

Spare them the relocation blues

Companies should go in for 'planned transfers', allowing employees to control certain variables

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Vignesh (name changed), a middle-level executive with a public sector company in Chennai, is being posted to the North-East, and would be assuming responsibilities next month. Though transfers are par for the course in this sector, the posting to the North-East has come as a bolt from the blue. Vignesh's main concern is finding a suitable school for his son who will be in Class IX in the coming academic year.

"My posting in the North-East region is for a period of three years, which means I will have to scout for a school in a new city when he goes to Class XII," says Vignesh.

It's an extremely unfortunate situation for Vignesh.

Following appraisals and the end of the financial year, a good number of companies effect transfers.

In most public sector undertakings, relocation is one of the requirements, according to the Central Vigilance Commissioner guidelines. Relocations usually happen every three years.

Delayed transfers can cause parents of school-going children great hardship.

Last year, the State Bank of India made some changes and advanced its appraisal season, so that promotions and transfers could be effected by April, and transfer-

ees can take care of their children's admission to a new school in the new place easily.

"We have been putting pressure on banks to start the transfer exercise three months in advance, so that it does not cause any difficulty to parents of school-going children," says Thomas Franco, former general secretary, All India Bank Officers Confederation (AIBOC).

In some banks, until last year, the process would go on till the end of June.

This year, PSU banks like Syndicate Bank, Canara Bank, Union Bank of India and Bank of India also expedited the process.

AIBOC has been campaigning for banks to offer the transferee a choice of three locations.

The larger the organisation, the bigger the challenge in carrying out the exercise. Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited calls it 'placement' and not 'transfer' to take edge off the transition phase. The company has 10,500 employees spread across its over 900 centres.

"Close to 800 placements in a new city are effected every year," says a senior HR manager of HPCL.

More than a decade ago, the organisation had two cycles for promotions and transfers. "With growing strength we have one cycle



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and announce list of placements by the end of March," says the executive.

Feedback mechanism

HPCL provides a platform for employees to express their preferred location. The period from August to December is set aside for this exercise.

"Every year, we carry out some improvement or the other based on the feedback collected from employees," says the HR executive.

For instance, employees of children studying in Classes IX and X, there is the option of postponing the transfer.

Care is taken for the differently-abled employees and to keep working spouses together.

In the hospitality sector, transfers are requirement-based and usually executives at the level of assistant manager and above are considered for a location change.

Lemon Tree Hotels, which has a chain of properties, pays for the admission fee of the employees' children in the new school, apart from providing a host of other benefits, says Rajesh Kumar, vice-president (HR), Lemon Tree Hotels.

Transfers are often hard on the transferee, but trans-

fers are the best bet in sustaining organisational culture.

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Rajesh Kumar says: "I can always hire a talent from the new place, but transferring an experienced person who understands the ethos of the company to fill the vacant position would ensure the company's unique culture is maintained."

CEO for a month

The Adecco Group has opened registrations for the sixth edition of its 'CEO for One Month' programme. The assignment is open to youngsters from across the world. Short-listed applicants will be invited for an interview and further assessment.

According to a press release, the India finalist will get to shadow Marco Valsecchi, country manager and managing director, The Adecco Group India, and receive a remuneration of ₹1, 60,000 for the month.

This programme will be followed by selection for the 'Global CEO for one month', where the India finalist will compete with finalists from other countries. Ten global finalists will get to attend a boot camp where their collaboration and innovation skills will be put to the test. Only one of them will then be selected to work along with The Adecco Group Global CEO, Alain Dehaze, for one month. According to a press release, the programme is designed to give young people hands-on work experience and step into the shoes of a business leader.

This year, the programme has attracted more than 18,000 applicants from 260 colleges in India, says the release.

Registrations for the challenge closes on April 16. For details, visit www.ceofortmonth.com

A conference for women in engineering

There will be workshops and discussions on workplace-related issues

WE Local India, the fourth annual conference of women engineers presented by the Society of Women Engineers (SWE), will be held in Bengaluru from April 11 to 13. The three-day event is the flagship programme of SWE designed to give a boost to the research and career interests of women in science, technology and engineering fields.

Started in 1950 in the United States, SWE is a non-profit educational and service organisation where members get to network, hone their skills through professional development workshops and outreach activities.

In India, the first WE Local was held in Pune in 2016.

"We started with 50 members. Now, we have 437 members," says Suchismita Sanyal, publicity chair on the WE Local India advisory board.

Women engineers at any stage of their career can be associated with organisation. "Apart from organisations, we also have representatives of engineering colleges as members," said Suchismita.

Members get to participate in a host of programmes conducted by SWE, and these include research papers, mini-conferences and

round table meetings.

"The best part of becoming a member of SWE is that we get to pick and choose programmes that we like. For an organisation, it's a platform to promote the company and also utilise SWE's strong research arm," says Shirin Salis, Vice President, Human Resources, Ingersoll Rand, who will be conducting a session on career management at the upcoming conference.

At the career centre, companies get to post their job requirements.

As the company has signed up for 'Paradigm for Parity', a coalition of various companies to achieve gender balance by 2030 in the United States., we are leveraging SWE to achieve our goals, says Shirin.

The sessions

"One surprising secret of how people become successful leaders", 'Systems Thinking and its importance for technical leadership', 'Strategies for navigating bias in engineering workplaces' and 'Unconscious bias - defeating it in ourselves and others' are some of the sessions at the three-day event.

On April 13, a career fair will be held. For details, visit welocal.swe.org/bengaluru/