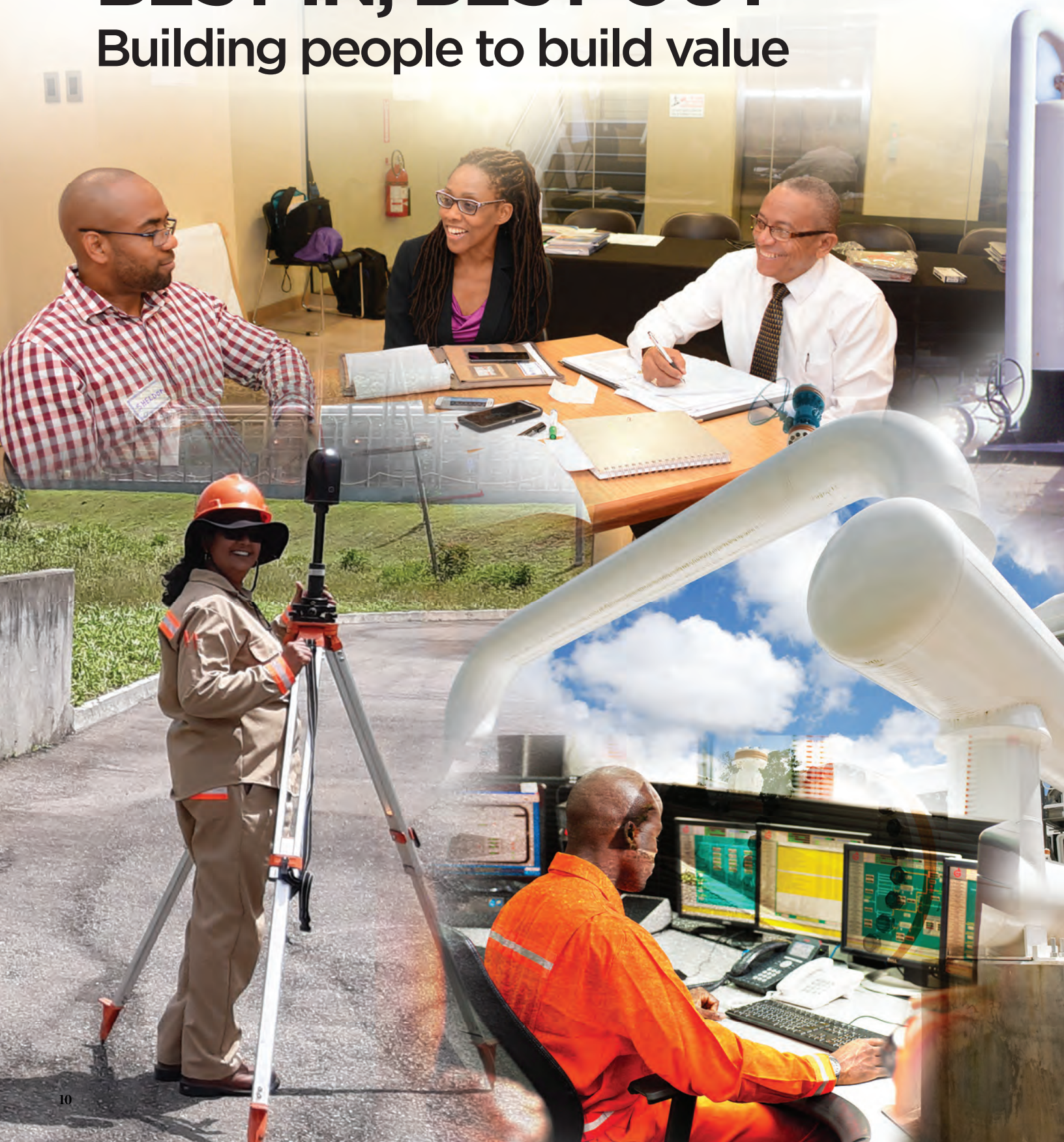




BEST IN, BEST OUT

Building people to build value







No matter what the future of energy might look like, or what's in store for NGC in particular, one thing is for certain - that future cannot be realised without people. People will need to craft strategy, take investment decisions, lead projects, harness technology, innovate processes, close deals, envision, grow and change.

If NGC's story will be shaped by its people, any investment in the future of the Company must consider the development and support of its employees. Moreover, if the Company intends to grow into an international energy leader, it must be staffed by people who are the best at what they do.

In order to promote employee excellence, NGC's HR Division has implemented and is working to complete several employee-focused initiatives. These are aimed at matching needs with the right talent, strengthening capabilities and providing tools to maximise efficiencies and productivity.

TALENT MANAGEMENT

One of the major functions of the HR Division is ensuring the Company attracts and retains strong talent and that staff is constantly developing. This is key to the overall development of the organisation, and involves nurturing talent from the point of entry straight through retirement.

Recruitment and onboarding

Every company values having talented employees who understand and fit well with the company's business and culture. For this reason, the recruitment process must

be an effective filter that presents only the best-suited candidates for a position.

On any given vacancy notice, NGC can receive hundreds of applications. The Company has a solid reputation as an employer of choice in the energy sector, and its growth strategy is particularly attractive to young professionals. In order to help sift through potential candidates, the HR Division has introduced a new element into the screening process. As of 2020, HR has introduced an Assessment Centre methodology for all levels of hire. This can assume different formats such as group activities, individual activities and other tasks that mirror what the potential candidate would be expected to perform on the job. This assessment will enhance the selection process by generating more reliable data on which to gauge a candidate's suitability for a position.

To further ensure a seamless fit with the Company, new hires are now required to complete a structured six-month onboarding process, which would methodically introduce the employee to NGC's work and organisational culture. In the past, new employees were onboarded over a two-month period, but HR recognised that employee acclimation can take much longer and there was need for greater support. In 2020, a new Onboarding Plan was approved for implementation, which would involve a broader programme of activities for new hires.

These include orientation presentations, facilities tours, a welcome event, introduction to policies and procedures, a one-on-one meeting with the President, mandatory training and routine check-ins by HR to assess the progress and comfort of the employee. As envisioned,



the increased number of touchpoints between the new hire and the HR team would help build the employee's trust, sense of ownership and engagement with the Company, and expedite productivity. In the long run, this programme would build a solid foundation for the employee's relationship with the Company and would help to reduce employee turnover.

Competency, Knowledge and Skills Development

Once employees are settled into the Company, the HR team must work to strengthen their capabilities through continuous learning and improvement. This is a cornerstone for organisational growth.

With NGC setting its sights on growing globally, employees must have the requisite skills and competencies to carry and sustain the business in new markets. Accordingly, training and development have assumed new importance and a new approach. Programmes are no longer limited to enhancing the skill sets that already exist, but seek to identify and fill gaps that need to be filled for NGC to operate as a global company.

In 2017, NGC launched a Competency, Knowledge and Skills Development (CKSD) project to map and benchmark the competencies and skill sets resident within the organisation. The objective is to determine where the organisation stands in terms of skills relative to other best-in-class companies so that appropriate training interventions and recruitment campaigns could be undertaken to ensure NGC is tooled for the future.

This phased project is well underway. Phase I involved employees across the organisation mapping their skills and qualifications. Phase II is now focusing on assessing the competencies of employees. Different groups within the Company are receiving training from a consultant on the principles and practice of assessing competencies against defined standards. Ultimately, this will help NGC determine where strengths exist and where there are competency gaps.

Although COVID-19 temporarily disrupted the CKSD process, the HR team intends to work with line supervisors to move the CKSD Phase II into other areas of the business later this year.

Succession Planning

A major objective of staff development is to ensure that talent is groomed to fill higher-level positions that may become vacant due to the retirement or departure of the incumbent. Succession planning is integral to business continuity and is, therefore, an area of renewed focus for NGC.

In an effort to open more opportunities for staff to develop, a Group-wide policy was signed in 2019 that

would allow employees, for the first time, to be selected as successor candidates for roles across the NGC Group of Companies. Removing the limitation of succession solely within companies allows the Group to reduce its turnover rate, and acknowledges that experience gained at one company in the Group could add value to another. It also strengthens the collective resource pool of the Group, as talent will now be managed with an eye on all possible avenues for growth, not just intramural opportunities.

CONSUMER SERVICES

If NGC is aiming to be a best-in-class energy company, then all its internal functions must evolve accordingly. For the HR Division, this involves improving its service delivery to employees using best-in-class tools and processes.

As recently as five years ago, most HR services were paper-based, with forms for leave application, performance appraisals, training registration, update of personal information and so on. These manual forms required staff to physically present in the HR Division to conduct their business.

Since then, NGC has rolled out specialist *SAP SuccessFactors* software that has automated many of those processes. This human capital management software has been used with great effect by large international corporations including American Airlines, Coca-Cola, EY, Oxford Global Resources and the Toronto Transit Commission.

Not only has the software reduced the environmental footprint of the Company, but it has also made HR transactions considerably more employee-centred and convenient. Employees now have personal dashboards from which they can track leave balances, register for and even take certain courses, monitor progress towards performance targets, update personal information such as home address or emergency contacts, and even access payslips.

This software has many additional functionalities that NGC will invest in over the coming years to further enhance the consumer experience for employees.

WELLNESS

Around the world and across all industries, companies are becoming more aware of the importance of healthy and engaged employees to their bottom line. Top organisations such as Google and Virgin are renowned for their employee programmes which focus on work-life balance and creating opportunities and spaces for physical and mental wellness activities.



Fitness classes are made available to NGC staff to promote healthy lifestyles

The linkages between wellness and productivity are self-evident. Healthy employees have more energy for their tasks, are more present and involved in work activities, and naturally apply for fewer sick days and compensation. Reducing stress levels improves concentration, which can mean fewer accidents at work sites. Companies that look after the well-being of staff demonstrate that they value their employees, and reap the benefits of a more engaged and invested workforce.

It is small wonder that more and more companies are introducing structured wellness programmes to address the physical and mental health of employees. NGC's HR team manages a number of long-standing wellness initiatives, and a recently revamped NGC Group Wellness Committee is working to bring more on stream. NGC employees can make use of free on-site gym facilities at various locations, as well as recreational amenities such as pool tables, table tennis equipment and massage chairs. Employees also have access to guided classes, including spin, Zumba, yoga and even self-defence. During the period of the COVID-19 lockdown, the Wellness Committee worked to bring virtual aerobics and yoga classes to employees, to help staff keep fit and relaxed at home, and plans for the first-ever virtual 5K are underway for July/August 2020.

For many years, NGC has hosted health fairs where employees could participate in free screening for diabetes, high cholesterol and certain cancers. Healthcare professionals would deliver talks on topical issues, make literature available for staff education, and offer therapeutic massages on-site.

To further support mental and emotional health, NGC partners with Families in Action (FIA) to offer free,

confidential counselling and mentorship services to employees. Through this organisation, staff can receive support around parenting and relationships, managing grief, addiction and even personal self-esteem and image issues. During the peak Covid-19 phase, HR through this agency supported the emotional well-being of employees with a Self-Care pulse check using its Virtual Knowledge Café series.

Financial health is not overlooked. The Company has routinely sponsored financial planning guidance sessions to ensure staff is well apprised of options for managing their personal portfolios.

As the Company plans for a post-COVID 'business unusual', the HR team is working closely with the relevant internal departments, including HSSE, to make necessary adjustments to policies and work culture to keep employees safe, healthy and productive on their return to the office environment. These changes are being informed by international standards and best practices, as the world settles into a new way of working that prioritises employee well-being.

BUILDING THROUGH PEOPLE

NGC acknowledges that without investment in employee development and wellness, business would stagnate and fail. The HR function is therefore increasingly important to the advancement and sustainability of the organisation, and will be assuming a greater role in leading future strategic interventions. At the heart of the Company's approach to managing its human resources will remain an emphasis on international best practice – after all, you must put best in, to get best out. ■