

Why staying in touch with an 'ex' helps

GETTING THEM BACK Organisations are increasingly networking with former employees to fill vacancies and improve their brand image

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Organisations are constantly focused on forging close relationships with business associates, consumers and other stakeholders. Now, they have started networking with former employees or 'alumni'. Research studies, including those by Forbes and Harvard Business Review, strongly support the philosophy of having a dedicated alumni programme by companies.

According to Vikramjeet Singh, head, human resources, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance, staying in touch with a former employee who has left on good terms, reflects the respect, understanding and care an organisation has for its people. "It helps an organisation create brand influencers and a thriving pool of employees, who can be looked at for future assignments. The network created also works as a good source of employee referrals. However, every organisation should have right frameworks to assess the homecoming for rehires," says Singh.

Deloitte, which refers to its ex-staffers as alumni, believes that staying in touch helps organisations build and strengthen relationships with former workers, enhance recruiting capabilities, build brand and eminence. SV Nathan, chief talent officer of the company, says, "Many of these alums take on significant positions in the industry over time and they are great connects to drive business growth potential. Such programmes also build emotional connect with the

BACK AND FORTH

- Connecting with former employees helps organisations create brand influencers and a thriving pool of employees who can be picked for future assignments
- The network created works as a good source of employee referrals
- Companies are creating 'alumni' programmes to build emotional connect with former employees to make them feel valued
- Maintaining active relations with former employees pays dividends for both parties, say HR heads

alumni and they feel valued. We consider our alumni as 'colleagues for life' and are committed to keep the relationships alive and strong."

The exit process in progressive organisations often go beyond the last day of an outgoing employee. Pranshu Upadhyay, director, Michael Page India, says, "It helps to stay in touch as these employees also become a trusted source of information and influence in their industry peer group. Positive word of mouth from them can go a long way in establishing strong employer branding. It is important to remember that all employees – past, present or future, are all considered brand ambassadors."

The SMAC (social, mobile, analytics and cloud) world is fast becoming a competitive



■ Networking helps former employees connect with colleagues to gain insights into latest industry and business trends.

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advantage for businesses. This has led to the growth of human network as evident in the rise of social media platforms. Sarthak Raychaudhuri, vice-president, HR, Asia south, Whirlpool India, says, "Views of individuals help to form opinion about a product and also organisations. This is where former employees can play a significant role."

Maintaining active relations with former employees pays dividends for both parties. "The onboarding process of rehired employees is relatively easier as they are aware of company policies, culture, processes and systems and hence are easier and faster to reintegrate into the firm. Besides, the productivity of re-hired employees often is much higher and faster," says Singh.