Project Report

Course Code: CS4001

Course Title: Professional Practices in IT

Section: E

Group Members:

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Introduction

In light of Professional Practices in Information Technology, we aimed to conduct our research and perform real-time cases by selecting a company. We have taken a particular area from our course that we are going to target and focus on. Based on that particular area, we developed a questionnaire to ask them about the practices they currently follow in their organization and see how much they entail Professional Practices in their company's administrative, business, and marketing policies.

The following project is related to interviewing an organization of our choice: **Afiniti** and asking them questions related to our course outline from Professional practices in IT. The questions we asked from the company are mainly focused on HR & Administrative policies of the company, How contracts work and what are the legal bindings the company has with its employees, Discrimination policies of how employees from different backgrounds are treated and the policies against discrimination and how the company protects minorities, Company registration, about the company, and about individual employees grooming within the company.

Meeting Minutes Snapshot

We organized a Zoom meeting to interview **Shamayel Atiq**, Assistant Manager Talent Acquisition at Afiniti, since he wasn't available in Karachi, leading us to opt for an online interview. Due to his reservations about recording, we opted to capture a snapshot for verification purposes instead.
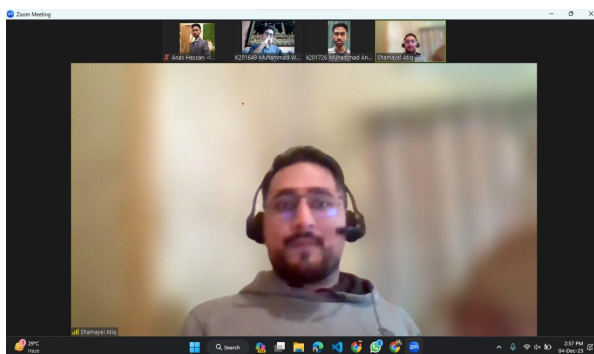
Detailed Answers of the Questionnaire

HR & Administrative Policies

Question#01: How do you ensure your employees stay motivated?

The company provides incentives to the best performing employees. These incentives are usually based on the time they have spent in the company. The incentives are allocated according to the rules and regulations stated below:

o Employees with less than 3 years - 20-30% of salary

o Employees with more than 3 years - international trips

o Project completion - core team gets 10% bonus

These types of rewards keep a healthy and competitive work environment at the workplace. The employees also stay satisfied as they know that their contributions will be acknowledged.

Question#02: How do you deal with slackers?

Afiniti believes that the employees are a family. They have a very well structured Hiring process, so if the company hires an employee, they know it is capable enough to work. There may be some other reasons if someone is underperforming for example there might be a personal problem they're going through at the moment.

The company has an open office policy so the employees can directly communicate with their managers and colleagues about any hurdles they are facing. This helps the employees feel comfortable in the company, and helps build a stronger bond between the employees, making all employees under the same roof live like a family.

Question#03: What are the key issues affecting team success?

We feel that when an employee or team lacks motivation they underperform that is the reason we have incentives based policy. The same policy helps the team productivity to boost as they get a bonus for completing the project within a given deadline. This basically promotes the concept of a reward: employees performing well get rewarded according to their performances. This not only motivates the employees,

but it also makes them happy that their efforts are being appreciated in their workplace, and hence they work with increased productivity, and determination.

Question#04: What conflict resolution techniques do you employ?

We have penned down very extensive HR policies regarding all types of conflict and we still append to them as soon as we feel there is a need for a new policy. This is a better way to treat problems according to the pre-stated laws. This prevents any conflict, or the idea of favoritism in the company: the laws and rules are the same for everyone.

Question#05: Can you elaborate on the onboarding process for new hires at Afiniti?

Our company's onboarding process is designed to provide a smooth introduction to our culture and operations. It includes a comprehensive orientation program, a tour of workplace facilities, and tailored training sessions for specific roles. Open communication is encouraged, and mentors are assigned to guide new hires through their initial weeks. Our goal is to make the onboarding experience informative and welcoming, laying the foundation for a successful and fulfilling career with our organization.

Contracts

Question#06: How do you penalize breach of contract? Are there levels to it?

Breach of contract is penalized after measuring the damage it may have caused to the company. Many of the small breaches are ignored but if it affects the company negatively we penalize by deducting salary and the highest level is that we may take the employee to court. This promotes the concept of punishment amongst the employees: the employees know that if they go against the company's laws, they will surely be punished for it, and the punishment may be as severe as the company's damage is.

Question#07: Do you require all employees to sign an NDA?

Yes, every employee who has the ability to access confidential information or trade secrets is required to sign a reasonable NDA at the time of joining, so that they may know the consequences of leaking information to an unwanted source.

Discrimination Policies

Question#08: In the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, do you have policies to protect religious minorities from discrimination in the workplace?

Yes, we have strict HR policies regarding religious issues. Everyone has full rights to follow their religious practices, and offer their prayers in the prayer area. We encourage a diverse environment within the company. Violation of these HR policies, or arguments over other's religious practices are not tolerated in the company, and the company will take strict actions against it.

Question#09: Do you have policies in place against workplace harassment or gender discrimination?

Yes, we have strict HR policies regarding harassment issues. Every gender is equal in the eyes of the company, and HR and therefore we encourage everyone to respect each other's differences, and maintain certain workplace rules. Any person who violates these policies is at least fined but he/she can also be terminated from the company.

Question#10: Does the company enforce a gender-biased wage gap?

We live in a society where there are fewer female workers compared to male workers which make it look like men are preferred over women but that's not the case we offer the same pay to both genders without any discrimination. Employees of the same experience and level get equal pay. We encourage equality by doing this, which motivates even the minority (in number according to gender) to work harder, because they know that gender will not be a barrier, and that their growth will also be just as quick as others.

Question#11: Does the relation with any influential personality and/or a friend/colleague reference affect the hiring process?

Like most of the companies, we also have a reference based hiring system but it only gets the candidate to the interview desk after that the hiring is made completely on the basis of merit. We don't just hire employees over referral – this reflects a positive image of the company that it prevents favoritism, as well as it promotes equality amongst the candidates that are applying for the available position.

Registration

Question#12: What is your company registered as? (Pvt. Ltd, Pvt. company, sole property)

Afiniti is registered as a Pvt. Ltd company.

Question#13: Is Afiniti a SME or a private enterprise?

Afiniti is a private enterprise.

Company

Question#14: What company structure do you follow? (Flat or hierarchical)

We follow a hybrid structure. We have an open door policy but there is a limit to it, any employee can approach his manager or director but not the person above that in the hierarchy.

This is to ensure that an employee can reach his manager with no hesitations, or delays. It is usually seen that employees in general are more comfortable to reach to their managers when there is an open door policy instead of the conventional appointment style. Therefore, Afiniti also keeps an open door policy for its employees, but limits the use of it to ensure it is used as per need.

Question#15: Why do you think this structure is feasible for the type of company that you are?

It gives members clear guidelines for how to proceed and also maintains order and resolves disagreements.

We are a software company and while coding people fall into hurdles that are solved mostly by discussing with one another so we encourage collaboration among the employees of the company.

Question#16: What is the workplace culture like at Afiniti?

As mentioned earlier we consider ourselves a big family which helps each other and back each other. We have a very friendly culture within the company. We implement a balanced combination of leniency and strictness which is the reason behind our loyal employee base. Maintaining a friendly relationship with the employees is important,

because the more comfortable the employee gets while working, the more his / her productivity increases. But on the same hand, limitations have also been given to ensure everyone knows their boundaries.

Question#17: What measures does the company take to promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace?

Our company is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace environment. We implement proactive measures such as targeted recruitment strategies, diversity training programs, and inclusive policies to ensure that employees from all backgrounds feel valued and respected. Through continuous efforts, we strive to create a workplace culture that celebrates diversity and promotes equal opportunities for everyone.

Question#18: What steps does Afiniti take to address and prevent burnout among its employees?

Our company is committed to addressing and preventing burnout among employees by fostering a culture of work-life balance. We implement regular wellness programs, encourage open communication, and provide resources for stress management. Additionally, we prioritize realistic workloads, promote flexible schedules, and offer support initiatives to ensure the well-being and mental health of our team members.

Question#19: Can you share insights into Afiniti's approach to continuous learning and skill development?

Absolutely! We foster a culture of lifelong learning through customized learning paths, generous learning budgets, and peer-to-peer knowledge sharing. This empowers our employees to constantly upskill, stay ahead of industry trends, and contribute to our collective growth. It's a win-win for individual and company success!

Question#20: How does the company foster teamwork and collaboration among different departments?

Our company prioritizes teamwork and collaboration by implementing regular cross-departmental meetings and collaborative projects. We encourage open communication channels through digital platforms, fostering the exchange of ideas and

information among teams. Additionally, team-building activities and workshops are organized to strengthen interpersonal relationships, ensuring a cohesive and collaborative work environment across diverse departments.

Question#21: Lastly, Could you discuss the company's stance on remote work and flexible schedules?

Our company embraces remote work and flexible schedules as a core value, fostering a diverse and thriving team. You design your workday around your life, choosing your workspace and delivering results on your terms. This approach promotes happiness, health, productivity, and innovation.

Individual

Question#22: How do you assess/motivate individual employees based on their strengths & weaknesses?

Personally, we do not think that any employee possesses any weakness. However, we still organize sessions and seminars in regards to discussing productivity and efficiency on employee development. The participation and involvement of workers in these types of sessions help us determine the strengths and weaknesses of each individual employee. We try to evaluate on many factors and not just the participation and involvement in the session. These parameters include employee morale, his performance in the term, his working hours, and performance. If we observe there is a need for a session on a particular topic then we organize the session for a specific group of people.

Question#23: How do you align individual goals with project goals?

We as an organization have faced numerous situations where the goal is not just for an organization, but the employee also sets up their own individual goals with respect to each project. These can include personal growth, enhancing their skill sets, having it as an add-on in their resumes, so we allow employees to set their own goals. However, we just provide the manager with the final goal of the project but each individual goal is set by the employee for himself. We conduct training sessions for not only our employees but also for our managers so that they can become a better leader and

more importantly, become a mentor. After the individual goal is set by the employees, our team creates an actionable plan according to that.

Question#24: Are your employees allowed to work on personal projects on the side?

Yes absolutely, there are numerous employees in our company who have their own small businesses running side by side in their professional workplace. This also includes freelancing, and working for their personal clients in their leisure time. They can also work in their office hours when there's no other office work involved. So, yes the employees are allowed to work on personal projects but it should not affect the productivity of the projects assigned by the company. If there's some contradiction in the working hours and if the efficiency of an employee is compromised, then employees are certainly first asked and are suggested to maintain their focus better on work and even if further required, then certain actions are taken as per the company's policies.

Question#25: How does Afiniti handle performance reviews and feedback for its employees?

In our organization, performance reviews are conducted annually to assess employees' achievements, strengths, and areas for improvement. These evaluations involve a collaborative discussion between managers and employees, fostering open communication and goal-setting for professional development. Feedback is not only provided during formal reviews but is encouraged regularly to ensure continuous improvement and a supportive work environment.

Question#26: How does Afiniti approach professional development opportunities for its employees?

At our company, we prioritize professional development by offering a range of opportunities aimed at enhancing the skills and knowledge of our employees. Through regular training sessions, workshops, and access to online learning resources, we empower our team to stay abreast of industry trends and continuously grow in their respective roles. Additionally, we encourage a culture of mentorship and provide avenues for employees to pursue further education or certifications that align with their career aspirations.

Question#27: In terms of employee benefits, what does Afiniti offer to ensure a healthy work-life balance?

At our company, we prioritize our employees' well-being and work-life balance by offering a comprehensive range of benefits. From flexible work schedules and remote work options to wellness programs and mental health support, we strive to create an environment that fosters both personal and professional fulfillment. Our commitment to providing a healthy work-life balance reflects our dedication to the overall satisfaction and productivity of our valued team members.

Question#28: How does the company support employees' mental health and well-being?

Our company places a strong emphasis on supporting employees' mental health and well-being through a variety of initiatives. We provide access to mental health resources, including counseling services and wellness programs. Additionally, our flexible work arrangements and a supportive work culture aim to create an environment where employees feel valued and are encouraged to prioritize their mental health.

Values

Question#29: What are the values of your company?

Innovation, teamwork, and open communication are important to us. Our goal is to create technology that makes people's lives better and has a significant impact. So basically our company innovates whatever the customer demands. We're more of a service providing company.

Question#30: Do the employees always finish their work on time?

Yes, our employees always finish their work on time, because we provide our employees a long deadline. In addition, as mentioned earlier, Afiniti gives its employees the concept of reward and punishment which is given according to their performances. Therefore, to get good benefits and incentives, the employees are usually keen to complete their work within the deadline to get their token of appreciation at the end of the month.

Recommendation and Suggestions

While conducting an interview in Afiniti, we observed that they provide much more facilities to their senior staff than their junior staff. They should have to be treated equally and provide equal facilities to senior and junior staff.

Another observation was that the staff is sometimes given complex tasks that require additional office hours to complete. This might increase the frustration in the employees. Hence it is recommended to give this additional task on a separate working day, or to assign this task remotely on weekends, and reward the employee for the overtime service.

Another recommendation would be to include a sports area, or a lounge where employees can sit back, take a few minutes to relax. This will not just increase the company's good will in the employees, but it will also keep them relaxed - which positively impacts the results.

Conclusion

Afiniti was the organization we interviewed. The questions asked were related to the workplace norms including every hierarchy in the organization from the hiring process of how things are done there, to rewarding and punishing employees on their actions and performances, and at last how the organization maintains a healthy workplace environment, its bond with employees, and a professional workplace such that the company's requirements are satisfied, and how the employees are motivated to work more productively, and help the company keep growing at a steady rate as it has been for the past years.