Job satisfaction of Knowledge Workers and Retention Strategies in the Software Development Industry of Sri Lanka

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Abstract: A high turnover of knowledge workers is a matter of serious concern for firms in the software development industry of Sri Lanka. This study sought to establish the key 'satisfiers' or motivators that induce knowledge workers at senior as well as junior levels to remain in an organisation. The research was based on interviews and discussions conducted in eight firms. The key finding of the study was that senior as well as junior knowledge workers greatly value 'support for continuous development', 'challenging work' and a 'favourable working environment'. These are the areas that companies should address in their retention strategies, besides instituting modern and transparent performance evaluation systems. Junior knowledge workers placed the highest emphasis on 'career and continuous development'. Companies' however, did not seem to recognise the intensity of this need. To successfully attract, and retain junior knowledge workers, companies should pay attention to providing 'support for career and continuous development'. Money, a key factor for attracting knowledge workers, is fairly important in their retention if tied to performance, and supported with transparent performance measurement tools.

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