

## EFFECTIVENESS OF EMPLOYEE COUNSELING IN AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY

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### ABSTRACT

In Automobile Industries, the counseling is basically given for helping and supporting the employees, who have been reported for reasons such as behavioral changes, poor attitude, lack of interest in work, high absenteeism, alcoholism, job miss, increased accidents and reduced production. The counseling is provided by the respective Section Heads, IR Coordinators to the specific employees who show the sign of misconduct. According to the study, manufacturing and automobile industries face serious issues amidst their employees, which arises due to various reasons and have a direct impact on the productivity, which is considered as a loss to both organization and individual. Taking into account the affecting factor of the above said reasons, counseling is considered to be a vital procedure that has to be given weight age and studied. Descriptive research design has been adopted in this study. A total of 200 NEX employees from various automobile industries were selected for the study in Chennai City.

The results also showed that the positive attitudes of the employees indicated that they valued the services of the counseling programs. This is also indicative that the employees were open to the counseling services being offered. The four factors identified was Counseling Intention, Counselor Potential, Attitude of the Employee & Expected result out of counseling. Automobile Industries can think of introducing Problem-focused model of counseling in their organization. This model sees the counselor's role as helping individuals to work with the immediate problems they bring. Counseling of employees can have desirable consequences for the organization. It helps the organization when the employees know that the organization cares for them, and build a sense of commitment with it.

**Keywords :** Counseling, Automobile Industry

## INTRODUCTION

The latest trend catching up in the corporate HR across the world is 'Employee Counseling at Workplace'. In the world of ever increasing complexity and the stress in the lives, especially the workplaces of the employees, employee counseling has emerged as the latest HR tool to attract and retain its best employees and also to increase the quality of the workforce.

In today's fast-paced corporate world, there is virtually no organization free of stress or stress-free employees. The employees can be stressed, depressed, suffering from too much anxiety arising out of various workplace related issues like managing deadlines, meeting targets, lack of time to fulfill personal and family commitments, or bereaved and disturbed due to some personal problem etc.

Organizations have realized the importance of having a stress-free yet motivated and capable workforce. Therefore, many companies have integrated the counseling services in their organizations and making it a part of their culture. Organizations are offering the service of employee counseling to its employees.

## CONCEPT OF EMPLOYEE COUNSELING

Counseling is a process through which one person helps another by purposeful conversation in an understanding atmosphere. It seeks to establish a helping relationship in which the one counseled can express their thoughts and feelings in such a way as to clarify their own situation, come to terms with some new experience, see their difficulty more objectively, and so face their problem with less anxiety and tension. Its basic purpose is to assist the individual to make their own decision from among the choices available to them. (British Association for Counseling, Rugby 1989)

Employee counseling is a service offered by companies to their employees. Organizations that care for their employees are perceived as more meaningful and purposeful. Every organization has economic and social goals.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The studies on employee counseling conducted by a number of researchers have been identified the employee counseling provides help and support to the employees to face and sail through the difficult times in life. Only in the recent years have some studies started gaining proper attention from the academicians and practicing managers. In the present study, a brief review of the studies on employee counseling programme has been given below:

1. Peter C. Cairo, (1983) in *Counseling In Industry: A Selected Review of The Literature*, reviews the literature on counseling in business and industry. It summarizes what is known about (a) the extent to which personal and career counseling services exist within industry and (b) the effectiveness of various counseling programs in dealing with specific employee problems or concerns. The review is divided into three major sections. The first describes various programs and research involving counseling for personal problems. This is followed by a summary of efforts by industry to provide various forms of career counseling and guidance.
2. Upton, Dave, (1997) in *Developing Employee Counseling* focused on the counseling service provided by a major national N-1 organization. The main aim was identification of managerial mechanisms that might be instituted to facilitate the development of workplace counsellingship comprised of three main studies which utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods. Over a

period of eight months, corresponding quantitative data were collected after each new counseling session from six hundred and ninety-four clients and forty-six counselors.

3. ***A recent study done in India – the study was done in a manufacturing company in Mumbai (2002)***. This research aimed at investigating the (felt) need for employee counseling in the organization. The sample being one hundred and ten (110) employees which is 20 % of the employee strength – five hundred and fifty three (553) of the corporate office of the company. The research results indicate that majority of the sample under study responded positively to the hypothesis i.e. a need for Employee Counseling was felt and that it would benefit the organization. However, the awareness about the concept of counseling and employee counseling, particularly so was found to be exceptionally low.
4. Lawrence H. Gerstein and Gregory A. Bayer (2005) in ***Counseling psychology and employee assistance programs: Previous obstacles and potential contributions***, discusses various reasons why counseling psychologists have not become involved with EAPs. It also presents some ways that counseling psychologists may contribute to these programs and it highlights the similarities in the philosophies and the activities of EAP and counseling psychology practitioners and scientists. Additionally, some suggestions for how to prepare counseling psychologists for entrance into the EAP profession are offered. Finally, a brief research agenda designed to guide counseling psychologists who are interested in the study of EAP related variables is presented.
5. McConnell, Charles R. (2006), in ***Effective Employee Counseling for the First-line Health Care Manager***, Emphasis Counseling is an important supervisory skill applied for a number of purposes. Although the need for counseling is as constant as any need facing the manager, a number of commonly encountered barriers often prevent effective counseling. In most instances, counseling is a necessary step preceding disciplinary action, and it is always an important step in improving employee performance. Although the manager may not come to the job with expertise in counseling, counseling can nevertheless be learned through practice and the conscientious application of a few simple guidelines.

## **RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

Counseling is discussion of an employee's problem that usually has an emotional content to it, in order to help the employee cope with the situation better. Counseling seeks to improve employee's mental health. People feel comfortable about themselves and about other people and are able to meet the demands of life when they are in good mental health.

In Automotive Industry, the counseling is basically given for helping and supporting the employees, who have been reported for reasons such as behavioral changes, poor attitude, lack of interest in work, high absenteeism, alcoholism, job miss, increased accidents and reduced production. The counseling is provided by the respective Line incharge, Section Heads, IR Coordinators to the specific employees who show the sign of misconduct.

According to the study, manufacturing and automobile industries face serious issues amidst their employees, which arises due to various reasons and have a direct impact on the productivity, which is considered as a loss to both organization and individual.

Taking into account the affecting factor of the above said reasons, counseling is considered to be a vital procedure that has to be given weight age and studied.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To study the benefits of employee counseling programs in Automotive Industry.
2. To analyze openness the employees in Automotive Industry have towards to the counseling services being offered.
3. To study the essential factors of employee counseling programs in Automotive Industry.
4. Suggest some appropriate strategies in designing a successful employee counseling programs for Automotive Industry workforce.

**METHOD OF INVESTIGATION**

Descriptive research design has been adopted in this study. The purpose of choosing descriptive design is to achieve new insights into the phenomenon of Employee counseling, to formulate a complete and comprehensive picture of counseling which helps the well being of Automobile Industry employees.

Probability sampling method was used in the study. The sampling unit used in the study includes the employees of non executive cadre (NEX) in the shop floor of Assembly shop, Body shop, Transmission, Engine shop, Paint and Maintenance, Press shop departments. A total of 200 NEX employees were selected for the study in Chennai City.

The data have been analyzed using “SPSS” Version 11.0. Factor analysis, Chi square test, Percentage analysis and weighted average have been carried out to find out the effectiveness of the counseling programme.

**HYPOTHESIS**

The hypotheses may be stated as:

1. There is no significant difference in the benefits of counseling in different departments
2. There is no significant difference in absenteeism in different departments
3. There is no significant difference in the benefits due to counseling in various age groups
4. There is no significant difference in the benefits due to counseling in workers with different experience
5. There is no significant difference in the benefits of counseling with marital status

**RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

- As 77.22% of the subjects showed a positive attitude towards counseling programmes, it was clear that the results were indicative that the employees understood the importance of counseling and how it could have benefited them as employees in the organization.
- The positive attitudes of the employees indicated that they valued the services of the counseling programs. This is also indicative that the employees were open to the counseling services being offered.
- The following were some reasons given by the employees as they expressed their concern in their career: incompetence in carrying out their duties, contemplation of career move, problems with their superior, dissatisfaction with their job, etc.
- The qualities of the counselor considered as important by the employees were in the following order: patience, experience, trustworthiness, responsible, physical attractiveness, honesty, status and health.
- Out of various benefits out of counseling programme, 32% of the employee felt that the counseling programme will lead to less absenteeism and be punctual to their work, 25% of the employee felt

that the union problems will get resolved and another 20% of the employee felt that the counseling programme led to cooperativeness among the peer group in their respective departments.

- From Factor Analysis it is inferred that the determinant of the correlation matrix is 0.000527 which is greater than necessary value of 0.0001, therefore multi collinearity is not a problem for the data, that means all questions correlate fairly well and none of the correlation coefficient are partially large. Therefore there is no need to consider eliminating any questions at this stage. And the Eigen value associated with each linear component (factor) before extraction, after extraction and after rotation. Before extraction SPSS has identified 16 linear components within the data set. The Eigen value associated with each factor represents variance explained by the liner component. For example Eigen value in terms of 1<sup>st</sup> component is 30.217 it means factor 1 explains 30.217 of total variance. Therefore all the four factors put together explains total variance of 76.999%
- The four factors identified was Counseling Intention, Counselor Potential, Attitude of the Employee & Expected result out of counseling
- It was evident that the employees will appreciate the management for providing the counseling services. Thus organizations should not just focus on productivity but also to consider the importance of the employee welfare.
- Employees who are satisfied, motivated and happy with their jobs are more productive. Effective counseling programs are therefore beneficial both to the organizations and the employees.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- No successful organization will ever be free from stress among its employees. Organization should be able to deal with stress on individuals at all levels. Here the role of Counseling comes in, where people can talk and attempt to solve their personal and work related worries. Need for employee counseling arises due to various causes in addition to stress. Counseling is a process of helping an individual to help himself. So Automobile Industries should take care that their employees are not being stressed in their work.
- Counseling is discussion of an employee’s problem that usually has an emotional content to it, in order to help the employee cope with the situation better. Counseling seeks to improve employee’s mental health. People feel comfortable about themselves and about other people and are able to meet the demands of life when they are in good mental health. Automobile Industries should also think of improving their employee’s mental health.
- “The roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet” – Aristotle Educating the employees implies some formal training about the new process to be introduced or leveraging on informal channels. However, a systematic and planned formal approach is usually preferred. Automobile Industries can think of providing training programme to their employees so that many reasons for counseling can be overcome.
- Automobile Industries should use counseling programme more a reactive than a proactive mode. It is introduced on an ‘as needed’ basis in response to a particular situation or a particular individual.
- Automobile Industries can think of introducing Problem-focused model of counseling in their organization. This model sees the counselor’s role as helping individuals to work with the immediate problems they bring. This is a five-stage model also called as “life-skills counseling”. Nelson-Jones developed and called it DASIE model.
  - D - Develop the relationship, identify and clarify problems
  - A - Asses problems and redefine in skill terms
  - S - State working goals and plan interventions
  - I - Intervene to develop self-helping skills
  - E - End and consolidate self-helping skills

## ENDING REMARKS

Counseling can go a long way in helping the employees to have better control over their lives, take their decisions wisely and better charge of their responsibilities; reduce the level of stress and anxiety. Counseling of employees can have desirable consequences for the organization. It helps the organization when the employees know that the organization cares for them, and build a sense of commitment with it. It can prove to be of significant help to modify the behavior of the employees and more so to re-enforce the desired behavior and improve and increase the employee productivity. HR strategies must be relaxed and should be designed with proper understanding of their expectations and unique preference that demonstrates proactive strategy.

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