

# How to Maximise Employees Satisfaction

July 2013

Published by - Entrepreneur Magazine

I have been working and managing teams for the last almost 18 years now. One would have thought that this experience would have given me some 'Magic Mantra' to maximize employee satisfaction. However, I have come to the realization that gaining employee loyalty and satisfaction is a very difficult task. There are various forums, articles and journals written by many HR professionals on the subject. Various companies come up with different strategies to combat employee dis-satisfaction and attrition. However, if you look closely, not any one practice or methodology works well alone. It takes all of them to work in unison.

In an ideal world, each employee's needs should be addressed at an individual level. However, this is not an easy task as neither is it cost effective nor realistic. So, I suggest that employee satisfaction is addressed at two levels. The first level needs to be looked after by the company as a whole and the second at a more personal level by each manager, supervisor and team leader, if you will.

The company needs to understand what to improve on in specific and what changes to make. This may perhaps be best understood by conducting a survey. However, there are some generic methods that may be adopted to maximize employee satisfaction.

Firstly, in my mind, it is imperative to hire the right candidate. It is important that we assess their technical skills, knowledge, and cultural fit within the company before we invite them to come and work with us. Having done so, we must work on ensuring that they feel secure in their jobs at all times. A sense of security may be further strengthened by the financial stability of the company. This becomes especially important when the economic conditions are challenging and can arouse a sense of insecurity and constant dis-satisfaction in employees.

Secondly, the environment must promote their intellectual, financial and vertical growth. It is often a constant intellectual challenge that precipitates a sense of achievement and satisfaction in all of us. Thus, re-iterating the importance of self – gratification and achievement that translates directly into a sense of satisfaction. There are multiple ways one can achieve this - through trainings, added responsibilities, freedom to choose their tools to perform a certain task, promotions etc.

Having said that, we cannot ignore the compensation value in one's life. Companies must ensure that the salaries and compensation is competitive if not at par with the other companies in similar space. The compensation may comprise of salaries, incentives, bonuses, stock options, loyalty programs etc depending on the industry, job function, tenure and seniority. Essentially, it is important to value and appreciate performance at all stages and functions.

On a different level, the company must ensure an emotional connect with their employees. For this, companies must constantly train their managers to mentor their teams and build strong relationships. While the company may continue to do things at a more strategic level, it is important that the employee's have a strong relationship with their immediate supervisor or manager. This should more often than not be initiated by the manager himself/herself. I believe that the more we openly rely on our teams, better the sense of belonging and performance. I also personally appreciate my top performers, rising stars, hard workers,

consistent performers and people who are loyal to myself and the company. I do this by verbal appreciation at the coffee machine, lunch breaks, and every walk in the corridor, every meeting possible and every occasion possible.

As a company, we hold monthly sessions to publicly announce people's achievements big or small. The idea here is to include as many team members as possible. If they can walk away with a certificate or a medal or something that they can publicly display - even better. This, I find, is one of the biggest ways to ensure a high percentage of satisfied employees especially in a sales environment like ours.

In today's day, when both men and women share responsibilities at home and work – it is very important that companies give some flexible time to both parents but most importantly, women. Essentially, companies must recognize that women have a different value system than men and provided one is respectful towards that – if companies understand and encourage them to put family and other social obligations above work; they respond by reciprocating and being far more committed than men. At Doon, women have the flexibility to design their own schedule; they are allowed to bring their kids to work if needed (we have a crèche at work). My only pre-requisite is that the work needs to be par excellence and delivered in time. Till date, none of my female team members have disappointed our clients just because they are juggling two roles.

There are other aspects that can also point us in the right direction. I am referring to a general culture in the company. An open, friendly, non-hierarchical environment can be very helpful in this regard. We, at Doon, practice all of the above and find it very successful in maintaining a good communication between employees, managers and senior management. This way, we are able to ensure that all issues are highlighted within a reasonable time frame even if they cannot always be addressed within an expected time frame. It is important that employees are heard and their issues acknowledged to maximize their satisfaction levels.

Before I conclude, I would like to talk about the importance of fun – filled activities and team outings. When an employee goes home after 8 – 10 hours of work, they should want to come back the next day and the day after. If we have that in most of our employees – then, we have a satisfied team.