

The Willis Harman Spirit at Work Award

Mr. William Miller who knows about our specific policies, programmes, practices to nurture spirituality in work place and outside have advised us to submit our nomination for the 'Willis Harman Spirit at Work Award'.

DETAILS:

Name of the Organisation:	The Times of India Group
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THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF BUSINESS:

The Times of India Group is a 164 year old company with businesses in Publishing, Internet, Radio, Television, Music, Multimedia, Retailing and News Syndication. The company has a turnover of US\$350million with a net profit of US\$65million. It employs 7000 people, has 10 factories and 26 branches.

The Group runs four Newspapers and two Magazines namely:

1. **The Times of India** (English language newspaper) with a circulation of 2.09 million copies per day. The largest selling broadsheet daily in the world as acknowledged by the **Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC)**.

2. **The Economic Times** (English language newspaper) with a circulation of over 400 thousand copies per day. The second largest financial newspaper in the world after Wall Street Journal.
3. **Maharashtra Times** a linguistic Marathi newspaper (local language) with a circulation of 200 thousand copies per day. One of the most read Marathi newspaper in India.
4. **Navbharat Times** (Hindi language newspaper) with a circulation of more than four hundred thousand copies per day. One of the largest selling Hindi newspapers in India.
5. **Femina Magazine** (for generation W) is a fortnightly magazine and has a circulation of 1.13 lakh copies per issue. The most happening women's magazine for the women of substance.
6. **Filmfare Magazine** (the only intellectual film magazine) is issued every month and it has a circulation of 1.18 lakh copies per month. It is the final destination for film reviews.

In addition to this, we have:

- 116 sub brands around the main brands.
- Internet which is known as '**Indiatimes.com**' which has more than 825 million page views per month.
- 10 radio stations under the name '**Radio Mirchi**'.
- **Times Multimedia** which provides multimedia, CD and information to the discerning audiences
- **Times Music** which develops music genre and products. It has developed the largest genre of spiritual music.
- **Planet M**, chain of retail stores and
- **Syndication of News** to smaller publications.

CURRENT VISION AND MISSION:

The ***Vision of the company*** is to grow as the largest infotainment company to provide meaning and add value to people's lives.

The ***Mission of the company*** is to create brands with differentiated content and market it to relevant audiences to provide multiple values to the readers and advertisers.

'The Times of India' brand symbolises from mundane to spiritualism. We believe that as the reader moves upward in one's journey from physical to the spiritual, s/he connects with the Times of India in its various offerings.

PHILOSOPHY AND CORE VALUES:

The *Philosophy and the Core value of the Company* has been to better the lives of people both within and outside the organisation as a 'teaching organisation'.

We believe, that the company is not a forum to honour or dishonour any individual / organisation / nation. The organisation values people who are at equipoise and are self-motivated. It is our belief that employees should work with loving detachment towards their roles. The organisation thus values people who work from the core of the inner most being and as per their volition.

The organisation structure is consumer focussed and the customer is seen as God. Everyone in the organisation joins together to provide an offering to this God (customer) with the best possible news and views, of highest quality at fastest speed. The organisation is not solely governed by profits. The aim of the organisation is to make employees and stakeholders happy and achieve their highest potential by using the organisation as a platform for self actualization.

However, we believe that organisation cannot be a cause for anyone's happiness or unhappiness. Happiness comes from within and the organisation at best can provide an environment for that to happen.

THE POLICIES, PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES THAT EXPLICITLY PROMOTES SPIRIT AT WORK.

'The Times of India Group' has been the market leader in publishing and newspaper for the last 164 years. The company today makes a net profit of Rs.300crores on a turnover of Rs.1600crores. On a debt equity ratio, there is no debt. Employees are happy and the attrition rate is 7%. The wage cost to turnover rate is 10%.

The company by every business and spiritual parameters has succeeded beyond reasonable doubt. We would like to highlight some of the reason, which has contributed to the growth. We, however, fundamentally believe that life evolves naturally and one cannot predict the future. We, therefore, should be present to the present and not bother about the past or the future. We believe, that we will evolve the best when we are in tune with self and when we tap the inherent spirit of our resources, which are mainly people as we are in the knowledge industry.

Some of the actions that we have explicitly taken to promote spirit at work place are as follows:

1. The Times of India Group was the first one to introduce a column on spirituality called the '**Speaking Tree**' in May 1996. This became so popular that today it has gone to the editorial page. The Speaking Tree provides spiritual guidance to people to influence their lives by commenting on all religions and highlighting spiritualism in everyday life.
2. The Times Music was the first to start the spiritual genre of music in India. We first came out with a CD called '**Gayatri**' in March 1999 which sold more than 10 lakh copies, after that we produced music from Vedas, Upanishads and various Mantras as it has touched the lives and souls of millions of Indians to get spirituality back in their lives.
3. We have always believed that each individual is unique and that the organisation should work like a hospital. In a hospital various doctors, specialists come to do their work as per their specialisation and help the patients to recover while working in collaboration without reporting to each other. *For example:* When a patient is operated the anaesthetist, surgeon, physician, radiologists, etc., do not report to each other yet all of them work together in harmony to offer the best possible service to the patient to help the patient to recover.

In our company, we believe that the customer is the central focus of all departments and people should work together while respecting each other's specialisation to serve the customer. The structure, therefore, inherently determines that we get in super specialists at the functional level and they have their generalist supporting them. These super specialists respect each other's specialisation and work in the spirit of cooperation to deliver to the audience high quality service at top most speed at minimum cost. That is why we can sell the newspaper at Rs.2/- to the Indian public though the cost of production is Rs.8/- per paper. On an average, we give 40 pages every day to the reader covering all fields of specialisation to enhance ones life. The entire ethos of the company is to respect each human being as a representation of God and serve him/her to manifest the latent divinity.

4. The strategy of the organisation has been to encourage collective wisdom and plurality of use. We, therefore, create participatory processes to find solutions for futuristic work, present performance and situations that arise from time to time. Because of this reason, we tap the best potential, views of people and encourage them to contribute to the organisations growth and development. This is adapted from the principle of "Anekantwad" from a Yogavashistha of the Vedanta, a religious text.

5. Since 1997, as an organisation development exercise every year we create a participatory process (a forum called LENS) to examine the vision of the company and to create an action plan. These workshops have been attended by the principal Shareholders, Directors, Editors and all senior people to brainstorm and decide the future purpose, mission and the actions that will be taken for the company. Similarly, workshops are also conducted for each brand to decide the purpose, vision, mission and the product mix of each brand through a participatory process. These forums create a spirit of participation and co-operation for people to be in a position to contribute and be in the organisation.
6. We have designed a training methodology whereby every employee who joins our company goes through a program called 'Managing Self.' Those who have subordinates go through a program called 'Managing People'.

These programs have been developed as it was researched that even in the best of Management schools the students are not taught how to manage themselves in terms of body and mind control, controlling ego and applied behavioural sciences to help them unleash their latent potential and work from their inner most source. We call this program as "Self Mastery".

It is our fundamental belief that the world is going through tremendous change and the only way to survive and be successful is when an organisation brings innovation in its products and services. We believe, that our system of education stifles creativity rather than unleashing innovation. We also believe that spiritual technique creates calmness, introspective behaviour, helps focussing, facilitates observation which are needed to be innovative. Therefore, central to our learning architecture since 1998, we run programs on spiritual methods to help people unleash their power of innovation and creativity. We are doing a research study on "Impact of Spiritual Methods" on individual, behavioural change and performance. This is an anecdotal study supported by empirical analysis. We have chosen a number of people through random sampling method where we have taken every 5th employee from the employee role. This helps to cut across hierarchies, gender, specialisation, caste, religion, etc., to provide relevant sample. All those who are members of the sample go through a specific program of training. Everyone is taught Yoga, Meditation, Pranayam (breath regulation and control), Value training and a structured course on Self Mastery. Our preliminary results are portraying that there are significant improvement in the areas of performance, human relations, individual performance, peer relationship and the overall happiness of the individual. We still do not know whether it is really increasing innovative capacities though there are trends to show that individuals are demonstrating greater diverse thinking after they have gone through this program.

7. We have also developed “**International Institute of Inner Sciences**” which provides spiritual training through the existing spiritual masters to our employees and to outsiders to create greater happiness in their lives. We have been asked to train the Senior Officer of the Civil Servant of Maharashtra and we are offering the same to the decision makers of our country. We believe, that we have a role to play in improving the policies and programs of the nation so that we contribute to the human factor in development.
8. We have formed the “**Times Foundation**” to create consciousness for developing an effective civil society.

Under the banner of Times Foundation we do the following:

- a. We have created the largest NGO platform in India to take up issues and bring about policy level changes. All our employees are involved in it and it develops their spirit of consciousness and helps them to contribute to society.
- b. We are developing an endowment to offer scholarships to the meritorious and poor, so that they can undertake education and training for their development. All our employees are involved in this endowment. We have a program called “**The Power of Ten**” where every employee can contribute Rs.10/- or multiples of 10 to help the poor.
- c. We are designing a course in ‘**Inner Science**’, which profoundly impacts the realisation of the latent potential of each human being both within and outside the organisation.
- d. We hold national level seminars on issues relating to HIV, Drug Addiction, Gender Sensitivity, Mental Health, Rural Development. Unemployment to bring in policy level changes.
- e. The impact of Times Foundation’s work has been tremendous on the stakeholders community, employees, owners, customers, clients, suppliers as they see it as a prime mover and driver of social change. We are also getting all the other media companies involved with us in social issues under the program called “Media Moves” to highlight social issues and to focus the nations attention on it.
- f. The Times of India Group has been a model of inspiration for others and a number of industries have started social development initiatives such as Dhirubhai Ambani Foundation, Sterlite Foundation etc., to help the poor and needy. Our website www.timesfoundation.org can be viewed on the Internet.

Central to our organisation is the belief that each human being is potentially divine. The goal of the organisation is help manifest this divinity by providing challenges and uplifting assignments to each individual.

For us life is an evolution. We realize we can predict very little and being judgemental takes us away from learning. Employees are our only assets and our growth fundamentally depends on their effectiveness and superior performance. We also know that outstanding and creative performance emanates from introspective behaviour which is a product of spiritual training.

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