



Building global organisations: adding value through people

ClinTec International's Dr Rabinder Buttar shares her thoughts on creating trust and other key factors for success when developing or rebuilding a business

The pharmaceutical world is in a phase of massive restructuring in an effort to reduce costs, improve efficiencies, shorten product development timelines and bring an increasing number of innovative products to the market quickly. What can the pharmaceutical companies and CROs do to make their global organisations become more successful than they are today, and what are the key challenges faced by them?

Developing trust in organisations

For all organisations, I believe that people are the greatest asset. Organisations in a state of positive turmoil have an ever-increasing dependence on their people as it is the people that make everything happen – processes, systems, are all secondary. TRUST, and the value of this in keeping an organisation thriving cannot be underestimated; especially more so in an uncertain climate. Trust between people is key for quick re-building and developing of new departments and successful top-performing teams. In a world of recent economic crisis TRUST needs to be re-built fast in the new developing organisations. New people need to come together and form new local and global teams, and re-create the new organisational culture. The human factor plays a bigger role in this than anything else.

Emerging markets

With drug development efforts shifting to emerging markets - areas where local cultural differences, regional regulations and language barriers exist - dependence on local personnel and their local expertise is key, and developing trusting relationships in these areas poses an even greater challenge. Here, extensive use of communication tools such as face-to-face meetings, integrating the east and west parts of the world to form cohesive project teams, and simply keep everyone motivated, pose great challenges. It is important for Western management to understand how things function at a local level and it's important for the Western world to integrate with their co-workers in emerging markets and quickly establish high degrees of trust. With this comes loyalty, respect and unison in efforts to achieve common global, as well as local, goals. To fully appreciate the local ways of working and then be able to adapt these to the international standards, to share the corporate vision with local experts in India, China or elsewhere, are some of the key factors in high-performing and successful global teams.

Developing winning partnerships

In attempting to break into and establish in new geographies quickly, provide new products or service offerings on a global basis, organisations are striving to develop new partnerships

with local players. How many of these organisations and their management really know how to work in the spirit of a partnership? How many actually take the bold step to move from transactional, sub-contractor type deals to pure partnerships deals where risks and rewards are shared by both parties? Partnerships take immense effort and this word is often used too loosely. While many partnerships are successful, very many fail, much to the disappointment of both parties.

So, what is the essence of a long-standing winning partnership? Again, trust must form the basis. New, stable partnerships should be formed for mutual benefit but each party's goals, and what each party hopes to get out of the partnership, must be clearly understood from the outset. This requires a high degree of openness, frank discussions and, above all, trust between both parties. Partnerships require efforts from both parties and recognition that, just like in a real marriage, a process of learning has to take place. Each party has strengths, weaknesses and no one is perfect. Successful partnerships can be formed globally, be durable and long-lasting once there is a real understanding between both parties on their common objectives and what each party can gain from each other to benefit their organisation and to create a win/win situation for all.

Essential ingredients for a successful partnership include the careful planning of strategy, executing projects, mutually adapting and modifying goals in response to changing business needs, resolving disagreements with understanding, participating and being accountable for risks on both sides. This is more challenging when there are geographic and cultural differences to consider.

Building successful leaders

By building trust, forming successful partnerships and making people across the world feel a real sense of belonging to a caring, highly reputable and progressive professional organisation, everyone can be successful. It's really all about people and how you deal with them. Getting the best expertise on board, training and developing the talent, placing a high degree of trust on all people will inevitably create an exceptional talent pool to form or re-create a global organisation. Creating a vision, making each person feel valued and part of the local picture as well as a key player in the global picture is essential. Showing progression in the organisation and developing people, creating leaders of the future, all helps to build and quickly re-build great organisations. ■

Dr Rabinder Buttar is president and chief executive of ClinTec International Group. ClinTec International has a presence in more than 40 countries worldwide and expanded its operations into 17 new countries, employing 115 new staff in 2009.