus
- Social—through the CSR committee which focuses on giving back to the community and involves employees in this effort

Employee engagement is yet another indispensable aspect of the corporate working environment. Furnishing pockets of opportunities to learn, knowledge exchange programs, training and fine-tuning employee skill sets, fun at work, are some of the measures through which employee participation can be actively garnered.

Rao added, "Employees are given the opportunity and the ownership to not just work in projects but outside of it too. This includes IP/asset creation, and creating solutions for technology problems for customers and prospects. We realize



▶ that it helps employees if they are part of a larger ecosystem in the industry to understand and appreciate the landscape better."

Covering employee life-span

■ **Recruitment:** Collabera selects employees through a systematic streamlined screening mechanism that averts job hoppers and is on the look-out for people who are keen on building their careers with the company. A comprehensive set of tests like technical assessment, experience/content assessment, behavioral assessment which includes assessment of behavioral competencies and culture fitment and team players, management and leadership qualities, are some of the vital traits that they look at. A thorough background check and reference check acts as a sounding board.

■ **Training:** While the induction program gives the new employee an overview of the organization, its culture, vision, values, functions, policies, procedures, information on various points of contact, available facilities, company's services and organizational structure, an interaction with the senior management team gives a personal touch to the process. The employee is also introduced to a buddy and an HR business partner who partners with the new hire at all times. In addition, employees meet with various department heads.

Knowledge on the latest technologies to hit the market and best practices in the industry can be gathered through the Knowledge Club. Apart from these, the necessary technical training and soft skills training are undertaken on an ongoing basis.

■ **Mentoring:** Rao explained, "Employees have a manager who acts as both a guide and mentor. These managers are evaluated

through the appraisal system and through skip levels in order to ensure that the environment around the employee continues to remain positive and encouraging."

■ **Career path:** Rao advocated that the company has clearly defined roles and responsibilities across various streams. Quarterly and annual reviews which require managers to evaluate employees based on the KRAs, technical and behavioral competencies, and organizational initiatives ensure that managers regularly assess performance of employees against predefined goals and have regular conversations on holistic feedback with the employee. During this review, process managers have conversations with the employee regarding his/her career path with reference to the career ladder as communicated by the HR.

The HR maintains clear guidelines on the requisite criteria for movement between streams and promotions. Managers have been trained on these guidelines to improve awareness and increase assessment maturity.

■ **Evaluation:** Apart from performing as against the set KRA's, adaptability, flair and excellence shown in soft skills, behavioural competencies, involvement in organizational initiatives, employee engagement programs and awards that the employee has received in tournaments and competitions, etc. prove to be an edge in the evaluation process.

Areas that are focused on are leadership excellence, customer delight, execution excellence, collaboration and any other proactive or 'above and beyond' initiative displayed by the employee.

Bringing hierarchies closer

Quarterly town hall meetings between the senior management

team and employees from all levels help eliminate issues/grievances, as objectives and goals for the coming quarter are shared and accolades pour in for the results achieved thus far.

In addition, the senior management has skip levels and project team meetings. They espouse an open door policy, and any changes within the organization—either to structure or policy—are clearly communicated to employees before rolling them out.

Various initiatives such as quiz competitions, football tournaments, cricket tournaments and other cultural activities are organized for breaking the monotony, and also aid in bridging the gap. All these activities are ably supported by the senior management team along with their active participation.

Corporate social responsibility

Rao explained, "Collabera Cares Trust is a Corporate Social Responsibility initiative of Collabera that focuses on the education of underprivileged children. This initiative is propelled by the energy, efforts and enthusiasm of our employees working together to lend a helping hand."

She added that starting from 2009, they have also partnered with an NGO to provide English education to a school for underprivileged children. Through this initiative, they have identified people from the community to support the extra classes being conducted at the school—all this being an attempt to improve the children's standard of living. In addition, the Trust also funds teachers in a school for the blind and sponsors facilities for the spastic children. ■

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