MOTIVATION OF MULTI-GENERATIONAL WORKFORCE IN IT FIRMS: A REVIEW STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Today organizations recruit & retain Age Diversified Workforce which consists of employees from five different generations. It is always a great challenge for organizations to motivate a Multi-Generational Workforce to achieve their goals & objectives in a competitive era. The growth and development of an age diversified organization depends upon the performance (PFM) level of personnel working in the organization and their PFM level depends upon both ability & motivation. Effective Motivation helps employees to perform to the best of their ability. As IT firms consists of Multi-generational workforce they are different in thought, ideology, attitude & perception. So they are motivated differently. Traditionalist, the silent generation is motivated by intrinsic reward whereas Baby boomers opt for both challenging task as well as top positions for motivation. Similarly Gen-X prefers balanced work life whereas Gen-Y, the tech savvy generation is motivated by work from home & knowledge sharing along with dignity. Finally Gen-Z the 5G who are more advanced in technology are motivated by heavy perks & instant rewards. It is an attempt to study how Software Firms motivate multi-generational workforce. What issues & problems they are facing while motivating them & strategies with the help of which the workforce will attain its goals & gain competitive advantage.

Keywords: Multi-Generational or Age Diversified Workforce, Generational Cohort, Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Gen-X, Y & 5G, PFM, IT, Motivation, Issues, Strategies & competitive advantage.

MOTIVATION

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Back ground of the study

Motivation is a term which converts 'Impossible' to 'I am possible'. It has come from the Latin verb "Mover" means "To Move". Behind every goal that has been achieved motivation works as a key factor. It is the force of life & the drive of all actions. Higgin (1994) defines motivation as "an internal drive to satisfy an unsatisfied need. Kreitner (1995) defines motivation "as the psychological process that gives behavior purpose & direction." According to Greenberg & Baron (2000) the definition of motivation is "two fold". The first part deals with arousal of interest to act & the second part focuses on the consistency of the behavior which helps to achieve the desired goal. On the basis of Generational Cohort each generation has unique ideology & work pattern & different motivational strategies are required to motivate different generations. There is not exact birth dates for each Generational Cohort, but they can be grouped on the basis of definite age boundaries. They are Traditionalists (Born 1928-45), Baby Boomers (Born1946-64), Gen-X (Born 1965-79), Gen-Y (Born 1980-95) & Gen-Z (Born after 1995), (Brusch & Kelly, 2014). They have unique personality & perception on the basis

of which they carry different work values. Traditionalists regarded as silent Generation & most of them are retired persons. They are hardworking, loyal to employer & co-workers & less tech-savvy than younger generations. Baby Boomers are well established in their carrier & hold good positions of power & authority. They are workaholic & committed. They are motivated by challenging task, perks & praise. Xers value freedom to set their own hours of working. Flexible work schedule & work-from-home options motivate & retain them. Gen-Y is smart, creative, achievement oriented & optimistic generation. They are tech-savvy & multi-task oriented. They are motivated by immediate feedback & instant reward (Sally Kane, 2017). In India they are regarded as: Socialists (approximate current age 55), Liberals (mid-40s to mid-50s), Gen-X (Late 20s to early 40s), Gen-Y or Millennials (Early20s), (Contemporary Work Cohort). According to the data available by U.S. Labor Force, 5% were Veterans, 38% were Baby Boomers, Gen-X occupied 32% & Millennials occupied 25% (U.S.Labor Force, 2011). According to recent data 2% were Veterans, 25% were Boomers, 33% were Gen-X, 35% were Millennials (one third of the workforce) & 5% Post Millennials (U.S. Labor Force, 2017). By 2020, over one-third of India's population will be between the age of 34 years, who are Millennials & they will occupy very important place in workforce (Global Statistical Overview, 2017). So motivation among multi-generational workforce will provide competitive advantage in IT sectors.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To focus on the process & basic theories related to motivation which influence multi-generational workforce in IT firms.
- To identify key factors of motivation across multi-generational workforce in IT firms.
- To focus on challenges faced by IT firms while motivating multi-generational workforce.
- Suggest measures to curb the challenges & gain competitive advantage.

- METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

- Data is collected by secondary sources through journals, books, review of literatures & internet.

- REVIEW OF LITERATURE

 Sally Kane(2017), made a study on characteristic & strategies of motivation of multi-generational workforce & concluded that different generations are motivated differently while working in the same organization. Traditionalists, the silent generation who are completely loyal & sincere towards duty & people also. They are almost retired personnel who are motivated by intrinsic reward like praise or appreciation. Baby Boomers are effective leaders, workaholic & motivated by challenging task & heavy perks. Gen-X values freedom to set their own working hours & motivated by work-from-home with flexible working schedule. Similarly Millennials are tech savvy & multi-task oriented & motivated by immediate feedback & instant reward. Iden(2016), focused on generational differences which create conflict across generations related to motivation, job satisfaction etc. & suggested measures like improving community relations by understanding & accepting each group to overcome conflict. Tiwari(2016), focused on few strategies to manage & motivate multi-generational workforce by effective training, mentoring, fair policies, balancing personal & professional life. Schweyer(2015), laid stress on customized reward, incentive & motivational strategies to motivate age diversified workforce. Celeste(2015), suggested that as each generation is unique, managers should motivate them differently with a broad mind set & move out perceptual error. Barron,et.al(2014) focused on dynamic practices to attract, retain & motivate multi-generational workforce. Agrawal(2015) studied different trends in

Information Technology(IT), from ZeroG – FiveG & found that today's new IT sector puts more workforce dilemma as compared to past & it is always a big challenge for IT sectors to recruit, retain & motivate them. Prince(2017), focused on different expectations of different generations including Millennials in IT which is a great challenge for the organizations to motivate the multi-generational workforce.

TRENDS IN IT SECTOR

IT sector has been developed on the basis of generation. The First Generation (0G) computer was developed in 1940-56. Today's trend is 5G as IT shifted itself from an entire room to one figure to be run. From the evolution till date IT sector faced so many changes & challenges. From the typical process of collection, store, circulation & retrieve information IT now runs the entire world in a single palm. From 0G-5G IT shifted itself from unified objective of enhancing PFM & Efficiency to Research & Development (R&D). At present conference, research, video, audio, chats etc. are done in an easy & swift process which is the gift of IT.

The modern world heavily depends on IT. It is always stated that each generation is identified on the basis of the dependence on technology. Traditionalists were not technology friendly, but they use first generation's heavy Vacuum Tubes. Baby Boomers were rocked by electronic calculator & later the personal computer. For Gen-X, it was email & online services. For Millennials who are completely tech-savvy & occupy the one third portion in workforce depend on technology like anything. They use laptops, palmtops, smart phones & mobile apps which quickly access information & feedback. Their world is digital which is based on creativity & innovation.

PROCESS & BASIC THEORIES OF MOTIVATION WHICH INFLUENCE MGW IN IT SECTOR

PROCESS OF MOTIVATION

Motivation process consists of four phases. These are Need, Drive, Goal & Incentive. These four phases are inter related to each other & are satisfied in a sequential manner. Need refers to deprivation of something. Drive means tensions or drives to fulfill a need. Goal directed behavior is known as action & reduction of the drive of the original need is satisfaction. Needs set up drives aimed at goals. Need exists in each individual in varying degrees to satisfy both physiological & psychological deprivation. Drives are action oriented & directed at fulfillment of needs & reach at goals. Goals are instruments used to induce people to follow a desired course of action. Once goal is attained the physiological & psychological balance is restored & the drive is cut off.

THEORIES OF MOTIVATION

Motivational theories are guide lines of motivation. They were developed on the basis of identification & classification of factors relating to different business environments. Theories of motivation are basically two types. These are Content (Need) Theories & Process Theories. Content Theories consists of Maslow's "Need Hierarchy", Herzberg's "Two Factors Model", "ERG" theory of Alderfer, "n" theory of Mc Clelland & Mac Greger's theory "X-Y". Though the authors have developed different theories, but these are inter-related to each other.

For example Maslow's 'Physiological, Safety/Security & Social' needs are named as 'Hygiene factors' of Hergberg & 'Existence & Relatedness' of Alderfer. Similarly 'Relatedness & Social' needs are also regarded as 'Need for Affiliation' of Mc Clelland. Another example is 'Esteem & Self-actualization' needs of Maslow are otherwise known as 'Motivators' of Herzberg, 'Growth' need of Alderfer & need for 'Power & Achievement' of Mc Clelland & which is also equivalent to theory 'Y'of Mc.Gregor.

Process theories can be of two types. These are Vroom's 'Expectancy Theory' & Adam's 'Equity Theory'. Expectancy theory focuses on three aspects which are Expectancy (Effort & Good PFM), Instrumentality (PFM & Outcome) & valance (Value of outcome). Equity theory consists of one person's outcome/inputs which will be equal to other person's outcome/input.

KEY FACTORS OF MOTIVATION ACROSS MGW IN IT SECTOR

Motivation can be both physiological & psychological. It depends on motives & motivating factors. Motive is a strong need which has a certain degree of strength that inspires a person to act for its fulfillment. Key factors relating to motivation across multi-generational workforce are differences on the basis of generational cohort & organizational systems. In IT sector we find age diversified workforce who are different in personality, perception, culture, behavior, attitude & ability & they are motivated differently by monetary & nonmonetary means through both intrinsic & extrinsic rewards. Similarly, organization's goals, objectives, strategies, structures, policies, procedures, managerial practices & reward system strongly influence motivation.

TO FOCUS ON CHALLENGES FACED BY IT FIRMS WHILE MOTIVATING MGW

It is always a great challenge for IT firms to motivate a multi-generational workforce as each generation demands unique strategy to be motivated & satisfied. Most of the Traditionalists are retired from workforce who are motivated by intrinsic reward, just like simple praise & appreciation. Baby boomers who are on the verge of retirement, are effective leaders of the workforce. They opt for both intrinsic & extrinsic reward. They are motivated by challenging task, autonomy, top position in hierarchy & leading others. Similarly, Gen-X are Post Boomers who are basically do not love to work, but they are technology friendly. They are motivated by Balanced-Work-Life. Gen-Y, the Millennials who are tech savvy generation are motivated by work from home or own schedule of task & knowledge sharing along with pride & dignity. As they completely depend on technology, it makes their life soft & swift & they equally give priority to both personal & professional life. Finally Gen-Z the 5G who are more advanced in technology are motivated by heavy perks & instant rewards. Basically most of the Traditionalists are retired from workforce & Gen-Z occupies limited place. There is always a class in between Baby Boomers, Post Baby-Boomers & Millennials. Baby Boomers think Gen-X & Y are lazy & inexperienced whereas Millennials think Baby Boomers have lack of technical skill. Similarly while Baby boomers opt for personal meeting & written documents for communication, Post Boomers & Millennials prefer for video conference, mail or tutor. Similarly there is a strong perception in managers who think to motivate Gen-X task compulsion is necessary whereas Gen-Y are self-motivators. Old generation adheres strong rules, regulations & discipline whereas new generation opt for freedom & autonomy. So it is always hard to motivate a multi-generational workforce in IT sector.

MEASURES TO CURB CHALLENGES & GAIN COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

There cannot be a standardized motivational strategy. As each Generational Cohort is unique there must be flexible motivational strategies. First of all the Human Resource manager or the leader must be free from perceptual biasness & treat every generation equally. There should be uniform & homogeneous rules & patterns for the multi-generational workforce.

There are basic motivational instruments which must be taken into consideration. These are Fair salary structure, conducive working environment, sociable peers with free flow of communication in all hierarchy in all generations, job security, instant incentives, SMART(Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic & Timed) goals, scope for innovation & creativity, flexible working hours, desired autonomy, job satisfaction, cordial industrial relation along with proper & timely grievance redress, both intrinsic & extrinsic reward. No discrimination should be allowed while dealing with multi-generational workforce regarding the basic instruments of motivation. Similarly dynamic & adaptive reward strategies should be there which are generation specific. For example old generations opt for good health plan, pension plan & long term reward whereas youngsters prefer higher studies related to research & development plans, foreign tours & instant reward. We can take the example of HCL which motivates its multi-generational workforce through team involvement, decision making & personality development training, challenging assignments along with dynamic incentives & rewards(monetary & nonmonetary) which increase their moral & job satisfaction.

We can take another example of Infosys. N.R. Narayan Murty (IT Industrialist) noticed that during meeting of management council, young achievers having brilliant ideas hesitate to present. So he decided to motivate his multi-generational work force by providing   leadership programs through Leadership Institutes that would help in knowledge sharing among employees of all generations & in all hierarchies & they are able to show their full competency. They are regarded as self-motivators who set their own goals, benchmark own & prepare strategy by self to achieve their goals.

CONCLUSION

Motivating a multi-generational workforce is the primary & long term goal for every organization as today's workforce consists of age diversified personnel in every sector. No doubt it is a heavy challenge for IT sectors to manage them effectively. But as every generation is unique new thoughts come to front & build a scope for innovation & creativity. The manager should give emphasis on each generation & satisfy different needs to be motivated. There should be a common platform for knowledge sharing as old generations will be technically updated & new generations gain benefits from the experience of seniors & a self-motivated climate will be there. Hence, motivated employees are valuable assets who can gain competitive advantage in maintaining & strengthening business growth & profit.

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