



Human Resource Management System

Let's get flexible!

Rahul Siddhu _ The Times Group

When was the last time you got blasted for being late to work? Do I hear, 'almost everyday'? Well, in the complex business environment, where most bosses are just looking for just another reason to pull you down, checking in late could just add to the heat and make life worse. But there are some companies that offer a novel solution. They call it 'flexi work timing'. What it proposes is that come in to work when you wish to, as long as work gets done. Sounds brilliant?

This concept has been successfully adopted in the west, as most employers abroad are more concerned about the end result, irrespective of the number of man hours spent in the process of achieving the same. "Today's employees have different expectations and desires from the previous generations. Increasingly, workers want to balance their work and personal lives in new ways. Therefore, organisations are exploring ways of being more flexible and competitive in the current socio-economic environment. Flexi-time allows employees to work for the same number of hours each week but their schedules are modified according to their convenience," explains Sunanda Raman, Manager Human Resources, Indian Sub Continent, Yum Restaurants International.

The concept may sound profound and futuristic but it could have some demerits as well, when adopted and implemented among the Indian workforce. And the vital question is: Is the Indian workforce mature enough to adopt such a radical practice? The answer to that may be not really, as most employers in India perceive the workforce to take advantage of this by showing up late everyday and disregard their duties and responsibilities. Explains Zainul Abidin Khan, Business Head, Consortium Executive Search Pvt. Ltd., "The concept of flexi timing practically works only when the KRAs are well defined and the employer is able to bear the cumbersome process of managing flexi-time workers. When in regular working hours, many employees feel guilty of not having worked enough in a day, flexi timing will be unthinkable. However, well managed time and rotation can do the trick. The whole argument clearly indicates abundance of workforce which is out there to please you at the same cost; flexi timers must be specialists to demand such privileges. Like in the west, scarcity of resources or rather specialist-resources will pave way for flexi timing."

Explains Arunisha Sengupta, VP Corporate, TopsGroup, which adopted flexi working about a year back, but only for special cases, "The muster signing culture still exists. In fact the swipe cards have just reinforced the same. We are not aping the west when we talk about some organisations for flexi-work culture. Since I personally feel that this is a global need and sooner we will be a part of it."

Why go flexi

With globalisation at its peak, the whole approach to work has been revolutionised with quicker delivery circles and more emphasis on quality. Adds Khan, "The regular nine to five types make sure to arrive at 9 sharp aspiring to leave at 5:30 if not 5. Being in the office does not necessarily means working all the time. We have to first become productive and measure productivity in our 9 to 5 jobs to aspire and respect for flexi time." Says Nanda "For us in the end employee's output matters so why not give them the freedom to choose their work timings that suits them as per their requirement."

"There is now a considerable body of research that shows how the introduction of mutually beneficial flexible work arrangements can improve organizational outcomes while providing a better work/ life balance. This is why organizations are developing new ways of working to help the business, and its employees achieve their goals," adds Raman

Challenges

As new concept comes with its flip sides similarly flexi timings has its own negative aspects. "The advantages of flexi timing is that it helps in improving the productivity and whereas downside is that when a resource is not physically present all the then it delays crucial decisions," comments HR team Kalpataru Constructions. For Sengupta the challenge lies in how to get the best productivity and how to make employees perform at par if not better than those who don't work flexi. However, one school of thought believes that we need to have traditional working hours to maintain discipline in offices because if we do away with the fixed working hours then employees may tend to take their freedom for granted and the whole concept will go haywire.

Positives of flexi timing:

- 1. Helps in meeting responsibility besides office;
- 2. Curbs attrition;
- 3. Attracts and retain skilled and experienced;
- 4. Organization appears employee friendly;
- 5. Enhance job satisfaction and helps in handling dual pressure.

De-merits of flexi timing:

- 1. Employees may not handle this freedom;
- 2. Employee absence impact on group during core hours;
- 3. How to schedule emergency meetings
- 4. Infrastructure to deal with such concept.