

Hitting the right notes

RMSI shows that keeping employees happy doesn't require big budgets and fancy initiatives

This year, Shreyasi Choudhary, an M.Tech student from IIT Roorkee spurned a tempting offer of Rs 18 lakh per annum at a leading oil exploration MNC to join Noida-based, RMSI at half the salary. For her, it was clearly a choice between a hefty pay package and job satisfaction. She chose the latter. Though smaller in size, both in turnover and headcount, RMSI — an IT services player offering GIS, modeling & analytics and software services — was nothing less than a dream come true as it provided her opportunities to continue to work in disaster management. Choudhary was pursuing a specialisation in disaster management at IIT Roorkee.

Many like her at IIT Roorkee specialising in disaster management keenly wait to get offer letters from RMSI. "If we get late during placement season, we start getting frantic calls from IIT Roorkee students," says RMSI vice president RRD, Gagan Jyot. It is not only the specialists in disaster mitigation that are part of the company. Other unusual profiles like earth quake scientists, climatologists, meteorologists, hydrologists, economists, remote sensing experts, agriculturalists, systems architects, geo-informatics experts and geologists are also employees at RMSI. The company, which employs about 800 people currently, plans to more than double its headcount to 1,000 people in the next one year.

In 2011, RMSI underwent a management buy-out led by Rajiv Kapoor and Anup Jindal from its former owner RMSI Inc., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Daily Mail General Trust plc, UK. After the buy-out, the focus of the promoters was to turnaround the company from a loss making venture to a profitable one.

"The thrust for the company at the moment is to grow," says Kapoor, chairman and managing director at RMSI. Interestingly, the last time RMSI had per-



1 RMSI scored 91.70 in employee satisfaction, 84.25 on diversity and 84.75 on work-life balance.

ticipated in the Best Companies to Work For 2015, it had topped the study.

"Simplicity and transparency" are two key pillars of the RMSI workplace. Employees are encouraged to keep e-mail communication and formal meetings at bare minimal. "Direct communication is an important part of our DNA," says Kapoor. This is true for all employees including Jindal and Kapoor who also sit in the open areas like other employees. Except for a few conference rooms and the cafeteria, the RMSI office does not have any closed spaces. "I have

no secretary," boasts Kapoor who is the majority shareholder at RMSI.

For almost a year now, RMSI has been busy communicating its core values, mission, culture and vision across to all its employees. "Customers like to do its business with good people hence it is important for us to have client facing teams that have the values of the company ingrained in them. These little things have helped us build business and to a large extent helped us become profitable," says Jindal, joint managing director and CEO.

The company focuses on simple employee engagement practices like holding timely workshops to help employees develop life skills. "We have no fancy budgets for employee engagement like other companies where employee engagement budgets run out of the roof benefiting only a handful," adds Jyot. A few of the recent ones include workshops on "how to quit smoking" and handling relationships as a parent and a spouse. The company also has organised sessions on stress management through jans and yoga. The firm has an in-house music band and a photography club.

"As the workforce is growing in terms of age, we have moved counselling and workshops away from mere engagement to stress and relationship management," says Jyot.

With travelling becoming a routine affair for most of its employees, RMSI felt

the need to hold corporate social etiquette workshops around tea and wine appreciation. "Our employees, especially in the sales, marketing and business development teams travel a lot. It became important for us to teach them etiquette around wine and tea appreciation as this is used as a stepping stone to business conversations," Kapoor says.

During the management buy-out, the attrition rates were high at the company compared to its existing attrition rate in single digits. "Engagement and people practices are a no-frills affair at RMSI and also we do not believe in spicing others. We keep this simple by tracking the happiness quotient of our employees at individual levels," she says.

Apart from internal efforts, RMSI regularly holds wellness camps. Through these camps, doctors and experts from the medical fraternity sit individually with the employees and understand their psychological, medical and emotional needs. Including the families of the employees has been another focus of the company around its people practices. In the past, it has sent notes of gratitude and appreciation to the families of star performers. "These notes have helped us seal a personal bond with their families. The families' response to these notes has been overwhelming," said Kapoor. "We do not have fancy budgets for running people initiatives, however, we always had fun and meaningful engagement sessions for our employees and when needed," Jyot says.

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— Rajiv Kapoor, Chairman & Managing Director, RMSI

