

# Boomerang employees: bring

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Boomerang Employees: Bring 'Em Back G. MURALI MANOHARI FACULTY, NEHRU INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY, COIMBATORE B. SUDHA VENKATALAKSHMI FACULTY, NEHRU INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES, COIMBATORE "Great Things are coming back" Employee turnover is one of the biggest expenses for organizations. Losing and replacing employees can cost one times the salary and benefits of the departing employee. One method of combating high turnover costs is to focus on bringing back boomerang employees also commonly referred as "rehires," and "retreads"- are all names given to the employees who are the people who used to work for you, departed on good terms, and may be candidates to bring back into your workplace. People leave a firm for many reasons: more money, a promotion and greater flexibility are only a few. Sometimes family situations, such as young children or elderly parents, require their full attention. Often employees see no possibility for career advancement in their current position. In the already saturated talent market, keeping in view the prevalent scenario, organisations have opened doors to welcome the employees who have left them on a good note and had proved to be good performers for the organisation in the past. Employees leave organisations for various reasons. Most of them are tempted by the "greener pastures on the other side". Often, the employees realize that their previous organisation wasn't that bad to work. And sometimes, even the organisation fails to find the suitable candidate with the required skill set, experience etc. Boomerang hiring has come across as an effective solution to the various HR problems for the organisations. - FACULTY , NEHRU INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES , COIMBATORE - FACULTY , NEHRU INSTITUTE OF

ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY , COIMBATORE The trend of boomerang hiring is catching up fast in the worldwide corporate world. But a few years back hiring the ex-employees of an organisation was not an acceptable practice. Organisations followed it as a policy of not taking back the employees who have left their organisation for a better opportunity. Leaving an organisation was taken as a perfidy. But today, where change is the only constant thing, boomerang hiring is the latest trend in hiring. Recruitment policies have been modified to incorporate the hiring of boomerangs in the organisation. And even employees who are happy in your organization may feel the need to gain a different perspective — especially if this was their first job. To encourage boomerangs, you need to plant the seed during the resignation. “ When a valued employee says they are leaving, there are two things an employer should do. - First, ask if there is anything you could change that might cause them to reconsider. - Second, tell them, in no uncertain terms, if you ever want to come back for any reason — I will try to find a job for you, so call me. - Pride can keep people from even calling unless you make it clear that the call is welcomed. ” How do you identify employees who may be candidates for boomeranging? Really listen to them when they tell you their reason for leaving. Some circumstances, such as the care of young children or an elderly parent, are going to change over the years. You can follow up with them occasionally to see how their new lifestyle is working for them and notice if there seems to be a longing to return. If people are leaving for a job with a start up company, find out where they are going and keep track of whether the company stays in business. Make sure those ‘ pie-in-the-sky’ promises of a great salary and fantastic job opportunities turn out to be both

realistic and in line with the expectations of your former employee. If you read that the company they left for is beginning reductions in force, give them a friendly call — they may be worried that their status as “ last hired” places them in jeopardy. Most importantly, don’t discount the social aspect of work. People spend a great deal of time in the office these days and form many friendships at work. While a former employee may not keep in touch with you, you can bet they’re maintaining contact with some of their former co-workers. Keep your ears open to see if anyone mentions any disillusionment with the new job. Many employees won’t ask for the chance to come back — they may be too embarrassed to admit their ‘ fantastic opportunity’ turned out to be an unqualified disaster. The goal is to make people feel like they are still part of the ‘ clan’. " Why would you want to rehire a former employee? There are several reasons. The benefits of hiring boomerangs: - Rehiring an employee is beneficial for the organization because of the high costs involved in the recruiting a new employee. - Also, investments have to be made in the training and development of the new employee. Retraining is much cheaper than training and development of a new employee. - It takes time for the new employee to adapt and adjust to the organisational culture, understand work and start delivering results, whereas, the former employee is already familiar with the culture, procedures and practices and the people. - Many a times coming after testing the bad water, boomerang employees are considered to be more loyal towards the organisation than before. By sharing their experiences and the difficulties faced outside the organisation, boomerangs can help tremendously in boosting the morale of other employees in the organisation

and can raise the goodwill of the organisation as an employer. - Boomerangs come with a renewed sense of commitment and loyalty and bring new experiences and perspective, sometime even better skills and knowledge. The former employees may not be in touch with the organisation, but they would definitely be maintaining contact with some of their former colleagues or friends in the organisation. Any mentioned instance of dissatisfaction at the new job can be a chance to get them back. It is always advisable to let your star employee know (when leaving the organisation) that he would be welcomed if he ever wants to return. Organisations can also start alumni clubs for their ex-employees. This is being practiced by many organisations to stay in touch with their ex-employees. Informing and updating them about the major events, happenings and the requirements can play a crucial role in making the employees feel that they are valued. In India, the BPO industry, which is facing the hard truth of high attrition rates and retention problems, has adopted the policy of boomerang hiring. For instance: Integreon has also adopted the 'Boomerang' policy whereby it is hiring its former employees back in the organisation. Boomerangs constitute a large percentage of the current Integreon employees and they are the people who realize its worth as an employer and appreciate its policies and culture. The condition that Integreon has for accepting boomerangs is that the employees should have left at a cordial note and should have any performance issues associated in the past. Similarly, a leading name in BPO industry, 24/7 Customer also has a policy for boomerang hiring. And to beat the hesitation of approaching the former employer, the policy of hiring their ex-employees is communicated to its employees at the time of leaving the organisation or in their exit

interviews. Do Boomerangs Play a Role In Your Recruiting Strategy? An employee who terminates from an organization and then returns after a period of time is called a rehire or Boomerang. Recent blog posts from ERE discuss the role Boomerangs play in recruiting. In addition, this article from IT Business Edge mentions a recent survey by CareerBuilder finding that 32% of employers who laid off employees last year, plan to bring employees back to work in the first six months of 2010. Should you consider Boomerangs in you staffing plan and recruiting strategy? Here are some questions to ask.

- What are the pros of hiring a Boomerang?

Boomerangs are familiar with the company and processes. They should be able to hit the ground running or with little ramp up time. Managers are familiar with the Boomerangs strengths and weaknesses and know what type of employee they are getting.

- What are the cons of hiring Boomerangs?

The Boomerang left once, what makes you think they will not leave again? Need to make sure all the circumstances surrounding why they left are addressed. You also need to take into consideration what role they will play in the organization and be clear about expectations.

- Staying in touch with Boomerangs. Does your organization have an alumni program? If so, how do you stay in touch with alumni? Keeping in touch with alumni and being familiar with where they are in their career can help with matching skills to current openings. This is especially important for interns or junior staff who left. Their skill set most likely has increased. Staying informed with their updated skills is important when determining whether they are a fit.
- The role of Boomerangs in succession planning. Boomerangs can play a big role in succession planning. Was their departure an amicable one? Have they

stayed a " friend" to the organization? Additionally, can retired Boomerangs may play a key role in succession crisis — filling an interim role? - Selling the Boomerang on the opportunity. You may need to really sell the opportunity to some Boomerangs, others you do not. You need to have a candid conversation about why the Boomerang left. Listen to why they want to leave their current role. Discuss the new role the can play in the organization and their career path. Dangers of Boomerang Hiring Despite the various benefits mentioned above, hiring the former employees does not come without some dangers or exceptions —as you may call it. In some cases, the job responsibilities and the required skill set itself changes over the course of time, making it difficult for the boomerang to adjust again in the organisation. Many employees tend to bring back the baggage of the bad experiences with them and can also exploit the advantage of their knowledge and experience of the organisation. Conclusion: Often, boomerangs are found to be the best fit for a job. And in today' s dynamic workforce and workplace, where nor the employees are reluctant to welcome back their ex-employees and neither are employees embarrassed to go back to their ex-employers or organisations; hiring boomerangs can be the strategy for surviving in this competitive corporate world.