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A new synonym for caring

Outplacement shows that an organisation is interested in an employee's welfare even after he has been struck off the rolls

JOEL PAUL

As companies downsize due to an increased reliance on technology, HR teams are finding themselves focussed on helping impacted employees transition out of their organisations.

These organisations are looking more and more toward outplacement providers to help smooth this process of transition for these employees and relieve the burden placed on already-stretched HR teams. Recent trends that focus on talent management issues have urged organisations to change their perspective, encouraging employee-focussed services, like outplacement, to become a "must have".

Outplacement is an emerging trend that began when organisations, looking to downsize, realised the value of maintaining the goodwill of employees throughout the employment journey, including the time of departure from the company. Empathy and goodwill are becoming the hallmarks of employers of choice and outplacement services are one way companies can demonstrate

those values.

Outplacement helps impacted employees find a new job fast and continue their career growth. Here are a few ways in which outplacement aids the HR department in every corporation:

Culture of empathy

Through offerings, such as outplacement, organisations live out their values by taking care of employees when they're leaving as well as when they are first joining the team. These companies are committed to workplace culture and understand the impact of former employee opinion on that culture and on the employer brand.

They know that building an employee-first culture naturally establishes their organisation as a great place to work, do business with, and invest in.

Even when business decisions force companies to reduce the workforce, providing employees with career-transition assistance helps mitigate some of the hardships of being laid off.

Exiting and remaining employees are both positively impacted when organisations offer severance packages that include outplace-

ment.

Talented employees will want to join your organisation when they know they'll be taken care of and hear positive feedback from former employees. Remaining employees will take pride in the goodwill of their employer and return to productivity faster than when transitioning employees are not offered the support they need.

Morale booster

When considering a layoff, employers and HR leaders often miss an opportunity to increase employee engagement and improve productivity by failing to recognise the importance of supporting and engaging the employees not directly impacted by the layoff – the survivors.

Understandably, employers tend to focus their attention on planning notifications and severance packages designed to ease exiting employees' transitions into the next phase of their careers, however they often underestimate the importance of creating a detailed plan to ease remaining employees back to productivity by rebuilding a pos-

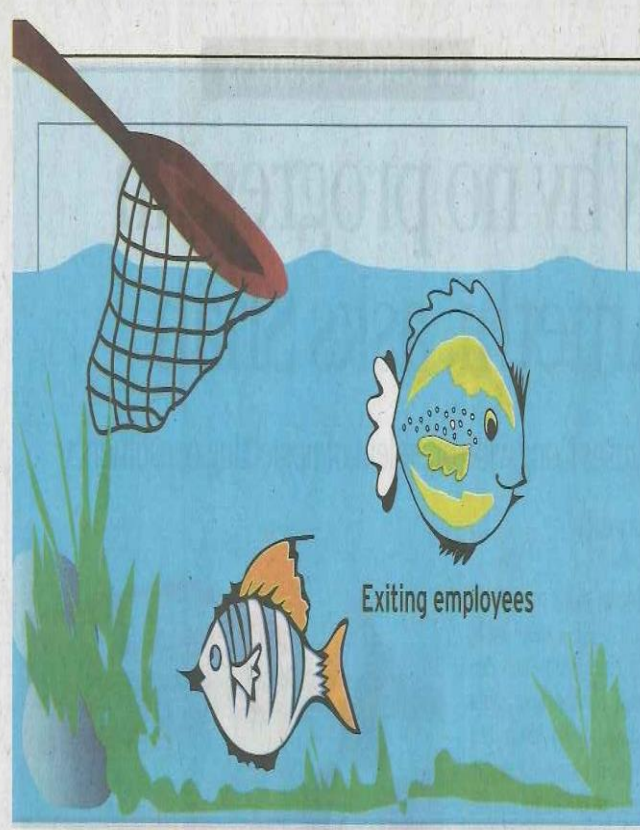
itive workplace environment.

Just as offering a comprehensive outplacement programme can help protect the employer brand, limit liability, and communicate your commitment to corporate values, taking care of your remaining employees will make an impact on employer brand, employee loyalty, trust, future productivity, and workplace culture.

Waiting to address the needs and concerns of remaining employees until after the layoff event has occurred and notifications have been delivered, creates unnecessary anxiety and mistrust among surviving employees. Get in front of "survivor syndrome" by openly communicating the decision to lay off and clearly explain the changes that remaining employees can expect. To help companies ensure the positive outcomes for remaining employees, contemporary career transition services companies offer resiliency training programme for managers and employees.

Finding purpose

As the workplace evolves, so should your strategy for



maintaining positive employee relationships. Today's employees come to work every day to find purpose and satisfaction – not just to collect a salary. Fostering positive employee relationships does more than keep workers happy; it improves your bottom line. When you invest in employees, you're guaranteed a return on that investment through in-

creased employee engagement and productivity, better talent retention, and improved brand reputation. Organisations that focus on building positive employee relationships from within quickly realise a positive impact on every facet of the business – from recruiting to results.

When you endeavour to fully support the employee

When companies make outplacement accessible to everyone in their organisation faced with involuntary career transition, they are affirming their commitment to putting employees first.

ILLUSTRATION: K.B. JAWAHARR



journey, you're making a commitment to improving the employer-employee relationship. That relationship begins with the first point of contact with a potential employee and continues long after that employee has left the organisation. Companies that offer best-in-class engagement, retention, outplacement, and other HR services designed to support

employees along their career paths will find this approach to be a recipe for business success. Measurable business metrics – from revenue to employee retention and even diversity numbers – all hinge on an organisation's ability to build and foster positive employee relationships.

(Joel Paul is Head of Operations at RiseSmart India.)