

TÜNDE TÓTH

Achieving HR Synergy by Thinking of People and Business

Companies strive to achieve sustainable growth and success in increasing competition from both domestic and international rivals. In order to stay ahead of the curve, businesses need to be able to adapt to change quickly and effectively. This is where Human Resources (HR) plays a critical role. HR is responsible for harnessing the power of its human resources to create a workforce that is a valuable asset and a key driver of success.

At the forefront of this endeavor is **Tünde Tóth**, an accomplished HR leader serving as the **Group HR Director** at **MET Group**, a prominent player in the Energy industry. With a comprehensive portfolio of responsibilities and a strategic mindset, Tünde plays a pivotal role in shaping and implementing the HR strategy at MET Group, driving the organization's overall performance and fostering a culture of excellence.

Tünde's expertise extends beyond traditional HR functions, as she actively supports MET Group's Mergers and Acquisitions (M&A) activities. This includes conducting HR due diligence, evaluating the people aspects of potential mergers and acquisitions, and facilitating seamless post-merger integration. By effectively managing the human element during these crucial business transitions, Tünde Tóth plays a key role in ensuring the success and harmonious integration of acquired entities within the MET Group.

We at Insight Success interviewed Tünde on bringing tangible value to MET Group, fostering a culture of excellence, growth and innovation.

Let's delve into the insights of the interview!

Brief our audience about your journey as an academic leader until your current position at your company. What challenges have you had to overcome to reach where you are today?

I studied at the Corvinus University of Budapest, the leading economic university in Hungary. I chose management and organization as a major and parallel to my main studies I completed a second degree, the CEMS Master's in international management. CEMS is a Global Alliance of leading business schools, multinational companies and NGOs and part of the studies include a mandatory internship abroad. I spent my exchange semester in Germany at the University of Cologne and stayed there to do the internship. Henkel hired me to their global learning and development department and that is where my HR journey started.

Following my university graduation, I joined British American Tobacco (BAT) as an HR management trainee and had several rotations within the different sub-areas of HR. It was an up-or-out programme with performance assessments every 6 months, so I had to perform constantly at my very best to be able to progress further.

After I completed the programme, I received my first HR Business Partner role and was supporting the direct sales organization of the Hungarian subsidiary. I was in my mid-twenties and became suddenly part of a senior sales leadership team with an average work experience of 20+ years. I had to improve my business understanding and to do that I went on field visits with sales representatives.

After spending 6 years at BAT Hungary, my first international assignment came in 2012 when I received a



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Group HR Director
MET Group

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short-term assignment opportunity to BAT's HQ in London and worked as Interim Global Marketing Talent Manager. It was truly fascinating working together with so many different nationalities and managing 200 countries from a group headquarters perspective.

From London, I relocated to Serbia where I was promoted to my first Head of HR role. A year later, in 2014, I received an assignment to Switzerland where I became the Head of HR of BAT's Global Travel Retail business. This business unit was managing the duty-free business worldwide for 120 countries with an international HQ organization in Zug.

After more than a decade spent with BAT, in 2017 I joined the integrated energy company MET Group in Switzerland as Group HR Director. The company operates in 14 European countries, had a consolidated revenue of 41.5bn EUR in 2022 and comprises an international workforce of 850+ employees from 50 nationalities.

In my current role, I am responsible for the entire spectrum of HR activities for the whole Group including performance and career management, annual bonus cycle, employee share programme, talent development programme, recruitment and many other activities. I also support the growth of the company by participating in M&A activities

and supporting new market entries. In April this year, we announced the opening of our Singaporean office with which we became a global player in the energy sector.

On the personal side, I am a mom of two lovely sons who bring me a lot of joy every day. Sometimes it is difficult to juggle between work and family-related duties, but a supportive environment both at home and at work and a well-organized schedule can make it work.

Enlighten us on how you have been impacting the dynamic industry through your expertise in the market.

In 2018, we went through a management buyout process and we turned to a private equity company where the management became the majority owner. At that time, my key task was to create an employee share programme, which brings our highest-performing employees into the ownership structure of MET Group.

This is quite a unique incentive programme which is beloved by our participants as they can not only benefit directly from the growth of the Group but have access to more in-depth business information and can actively shape the company's future. This creates a fully aligned interest among our shareholders, a longer-term commitment and

fosters teamwork through which we reach better results.

A further peculiarity of the share programme is that participation is not decided based on someone's seniority within the organization but based on real long-term performance. Our young talents are welcomed as well as shareholders if they deliver significant benefits for the Group.

Describe in detail the values and culture that drives your organization.

MET Group's mission is to become a leading market player by implementing innovation in the energy markets. Fostering a culture of innovation is part of our DNA. The beauty is that once you brought a new idea that is accepted by the decision-makers, then you are expected to execute it. We are an agile organization that can act and react quickly to market opportunities and changes.

This competitive advantage proved to be extremely useful during the recent crises such as the Covid pandemic and the energy crisis where we reacted fast and smart to changing market conditions and as a result, we came out of it stronger than ever. We foster and reward high performance, results that matter at the end of the day.

The business success of the Group is largely driven by having a talented and highly motivated workforce in place. Young talents receive special attention at MET, we are targeting to recruit high-potential fresh grads who can quickly make a difference and drive our growth story further.

Undeniably, technology is playing a significant role in almost every sector. How are you advancing towards technological innovations to make your solutions resourceful?

We are going through a digital transformation and as part of it, AI is playing a key role in all areas where we operate. In our commodity trading business, AI solutions are continuously developed for market forecasting, risk and position management. Our sales division is digitalizing its activities due to increased customer demand and new business opportunities. In our renewables business predictive algorithms are using our sensors to forecast possible outages and AI is supporting our decisions on where to build our next wind farm or solar park. Equally, in HR our systems are ongoingly developed. Our selection process is automatized through our recruitment

system, which is fully integrated with LinkedIn, Google Maps, Outlook, Microsoft Teams and WhatsApp, allowing a user-friendly experience for our recruiters and an easy-to-apply and pleasant experience for our candidates.

What, according to you, could be the next significant change in your sector? How is your company preparing to be a part of that change?

Significant change is happening now by drastically changing gas supply routes, volatile market prices and accelerated green energy transition. The importance of LNG (liquefied natural gas) is growing and geographically becoming more and more diverse. We already had an LNG desk before the energy crisis started and were standing on more legs by having a trading floor, wholesale and retail sales operation in several countries, energy assets (power plants, gas storages) that we own and renewables investments.

This multi-leg strategy well-positions us to current and future market trends. We can adapt fast, grab new opportunities, utilize synergies, re-allocate resources and focus where it can have the biggest impact.

Where do you envision yourself to be in the long run and what are your future goals for the organization?

The current business still offers a lot of opportunities to grow both professionally and personally. Every day we work on improving our employment practices with the HR team. The key focus will be in the future to widen our development portfolio, increasing the ratio of women in senior management roles and getting into the top employers of the continent.

What would be your advice to budding entrepreneurs who aspire to venture into the dynamic industry?

Changes in the energy industry accelerated over the past one and a half years. Have a clear strategy and goal in place that you would like to achieve and, at the same time, be prepared for changes and react fast. Make sure you have enough capital as investments are capital-heavy in this business. Surround yourself with the smartest minds you can have. Work hard and execute quickly. Wish you good luck! 🍀

