

# Employee Welfare Programs: Just The Way Your Employees WANT



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The role of employee welfare programs (EWP) in Retentions, Engagement and Motivation of employees cannot be denied by any firm. No matter what is the magnitude of an organization EWP are most extensively used HR management strategy. Mandatory or Non mandatory EWP's both are very important part to create a workplace that make employees look forward to come to work invariably. But nothing comes free, such programs incur huge expenses to the firms ,so it's very important to design such programs that employees actually need and would be elated to use.

People may look the same outwardly and on paper (appear to) have the same backgrounds and competencies. The truth however is that when it comes to doing their work WELL and feeling good about it, to the extent that they - on their own - would decide to continue doing it even when not required to do so, EACH employee is likely to differ in terms of what s/he will want to see, hear or receive in order to ACT that way.

People within the same society/culture typically differ in their workplace preferences and expectations. What works in a particular society/culture may not work as well (or at all) in another society or culture.

The implication is that companies may find that the manner in which they have to manage their employees/team members may vary from one culture to the other in which they operate branches or subsidiaries for instance. All the big players in the corporate world works on the centralized policy making concept .All the programs whether welfare ,recruitment ,appraisal etc. are designed by the policy makers at the central level and are executed as it is at all the branches. People with different geographical and cultural backgrounds require different welfare plans.

This is the reason why some welfare programs are a big hit at some branches whereas they are not likeable by the employees at other branches or they hardly use it. For e.g. A big IT giant (name undisclosed) has a unique welfare facility of child day care centers for their employees where they can keep their children under professional care while they are working for extra hours or after school. This facility was much appreciated by employees in cities like Bangalore, Pune and Mumbai. On the same hand this facility was hardly used by employees in smaller cities like Bhubaneswar, Jaipur etc



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The main reason was that employees in smaller cities usually live in joint families and they don't need to keep their children in day care when there are people back home to take care of kids. Thus while a company designs a welfare program than they must consider the cultural differences also as well as there must be flexibility in the way they are executed for best results. Rather welfare programs must be designed at divisional level to reduce this issue and make them more successful.

One of the vital factors that lead to failure of EWP usually is the lack of awareness amongst employees regarding the facilities they can avail at work place. Designing an efficient program is not enough, employees must be made aware as well as they must be encouraged to use them in the initial phases of introduction.

At the time of induction only employees must be explained the various programs, how and when they can use it, as well as the benefits of that program. For e.g.-at an MNC, a yoga program was launched among various health welfare programs. The employees were informed about it through the usual email circular. The Company spent a huge sum of money in hiring professional instructors, creating infrastructure, and purchasing the various equipments required. The number of employees using the facility was not even 10% of the total employee strength

Later the HR manager in the appraisal interviews asked the employees the reason for not showing interest in the programs. The result was awakening 25% of the employees dint even know about the program as they ignored the circular. 60% employees admitted that they thought of going to the facility but thought after the tiring day's work they will be all the more exhausted.

The H.R manager after that called the meeting for all the team leaders and convinced them to attend the programs for a week, along with their team members stating benefits of yoga.

After 1 month the strength of employees going to the facility increased by whooping 200%. As well as the employees appreciated the companies effort of taking care of the health of their employees. Participative management encourages the involvement of the employees in the designing phase of various EWP, so that such programs can be designed that are actually required by the employees and in the way they want. This will not only leverage the usability of the program but the employees would feel all the way more cared. A sense of belongingness would be raised giving a message that the company is doing these programs not because of their benefits but to streamline the mutual benefits of employees and employer.

The success of such programs is sure shot because of higher usability, awareness and likeability. Thus by providing EWP the way the employees WANT, is the key to a good business investment rather than an unnecessary Expense.