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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 03, 2007 8:19 PM IST

Smaller IT-BPO cos bank on best HR practices to remain competitive

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Small and medium-sized IT and business outsourcing companies are constantly looking at adopting best practices such as innovative performance appraisal system, individual career development programmes and recreational activities, to make themselves more attractive to employees in a fiercely competitive market, says a survey on exciting emerging companies in India.

The survey was conducted by the National Association of Software and Services Companies (Nasscom), a trade body of the IT software and services industry in India.

Some of the top companies identified in the survey include: Corbus India Pvt. Ltd, RMSI Pvt. Ltd, Hytech Professionals India Pvt Ltd, Nagarro Software Pvt Ltd and VCustomer Services India Pvt Ltd. The survey says several best practices followed by the small companies may not seem necessary from a broader human resource viewpoint but are important in building ties with employees and also, for the future growth of the company.

"People practice is the biggest differentiator in today's job market and organisational and employee development has to go hand in hand for companies to grow," said Sanjay Lakhnpal, vice-president and head, India operations, Corbus, the company that topped the survey. "HR practices need to come from the top for them to be effective. The key lies in practising what you preach," he added. The study, which was conducted in association with Grow Talent, a human resource consultancy firm, included an online survey to identify the best small and medium sized IT and BPO companies to work for, with Rs 250 crore and below annual turnover. The parameters considered included work environment, career development, job satisfaction, reward and recognition and fairness and equity. The top employers, according to the survey, felt companies needed to create a sense of ownership among its staff and look at employees as customers and partners. "Irrespective of your size, you need to be able to give your employees a good professional experience," said Devendra Saharia, co-founder and president, Ajuba Solutions (India) Pvt Ltd, one of the top 15 companies identified in the survey.

"To retain talent, companies have to offer challenging roles, and train and motivate more employees to take up new initiatives, projects that create value for them from a career perspective," added Saharia. He said to motivate its young and new employees, Ajuba allows them to handle more frontline jobs, and provides team leading opportunities early on. "It gets top performers excited and others motivated to work towards it," said Saharia.

The top firms also outsourced on the communication front by providing constant and effective communication. Corbus, for instance, has been conducting a bi-annual anonymous survey called Chetna for the past six years to find out from its employees their perception on all facets of organisation including HR, finance, administration, leadership and communication.

At the BPO company, which has seen its attrition rate coming down to 8% from 28% last year, employees are encouraged to post their feedback anonymously, which is taken up by teams that can address it the best. "There's a danger of getting lost in large companies. Smaller firms can leverage this opportunity to their advantage by catering to individual career needs of their employees," said Lakhanpal.

The survey further reveals that although training and development was provided at all organizations, the top 15 companies had more effective training delivery mechanism and showed better integration between career planning, training and development and performance appraisal. "The Indian IT industry has set an exceptionally high standard with regard to workplace and employee practices. With the continued growth and rapid evolution of the industry, as well as the changing aspirations of its young workforce, IT companies - small or large - will have to constantly look at innovation to excel as employers," said Kiran Karnik, president, Nasscom, in a statement.