

LEARNING CULTURE & PRACTICES IN PHARMA ORGANIZATION (SANOFI)

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ABSTRACT

Sanofi is one of the leading pharma players in the world. It has built up its reputation both in among the stakeholders and the employees. The organization has designed and implemented series of people practices. This case study captures the people and learning practices at Sanofi India. It explains in detail types of learning interventions that are in implementation across levels. It details the linkage of learning inventions that are lined to succession planning

KEYWORDS: Employee Learning, Learning Effectiveness, Learning Interventions, Learning Cycle

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT SANOFI

With presence in more than 100 countries and industrial sites in more than 40 countries, Sanofi is a global life sciences company committed to improving access to the healthcare and prevention and treatment of disease throughout the world. Sanofi over the years have embarked into five business units and major therapeutic areas such as Diabetes & Cardiovascular, Specialty care, Consumer Healthcare, General Medicines & Emerging markets, generics and vaccines.

The company was formed as Sanofi-Aventis in 2004 by the merger of Aventis and Sanofi-Synthélab, which were formed after several previous mergers. Becoming the fifth largest pharmaceutical company Sanofi has been growing immensely in terms of sales and the presence, over last two decades. The core values on which Sanofi has engraved its business culture are Innovation, Confidence, Respect, Solidarity and Integrity.

ABOUT SANOFI INDIA LIMITED

Aventis Pharma limited was incorporated in India in 1956 which was then known as Hoechst Fedco Pharma Private Limited and now known as Sanofi India Limited. Sanofi' 100% subsidiary, Hoechst GmbH, is the major shareholder of Sanofi India Limited and together holds 60.4 % of its paid up share capital. Sanofi India Limited is traded on Bombay Stock Exchange and National Stock Exchange. Sanofi India Limited has two manufacturing units India, one in Ankleshwar - Gujarat and one in Verna- Goa with Head office based in Mumbai. Sanofi India Limited also manufactures its product through loan license for domestic consumption and for export to Russia, the Ukraine and other CIS countries. These are manufactured in accordance with the same quality standards as those prevalent at its own manufacturing sites.

ABOUT MANUFACTURING UNIT AT VERNA GOA

The manufacturing facility at Verna was commissioned in 1997 and full manufacturing and packaging operations started in 1999. The main activity of this site is manufacturing of solid dosage forms for the local Indian market, export to European countries, and the export of finished goods of to the UK market.

The plant includes a Global Development Centre which has the capacity to develop solid dosage formulations for the needs of Winthrop and the Asia-pacific base business.

The Site manufactures products in a facility that complies with global directives of GMP (Good Manufacturing practices) standards. This site is regulated by WHO (World Health Organisation), PIC (Pharmaceutical Inspection Convention) certified by the German Regulatory Authority, TGA (Therapeutic Goods Administration), MCC (Medicines Control Commission) and MHRA (Medicines and Health regulatory Agency). In addition this site is also ISO14001(2004) certified.

In 2012, the manufacturing unit has grown to double of its initial manufacturing capacity with commissioning of additional manufacturing plant. This had led to the sudden increase in hiring of the employees. Today the entire manufacturing unit comprises of 295 employees. Out of which 130 are within executives and managerial capacity and 165 Shop floor operators. There are also trainees who are hired from time to time in addition to apprentices.

The manufacturing unit at Verna, Goa has been synonyms with the encouraging work culture and the environment in which the employees can grow and blossom in their career. Being cognizant of the needs of each and every person employed at the site, Sanofi has evolved as one of the best employers to work for in Goa, be it for the workers at shop floor or the employees above supervisory category.

PEOPLE PRACTICES AT SANOFI

The employees at executive category are hired from placement agencies or through walk-in interviews held at the site. Most of the junior level executives are hired from within the candidates who complete the apprenticeship training of one year. The workers are recruited as apprentices directly from Industrial Training Institutes, who are then confirmed for permanent employment depending on their performance. Laterals are hired based on their past performance and work experience.

While few Workers are members of Union, there are majority of the workers who are in non unionized category. Despite of presence of the unionized workers, working environment in the organization has always remained peaceful. The non-union workers are part of the annual appraisal system, due to which they get annual hike in the compensation, unlike union workers.

Because of this reason the Non-Union workers are encouraged to learn and develop themselves in order to grow in their career. These workers are given enough opportunities in terms of their personal growth. Whereas, on the other hand, the Union workers give very less importance for their own personal development.

The organization has employees in 5 different categories which are further divided into scale of **7 levels**.

- Operators
- Executives
- Assistant Managers
- Managers

- Head of the Department (Sight Leadership Member)

Apart from this permanent staff, the company also hires trainees and apprentices for fixed term.

LEARNING CULTURE & PRACTICES AT SANOFI, GOA

Learning initiatives and development of employees in Sanofi is regarded as one of the main priorities of the organization. All the employees right from temporary shop floor workers till the top managers are made part of career development plan through learning interventions at every stage of their work life in the company.

The procedure of the training is governed by the Standard Operating Procedure which underlines the detail plan and course of action to be undertaken by the employees and the HR representative. This SOP undergoes revisions with changing dynamics and processes of learning environment.

Every employee, be it the operator or the executive, on the day of joining has to undergo the training on general Good Manufacturing Practices which introduces the employee to different compliances and important practices to be followed while working in a Pharmaceutical company. This training is important for all the employees from all the departments as it covers most of the basic regulatory requirements that an employee should perform being part of Pharma manufacturing process.

Within next few days the employee gets inducted by each department head, who acquaints the new employee with the functioning of each department and the ways in which the new employee shall be supporting their respective department. The department head also trains the newly joined employee on the technical knowhow of their department. For example the Finance Head will provide the basics of the financial principles to the employee which will be important for him/ her in routine jobs.

The formal procedure of training cycle commences in the month of December when the employee identifies the learning needs for himself. After identifying the Learning Needs the employees obtains feedback from his Manager, who may eliminate the learning needs due to already existence of such competencies or may add more training needs depending on his/her observations in past.

These learning needs are identified keeping in view the gap in the performance of the individual and the level of expected performance of the individual. Such needs may also be due to evolving trends in the industrial environment or for preparing the employee for new role or a new project. Broadly, these training needs are categorized as Behavioral, Technical, GMP and Safety.

Depending on the categorization of the training needs, the training plan for the next year is formulated which keeps the track of the trainings taking place during the year. This plan is prepared including all the trainings of internal as well as external training facilitators.

If there are any additional training organized by any department, which are not included in the training plan, the nominations are sought from all the department managers for such trainings. To easy the process of identifying the nominations, all the necessary suggestions are provided by the HR department.

Post every training, the participants' records the feedback of the training and that of the trainer on five point scale against five parameters. This feedback is then shared with the trainer and the local HR representative for improvements in

the future trainings. The training needs (TNIs), across areas are captured below:-

Table 1

	Shop Floor	Executives	Top Management
Behavioral	First Time Right – to improve the accuracy	Supervisory	Leadership Skills
	Positivity	Emotional Intelligence	Strategic behavior
	Innovation	Conflict Management	
Technical	Machine Operations	Lean & Process improvement	Financial Management
	Presentations	Machine Operations	Operational Strategy

Learning Cycle at the Site



Figure 1

Learning Effectiveness & Measurement

The procedure to measure the training effectiveness is laid down by the Standard Operating Procedure of the factory. This procedure is not only limited to the training initiated By HR Department, but also covers the trainings initiated by other departments with the help of internal trainers or the external trainers. In terms of Training evaluation the HR department has the objective to achieve the goal of doing complete training evaluation as defined by the **KirkPatrick' Model of Training evaluation**: Kirkpatrick's Model of Training Evaluation underlines the four stages of Training Evaluation.

- **Level 1: Reaction:** The degree to which participants find the training favorable, engaging and relevant to their jobs
- **Level 2: Learning:** The degree to which participants acquire the intended knowledge, skills, attitude, confidence and commitment based on their participation in the training

- **Level 3: Behavior:** The degree to which participants apply what they learned during training when they are back on the job
- **Level 4: Results :** The degree to which targeted outcomes occur as a result of the training and the support and accountability package

The training evaluation at the Goa site is done at two levels i.e. **Reaction and Learning**. At reaction Level the organization measures the reaction of the participants on the Feedback Form which is specified under the Standard Operating Procedures. This feedback is shared with the trainer to interpret the current standard of the training execution and enact improvements in the future.

In order to measure the Learning outcomes from the trainings initiated, the organization has the system to conduct quiz before the training and post training. The difference in the knowledge of the participant before and post training gives the clear picture of the learning occurred after training. Sometimes the trainer also gives the questionnaire with most of the objective questions. However, this step is not mandated by the SOP and becomes an individual choice of the trainer.

Learning for Succession Planning

The attrition percentage of the management staff at Sanofi, Goa has been below double digits for the past more than decade. The management have managed to fill all the key leadership roles across departments and the manager's one level below through internal candidates and had only one leader who was hired into the organization through external sources. Apart from proving that the workplace and culture at Sanofi is conducive and devoid of toxicity, this fact seems to point that the organization has successfully planned the succession for these positions.

Succession planning is a continuous process at Sanofi for all the positions. Moreover, this planning is done more rigorously for the positions which are critical from business perspective. Some of the critical positions would be the IPQA Head, Manufacturing Head, QA Manager, QC Manager and Plant Supply Chain Head. In such positions, one of the KPI' of the incumbent is also to develop the second line of managers to make them capable to take over the position whenever there is need to do so. The successors for such critical positions are identified in three different categories.

- Immediate Successors
- Successor after two years
- Successor after three years

This classification is done basically to aid the development plan for the employee depending on his/her current capabilities and skills. If the employee is capable of taking over the position at any time, he will be placed in the first category, while if the employee requires undergoing development plan for two years or for the period more than three years, he/she will be placed in second or the third category respectively.

During this period the employee undergoes several interventions, during which he is under observation by the department HOD and the HR Head. Repeated feedback and guidance is solicited by the employee during this process. However, most of the time the employee is unaware that he is been considered for the successor plan. Some of the interventions are.

Table 2

Sr. No.	Interventions	Objective
01	Job Rotations	To give knowledge about the functioning of other departments, which impacts the business of the organization? This also facilitates exposure to challenges faced by other department.
02	Managerial Skills	To improve the Interpersonal Skills, communication Skills, decision making skills and Leadership Skills.
03	Financial	To give overview of the financial performance of the organizations and make the employee familiar with the concept of accounting.
04	Business Environment	To give the exposure to the economic environment and the challenges in which the organization functions.
05	Corporate Governance	To equip the employees with the knowledge of the governance of the Industrial affairs.

This development plan begins with identification of learning needs for the position which takes immense brainstorming and discussions from the Site Directors and the HR Head. Sometimes the top management also seeks support from the Organization Development Team from Head office.

The Learning needs can be the requirements of the position or the requirements of the individual. The position requirements are mostly documented and hence become easier for the management to develop the person in this area. Whereas, the requirements of the individual differ from person to person, which makes it a mammoth task for the management to identify the learning needs?

Apart from the internal training, sometimes these employees are also sent to other factories to understand the procedures and good practices that can be implemented at Goa site.

Sometimes, when the incumbent is informed that after specified duration he/she will be promoted or transferred to other location, he/she is given a task to develop his/her successor. In this case the employee is clearly aware that he/she has to take over the position and hence he/she can effectively plan and devote time for own training.

Criteria in Performance Management

The performance of every employee is evaluated twice in a year. At the beginning of the year every employee is set with the targets to be achieved during the year. The employee has to then work towards achieving their targets under the guidance of their superiors. The employee is constantly given feedback on their progress.

These goals are set in the area of 8 competencies, one of the most significant in employee perspective being "Develop People". All the Managers are bound to develop people working under them on regular basis and this becomes a critical performance evaluation criterion for them. At the time of the performance review, the Manager is required to submit the report of the achievements in development of the People done by the Manager.

Due to this performance evaluation criterion, the managers are bound to train the employees working under them and not to deprive them of any opportunities for their self enrichment.

Leadership Development Plan

The mission of Leadership Development plan at Sanofi is to enable all the leaders to inspire, shape the vision and execute the strategy, for present and for the future. To achieve this, the company identifies the leadership skillsets required in diversified environment and offers a variety of business oriented learning opportunities. This enables the leaders and the future potential leaders to constantly evolve and contribute to their full potential.

One of the important initiatives under the Leadership development plan is the Executive Development Community. Executive Development Community is a digital community for the companies' top leaders. The objective of the community is to enhance a collective leadership mindset and to foster the education offer. Through this initiative the executives can interact with other leaders and share leadership best practices across the organization.

Job Rotation

Job Rotation has been constructively used over the years to enrich talent and create future leaders for the organization. Every year the site Leadership team and the HR department are set with the target of 5% of the total manpower strength to undergo job rotation. This translates into job rotations for 15 employees in a year. This target may vary for some years due to some changes happening at site.

Though this target seems difficult, the management team and all the departments have achieved the target in consensus. Such Job rotations have reaped several benefits to the organization. Some of them are it has helped the individual employee to explore their interest, it acts as a motivational initiative for employees, Managers are able to identify hidden competency in the employees and most importantly it helps in building an employee who is flexible and who is ready to take up challenging positions.

Job Rotations are initiated in two cases, first, in which the employee intends to move to other department for more exposure or when the management intends to, for development of the employee or due to business exigencies. When the employee desires to have wider exposure the employee expresses his/her desire to the Head of the department who communicates it further to the HR department. HR department then looks through the possibilities and initiates the discussions within the department HOD'.

All executive as well as operator are eligible for such job rotations. Such job rotations are for the varying period as per requirements of the job. However, if the employee performs exceptionally well in the department and if the management thinks so, the employee is retained in the same department after completion of such period.

In addition to job rotation at site level, the company also has a system where the employees are provided opportunities to shift to other locations of Sanofi within country or outside country.

Intervention for Shop Floor Workers

Every year the selected shop floor employees undergo a series of trainings called as 'KAABIL' which primarily focuses on building and nourishing the inherent capabilities of these operators to progress in their work life. 'KAABIL' was initiated as a development platform for the employees in the year 2012 and has been successful in providing platform

for development of basic competencies and supervisory skills among the participants.

The selection of the participants is done based on the nominations submitted by the head of respective department. The HR department then makes the final selections based on the selection criteria's.

With a mix of theory and activities, 'KAABIL' provides wholesome training experience to all its Participants. A typical 'KAABIL' session lasts for a day, usually with first shift timings between 8:00 am to 04:00 pm. Mr. Amey Gupta, a Motivational Speaker and Corporate Trainer, has been conducting the program for Goa.

The aim of 'KAABIL' is to equip the shop floor operators with basic managerial skills that would be critical if they have to climb up the career ladder. From 'Attitude' to 'Presentation Skills', the program tries to give as much as possible to its participants. In the year-long training program which conducts one training per month includes training sessions on 'Communication & Listening', 'Positivity, Happiness & Self – Motivation', 'Spoken & Written English' and 'Presentation Skills'.

By end of the program the participants are given opportunities to undertake projects under their preferred guide and in preferred work area. On completion of the project, the participants make presentations before the entire Site Leadership team. And with no surprises in past the viewers have got astound with the progress and the transformation of the employees.

Support/Sponsorship for Higher Studies

The Company provides the financial assistant to the employees who desire to pursue their further studies in the areas related to their profession or to the work performed by them, while being in the employment. All the employees who have been employed in confirmed services for more than one year in the organization are eligible for this Continuing Education Scheme.

In addition, this scheme also provides the facilities of education leaves to the employees who pursue their studies under this program. Till date, twelve no of employees have taken benefit of this scheme and it has attracted immense response from the employees since its launch. The key benefits of this program are the exposure of the areas to employees in which they have been lagging. The employees are also given opportunities to work in the areas in which they have acquired knowledge post completion of the courses under this program.

CONCLUSIONS

At Sanofi, the organization has well-structured processes in place to facilitate and track the learning efforts of employees, which is a win-win proposition, both from the organizational and employee perspectives. In the case of the organization, it helps to have talent with right skills and attitude that will help to have products that are competitive and are complain to regulatory requirements. In the case of employees, it helps to continuously upskill and develop themselves which will not help them in their current job but help them to move up the career ladder and realize their personal and professional aspirations. The learning culture and practices at Sanofi have created and positive and performing environment in the organization.

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