

# Company highlights value of investing in employees

RANGE OF WORKSHOPS AT EFS SPEED UP PROGRESS AND HELP THEM REALISE THEIR DREAMS

DUBAI  
BY JANICE PONCE DE LEON  
Staff Reporter

**I**f you care for your employees and treat them like family, you will not just have highly motivated employees who will take good care of your company, it will also help contribute to the employees' and their families' personal growth.

This is the abiding belief of Tariq Chauhan, CEO of EFS Facilities Services, who puts it into practice every day for the benefit of his employees — more than 12,000 of them in 20 countries across the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia — who provide integrated facilities management services.

"When something [like work, for instance] takes me away from my family for five days a week, and that matters to me," Chauhan told *Gulf News*. "So imagine what it must be for the workers who are away from their families for one or even two years," he says.

"It's important that we create some kind of a support system for them and that would come from the company at a very nominal cost. This makes a huge difference to the company-employee relationship," says Chauhan.

"We want them to see us as part of their family and not simply as their bosses or a company."

Guided by this belief, Chauhan and his team designed a programme for their employees that includes regular workshops on long-term financial planning, health, personal hygiene and grooming, setting life goals and objectives, besides building community and empathy, among other things.

Part of their employee welfare programme is devoted to skills training and career progression to ensure that employees are moving up the ranks and are not stuck in their initial job roles for years on end.

"There is no rocket science here. They cannot buy homes unless until they grow. And for them to grow, you need to motivate them to grow."

Based on their in-house research, Chauhan said workers from countries like Philippines, India and Bangladesh would remit an average of Dh700 to maintain a family of four, which is a huge chunk of their salary.

"What we have concluded in this exercise is, for 85 per cent of the people, to expect them [to] have savings is impossible, unless you show them the way of growth.

"For example, I have one case of progression. A person who came to me as a supervisor is now the director for Dubai operations. His salary as a supervisor then was Dh4,000. Now he's earning Dh65,000."

Chauhan said they lay out goals for their employees and, once the employees see their goals, they get motivated to start working on them.

"I have told them that all of them in five years' time could dream of building a home if they start working, rising up into the progression."

Fortunately, Chauhan said EFS clients are supportive of their employee welfare initiatives.

*Gulf News* met some employees whose successful career trajectory is clear to see.



Clint Egbert/Gulf News

▣ A training session at the EFS Facilities Services office in Dubai. More than 12,000 of the company's employees in 20 countries work across the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia.



Clint Egbert/Gulf News

▣ Manir Hussain, 25, started as a cleaner, but is now set to become a chef through training and certifications.

dia, started with EFS as a technician in 2001. For the last 15 years, he has been promoted five times and is now working as a coordinator.

"I've built two houses in the last 15 years. I gave one to my younger brother while the other is where my wife and two kids are staying," Shankar said.

"We are happy to work here because the company is also helping us. We get increments and bonuses. We can also openly share our feelings with the management. They listen to us."

Baljeet, 25, joined EFS as an office assistant and now works as a call centre agent for the company. He is a second-generation employee as his dad previously worked with EFS before retiring.

"My father served this company for 20 years. He put me to school through his earnings from this company. So I want to serve this company as well," says Baljeet, who has bought a car and acquired a flat in Sharjah.

### Family environment

Working as a family in the literal sense is true for the Baloch brothers. Asad came to work at EFS first and then helped his two other brothers, Hafeez and Mohammad, find work at EFS years later.

"I first worked as a cleaner and I got promoted to team leader after one year. Since then, I've brought my brothers to work here," Asad said. "I've learned a lot in this company. The CEO does not have a wall separating him from the workers."

Another worker, Manir Hussain, 25, who started as a cleaner is now on his way to becoming a full-fledged chef through training and certifications by Unilever. He is also in the process of getting a new house built back home in Bangladesh.



Clint Egbert/Gulf News

▣ Arian Shankar, 51, started with EFS as a technician in 2001. Having earned five promotions since, he is now a coordinator.



Clint Egbert/Gulf News

▣ Baljeet, 25, joined EFS as an office assistant and now works as a call centre agent for the company.

### POSITIVE CHANGE

*'Allot 4-5% of monthly cost to training and development'*

DUBAI  
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**T**ariq Chauhan, CEO of EFS Facilities Services, said any company can do the same by allotting 4-5 per cent of their monthly cost to employee training and development initiatives.



Clint Egbert/Gulf News

▣ Tariq Chauhan

"In the service industry, what matters to you is output and part of the output is what we call quality service. For that, motivation is very critical. And motivation comes through feel-good factors where a company has helped you to create that sense of responsibility," Chauhan said. "It's like a two-way relationship. The company looks after me, considers me as part of family, it's my responsibility that I do my best. This is not rocket science."

Chauhan said being philanthropic is not his goal since his employees are "very critical to his own sustainability" as well. But what he is doing is allowing his employees to envision a good future for themselves. "I'm not selling their dream to them; I'm helping them walk their dream. My biggest accomplishment in life will be if I'm able to help them realise their dreams."