

A Study of Innovative and Strategic Practices in Creating Positive Workplace Culture and Its Impact on Productivity

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Abstract

Workplace culture has become one of the important aspects for current workforce. The current young workforce of India, between the age group of 18 – 34 years happen to be the most of stressful workforce compared to Global Average of 86% whereas Indian Workforce stands at 95% in stress level.

In order to cope up with this challenge, there is strong need for strategy and innovative methods in redesigning the workplace culture. There are instances in real world where small move from organization have larger impact on employees work life. In this research paper, we will bring you insights of some Great Global Companies who are successful in managing good workplace culture and they have become benchmarks for others.

Through Case Study Approach, we will reveal the secret sauce of managing good workplace culture. Also through questionnaires we will try to assess the needs and wants of current workforce and job aspirants. This research paper will address the pain points of current workforce and also infer solution to the pain points through Case Study Methodology and other findings.

In terms of Innovative Practices, the companies have drastically changed their operational methodology by adopting latest technology in the market. In this research paper, we have brought real use case of technology in HR Management and its direct impact on employee's work life. Use of Big Data helps company to know employee

productivity i.e., the software studies the movements and interactions of its employees and finds out that the teams with best bonds are more efficient.

Keywords: Workplace Culture; Work life Balance; Strategy; Talent Acquisition; Recruiting Process; Artificial Intelligence

Introduction

Herb Kelleher, Founder of Southwest Airlines quoted “A company is stronger if it is bound by love rather than fear”. In today’s Fourth Industrial Revolution, companies are being very competitive in adopting latest technology like use of Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Robotics, Virtual Reality, Big Data, and Predictive Analytics and like more. To implement and upgrade their technology, organizations are hiring for people who are well versed and experience in this technology. However they fail to understand in long run people will not stay for longer. They bound to leave the company even though they are paid more than the market value.

The reason is, people who are today in the workforce are Millenials. These are the young workforce between the age group of 29 to 30 years, who look for work life balance, they crave for recognition and they want to be valued in their closer circles, they expect transparency from organization, they want timely feedback, they tend to leave the job if they feel the work is too monotonous and there is no learning curve.

In one of the recent survey conducted by ThePredictive Index 2018 Survey states that today’s workforce looks for working in an organization which makes a difference to a society through their work. Millenials are the largest generation with the number of 2.5 Billion worldwide and they are grown up alongside of technology and they have wide presence of social media. They are confident, high expectation and sense of purpose.

The corporates, organization and other employers should try to address the issue of today’s workforce. There are few great companies in the world, who take care of their employees as its own family member’s. The culture in such companies is employee friendly and even the employees find easy to adapt to the culture which matches their personal attributes. Workplace should be second home for employees, as they spend

approximately 9 to 10 hours daily and the work environment should have positive vibes with lots of fun, to have friends rather than colleagues and it should be a place where employees emotion are valued and ideas are respected.

In this research paper, we have handpicked three global companies which have a great workplace environment. And their recruitment process, employee engagement activity, rewards and recognition programs, core values and its organization culture are so strong that employees have turned revenue and profitability to upstream direction. When they speak, they speak proudly about their companies in public. Employees have become brand ambassadors of the company. They go to extreme end in protecting the company at the time of crisis.

There are other companies, who have adopted innovative methods in having good working environment. In this paper, we are highlighting such innovative methods adopted by the company in making better workplace.

With the culture and innovative methods, one can achieve productivity with lesser attrition rates. Any monetary funds allocated for well fare of employees is not an expense but it will prove to be revenue generating investment.

1.1 Research Motivation

The motivation behind this study is to find out:

- 1) The strategic method employed in creating good workplace culture
- 2) Does Organizational Culture have impact on employee's personal and professional life?
- 3) To prove open innovation and other digital transformation have considerable impact on employee's productivity.

1.2 Problem Statement

Most of the companies fail to understand the needs and wants of employees. They try to address the issue of company problem on priority. What they don't understand is that, if they address the problem of an employee, by default, the company problem is taken care.

1.3 Objective of the Study

After going through the research paper, the learning objective would be:

- 1) To create an employee friendly culture
- 2) To use innovative method to increase the productivity

1.4 Scope of the Study

- 1) The research paper speaks about the organizational culture which has impact on employee's personal lives and such employees going beyond the industry standards.
- 2) The use of technology has considerable impact on companies' productivity

1.5 Limitations of the Study

- 1) The research concentrates only on Organization Culture as a means of creating positive work environment
- 2) The research paper has adopted case study approach done on Hospitality Industry; Airline Industry and E-Commerce Business.

2. Literature Review

- 1) **Index, T. P. (2018, June 01). The Predictive Index 2018 People Management Survey. Retrieved from www.predictiveindex.com: <https://www.predictiveindex.com/management-survey-2018/>**

The survey report speaks more about, how to be a good manager. The survey is conducted by The Predictive Index with a sample size of 5,103 respondents across many industries answering about questions related to their immediate supervisor or manager. The questions target on communication, listening ability, feedback mechanism, emotional quotient, rewards and recognition.

- 2) **Monster. (2019). Retrieved March 29, 2019, from www.monsterindia.com: https://www.monsterindia.com/career-advice/work-life-balance-do-you-own-your-work-or-does-your-work-own-you-7967.html?spl=IN_WLB_Content**

The survey was conducted by Monster India, it has considered 2000 respondents to speak about Work Life Balance. The report results speaks more about the employees understanding of work-life balance. It also address the ill health aspects of not having work-life balance like number of respondents facing anxiety, stress, lack of sleep, back pain, obesity, depression, hypertension, frequent headaches etc. The survey intention is to create awareness among employers to check out for the loop holes in their policy. And to promote more work life balance policies like flexi-time, holidays, work from home.

2.1 Gap Identified From Literature Review

- ❖ This research paper not only highlights the issue of employees, but also provides diversified possible solution to keep up employee morale high.
- ❖ The research intends to create more impact through case study on organizations which are best in the world for creating good work place culture.
- ❖ The research aims to offer solution through not just change in HR Policy but to create a new organization culture itself.
- ❖ The policy change have minimal effect on employees however if the company adopts a culture which is work friendly then it has impact on companies productivity.
- ❖ The research not only gives alert to Managers, but as a whole to organization like how senior management and bottom-line can work together in bringing new ideas, new products and providing great service to the customers
- ❖ This research highlights innovative methods undertaken by companies to increase productivity.

3. Research Methodology

The methodology used in this preparing this research paper is through ***Case Study Approach***. The case study approach deals with real life situations with a specific

problem, which helps the reader to analyze the case or events related to people and decision taken on the uncertain issues. The outcome is been analyzed for future references, so that, it can help others in understanding the problem and implementing readily available solutions.

3.1 Research Design

The Case Study has been done on three companies of different industry i.e., Hospitality Industry, Aviation Industry and E-commerce Business. All the three companies are well-known in their industry and they have set-up right culture and their Business Model is closely observed and studied by business schools across the world.

3.2 Data Collection Methods & Sources

- ❖ The current pressing issues of employees have been understood through surveys, questionnaires and other web research works.
- ❖ The relevant information for the research topic is collected from different sources like web articles, research papers and company profiles.

3.3 Tools of Analysis

- ❖ A questionnaire form was prepared with the help of Google Forms and it was asked to fill it by working professionals
- ❖ To ensure quality and purpose of the research, the respondent's personal identity like First Name, Email Address, Company and Mobile Number were "Not Asked".
- ❖ Respondents were assured that the responses would be used only for the research findings.

4. Data Analysis

Case Study 1: The Taj Mahal Hotel – Epitome of Work Culture

In 1890's during British Rule in India, a middle-aged man was denied to enter a European owned Club, upon questioning a security men, the security men pointed out at a board which read "No Entry for Indians and Dogs".

The middle-aged man took it as a challenge and built a grandiose luxury hotel with a plan of accommodation facility for 500 guests. And the man was none other than JamsetjiTata. He vowed to create an economy corridor out this luxury hotel. Today, it stands still as the Iconic symbol of Mumbai, India and the hotel is 'Taj Mahal Hotel'.

This act of patriotism of Jamestji Tata was a turning point in revolutionizing the concept of Indian Hospitality Industry with Indian heritage and its culture being intact and being unaffected with western thoughts. At that time, there were no luxury hotel in India and there were very few luxury hotels in Asia like Raffles Hotel in Singapore which had only 10 Rooms and it served only for Europeans but not Asians. Taj stood different, it offered service for Asians and Europeans and intention was to create equality and provide a platform for building socio-economic relations between Asia and Europe.

Today, Taj is not only the icon of India but also, it is the epitome of good workplace culture. Its employee's behavior and customer focused approach has raised eye brows of many industry experts and it has challenged the human psyche. People, who have witnessed the heinous act of terror attack (known as 26/11 attack) on the heritage building of Taj, will tell you the stories of Taj staff in protecting their guest at the cost of their own lives. This is something not expected from its employees nor it's written down in standard operating procedure to do so.

Usually at the time of terror attack, the psychology says "People will flee and try to run for their lives and hide in a safe place" but here the Taj staff exhibited their valor as a soldier in border. Taj staffs were not less than any soldier. In this case study, I will be sharing few real instances of Taj Staff which has set-up an example in Hospitality Industry:

Instance 1: The Banquet Hall

Mallika Jagad, young 24 year old banquet manager was assigned as an in-charge for organizing farewell dinner party of Hindustan Unilever CEO's exit and Unilever staffs were welcoming its new CEO that night. All the senior management, directors of Unilever and their family were enjoying the event. It was around 9:30 PM, they heard a loud thunder like sound initially guest and staff thought it might be firecracker from near-by wedding hall but very soon they realized it was a sound of gunshots and grenades thrown in the hallway of banquet where event was organized.

Ms. Jagad was very quick in responding to terror attack by locking the banquet hall door and turning off the lights. She asked her guest to lie down under the tables and also requested her guests, to get husband and wife separated to avoid the risk of casualty. She and her staff stayed all the night with the guest, offering glass of water in regular intervals of time and she and her team remained calm and composed even when they could listen to terrorists walking around the passage of banquet hall and were firing in random direction. It was early next morning, when the terrorist moved to other part of building, this gave a room for opportunity and Mallika helped all her guest to move out from the window where firefighter were ready with ladders to help guest to get down safely from second floor. Even at this time, Mallika Jagad and her team made sure that, guest would be rescued first and they would be last person to come out.

After this incident, one of the news media asked her, "What made you to stay with guests, when you had ample of time to escape?" for this Mallika Jagad replied "I was scared but 65 lives were at stake, I can't take a chance and it's my responsibility...I may be the youngest person in the room. I was doing my job"

Incident 2: Wasabi – The spiral stair case which opened the doors to the graveyard

Around 9:30PM, at Wasabi, a premium Japanese restaurant was alerted by staff members saying that there terror attack and a senior waiter Thomas Varghese, 48 year old directed his guests who were 50 in number to hide under the table and he directed his employees to form human chain around his guest as a safety precaution.

After fours of hiding, Varghese was able to contact security and got the help from rescue team. He asked his guest to be evacuated from the backend spiral staircase which led to the window were rescue team were ready with ladders. Varghese made sure he would evacuate all 50 guests and his employees first and then he would be the last person to come out.

He was successful in evacuating his guest and employees, however the faith had a calling, and he was seen by a gun manned terrorist and was shot down at the stair case at the time of evacuation.

Incident 3: Karambir Singh - Son of a soldier always remain a soldier

Karambir Singh Kang was a General Manager at Taj Mumbai, he got a phone call in the middle of the conference and after listening to the horrific news he immediately took charge at Taj Hotel and he was overseeing the evacuation process of guests and he was coordinating with firefighters showing the exit points for rescue as he knew all the blue print exit points of Taj.

His wife and children stayed in sixth floor suite in Taj, it was tradition at Taj where General Manager's given suit at sixth floor. He tried to reach sixth floor with the rescue mission but it was impossible, considering the sixth floor was completely set into flames by terrorists.

Karambir continued his job until next noon, and only then he called his parents and gave the information that terrorist had killed his wife and children. Upon listening to this, his father who happened to be ex-Army General told him "Son, do your duty. Do not desert your post" for which Karambir replied "Father, if hotel goes down, I will be the last man out"

Learning Outcome:

What made employees of Taj to go to that extreme end of doing their job where the lives of 11 staff were sacrificed? Why they were so customer focused even at the time of crisis, they did not think about their lives and family? What they thought at that moment, was safety of the guest, and how can they bring them out with less casualty? Can organization train its employee to exhibit this kind of valor as Taj Staff?

There is something unique which makes Taj Staff to stand out of the crowd. To decode this, we have to dig down on its unusual hiring process, training and reward system at Taj.

HR Approach at Taj Hotel: Taj follows 11 simple easy to follow principles in order to keep the good working environment culture across its all 108 Hotels in 12 countries i.e., *THE FIT HIRES*

T –They **Train** workers for 18 months but not just 12 months

H – They **Have** incumbent Managers but not consultants involved in conducting training

E - They **Ensure** recognition comes from immediate supervisors but not top management

F – They **Focus** on hiring candidates who have devotion and integrity towards work rather than hiring for skills and talents

I – They **Induct** Managers who seek for a single-company career and with full hands-on

T – They **Teach** employees to improvise rather than just following the book procedure

H –They **Hire** from small towns and semi urban areas but not from big cities like metros

I – They **Insist** that they have to put guest's interest over company's interest

R– They **Recruit** people from high schools and also from second-tier business schools but not from top premier B-Schools

E –They also **Ensure** that employees can deal with guests without consulting their supervisors, complete free hand and freedom is given to employees to take quick decision.

Value Focused Recruitment: The Taj recruits its new hires from small towns and tier-2 cities like Pune (not Mumbai), Dehradun (not Delhi), Mysore and Manipal (not Bangalore), Coimbatore (not Chennai) the intention is not to reduce the cost and pay less for tier-2 hires but intention is to go inside these small towns where even today Indian Traditional Values are alive like respecting their elders and teachers, humility, discipline, honesty, moral values, ethical values and so many. In cities, youngsters are influenced and driven by money, for them moving to other jobs is quite common and they have less empathy towards customers. In hospitality industry values, empathy, compassion matters a lot than skills, talent and spoken communication.

Hunt for future Taj Staff: The recruitment team at Taj goes out to small towns and semi urban schools which have good standard of teaching and talk to school teachers and ask which students have the below three character traits:

- 1) Does he/she respects elders i.e., teachers and parents?
- 2) Does he/she take life in positive manner even at the time of difficulties?
- 3) How badly does the family needs income earning from a person?

They even don't mind picking up a school dropout if he/she shows above three traits. The chosen candidates are sent to Taj's residential skill certification centers for the period of 18 months with free accommodation, free food and with monthly Stipend ranging from Rs 10,000 to Rs. 12,000 per month. Most of the selected recruits send the entire stipend to their families staying in their hometowns and for them Taj gives all the facilities for the period of two years. This makes them feel gratitude and display hard work and remain loyal to the Taj.

The Taj's 50% of supervisor and junior manager's role is fulfilled via tie-ups with Hotel Management Institutions, it tries to maintain cordial relations with tie-2 institutions and train faculty members and conducts frequent campus-industry connect programs to attract tier-2 students who are more focused on building their career in single company rather recruiting than job-hopping city students.

Taj Employees speak for their Customers:Taj Hotel's research has shown that up to 70% to 80% of employees build great rapport with their guest in unsupervised environment. This gives employee a free hand environment and the employee has to learn and improvise his skills through his interaction with his guest. There is no operating procedure or book manual to follow the guidelines. However, each trainee has to spend 2 hours every week to debrief his experience with his immediate supervisor by answering 2 standard questions: answer:

- 1) What did trainee learn from this week?
- 2) What did he observe this week?

The Taj group right from the top i.e., from CEO the message is very clear that its support its employee who speaks for their customer. In hospitality industry, the end goal is to see customers happy and they should be returning back. So it asks its employee to put its guest interest first rather than company's interest.

48 Hours Reward System:The employees are rewarded within 48 hours of recognition from their guests. The timing of the recognition matters a lot in employee retention. Employee is appreciated by his/her immediate supervisor, which makes employee – manager bond stronger. Taj has also rolled out STARS Award i.e., Special Thanks & Recognition System which has resulted in Higher Service Standards and even customer retention was higher after the launch of STARS Award.

Case Study 2: Zappos – The synonym for Highest Level of Customer Satisfaction

Zappos is an online shoe and clothing retailer based out in Las Vegas, United States. The idea of Zappos came when Nick Swinmurn couldn't find proper pair of shoes even after visiting several stores, this frustration lead to opening up a company called "Zappos" meaning shoes in Spanish. This was in the year 1999.

On the other side, the Tony Hsieh and Alfred Lin sold their business LinkExchange to Microsoft for \$265 million and the duo set-up an investment firm called Venture Frogs. It was Nick Swinburn voice mailed Tony Hsieh pitching for the funds and Tony Hsieh was about to delete the voice mail but he heard Nick saying “Footwear business in US is estimated at 40 Billion dollar and 5% of 40 Billion dollar business is sold by supply logistic firm”. It was this moment Tony decided to invest in the company.

Later in the year 2001, Tony Hsieh joined Zappos as CEO, his mindset was not making company but he wanted to build a company which was totally different from rest others. His idea was to create a great experience to the customers. This feeling of making customer happy came to his mind when, one of the customer of Zappos was so happy after receiving his pair of shoes within two days and the estimated time of delivery was two weeks. The customer was so happy that he suggested Zappos should enter into Airline industry. This kind of customer response had profound impact on Tony’s thought approach. He made up his mind “To create Zappos as one of the brand which caters very best customer service in the world”

He understood very soon that, in order to make his vision come true, he has to make his employees happy. Zappos can’t have happy customers without happy employees and you can’t have happy employees without right company culture.

Tony asked his fun-filled friendly employees to list down the points which could be Core Values of Zappos. After summing up the points, the list came down to 10 Powerful Values:

- 1) Deliver WOW Through Customer Service
- 2) Embrace and Drive Change
- 3) Create Fun and a Little Weirdness
- 4) Be Adventurous, Creative and Open-minded
- 5) Pursue Growth and Learning
- 6) Build Open and Honest Relationships with Communication
- 7) Build a Positive Team and Family Spirit
- 8) Do More with Less

9) Be Passionate and Determined

10) Be Humble

Zappos is full inspiring stories where all its employees are the brand ambassadors of the company. They have so open and friendly environment that no other companies on earth has that kind of openness. As the case study title says the other meaning for customer satisfaction is Zappos. In order to know “What Zappos Culture is and why on earth it is more powerful customer centric company?” you have to go through below real situations which made Zappos.

10% to 20% of Work time in Socializing - Managers at Zappos spend 10% to 20% of their time outside office with other Zappos employee in socializing.

Experience the culture first and then take the call for attending interview: The hiring process is totally different at Zappos, the candidates will be attending some socializing event of Zappos and the candidate can meet as much as employees they want and sometimes this kind of interaction goes on for four to six months just interacting with Zappos employees. Once they get to know the culture, then they can decide to give interview at Zappos.

Zappos hires slowly but it hires only those who are culturally fit for Zappos. The HR Recruiter gives 50% weightage for Cultural Fit Test.

Employees are paid to leave the Job: If employee completes his/her tenure in Call Centre then Zappos offer upfront \$3,000 to leave the company. Yes, they allow employees to do self-assessing and check if they really have observed Zappos Culture and they are committed towards the goals and objectives. If the answer is ‘No’ then they can take \$3,000 and leave the company to never come back

De-tour Zappos: Las Vegas is one of the most happening tourist places in the world. Zappos employees will pick up tourist from Airport and take tour t Zappos office. At Zappos, tourists are free to roam around at any place, even have a free lunch, talk to employees and even employees greet them by ringing cowbells and cheer them up.

Rewards based on Skill Acquired:The Call Centre employees at Zappos get additional \$11/Hour to \$16/Hour within a year if the employees at Zappos learn the skillset at Resource Desk where complex calls are diverted.

5 Hour 25 Minute 31 Seconds – Building Personal Emotion Centre but not Call Centre:Tony Hsieh looked its call centre division as not expense centre but as marketing investment even though the call centre had resulted in 300% high expense turnover. Employees of Zappos answered the call with cheerful smiles on their face as they hired people who were jovial and created fun loving environment at call centre division. Employees at call centre do not go as per standard handout manuals. They are free to talk to customers until the issue is resolved. The employees are not judged by how many calls they have answered rather they see how happy the customers are after they speak to Zappos Call Centre. The main aim is to build Personal Emotional Connect with its customer. In one of the case, the call went on for 5 hours 25 minutes and 31 seconds, the call was initially to enquire about the product but it went on to personal topics and such kind of conversation builds emotional bonding between customer and Zappos.

Holacracy – Moving from Management Hierarchy to Employee Self-management:In March 2015, Tony Hsieh communicated official announcement of making Zappos a complete Holacracy Organization i.e., making decisions by the responsible person, need not wait for senior approval, employees are empowered to take decisions and for any issues they are free to discuss with other accountable person and come up with a full proof solution, employees are responsible and accountable for their own decision taken. This kind of Holacracy keeps organizational culture unaffected with growing number of employees

Case Study 3:Southwest Airlines – Connecting People with its Culture

Herb Kelleher was born in Trenton, New Jersey on March 12, 1931. He earned bachelor's degree from Wesleyan University and pursued his law from NYU Law School. Later he joined New Jersey Supreme Court as an employee.

Origin of Southwest Airlines:

In 1966 Herb Kelleher's client by name Rollin King, who was a banker and also pilot running a small charter airline met Herb Kelleher at San Antonio bar and they were discussing about airline industry and they were complaining about no proper connectivity. At this moment or let say it was a Eureka Moment for Herb Kelleher who happened grab a cocktail napkin and jotted down the airline route between Dallas, San Antonio and Houston and said to Rollin King "Let's do it" and rest was a history.

Initially Southwest Airlines was known as Texas Intrastate Airline. The air service in Texas was very poor and prices were high and Herb Kelleher took advantage of this, he wanted to come to airline industry with good service at low cost for betterment of the people. At that time, Texas had a monopoly market in airline industry and the competitors were Braniff, Trans-Texas and Continental Airlines. The trio smashed a case against Southwest Airlines for offering low cost service. The trio failed to understand, they were fighting against the visionary and who wanted to make a difference in the lives of under-served people. Herb being lawyer himself went on to fight against these three competitors and finally won the case after 5 years of litigation. With the historic win, Herb launched his first Southwest flight taking off from Dallas to Houston for \$20 which was 3 times less than other airline fares.

The only motto of Southwest Airlines was "To provide good service at lowest price and to ensure passengers had good time" with this motto they penetrated the airline market. In order to keep their low price per seat, they came up with innovative methods to cut down the costs:

- Abandoning the traditional method of multiple class & reserved seats
- Relying on a single type of aircraft.
- Offering snacks instead of full meals
- Turning planes around within 10 to 15 minutes of landing whereas other airlines turnaround time was 50 minutes.

Southwest Airlines Business Model:

Herb Kelleher believed in doing things differently, he was the first in the airline industry to have organization structure upside down i.e.,

- Employee comes first
- Customers comes second
- Shareholders come third

It's a simple change in thought approach. If you treat your employees well and if you take care & value them as people then employees in return provide a great job for the customers and the customers would come back, which in turn would be good for the shareholders.

So many of the airliners tried to imitate Southwest Business model like US Airways Metro jet, Continental Lite, Delta express but they all failed, they couldn't turn up their profits as Southwest, which earned \$474 million on \$4.7 billion sales by raising stock price up to 300% with a price per seat being lowest as before \$20.

What Differentiates Southwest Airlines from other Airlines?

One thing that makes Southwest Airlines unique is "Their Culture". Herb Kelleher says that "Our Culture is the core of our success. Our culture is tough to be replicated by any of our competitor". The culture that he is talking about is the core values of Southwest Airlines-

- 1) Humanism
- 2) Simplicity
- 3) Humor
- 4) Service

1) Humanism:

Most of the airline industry layoff their employees at the time of crisis but Herb Kelleher took the decision which no other person could think off i.e., he sold 1 out of

4 airplanes in order to keep their employees job at Southwest Airlines rather than laying off.

For Example: Tony Saugey, passenger of Southwest Airlines boarded the plane, and he had skipped the breakfast in hurry. When he requested flight attendant Amy, for Turkey Sandwich, she bought some chips to him. When flight got landed, it was very surprising for Tony to see, Amy came back with Turkey Sandwich, and she had brought it from Airport food court. And Tony went to pay her but she refused and said thank you for giving up his seat to a mother and daughter so that they can sit together.

2) Simplicity:

At Southwest Airlines, each and every employee without any hesitation do the menial jobs if required. For instance, if necessary, Pilot will help to load bags and also clean cabins to stay on schedule. Gate agents sometimes restock planes.

Southwest Airlines believes and respects all the ideas submitted by its employees, it can be any employee starting from flight attendant to top level executives.

For example: One of the mechanic at Southwest Airlines submitted a sketch showing how to fit an extra seat onto the aircraft and Southwest Airlines considered his idea within a week of time.

As Herb Kelleher strongly believes one should “Never spoil an idea, because when you spoil the idea, you never get another great idea from that person” he further continues to explain that, never underestimate anyone on any basis like how much he/she is educated, what their background is about etc. You never know, you can get a great idea from anyone, anywhere at any moment.

3) Humor:

Herb Kelleher believes in liberating people at work (i.e., to have very informal structure). He says that, people minds stop working when they enter into workplace because it’s an unnatural experience and they feel as if they are robots and have to act like automation. So Herb wants his employees to be themselves but not to be someone else. He says that in Southwest Airlines you can laugh at workplace, can play jokes on

each other and you can address your co-worker with informal names. Humor is needed in workplace in order to keep the spirit of the company with more lively, fun, enthusiastic and joy.

4) Service:

Southwest Airlines has industry's fewest customer complaints, the fewest lost bags, and most on-time arrivals.

For Example: The Southwest Airlines Passenger, Melissa was ready for Cumberland Mountain Relay race and her teams of 11 members were waiting for her to turn up, unfortunately the bag of Mellissa which had athlete shoes went missing. And it was a 30 year old Marine Veteran, Reecie who is now employee at Southwest Airlines Baggage department assured Melissa that she would find her bag and she has to leave to Cumberland Mountain relay Race.

Reecie was able to find her bag with Athlete shoes and she drove 3 hours non-stop to Cumberland Mountains and trekked muddy filed and delivered athlete shoes to Mellissa before the race.

There are many such inspirational stories mentioned in their [community website](#), where employees of Southwest went beyond their job limits and wowed its customer's heart. This is something which can happen only at Southwest because Herb Kelleher and his management take care of employees and in return employees take care of their customers.

So what is that uniqueness of Southwest Airlines differentiates from others? The answer is "Their Culture". Southwest takes a lot of time to hire the right person who is cultural fit for Southwest Airlines. Let's see how recruitment process goes in Southwest Airlines:

Southwest Airlines Hiring Process:

Southwest Airlines spends enormous of time in selecting its employees. Only 4% of the 90,000 people will be short listed for a job in a year i.e., only 3,600 out of 90,000 candidates. They select the employees on the basis of 7 traits: cheerfulness, optimism, decision-making skills, team spirit, communication, self-confidence and self-starter skills.

Southwest Airlines will look for mini-Herb Kelleher. They meant to say that, they are looking for those employees who know how to turn the crisis into an opportunity. For instance only two airlines succeeded in making profits after 9/11 incidence one is Southwest Airlines and other is Dallas Airlines.

Herb Kelleher says that “There would be at least two crisis in every year and we’d better be ready for them” and he continuous to justify his profits during 9/11 incidence by saying that “We manage in good times so that we’ll do well in bad times”

After Hiring Process:

Once employees are hired, they have to go through rigorous people-skills courses at University for People - Southwest Airline’s training center in Dallas. New Hires are trained to read the body language, for example head down, hands folded across chest signifies negative body language and other art of positive reinforcement i.e., sharing culture of Southwest Airlines which has many live examples and one among them was:

When there was fuel crisis in February 2001, Herb Kelleher sent a letter to his employees saying that “Jet fuel price raised to \$1 a gallon, which is three times more than previous year and he requested each worker to help the company by saving \$5 per day.”The response was such that:

- One of department at Southwest Airlines started doing its own janitorial work.
- Another group of mechanics figured out, the frugal way of heating the planes more cheaply.

Within the first six weeks of the letter sent to employees, Southwest employees were able to save more than \$2million and it went on to save \$51 million in a year.

4.1 Innovative Methods Used By Companies To Increase Productivity

1. Hewlett-Packard Using Predictive Analysis to Retain Employees:

HP Company has over 300,000 employees and the employee turnover was estimated as high as 20% which means the employee leaving the company before completion of 5 years. In order to reduce the cost of hiring i.e., the cost of hiring new resource would come up to 150% of the cost of existing employee's annual pay. And also the leaving employee took the knowledge and networks and sometimes clients with him adding loss of revenue stream to the company.

Adoption of Predictive Analytics: Hewlett-Packard used Predictive Analytics by combining two years data for all 300,000 employees. The outcome was ground shaking, employees with higher pay, promotions and good ratings did not stop employees from leaving the company. The person who had got promotion had left the job because he wasn't happy with salary hike. There were several such cases listed down and they called it as 'Flight Risk Score' and this score would predict which employee is likely to quit the company. The managers are trained to read this flight risk score and based on that they can take a call and in retaining the employees before it's too late.

2. Use of Chatbots in Recruitment

Chatbots are friendlier in conducting interviews. Candidates don't have to be cautious about your body language or appearance and fear of being judged by the Recruiters as candidates will be giving interview with Chatbots. The candidates can sit at home and in comfort level for interview with Chatbots. The candidates are more calm and relaxed and give open answer for Chatbots questions compared to human interviewer.

Chatbots are even used after interview, to give updates on status of interview, feedback, scheduling F2F interview, rescheduling interview, sharing locations etcetc

It's estimated that around 50% - 80% of response time is saved using Chatbots, as there will be common questions being asked by candidates and Chatbots are equipped to answer these common queries and they are capable of learning from the new data input

3. Credit Suisse – Saved money by using AI to know “Who will quit”

Credit Suisse's managers got a report built by algorithm and it showed the Flight Risks of high performing employees are in verge of leaving the company and with this alert, Credit Suisse took corrective actions and was able to retain high performers and thus saved the cost of \$700, 00,000 a year.

4. Bank of America - Employee Productivity:

Through Big Data tool i.e., performance metrics helped Bank of America in studying employee movements and interactions with its team members. The study showed the more interaction of team members lead to highest productivity compared to other teams with lesser interactions.

There are other wide uses of Artificial Intelligence in HR & Recruitments like:

- Exit Formalities
- Recruitments
- Predicting new hires performance
- On-boarding and training new hires
- Objective setting and tracking performance
- Employee Engagement
- To track employees morale e.g. IBM Watson

5. Findings & Conclusions

Survey Reports

For the purpose of this research article, we conducted a survey on working professionals and questions were framed to capture the essence of the research topics. Also, to ensure quality and purpose of the research, the respondent's personal identity like First Name, Email Address, Company and Mobile Number were "Not Asked". Respondents were assured that the responses would be used only for the research findings.

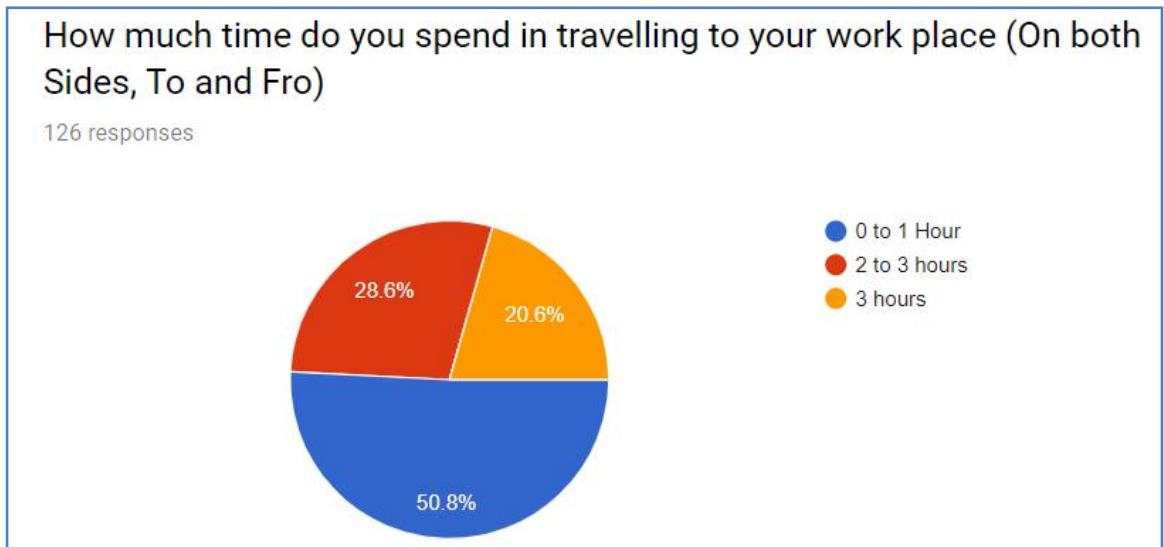
Survey Details:

- **Name of the Survey:** Workplace Culture
- **Sample Size:** No Samples were targeted. The survey was launched in social media platform and also in professional sites like LinkedIn
- **No. of Respondents:** 126 Working Professionals

Survey Link: The below link was kept open for 5 days to collect responses

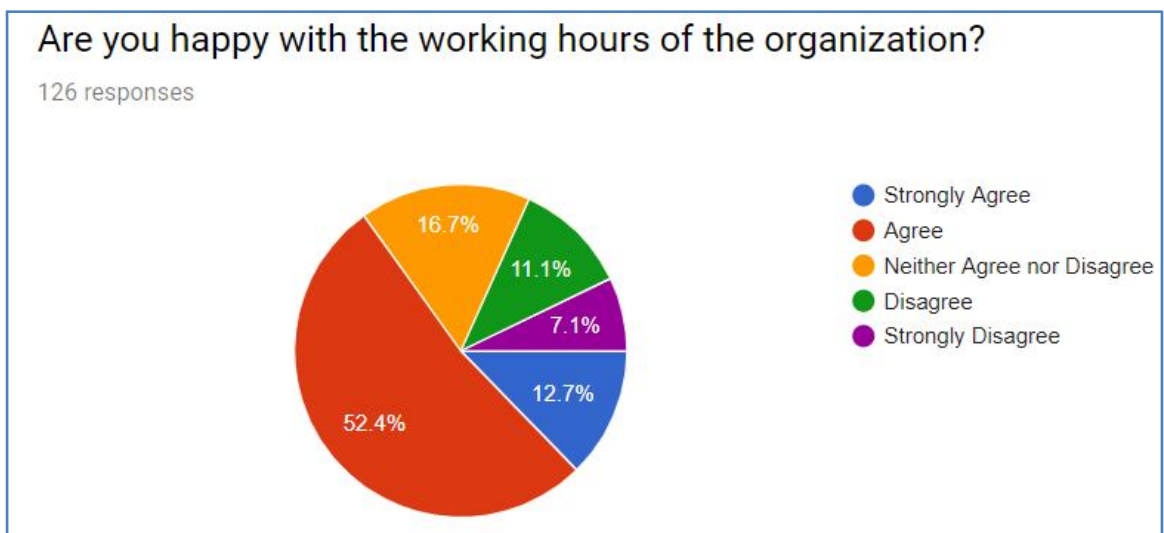
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The survey was collected from 126 working professionals and their responses on 20 questions related to workplace culture like travelling time, working hours, time spent with family, company's culture, work pressure, sense of purpose, feedbacks, rewards and recognition etc etc. Below statistics gives you insights about working environment.



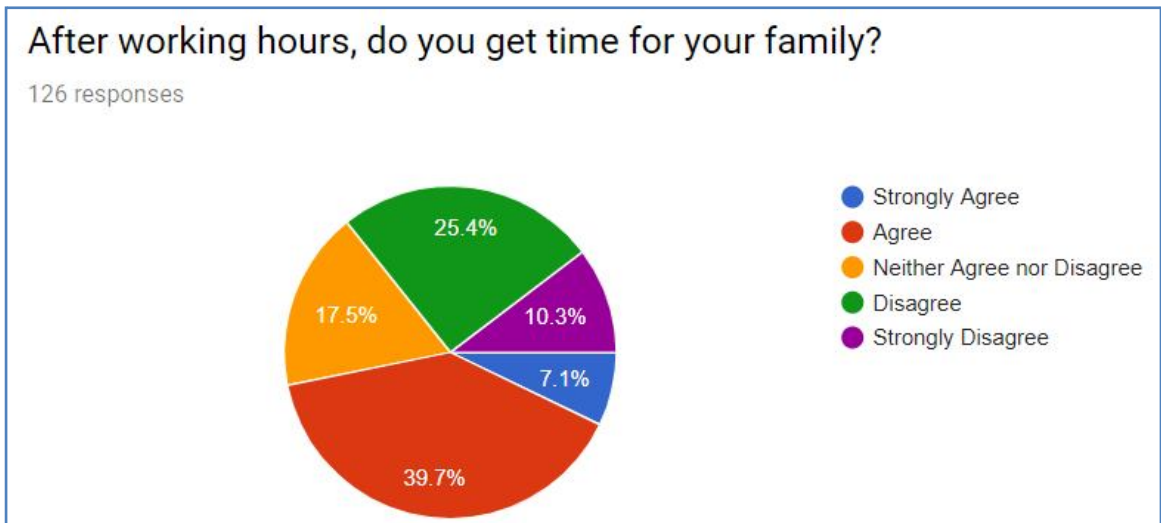
Conclusion:Neutral

As per the survey, there are 62 respondents out of 126, who spend time in travelling 2 to 3 hours to their office. Commute is considered to be one of the major problems in urban areas, people will tend to lose interest in jobs and get frustrated in traffic jams.



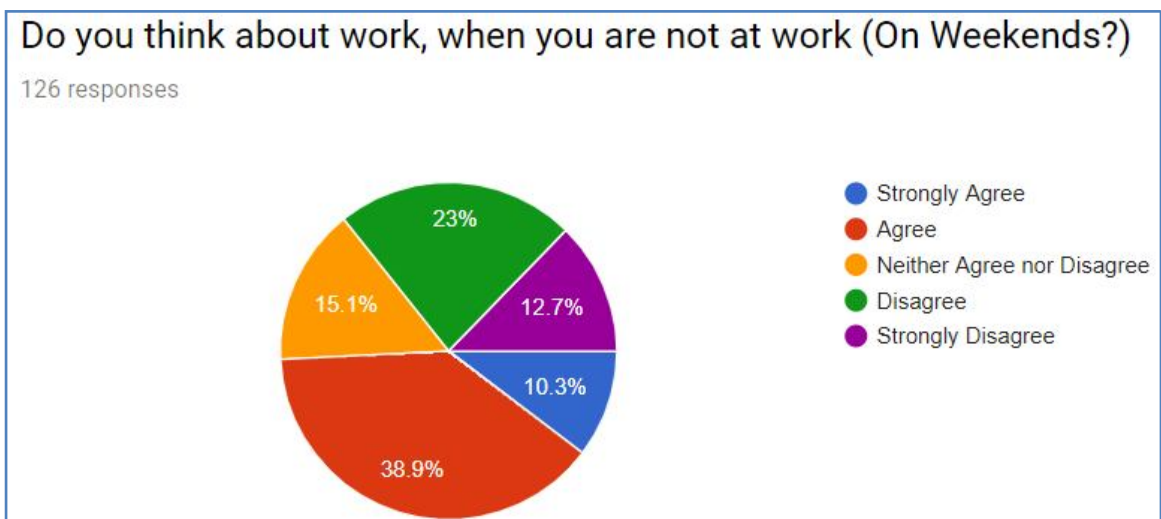
Conclusion:Positive

Most of the respondents are happy with the working hours, nearly 65% are happy with timings



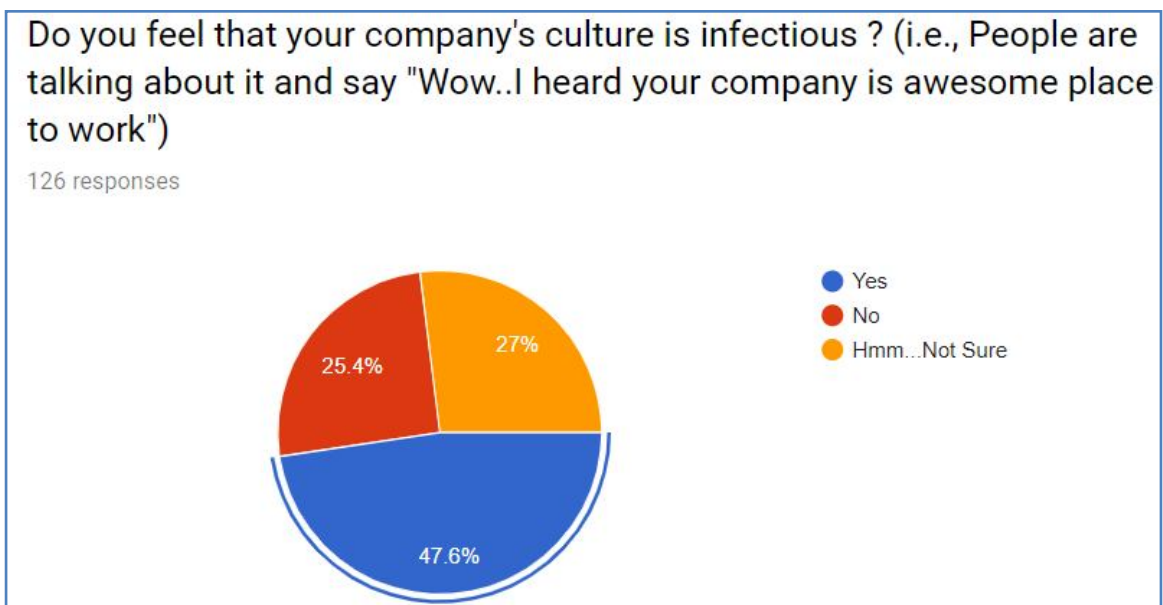
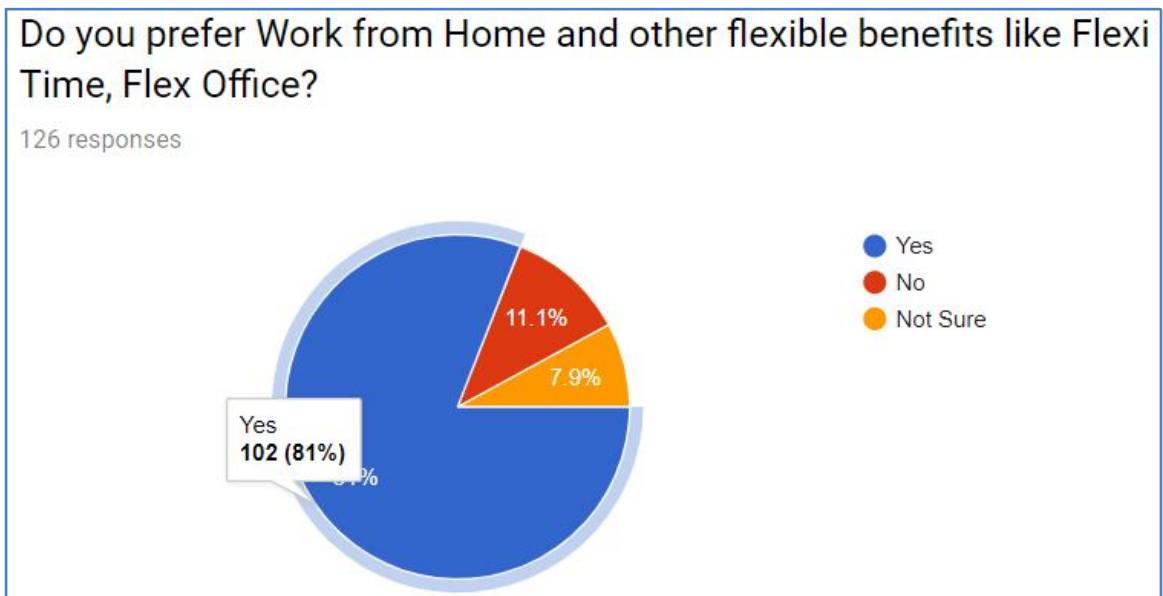
Conclusion:Quite Positive

As per the survey, 59 respondents agreed that, they get time to spend with their families after working hours and 45 respondents disagreed with the statement. These might be the workforces who are in shifts or they commute more than 3 hours and high possible these are bachelors with families in their home town.



Conclusion:Negative

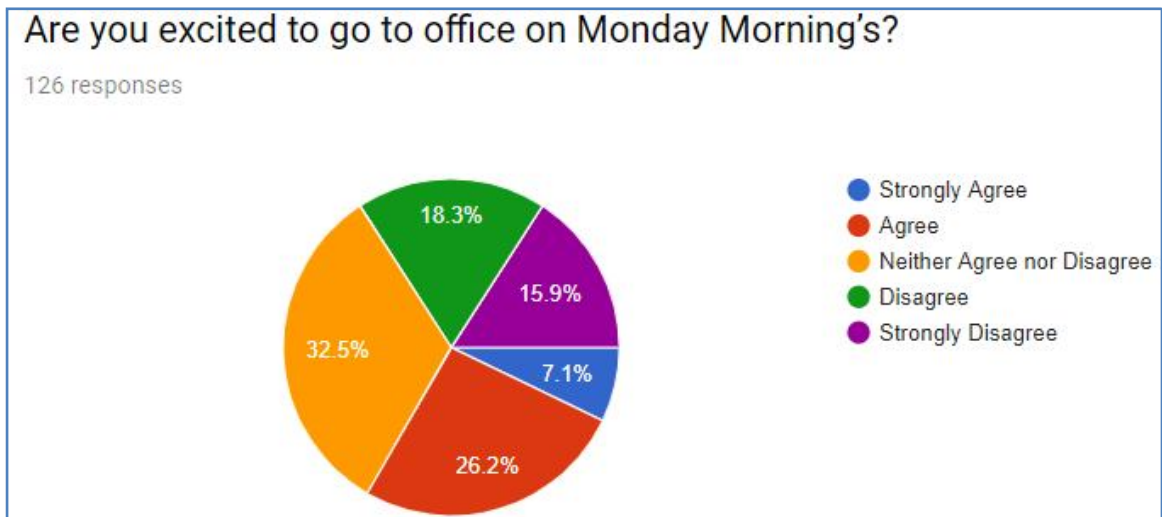
As per the survey, 62 respondents think about work even on weekends, which is very harmful for employee's health. In long run this will lead to stress, hypertension, anxiety and other ill effects on employees health



Conclusion: Positive

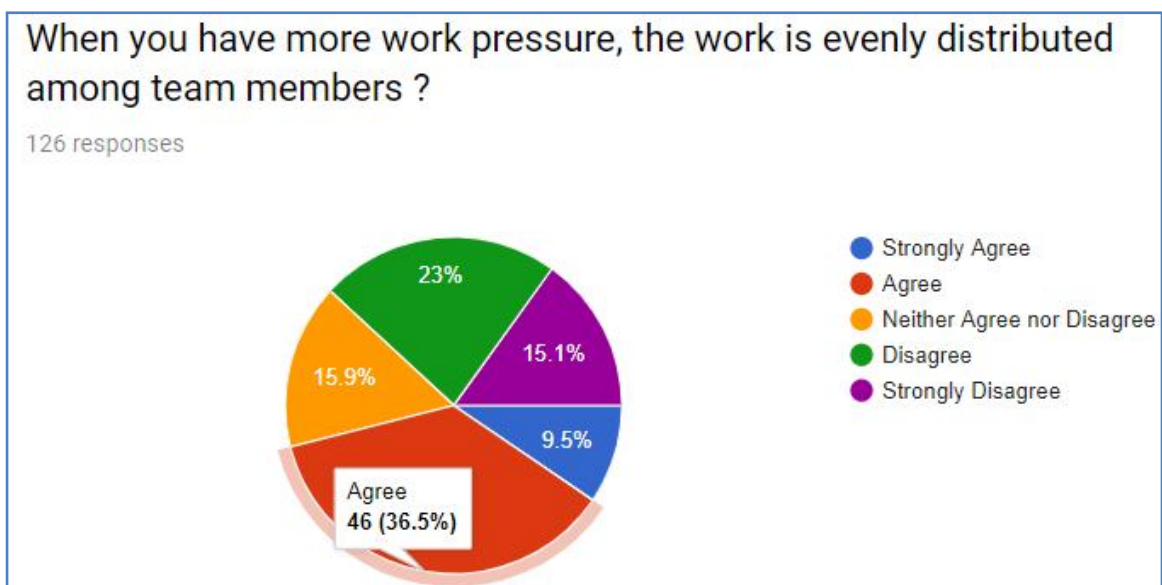
There are different attributes to say the company's culture is really good and one of the attribute is providing flexi-time, flexi-place, and work from home options. In this

survey, around 102 respondents prefer flexible benefits and around 60 respondents are enjoying the benefits provided by the company.

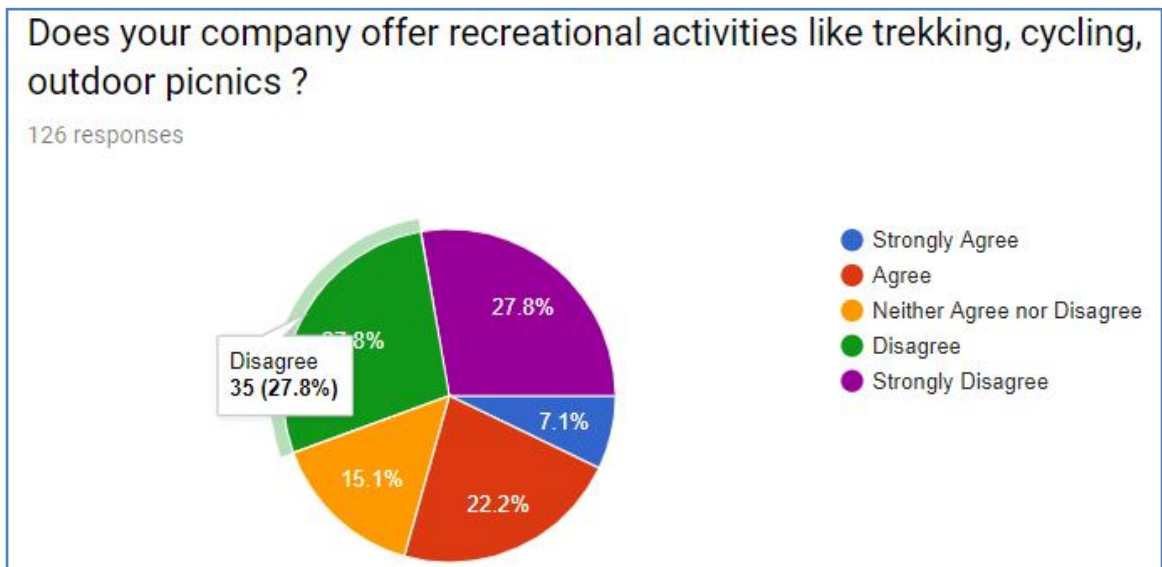


Conclusion: Neutral

Around 43 respondents disagreed with the statement and 42 respondents agreed to the statement. The intention of this question was to see if there is “Fun” component at workplace. Companies should promote more fun friendly environments. There are few research which says, by giving High-Five to colleagues in work place will boost the productivity.



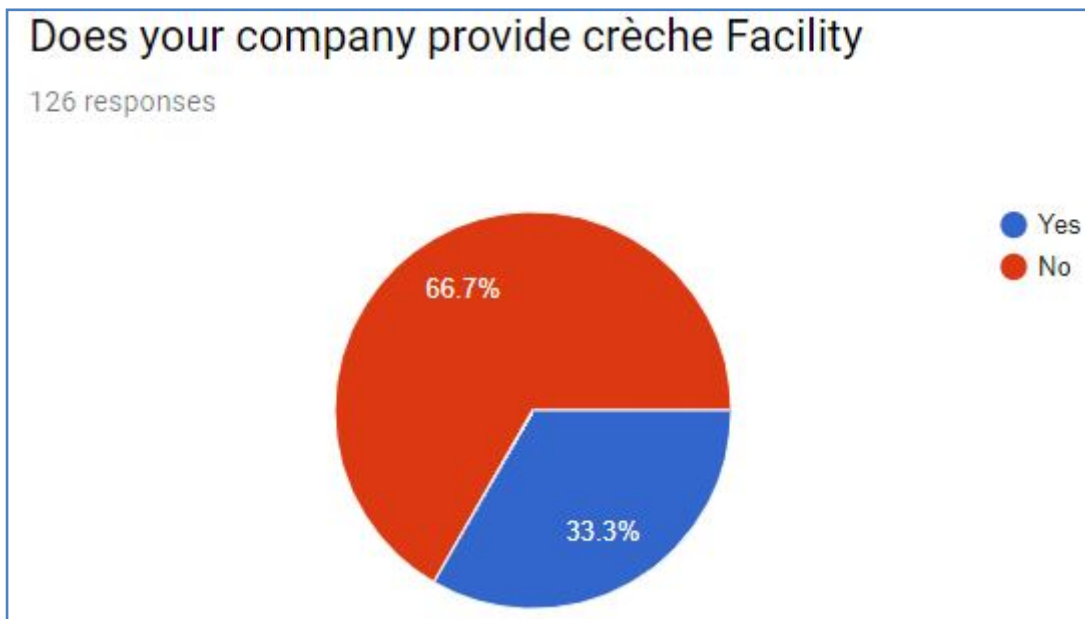
Conclusion: Quite Positive – Manager has to see each team members are cross trained to support the staff. 58 respondents have back-ups and 48 respondents do not have back-up to do the task.



Conclusion: Negative

Around 70 respondents strongly disagreed to the statement when asked whether the company takes them out for picnic, trekking, cycling. Hardly 37 respondents agreed to the statement. Companies should focus on conducting employee engagement programs. The team will outperform in the work when they have strong bond and this bond is built through recreational activities

Benefits for Working Mother's

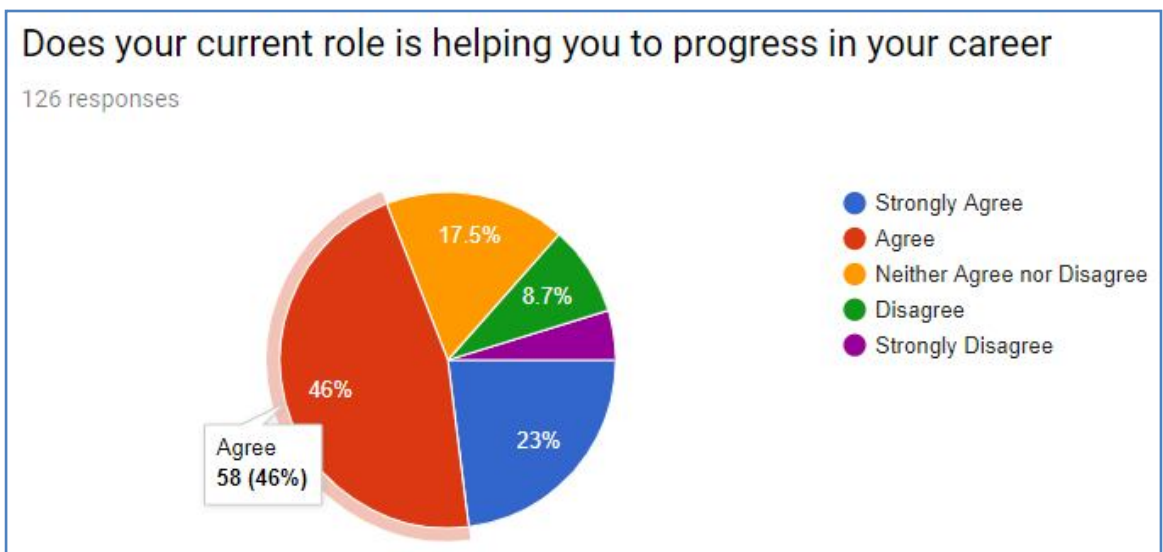
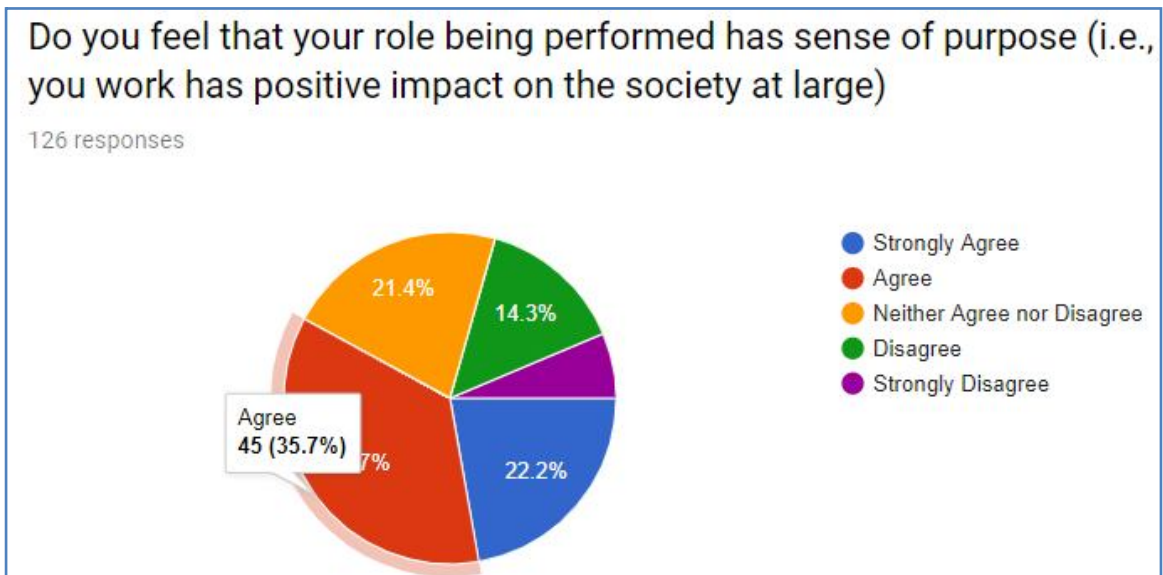


Conclusion: Negative

Around 84 respondents said that they don't have crèche facility within the company.

Many companies are providing the extended benefits to its working mothers. For any working mother it's tough to concentrate on work when their kids are left far away from work office location. The companies should have facility of crèche, so that the working mothers get some time out to visit the crèche and also have sense of satisfaction of doing job of mother as well as an employee.

Sense of Purpose & Career Progression



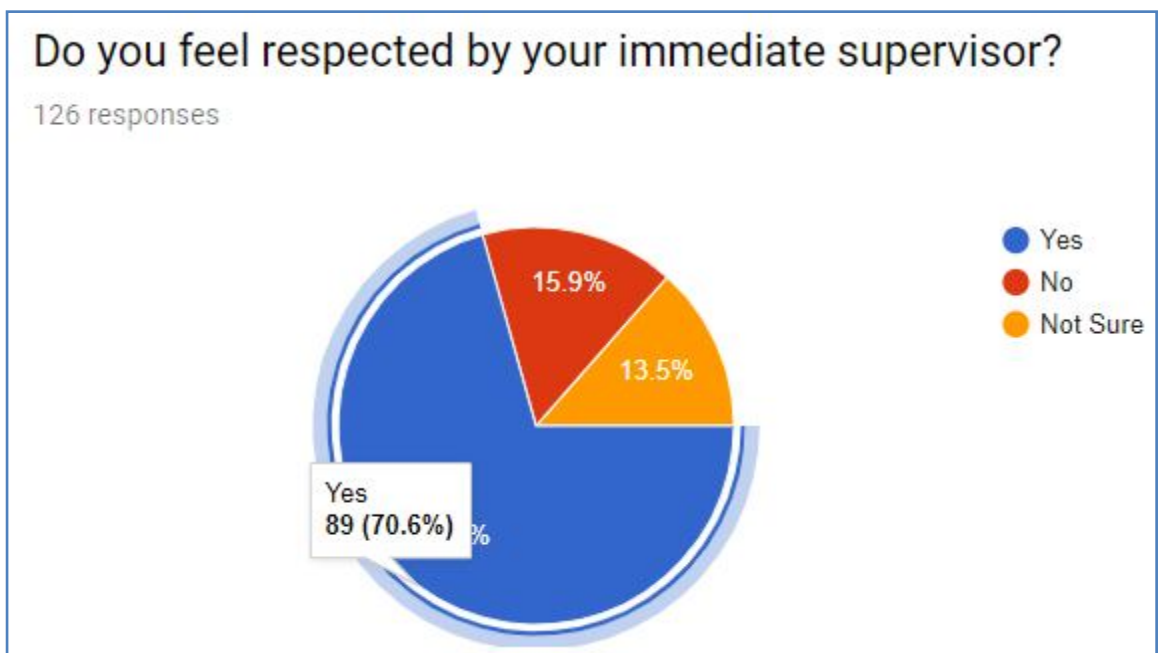
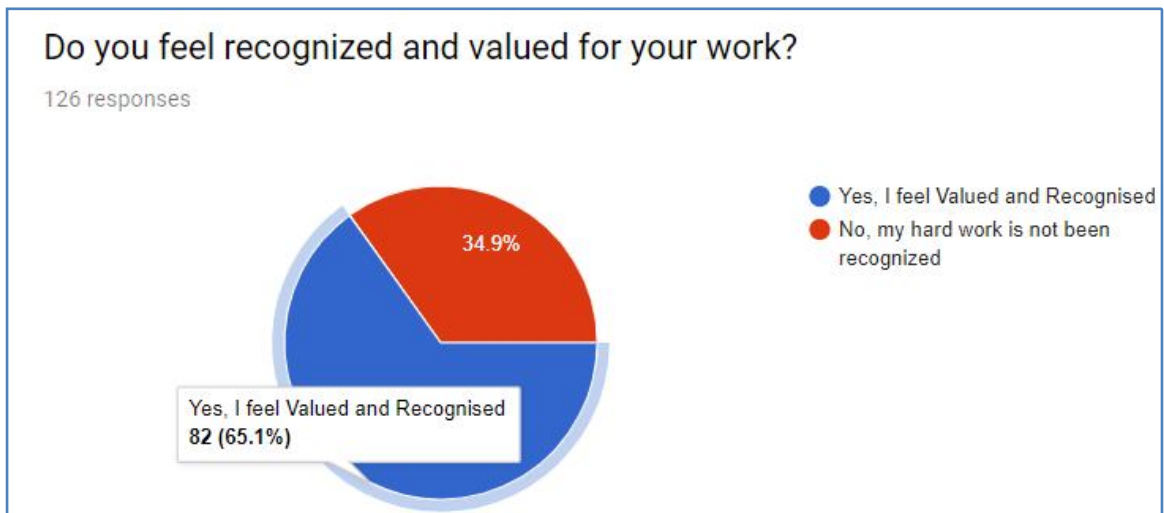
Conclusion: Positive

Most of the respondents agreed that the role they are performing has bigger impact and also they feel the current will help them to build their career.

The organizations should always focus on training its employees in up scaling their skills and they should be told how their job is going to impact the organization. When

they get to know if they are part of bigger picture, only then the employees will have sense of job satisfaction.

Recognition & Respect – Alert to Management

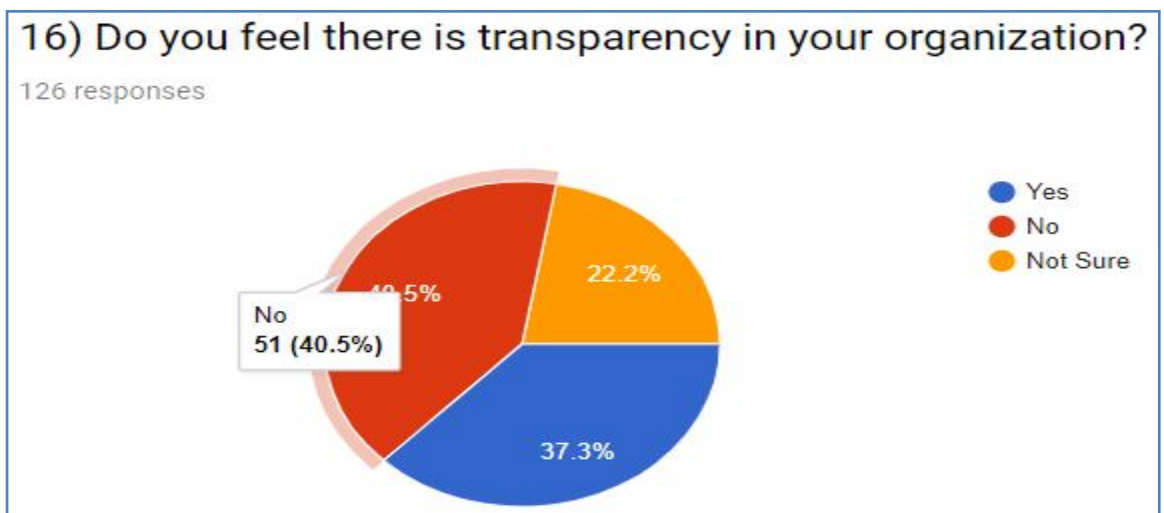
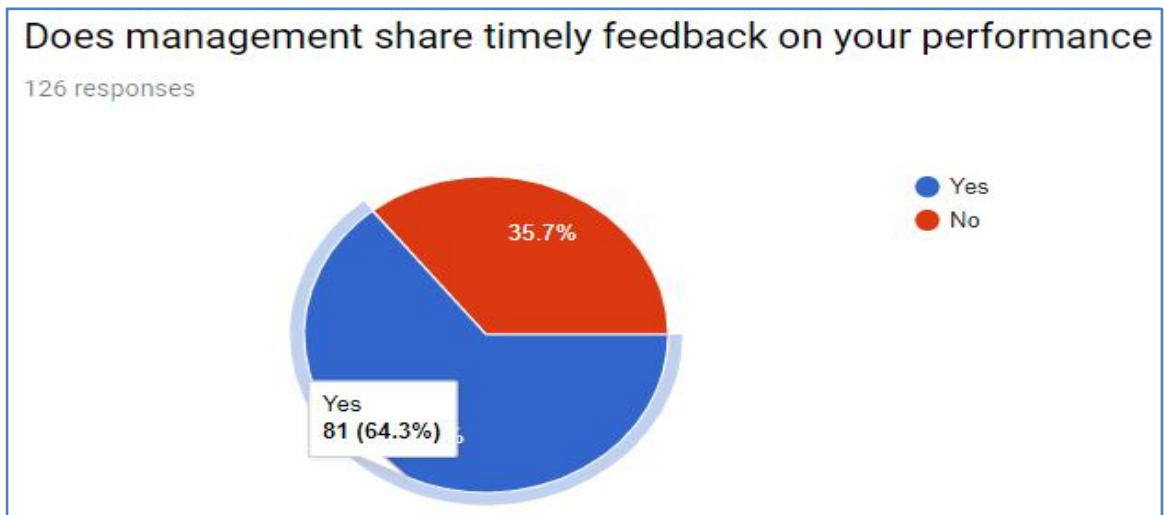


Conclusion: Very Positive

It's good to see around 80 to 89 respondents feel they are valued at work and their work is recognized. The immediate supervisors have respect for their subordinates and this makes staff to feel motivated.

There should be a Rewards and Recognition program and at least 2% of the annual budget should be kept aside for rewards.

Feedback & Transparency

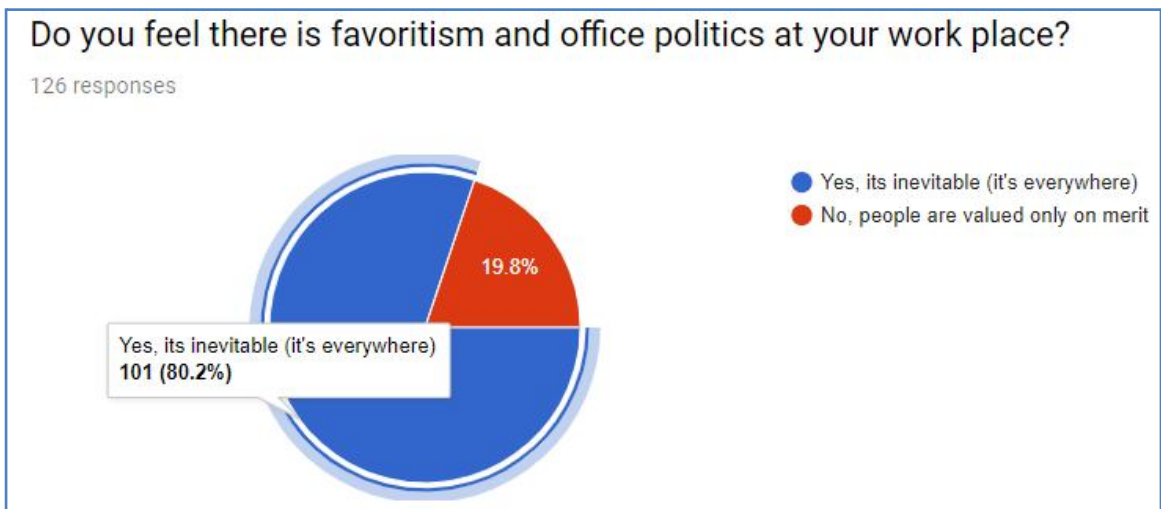
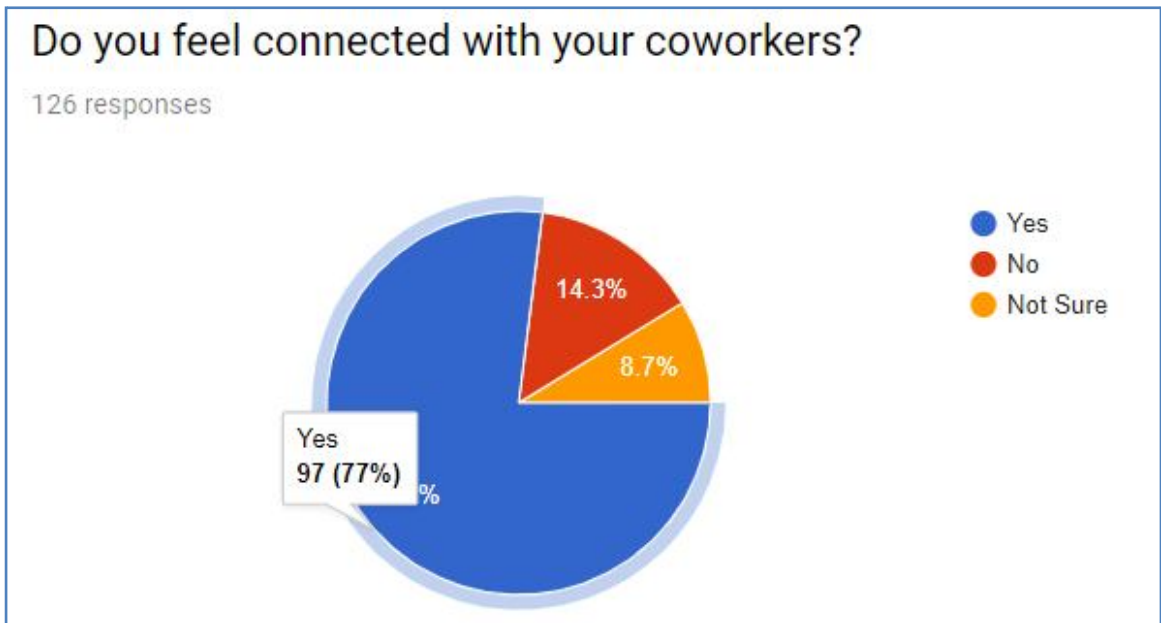


Conclusion: Positive on Feedback; Negative on transparency

As per the survey, there is a feedback mechanism in-place, where 81 respondents say that they get timely feedback. However, when it comes to transparency, respondents feel the management is not transparent with respect to company decisions.

The employee will feel valued and respected when he/she gets to know what is happening in the company and they feel motivated if management asks for their feedback and suggestions. The organization should be transparent with its employees.

Bondings and Favoritism

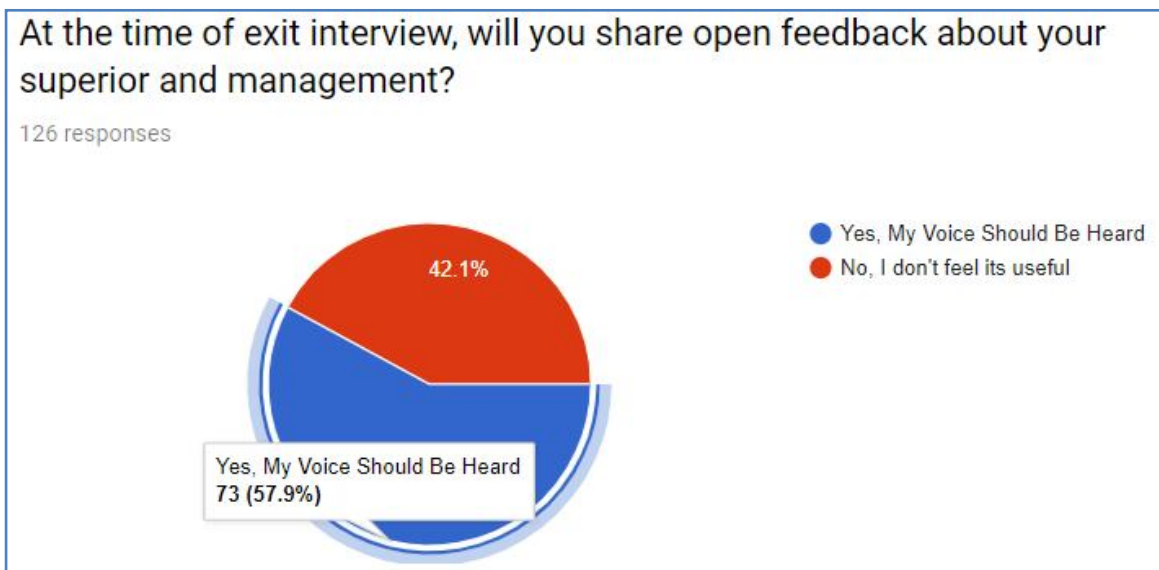


Conclusion: Very Positive on Bonding's + Very Negative on Favoritism

There are two possibilities:

- 1) Because there is great bonding between co-workers which leads to favoritism in terms of promoting & giving good ratings to their favorites
- 2) Treating Bonding is different from favoritism – It's a good sign to share a great bond between the team and however to have fair annual performance review

Feedback to Management at the time of Exit



Conclusion: Positive

Around 55% to 58% of respondents feel that they don't mind approaching HR for any issues and they will give open feedback at the time of exit interviews. This is a good sign for company; with this valuable feedback organizations can eliminate Toxic employees from their company because of whom, good resource is leaving the company

6. Recommendations

The organizations should be flexible enough to adapt to recent technology like Artificial Intelligence, Robotics and other technological advancements to have competitive edge and also these technologies are enabling to have good profitability at the year end.

The use of innovative methods and other organizational strategies help companies to retain their high performers. As we have analyzed in case study, Taj's value driven recruitment approach i.e., hiring for attitude and training for skills make employee be loyal to the company.

Always, managers who are representative of Company should listen to the ideas of his subordinate. Herb Kelleher always believed in his saying, "Never spoil an idea, because when you spoil the idea, you never get another great idea from that person". Respect your subordinate without judging his background like whether he is educated or not.

Create a system where employees feel free to share their thoughts and ideas to top-level management without any fear. In Taj case study, top level management supported its staff members to speak in interest of its customer but not company. And it assured its employees that they will be rewarded for being ambassadors of their clients but not punished.

For any worker, there should be conducive work environment, where he or she should feel they are respected and valued. Even if the employee breaks down because of the thought of work treatment by fellow employee then it's not at all good environments to work. For instance, in one of the company's interview the questions were so targeted to candidate's workability and judgmental, that the candidate broke down to tears. Later the candidate was offered job, but the candidate refused to go the job and the reason given was "I don't want to be part of an organization which makes me feel low and cry in a public place waiting for a bus"

The best way of taking care of your employee is to go with this approach "Run your company as if, you're running your family".

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