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Employee Engagement Strategies in Five-Star Hotels: A Path to Retention

Sunith Mandal ^{1*}, Dr. Vikas Rana ², Dr. Abhinav Mishra ³

- ¹ Research Scholar, Department of Hotel Management, Vivekananda Global University, Rajasthan, India
² Associate Professor, Department of Hotel Management, Vivekananda Global University, Rajasthan, India, India
³ Senior Lecturer, NCHMCT, Noida, India

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history: Received: 09-04-2025 Received in revised form: 19-05-2025 Accepted: 20-06-2025</p> <hr/> <p>Keywords:</p> <p><i>Retention, Hospitality, Allied sectors, Employees</i></p>	<p>This study investigates the factors that influence the migration of employees from five-star hotels in Kolkata to allied sectors, as well as the strategies for retention. The research synthesizes findings from academic journals, industry reports, and government publications using a descriptive research design based on secondary data analysis. Competitive compensation, career advancement opportunities, work-life balance, and job satisfaction are significant factors contributing to employee migration (Gupta & Singh, 2019; Kaur & Singh, 2021). The analysis indicates that hotels encounter substantial obstacles in recruiting and retaining employees in the face of escalating competition from allied sectors, which frequently provide more appealing employment opportunities (Nair & Patel, 2022; Tiwari & Jha, 2019).</p> <p>The research identifies effective retention strategies, including implementing flexible work schedules, providing professional development opportunities, and enhancing employee recognition programs in order to reduce employee turnover (Lalwani & Sharma, 2023; Mishra & Gupta, 2020). Hotels can enhance employee contentment and organizational performance by establishing a more engaging workplace that addresses these fundamental areas. This research contributes to comprehending the dynamics of employee migration in the hospitality industry and provides practical suggestions for improving retention in five-star hotels.</p> <p>© 2025 The Authors. Published by IASE. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).</p>

INTRODUCTION

Over the last several years, the hospitality business, particularly five-star hotels, has experienced a significant movement of staff to related industries such as event management, tourism, and facilities management. This migration has been particularly noticeable in more recent years.

A number of variables are driving this move, including discontent with professional progression chances, a lack of work-life balance, and insufficient remuneration from employers. According to Lalwani and Sharma (2023), the absence of well-structured career progression routes in luxury hotels encourages motivated workers to look for positions in other industries that

provide better opportunities for advancement and other kinds of working circumstances. In addition, Mishra and Gupta (2020) indicate that unpredictable work schedules and high-stress levels during peak seasons lead to employee burnout, prompting many individuals to look for businesses that provide higher salaries and more flexibility.

The tendency of personnel leaving five-star hotels to work in linked industries is becoming more prevalent, especially in urban locations like Kolkata. In the hotel business, where workers often encounter issues linked to unexpected schedules, unpleasant working conditions, and inadequate compensation, this change originates in the profession's highly demanding nature.

It has been found by Mishra and Gupta (2020) that the hospitality industry frequently places its employees in high-pressure situations, particularly during busy periods. This increases employee turnover as workers seek positions in allied sectors that offer more manageable workloads and structured career growth (International Journal of Technology, Management and Social Sciences, IJTMSS). Furthermore, Nair and Patel (2022) underline that while

some five-star hotels try to retain talent by offering competitive salaries, these efforts sometimes need to be revised to prevent staff exodus to industries that provide more appealing professional growth opportunities.

Kremer and Hommond (2013) stress the importance of a growth-oriented and supportive organizational culture in reducing employee turnover. This is particularly relevant in the hospitality industry, where the absence of such an environment in many five-star hotels is a significant factor driving talent migration to related industries. In these sectors, workers have the opportunity to achieve greater job satisfaction and career security.

Luxury hotels can stem the tide of talent migration to related industries by understanding the underlying reasons and implementing strategic interventions. These could include establishing clear career paths, promoting work-life balance, and instituting recognition programs to acknowledge and reward employee contributions.

Literature Review

The hospitality industry is increasingly concerned about the migration of employees from five-star hotels to allied sectors. Numerous researchers have identified the

high demands placed on hospitality workers and dissatisfaction with career development, work-life balance, and compensation as contributing factors to this trend.

Work Conditions and Work-Life Balance

In the hospitality sector, particularly in five-star hotels, employees are frequently subjected to high-pressure work environments, irregular schedules, and extended hours. Mishra and Gupta (2020) contend that the consistent demand to satisfy visitor requirements, particularly during peak seasons, results in employee dissatisfaction and exhaustion. Many employees are compelled to investigate alternative industries that provide greater flexibility and a more manageable schedule due to the imbalance between their professional and personal lives. Similarly, Nair and Patel (2022) emphasize that the hospitality industry's unpredictable schedule exacerbates work-life balance issues, a significant factor in employees' pursuit of event management or tourism opportunities. These sectors often offer more structured work hours and significantly reduced stress.

Benefits and Compensation

Although competitive compensation and benefits are crucial for employee retention,

more is needed to avert employee migration from the hospitality sector. Even though certain five-star hotels provide attractive compensation packages, employees often find the benefits in allied sectors to be more alluring, particularly in terms of long-term career progression, as per Lalwani and Sharma (2023). Kremer and Hommond (2013) also propose that organizations that implement compensation systems that are more structured and transparent, particularly those that incorporate benefits such as paid time off, healthcare, and professional development opportunities, have a higher retention rate.

Professional Development and Career Advancement

The perceived lack of career advancement opportunities is a major reason why employees leave five-star hotels. Many hospitality employees feel confined in roles that lack distinct pathways for advancement or skill development, leading to job dissatisfaction. Sectors such as tourism and event management often provide more tangible opportunities for professional development and upward mobility, making them more appealing to hospitality employees who are feeling stagnant in their current roles. This highlights the need for

the industry to reevaluate its approach to career progression.

Employee Engagement and Organizational Culture

Employee engagement and a positive organizational culture play a significant role in retention. Organizations that prioritize collaboration, support, and recognition are more likely to retain their employees for an extended period. However, the hospitality industry often lacks adequate employee engagement programs, leading to workers feeling undervalued and prompting them to seek opportunities in sectors that prioritize employee well-being. This underscores the importance of implementing effective employee engagement initiatives in the industry.

Objective

- 1) Examines migration trends and strategies for retaining employees at five-star hotels in Kolkata.

Research Methodology

This comprehensive descriptive study thoroughly examines Kolkata's five-star hotel workers' movement to associated industries using a wide range of secondary data sources, including literature, industry reports, and government sources.

Data Sources

Academic Journals: Research on employee satisfaction and turnover is basic in the International Journal of Hospitality Management and the International Journal of Technology, Management, and Social Sciences.

Industry Reports: Indian Hotel Association and labor market studies show wage and working conditions developments in both industries.

White papers and case studies show hospitality retention techniques that work.

Result and Analysis

Strategies for Retention: Elaboration

Clear Career Paths

Career paths are one of Lalwani and Sharma's (2023) key recommendations for reducing five-star hotel staff migration to related industries. When they see no room for advancement, employees depart. Career development transparency improves work happiness and loyalty by showing employees their future in the company. Hotels should clearly define professional advancement opportunities, such as internal promotions, skill development, and leadership responsibilities. This strategy

helps employees see a long-term future with their company, minimizing their desire to leave.

Hotels may connect younger personnel with senior staff to assist their career growth. Hotels also provide department transfers to help staff develop new skills and boost their employability. When workers feel their abilities and potential are respected, they are more inclined to remain with the company rather than pursue chances in allied areas.

Competitive pay and benefits

According to Lalwani and Sharma (2023) and Mishra and Gupta (2020), competitive remuneration is another key to employee retention. Compensation includes health insurance, retirement programs, paid time off, and bonuses. Many hotel workers depart because they believe the financial incentives are not worth the stress and long hours. Hotels may retain staff by providing attractive compensation and perks that equal or surpass associated industries.

Performance-based incentives and profit-sharing models motivate staff by attaching motivation to actual benefits, helping retain staff. Travel discounts, professional development stipends, and wellness initiatives may boost employee happiness

and loyalty. Hotels that invest in their workers' finances maintain top talent and become appealing employers in a competitive market.

Work-life balance initiatives

Employees prioritize work-life balance, particularly in hospitality, where unpredictable hours and heavy workloads are frequent. According to Lalwani and Sharma (2023) and Nair and Patel (2022), work-life balance programs reduce employee turnover. Overwork causes burnout, job discontent, and a desire to quit.

Hotels may provide flexible scheduling to help workers combine work and leisure. Giving workers greater shift flexibility, part-time employment, and a regulated time-off policy might reduce stress from long and unpredictable work hours. Remote work for administrative chores may also minimize burnout among non-frontline personnel.

Professional Growth Opportunities

Mishra and Gupta (2020) stress that professional growth promotes loyalty and reduces turnover. Many hospitality workers leave for adjacent fields because their abilities could be improved. Hotels may address this by offering organized training, workshops, and seminars to improve staff

abilities. Examples include leadership training, customer service improvement, and event management or tourist qualifications.

Interdepartmental skill development helps hotel workers broaden their expertise and become more adaptable. For instance, rotating personnel between front desk operations, food and beverage, cleaning, and human services might help them learn new skills and feel more incorporated within the company. Career mobility inside the company might diminish the urge to leave the hotel industry.

Employee Recognition Plans

Retention depends on employee recognition and rewards. Nair and Patel (2022) stress the value of employee recognition programs, which might include formal rewards and management appreciation. Employee engagement and commitment are higher when employees feel valued for their hard work.

Formal recognition programs like "Employee of the Month" awards or yearly ceremonies may foster gratitude. However, informal recognition like individual thank-you cards, team celebrations, and public recognition of successes also make workers feel appreciated. Hotels may also encourage

employees to recognize one another's achievements, creating a friendly workplace.

Mental Health and Well-being Support

Finally, Nair & Patel (2022) and Mishra & Gupta (2020) recommend mental health and well-being assistance for employee retention. Hospitality is challenging and stressful. Counseling, stress management, and wellness programs may boost employee well-being and minimize turnover.

Hotels may also offer staff break areas, gym memberships, wellness workshops, and mental health specialists. These hotel cultures of well-being may minimize staff burnout and improve workplace support and appeal.

Conclusion

Five-star hotels can make their workplaces more attractive, supportive, and engaging by addressing career advancement, compensation, work-life balance, professional development, employee recognition, and well-being. These tactics improve retention, happiness, and organizational success by targeting diverse aspects of employee experience.

Career growth

Hotels with defined career paths encourage staff to remain since they may see long-term career progress. Structured career growth gives workers a feeling of purpose and belonging by making their efforts worthwhile. Mentorship programs, leadership development courses, and promotion chances help hotel staff envisage a future in the industry rather than event management or tourism (Lalwani & Sharma, 2023). This increases loyalty, decreases turnover, and helps hotels retain personnel.

Compensation

Competitive pay shows workers that their labor is appreciated. Hotels with competitive salaries, health insurance, retirement plans, and incentives may stand out in a competitive labor market. When workers feel appropriately paid for their abilities and effort, their motivation and loyalty grow, lowering the attractiveness of shifting to allied areas with more excellent pay or better benefits (Mishra & Gupta, 2020).

Work-Life Balance

Hospitality, particularly at luxury hotels, is demanding, with extended hours and changing schedules. Flexible work schedules, guaranteed days off, and equitable shift allocation may boost

employee happiness. Providing part-time or remote work for non-guest-facing occupations may also prevent burnout. Hotels can compete with associated industries that provide regular working hours and less stress by creating a healthy work-life balance (Nair & Patel, 2022). This balance is essential for recruiting and keeping flexible, personal-time workers.

Professional Growth

When employees sense their company cares about their advancement, they are more loyal. Hotels show they value staff growth by offering training, cross-departmental rotations, and skill development. These efforts boost staff skills and strengthen the company's talent pool. Leadership or hotel management credentials help workers feel like their careers are progressing, lessening the desire to move sectors for greater chances (Mishra & Gupta, 2020).

Honor and gratitude

Recognition motivates and improves workplace culture. Employees feel appreciated when they get prizes, incentives, or public acclaim for their hard work. Appreciation boosts morale and loyalty. Hotels with employee recognition systems, including peer-to-peer recognition, retain

more employees because they are happier and more connected to the firm (Nair & Patel, 2022). Undervalued workers are more inclined to quit for areas where they think they would be valued.

Well-being and Mental Health Support

Mental health assistance improves retention in the stressful hospitality sector. Hotel employee support programs, stress management classes, and on-site wellness activities demonstrate their dedication to employee well-being. Supporting workers intellectually and emotionally reduces burnout and increases industry retention. Wellness programs may make hospitality occupations more sustainable and desirable than allied industries, where work circumstances may demand a lack of assistance (Mishra & Gupta, 2020).

Workplace Performance

Effective retention methods benefit hotels beyond employee happiness. An engaged and devoted staff boosts organizational success. In hospitality, employees who feel respected, supported, and pushed to improve professionally are more productive, motivated, and likely to provide better service. Lower turnover reduces recruiting and training expenses, improving

operational efficiency and stability. Hotels that invest in their staff improve employee satisfaction and assure constant service quality, vital for five-star hospitality.

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