

Employee Challenges in Information Technology Industry

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Abstract: This paper focuses on employee challenges in Information Technology Industry. Changing work environment influences the workforce productivity. In this Information and Communication Technological environment, it is inevitable to expect challenges emerged out of such working conditions. Further, to study challenges becomes crucial for a better work environment.

Keywords: IT, ICT (Information and Communication Technology), Employee Challenges.

1. INTRODUCTION

FY2012 has been a milestone year for Indian IT industry with aggregate revenues cross the USD 100 billion mark (exports at USD 69 billion). In last two decades Indian IT industry has revolutionized the world with more efficient ways of enabling traditional business at the same time developing new businesses, which could have been possible through IT only.

The Indian IT industry continues to be a net employment generator – added around 230,000 jobs in FY2012, thus providing direct employment to about 2.8 million, and indirectly employing 8.9 million people. NASSCOM predicts the IT workforce will touch 30 million by 2020. [NASSCOM, 2012]

A major contributor in the glorious story of Indian IT is its employees. Being heavily people-dependent, it is important to understand the challenges an employee goes through in the work environment because an employee's well being may have direct impact on his/her own performance as well on the performance of the team/department/organization (s)he is associated with.

Our focus in this research paper is to study and understand some key challenges an average employee encounters in delivering his/her day-to-day responsibilities.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Workplace Diversity

Workplace diversity leads to higher production, better results by using unique strengths and best expertise of people with diverse culture, knowledge and skill-set though if not properly managed the diversity at workplace, may lead to conflict, low morale, negativity within the group and further to low

Grimes & Richard, 2003 mentioned that expedited communication among managers, supervisors and workers, enhances the efficiency. Although, when managers lack in managing the cultural diversified teams at the workplace then it may lead to lack of communication, ineffective teams, and decreased productivity.

B. Workplace culture

It is important for two different teams or individuals to understand one another. An organizational culture largely determines an employee's passion-towards-work level.

This study focuses on workplace culture, as it is important for experienced managers to learn to understand different country's culture, political priorities, economic potential, employee's rituals and beliefs before they can actually lead their team effectively.

C. Effective Leadership

Leon, cited in Tapscott, 1999 focused on the Information Technology (IT) consulting organizations' internal work environment, specifically job satisfaction and leadership styles of Generation X leaders. Leadership styles, behaviour and characteristics will impact or influence best business practices for coming years.

Employees who possess job proficiency, good work habits such as never missing day at work are considered to be the best fit for leadership roles. Employees who report to efficient leaders are more committed to work and face less challenges in performing their work.

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Efficient leaders keep their team motivated through their leadership skills with continuous support, guidance and mentoring.

D. Work-Life Balance

With Technological advancement the internet can be accessed 24/7, Accessing emails, web, internet from any place and at any time through devices like laptops, I-pads, smart phones, pagers etc has disturbed an employee's work-life balance and it has become a challenge to maintain the work life balance. As a result, employee's personal life has taken a back seat.

E. Employee Privacy

Many companies are investigating some type of internal electronic monitoring or surveillance or updating their software in this area. One surveillance program is "WinWhatWhere" Investigator. "WinWhatWhere" produces an audit report generated by a database query. Information stored in the database can be displayed in concert to generate a log of computer activities. Data stored in the database include: 1) Keystroke logs, 2) Screen captures, 3) Internet activity, 4) Window content and titles, 5) Network monitoring and support, 6) File activity, 7) Remote install, 8) Send data to remote location via e-mail, 9) Timed events, 10) Clipboard contents capture, 11) Document content, 12) MD5 digital signatures, 13) Key phrase alerts, 14) Chat room, and 15. Web cam. Such software walks a fine line between privacy and resource misuse.

Keystroke capture software is troubling because it can inadvertently record raw thoughts as noted by McCarthy (2000), He detailed the case of an employee, whose every thought, although backspaced and subsequently deleted was logged by keystroke capture software. How many times have you written an email on the computer in the heat of anger and then cooled down and edited it?

This software "WinWhatWhere" captures and employee's innermost thoughts, is it really ethical?

F. Job Appraisal

Employees who work for companies that conduct regular performance appraisals face challenges in performing their job duties according to their employer's expectations. Employers may provide detailed job descriptions, performance standards and all the tools an employee needs to do his job. Yet when appraisal time comes, it's impossible to foresee how a supervisor will assess the employee's job performance. The challenge is in ensuring the employee's job performance is on-point given the subjectivity of most performance appraisals. This may be one of the reasons performance appraisals rank as one

of the least favourite aspects of employment for both supervisors and employees

3. RESEARCH GAP

Researchers have not yet worked on Employee Challenges in Bangalore based IT Industry.

4. PROBLEM STATEMENT

There are many challenges associated with the IT Industries workforce, and if not carefully analysed, organizations can be threatened by not fully realizing the enormous benefits that can be achieved through IT set-up. Therefore it becomes essential for Employers to discover those hidden challenges an employee faces while working in the IT Industry to accomplish his day to day objectives along with his team goals; this study shall help the emerging and existing employers to know upcoming challenges and to know how to overcome those challenges faced by employees in an IT Industry.

1. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to study and understand a few key challenges faced by an employee.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The objective of this study is to study and understand a few key challenges faced by an employee.

A. Sample Size - Top 10 IT Company's employee

B. Data Collection Method - Interviews, Focus Groups

C. Data Collection Tool – Open Ended Questionnaire, Field Notes, Videos, Audios.

D. Inclusion Criteria – 10 IT Companies based on Employee Strength and Turnover extracted from the database of reputed Market Research Firms.

E. Research Ethics - The data shall be used only for research purpose and shall be kept highly confidential. Anonymity of the respondents with prior consent from the respondents as well as the companies.

3. FIGURE 1 – FREQUENCY OF GENERAL THEMES

This figure shows the frequency of General Themes emerged out of extant Literature review and the interview of 20 cases. As it evident from the response of Top 10 IT companies employees that Leadership skills matters the most, most of the respondents felt that if their leader is not efficient enough, then they face lot of challenges in co-ordination with rest of the team members or communicating their work to the company

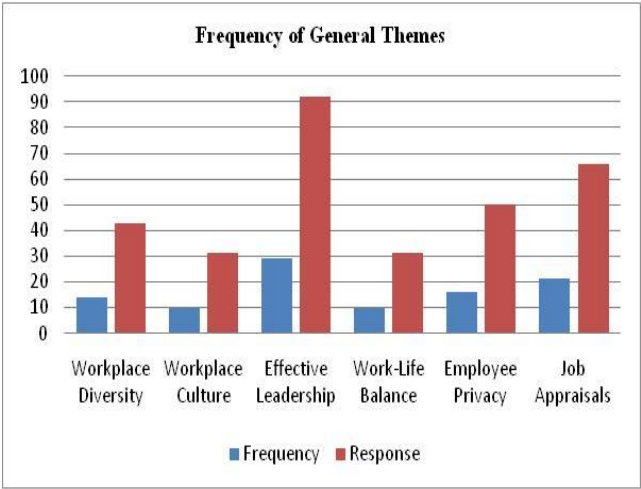


Fig. 1 A graph of sample employees’ response and frequency of general theme

Also the second most difficult challenge is job appraisal as peer, colleagues and managers at times, without understanding the objective of Appraisals provide unrealistic ratings or subjective comments which leads to low morale of employee receiving such ratings. Also there are couple of other factors associated with it as mentioned in Table 1. Challenges followed by Job Appraisal are Employee Privacy, workforce diversity, Work-life Balance and Workplace Culture.

General Themes	Frequency	Behavioral Indicators
Workplace Diversity	14	Social Background
		Educational Background
		Different Skill -set
		Domain interest and Expertise
		Adapting to common objectives
Workplace Culture	10	Office Politics
		Leadership approachability
		Transparency, fair and open treatment
		Employee’s cultural values, beliefs and rituals
		Regional culture, social customs
Effective Leadership	29	Political priorities
		Town-hall and open forums
		Role model, mentorship
		Day-to-day communication
		Honest feedback
Work-Life Balance	10	Setting expectations rights
		Effect of personal challenges on professional engagement
		Weekend and odd hours support
		Extended expectation for sustainability
		Lack of physical activity
Employee Privacy	16	Job Uncertainty leads to extra work hours
		Privacy intrusion
		Thin line between privacy and organizational security
		Inadequate privacy laws
		Spying without communication
Job Appraisals	21	Activity monitoring
		Subjective Appraisal
		Ethics
		Lack of conducive environment to encourage Whistle Blowers
		Social loafing
		Poor implementation of 360 - degree tool negatively affects motivation

TABLE 1: Response of 20 respondents on general themes

5.CONCLUSIONS

With changing work dynamics, employees are facing lot of challenges. This study has clearly mentioned the most and least important challenges, at present an employee faces while working in IT Industry

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