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CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	A ROBUST AUDIO STEGANOGRAPHY FOR HIDING ENCRYPTED DATA <i>R. VALARMATHI. & DR. G.M.KADHAR NAWAZ</i>	1
2.	EXAMINING FACTORS OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND THEIR MEDIATING ROLE IN RETAIL BANKING SECTOR: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY <i>MEENAKSHI CHANDOK & N. L. GUPTA</i>	6
3.	DETERMINING APPROXIMATE FUNCTIONAL DEPENDENCIES USING ASSOCIATION RULE MINING <i>SIKHA BAGUI & ANTON ZAYNAKOV</i>	10
4.	ATTRITION TRENDS IN INDIA: ISSUES & IMPLICATIONS <i>M. NAGABHASKAR, DR. P. SRINIVASAREDDY & M RAMU</i>	18
5.	A LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE ROLE OF MASS MEDIA IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT <i>DR. A. KUMUDHA & THILAGA.S</i>	22
6.	STUDY OF MOTIVATIONAL PARAMETERS OF FTAS (FOREIGN TOURIST ARRIVALS) FOR MEDICAL TOURISM IN INDIA <i>KAUSHAL DESAI, VISHVESH PATEL & PARAG MORE</i>	25
7.	STUDY LINUX POWER – BY DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMANDS AS QUERIES FOR READING DATA <i>MANPREET SINGH SANDHU & DR. SAURABH SRIVASTAVA</i>	30
8.	STUDYING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ISSUING ACCEPTABLE AUDITING REPORT AND AUDITOR'S CHARACTERISTICS IN ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION COMPANIES IN IRAN <i>SEYYED SAMANEH SALEHI & MOHAMMAD MOHSEN NOURBAKHS</i>	34
9.	MEDITATION: A KEY TO OVERCOME STRESS <i>JYOTI VIJ, KAVITA VIJ & VINOD VIJ</i>	39
10.	NON-DISCLOSURE PRACTICES OF INTEREST RATE AND COMPOUNDING FREQUENCY IN SINKING FUND PROPOSALS BY THE BANKS OPERATING IN BANGLADESH: A SERIOUS PITFALL FOR INVESTORS <i>ABU SYEED MUHAMMED ABDULLAH</i>	44
11.	MEASUREMENT OF STATE CAPITAL FORMATION IN INDIAN AGRICULTURE: ISSUES AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVE <i>NITI PANDEYA</i>	51
12.	EFFECTIVENESS OF HARYANA FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND BUDGET MANAGEMENT ACT IN FISCAL CONSOLIDATION OF THE STATE <i>DEEPAK VATS</i>	54
13.	TRENDS AND PATTERNS OF FDI: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF INDIA AND CHINA <i>RENU BALA</i>	60
14.	IMPROVEMENT OF WORD SENSE DISAMBIGUATION WITH RULE BASED APPROACH <i>SHWETA VIKRAM</i>	65
15.	NOMADIC COMPUTING: AN IMPERATIVE TO HIGHER EDUCATION SECURITY IN NIGERIA <i>ALADE, O. A. & RAJI F. I.</i>	68
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK & DISCLAIMER	71

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ATTRITION TRENDS IN INDIA: ISSUES & IMPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The biggest challenge facing the corporate houses these days is not attracting the prospective employee but retaining the talent. Attrition has been a never-ending problem for every organization especially the developing countries like India due to either lack of appreciation or lack of proper job sculpting. It not only affects the morale of other employees but also on the financial position of the organization. As it becomes very necessary for the HR managers to understand the factors that prompt employees to quit an organization, firms are adopting many retention strategies to combat the attrition problem. This paper examines the faces of attrition within the global organization of today; and attempts to offer some insight that may alleviate future problems. In this paper an attempt has been made by authors to suggest suitable measures for controlling attrition. Lastly the authors have handled positive aspects of attrition.

KEYWORDS

Attrition, retention, globalization, job sculpting.

INTRODUCTION

Attrition simply means "A reduction in the number of employees through retirement, resignation or death." Attrition can be conceptualized in many forms; the two prominent forms of attrition for the constraints of this Endeavour are attrition due to employees leaving and employee retiring from an organization.

Attrition has always been a sensitive issue with IT firms. Despite offering the highest salaries across all business segments, the industry has been plagued with attrition across the board, particularly in the past few years. This ever-growing wage inflation and attrition rates have put financial pressures on firms.

For a generation used to constantly seeing and adapting to change, "getting bored" will happen quickly and easily. Jobs will be increasingly treated like projects and assignments that workers would like to complete and move on. And they would want to have the option of multiple employment contracts - full-time jobs, consultancy, and project-based jobs to retainer ships. Companies will have to either cater to these needs or lose them to competition. Perhaps reasons why many 'Best Employers' like Satyam are institutionalizing the job change. Satyam has a "global rotation plan" where every 18-24 months, employees can actively seek a job change.

Hiring young IT majors are now also turning towards youth from the interior regions of the country to get more loyal employees coming from rural parts. As a part of its experiment, Wipro technologies have recently gone to Chindwara in Madhya Pradesh to train students. As part of its four-months 'finishing school' programme, Wipro Technologies is eyeing students who are either graduates or even those who have passed the 12th standard. The company is not just hiring candidates from the rural areas but also making them expertise in the field. Wipro has also hired science graduates instead of engineers. It has hired 300 science graduates, who will undergo the training to acquire necessary IT skills.

ATTRITION SCENARIO IN INDIA

Almost all the sectors in India are facing attrition, but the reasons and effects are unique to each sector. The BPO sector has highest attrition rate i.e. 50%. The aviation sector, pulsating with the early of numerous private players, has thrown up irresistible opportunities, fueling attrition to 46%. In case of Service sector highest attrition levels are seen in sales. One reason for this is the fact that companies in the FMCG sector are themselves hiring more salespeople. Another reason is that insurance and telecommunications sectors are also hiring people. At PepsiCo India, according to Pavan Bhatia, executive director, human resources of the company, the proportion of people hired in sales to total hires increased from 20% in 2006 to 70% in 2007.

Leading business chambers of commerce and industries, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham) and Indian Merchants' Chamber (IMC) also facing a major problem of attrition. The attrition rate among these organisations ranges between 6% to well over 35%. Sources at these organisation said that though they revise salary and remuneration by at least 25 to 30% annually, it seems it was quite inadequate compared to the market trend. CII, which has a total employee strength of around

550 across India, has the attrition rate of 5 to 6%. FICCI, which has almost equal strength of employees, the attrition is almost upto 20%. FICCI sources informed, "Apart from lucrative salary package, staffers take the advantage of command in various subjects and sectors.

At FICCI, recently a staffer, who was drawing Rs 15 lakh annually, got a package of Rs 1.50 crore, while another had been lured by an industry in the entertainment sector for a similar package. More than six employees of the middle level have been hired by Reliance." In case of IMC, the attrition is almost 25% of its total employee strength of 80. At FICCI, recently a staffer, who was drawing Rs 15 lakh annually, got a package of Rs 1.50 crore, while another had been lured by an industry in the entertainment sector for a similar package. More than six employees of the middle level have been hired by Reliance." In case of IMC, the attrition is almost 25% of its total employee strength of 80.

DRIVERS OF ATTRITION

It is not easy to find out, who contributes and who has the control on the attrition of employees. Various studies/survey conducted indicates that everyone is contributing to the prevailing attrition. Attrition does not happen for one or two reasons. The way the industry is projected and speed at which the companies are expanding has a major part in attrition. If you look within, the specific reasons for attrition are varied in nature and it is interesting to know why the people change jobs so quickly. Even today, the main reason for changing jobs is for higher salary and better benefits. But in call centers the reasons are many and it is also true that for odd reasons people change jobs. At the same time the attrition cannot be attributed to employees alone. Organizations must develop its own sensing device to know whether it is the internal or external factor that is causing the attrition.

- ❖ Individual / Personal reasons
- ❖ Organizational matters
- ❖ Other factors

INDIVIDUAL / PERSONAL REASONS

The personal reasons are many and only few are visible to us. The foremost personal reasons are getting married or falling in love or change of place. The next important personal reason is going for higher education. Health is another aspect, which contributes for attrition. Employees do get affected with health problems like sleep disturbances, indigestion, headache, throat infection and gynecological dysfunction for lady employees. Employees who have allergic problems and unable to cope with the AC hall etc will tend to get various other health problems and loose interest to work. Youngsters look jobs as being temporary and they quickly change the job once they get in to their own field.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

The employees always assess the management values, work culture, work practices and credibility of the organization. The Indian companies do have difficulties in getting the businesses and retain it for a long time. There are always ups and downs in the business. When there is no focus and in the absence of business plans, non-availability of the campaigns makes people to quickly move out of the organization.

Moving from one job to another for higher salary, better positions and better benefits are the most important driver for attrition. The salary offered from MNC companies & IT firms in Bangalore, Delhi, Pune and Mumbai have gone up very high and it is highly impossible for Indian companies to meet the expectation of the employees. The employees expect salary re The employees move out if there are strained relations with the superiors or with the subordinates or any slightest discontent.

OTHER FACTORS

Working environment is the most important cause of attrition. Employees expect very professional approach and working environment of international standard. They expect very friendly and learning environment. Employees look for freedom, good treatment from the superiors, good encouragement, friendly approach from one and all, and motivation. If they won't get such environment they will leave the job. vision once in 4-6 months and if not, they move to other organizations.

POUCHING

The demand for trained and competent manpower is very high. Poaching has become very common. The big companies target employees of small companies. The employees with 4-6 months experience have very good confidence and dare to walk out and get a better job in a week's time. Most of the organizations have employee referral schemes and this makes people to spread message and refer the known candidates from the previous companies and earn too.

CONTROLLING ATTRITION: SUITABLE MEASURES

Employee attrition rate can be never being entirely eradicated. It can only be influenced to keep it in control. How a company can best retain its staff in a competitive environment is the topmost challenge of HR professionals. When employees leave, it is usually due to either lack of appreciation or due to an inability of nurturing employees according to their skills. Following are some strategies to combat the attrition problem.

1. Exit Interview
2. Mentoring
3. Strengthening the recruitment process
4. Strategic compensation package
5. Fun & Laughter at workplace
6. Free or Subsidized lunch/ Dinner
7. Treating Employees like Customers.
8. Transportation facilities
9. Involvement of Employees in Decision Making Process
10. Employees Advocate
11. Making the organisation very transparent.
12. Recreation, Healthcare, gym facilities, etc.
13. Employee stock ownership plan.
14. Bring your buddy scheme.

1. Exit Interviews

Exit interview has always been a reliable as well as cost-effective retention tool. A well-designed exit interview provides a valuable feedback about the employees' perceptions and experiences. Results obtained from these exit interviews help the HR managers to take initiatives in order to retain a loyal and motivated workforce.

2. Mentoring

The Mentor plays a very vital role of handholding in the initial stages of an enterprise. He is the guardian angel to whom an entrepreneur can turn when in distress.(Gavane

2007) The Mentor provides business guidance and shares his experience and skills with the entrepreneur. The Mentor through counselling will come to know the problems of employees, which may lead to attrition in future.

3. Strengthening the recruitment process.

Hiring the people that are a good "fit" with the culture of the organization meaning that their values, principles, and goals clearly match those of the company and then training as necessary will go a long way toward ensuring employee loyalty and retention.

4. Strategic compensation package

The firms should develop an overall strategic compensation package that includes not only base and variable pay scales, but long-term incentive compensation, bonus and gain-sharing plans, benefit plans to address the health and welfare issues of the employees, and non-cash rewards and perks as well. To be competitive in today's labour market, most companies find it necessary to offer a standard benefit package, including health, dental, and life insurance, vacation and leave policies, and investment and retirement plans. But what more could be done that would be cost effective toward creating an employee-oriented work environment?

Creativity in compensation and benefits can make quite a difference to the welfare of the employee. A company should assess overall employee needs when addressing retention issues.

5. Fun & Laughter at workplace

Fun filled workplaces results in excellent performance of the employees. This element of fun and laughter at the workplace makes a significant and positive change in the employee's attitude and behaviour on the company's bottom-line. Happy employees are the most productive workers who break workplace monotony and make it really a perfect place to work as they pass on their exuberant mood to their colleagues and managers too. This serves a source of motivation to everyone in the office.

6. Free or Subsidized lunch/ Dinner

If the organisation is far away from city, many employees find it difficult to arrange lunch for them especially, the bachelors. If free or subsidized lunch/ dinner are made available by organisation the chances of leaving may dimmer.

7. Treating Employees like Customers

Companies should have similar approach to employees and Customer. If the company strives to retain their employees in the same way they try to retain their customer the attrition problem is out of question. The companies should maintain the good flow of communication with regular meetings and daily updating employee about company's current position and events.

8. Transportation facilities

Due to shortage of space to setup offices, corporate houses are setting their offices far away from the city place; many times the employees feel inconvenience to manage the conveyance from home to office. Keeping the same problem in view many organisations are providing to & fro transportation facilities to their employee either on sharing basis or part of benefits.

9. Involvement of Employees in Decision Making Process

Employees like to be a part of an organisation where their voices are heard and opinions really matters. The greater an employee's involvement in decision making process better is the organisations ability to retain its talent.

10. Employees Advocate

Handling employee's grievances is very critical issue, effective grievance handling is very essential in any organisation. One of the main reasons why employees leave companies is because of problems with their managers. An HR professional can be termed an employee's advocate and a bridge between top management and employees at all levels. There is a huge gap between HR professionals and employees in terms of understanding challenges and delivering requirements. HR has not really understood the problems associated with employees' careers and jobs. The company's overall plans and strategies also depend on HR professionals as they voice employees' problems and requirements The HR department should have genuine interest in the employees' welfare...it is responsible for making sure that their expectations are met.

11. Making the organization very transparent

Employees feel more comfortable working in a highly transparent organisation where much of the details regarding its functioning, development and performance are freely available to the employees.

12. Recreation, Healthcare, gym facilities, etc.

To have healthy atmosphere at the workplace, many organizations are providing different facilities like gym, yoga/mediation, healthcare facilities etc.

13. Employee stock ownership plan (ESOP)

ESOP i.e. Employee stock ownership plan is a kind of reward scheme that enable employees to acquire the status and benefit of ownership in their company without investing their money. It creates the direct link between employee productivity and employee benefits. ESOPs also encourage employees to develop a sense of ownership and commitment. They provide increased financial incentives, create a sense of ownership, and help to build teamwork.

14. Bring your buddy scheme

Bring your buddy scheme is the recent strategy now a days the HR managers are adopting. If we refer the McClelland's theory of motivation the need for affiliation is one of the factors influencing behaviour of an employee, which can in turn to be the motive for leaving the organisation, considering this psychology; most of the IT companies have started hiring the buddies/friends of the existing employees. Here companies are getting double benefit of getting an employee as well as retention of existing employees.

COST OF ATTRITION

Employee attrition is a costly dilemma for all organizations. In today's taxing business climate, managing company's competent and skilled human capital is vital for success.

The extent of the impact of attrition on an organisation cannot be fully understood if there is no attempt to quantify the costs. The more complex approaches to costing turnover give a more accurate and higher estimate of the costs. When a competent employee is to be replaced an organization incurs a variety of costs including those related to recruiting, selection, training and suboptimal performance while learning the job.

Companies usually turn to increasing the compensation for employees to retain them. This however is no longer helpful in solving the problem as the skilled work force has many opportunities which masses of them give predilection to. Employee attrition costs 12 to 18 months' salary for each leaving manager or professional.

The UK Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) suggests that because of the difficulties involved in estimating and quantifying some of the indirect costs many organisations prefer to take a 'not less than' approach in attempting to cost turnover.

According to the CIPD the major turnover costs are:

- ❖ Administration of the resignation (including exit interviews)
- ❖ Recruitment costs (including advertising)
- ❖ Selection costs
- ❖ Costs of cover (temporary employees or overtime) during the vacancy period
- ❖ Administration of recruitment and selection process
- ❖ Induction training for new employees.

SOME POSITIVE ASPECTS OF ATTRITION

If all employees stay in the same organization for a very long time, most of them will be at the top of their pay scale which will result in excessive manpower costs.

- ❖ When certain employees leave, whose continuation of service would have negatively impacted productivity and profitability of the company, the company is benefited.
- ❖ New employees bring new ideas, approaches, abilities & attitudes which can keep the organization from becoming stagnant.
- ❖ Desirable attrition also includes termination of employees with whom the organization does not want to continue a relationship. It benefits the organization in the following ways:
 - It removes bottleneck in the progress of the company
 - It creates space for the entry of new talents
 - It assists in evolving high performance terms
- ❖ Acquisition of new knowledge
- ❖ Reduced conflict situations from controversial employees who leave.

CONCLUSION

In the current scenario where every organization wants to be at its competitive best, high attrition rate can really act as a threat to success. Attrition is a very serious challenge Especially to rapidly growing organizations. Before it explodes, the organizations should seriously workout strategies to reduce the turnover so that the organizations should not suffer. Organizations planning for the future should be giving close attention to why attrition is occurring in the present.

Attrition is not bad always if it happens in a controlled manner. Some attrition is always desirable and necessary for organizational growth and development. The only concern is how organizations differentiate "good attrition" from "bad attrition"

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