

TWENTY RETENTION TOOLS FOR CURBING ATTRITION

In today's scenario **ATTRITION** has become the most dangerous alarm to all HR employees' ears and Organization is facing troubles to fight it out. Suggested Retention Tools for curbing attrition to a great extent are submitted herewith. These need not be brainstormed and implementation strategy should be worked out immediately.

1. OFFER COMPENSATION – ATTRACTIVE AND COMPETITIVE: Fair compensation alone does not guarantee employee loyalty, but offering below-market salaries makes it much more likely that employees will look for greener pastures.

- ☺ Use of Industry Surveys and other data tools to stay informed on wage trends.
- ☺ To benefit both company and employees, tie increased one time performance pay to meeting specific goals aligned with business objectives.
- ☺ Collect data from exit interviews to document trends from your departing employees, and then use this data to make a business case for increasing salaries across the board.
- ☺ Go for Employee Engagement Surveys / ESS, to find out what perks, benefits and forms of compensation other than money will help keep them motivated.
- ☺ Let employees decide their own compensation package / reimbursements once the quantum is fixed.

Pay Exception is a procedure at **FedEx**, which allows managers to recommend and give exceptional pay increases to their highly performing employees when it is not covered by normal policy. Extensive performance measuring scheme and incentive policies by **Sasken Communications**, Awards and recognition like "Best project" , "contribution", "mentorship" by **Aztec Software** and Formal Individual / group recognition at departmental / organization levels by **Intel Technologies India Pvt Ltd** are few outstanding examples.*

2. BENEFITS NEED TO BE QUANTIFIED AND QUALITATIVE. Although benefits are not a key reason why employees stick with a company, the benefits you offer can't be markedly worse than those offered by your competitors and like minded industries.

- ☺ Group Medi-claim Insurance Scheme and Personal Health Care (Regular medical check-ups)
- ☺ Corporate Credit Cards and Discount Coupons
- ☺ Cellular Phone / Laptop and other latest technology on-board
- ☺ Interest free loans for higher educations
- ☺ Performance based quarterly incentives
- ☺ Flexi-time and Flexible Salary Benefits
- ☺ Wedding Day and Birthday Gift

NTPC Limited has social security systems for their employees with high level of commitments and a unique culture of celebrating all their achievements.*

3. TRAIN YOUR FRONT-LINE, MANAGERS AND ADMINISTRATORS. It can't be said repeatedly that people stay or leave because of their bosses and not the companies. Make sure your managers aren't driving technologists away. Harp upon the competencies and substantially invest in human capital irrespective of ROI.

- ☺ Improve managers' leadership, communication and interpersonal skills through coaching, training and feedback. Rate these key skills in their evaluations, and tie compensation to performance.
- ☺ Create a safe environment and process for employees to bring up concerns with their managers.*

In **Whirlpool Appliances**, there are highly selective leadership development mentor programs. Managers selected to participate as mentors go through a rigorous selection process and are then monitored closely to ensure that only managers who consistently produce results remain in the program.*

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES NEEDS TO BE DOVETAILED. Make sure your employees know what is expected of them every day, every month and every year, what types of decisions they are allowed to make on their own, and to whom they are supposed to report.

- ☺ Provide clear vision, brawny and consistent communication, teamwork and respect for human capital' efforts.
- ☺ Share the company vision/mission clearly and regularly.
- ☺ Collaborate, communicate and listen. Contented employees achieve amazing things.

Eli Lilly & Co.(India) Pvt. Ltd has a Red Book on Code of Business Conduct which provides standards for conducting business consistent with the company's legal obligations, global policies and core values. Employees are taken through the Corporate values, vision and mission and Red Book. There is a structured training program on the Red Book and the employees are required to sign the Responsibility Statement of the Red Book to certify that they agree to comply with the principles and values. *

5. ENHANCEMENT, ADVANCEMENT AND PROGRESSION OPPORTUNITIES. To foster employee loyalty, implement a career ladder and make sure employees know what they must do to earn and go in for progression. A clear professional development plan gives employees an incentive to stick around. Do away with you Performance Management System if it has turned to NOVA (Non Value Added Activity) and go in for instant performance rewards. Think! Think out of the box!

- ☺ Assess employee's performance against the focus area's set in their performance agreement for the appraisal year and improves their proficiency.
- ☺ Provide an opportunity to the employees to express their views or to seek further clarification on their performance.
- ☺ Identify potential of employees and to develop them for future roles.
- ☺ Reward them appropriately.
- ☺ Generate data for career planning and succession planning.

Computer Sciences Corporation India (P) Ltd in the sabbatical policy, not only does the Company pays for the fees of higher qualifications being acquired by any employee, any break in service for acquiring higher qualifications is treated as work experience for the purpose of determining seniority within the Organisation, and there is an assured job for the employees after completion of his/her course. *

6. OFFER RETENTION BONUS: Employee longevity typically is rewarded with an annual raise and mandatory vacation time after three, five or ten years. But why not offer other seniority-based rewards such as a paid membership in the employee's professional association after one year, a paid membership to a local gymnasium and clubs after two years, and full reimbursement for the cost of the employee's formal dress.

- ☺ Build a high degree of recognition value into every reward you offer. Reduce entitlements and link as many rewards as possible to performance.
- ☺ Troubleshoot your reward system to make sure that what it is rewarding is what you really want to happen.
- ☺ Give employees a choice of rewards.
- ☺ Increase the longevity of your rewards

Intel Technologies has cash bonus plans and performance based bonuses for employees. *

7. RETENTION STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTATION NEEDS TO HAVE A PROCESS OWNER: Measure your turnover rate and identify a process owner responsible for containing it. If customer returns, in-house rejections and non-confirming products can have a process owner as a countermeasure why not a process owner for implementation of retention strategies? Think better, think bigger, think brighter, think broader, think **bolder**, think positive and set higher audacious goals.

☺ The ability of the employee to speak his or her mind freely within the organization is another key factor in employee retention. If so, employees offer ideas, feel free to criticize and commit to continuous improvement. If not, they bite their tongues or find themselves constantly "in trouble" - until they leave. *

8. GO IN FOR EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES: You won't know what's wrong... or what's right ... unless you practice. To check the pulse of your organization, conduct employee satisfaction surveys on a regular basis. Go in for its analysis and implementation.

- ☺ One idea: Ask employees what they want more of and what they want less of – Capture Voice of Employees
- ☺ Value addition in terms of ASKPT (Attitude, Skills, Knowledge, Practices, and Trust) has to be the end product.
- ☺ Stay Interviews and its implementation, call back your employees and ensure ombudsmen concept.

From the very beginning, **Mindtree Consulting** has been active in its social responsibilities. Infact, MindTree has identified social responsibility as one of its core values and therefore, regularly encourages it in the organization. It has adopted an old age home and a home for children of Sri Lankan refugees in Bangalore. Every third Saturday, MindTree Minds visit these places and spend half a day with the inmates there. *

9. TEAMWORK AND CROSS FUNCTIONAL TEAMS: It takes effort to build an effective team, but the result is greater productivity, better use of resources, improved customer service and increased morale. Give great emphasis on cross functional approach as it endorses acceptance and accountability.

- ☺ Make sure everyone understands the department's purpose, mission or goal.
- ☺ Encourage discussion, participation and the sharing of ideas.
- ☺ Rotate leadership responsibilities depending on your employees' abilities and the needs of the team.
- ☺ Involve employees in decisions; ask them to help make decisions through consensus and collaboration.
- ☺ Encourage team members to show appreciation to their colleagues for superior performance or achievement.

Sapient Corporation has a practice known as "Team Storming". When a team (project team or an internal team) has worked very hard, teams from across the office get together and storm the team with a 'goodies' basket to recognize the team and lift their morale. *

10. PAPERLESS ORGANIZATION: If your high performers and technologists spend nearly as much time filling out paperwork, it's time for a change. Convert paperwork to an electronic format; and hire non- tech administrative staff to take over as much of the paperwork burden as is allowed under legal or regulatory restrictions

- ☺ Intranet facility
- ☺ Centralized servers for data storage

11. FUN IS MUST. Celebrate successes and recognize when milestones are reached. Buffet lunches, birthday parties, employee picnics and creative contests will help remind people why an organization is a great place to work.

- ☺ The companies organizes cultural program as and when possible but most of the times, once in a quarter, in which all the employees are given an opportunity to display their talents in dramatics, singing, acting, dancing and sports programs such as Cricket, football, etc

Fun elements at work like Parties, bashes, outings, picnics at **Aztec Software & Technology Services Ltd** and De-motivation to work on holidays by **Phillips India** are few good illustrations. *

12. MISSION STATEMENT FOR EACH FUNCTIONAL AREA. Everyone wants to feel that they are working toward a meaningful, worthwhile goal. Work with your human capital to develop a departmental mission statement aligned with company's vision, Make sure employees understand how their contribution is important.

- ☺ A place where people work with a smile on their faces and dreams in their eyes
- ☺ A place where your views can be freely voiced and are received with an open mind
- ☺ A place where you know whenever you need help, there is a family of 2000 members waiting to help you out

13. ASSIGNMENTS FOR JOB ENRICHMENT: Identify your employees' talents and then encourage them to stretch their abilities into new areas. You have to have a great mentor or mentors. A variety of challenging assignments helps keep the organization stimulating. Lay emphasis on stretch Key Result Areas.

- ☺ Employees today want more than just a job. They want to contribute to the big picture and help the company sustain it through the tough times. Provide challenging and meaningful work assignments that stimulate them.
- ☺ When employees feel bored, their motivation declines and they lose focus on how their work fits into the big picture.
- ☺ Delegate meaningful work whenever possible so employees can learn something new and feel challenged. Additionally, provide regular development and learning opportunities.

Johnson & Johnson conducts a Strategic Roadmap Meeting which is a large-scale interactive process (LSIP) of communicating with employees and getting their buy-in on the strategic goals set by the company. This is a theme based motivational event. *

14. TRANSPARENCY IN COMMUNICATION. Employees are more loyal to a company when they believe management or those at the helm of affairs keep them informed about key issues

- ☺ Communication is the first step toward creating the kind of environment that people care about, and if they care, they just may stay, keep your people in the loop about what's happening with the company.
- ☺ At any time, all of your employees should have a pretty good idea of how business has been carried out.
- ☺ They should be aware of what issues the company is attempting to address.

Everyone from new recruit to CEO is treated as same in **Nokia**. Everyone flies the business class and everyone stays in luxury hotels. *

15. ENCOURAGE HIGHER LEARNING. Create opportunities for your key performers and technologists to grow and learn. Encourage every employee to learn at least one new thing every week, and you'll create a work force that is excited, motivated and committed.

- ☺ To keep morale high, coach and facilitate every day.
- ☺ The "I tell/you do" method of management simply does not work for motivating and retaining people. Instead, become a coach to your people and encourage them to try things their own way.
- ☺ Allow for mistakes to happen, as mistakes are often our greatest learning opportunities.
- ☺ Most people are grateful for constructive feedback. It shows that you're paying attention to their progress

FedEx has Personality Development Systems, amount of 3000 \$ annually as education reimbursement and an Online training library with 600 courses. *

16. FLEXIBILITY AND PRAGMATISM: Employees will be loyal to organizations that make their lives more convenient by offering on-site childcare centers, on-site hair styling and dry cleaning, flexible work hours, part-time positions, job-sharing or involving spouses in CSR activities and promote ownership culture.

- ☺ Employees of school-age children might appreciate the option to work nine months a year and have the summers off to be with their children.

17. DEVELOP AN EFFECTIVE INDUCTION PROGRAM. Implement a formal orientation program that's at least three weeks long and includes a thorough overview of every area of your department and an introduction to other departments.

- ☺ **Infosys** has a 23 days Induction Program with ISB Bangalore*
- ☺ **Sona Group** has tied up with MDI Gurgaon for one month Induction Program

18. WORKPLACE AMBIENCE. No one wants to work with equipment that's old or constantly breaking down. Provide employees with the highest quality supplies you can afford. Cheap, leaky pens may seem like a small thing, but they can add to employees' overall stress level.

- ☺ A career-oriented, valued employee must experience growth opportunities within your organization.

19. NEVER, NEVER, EVER THREATEN AN EMPLOYEE'S JOB OR INCOME. Even if you know layoffs loom if you fail to meet targets, it is a mistake to foreshadow this information with employees. It makes them nervous; no matter how you explain the information, even if you're absolutely correct, your employees will update their resumes

- ☺ Demonstrate a vibrant workplace that retains and promotes talents and at the same time encourages development of non-performers to perform better and dissuade pink slips

20. VALUE YOUR EMPLOYEES. Recognize outstanding achievements promptly and publicly, but also take time to commend on the many small contributions your staff makes every day to the organization's vision, mission and growth. **DO NOT FORGET — THESE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE YOU LOOK GOOD!**

- ☺ A commonplace complaint we hear during an exit interview is that the employee never felt senior managers knew he existed.
- ☺ Take time to meet with new employees to learn about their talents, abilities and skills. Meet with each employee periodically.

It is not unusual for one to find the CEO of **Godrej Consumer Products Ltd.** having lunch with employees everyday, or for the CEO and HR head of **Wipro Spectramind** to have open doors for employees at all times*

References

- ☺ * **Business world- Grow Talent list of Great Places to Work® 2nd Edition brochure for application, May 2006 and excerpts from 2007 Great Place to Work® Institute website retrieved on March 23rd, 2007, at <http://www.greatplacetowork.com/gptw/index.php>**

- **THE AUTHORS**



MR. HARI NAIR, a Masters in Public, Personnel Management & Industrial Relations from Osmania University, did his Graduation in Commerce and has a Degree in Education Psychology & a Diploma in Journalism. Currently he is at the helm of affairs at Sona Koyo Steering Systems Ltd, Gurgaon as its **Assistant Vice President – Human Resources**, and can be reached by email – hari.nair@sonagroup.com or hari.nair69@gmail.com and on his Mobile No. +91-98-102-89047