

Media Coverage

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Telecom Inc Ups Salary Hikes Amid Talent War

Industry, which includes top telcos and infra and equipment providers, among others, to pay average increments of 10-12% this fiscal

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Mumbai: The telecom industry, including top operators Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea, are giving salary hikes of an average 10-12% for this fiscal year, a significant increase compared with the average increment of 7.5% last year, said staffing firms. For the three telcos, they said the average increments are 8-12%.

Most of the companies have communicated the pay hikes to employees. While some have already given out the higher salaries, others are expected to implement them effective July the staffing firms said.

Deval Singh, business head of telecom IT& ITES, media and government at staffing services firm TeamLease Services, said the car-

riers are aligned with each other when it comes to paying out salaries and aren't overdoing it yet.

Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea did not respond to ET's queries till press time on Thursday.

The telecom industry, which also includes infrastructure and equipment providers, virtual network operators and other segments, employs an estimated 4 million people, according to TeamLease.

There is a war out there for top talent, especially for those with expertise in new tech

Top Money

Pay hikes likely to be effective from July for some

Telecom industry employs **4 million** people

Telcos making significant investments to upskill and reskill high-performing employees

Estimates put increase in HR budgets in telecom sector cos at 8-10%



industry, even the telecom industry is offering good perks to procure and manage this new-age highly skilled talent," Singh said. HR experts said while operators

are looking to retain as much talent as possible to prepare for the rollout of 5G services, they are also making significant investments to upskill and reskill high-per-

forming employees. Estimates put the increase in the HR budgets in telecom sector companies at 8-10%.

From a profile standpoint, the sales and tech profiles have driven the hikes this cycle. With Covid increasing the adoption of digitisation in the telecom sector, customer-facing jobs and those on the technical backend have gained prominence; the demand for the latter has also been boosted by the impending rollout of 5G technology. There is also high demand for talent in cloud computing, artificial intelligence analytics, IoT and mobile app development. "In-house talent is being retained by undertaking retention strategies, such as market corrections, higher increments, and one-time bonuses," said Singh. Saran Balasundaram, founder and

chief executive of job consultancy Han Digital, said the hikes in the telecom industry are better than other sectors. This he said is also driven by the need to retain the workforce ahead of the 5G rollout. "Most of the hikes have been doled out to employees with 3-8 years of experience as this category has critical mass (of employees)," he added, referring to the tech functions in telecom.

An emerging trend in the salary corrections in the industry is that the gap in hikes between tech and sales functions is narrowing. Traditionally, the sales employees saw higher hikes than those with technical profiles. However, with the increasing demand for technical skills, this gap is as small as 2% now and is expected to reduce further, said RP Yadav, chairman at Genius Consultants.