



TALENT RETENTION IN ACADEMICS: A CASE STUDY OF MANAGEMENT INSTITUTES OF ODISHA AFFILIATED TO BPUT

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ABSTRACT

Talent has a connotation of distinction. It is something that sets one apart. Management gurus have defined talent as the people who have potential and skills or those who can successfully lead transformation and change in the organization. The point to be underscored here is that talent is a commodity in short supply and comes at a price. Since it is a scarce resource, it needs to be optimally managed. Each resource in the organization plays a vital role in its success. Amongst all the available resources in an organization, human resource is the most crucial one. Managing human resources in an effective manner can lead to better chances of organizational success. One of India's leading technical education institutions, Biju Patnaik University of Technology (BPUT), Odisha, with its head-quarters in Rourkela came into being in 2002. Today, the University has 110 colleges, both constituent and affiliated, with around 58,000 students. But the burgeoning problem is the retention and proper development of talent. This paper seeks to understand and analyze the causes of the high attrition rate of employees in the management institutes of BPUT. Moreover, the paper tries to diagnose the malady and prescribe the remedial solutions. The essential theme of this paper is talent management and the development of a proper talent pool.

Key Words: Human Resource, Attrition, Retention, Talent, Talent Management.

INTRODUCTION

Technical Education Institutes in India have shown tremendous growth over the last decade. Now these institutes are gaining more and more attention both at local and international level. Management Colleges are supposed to be highly knowledge intensive, which enables the management of human capital even more important for them. Role of HR Managers are not only precise to corporate houses, but it is required at today's Technical Education houses as well, since they also operate as conglomerate these days. The task of managing talent at the professional level is getting challenged every now and then. As per the present model of managing human resources, most of the management colleges rely on the power of the Principal or the Management of that particular institution. It purely depends on the leadership abilities of these individual, which makes differences in managing the talent. But with the increase in intake every year, increase in number of management colleges every year; is it possible for an individual who are responsible for running the institution, to keep on managing, developing and retaining the current talent? This is where the researcher felt the importance of this research which would analyse the factors leading to high turnover rate of faculty and how these institutions can retain more of their talented faculty. This proposed talent retention strategies at institutional level would significantly contribute to the overall performance of technical education in Odisha.

IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

A nation is built to a large extent in its educational institutions – in its classrooms, laboratories, libraries and playing fields. Educational institutes not only produce highly skilled and enlightened manpower needed for the political, economic and social transformation and development of our country but also shoulder the responsibility of lending dynamism, resourcefulness and intellectuality to it. The teacher is the backbone of the educational system, the maker of mankind and the architect of society. A nation grows with the teachers and with the education imparted to the people. It is in this respect that the role of the teachers acquires significance in shaping society and in bringing revolutionary changes in the development of the country. The retention of this community in educational system



especially individual institutes is necessary for the effective and proper use of the resources for rendering maximum service to society through building up the future human-resource pool of the nation.

A number of findings and observations especially regarding management institutes are pointers to the fact that the education cosmos is sitting on a veritable landmine – that of talent crisis. Institutes at large are facing an acute dearth of academic talent; this is a malaise, which can snowball into a pandemic if remedial action is not taken instantly. Institutes are now taking the bull by the horns. The realization of the gravity of the situation is gradually dawning upon them. Slowly but steadily enough, they have started addressing this issue. They are acknowledging academic talent shortage as a burgeoning problem and are placing the academic talent development task high on their list of priorities.

From the earlier oft-repeated phrase of ‘no one is indispensable’, today the key words for any HR department are ‘key personnel’, ‘talent war’ and ‘attrition’. In such a situation, employee-retention programs have gained importance not only in sectors like IT/ITES, retail, banking and financial services but also educational institutes, which witness high rates of employee turnover. After talent acquisition and talent management, talent retention is the next most important issue on any HR agenda. Zubeen Mody, senior vicepresident, HR, IndusInd Bank, says “Employee retention is of utmost importance. At the senior level, each individual brings a unique set of skills. Where talent is already rare and people with requisite skills and experience are difficult to find, retention becomes a critical component of organisation-building.”

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

TALENT: - At the outset, let us embark on an attempt to define ‘talent’. Talent may be defined as the inherent ability of an individual to do a particular task in a particular way. Talent has a connotation of distinction. It is something that sets one apart. The point to be underscored here is that talent is a commodity in short supply and comes at a price. Since it is a scarce resource, it needs to be optimally managed. Organizations across the world are now thinking of including talent management in the gamut of management processes and functions. But what is talent management? Talent management incorporates attracting, retaining and developing the talent pool available to an organization in association with the other functions of management, so that the organization is never rendered bereft of expertise.

TALENT MANAGEMENT

Talent management is a professional term that gained popularity in the late 1990s. McKinsey & Company, following a study in 1997, coined the term and then it was the title of a book by Ed Michaels, Helen Handfield-Jones and Beth Axelrod. It refers to the process of developing and fostering new workers through developing and retaining current workers and attracting highly skilled workers at other companies to come and work for your organization.

Talent management is a systematic process of identifying, assessing, developing and retaining people with critical knowledge, skills and competencies. Competence, capability and talents are human assets of organizations. At the workplace, capability could mean member’s readiness to seek, undertake and carry out challenging work assignments. It is grounded in self-efficacy and other self-related phenomena (Mehta 1999). Talent management systems provide an organization with the vehicle of attracting and retaining the right skills at the right time in the right jobs.

The term ‘talent management’ means different things to different people. To some it is about the management of high-worth individuals or “the talented” while to others it is about how talent is managed generally, i.e., on the assumption that all people have talent, which should be identified and liberated. This term is usually associated with competency-based human resource management practices. Talent-management decisions are often driven by a set of

organizational core competencies as well as position-specific competencies. The competency set may include knowledge, skills, experience and personal traits (demonstrated through defined behaviours).

Management gurus have defined talent as the people who have high potential and skills or those who can successfully lead transformation and change in the organization. Such individuals are usually sought after in the market and their contribution to business adds direct value to its strategic and competitive positioning. These management gurus have defined talent management as the deployment of special strategies by the organization to recruit, retain and develop their pool of top talent. These special strategies are highly innovative and are in no way bureaucratic in nature.

Currently, Boards of Directors and other senior leadership teams are taking a direct interest in integrating talent management into the overall corporate strategy. It calls for featuring these individuals prominently in initiatives, and moves the accountability for talent beyond just the human resource arena. It lies prominently in strategy – at the core of business success. By making talent management an integral part of corporate strategy it would be a lot easier to monitor, control and direct it into the desired direction. Lynn Morton, of Performance Improvement Solutions, is of the view that the importance of talent management is evident in its ability to hold management interest even in the recently weak economy. Talent management is coming into its own now. It is providing a way for organizations to integrate a range of disparate human capital initiatives and for human resource itself to strategically align itself with the whole organization. Human-resource guru Dave Ulrich has written extensively on what it takes to build what he calls organizational capability, the ability to develop business strategies and execute them. He contends that the essence of organizational capability is a tight link between business objectives and organizational processes for selecting, developing, appraising and rewarding people. In short, they need Talent-management systems. Talent management systems do not leave key factors to chance. The organization carefully develops a distinct ‘employer brand’ to attract talent, works out ways to organize work, to delegate responsibilities and, ultimately, to generate employee satisfaction and retention. A talent management system is part of the fabric of the organization.

STAGES OF THE TALENTMANAGEMENT PROCESS

Each resource in the organization plays a vital role in its success. Amongst all the available resources in an organization, human resource is the most crucial one. Managing human resources in an effective manner can lead to better chances of organizational success. A high-performance organization attaches more importance to talent and goes all out to cultivate and consolidate its talent pool. This process involves recruiting, selecting, developing and motivating competent employees in a way that they are equipped with the right skill set that helps the organization in the attainment of its goals.

Just the hiring of employees does not ensure that the organization achieves its objectives. Attainment of organizational objectives is only ensured when people are committed to the organization. This is only possible with proper talent management. Talent management, in simple terms, is a scientific mechanism for acquiring, developing and motivating people with the right skill set and approach to meet business objectives. Many researches have shown that young managers have the tendency to migrate to a new job when a better opportunity presents itself. On the other hand, the turnover of managers who are in the middle of their career is comparatively low but not negligible. A high turnover of employees hampers the growth of the organization. So, in order to ensure that the organization does not lose its valuable human resources it is necessary that a proper talent management system is in place. A typical talent management process involves the following stages:

Attracting Talent

Attracting talent would involve assessment and selection of human resources. It would basically require the evaluation of the present workforce. This evaluation unravels the existing discrepancy between the needed talent and existing talent. Job evaluation is another way of identifying the needs of the organization. Now the talent can be acquired through proper recruitment and selection strategy to fill the burgeoning gap. Talent acquisition includes the

organization's ability to extract information and ideas from its environment as well as through insight. One of the fastest and most powerful ways to acquire talent is through *grafting*, i.e., hiring individuals or acquiring entire companies. For example, graphic chipmaker ATI Technologies picked up plenty of talent by hiring the most experienced Nortel staff that was recently laid off.

Retaining Talent

In the fast-growing competitive world the organization can survive only with its talented employees. The organization may face several challenges, such as ageing workforce, high attrition rate, increasing skill shortage, etc. Among these high rate of attrition of employees is the major challenge. This can be seen in the following figures of attrition of employees at

- Infosys - 10.7 %
- Wipro - 17 %
- Satyam - 18 %
- HCL Technologies - 13.1 %
- i-Flex Solutions - 19 %

The growth rate of these IT companies is tremendous, but so is their attrition rate. Similar phenomena are observed in educational institutes as well. A study conducted by Dhar & Jain (1992) explored the nature of relationship between job satisfaction, job involvement and employee retention. An important finding of the study was that job involvement and job satisfaction and retention are positive correlates, which imply that involvement in job increases with job satisfaction, and so does retention. High attrition of employees calls for a proper retention strategy. Employees can only be retained by an organization when they are satisfied working there. An organization facing a high attrition rate is often hard pressed with other ongoing HR activities like recruitment, training, compensation revision and survey etc., so that eventually no time is spent on the development of employees (Kumar, 2003). A good retention strategy will ensure the presence of following elements in its organization, so as to prevent any further exodus of the employees:

1. Exciting work
2. Good organizational culture
3. Robust leadership
4. Wealth and rewards
5. Prospects of career growth and development

Developing Talent

Development represents efforts to improve employees' ability to handle a variety of assignments and to cultivate capabilities beyond those required by the current job. Development benefits both the organization and the individual employee. Employees and managers with appropriate experience and abilities may enhance organizational competitiveness and the ability to adapt to a changing environment. Talent development strategies will include the following

New-job Integration/Assimilation

Development of talent should be done in such a manner that the employees are at ease when faced with the situation like that of job rotation. It equips them with the knowhow of a new job and adds spice to their routine job.

Training

Training is a process whereby people acquire capabilities or develop their existing competencies to aid the achievement of organizational goals. It provides employees with specific, identifiable knowledge and skills for use in their present and future jobs. Talent training specifically aims at bridging any gap between the existing and required competencies of the employees for better succession planning.

Succession Planning

It is the process of identifying a long-term plan for the orderly replacement of key employees. The need to replace key employees results from promotions, transfers, retirements, deaths, disabilities, departures or other reasons. In fact, succession planning is something that most of the organizations do not even think about, hence, the impending leadership crisis. A good succession plan always ensures the ready availability of the right person at the right time and at the right place doing the right work in the event of the current incumbent not being there for the any of the aforementioned reasons.

Transitioning Talent

Transitioning talent implies that employees are deputed on some new position for a short period of time, so that they are able to provide a new insight into this job as well as learn some new skills for their existing job. This will include the following:

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The primary objectives of this research were:

- To understand the concept of talent management,
- To analyze the factors that lead to the high turnover rate of faculty,
- To suggest ways to reduce the turnover rate of faculty.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design used for the study is mainly descriptive. A number of management institutes have been used from Bhubaneswar and adjoining places to collect a sample of 80 respondents randomly. A multiple-choice structured questionnaire was used for the collection of primary data. The purpose of this study was to find answers to questions through the application of scientific procedures. The main aim of study was to discover the truth that is hidden and that has not been discovered as yet.

Profile of respondents: The respondents in the study at hand were largely in the 'active-life' bracket, i.e., from 25 to 40 years of age. The sample consisted of 56 male and 44 female respondents. The sample was almost uniformly distributed across the academic hierarchical levels, i.e., an equi-proportional mix of professors, assistant professors and lecturers was taken. All, the respondents are from private educational institutions.

ANALYSIS

Table 7.1:- Comprehensive Table

Sl. No.	Content of Question	Response	
1	Length of service	a. 0-2 yrs b. 2-5 yrs c. > 5 yrs	= 26 % = 55 % = 19 %
2	Intended time frame of staying with the institute	a. 0-2 yrs b. 2-5 yrs c. >5 yrs	= 23 % = 49 % = 28 %
3	Salary according to expectations	a. Yes b. No	= 47 % = 53 %
4	Satisfaction with infrastructure	a. Yes b. No	= 68 % = 32 %
5	Encouragement given to faculty development programs	a. Yes b. No	= 59 % = 41 %
6	Your institute's policies on intangible recognition of employee efforts	a. Yes b. No	= 52 % = 49 %
7	Does your institute promote merit-based promotions?	a. Yes b. No	= 61 % = 39 %

8	Always pressed for time due to workload?	a. Yes b. No	= 43 % = 57 %
9	Dislike most about your work profile	a. Teaching b. Student counselling c. Evaluation work d. Administrative responsibilities	= 0 % = 18 % = 33 % = 49 %
10	Main reasons for leaving your institute would be	a. Salary b. Workload c. Inappropriate management d. Poor infrastructure e. Timing f. Work Environment g. Organization h. Politics i. Management's attitude towards faculty	= 2 % = 18 % = 23 % = 0 % = 0 % = 12 % = 31 % = 14 %

(Source: Collected and Compiled Primary Data)

FINDINGS

Employee attrition is a costly affair for all organisations. In today's taxing business climate, competitive environment, managing an institute's competent and skilled human capital is vital for success. This study has explored the prime factors for employee attrition and suggests some retention strategies and processes that will help achieve long term tangible business benefits.

It can be noticed from the comprehensive table that most of the employees of management institutes are working with an experience of more than 2 years. In spite of this nearly 53% faculty members are not satisfied with their salaries as they are not according to their expectations. 68% faculty members are satisfied with their institute's infrastructure. Some of them feel that they are pressed for time. 43% faculty members reported that they are overworked. Complaints of excessive workload mainly came from female faculty members. Evaluation and administrative responsibilities are the mainly disliked job responsibilities. 49% respondents detest any kind of administrative responsibility. On insistent probing it was even revealed that administrative responsibilities take away a major portion of the valuable time, which could otherwise be devoted to research and consultancy work. Through our research we found that most of the employees leave their college because of organizational politics rather than salary package, inappropriate management, infrastructure, timings and so on. 31% respondents consider organizational politics as an important reason for leaving organization. While very few respondents consider salary to be the cause of attrition, but when asked about the most important factor for his or her retention, the answer was salary.

When probed beyond the questionnaire, respondents expressed their view that the quality of education is going down due to the entry of regionalism, casteism, politics and business motives in the educational set-up. All these are together responsible for the deteriorating academic environment of the institutes. In order to look for something better, job-hopping takes place in the academic institutes. Most of the management institutes are undergoing high attrition and it has led to a major problem and has forced them to take immediate corrective measures. Based on the

empirical analysis of data, following emerged as the important strategies for retaining employees in the management institutes:

1. Salary
2. Training and development opportunities
3. Work environment
4. Growth prospects

Despite all the talk about growth, challenge, self-fulfilment, meaningfulness and all other motivation factors (Herzberg's two-factor theory), salary, that is monetary motivation, still remains the most important factor in retaining employees. Probably it can be attributed to a more or less similar kind of work environment prevailing in almost all management institutes. In the given scenario salary becomes the only differentiating factor.

Retention Strategies

Before discussing retention strategy it is important to understand the employee categories that may exist in any organization. Organizations, more importantly management institutes, are very cautious about the employees they keep. They value their talented employees and are more than eager to get rid of their trouble-making employees. It is this valuable talent pool that we are concentrating upon..

The following exhibit gives us a glimpse of the identified employee categories and the ways to retain them:

Table 7.2

Employee Category	Talent Retention Strategies
Talented and Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuously nurturing competence and talents • Empowerment • Maintaining positive mindset • Recognizing as leaders of personal mastery/excellence • Research and development
Talented and abrasive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regarding and recognizing competence and skills • Nurturing competence and skills possessed by them • Empowerment • Loading with exceptionally difficult organizational responsibilities and challenges • Programs on team-building, conflict management, assertive skills and change management skills
Plateaued and indifferent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill-development programs • Team-building and change-management programs • Personal effectiveness and self-development programs
Not talented but polite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill-development programs

Talent management has not been given its fair share of attention by Indian organizations, as its importance has not been adequately realized and, if realized, it is often felt that there are other management strategies that may deliver better results.

Organizations are in the process of changing over to new performance-appraisal practices for better performance by linking performance with rewards and motivating high performers. These are becoming a priority in organizations as an important contributor to effective talent management (Bhandarker 2003).

An important point for effective talent management is to ensure that appropriate management practices, systems and interventions are in place at all stages of the employment life cycle (from recruitment to separation). In each phase there is a specific emphasis required in terms of the following:

- Creating the right organizational context for talented people
- Ensuring the correct leadership and management practices to develop and nurture the talent pool
- Creating an overall environment that is conducive to attracting and retaining talented people
- Individualized mentoring, coaching and career-advancement opportunities
- Maintaining proper quality of management.

Talented people also have high demands in terms of the balance between their work life and personal life. They generally want their work life to be integrated with their personal life. They also want access to facilities and lifestyle options that suit their preferences. In order to develop good retention plan management institutes must develop suitable job-context, role context, culture and environment, compensation, faculty development programmes and above all must rise above organizational politics.

CONCLUSION

The role of the teacher is extremely crucial in the context of education being the best instrument of change and nation-building. To play his role more effectively, the teacher faces a greater challenge today than at any time in history. As an interpreter, the teacher has to place new knowledge and new experience within the context of what is already known and understood by the students. In order to be a good mediator, he has to understand a great deal about the way in which people at various ages and stages of development perceive the world around them. He is actually the linking pin and if the form of this linking pin keeps on changing every six months, it leaves the institute in a lurch and creates a big void in the mind-sets of the students.

If service is taken as a mark of profession then the teaching profession could be treated as one of the most important professions since its social value lies in its significant contribution to the betterment of people and society at large. Nothing is more important than securing a sufficient supply of high quality recruits to the teaching profession, providing them with the best possible professional preparation, ensuring the right environmental context for their growth and self-fulfilment, creating satisfactory conditions of work in which they can be fully effective and ultimately retaining them. The retention of star performers is crucial for every organization, more so in the case of management institutes, as they are recognized and associated with the faculty they have. Institutes pay a high price for a continuous exodus of faculty. In order to keep efficient people for a longer period in the institutes a simple way is to understand the key factors that influence attrition. After that a long term and cost-effective retention strategy should be chalked out. A successful retention practice will help in developing a network of experienced and talented employees who can join hand in hand to take up challenges in the present and future as well.

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