

Understanding the Importance of Job Security

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When you have job security, you have little fear of losing your job. A variety of circumstances can result in job loss - in some cases through no fault of your own. For your best opportunities to ensure job security, it is a smart move to keep your skills up-to-date and to be willing to be flexible with respect to job title and geographic location.

Job security is the assurance that you will keep your job without the risk of becoming unemployed. Your job could be secured through terms of an employment contract, collective bargaining agreement, or labor legislation that prevents arbitrary termination. Where there is no job security, employees are at high risk of losing their jobs.

The annual British social attitudes survey conducted by NatCen, revealed that job security is important to most of the respondents (a whopping 92%), even though only 65% felt they have this in their current job. This is a result that could potentially present problems for employees, according to the Senior Research Director at NatCen. He advised that “Although many of us value our jobs beyond their monetary value there is a discrepancy between what workers say they value in a job, such as job security and opportunities for advancement, and what their current job affords them. This could lead to dissatisfaction in the future which may be a cause for concern for employers.”

According to the recently released IPC Zimbabwe National Employee Engagement Benchmarking Report, employees rank job security as the second most important factor they consider when considering whether or not to stay with a particular employer. The study which was conducted by Industrial Psychology Consultants, a management and human resources firm, surveyed one thousand nine hundred and twenty-six (1,926) employees across Zimbabwe to understand and quantify the levels of employee engagement amongst the nation’s formally employed employees. The survey revealed that employees ranked job security as the second most influential factor when deciding to stay with an employer, second only to opportunities for advancement present at the organization. 97% of the respondents believe job security to be crucial to their jobs, however, only 62% were able to attest to having this in their current job. A total of one thousand seven hundred and eighteen (1,718) of the one thousand nine hundred and twenty-six (1,926) participants responded to the section. This suggests that approximately 87% of Zimbabwean employees rate job security highly and believe it to be an important aspect of their job.

Job security is ranked more highly than the factors such as the organization’s reputation, policies and procedures, and even the more perennial remuneration aspect. Could this mean that employees care more about being able to count on the fact that their job will remain theirs for the foreseeable future, than an inconsequential retention bonus? In a country plagued with socio-economic factors, this particular result is an interesting one, especially as only 42% of Zimbabwean employees are satisfied with their remuneration. Also, if such a large number of employees (97% of respondents) believe this to be an important aspect, then why does only 62% enjoy it in their current job? Could it be that employers

are not aware of its significance to employees?

Two 2014 Towers Watson research studies revealed that employers and employees have different views on the importance of job security to employees. Towers Watson, which is a human capital consulting firm based in New York, surveyed 32,000 employees from all around the globe as well as 1,637 human resource managers and found that job security is ranked as the second most important factor to employees after the compensation aspect. However, when employers were asked to rank and rate engagement aspects based on what they felt employees valued most, employers did not rate job security highly, ranking it below seven other factors.

So, what can employers and employees do in the meantime?

Employers with high rates of voluntary turnover are thus encouraged to reassess their stance on job security, in light of this information, as it can prove useful in reducing these rates. However, employers are warned against putting up with shoddy conduct and second-rate quality, in an attempt to retain employees.

Employees need to recognize and understand how their job and skill set fits into the organization's overall strategic direction. Employees are at great risk if they don't know how their job directly impacts the profitability and business model of a company.

Jobs that do not contribute much to the company's strategy are a great risk of being phased out. By so doing, employees can apply themselves and find ways to offer more value to the company. At the same time, do not be afraid to better yourself and learn new skills. Ensure you keep your LinkedIn profile and CV up to date, whilst keeping an ear to the ground where opportunities in the market are concerned.

Job security is an important aspect for employees, with a lack of it resulting in an anxious and uneasy workforce. Such feelings can harm the level of engagement of employees, which in itself can lead to low productivity and profitability. Employers appreciate this and know that employees can do their best work when their minds are not clouded by worries of their future employment status, however, they are faced with maintaining a balance, as employees that feel too secure in their jobs can end up getting complacent which usually results in quality being sacrificed.

Good job stability simply means having a robust, dependable workforce that believes in your company's vision and is deeply invested in its success. By providing your team members with a good reason to continue working with you, not only can you get the best out of them, but create a stellar workforce that knows its future is secured. Not only will your colleagues know they can count on you, but will also be well aware that working together makes the company's and their success all the more inevitable.

Carl Tapi is a Consultant at Industrial Psychology Consultants (Pvt) Ltd, a management and human resources consulting firm. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/carl-tapi-45776482/> Phone +263 (242) 481946-48/481950 or cell number +263 772 469 680 or email: carl@ipcconsultants.com or visit our website at www.ipcconsultants.com

