

Employee Retention at Admaark: A Case Study

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Abstract:

Employee retention plays a key role in the success of every organization. Organisations design and adapt various approaches to encourage and retain their employees with the organization for the maximum period of time. It is beneficial for the organization as well as the employee. Indeed, retention of employee is not the matter that can be dealt by the reports or records, it is purely depends on how we understand individual concerns especially in case of woman employees the only simple logic employers must understand from the employee point of view is, organisation must be like a helping hand for the genuine concerns. This case study deals with similar situations which took place at Admaark, an event management organization in Nagpur

Keywords — Employee retention, attrition, hiring.

I. INTRODUCTION

In May 2019, Mr. Promod Batra, Managing Director of Admaark Pvt Ltd, an Event Management company in Nagpur, India was lost in his daily routine, checking the status of his current and next day priorities and appointments, till he was intervened by the knock on his cabin door, Though he was indifferent about the knock at the first go, latter on he answered “Come in” upon the second knock. Ms. Hasini, a project associate with Admaark for the past one year came in holding a packet. Hasini can well be described as a hard working and easy going person, fit for her profile in Event Management and was always far ahead of her deadlines and was a role model for many.

With a pleasant smile, she unwrapped the packing and handed the box to Mr.Batra, he was not surprised as the packet turned out to be a box of sweets. For a moment a shiver went through

him. But with a smile, he asked “What’s the happy news Hasini?”

“Sir, actually my wedding has been confirmed for the next month” she replied in soft but hesitating voice while, handing over the embossed envelope which she was hiding underneath the sweet box. “So you need a long leave, right?” asked Mr.Batra in a welcoming tone. “No sir, I will be leaving to the U.S to join my husband. We will leave one week after the marriage.So I wish to resign, with a month’s notice period” she replied.

This was the fifth such envelope Mr.Batra received this year, often hidden under the sweet boxes.In fact whenever someone stepped in to his cabin with a sweet box in their hand, he always anticipated bitter news.

For a growing organization like Admaark, retention and motivation of hardworking and deserving personnel like Hasini were major HR

concerns. Over the past decade, the growth in the attrition rate was parallel to the recruitment. The average tenure of an employee working at Admaark has been less than two years. As organizations began to feel the impact of employee turnover, so a matching management tool began to be developed- employee retention. (Mckeown 2002)

Retaining talent was never been so important in the Indian context; however, things have changed in the past decade or so. Being located in the small city like Nagpur makes retention very challenging. In Indian metro cities at least, there is no dearth of opportunities for the best in this business, or even for the second or the third best. There is a natural flow of trained employees to such locations or for personal reasons leave the city. "Sometimes, I feel that we are a training school. Retention of key employees and treating attrition troubles has never been so important to event Management companies" says Mr. Batra.

Mr. Batra quoted "how tough it used to be for a qualified candidate from a small city to get the right job, before the India opened up doors to liberalization and globalization. Getting a job equally implied that the relationship would be for life. (With a sigh, he quoted)" "How easily today's generation let go the bird in the hand to chase another one". With that remark he signed her resignation letter and wished her all the best. His immediate concern was to get a replacement who she can train well, before she gets involved in the wedding celebrations.

II. THE TURBULENCE

Over time, Organizations like Admaark invest substantially in their employees. The ease with which employees can now change jobs, move and change functions and industries, has reduced employees' loyalty towards organization. The corresponding costs to the Admaark with regard

to employees' attrition and subsequent hiring or replacement can be quite high in terms of personal work-unit, and organizational readjustments.

Mr. Batra quotes "investing in staff is far less expensive than replacing them, apart from the hiring costs, one should also face risk of losing firm's knowledge-base, good will and customer service".

Since the prime focus of event management is derived from hospitality and creativity, hence women are generally preferred in this industry; this fact is also confirmed with the statistics of gender ratio at Admaark. But identifying such competitive workforce and attracting them is a challenging task. And retaining such competent workforce is another major challenge at Admaark. Especially among staff comprising the female workforce, the concept of extended working hours or flexi timing is the primary cause behind the rising attrition. On the majority scale, married women face the friction with concept of extended working hours. In spite of introducing perks and additional incentives for such extended hours, still this has been a major source for attrition rate and cause behind the sealed envelopes submitted by the deserving candidates like Hasini.

Hence the pressing need for Mr. Batra to develop a strategic move in order to ensure the attracting and retaining the competent staff was ever growing. Since the majority of the staff members are women, so Mr. Batra has decided to implement certain women friendly work culture measures at Admaark.

So, the primary focus was towards organizational policies, "women-friendly policies and work culture play a substantial role in recruiting and retaining competent women and promoting their full effectiveness at work" says Mr. Batra.

III. THE STRATEGIC APPROACH

At Admaark many fundamental changes were made in terms of grade placement, pay and promotion, maternity and paternity benefits and unbiased performance evaluation etc.

Spousal employment was always given the top priority among the employee referrals. Admaark has encouraged and organized more than three marriages between the staff members in the past 5 years. Towards integrating personal and work responsibilities initiatives like flexi-time, shared positions, companion travel and communications with home during travel are taken.

Poor and dangerous working conditions are a daily fact of life for millions of women workers worldwide (Stephen Taylor, 2002). Especially for the women employees working in the night shift, safety and security measures were tightened both at work place and transportation to the work place.

Constant medical checkups are taken up at Admaark to ensure health standards of the employees. To eliminate the gender discrimination at Admaark, Mr. Batra has ensured that more than 50 percent of the advisory board members and performance evaluation team comprise women.

Many recreational programs were conducted at Admaark periodically where in all the employees are taken for outing and picnic programs along with their families.

Such moves which ensure better work-life balance will also enable the firms with tools of retention.

Constant mentoring was taken up to ensure that female employees are provided with the appropriate environment, knowledge, and sponsorship to achieve their full potential within the company. Towards the career development

initiative at Admaark, employees are encouraged to pursue higher education.

“Admaark is the best work place that I have ever had in my career. The management wants to see their employees succeed and help in all the possible ways, I am proud to be part of Admaark's family” says Mrs. Archana Srivastava, a senior supervisor at Admaark.

Current and prospective employees need a clear vision of their career path. Identifying this need, Admaark conduct many in house development workshops to match female managers and senior managers of Admaark with leaders who help them orchestrate a career plan, gain access to key assignments, and enhance their knowledge of what it takes to advance. The hallmark of such corporate workshops was to increase knowledge and sensitivity around cultural differences and continuously improve global collaboration. These initiatives help in eradicating misunderstandings and provide clarity to issues related to stereotyping; which in turn increases cultural awareness.

Admaark flexible recruitment policy enables it to re-hire the ex-employees, who were top performers, and left the organization with amicable relationship. In this respect, Admaark has done substantial exploration towards various work options for employees at retirement-age such as project-based roles, phased retirements etc, to retain knowledge and expertise of senior staff.

Mr. Batra has given equal weight to the concept of succession planning and acceleration as well, towards this he has always identified and developed the key individuals so that they may eventually assume top-level positions. This foresight is not limited to the forecasted vacant positions, but also to develop a group of high potential candidates for undefined executive jobs and focus on increasing their skills and

knowledge rather than targeting one or two people for senior management position.

At Admaark a unique and explicit pattern is adapted in appraisal process, where in employees are classified in to quadrants based on performance and potential. Based on the quadrant in which a particular employee belongs, ranking was made with in the quadrant there by ensuring the transparency in the ranking system while integrating the pay to performance. Such a perfect blend of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is the key behind the increased employee satisfaction and morale at Admaark.

“At no point, did I ever felt that my professional life is causing an eclipse effect over my personal life, at Admaark work-life balance is the first priority and here our efforts are recognized at their best” says Mrs. Sahasra, a senior project associate with Admaark .

The market competition has intensified, and so is true with the demand for competent staff. Organizations cannot afford to be complacent about retention, especially the deserving employees. Due to the shortage of skilled manpower, organizations are adopting various strategies to curb attrition and attract right talent. Strategic moves like those at Admaark, help HR practitioners like Mr. Batra to convert such threats into opportunities. In order to do so, recruiting the right people and retaining them is mandatory. Though the initiatives taken at Admaark in this regard have a silver lining effect, but yet the outcome has to become more tangible and definite.

As such Mr Batra waits for the outcome of the outstanding initiatives which he has implemented at Admaark. However certain, the future with its uncertainty is yet to reveal the effectiveness of the organizational initiatives.

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