



Diwali is here! And shopping is not the only activity on your long list of things-to-do during this Diwali, right? Let's see – a few visits to close relatives? A quick getaway to a nearby hilly resort with family? E-cards to be emailed to friends abroad? Assisting your better-half with cooking Diwali delicacies? There is just one glitch – while you have all the above “errands” to run, at the same time, you are stuck with the reality of your daily life: you, at the office! And worse, because your priorities are divided, this can be observed in the results you deliver. But fret not, as your employer is devising ways for you to enjoy Diwali without hindering business or productivity.

“It's true that employees may get a bit complacent because of the relative boost in the economic activities in the country. People indulge in shopping, holidaying and spending. Hence, the employee attention gets divided and the time-bound festive season-related activities prevail over the normal day-to-day work,” says Atul Sharma, executive VP-HR and administration, Bajaj Electricals. After all, Diwali is one of India's most popular festivals, right? And as it approaches, it calls for a lot of planning and prioritising. V. Manivannan, VP-HR, Loop Mobile (India) Ltd says, “The festival brings an air of socialising within the community. Also, since schools are shut, children expect to

Sharma suggests ways through which companies can ensure employee productivity, while also fostering the festive spirit:

- International clients need to be informed in advance about the expected slight dip in communication during Diwali; they are mostly sensitive towards the same and usually agree on “skeleton services”;
- Leverage those employees on customer-sensitive activities who voluntarily make themselves available to keep business as usual; provide compensatory-off in lieu;
- Prior to the festive season, companies, for certain tasks, can seek employee assistance in the form of additional working hours;
- To achieve enhanced goals of the festive season, all managers must prepare a ‘season-tactical’ plan;
- Share best practices on the company intranet with regards to Diwali shopping, best deals, e-card options, etc.

spend time with their parents in a constructive manner. The five-days of Diwali are equipped with a lot of customs that can be tiring and distracting for working people. This is mainly why employees feel pulled by various social engagements during the Diwali celebrations.” How-

ever, the core reasons why productivity witnesses a dip in productivity during Diwali, according to Sharma are: 1) utilising office infrastructure to carry out online Diwali shopping and leveraging the telephone to make personal calls to

president – HR, Raymond Ltd agrees, “Such plans can be made earlier as festival dates are revealed way in advance and these changes can be incorporated in the agenda early on. But to ensure that work is not getting hampered is a

While at work, having visions of flamboyantly indulging in discount shopping or gorging on scrumptious sweets? Fret not, as this Diwali, employers discuss ways to enjoy the festive spirit, without hampering productivity, says **Viren Naidu**

a FIRECRACKER of an idea

exchange Diwali greetings; 2) searching, preparing and sending e-cards to friends and families on email during office hours and 3) leaving a bit early to catch up with the Diwali shopping.

But what if an international client decides to visit you to close a deal during the Diwali week? Or your boss expects you to work on an unforeseen revenue-generating assignment? **Ronesh Puri, MD, Executive Access** makes a valid suggestion, “It is best to intimate the client and tell him/her that since it is festival time, you shall follow flexi-timings, provided the work does not get compromised. Also, organisations can ensure that more people are assigned for the same task, so that work gets done faster and targets are met.” “Proper planning of immediate goals, work allocation and setting of right priorities may always help in ensuring business as usual. Supervisors need to be sensitive to employee needs and at the same time, must plan and organise their teams well in advance. Small work projects, cross functional tasks, where employees can work together with an element of fun can be another way to ensure a mix of business and pleasure during such times,” adds Indrajit Chatterjee, VP – HR, Nitco Ltd. Is it fine to request employees to work a little harder a week prior? And should communication mailers be sent out w.r.t the change in work-schedule? KA Narayan,

leadership priority. Under bad leadership, employees tend to waste working hours by indulging solely in personal chores, thus leaving work on the backburner.”

“A quick fix is not the answer. An organisation needs to propagate a culture of efficiency and accountability at work throughout the year. This will ensure that work carries on, all deadlines are met, irrespective of an ongoing/upcoming festival. There is always room for distraction, but when employees are committed to the quality of their work, they keep it as a priority,” says Manivannan.

Therefore, companies are not propagating the need to “work” during the festive season, but fostering the need to strike a chord between the two priorities. After all, there is no fun burning firecrackers with the thought of an incomplete assignment lingering in your head, right?

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