

## HOW ALL WORK BECOMES MUCH PLAY

Mumbai Mirror | Sep 14, 2015, 09.51 AM IST



By Ektaa Malik

Indians, on an average, spend roughly 8 hours a day at work. If you have a tough boss, uncooperative colleagues and no scope to grow or learn at the workplace, then those hours can feel like a time from hell. But what if your workplace was also your

happy ground? According to a study conducted by the Great Place to Work Institute and Economic Times, out of the 700 companies that volunteered, they listed 10 companies that emerged the happiest. So, we visited these companies' Mumbai-based branches to gauge its happiness quotient based on a few parameters such as employee feedback, perks, growth opportunities, grievance redressal and the HR policies.

### Google India

The company topped the study for five consecutive years, only to lose out to a National Capital Region-based company this year. The 15-year-old internet company's offices are uber cool and quite legendary. Their sales office at BKC, which houses 80 employees, sports a life-sized version of the Google logo. "That's the old logo, we will update this soon," says Sushil Makhija, the administrative and events business partner at Google.

We noticed that the decor is modelled on iconic facets of life in Mumbai -there is a mural depicting dabbas with the word 'dabbawallah' written across it, soda bottles encased in a glass wall and a 'hangout' place with Bollywood posters, where employees can relax, work or make conference calls. There are also window seats, bean bags and standing desks, for the comfort of the employees.

Makhija, 31, has been with the company for the past 8 years. He has also worked at the Hyderabad office. What made him stick around, given the high attrition rate in the IT sector? "The freedom and flexibility. I was in operations earlier, and now as part of the administration department, I deal with a cross section of the company. The atmosphere is so vibrant. The company takes care of everything -from free, excellent perks like flexible working hours and quick wifi. I can't complain about anything, so I stay put," he explains.

The sentiment is shared by Shilpa Keswani, 30, who is also the mother of a one-year-old. "I wanted to extend my maternity leave after 20 weeks. They were completely okay with it," says Keswani, a partner manager with Google. Suryanarayana Kodukulla, the HR head at Google adds, "At Google, we have an open culture and environment that focuses on innovation, which helps peak performance." Marriott Hotels

The international hotel chain has five proper ties in Mumbai. We visit its Juhu office, where a naturally-lit lobby bustles with activity. Bell boys and servers are kept on their toes, to ensure that the day's work is carried out with clockwork precision. Yet, they remain cheerful through the busy day. "We don't call them employees, we call them 'associates'. If we, the management, keep them happy, then they will keep the customer happy," says Pavithran Nambiar, GM Juhu Marriott. The group believes in engaging with their associates and keeping the lines of open communication open. "All the hard work is done by them and not the man in the suit," adds Nambiar. Bindiya Yadav, head of house keeping, says the hotel rewards those who work hard. "I have worked here only for two and a half years, but I already see so many opportunities for growth.

Also, as the senior management does not meddle in our affairs unless there is an emergency, so I feel empowered enough to take my own decisions at work," says Yadav.

### Lifestyle

The Lifestyle Store at High Street Phoenix spills over three floors, thus making concept manager Kapil Jain a very busy man.

Jain, who oversees the men's clothing department, started off as a customer sales representative in the baby section. "I completed my bachelors while working here. In a span of 8 years, I have been promoted to such a good post," says Jain. Employees who want to study further are granted flexible working hours and even monetary help. Margaret Fernandez, 25, looks forward to the movie shows that are organised by the store for the staff at the workplace. As a fashion consultant, she helps customers ATYAJIT DESAI mix and match their clothes. "We always have something or the other planned for us. We watched Andaz Apna Apna last week. We also had a DJ party, where we danced like crazy. We also give suggestions to the management about these fun outings," shares the happy worker.

The HR head, Venkata Ramana Bhaskar, feels that giving priority to the workforce over any thing else makes all the difference.

"People are critical to the process.

And to retain employees, you have to engage with them. To make them happy at work, employees need to have pride in what they do. So we empower them," Bhaskar adds.

### Godrej group

At the Godrej plant Hubble in Vikhroli, there is an innovation centre, where employees across departments sit together, work and brainstorm. The Hubble space is the brainchild of Navroze Godrej and is also designed by him. Javed Khan, head cuisine and events, says the space is a manifestation of the larger vision of the group. "Things don't work in isolation. There has to be an interdisciplinary approach to innovation. An office space should excite you to work. Here at the Hubble, things and ideas percolate," he says.

Khan is a third generation employee of the Godrej group. And there are many others like him. Harpreet Kaur, the head of HR adds, "People work better if they are connected to a larger idea and feel part of the organisation. Holistic employee connect is one of the core values that we imbibe at the Godrej group. Also, we here aim to give them the freedom to speak, ideate and address whatever they want. Because only with freedom can they innovate, which is essential for a group like ours," informs Kaur.

### DHL Express India

At 8 am, the Vidya Vihar establishment is in full work mode. Deliveries have been sorted, classified and divided according to their routes and then stacked in their trademark yellow vans. The cycle is repeated at 3 pm. The team is equipped with state-of-the-art scanners, where packages' tracking information is updated the moment it is handed over to the courier. "We value workers as they then give us great service. The end result? We make a profit," shares Sunjoy Dhaawan, Vice President HR.

Shaikh Reyaz, 52, joined the group as a courier in 1990 and today, he works as a supervisor.

"We can talk to anyone from the senior management as there are no boundaries. I also opted for the four-six week long English Vinglish programme that the company offers and improved my language skills. Also, no decision is taken unilaterally. The employees are always a part of the process."