



RECRUITMENT & RETENTION OF KNOWLEDGE WORKER IN AN ORGANISATION

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge is the symbol of prosperity, key to development, power of mind and life of brain. India is approaching knowledge-based economy; it has the potential to become a knowledge superpower. The foundations of Knowledge organizations are their valuable people. According to Peter Drucker, Knowledge workers are those employees who combine their strong analytical and theoretical knowledge to come up with radically new ideas. Knowledge capital creates the long lasting competitive advantage. This means that locating and retaining knowledge workers is the single most important challenge for any company competing in the changing environment.

“Today knowledge workers are like frogs in a wheelbarrow, which can jump at any point of time when they sense opportunities”

Good work behavior + knowledge source = Company growth

The process of creativity is key to human excellence is not a skill, it is an attitude. According to physiology, the human brain is divided into two hemispheres- right and left. The right hemisphere is the seat of creativity, intuition, imagination, faith, love, charity, compassion, tolerance and other such ennobling qualities. The left hemisphere is the seat of logic, judgment, the faculty of critical enquiry and questioning. The aim of education should be to forge the synthesis of these two hemispheres in the human personality to promote awareness for imparting knowledge.

The success of any organization depends largely on its workforce. The HR professionals recognized that core competency lies in the employees so recruiting the

right candidate for the right job is very essential. In order to judge and select the talented potential employees one must need a talent to identify the recruitment and shortlist the prospective candidate on the basis of information supplied. The recruiter must have through knowledge of the prevailing situation and competencies and abilities to be identified from the available candidates in the age of modern upcoming field of human resource management keeping in view the global prospective of knowledge management.

Knowledge workers are calculated risk takers as well as emotional intelligent people. They seek challenges in work and do not follow blind instruction. To retain knowledge workers organizations should give significance to Quality of Work life and Harmonious environment. Managing Knowledge workers is one of the greatest challenges uncouted by HR Managers.

KEYWORDS: *Core competencies, HR Strategies, knowledge capital Recruitment, Retention.*

INTRODUCTION

With the emergence of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG), the business environment has become more dynamic, markets are becoming competitive, businesses are becoming service-oriented and diversified, educated workforce is growing in number. Information revolution is actually knowledge revolution, due to this organizations fight the war for talent every day. Nowadays organizations are capitalizing on Knowledge base work and workers are regarded as intellectual capital. There is transformation of industrial economy into Knowledge-based economy. The role of HR managers has become very crucial, not only recruitment and selection is sufficient they have to attract, mold, develop and retain and fulfil the expectations of Knowledge Workers.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Knowledge management is not only about the latest technology but also managing knowledge within the company and treating it as the most valued asset for the success of the company. Knowledge workers are people who use their heads more than their hands to produce value. They add value through their ideas, their analyses, their judgment and their designs. In this knowledge age an, organization can no longer expect that the products and services that made them successful in the past will keep them in business in future. The organizations having rich 'knowledge source' only can able to maintain and enhance their core competence and corporate identity. In this competitive global market, the knowledge management is considered as intangible asset which can provide a substantial competitive advantage.

Knowledge is always embodied in a person; carried by a person; created, augmented, or improved by a person; applied by a person; taught and passed on by a person; used or misused by a person. The shift to the knowledge society therefore puts the person in the centre.

KNOWLEDGE WORKER

The concept of the “knowledge worker,” a term first coined by Management Guru Peter Ducker in the 1959 and defined a Knowledge worker as, “Anyone who works for a living at the tasks of developing or using knowledge.”

Example: - Knowledge worker might be someone who works at the task of planning, organizing, programming, distributing, marketing and contributing in transformation and commerce of information.

Knowledge worker may be any core professional like teachers, lawyers, doctors, engineers, scientists and all such professionals who deal with information technology.

Knowledge workers in today's workforce are individuals who are valued for their ability to act and communicate with knowledge within a specific subject area. They will often advance the overall understanding of that subject through focused analysis, design and development. They use research skills to define problems and to identify alternatives. They mainly “have high degrees of expertise, education, or experience. The primary purpose of their jobs involve the creation, distribution and application of knowledge”.

“Knowledge workers are people who use their heads more than their hands to produce value. They add value through their ideas, their analyses, their judgment, their syntheses, and their designs. “

According to Reed (1996), knowledge workers are “information technology analysts”. He further argued that these workers live an “informal way of life” and are not tied to any particular company. Thus, they are mostly self-employed and have a high degree of work autonomy.

CORE COMPETENCIES OF KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

Knowledge workers demonstrate strategic, managerial and operational traits.

- 1. GOOD THINKING AND ANALYTICAL POWER** —They having a vision and can make strategies that how the products or company can perform better. They have ability to think independently. With the help of their creativity discover innovative techniques to help their firing to develop further.
- 2. CONTINUOUS LEARNING** — They can learn and relearn in tune with the fast changing environment. They are learning oriented and focus on organizational learning to ensure operational excellence of organization along with their own growth.
- 3. INNOVATIVE TEAMS AND TEAMWORK** —Knowledge worker believe in collaboration, cooperation and coordination while working and have a good team spirit. They search, share, and use knowledge regularly.
- 4. CREATIVITY** — Creativity is a unique quality of knowledge worker which project the benefits and prospects for knowledge workers and organizations benefits. Keeping in mind the new prospective heights for both employer and employees.

5. **'CALCULATED RISK TAKERS', AS WELL AS 'EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENT' PEOPLE** — Knowledge workers are calculated risk taker as well as emotional intelligent people. They do not fear risks. They make decisions with calculated risk. They seek challenges in work and do not follow instructions blindly. Emotional intelligence helps in motivating and managing ourselves as well as others. They have self awareness and empathy as well as self control.
6. **ACTION ORIENTED** — They are willing to embrace professional discipline, have patience and determination. They are highly qualified professionals with a high a level of education. Knowledge workers may either have expertise on specific skills or to multidimensional skills.
7. **CULTURE OF RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD KNOWLEDGE** — Loyalty and commitment to one's manager, Boss and organization.

RECRUITMENT OF KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

The Secrets & Science of Hiring best knowledge workers takes the guesswork out of hiring and diminishes the risk of costly hiring mistakes.

1. **WRITE A CONCISE, TARGETED JOB DESCRIPTION:** The descriptions tend to be task oriented and give little insight into the environment, the expectations for the position or the barriers to success.
2. **SOURCE CANDIDATES:** The major sources of candidates are – Professional colleges, Universities, Technical institutes, consultancies and special references of prominent personalities.
3. **DEVELOP ADS FOR MIXED MEDIA:** The advertisement should be of composite nature and widely published and looking forward for prospective candidates.
4. **REVIEW RESUMES QUICKLY DETERMINING YES, NO, MAYBE CANDIDATES:** Shorting and short listing of prospective candidates for assessment and final selection.
5. **DEVELOP INTELLIGENT, NON DISCRIMINATORY INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES:** Interviews are the universal approach to selecting employees. It should be standard and structured .Structuring the interview can retain the personal touch while increasing the ability to objectively compare experience and potential across candidates. The interviewer looks for specific behaviour or knowledge and the questions determine whether a candidate possesses these attributes.
6. **CREATE FOOL-PROOF PHONE SCREENS:** The telephonic interview is the one of the advance mode of conversation with prospective candidate which is used widely among the different agencies for screening and short listing of candidates for final selection.

7. **CHECK REFERENCES WITH A VIEW TO READING BETWEEN THE LINES:** The references are most important means to check the creditability and professional ability of the candidates as a evidence from tested prominent references.
8. **EXTEND AN OFFER THAT WILL ATTRACT A WIN-WIN ACCEPTANCE:** The final offer is given to the candidate were candidate feel on the positive note and winning side and the employer also feel proud that talented person has been shortlisted and offer the job which is beneficial for the organization.

An effective hiring process is crucial to saving an organization the costs and consequences of a bad hiring decision. Not only is a bad hire costly in terms of recruiting expenses and the time spent hiring, it can also bog down or derail projects that may already be running late.

CHALLENGES IN MANAGING KNOWLEDGE WORKER

Knowledge workers are very effective for increasing the productivity and the overall efficiency of organizations but managing them is a very challenging task.

EXPENSIVE AFFAIR: Managing knowledge worker is very expensive job. The expenditure includes money invested in HR (recruitment, training, compensation, benefits, etc) as well as in infrastructure. For using knowledge workers more efficiently, organizations need to have sound infrastructure and hi-tech information technology'.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING: Knowledge workers engage in "peer-to-peer" knowledge sharing across organizational and company boundaries, forming networks of expertise. There should be proper communication and coordination multiple knowledge workers and knowledge teams who are involved in various projects concurrently and independently.

MANAGING EXPECTATIONS: Knowledge workers have high expectations in terms of challenging jobs, growth opportunities, and quality of work life, pay packages and benefits given by organization. To motivate and retain knowledge workers, organizations need to provide the best possible facilities to them.

HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGIES FOR EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

HR strategies play a vital role in this. The main HRM strategies used to manage knowledge workers are:

1. **APPROPRIATE SELECTION:** Companies should focus on recruiting bright, knowledge seeking individuals. While selecting the individuals proper focus should be given to the candidate's qualifications, job-oriented competencies and previous work experience in the related work field.
2. **RETENTION STRATEGY:** Companies should plan proper retention strategies. They should hire the best and fittest employees according to the need and culture; give them promotion, appreciation, incentives, rewards and appraisals whenever required.

3. **KNOWLEDGE SHARING:** HR managers should reinforce knowledge-sharing among employees through measures like group discussions, brainstorming, seminars, workshop, guest lectures, etc. Extensive knowledge of business proactive should be imparted along with the capability to translate technical information at the employee level. The benefits of knowledge sharing should also be elucidated to employees.
4. **ACTIVE LEARNING:** Organizations should teach their employees "Learning to learn", i.e., how to learn in short double-loop learning. Managers should focus on endorsing active learning to improve knowledge workers' competency and capability to discover new ways. Organizations should make employees self-dependent, self-motivated and self-controlled in order to adapt according to changing requirements of world.
5. **EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT:** The employees should be given the power to take decisions independently. They should be provided sufficient autonomy and flexibility in order to execute their work efficiently and achieve the desired level of performance.
6. **OFFERING OPPORTUNITIES:** Managers should provide opportunities for knowledge workers to brain storm ideas, exchange knowledge, and formulated new ways of doing business. Employees should view challenges in terms of opportunities, rather than merely focusing on problems. They should work on generating tomorrow's business instead of focusing on yesterday's problems.
7. **QUALITY OF WORK LIFE:** The organizations should give due significance to quality of work life, i.e., welfare provisions (ESI schemes, club membership, etc), fringe benefits (canteen, house rent, interest, free loans, etc), and harmonious environment. Provision for work-life balance, stress management, flexitime, etc., should be adopted by organizations to improve the productivity of employees.
8. **COMPENSATION AND REWARDS:** In order to attract, retain and motivate the employees, organizations should offer attractive pay packages. The company should us monetary awards, bonuses and special prizes for teams or individuals for their unique contributions.
9. **MOTIVATION AND RECOGNITION:** Employees should be motivated not only by monetary rewards but also by appreciation and encouragement form time to time. This would help in maintaining work motivation in employees.
10. **COUNSELLING AND MENTORING:** Managers of knowledge workers should act as facilitators in directing them towards their goals. Managers should play the role of a counsellor and mentor, in order to motivate employees and remove obstacles in their path of achievement
11. **SOUND IT INFRASTRUCTURE:** Managers should provide sound IT infrastructure to employees so that they can unitize their knowledge competence to the fullest. The organization should have sophisticated and user-friendly software systems that would help in documentation and streamlining of data and processes. For instance, companies,

like Infosys and Tata Steel have knowledge repositories and hi-tech software's for knowledge sharing.

- 12. TRAINING:** Knowledge workers should be trained regularly in order to sharpen their competencies and capabilities. Training provides a platform for learning and generates the scope of continuous improvement.
- 13. MAINTAINING TEAM SPIRIT:** Managers should focus on maintaining coordination, collaboration and concurrent activities among knowledge workers. Generating team spirit in workers should be given the highest priority.
- 14. EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP:** A prerequisite for implementing knowledge-oriented concept in organization is that the top management should be involved to the fullest. The top management should lead the process and encompass it at all the levels in order to spread knowledge culture in the organization. Effective leaders are defined as people who come up with new ideas, and articulate a vision that inspires others to act. This work should be headed by a top managerial committee.
- 15. LEADERSHIP STYLE:** Along with implementing effective leaders, effective leadership style should also be used. As knowledge workers cannot merely perform on the basis of instructions, they must be treated with due respect and dignity. All employees should be dealt with tactfully because each one is different from another and may have altogether different needs. So, tailor-made and participatory style of leadership style should also be followed to create win-win situations.
- 16. CREATING AN INNOVATIVE AND KNOWLEDGE CULTURE:** Innovation is the lifeblood of any entity in the present scenario. The organization should foster an environment of innovation and change. It also must develop a knowledge culture where employees are free to create and share knowledge.

All these strategies, if implemented by the HR department, would definitely help the organization to enhance the productivity of knowledge workers, transforming the organization into a huge success.

RETENTION

Philosophically, retention is important in almost all cases. Retention of key employees is critical to the long-term health and success of any organization. It is a known fact that retaining best employees ensures customer satisfaction, increased product sales, satisfied colleagues and reporting staff, effective succession planning and deeply imbedded organizational knowledge and learning. Intelligent employers always realise the importance of retaining the knowledge workers.

In India there are few sectors where the attrition level is much larger compared to other sectors? For example: IT sector and BPO. Whereas there are organizations like Air India, HAL, DRDO, BARC where the attrition is nearly 5% or less than that.

Employee Retention Strategies helps organizations provide effective employee communication to improve commitment and enhance workforce support for key corporate initiatives.

THE THREE R's APPROACH OF EMPLOYEE RETENTION

To keep employees satisfaction level high organizations need to implement Three Rs Approach of employee retention: respect, recognition, and rewards.

- 1. RESPECT:** As the pyramid shows, it is esteem. Special regard or particular consideration should be given to people. Respect is the foundation of keeping employees. Recognition and rewards will have little effect if you don't respect employees.
- 2. RECOGNITION:** It is defined as "special notice or attention" and "the act of perceiving clearly." Many problems occur related to retention because management is not paying attention to people's needs and reactions.
- 3. REWARDS:** Rewards are the extra perks organization offer beyond the basics of respect and recognition that make it worth people's while to work hard, to care, to go beyond the call of duty. While rewards represent the smallest portion of the retention equation, they are still an important one.

The major benefit of implementing Three Rs approach is that it is helpful in reducing employee turnover & absenteeism and also helpful in increasing productivity and profit.

STRATEGIES USED FOR RETAINING KNOWLEDGE WORKER

The retention of highly skilled knowledge workers is one of the major challenges today for all organizations. Knowledge workers are those whose work primarily requires the use of "mental power rather than muscle power." They are therefore extremely valuable because they keep the factories churning, the customers satisfied, the new products coming out the door---they are the backbone of any company. So how do we keep these highly skilled and valuable workers from jumping ship?

- 1. CREATE A KNOWLEDGE SHARING CULTURE:** Knowledge management has never been more important and it should be an important responsibility for workers at all levels. A culture valuing shared knowledge helps keep people from hoarding it and believing that knowledge is power. A knowledge sharing culture empowers people.
- 2. SUPPORT TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT:** What highly skilled, quality workers realize that in a fast changing world, those who snooze will soon lose their marketable skills. The latest technology, or software package, or self-development program not only can lure knowledge workers, but can also induce them to stay on board. Encourage people to expand and strengthen their skill sets. Cross train them and utilize their expertise in as many ways possible. Use coaches and coaching to help ensure transfer of training into the work place. Engage peers in teaching and coaching one another so that a culture of learning is embedded in the core of the organization.

3. **DEVELOP A ROBUST AND DEEP SUCCESSION PLAN:** Include as many people in the organization as possible as specialized information is housed in a variety of positions throughout the company. Be sure to tie the succession plan closely to training and development so knowledge and skills gaps are known and so the company has a clear understanding of who is about to retire and walk away with lots of actual and intuitive knowledge.
4. **EXPLORE WAYS TO KEEP KEY TALENT:** Offer job sharing, part time employment, consultant ships, etc. to people who might be willing to work part time instead of retiring outright. Create mentorship programs where knowledge sharing is not only encouraged but expected. Do everything possible to transfer knowledge from retiring workers to younger workers before that knowledge walks out the door.
5. **PROVIDE SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS:** Knowledge workers will more likely remain if they know they are learning new things, gaining exposure to 'hot areas' or increasing their visibility inside the company. Some examples of short-term developmental projects include leading a task force on a pressing business problem, handling negotiations with a customer., integrating systems across units, supervising product or equipment purchase or presenting a proposal report to top management.
6. **ROTATE JOBS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:** The movement of workers to different tasks at specified intervals enables them to develop and practice new skills and determine areas in which they can best use their talents. Also, staffs that are prepared to function in a variety of capacities and to perform a variety of duties, will bring breadth and depth to your team or department as a side benefit, rotation of people to different areas can result in better communication and work relations.
7. **SHOW GENUINE INTEREST:** Ask your valued workers how they are doing, what's going well and what's not. Don't wait for yearly performance review time to recognize good work. Do it on a regular basis. As with most people who take pride in their work, knowledge workers value recognition, nearly as much as good pay.

The organization that is able to recruit, motivate, and retain the best workers is going to have a huge strategic advantage. Therefore, companies that offer comprehensive training with planned, on-the-job experience, complemented by enlightened supervision and opportunities for ongoing professional development, will be more successful in retaining their valued and highly skilled people.

CONCLUSION

Managing knowledge workers is indeed a difficult task as these people are more aware of the latest happenings. They have high expectations and are more prone to switch to other organization if not satisfied. So, managing knowledge workers is one of the greatest challenges countered by HR managers. If the HR department follows proper techniques and ways of managing knowledge workers, then the productivity of knowledge workers can be enhanced and the overall efficiency of the organization can be improved.

Management should be aware of all intricacies such that one cannot just give instructions to knowledge workers. Rather they should provide maximum opportunities to them so that they can explore their creativity and innovative skills. Organization should foster a congenial environment and focus on creating a learning culture. Proper leadership and motivation should be provided to employees from time to time. Continuous training and mentoring also helps in removing obstacles. Organizations should give due weight-age to the quality of work life and sound IT infrastructure. Productivity of knowledge workers can be enhanced, only if organizations understand the techniques of managing them. If the HR department recognizes the importance of these strategies and follows them, then no one can stop the organization from continuous knowledge enhancement, incremental productivity and success.

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