

Best *HR strategy* from *overseas*

Winner

Visible Alpha Solutions India

The approach taken by Visible Alpha's people team would be highly impressive even if the company were headquartered elsewhere, those HRDs judging this category felt. The fact the firm is based in a country and culture "not known for looking after its workforces" makes this entry even more attention-grabbing, they said.

Visible Alpha Solutions India was founded just four years ago in 2015. The investment technology company aims to transform the way Wall Street firms collaborate on research and financial models, combining advanced data correction methodologies, a secure distribution network and analytical tools to drive efficiencies and transparency in the research process. It aims to provide an end-to-end solution, from fundamental analysis to research administration, and has a growing client base and more than 450 banks contributing content.

Working from the premise that success starts with differentiation, the organisation's HR ethos has always centred around how important employees are to this. "We totally believe that engaged employees tend to be more productive," the firm states.

Employee wellbeing is therefore vital. The firm encourages staff to lead a healthy lifestyle through various initiatives such as providing fresh fruit and healthy snacks, health check-up camps, yoga and Zumba. Sporting events encourage employees from different departments to come together.

Specifically targeted at women are initiatives such as generous maternity leave, provision of a workplace crèche to support work/life balance, self-defence sessions, and a VA Imperium platform designed to aid the 'professional empowerment of women'.

"This must be a really good place to work," one judge commented, another pointing to how different this approach is



to the "head-down, long-hours" culture at many Indian firms currently.

But the good work at Visible Alpha goes far beyond wellbeing and engagement. And it all makes great business sense, our judges said. For example: a company-wide Hackathon, which enhanced collaboration, team synergy and communication and also helped the firm identify potential candidates for the next level and devise improvements to its products.

While traditional companies depend on hiring talent through consultants, Visible Alpha puts the emphasis on employee referrals. It believes that 'good employees know other good employees' and offers staff a generous bonus for hiring engineers. The impact has been an increase in referrals from 20% at the start of 2017 to 36% in 2019; decreased dependency on consultants (48% at the start of 2017, but now 9%); and an increase in campus hiring (11% at the start of 2017, and now 55%).

Shortlisted

American Tire Distributors

Hayleys Plantations Sector

Ooredoo Oman

The HR team has played a pivotal role in bringing product development in-house, with the initial outsourcing approach experiencing ongoing delivery, quality and responsiveness challenges. HR built a detailed hiring plan which was rolled out in two phases, executing recruitment drives in five major cities – including Mumbai for sourcing engineering talent. The result was an annual saving of \$3.6 million, something that particularly impressed our judges.

When it comes to CSR activity, the company works with Shigaon Zilla Parishad School, which previously weren't able to meet the basic education and study-materials needs of its students, and whose pupils were so enthusiastic about learning they used to walk 5-6 kilometres barefoot to school. The school has now been able to cover these materials for the year thanks to donations from staff and the organisation.

"Everything [Visible Alpha is] doing is just a bit quirky," commented one judge in relation to this entry. "I loved this one, I found it really energising," said another, with one judge agreeing that it was "high-energy [and that they] got that sense of real purpose and buzz, which was nice to read".

We hope you got a buzz from reading about it too.