Full Length Research Paper

Boomerang model: Wooing ex-productive employees

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In the real world, employees do leave their jobs either because they want more money; want better working atmosphere or because of their family or personal reasons. Zeroing the attrition rate is a ‘dream concept’ of human resource (HR) department. In the present scenario, this paper identifies the different strategies adopted by organizations to retract their ex employees and to maintain relationship with them. The paper is an humble attempt to know the psychodynamics of ‘ex employees’ affected by the HR policies in order to make the attrition rate zero.

Keyword: Attrition rate, stress burn out, mental health

INTRODUCTION

Literal meaning of ‘attrition’ is a reduction in the number of employees through retirement resignation or death. In India, average attrition rate is –18% as compared to US-42%, global average-24%. It is however no easy task for human resource (HR) manager to bridge the increasing demands and supply gap of professionals. HR manager is not only required to complete this task but also maintaining the human relations to maintain consistency in performance of employees.

People leave their jobs because of several reasons-monetary gain, better home life, personal betterment etc. In the practical world employees leaves the organization and there is no option left for employee except for arranging exit interviews.

In Indians context, the high percentage of female employees adds to the high attrition rate. Most of them leave their jobs after their marriage or due to their family reasons. After the introduction of open economy aspirations, ambitions of Indian middle class have gone up. The marginal monetary benefit became the key factor of job hopping. Together all this converted into great losses of the company, which invests a lot of money in training them.

Retaining all the employees is not possible but attracting good ex-employees may be beneficial in this process of zeroing the attrition rate to achieve the ‘Zero attrition rate’. Zero attrition rate is an ideal manpower state and zeroing the attrition rate is a process by which we can achieve the specific state. Process may vary from organization to organization. In the opinion of authors, attrition rate can be minimized but will never be zero. Companies’ objectives must not be to retain all the employees but the policy of wooing them back or reattracting good, ex employees may be beneficial.

EMPLOYEES MENTAL HEALTH: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Employment for many people provides psychological and social benefits as well as remuneration. The personal and health benefits of work are attributed to its impact on self-esteem, income, social relationships and leisure activities, and are the subject of much theoretical debate. Other benefits include security, finance and a valued social position.

There is a strong evidence base showing that work is generally good for physical and mental health and well-being. Worklessness is associated with poorer physical and mental health and well-being. Work can be therapeutic and can reverse the adverse health effects of unemployment. The provisos are that account must be taken of the nature and quality of work and its social context; jobs should be safe and accommodating. In overall, the beneficial effects of work outweigh the risks of work, and are greater than the harmful effects of long-term unemployment or prolonged sickness absence. Work is generally good for health and well-being.

On the other hand, mental health problems are
associated with a number of employment-related difficulties, including unemployment, absenteeism and reduced productivity when at the workplace. Many studies have shown these various 'indirect' employment-related costs to be substantial, often outweighing the 'direct' service costs of treating and supporting people with mental health problems.

There are numerous studies on stress and burn-out among employees across the world (Servellen and Leake 1993; Sullivan, 1994; Onyett et al., 1997; Boey, 1998; Rabin et al., 1999; Hopkinson et al., 1998). They have helped to identify factors related to stress and burn-out in workplace, such as job satisfaction, role confusion, ambiguity, organizational factors such as workload, excessive administrative duties and client load, effects on client relationships, negative attitudes and poor outcomes. Employee counseling services have proven to be an effective solution to such issues.

This paper is attempt to discuss the role of employee counseling, in managing treat mental health problems among employees, and particularly when considering the cost-effectiveness of specific interventions, it can make quite a difference whether these employment-related impacts are or are not taken into account.

Philosophically speaking, no organization is perfect. The problems may exist for longer duration, the HR department may review the rate of attrition of productive ex-employees and its correlation with the problems. In cases where the reasons are sorted out or the grievances have been eradicated after he had left, there is no harm in reattaching 'ex-productive employees'. The advantages of reattaching ex-productive employees include:

1. Employees' best performance is guaranteed.
2. Organization always gets reliable employees.
3. Cost of training is saved.
4. The measurement of potential of an employee becomes easy.
5. The best productive ex-employees come with a few new values of culture.

**Objectives of the study**

1. To study the psychodynamics of 'ex-employees' after leaving the organizations.
2. To investigate the strategies adopted by organizations to attract their 'ex-employees'.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The present study reports the psychodynamics of ex-employees after leaving the organizations and strategies being used by organizations to reattract their employees. The universe (Table 1) of the study consists of persons whose details were listed under ‘Deep Vihar Association Directory’ (it is the residents’ association of a locality of the capital of the biggest state of India). A questionnaire (comprises 20 questions) were distributed randomly to 72 people aged between 25 to 60 years. Forty five people responded, the data were then collected and was analyzed with the help of suitable statistical techniques and interpretation was made.

**Findings**

66% of the respondents were post graduate, and 66% of the respondents were male. Their average age was 42 years with average work experience of = 10 years (approx.). The average number of employees who have left they organizations is = 2.8.

54% of them left their jobs because of monetary gains only, while 22% of them left their jobs because of better culture. Only 26% of the respondents have left the job professionally by either giving notice of sufficient time period or giving salary as per company's policy. 44% of respondents were in the opinion that they were guilty while leaving the last organization. Only 11% of the respondents say they are either still invited for lunch / dinner while 66% of them say they have no interaction. Surprisingly, 33% of respondents avoid their employees while 54% people say that they meet in a friendly way. 77% people have firm belief that employees are not remembered in the organization after they leave the organization even they have contributed extraordinarily. 66% of the employees are of the opinion that they still keep in touch regularly with ex-colleagues. 35% of the respondents are in the opinion that through regular phone calls / emails employer can attract ex-employees. 66% of the female respondents have left their jobs because of family reasons; 80% of the females respondents do not want to meet with ex-employees and they were guilty while leaving the job because they could not give sufficient time period of notice or salary as per the policy.

In print media (Daily news paper) the ‘Dainik Jagran’ keeps in touch with its productive ex-employees through making phone calls while ‘Amar Ujala’ (Daily news paper) invites its ex-employees by sending invitation for annual lunch / dinner, generally extending it to spouse also. Ex-employees of Monto Motors, Eveready Industries India Ltd. gets seasonal cards, while ex-employees of Dharmpal Satyapal group are welcomed if they visit their ex-employment work place. On the other hand, ex-employees of all other companies say that there is no such policy for ex-employees.

**Applying Chi square test**

Let us take the hypothesis that phone calls / emails are not effective in reattracting ex-employees (Table 2).

Expectation of AB = $\frac{38 \times 15}{45} = 12.6$

Value of $x^2$ [where $V = (\gamma - 1)(c-1) = 1$]
Table 1. Details of sample.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XII pass</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PG/Equivalent</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income (annual)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 lakh-3 lakh</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 lakh-5 lakh</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 5 lakh</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25-35</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-45</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-60</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of organizations left</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zero-1</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or more</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Chi square test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not turned back</th>
<th>Turned back</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emails / phone calls</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No emails/phone calls</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \sum (0 - \varepsilon)^2 / \varepsilon = 5.09 \]

The calculated value of \( x^2 \) is greater than the tabled value. The hypothesis is rejected. Hence doing email / making phone calls to ex-employees are effective tool for wooing them back.

**Applying F-Test**

Let us take the null hypothesis that samples came from populations (those having less than 3 years last stay and those who have more than 3 years last stay) having the same variance in the 19th question of questionnaire.

\[ X_1 (0-3\text{yrs. stay}) = 3,3,2,1,1,3,3,3,2,2,3,2,1,2,3,3,3,3,2,2,3,3,2,2. \]

\[ X_2 (+3\text{ yrs. stay}) = 1,2,2,1,2,2,1,1,2,2,2,1,1,1,2,2,3,3,3,1. \]

\[
F = \frac{S_1^2}{S_2^2} = \frac{15.2}{10.84} = \frac{0.63}{0.57} = 1.10
\]

The value of F at 5% level of significance is 3.18. The calculated value is less than table value. The hypothesis holds true, hence the samples came from populations having the same variance. It means the companies are not giving importance / special treatment to those who have stayed for longer time period.

**DISCUSSION**

Generally there is no policy to reattract the ex-productive employees. The companies do not focus on ex-employees, the result shows (from F Test) that the companies are not giving importance / special treatment to those who have stayed for longer time period.

In Northern India, only a few companies are focusing on ex-productive employees through few techniques. Probably this is the initial phase, where companies have just started paying attention towards ex-employees. Boomerang model may be time consuming and expensive. It has limitations, it is very difficult to measure the rate of return of time and money invested in re-attracting the ex-productive employees. Actually, a large
number of employees after leaving their companies are not remembered or invited by organizations, they are kept in touch with only former colleagues.

Employees’ belief, faith, values, habits and experience are the part of organization’s non material culture. The individuals, who have left the organizations, are actually not in touch with the material culture, but the non material culture untouched through their former colleagues. Organizations are spending huge amount of time and money to hire the services of right persons or are outsourcing the recruitment services for getting the reliable employees. Can we utilize our employees’ social networking with ex-productive employees (who are also willing to join)? Inviting them for annual lunch, dinner or e-mailing them, making them aware about latest happenings, also reviewing the conditions at the time of separation are a few methods by which organizations may retract the ex-productive employees. It was observed that annual income has no connection with reattraction. Results show that money can not replace love and affections. A person may be made responsible for ‘linkage’ between the management and ex-productive employees.

Conclusion

It is the major responsibility of HR department to make necessary steps internally and externally. Internally, they making their own efforts on the training and development of their employees, implementing innovative retention schemes; externally, employees are sent for the short duration training outside at the same time they can woo their ex-employees back by sending regular e-mails, in house publications, making phones calls, inviting them for annual lunch/dinner or welcoming them whenever they visit.

As regard our findings, most of the employees are still in touch with their ex-colleagues but not with employer. So it is advisable if this relationship is more formally channelised, wooing efficient ex-employees will be easier in the way of ‘zeroing the attrition rate’ or spending huge amount on recruitment process.

REFERENCES

## Appendix

### Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Total experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>last stay in the organization - (duration)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I have changed no. of organization/s –
   1) monetary reasons  2) better culture  3) better career prospects 4) family and other reasons

2. I left my last job because of -
   1) Positive note  2) negative note  3) no reaction

3. I left my last job on -
   1) After giving notice of sufficient time period  2) by giving appropriate salary
   2) No conditions applied  4) Unprofessionally

4. I left the last job -
   1) After giving notice of sufficient time period  2) by giving appropriate salary
   2) No conditions applied  4) Unprofessionally

5. I remember, while leaving the company my colleagues -
   1) Were dejected  2) were persuaded  3) were allured  4) Could not remember

6. After leaving the company I was
   1) Guilt  2) not happy  3) happy  4) can’t comment

7. After joining the new company initially I used to communicate with my ex-employer
   1) Weekly  2) fortnightly  3) monthly  4) yearly

8. I am still invited for lunch / dinner by my previous employer
   1) Always  2) often 3) sometimes  4) rarely

9. I receive greeting cards from my ex-employer
   1) Always  2) often 3) sometimes  4) rarely

10. I receive phone calls from ex-employer -
    1) Always  2) often 3) sometimes  4) rarely

11. Whenever I meet my ex-employer we do
    1) Meet friendly 2) talk more  3) talk less  4) do not recognize each other

12. Whenever I visit my ex-employment workplace
    1) Am welcomed  2) don’t feel good  3) am ignored  4) don’t want to visit

13. In my last stay, employees are not remembered even they have contributed extraordinarily to the system
    1) Strongly agree  2) agree  3) disagree  4) strongly disagree

14. I feel human relations is more effective tool than monetary gains / increments to retain employees.
    1) Strongly agree  2) agree  3) disagree  4) strongly disagree

15. I try to avoid my ex-employer
    1) Strongly agree  2) agree  3) disagree  4) strongly disagree

16. I feel employer can reattract his ex-employees by
    1) Sending emails / making regular phone calls  2) Inviting them for lunch / dinner
    3) Decent behaviour at the time of leaving  4) Can’t be attracted.

17. If any offer of rejoining by ex office will come, I will –
    1) Join at one  2) Can think about it  3) Can’t tell  4) Will never join it

18. Any suggestion -