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Genius Consultants



Print Coverage

Smart Life (Week)

exhale

Time for a break

Many corporates are now open to the idea of young employees taking time off to enrol in training courses or chase new goals

BY RAJIV DOGRA



India is gradually warming up to the idea of sabbaticals, a trend popular in the west. While the idea of a sabbatical is mostly associated with those taking a break from academia, the concept has found its way into corporate offices as well. At the forefront are large and mid-sized progressive companies.

Although sabbaticals are a foreign concept, companies in India are granting sabbaticals to their employees, especially those headquartered in the US or UK, says Ajay Shah, vice-president and head recruitment services, TeamLease Services. "Companies are embracing this trend in hopes of long-term retention of top talent and to avoid office breakaways. Around 18 per cent of companies in the US let employees go on sabbaticals. It is becoming a growing trend in India, especially in the last seven years," says Ajay.

According to a 2015 Michael Page India Employee Intentions report, Indians are working long hours, with 34 per cent of employees clocking in over 51 hours each week. Cumulative stress caused by heavy workdays is often leading to a drop in productivity and employee health issues. Sabbaticals, therefore, come in as a breather. Not only does it give an opportunity to the employee to pause, discover, re-focus and come back re-energised, it also helps cement the employee-employer relationship. New Delhi-based Tanya Singh, director, IPE

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Global, says that sabbaticals build a sense of purpose and help employees connect with the organisation mission so that they are able to make a more meaningful impact. "This is especially prominent among millennials who opt to work for organisations which are more socially responsible vis-à-vis ones offering higher pay. Usually given to star performers, sabbaticals provide a sense of job security among employees who are willing to continue in the long run," says Tanya.

However, if it is a paid sabbatical then it is a double whammy for the company, says Ajay. "One is to keep paying the employee on sabbatical while she is on leave. Another is to find an employee who fills the shoes of the employee on sabbatical in terms of her capabilities and pay. A huge cost there, especially if the employee is on a long sabbatical like over a period of six months," he says.

Increased productivity, ownership and an opportunity to be a part of the employee growth story are some of the top of the mind benefits for organisations giving sabbaticals, says Singh. "It helps build organisational capacity and prepare other employees to acquire new skills and take on additional responsibilities. Sabbaticals can be a dry-run for future leadership transitioning and can often spark creativity, establish new perspectives of doing things and create a long term connect with their employees. After all, who doesn't want to be a part of a place that goes beyond to provide them with such benefits," she says.

The culture of a company that is open to addressing the needs of its

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employees outside the work environment showcases the trust and confidence the company has on its team, says Sandeep Sachar, co-founder, Hublife, which is a sector-agnostic incubator working with startups across sectors. "I am glad people are more open to voicing their goals and requesting sabbaticals, as this showcases the evidence of an open culture amongst companies," says Sandeep, adding that this culture has the potential of building a core value of togetherness to enhance employee and employer culture into a much larger picture of providing ownership to the employees not only in their tasks relating to their company but in their personal goals as well.

There is a flip side too. Sometimes, people misuse sabbaticals, says Ajay. "An employee could moonlight over the sabbatical period with some other company, which goes against the spirit of taking sabbaticals. Organisations try to quell the risk by drafting specific

Individuals today place a lot of value on flexibility and personal development. "Millennials, who constitute 30 per cent of the workforce, are more likely to work with organisations that invest in their learning and development, as well as offer them a variety of options that encourage balance and are more conducive to their lifestyle requirements. In fact, studies have shown that 87 per cent of millennials value organisations that invest in them to enhance their potential. With instances of burnout on the rise, it has become particularly relevant at the organisational level to give employees the option to take a sabbatical or a time out to focus on themselves," says Shubika Bikkha, partner, EdgewiseU.

Win-win arrangement
While sabbaticals may be a winning formula in the long run, at times, organisations may have to bear certain hidden costs. For example, employee benefits such as health insurance, gratuity (if applicable) have to continue, says Tanya. "Post-sabbatical, it may become difficult for the organisation to find a fit for the returning employee matching their skills set and pay. While large multinational corporations (MNCs) have successful sabbatical programmes in place, it may be difficult for smaller organisations to accommodate such shifts. However, these could be temporary changes considering the sabbatical option is usually provided to high performers who have shown a great past work potential and will continue to be with the organisation in the long run," she says.

Global, says that sabbaticals build a sense of purpose and help employees connect with the organisation mission so that they are able to make a more meaningful impact. "This is especially prominent among millennials who opt to work for organisations which are more socially responsible vis-à-vis ones offering higher pay. Usually given to star performers, sabbaticals provide a sense of job security among employees who are willing to continue in the long run," says Tanya.

According to VK Menon, chief executive officer, SP Jain School of Global Management, many companies choose to hedge their bets when it comes to costs. If they are sponsoring a programme, "they encourage the employee to take a loan and then the equated monthly instalments (EMIs) are paid by the company. The EMIs are paid as long as the employee works as per the agreement. Some companies insist on a long-term bond. And others look at sharing the expenses with the employee. The worry is that the employee might switch to another company after the sabbatical." This is mitigated to a large extent if a comprehensive agreement is drawn up in advance," says Menon.

Upside
Any progressive company practicing such a policy will be benefited in the long term, says R. P. Yadav, chairman and managing director, Gerins Consultants Ltd and vice-president, Indian Staffing Federation. "Providing sabbaticals can help to attract and retain bright talent. It also allows the employee to rejuvenate themselves and return to work with renewed enthusiasm and fresh ideas. Moreover, it provides an edge to the organisation over its competitors in terms of benefits," he says.

Increased productivity, ownership and an opportunity to be a part of the employee growth story are some of the top of the mind benefits for organisations giving sabbaticals, says Singh. "It helps build organisational capacity and prepare other employees to acquire new skills and take on additional responsibilities. Sabbaticals can be a dry-run for future leadership transitioning and can often spark creativity, establish new perspectives of doing things and create a long term connect with their employees. After all, who doesn't want to be a part of a place that goes beyond to provide them with such benefits," she says.

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Gear Shift



terms of the sabbatical. The terms determine whether or not an employee can take a sabbatical with respect to her eligibility, duration of work, level in the company, and past performance. They also specify the duration of sabbatical on the basis of those parameters. It can be granting a loan to get someone to take the responsibilities left vacant by the person on sabbatical," he says.

Yadav is of the opinion that if employees don't prove to be productive or worthy after sabbaticals, it may cause an impact on client handling and revenue of the company and affect the employees as well. "The length of the sabbatical can have impact on the fitness of the employee in the team while joining back due to reasons like style of working of the new team manager or new subordinates. The human resource team should discuss the changes with the employees to ensure they can seamlessly settle in the team and get up to speed," he says.

Downside

There is a flip side too. Sometimes, people misuse sabbaticals, says Ajay. "An employee could moonlight over the sabbatical period with some other company, which goes against the spirit of taking sabbaticals. Organisations try to quell the risk by drafting specific

personal goals of each member. "The common point between all individuals is to grow consistently and everyone has a separate definition of this ambition. Having said that, if we are aligned as companies, despite our size and sector, of what each member sets as their goals and helps them challenge and learn within their organisation, then, in essence, their goals are met simultaneously as they are on their job. Additionally, employee satisfaction is the number priority because your team is what builds the company and never the other way around; therefore, if you cater to one another best interest, then the vision of the company is met due to respect being reciprocated," says Sandeep.

Lastly, with the average cost to replace an employee being in the range of 0.5-2.1 times of their salary, depending on seniority, an investment in this approach is not just financially lucrative but can contribute to increased innovation and overall sentiment. Large companies in India are definitely all ears to this fact. □

Online Coverage

Emerging hr



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Emerging HR website. At the top left is the logo for Emerging HR, which includes a stylized 'E' and 'HR' icon. To the right of the logo is a banner for a Zoho whitepaper download, featuring the Zoho logo and a red button that says 'DOWNLOAD WHITEPAPER'. Below the banner is a navigation menu with links for Home, HR News, Technology, Articles, Services, White Papers, Events, Gallery, and Contact. The main content area features an article titled 'Human Asset – The “Most Priced” Possession of an Organization' by R.P. Yedev, published 18 hours ago. The article's featured image shows a hand holding a row of white human silhouettes against a blue background.

EMERGING HR

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Articles

Human Asset – The “Most Priced” Possession of an Organization

18 hours ago R.P. Yedev



Jan-20				Client: Genius Consultants				
COVERAGE								
SR NO	DATE	PUBLICATION / CHANNEL	LOCATION	HEADLINE	SIZE (sq.cm / no of world)	AD RATE (INR)	AD VALUE (SIZE*AD RATE)	PR VALUE (AD VALUE MULTIPLIED BY 5)
Print								
1	Jan-20	Smart Life (Week)	National	Time For A Break	1626	₹ 234	₹ 380,484	₹ 1,902,420
Online								
1	29-Jan-19	Emerging hr	Online	Human Asset – The "Most Priced" Possession of an Organization	-	₹ 20,000	₹ 20,000	₹ 100,000
							₹ 400,484	₹ 2,002,420
							TOTAL AD Value	₹ 400,484
							TOTAL PR Value	₹2,002,420



TOTAL AD Value	₹ 4,00,484
TOTAL PR Value	₹ 20,02,420