



All-round development

Wipro Technologies has always tried to infuse newer ideas into the workplace, thus driving a dynamic change

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Personality profile

PV Kannan,
Co-founder and CEO,
24/7 Customer

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FEATURE

Holding a job or hopping on?

There is always some amount of employee dissatisfaction in some form, and the grass always seems greener on the other side. **Renuka Vembu** finds out more on job hopping



Is employee job hopping a common phenomenon in the age of myriad opportunities and better prospects? Or is there a perennial breed which does not show an ounce of stability? Is there any particular time frame considered ideal for employees before they make the switch? Questions aplenty, and views varied, employee job hopping is here to stay thereby giving rise to higher attrition levels.

Voices from the industry

There is a widespread perception of HR people from the industry with regards to job hoppers. While some people in the industry feel that

changing jobs as frequently as twice or thrice in a year does not make up for a good CV, some feel one to two years, or even three years is the ideal time to stick with a company. While there are still others who feel that there is no 'right time,' but it is better to move on rather than to stay put and stagnate in the same organization.

C Mahalingam, EVP and Chief People Officer, Symphony Services, opined, "Job hopping is an employee's personal decision arising out of their unhappiness with their current job. It hurts the organization when it is (a) not triggered by unsatisfactory performance of the employee; and (b) employee hopping is not willing

to complete the knowledge transfer to the replacement employee."

Aditya Prasad Dhal, Manager, HR, TVS Electronics, listed the impact from the organizational stand-point. He said, "Positive reflections can be in providing growth to existing employees, infusing new talent, upgrading the talent pool, and sometimes reorganizing. Negativity can be spurred by the loss of critical talent which can jeopardize a critical project, and thereby the growth progression of the company."

Who are job hoppers?

NV Rajan, Senior VP, HR, Infinite Computer Solutions (I), asserted, "A job hopper is one who wants to make hay while the sun shines. His interest is in maximizing earnings. A job hopper is not keen on career progression. He attaches value to his technical or professional competence and would like to associate himself with an organization which is willing to offer him the best. Therefore, when the going is good, it makes sense to a job hopper to make best use of what is available to him."

Skill-sets plays a significant role—people with special talent in a particular domain who are more in demand for niche jobs change companies frequently because they are invariably paid better and are more in demand. Likewise, if an employee is too creative and ambitious, and the company does not give a proper platform to leverage the impetus, he is likely to start looking outside. There are also a set of people who are not career focused, or too confused to take on a line of function or are not open to feedbacks and cultural, work-related and people-related adjustments. These are the people who hop jobs often and do not make for a good hiring candidate.

Rajesh Athihalli, CEO, Metis ERC India, said that if job hopping means frequent change of jobs, then it means any of these:

- No clarity in where one wants to take his career.

- ▶ Competency is not matching with the kind of profiles an individual is getting into.
- One is not mature enough to accept reality in terms of pressure, culture and work styles of today's global economy and still believes that grass is always greener on the other side.
- Running behind monetary benefit and not focusing on competency development.

Reasoning out

The reasons for shifting jobs can be aplenty—both personal and professional. Professional can be lack of connect with the job role, a mismatch with the work culture and work ethics, monetary compulsions, a nagging temporary problem, lack of work-life balance, stress and pressure owing to 24/7 working conditions, etc. Similarly, personal reasons can be either family or health related issues. More often than not, the problem is itself not the actual issue. It is when individuals manifest a small temporary grievance and dress it up as a permanent headache.

Rajkumar D, Head, HR, RIMS, Microland, gave a different perspective, "Brand attraction is another important factor; people move from less known to better known brands; this happens mostly in the early years of one's career. Whereas, there is a reverse trend in case of highly experienced people who move from very large organizations to comparatively smaller organizations for reasons of challenging assignment, lucrative position, freedom and no doubt a great earning potential."

Mona Gupta, Senior Manager, HR, Cincom Systems India felt that

When the move is only for compensation hike and the job hopper gets carried away by the recruiter's sales pitch on the salary and benefits that are not consistent with the first pay-check



Aditya Prasad Dhal

MANAGER, HR, TVS ELECTRONICS

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J Krishna Prasad

PRESIDENT, MATEXNET

If from the time the offer is made and the employee joins, there is a considerable period of time, the organizational dynamics, especially in a growing one, will dictate the change in profile. In case of IT companies, if the project specs change then the job profile (or technology) will change



Ravi Verma

HEAD HR, NUCLEUS SOFTWARE EXPORTS

There are specific reasons we don't hire job hoppers and need individuals who can commit to us, like product implementation, customer handling and deployment, which are very sensitive issues and the company prefers to show the face to their client that would stay and build a brand for them

when job hopping is frequent, the learning is superficial. She gave an opinion on what an employee should ideally do when dissatisfaction and disgruntlement creeps in:

- Know the reasons for dissatisfaction. Mostly the first thing that comes to mind when one has a bad day at work is 'let me leave.' Like all other things in life, a job may not be interesting every single day. One has to first understand the cause to be able to address it.
- Discuss/talk about it to the right person who you think can help address the issue.
- Sometimes, things need time to settle down, so give it rest. Don't jump at trying to find solutions instantly.
- If changing a job is the only solution, then do it, but do it for the right reasons, not to escape finding a solution to the existing problem. It is very likely the next setup may have the same problems in a different name and shape. Escaping doesn't help solve things.

Diagnosing the problems, analyzing it objectively, evaluating the options keeping in mind a host of factors—all inclusive of the past, present and future—will mean a matured and responsible decision-making by an employee.

Early considerations

Besides these obvious positive motivators, job dissatisfaction, team issues, various commitment failures, untimely appraisal, odd work schedules, personal problems are catching up as negative motivators, opined Iti Kumar, AVP, People Development

and Employee Services, GlobalLogic Inc. She said that employees need to exercise the following options before taking the plunge:

- **Speak up:** These two words are crucial. If any employee has any concern be it related to job profile, career progression, compensation, etc., he must talk about these to the manager. In case these are not resolved at the manager level, these can be escalated at skip manager level. HR as business partners can further facilitate in resolving these issues as their prime objective is to enhance employee engagement in the company.
- **Reaching beyond a project/manager boundary—**Many times an employee does not put in efforts to think or explore beyond existing project/manager's span. Every company has ample projects and domain where such employees can explore their fitment in case they have certain issues with the existing.

J Krishna Prasad, President, MatexNet, said, "The dynamics of the organizations would depend as to how the job profile can change. If from the time offer is made and the employee joins, there is a considerable period of time, the organizational dynamics, especially in a growing one, will dictate the change in profile. In case of IT companies, if the project specs change then the job profile (or technology) will change."

The effect of 'change'

When an employee changes jobs too often, what is learned in the time period gets no medium for application. The skills developed and the knowledge gained in the

interim do not find any platform to test the understanding and application of the same. This is because the employee then has to acquire new skills as per the demands of the new company and job role, or modify the existing talent to suit the requirements of the new place and process. Ashok Srinivasan, Vice President-Operations support, Expertus, said, "It generally takes close to six months to a year to understand any role in its entirety and after that a year or more to provide any perceivable contribution which can be measured for any consistency and does not merely manifest itself as a flash in the pan or one-time excellent contribution."

Lack of stability also leads to lack of growth and progress. Pay package or monetary considerations are not the reasons always why one would change jobs. It depends on job expectation and satisfaction too. Every employee should take heed of certain questions like:

- Will the new place open up fresh and better opportunities?
- Will the company and the job align with one's personal goals, interests and aspirations?
- Will the role challenge one's creativity and do justice to one's talent?
- Will getting associated with the company give an impetus to one's market value?
- Are the problems faced in the current workplace likely to occur in the next organization too?
- Is the benefit reaped just a short-term fruit or there are long-term rewards associated with the move?

Ishtiyaque Khan, Senior Team Leader Human Resource Management, Oceans Connect (India), added, "I would always advocate that we ask ourselves one question—what is that actually are we moving for and what is that we are losing in the haggle. I am sure at multiple junctures, the candidate has much to lose in the long run."

These are some of the factors that need to be considered, and one should see to it that the pros far outweigh the cons, and the decision of quitting does not have negative repercussions and backfire. Ravi Verma, Head HR, Nucleus Software Exports, said that an employee should have a solution-seeking approach and not have a fault-finding attitude. He added, "There are specific reasons we don't hire job hoppers and need individuals who can commit to us, like product implementation, customer handling and deployment, which are very sensitive issues and the company

prefers to show the face to their client that would stay and build a brand for them."

Jagat Mohan Sarkar, Head, HR, eRevMax, said that often employees change jobs and instead of a good package, they look for a lateral career option as that would help them diversify and gain a broader experience in a wider field. He pointed out the positive and negative impacts of job hopping:

Positive—

- A variety of experience, though with good time spent in each, helps in developing a well-rounded profile. It helps an individual gain a broader perspective.
- It helps one determine what their latent talents are and find the right career. Trial and error helps in this case, but one needs to learn from the past mistakes and not repeat it.
- Helps one in becoming more adaptable.
- Better packages and more responsibilities.
- Lateral moves help in helping one gain wider knowledge and experience.

Negative—

- Too many job shifts reflects badly on one's resilience and loyalty towards a company.

While some people in the industry feel that changing jobs as frequently as twice or thrice in a year does not make up for a good CV, a few feel that one to two years, or even three years is the ideal time to stick with a company. There are still others who feel that there is no 'right time,' but it is better to move on rather than to stay put and stagnate in the same organization

- One may be regarded as directionless and fickle minded.
 - Companies may not want to hire and spend on a person who has a history of shifting every few months.
 - Family life of an individual too gets affected because of frequent job shifts.
 - May impact financial condition also.
- Geeta Goti, Associate Director, HR, Virtusa Corporation, explained, "Factors that are generally overlooked by a job hopper are the ones that will again be the cause of hopping the job, instead of making a sensible move, trapping the hopper in a wasteful move:
- When the move is only for compensation hike and the hopper gets carried away by the recruiter's sales pitch on the



Ishtiyaque Khan

SENIOR TEAM LEADER, HR MANAGEMENT, OCEANS CONNECT (INDIA)

I would always advocate that we ask ourselves one question—what is that actually are we moving for and what is that we are losing in the haggle. I am sure at multiple junctures, the candidate has much to lose in the long run

salary and benefits that are not consistent with the first pay-check.

- Regardless of what happens at the time of recruitment, sooner or later there will be some kind of evaluation, and the imbalance will be leveled with the job hopper's future increments.
- The job profile looks very attractive with a lot of management jargon, but when the job hopper

arrives, the job content, responsibility and positioning in the hierarchy are a rude shock, as an outsider one cannot accurately judge the job content.

- Business performance inefficiencies come into play when the new employee is ramping up in the role. The job hopper is hired for the potential shown at the time of the interview and the same when not demonstrated immediately may prove detrimental to the career.

Any decision taken is like a game; it can seldom be a win-win situation. The employee can never be assured of its results; one has to be patient, wait and watch for the results and hope that the move pays off. ■

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