



## **Cultural Transformation to redefine our journey towards Excellence: Bindu Jacob**

An organization which commenced its journey as a “start up” to grow as the largest digital cinema distribution company in India within a span of 7 years, usually grows in a chaotic manner driven with passion where every person employed right down from the CEO does not shy away from even doing the job of a front line staff.. Tough, isn't it?

This organization derives its strength from its people, people who were with them from the start of the journey, people who had skills that catered to this niche industry, people who were rare to find.

HR in such organizations takes on a multi-faceted role to create the building blocks to take this growth story to the next level. This could be defined as a dream job for any HR professional.

There were a lot of norms and practices that people had adapted well to, however, the need to look at newer horizons of growth became imperative. In such a scenario, we needed to pause, look at “what next” & align goals, even while retaining UFO's core values.

UFO Moviez had challenges which presented themselves as a natural circumstance of the company being where it was at that juncture. The need of the hour was to view these challenges in a tactical light with a firm focus on the future. What was also required was a fresh perspective – a reboot of sorts that would channelize the organization's energies into pursuing the goals identified for the next decade.

The MD and JMD were instrumental in creating the big picture, the long term goal post that the business had to target, and communicating it with the leadership team.

### **Define a forward looking vision**

When every leader is rooting for change, as HR, your role is to consolidate the thoughts & enable the chain process. So we exactly did that. We kick started the process of laying down the foundations for a long term growth scenario. A repurposing process was the need of the hour but this doesn't happen in isolation, rather, it's about getting all the leaders to come together, bring in their synergies and formulate a new purpose for the organization.

Not only acceptance but also ownership is needed to bring the much-needed change. After having been in business for 12 years and being the industry leader, we repurposed UFO with a redefined vision and our newly defined set of values, after which we finally derived at our long term business goal.

Believe me, this process wasn't an easy one. To start off, there was a whole bunch of brainstorming sessions, multiple meetings and debates. Basically, we challenged and ideated around the status quo. Crucially, this also included a process of “letting go”. Letting go, not of the accomplishments, but of the baggage filled with perceptions/notions/beliefs/differences that every individual was carrying.

I'd say we did a pretty decent job in that space.

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### **Role Modeling & Facilitation:**

With the long term strategy & goal in place, all leaders now needed to speak the same language and incorporate this into the DNA of their respective teams. It had to start from them. Why? Because, an employee is always going to look upon and emulate the behavior of his/her leader at a subconscious level and it is our subconscious that drives behaviors.

UFO has talent across diverse geographies within India & abroad. We have 22 offices and operate more than 5300 cinema screens across the country. To give you an overview, the Cinema Industry is a highly people-centric industry and the nature of business demands adapting latest technologies, and yet maintains the creative requirements of business which can only be managed by people - People who believe. These are the folks who need to be a part of the change. To them change will come about only if their leaders speak and act as per the new purpose defined.

We did exactly that. We got every leader to speak about their belief in the redefined Vision/Values & Goal, which got captured in a beautiful a/v that was sent across geographies for everyone to realize that there is a greater purpose of existence, there is a new beginning within the organization. In fact, we also created a strong second in line through a Succession Planning exercise conducted internally, with a view towards echoing and carrying forward the organizational vision.

There is a definite target that every person, irrespective of which level or department he/she is in, will be responsible to achieve. It is all about collective effort and 'Collaboration', which is also one of our Values. We struck the "emotional chord" and ignited a spark!

The readiness to look forward to a new horizon was created. It was a turning point and the entire organization came together to speak the same language.

### **Align Processes:**

It was now time to align the processes & systems. First on the list was the Performance Management System. Employee behaviors needed to be a part of this journey to excellence. That got defined in the simplest way, thus eliminating the apprehension that any new change typically brings with it.

We wanted our new Performance Management System to be cascaded to the employees in the most innovative manner, and who could have done it better than the employees themselves. Under HR's supervision, select employees formed a team and created this video in-house, including the entire scripting, shooting, direction, acting and post-production.

Performance matrices were made measurable for every department and were approved cross-functionally. Thus, we came up with SMART goals for everyone. This was a critical part of the process as it brought in the required alignment across departments and more importantly, linked inter departmental goals with each other at a broader level. While it may appear superficial in nature, this step had a greater purpose attached to it - "Collaboration".

Since goals were interlinked between departments, it meant that everyone had to work towards contributing to the larger goal and achieving synergies to succeed as a group.

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Another point to note is that 50% of every department's performance contribution was mandated towards one key identified goal of the organization, which made them value their contribution towards the success of the organization. In the 1st year, we got it 85% right. The big winner for us was that every employee saw merit in the change.

### **Maintain Rigor**

In all of these ingredients, we needed to add the chemical that will serve as the catalyst. And that was done through various internally developed training modules around behaviors. These were not the rudimentary programs available in the market, but well researched & customized as per the need of the organization. They enabled employees to understand the need to demonstrate the right set of behaviors.

It was extremely fulfilling when the employees demanded more of this and we were happy to cater to their needs since it was assisting us in our defined purpose of transformation.

Finally, Adopt mechanisms based on the organization's nature of business & it will translate into a canvas of glory.

In conclusion, if your story for the future is in place, you just need to put in the management tools that will cement the behavioral changes.

Every HR professional needs to remember one thing: An Organization transforms, provided you are passionate about it; it's easy to replicate the process available in the market but there is no assurance of its success. If no change occurs, it will be less & less relevant.

Manage your own culture journey, build clarity and alignment and stop wasting energy on implementing tips, keys and tools, unless they fit with your unique cultural foundation.

Due to the extremely creative nature of this industry, we chose to adopt and speak about transformation in the most creative way, yet following a technique- insightful & simple.

And the most important part is to create an atmosphere of security and well-being and not forgetting to have fun on the way.

And the journey still continues...

**Note- The following article has been authored by Ms Bindu Jacob Vice President HR & Administration in UFO Moviez**