A STUDY ON WORK- LIFE BALANCE AMONG EMPLOYEES IN IT SECTOR

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Abstract

Work-Life balance of the employees in IT industry has become one of the hottest issues when comparing with other industries work and living style in today's trend. These articles enlighten "A study on the Work Life Balance" focuses on the level of satisfaction of the employees by analyzing their abilities and how they are balancing their work and family life. Work life balance is the important phenomenon in any kind of industry. Since Work life balance is a deeply personal issue, there is no right answer, only the right answer for each individual hence it has to be handled by the individual very carefully in the plan, prioritize and schedule as efficiently as possible. Finally, the research hints by providing the suggestions to improve the present Work life balance of the IT Employees.

Introduction

Work–life balance is a concept including proper prioritizing between "work" (career and ambition) and "lifestyle" (health, pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development/meditation). Related, though broader, terms include "lifestyle calm balance" and "lifestyle choices". Work Life Balance consists of the implementation of working arrangements and policies which assist workers in combining employment with other aspects of their lives. Employers can benefit from these policies too as they can help to develop a more committed and productive workforce."Working practices that acknowledge and aim to support the needs of staff in achieving a balance between their homes and working lives" Work/life balance, in its broadest sense, is defined as "a satisfactory level of involvement or 'fit' between the multiple roles in a person's life". Although definitions and explanations vary, work/life balance is generally associated with

equilibrium, or maintaining an overall sense of harmony in life. The study of work/life balance involves the examination of people's ability to manage simultaneously the multi-faceted demands of life.

Framework for successful Work-Life Balance in organizations

    a) Identify the key need or reason for introducing Work-Life Balance policies

    b) Build the commitment to Work-Life Balance Policies into the organization's vision or value statement.

    c) Set up a Work-Life Balance Task Force Examine current practices in the organization

    d) Hold joint discussions with employees to evolve policies, while also identifying possible barriers

    e) Communicate policies through handbooks, newsletters,

    f) Intranet and other forms of communication

    g) Hold workshops to help Managers implement and manage policies

    h) Begin with a few "quick win" policies.

Need For the Study

Many organization are successful at managing the materials and machinery of the organization, they fail short in managing human side of their business. This research is needed for IT employees who are looking for better initiative to balance their work and life. In this study the different IT Company employees have been assesses the importance of work life balance initiatives and its effectiveness. The study believes that people perform better when they are allowed to participate in managing their work & make decisions. This approach motivates people by satisfying not only their economic needs but also their social & psychological aspects. There by to satisfy the new generation workforce, organizations need to concentrate on job designs and organization of work. Further today's workforce is realizing the importance of relationships and is trying to strike a balance between career & personal lives.

Objectives

1. To study the work life balance of the employees in IT Industry

2. To study the factors responsible for work life balance.

3. To find the importance of work life balance on performance of the employees.

4. To study the initiatives taken by the employees to balance their work at office and at home.

Why Work-life balance for IT sector?

Maintaining work-life balance has been the focus of industries' human resource practitioners amidst the demanding nature of work and the workers' personal endeavors in the age of information and technology. The fast-paced life, the instant accessibility of almost anything does not put the individual in a more lax state; instead it pushes the person to do more with the seemingly more time in his/her hands. The individual engages himself/herself with more activities in and out of the office than usual as this seems to be supported by the adoption of flexibility measures in the workplace. The availability of technology anywhere which aids in the connectivity of people 24/7 further delineates the boundaries between work and personal life. Work-life balance "is the stability characterized by the balancing of an individual's life complexity and dynamism with environmental and personal resources such as family, community, employer, profession, geography, information, economics, personality, or values" (Crooker et al, 2002: 389). The linkage of work and personal aspect of lives has always been emphasized (Bruck et al., 2002; Gibson, et al., 2006). Gibson et al. (2006: 197-198) offered two explanations regarding the interconnectedness of work and life in the organizational setting:

(1) the compensation effect implies that employees tend to compensate for low work or personal life satisfaction by seeking contentment in the other domain; and the spillover view that indicates that job satisfaction spills over into one's work life and vice versa. Work-life balance is different for every individual in different stages of life. An individual who is fresh out from college and single would have a different notion of work-life balance compared with an individual who may be single but have certain 'obligations' to his/her family and again different for a married individual with kids, more so for single parents. According to Johnson (2005) the employees' age, lifestyle, and environment play important role in one's perception of work-life balance. The conflict between work and family spheres is also considered especially when there is role conflict and strain (Friede and Ryan 2005; Kossek and Lambert 2005); added to this is the productivity requirements in the workplace that often interferes with family responsibilities of individuals employed in sectors relying heavily on shift work (Williams 2008)

IT. Sector And Work-Life Balance

 With its 24/7 operations IT companies has higher turnover rates compared to most other industries in. In a recent study, Hechanova (2008) explained that 1 of 2 IT representatives has turnover intent; this turnover intent is associated with age, career commitment, burnout, satisfaction with pay, boss, promotions, job responsibilities, firm management and promotions. Given the results of the research, she recommended that IT SECTOR companies should ensure effective

rewards management, helping employees find the right fit and rethinking job design, as well as provide fun atmosphere and Employee Wellbeing Programs. Work-Life Balance in Philippine IT SECTOR organizations, are seen in these terms focusing on the extent to which benefits are not only commensurate and competitive but are also relevant to the needs of employees. Moreover, as IT SECTOR employees belong to fairly young age group, a supportive workplace and fun work environment is imperative to address the work-related stressors.

Work-Life Balance Practices and Program

Studies suggest that employee morale, satisfaction, and performance are improved among employees who have received work/life programs such as onsite child care, time for elder care, opportunity to study, opportunities for telecommuting as these reduce the level and intensity of stress that employees experience (Bruck, et al., 2002; Harmon, 2001; Garvey, 2001; Gibson et al., 2006). Consequently, organizations are paying more attention to work and personal/family life-friendly programs, and are developing other benefits and activities that may help alleviate workplace stress and conflict between work-life. Thompson (2002) classified these work-life initiatives into five categories namely,

(1) Time-based strategies like flexi-time, telecommuting and job sharing;

(2) Information-based strategies like relocation assistance, elder care resources, company work/life balance intranet;

(3) Money-based strategies like leave with pay, scholarships for dependents;

(4) Direct services like onsite childcare, concierge services and takeout dinners; and

(5) Culture-change strategies like training or focus on employees' performance not office face time.

Findings

The study revealed that most of the respondents experienced difficulties in work-life balance. A thin demarcation in terms of percentage separates those who encounter problems in terms of their personal life against their workload and those who are not. Schedules for studies and family sometimes are impeded by work schedules. In terms of family life, majority of the respondents did not experience difficulty in adjusting their family life; still some admitted having difficulty in managing time with the family and the demands of their work. Majority of the IT employees expressed the need to increase their monthly salaries and other benefits.

More than tangible work-life programs and policies, data disclosed that IT workers still are more focus on what they can get from their companies - like car plan, study/training scholarship, career breaks, exercise facilities, early retirement,

and flexi time; this may imply that compensation and benefits are still seen as important to the IT setting as means to outweigh the demand of the workload and help alleviate the working conditions.

Recommendations

There is a need to review the existing policies and thrusts of Department of Labor and Education and the government in general in terms of work-life balance policies and legislature. The government should rethink its role, especially in the monitoring of IT companies to further protect the IT workers. Finally, the existence of work-life balance programs, policies and initiatives at the organizational level is significant but not necessarily sufficient. Guidelines established at the governmental, industry and sector levels, as well as the ability of individuals to capitalize on existing work-life balance programs have to be connected. IT workers have to be knowledgeable about, and appreciative of, policies provided at the organization level, and should continue to protect their welfare. At the same time, there may be evidence that organizational climate and environment often curtail policy developments on the governmental level by being generally unsupportive of employees beyond their legally established rights. Consequently, accomplishing work-life balance is a complex issue that requires the interaction and cooperation of social actors at national, governmental, organizational, as well as the individual-worker Level.

Conclusion

Results showed that most IT companies employ high-caliber compensation and benefits packages for its workers and may be perceived as pioneer in work-life balance advocacy. Money-based strategies they offer surpassed those of other sectors as this comprised of meal and transportation allowances, performance incentives and bonuses, salary increase, overtime and night differential pays, and other bonuses. Moreover, their non-monetary benefits in the form of leaves with pay and health programs, flexible schedules, off-setting, opportunity to negotiate part time work, bedroom or sleeping quarters, health programs, career leaves and breaks, study/training scholarship and subsidy, early retirement, club membership and cultural/religious leave. With the existence of the different benefits and programs, respondents perceived that these are sufficient to foster work-life balance. Health programs ranked highly as benefits that promote work-life balance, this may be ascribed to the health risks involved in IT settings as well as the importance of being healthy and health-related concerns to the employees. Paid paternity/maternity/career leaves and breaks, as well as

flexible work schedules – like flextime and offsetting - are commonly considered as also important in promoting work-life balance as these may contribute to time spend with the family.

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