



INTERVIEW

TALENT FIRST

There was a time when Human Resource Management was a reactive function that sat alongside the business. Nowadays, HR is embedded as a strategic component that is inherent within the business and critical to its success. At Betsson Group in Malta, 24 HR and Office professionals form an integrated part of the operations. From turnover to risk management and cultural shifts, HR is a proactive science which enables the alignment of people to business goals, thereby creating an environment for success.



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The last year and a half, Betsson Group has been on a journey where the company has really put the spotlight on employees' experience and wellbeing.

Together with all people managers across the organisation, Chief HR Director Lena Nordin and her team are promoting the development and are armed with figures to prove the success to date. In the recently conducted employee survey, the analytics are impressive.

86% would recommend Betsson as an employer to family and friends.

87% of Betsson employees 'are proud' to work at Betsson.

89% believe Betsson to be a responsible operator who instigate 'fair play' and 'responsible gaming'.

In the 18 months since Betsson Group started this journey, staff attrition rates have fallen by 10%. How have they achieved this and how is Betsson faring in the war for talent? Many companies also want programmers, designers, IT specialists as well as legal, financial marketing and operations people. What makes Betsson special?

'The development we have seen within Betsson is the result of a bigger scope, where the company as a whole has worked with efficiencies and improvements in many different areas, where company culture and organisation played a big part.

For HR, the implementation of the HR Business Partner model allows us to cooperate closer with people managers and their teams, to continuously support the business and have a crystal-clear perspective on the organisation.

In addition to the HR Business Partners, the so-called Centre of Excellence also reports to the CHRO and supports people managers at Betsson within their respective area of expertise - Compensations & Benefits, Talent Management, Employer Branding, Recruitment and Talent Acquisition.

At Betsson Group, they have created their own environment; with staff known as *Betssonites*, an open culture of discussion and feedback from bottom to top and back again and an inclusive culture that makes Betsson, despite its 900 employees from more than 50 different nationalities across two offices, feel more like a family than a corporation.

'75% of our employees are Millennials', says Lena. Aged 22 - 32, they are free spirited and looking for all-round experience in different work environments, changing employer more frequently than older generations. Which is quite normal - they are young and want to try their wings. An advantage we have at Betsson Group is that we are a large, global company with many different career possibilities. With us, there is always room to grow and develop.

By 2020, Millennials will represent 50% of the global workforce and by 2025, they will be 75%. In the current war for talent, organisations need talented people more than the talent need organisations. So, businesses generally are going to have to fight much harder to attract and retain the key staff who make companies successful.

'We want to be the Employer of Choice and top of mind, for each and every one of our talented employees - Millennial or not Millennial - and for those we hope to hire in the future. The last year and a half, we have worked a lot with culture and leadership, which we believe are crucial to differentiate and attract the right talent. With our new initiatives, we have created our own energy and success. Betsson are now receiving over 2500 job applications each month and we have had 18 people return to the company this year alone!

The motto 'Talented People' is one of three focus areas in the business strategy and intrinsic to the company ethos. Visible, tangible demonstrations, through the office environment, working conditions, pay and the opportunity to progress through the company are essential. But the culture is critical. Communication channels and feedback are open but, more so than anything, is the knowledge that Betsson simply has great people working in the company.

'We believe that our greatest asset are our Betssonites. Not only do we have great colleagues and fun at work, but there is also always someone you can learn from to develop your career. One of our company values is *One Betsson* which is all about working together towards a common goal and to challenge and support each other. Therefore, coming to work is a pleasure, and not just due to the innovation and vitality you find here. Our second company value *Passion* states our dedication to our job, our colleagues and the industry that we are in. We love what we do, it's as simple as that.

The third value, *Fair Play*, applies to how we treat each other as well as customers and partners. It was very encouraging to see that so many Betssonites described us as a responsible operator in the Employee Survey. We believe that by playing fair, we win together.

You can feel Betsson's energy and success as soon as you enter their office. Their HQ and hub in Malta are both high tech, architect designed and beautiful spaces which overlook the Mediterranean. Clearly location may be a draw, but there is considerably more to working for Betsson than a view.

'Exactly', says Lena. 'Engage, Experience, Endorse' is our motto in HR. We don't stop at just the time a person is employed with us. We believe that the Employee Experience starts the first time



a person comes in contact with us, runs all the way through the recruitment process and onboarding to working, learning and developing their career with us. When the day comes and an employee leaves Betsson, we want to make sure that they had a great experience throughout and that they will endorse us going forward.

Part of the Employee Experience is the work environment and all the perks and benefits we have. Many of them are aimed at making our employees lives easier, promoting work-life balance. For example, we run a concierge style service from our reception, we have an in-house doctor and a dentist visits on a regular basis. We have a hairdresser and masseur on site. 'Friday Night Beers' are quite standard in companies now, but it is such fun on the roof of our Ta' Xbiex offices, overlooking the harbour and Valletta. It's a great way to unwind. We also have an on-site cafeteria and many other little treats and bonuses to help with the pressure of the working day.'

However, even more important than the benefits, is building a company's culture. It has to be done with passion and authenticity. It must be inherent within the company DNA.

'We are a very open, very transparent company. We believe in accessibility. Our CEO, Jesper Svensson, for instance, is a highly visible presence and an important advocate of our culture. We are a diverse company too. 357 female to 621 male employees and a real mix of nationalities, personalities, experiences and backgrounds.

We can still do more: everyone here is genuinely involved with the future of Betsson. We have

something called the BEE Forum, which stands for Betsson Employee Experience- where people can give honest feedback about what we are doing right and what we need to work on. The BEE Suggestion Box is for any idea and innovation: how we can develop both our working environment and our business'.

Development is clearly successful when you look at the awards Betsson have scooped up. Winning the EGR *Best Customer Service Award* four years in a row recognises the efforts Betsson frontline staff make in order to offer exceptional service in a highly competitive market. The award for *Best Affiliate Programme of the Year 2018*, also from ERG, shows that Betsson's clients aren't the only people appreciating the company's efforts. Suppliers and affiliates relish working alongside this innovative and exciting team and benefit from the interaction with their highly skilled and engaged staff. And last but certainly not least, the *Company of The Year Award* at the Women in Gaming, Diversity and Employee Wellbeing Awards 2019 which recognises companies that demonstrate a holistic and long-term commitment to equality, whether it is by gender, race or sexual orientation and have delivered significant progress in creating a diverse and inclusive workplace for all their employees.

Great progress has indeed been made, and Betsson Group is by no means done. With that kind of teamwork and dedication, the sky is the limit.

For more information, www.betssongroup.com