

Six not sexy: Execs reject jobs with no weekend

Namrata Singh | TNN

Weekends at work may soon be a thing of the past, say staffing experts claiming that Indian managerial-level employees are rejecting job offers from companies operating six days a week.

According to Executive Access, an executive search

firm, about 50% candidates today ask for a job that offers them a five-day work week. Five to seven years ago, this number was at 20%. The data cuts across industries and clearly points to how employees are taking charge of their lives by setting aside more time for personal matters.

“Earlier, 15% of candi-

dates would decline to work for a company that offers them a six-day work week. Today, that percentage has increased to 30-40%,” said Ronesh Puri, MD, Executive Access. “Candidates do not mind working longer hours from Monday to Friday, but they don’t like being called to work on weekends. Bosses

who ask employees to work on weekends usually see higher attrition,” said Puri.

A few reasons are fuelling this trend. For one, managers are working extra hard and putting in longer hours, leaving them with little time to attend to personal matters.

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'Workload, stress make 5-day-week jobs attractive'

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Secondly, stress levels at the workplace are increasing, so employees want to take their weekends to unwind and come back re-energized on Monday. "We see that there is an increasing demand for 'five-day-week jobs' from women and mature employees, that is, those employees in middle- and senior-level management (aged between 35 and 65). Our research studies indicate that mature employees accord greater value to work-life balance compared to younger employees," said Moorthy K Uppaluri, CEO of Randstad India.

According to Randstad, many candidates have said that their workload has increased compared to 2012 and the boundaries between work and personal life are merging. Its research inferences also show that over 80% of the people use weekends to attend to personal matters. "Due to heavy workload and associated stress, we find more and more candidates looking out for those jobs that are not only meaningful and challenging but also allow them to pursue other areas of interest outside of work," said Uppaluri.

With candidates themselves becoming more vocal about the need for a proper work-life balance, Randstad India says over the last couple of years, they have seen a shift in employees' working patterns. "Today, the workplace mantra is 'work smart, not long'. Staying late in office and putting in long hours is not the sign of a workaholic anymore; it demonstrates inefficiencies caused by increasing workload," said Uppaluri. According to a Randstad survey conducted this year, good work-life balance ranked 4th among the top 10 factors people consider while choosing a job. Other factors include competitive salary and employee benefits, long-term job security, career progression opportunities and pleasant working atmosphere.

According to a GlobalHunt study, if there was high com-

According to Randstad India, a rise in demand for 'five-day-week jobs' has been observed among women and mature employees

ensation involved, choices could flip the other way. "If any fresher has two offers from equally good organizations and equal compensation, 80% of the cases will prefer a company having five days working, while only 20% will prefer the one with six days. However, if compensation is higher, then in 90% of the cases people do not mind working for six days and only 10% opt for five days working," said Sunil Goel, MD of GlobalHunt India.

With India on a development path, more jobs are being created and remunerations rising, but there is scarcity of talent. With the leisure-work trade-off becoming a core issue for organizations and employees alike, companies which worked six day weeks are gradually embracing flexible working arrangements. "We come across candidates who express a clear choice to work five day weeks. Even within organizations where certain sections of the workforce, like sales, need to work five-and-half to six days, there is demand for cutting back to five days to allow them time to recoup, socialize and catch up on chores," said Ernest Louis, VP-HR, Asian Paints, which has a five-day work week at the corporate office and six days at its plants.

Though most multinationals offer a strict five-day work week for most employees, a number of Indian companies still work on a six-day concept, either keeping alternate Saturdays working or offering a half day. "They have to determine if it makes good business sense to go the five-day week way," said Louis of Asian Paints. "There are no easy solutions here, but needs of the employees, who are one of the most valuable stakeholders of the business, must be catered to as well."