

India Inc is discovering the value of a ready talent pool and open to re-hiring its former or 'alumni' employees. While on one hand, it brings back a "familiar" pool of employees; on the other, it gives such employees a chance to prove their mettle once again, discovers **Sheetal Srivastava**

# Back in action

**L**ike most alumni employees, Ravi Kumar (name changed) made a comeback to the organisation where he worked previously, after a couple of years. Life was not hunky dory for him while he was away but it certainly changed for the better when he was re-hired by his previous employer. The reason: he is a "valued" employee.

Re-hiring former or 'alumni' employees is a trend, which most organisations these days perceive lucrative for multiple reasons. While on one hand, it brings back a ready talent pool; on the other, it also gives such employees a chance to prove their "worth" once again.

Says Anupama Ambe, chairperson - India Women leadership Council, IBM India, "At IBM, we offer not only an equal footing for women who want to come back to work after a sabbatical, but also we believe that women as any other diversity constituency bring in innovative thoughts and ideas that serve our diverse clientele very well. In particular, alumni employees are already familiar with the company values, processes and tools. So they have a much faster learning curve and become productive even faster. These are certainly advantages of hiring alumni employees. Besides, the one key advantage, which some of these individuals would have is the strong relationships that they had cultivated in their prior stint."

For those who wish to resume work on a part-time basis, IBM India has a separate programme called 'Liquid Plus', which focuses on providing alumni women IBMers with an opportunity to continue a professional connect with the organisation. The purpose of the programme is to find the best talent to design and develop innovative software applications. Professionals will engage in a highly disciplined transparent short-cycle process to produce project deliverables, which may include technical de-



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sign specs, component software code, test plans and results, or other outcomes required in programme delivery of existing or new applications. A Gen Y virtual forum was also kicked off recently, which has current IBMers and non-IBMers including alumni connecting on various topics of interest to the generation.

The Infosys Global Alumni Network is open to its former employees across all locations. Through this portal, the employees can follow up on their retrials and final settlements. Also, from time to time, the organisation shares information with these employees about the latest happenings within the company. A total of 28,090 alumni have registered so far. "Our goal is to unite our former employees

**Employee benefits are essentially related to the skills and knowledge that a potential employee brings to the organisation**

worldwide and present them with possibilities to glean perspectives and partner for collaborative outcomes. We would like to provide them with a chance to reconnect with Infosys in many ways - as clients, consultants or just good friends," states Nandita Gurjar, senior vice president and group head of human resources, Infosys.

The company also has an initiative called 'Green Channel Hiring', which is aimed at hiring ex-employees. In Q1 FY '11, over 3000 alumni applied to through this channel.

Edenred has something called as the 'E-lumni program' through which it stays connected with their alumni employees. "We have a group for E-lumni members whom we keep updated on company information, share newsletters and also run various referral programs and contests for them to participate in. This programme helps our former employees to know the various events and successes of the organisation, and in turn, the organisation to know their whereabouts and achievements," notes Sandeep Banerjee, MD & CEO, Edenred India.

When rehiring an alumni employee, are employees' benefits reinstated as when they originally depart the organisation? "When rehiring alumni, the policies and benefits are based on the role and level at the time of leaving and his/her compensation structure in the current job. These are decided after internal evaluation and discussion with a potential re-hire. The benefits provided to them are at par with others performing a similar role in the organisation," says Gurjar.

"Employee benefits are essentially related to the skills and knowledge that a potential employee brings to the organisation. So, it's about the role that they would opt for and get selected for that determines these factors," feels Ambe. A relationship with a talented workforce should be continuous and last beyond the employment period. So, while staying in touch with your past in your personal life doesn't make any sense, it's certainly not a bad idea to do so in your professional life.

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