

Providing Greener Pasture Within

High attrition rates have always affected corporate organizations in a big way. There are abundant jobs available for skilled and experienced people and employees become easy prey to it. It is always suggested that if the employees are 'taken care of' then this outside movement could be restricted to quite an extent. 'Taking care' however is a difficult and an unending task. The organizations of today are thus renaming their human resource groups as 'people departments'. Here a lot of programmes are implemented to ensure that employees stay back. Special facilities and perks are also introduced frequently. The people care function is always working overtime to restrict the attrition rate. Even then it would not be an understatement to say that attrition rates are reaching alarming levels in quite a few organizations.

It is important to understand why people decide to leave the organization. This outside movement is mostly because of a feeling of discontentment that grows to a high level within the members. This feeling is also highly 'infectious' and grips other employees as well. Seeking a change is always outside the 'comfort zone', however in this case it is looked upon as a welcome change by all. Though there is always a fear of unknown associated with this movement, the risk seems to be worth it. Somehow the feeling of discontentment takes over the fear of unknown. This movement may not always be a right one since it is triggered through desperation. And once it has happened egos do not permit the employees to look back though the realization comes a bit too late on a few occasions. The movement could also be a result of an erroneous planning on the employees' part. Money is not the only issue when members within the organization look for 'greener pastures'. Most of the time, job satisfaction and stagnation are the key issues that prompt members within the organization to look for an opportunity outside the organization. Both these needs of the members have to be adequately addressed by the organization seeking to control the attrition rate. Job satisfaction essentially comes from providing the members the right opportunity in line with their interests and then providing a growth path. As the members grow in experience their desire to seek higher responsibilities and experiences also grow. This is where stagnation becomes an issue. The human mind always seeks new things. It constantly needs higher and higher experiences. As a behavioral consultant I have realized that a most of the employees are not certain of their professional aspirations and the knowledge of the factors that would result in job satisfaction. This is where Mentoring and career planning opportunities are of importance in controlling attrition rates. Mentoring is essential at all levels. Mentors are skilled employees within the organization who have operations and behavioral knowledge. Mentoring also provides avenues to bring about relevant changes within the organization apart from providing a growth-oriented environment. However, Mentoring is unfortunately a grossly neglected area in today's management practices.

Another relevant point is that most of the organizations look at utilizing members in a certain functional capacity only. Job rotation or change in role is usually outside the comfort zone for both the organization and the employees. The problem here is how to choose the right role. Both the organization and the members are at sea when any discussion on this point comes up. The reason is also obvious. The organization and the employees have never given a thought on career planning. People hardly spend time with themselves. If an opportunity is given for career planning where the members actually have a 'say' in drafting their career plans, things could drastically improve. The employees need to discover themselves first to know what they are good

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at and then execute the chosen assignment. Sense of ownership and job satisfaction are then automatic. The members then also get an opportunity to set their goals and achievement plans in line with the career objectives. The job thus becomes a part of the design of the career goal. The organization can then look forward to providing right opportunities. The implementation of the career plan however is a crucial issue then.

Once the members are clear on the career path then attrition can be controlled. One can initially look at plugging the issue related to job satisfaction. Then provide a long-term path for the employees within the organization and work towards other issues through Mentoring process. With career planning and Mentoring attrition rates can definitely be controlled.

Attrition is also largely dependent on the culture within the organization. If the relationships are oriented towards mutual growth wherein the focus is on trust and cooperation then the environment is conducive for performance. Only planning a career is not important the environment has to be conducive also. Competitive environments have largely compromised on relationship issues between colleagues within the organization. The other factor is whether the organization offers a growth path through skill enhancement opportunities. Humans always have an internal urge to constantly learn. Thus an environment to learn and opportunity of its implementation are essential in any organization development activity.

Most importantly the economic status and acknowledgement of the member's contribution goes a long way in controlling the attrition rate. The performance of each member has to be acknowledged and given due credit. Human mind always craves for appreciation. This is where the employee derives the sense of security and also a satisfaction of being an integral part of the process of growth within the organization.

Addressing the above issues within an organization can go a long way in controlling the attrition rate and aligning the organization towards growth. Growth and people go hand in hand. Growth is an outcome of a symbiotic relationship between people and the organization. It is a known fact that people make the organization. So to control the attrition and to align to growth, focus on contribution areas of the employees. Each successful employee lays a foundation for the consolidated growth of the organization. If people issues are sorted out process issues no longer exist.