



**A**ppraisal, in the true sense of the word, is neutral in meaning.

It is an evaluation, more than a positive or a negative one. But a 'below expectations appraisal' can only be viewed in one light – negative.

And that's where the problems

begin. In some situations, a below ex-

pectation appraisal may even lead to 'separation'.

"There are many cases where an employee is caught unaware and is surprised with a low rating. Such is the situation, when the leader was unable to set goals effectively or failed in conducting periodic reviews and providing feedback. The yearly performance review should be a summary of one's annual performance and not an exhaustive meeting to discuss and scrutinise every minute detail. Other situations arise when the leader and direct reports are working from remote sites and at times, the leader either fails to understand the expectations or is unable to interpret the business or work scenario the employee needs to work in, which could be affecting his/her performance and ultimately the goal attainment. Also, after delivering a below expectation performance review, leaders seldom prepare a development plan or commit to one over the next few months. This makes the employee lose faith on the leader and the system, thus compelling him/her to quit the organisation," says Ronnie Dias, county manager, HR, Nalco Water India Limited.

Similar views are echoed by other experts. "For

absenteeism," says Sudhanshu Pandit, director HR Symantec India.

That said, there is still a greater role for the HR to play. HR managers should carefully handle the situation if an employee shows his/her willingness to leave the company, post an appraisal. "Once the performance rating has been delivered to the employee, HR needs to work with the manager to ensure that he/she is truly committed to the development of that direct report. Ensuring that the manager fills in a performance improvement plan (PIP) is one of the key steps. HR needs to communicate to the employee after validation that the performance review process was fair and consistent to the organisational practice; if the employee still decides to leave, it is at times best to let the person go," says Dias. But the HR manager's approach should differ from employee to employee. "For a key employee, managers need to go the extra mile to understand and apprehend the reasons that cause the decision. In the case of non-key employees, managers typically accept the decision and move on," says Pandit.

"An HR manager should spend more time and efforts on the key employees as compared to the non-key ones; in other words, one should



## THE LAST APPRAISAL ?

**Unnati Narang** tells you why after appraisals, curbing attrition becomes a top HR priority

an employee, a below expectation appraisal may lead to a situation in which the employee loses his/her faith in the management; moreover, the employee feels cheated. HR majorly faces the issue of unrealistic appraisal expectations; therefore, it's the HR's role to give an opportunity to the employees to understand and contradict their perception," says Ronesh Puri, MD, Executive Access.

Companies can take a beating if their key employees leave the organisation due to reasons like wrongly communicated expectations or a shoddily planned appraisal process. In that case, is there a way for HR to predict such decisions and gauge them from employee reactions? "Predicting employee decisions is never easy. It is easier for managers to predict such situations since they work closely with the employees. An employee's day-to-day activities and a change in behaviour are indicators of the employee's state-of-mind. Some behavioural indicators of an impending departure include a lack of interest/motivation, disengagement and sudden increase in

know of ways to distinguish between apples and oranges. Also, managers should reduce subjectivity in appraisals substantially if they cannot eliminate it completely," concludes Puri.

