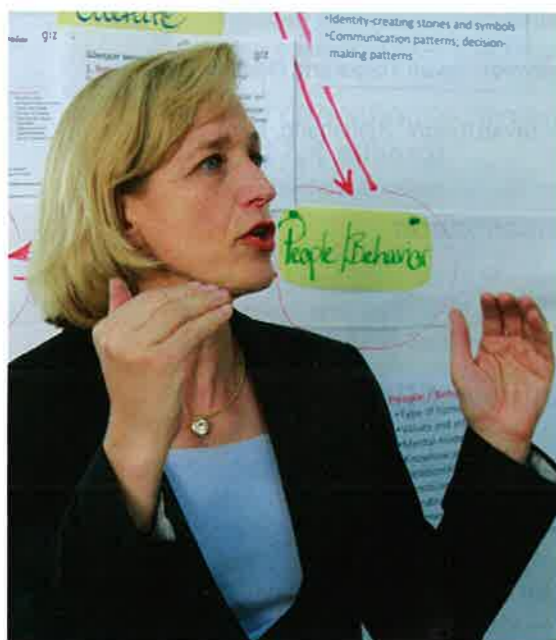


## MANAGEMENT

# THE RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARDS JOBS RATHER THAN SKILLS



BY KH. KHULAN

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*Mongolian Economy met Henne during a training course for management and leadership organised by the German Society for International Cooperation's (GIZ's) Integrated Mineral Resources Initiatives Programme (IMRI) in Ulaanbaatar.*

## Which essential factors should a company consider for the development of its human resources?

I think the answer is both simple and challenging. The simple answer is that you need to find the right people who have the right attitude, develop the right skills, and treat them in the right way so that they stay with your company. Human resource is the basic element of a successful organisation. If you do not have well performing, dedicated personnel, then you will not be able to attain your goals as a company.

So, first of all it is very important to do a good assessment of the human resources you need.

The first step is to think carefully before you hire someone. You need to answer questions such as: What type of job does the person have to do? What are the tasks? What are the qualities, attitudes and skills the person needs for the job? If you look at hiring staff, the most important factor may not be the skills but the attitude the person has towards the job and the company. It is more important to find a staff member that is active, responsible, willing to contribute and who has a sense of being an empowered employee, rather than finding someone who has the right skills.

If a person doesn't have the right attitude, it will not lead anywhere. Obviously, you also need good skills. But if you have the choice between the skills and the attitude, I would always go for the attitude because the skills can be learned.

So the first part is to find the right people. But in order to be able to find the right people you have to have clarity in mind. What is the job the person has to do? Which attitudes does it require? And how do you measure the job performance? Because very often we just give people tasks without telling them our expectations. In order to fulfill the task properly, the person just does anything, but it is not clear what is expected. Basically to make it more clear, you should also tell your expectations for the good performance of the given task

## One challenge that companies are just now beginning to face here is how to retain good staff? What can a company do to support its staff?

If you have people in the company you want to stay in the company and you don't want them to leave, you have to think thoroughly what makes a person stay. And the fact is it's not only money, but also being treated well, having the feeling of belonging to the company, the feeling of

contributing to something which is an important goal, and having success and vision. People are inspired by vision and belonging to something that is important. They love working in a good atmosphere.

If you want to keep your people, it is not just about money, but having the right vision and the right attitude towards those people.

And finally is career development. Do I have the perspective in a company that I can grow and have a career path? Is there an ambitious goal attractive to me that I can achieve in, let's say, three years, or is it the same job which I am doing all over again and where I'm not being treated with respect? Then I will leave this job later for a company with a higher salary or better branding.

Many people in Germany go more for well-known companies. They prefer to work for Adidas, Puma, Mercedes or Volkswagen than to work with the supply company that is unknown to the public. The supplier has the challenge of keeping its staff. Very often management thinks hard about employer branding. What is a good brand for me as an employer to keep my staff?

## How many types of in-house communication can be distinguished?

There are many different aspects to how to communicate inside of a company. One aspect is that there needs to be a strong distinction between information and communication. Information is passing on dates, states, figures, facts, and decisions that have to be taken. This is not communication.

Communication has two sides. One part is that I say something. The other part is that I might get an answer. The answer gives me another chance to explain, reply or to change something. And to better understand how my communication is understood. Communication is the key aspect in any organisation so that you have a dialogue and you can take your staff with you.

One instrument of communication is, for example, gathering all the staff and discussing the next challenges. It depends on the size of the company and how you are going to organise it. But it is important that it is not only a cascading way of communication, where the CEO meets with his or her direct subordinates and then communication cascades down along the hierarchy. Important issues should be discussed without the hierarchy chain, involving everyone in the company. You get better feedback and helpful information.

Another instrument of leadership is asking questions. A good manager asks questions of the staff and waits for the answers. Asking and talking to staff might solve challenges that you might not yet have realised.

## What should be done to improve the relations between the chief executive and staff?

The first thing you have to do is distinguish between structured and informal communication. Informal communication is meeting for coffee or talking in the corridor. Structured communication is a management decision. For this you have to decide on an in-house communication strategy.

I think this is something that is missing in many companies. For example, you can have a regular meeting once a week that has a definite beginning and—this is important—also a definite end. Don't allow meetings to carry on endlessly. Stick to a given

time table and stick to the agenda you communicated beforehand.

Another aspect of communication is setting the right tone and being open to receiving comments. If you are open you also increase transparency.

## In your training you have outlined three elements of good management. What are they?

The question of what is the best management has been asked for over a century. In general, everybody agrees that there are three aspects that are important for good management.

Set targets and objectives that are clear, transparent and have well defined milestones and are achievable and measurable. The second aspect is providing incentives for people who are fulfilling those targets. You have to distinguish between high-performers and low-performers in your company. The high-performers should be awarded and the low-performers should be trained, or, if needed, laid off. There needs to be careful observation of who is the high-performer.

## An organisation has staff from different social backgrounds with different behaviors. How can one communicate effectively with all these groups?

It is true that within an organisation there are many different types of people, as different as they are in society. People have different characteristics, from being very extraverted to introverted. Some are analytical, others are spontaneous. Some are slow, while others are very quick.

No matter how people are in their private environments, they will adapt to what is requested from them in a company. The question is what is the company's culture to deal with the differences? How do you communicate with your staff? If you are the CEO, always welcome new ideas and test them. Then even people who don't seem to be outspoken or outperforming will come up with ideas.

## What type of human resource policy is adequate for a company with about 20 people?

This depends on the type of work people are doing and the quality they are delivering. Human resource should not be too strict with regard to formalities. What is important is that people deliver results. Nowadays, companies are mostly knowledge-intensive and work with knowledgeable workers; less with conveyor belts in a production line. The important results of a company are based on knowledge.

So one should be more flexible with formal requests and instead impose an atmosphere of creativity. For example, there is a difference between the companies that produce pizzas and excellent software. You will not say to an IT person please produce your software from 9 a.m to 5 p.m. Instead you will say produce the software when it is best for you to be creative and productive, and just write the down time. Of course you have to monitor the results.

As long as the results are fine, I would give the person more freedom. On the other hand, obviously there are things that should be done at certain moments in time. It is important that the person should be responsible for the results. Then you don't need to focus so much on the process and the way the person does it. ■