

'MNCs have to have a paradigm shift or risk losing out on talent'

Millennials in India want to start their career with organisations that offer exceptional work culture and continuous learning curve, according to Sabre Millennial Survey. Shail Maniar, Vice President and Managing Director of Sabre Travel Technologies shared with **GOMANTAK TIMES** reporter Martin Joseph Payyapilly, some interesting insights around the survey and discussed a host of topics on the sidelines of Quark 2017- Shifting Paradigms - a flagship technology festival by BITS Pilani Goa. Sabre, the global technology solutions provider to the travel industry, is the title sponsor of the event.



SHAIL MANIAR,
VP, MD Sabre Travel Technologies

Excerpts:

Q: Why did you feel the need to conduct a millennial survey?

A: Over the last two years, we witnessed the influx of millennials into our workforce and the number of millennials working with Sabre increased to more than 700. This age group - born after 1982, clearly has different expectations from organisations they work with. In 2016, Sabre was named as top 50 companies to work for in IT & ITeS by 'Great Place to Work' and then our millennials said they were equally happy in terms of work environment and benefits like our other workforce. At Sabre, we wanted to continue to understand what are the millennial career preferences - especially when it comes to their initial career phase. We, therefore, reached out to universities across India to understand the changing dynamics of this workgroup.

Q: What are the key findings from the survey?

A: The survey gave us some really interesting insights around millennials. Clearly, Bangalore stood as one of the most preferred location among millennials. I feel that is not only because Bangalore is a tech ecosystem but also due to the ease of coming in and settling down, the connectivity, the pub culture and the weather. In terms of choosing their career path, technology stood out as the top industry. However, this section of workforce is not looking at Java or network oriented jobs - they are keen to explore new areas and 63% of our respondents said they would like to work on data analytics and web development/

mobile application. And I think that's because even if you are a math or a physics major, you can still leverage your expertise into data analytics. During our conversation with many engineering students, we have seen an increased focus towards non-tech roles like business analyst and professional services - fortunately Sabre is positioned very well where we have about 70% tech focused roles and about 30% roles for project delivery, business analysis and subject matter experts.

Q: What do you think the millennials are looking for when it comes to jobs?

A: About 50 per cent of our respondents said that they are keen to work with multi-national companies over start-ups. That shows a big shift because two years ago, there was this big exodus of talent who wanted to go work for start-ups. This story is not as compelling as it was then. In the previous generation, we witnessed job security, bigger brand names and compensation as some of the key drivers while choosing an organisation - but millennials are heavily inclined towards organisations that allow them to enhance their growth as a well-rounded professional, offer a solid work culture and competitive compensation. And when it comes to work culture - the impact is so much so that we see it being the biggest driving factor for millennials to term any organisation as a 'Great Place to Work' The another important factor for millennials is the opportunity to work with great leaders and drivers at an organisation.

Q: What do you feel organisations

need to do to attract and retain millennials?

A: When exploring opportunities, millennials focus towards the work culture of an organisation but the number one reason for them to leave a company is a slow career progression and not the compensation. A right mix of career progression and great work culture can lead millennials to work for up to 5 years with a company. So clearly, organisations have to have a paradigm shift or risk losing out on talent. Over the last few years, MNCs have done a better job of competing well with start ups by incubating accelerator programmes and offering other platforms to develop and showcase talent. Another important aspect is to continuously engage with this workforce. At Sabre, every year we organise a 'Global Hackathon' challenge for our employees across the globe. This is a great way to not only offer them an opportunity to drive creativity but also engage with them.

Q: Do you think Goa can be a future hub for technology companies like Sabre?

A: I think fundamentally, when you think of Goa, you don't think of technology but of a tourist destination. So 'brand Goa' is branded completely different from other tech locations like Bangalore or Hyderabad. Even though, Goa has become a hotbed for start-ups and can have small boutique outlets. But I think setting up full scale centres can be challenging. What we need is a larger ecosystem of engineering colleges similar to other locations and infrastructure facilities.