Best Practices for Retaining Global IT Talent

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Abstract
The general problem of employee retention and the ability of an organization to influence and change actual turnover behavior are of great concern to employers, consultants, and academicians alike. This has been especially true in the IT profession. The growing need for IT professionals combined with a shrinking labor pool has made recruitment and retention of IT talent a top priority in many organizations. Forward thinking companies are looking to find and retain qualified IT talent wherever in the world it is available at a reasonable price. This paper presents nuggets of wisdom from previous research and interviews that can be used as best practices for retaining global IT talent.

1. Introduction

Information Technology (IT) staffing is a topic that has plagued organizations for many years due to the fluctuating needs for talented IT professionals. During the 1990s, there was a demand for IT staff to support Y2K and the dot com boom. The IT industry could not recruit IT professionals quickly enough. However, with the 2001 recession, the dot-com bust, and the end of Y2K, IT hiring slowed and downsizing/rightsizing became the norm [41]. More than 100,000 Americans dropped out of the IT labor market between mid-2002 and late 2004 [41]. In recent years, an improving economy, growing business confidence, application of IT to new domains like health and biosciences, and the emergence of new technologies have again created a demand for IT professionals. Additionally, demand for IT professionals in the upcoming years is due to the impending retirement of millions of baby boomers in the United States. According to the American Society of training and development [21], over the next two decades, 76 million Americans will be retiring and only 46 million will be entering the workplace to replace them. For every two baby boomers who retire in the next decade there will only be one college graduate to take their place (op. cit.).

Finally, the downturn of the early 2000s and the media-driven fear that IT jobs are going offshore, has caused a decline in computing enrollment in American universities. This has made it even harder for firms to fill vacant positions [41]. The problem of unfilled positions is aggravated by the difficulty of retaining good IT employees [7;8]. Retaining IT professionals on a global scale is a new challenge for many requiring substantial effort and investment.

The U.S. has long been a haven for talented individuals, but now other countries are joining the fight for talent by offering similar or better opportunities for professionals and their families [11]. The recent phenomenon of reverse emigration is resulting in skilled foreign IT professionals heading home to attain new opportunities as economies in their home countries are growing because of globalization and stronger economic growth [12]. Companies are competing with each other for IT professionals globally and not just seeking engineering and science resources in low cost countries [32; 64]. Due to globalization, reduced language barriers, the ubiquitous Internet, and availability of stable communication infrastructure, agile companies can hire talent at a reasonable price anywhere in the world. Asian countries such as India and China, and certain companies in Eastern Europe and Latin America are now recognized as suppliers of highly qualified engineering and scientific talent [37].

Given the pace of change in information technology and businesses, the impeding baby boomer retirement, the globalization of organizations, and low university enrollments in IT majors, many believe that there could be an even greater shortage of IT talent in the near future. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics [61], one out of four new jobs between 2006 and 2012 will be IT related. The U.S. is projected to have a shortage of more than 6 million IT jobs by 2015 [41]. With the potential for a shortage of IT employees, executives are paying closer attention to their existing IT employees’ with the goal of finding ways to reduce turnover. Executives fully realize the importance of retaining talented IT professionals and the cost of employee turnover. Attracting, developing and retaining IT professionals continue to be top-ranked issues for IT executives [e.g. 10; 45; 38; 42].

IS researchers have explored the antecedents of IT turnover and produced evidence to show that demographic variables (age, gender, education, and organizational tenure), role stressors (role ambiguity and conflict), and career related variables (salary and
career opportunities) have a relationship with job satisfaction and impact turnover intentions directly and through organizational commitment (see e.g., Igbaria and Greenhaus, 1992; Igbaria and Siegel, 1992). However, there has been little further research to further enhance and evaluate the various antecedents of job satisfaction and turnover intentions developed in the early 1990s. Particularly, there has been very little research relating to how these factors vary (if at all) in the context of a globalized IT workforce. Therefore, the primary purpose of this paper is to identify a set of best practices for reducing IT turnover and retaining global IT employees based on prior findings and new data. Our research enhances existing research and provides contributions with regard to the factors important to a global IT talent pool.

2. The cost of turnover

Staffing costs take up to 40-50 fifty percent of an IT budget [3; 41]. The cost of employee turnover is expensive and involves both direct and indirect costs. The direct cost of employee turnover is vacant positions and recruitment. Recruitment in general and IT recruitment in particular is challenging and expensive. Initial recruitment costs include advertising, interviews, screening, and recruiter’s salary [55]. Additional costs include training and orientation, compensation for interim replacement, and overtime costs paid to current personnel [55].

Indirect or vacancy costs are also incurred when employees leave. The indirect costs of employee turnover include productivity losses and loss of knowledge [55]. There is also the potential for delayed projects due to turnover and job errors that may eventually lead to customer dissatisfaction [55]. Organizations may lose customers due to inexperienced replacement workers and lowered quality of work [55]. Employers also need to consider the snowball effect. The departure of one employee could lead to other employees following suit, resulting in mass turnover [47].

The IT workforce has become much more diverse, where IT professionals come from different demographics and cultures. Retaining skilled IT professionals is critical if organizations are to remain competitive players in an increasingly global marketplace. Organizations need to learn how to leverage offshore talent in conjunction with their local talent, yet managing IT work performed all around the world requires new skills. “Talent is an intangible resource embodied in individuals, groups, and social networks, and learning to organize and manage talent globally becomes an idiosyncratic capability that is unobservable and difficult to imitate” [37, pg. 30].

Companies are struggling to understand how to identify, engage, and retain talent in global regions such as China, Asia, India, Russia, Eastern Europe, and other regions. Organizations do not understand the rules of engagement concerning how business is conducted in these foreign regions, let alone factors that motivate people native to these regions [54].

Getting the right skills in the right numbers to where they are needed, spreading up-to-date knowledge practices throughout the global enterprise and identifying and developing talent on a global basis are problems that continue to plague employers [54]. Unfortunately, managers and decision-makers in organizations have largely depended on rules-of-thumb and anecdotal evidence rather than scientific means to understand turnover behavior and the psychological reasons for employee turnover. As a result, retaining IT professionals is of great concern to organizations.

3. IT employee retention – challenges and opportunities

Employee retention is defined as the effort by an employer to keep desirable workers in order to meet business objectives [17]. Employee turnover and retention are closely related. An organization’s turnover rate measures the percentage of employees who leave [3]. Retention rate measures the percentage of employees who remain [3]. Managers and researchers should focus on practices that affect both and measure the effectiveness of these practices in terms of a firm’s turnover rate or retention rate [3].

When considering retention factors, employers should note that pay is not as big a motivator as interesting work for most IT workers [15]. Specifically, job characteristics such as challenging work, job rotation, autonomy, feedback, mentoring, and task significance are well-established determinants of job satisfaction [15;24;25;26] and organizational commitment [49;52]. Studies in work settings such as hospitals and manufacturing plants have shown that autonomy and communication can influence the safety of a work environment and perceived job worth [51;43;5]. Other studies have reported that job perception measured in terms of perceived job characteristics has a reciprocal relationship with overall and intrinsic job satisfaction [65].

In a 2008 survey conducted by Laumer (2009), two-thirds of those surveyed (728 IT professionals in Western European and U.S. Companies) indicated that an optimal job profile includes creativity in work, working in teams, and an annual monetary or non-
monetary reward. According to this survey, respondents gave less importance to managerial responsibility and continuous advancement. However, given this data, few employers spend resources to help their IT workers develop and function on the job and most confine their employee management efforts to pay [15]. Apparently, non-monetary retention practices are more important than monetary incentives for reducing an organization’s turnover rate and increasing their retention rate.

4. Methodology and data analysis

This research builds on previous research conducted on important retention factors for IT employees. We conducted a comprehensive literature review and used structured in-depth interviews with senior IT executives to gather additional information on critical retention factors for global IT employees. This data was used to enhance an initial list of best practices that we identified from the literature. We were also interested in discovering whether the retention factors discussed in a priori literature are in any way different for global IT employee retention.

To address our goal of exploring key retention factors for global IT employees we reviewed articles that discussed important global issues for retention or issues specific to IT employees. We did not find many academic articles published after the year 2000 that focused on the retention factors of global employees, IT employees, or global IT employees. Therefore, we expanded our search to include professional journals and magazines. We did find a few articles that discussed some factors that affect retention of global IT employees [e.g., 44, 63, 66].

Based on this review, we developed a set of interview questions for conducting structured interviews with senior IT executives from local firms (A list of detailed questions are available from the authors). Additionally, we used the interviews to ask the participants about other important factors. All of the participants indirectly affirmed the initial list of retention factors. If participants mentioned other factors (or variations of the same), we took note and looked for them in other interviews. If new factors were identified in more than one interview, we included them in our best practices discussion.

Table 1 profiles each of the firms and the key executive participant in our study.

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<tr>
<th>Firm 1</th>
<th>Firm 2</th>
<th>Firm 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Global provider of advertising and marketing services</td>
<td>Provider of management consulting services</td>
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<tr>
<td># of IT employees</td>
<td>Over 200</td>
<td>200</td>
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<td>Global Diversity</td>
<td>5 different countries</td>
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<td>Position of subject interviewed</td>
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Table 1. Profile of Interview Subjects

5. Best practices for global IT employee retention

To succeed in a globally competitive environment, companies need to attract and retain the best talent worldwide, including both men and women from all nationalities [1]. Attracting and retaining IT professionals involves an overall program of economic, social, and technical opportunity [64]. Retention practices are classified into the categories described below and summarized in Figure 1a and 1b.
Globally oriented employers must tailor key job characteristics to retain talented IT employees wherever they are located. Here the term job characteristic refers to the tasks assigned and the work being performed by IT employees. Examples of job characteristics that are important to IT professionals include challenging work, job rotation, training, autonomy, and feedback. We provide specific insights into two of these job characteristics that are particularly salient for IT employee retention: challenging work and job rotation.

Challenging work = Engaged employees. Working on varying and challenging projects is important for both global and domestic IT professionals [34, 50, 31, 53]. Many employees want their assignments to challenge them while contributing to the success of the organization [31]. While low pay can lead to dissatisfaction, high pay by itself will not keep employees. The best employees are not motivated by and do not stay for money alone. They stay because they are engaged and challenged by their work [31]. Offering IT employees the chance to work with new technologies is a way to challenge and in some cases reward IT employees. IT workers realize their resume is an important asset and want to work with modern and leading edge technologies [64]. In fact, one of our interviewees uses technology as a perk for high performing employees. This organization provides new technologies such as iPhones, iPads and access to social networking tools like Twitter and Facebook as a perk for their IT employees.

Employers need to stretch their top performers and continually challenge them. Employers should not wait until their best people have left to find they were bored. It is also important to provide task variety and create a culture that values intellectual stimulation [31, 48]. Providing challenging work has an additional benefit - when an organization does lose good workers, it increases the chance of their return if their new job does not measure up to their old one [53].

Job rotation is one way to challenge employees and keep them engaged. Job rotation is another mechanism to challenge employees. Job rotation is the “lateral transfer of employees between jobs within an organization” [14, pg. 1518-9]. While job rotation in the IT field is rare [44], it is a way to continually challenge employees and provides ancillary benefits to the organization. It keeps employees interested in their work and allows them to get hands on experience with different job profiles. It also gives an employee the chance to learn new skills, adding to their portfolio of work. Providing challenging work is closely tied with job rotation. Part of the value of rotation is that work diversity allows employees to fulfill their full potential. This is particularly critical in some IT jobs, which can become routine and mundane. In addition, rotating workers into IT jobs from business operations can strongly align IT with the business. Rotation can also break the silos so often found in IT operations.

The organizational work environment and culture should support diversity and encourage global employment. The work environment and
Employers should leverage this diversity to build a globally diverse workplace, employers also need to provide and support front-line and executive leadership [48;50]. The role of the front-line leader is critical in building employee engagement [9;22;23;63]. Employees see the organization as they see their supervisor and they will stay if they have a good relationship with their supervisor [60]. Therefore, retaining valuable IT employees not only requires an investment in front-line workers, but also an investment in executive leadership. In a growing globally diverse workplace, employers also need to enhance global leadership skills [1]. Global leadership is not the same as domestic leadership [2;6;16] and organizations need to understand the difference and train their employees either through formal training or mentoring and coaching.

Global companies and their leadership effectively leverage and celebrate employee diversity in all its forms. Employers need to know their workforce [50]. This means that employers should be flexible in recognizing, understanding, and adapting to individual needs and views [48;58]. Global workforces include employees with culturally diverse backgrounds. There are also generational differences that lead to diversity. Employers should leverage this diversity to build engaging teams, but build them carefully. For example, generational tensions can lower morale and increase turnover [20]. There are several different generations currently employed in the IT workforce – Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y.

Baby Boomers (those born between 1943 and 1960) are known for their commitment to their work. Gen X-ers (born between 1961 and 1981) strive for a work-life balance and Gen Y-ers (those born between 1982 and 2005) are known for their sense of entitlement, outspokenness, inability to take criticism, and technological sophistication [21].

The retirement of the Baby Boomers will leave employers scrambling to recruit and retain the talent they need. Generation Y may be high maintenance, but are also reported to be potentially the most high-performing generation in history because its members are entering the workplace with more information, greater technological acumen and higher expectations of themselves [19]. To attract workers from this talent pool, an organization needs to understand what makes them tick. They demand fast-track career positioning, work-life balance, positive feedback, training, and innovative technology [21]. The millennial generation (generation Y), is technologically sophisticated and highly comfortable with digital communication. They can thrive in collaborative work environments. Global managers need to understand the unique strengths and weaknesses of each generation and manage the points of friction between them [20].

Leadership by itself is important, but global leadership skills, global mindset and global knowledge are critical. The role of the front-line leader as the driver of retention has been well-recognized [13;18;36;56]. Organizations need to provide and support front-line and executive leadership [48;50]. The role of the front line leader is critical in building employee engagement [9;22;23;63]. Employees see the organization as they see their supervisor and they will stay if they have a good relationship with their supervisor [60]. Therefore, retaining valuable IT employees not only requires an investment in front-line workers, but also an investment in executive leadership. In a growing globally diverse workplace, employers also need to enhance global leadership skills [1]. Global leadership is not the same as domestic leadership [2;6;16] and organizations need to understand the difference and train their employees either through formal training or mentoring and coaching.

Effective employee engagement engenders loyalty and trust. Engagement is defined as the willingness and ability to contribute to the organization’s success and is measured by the way employees connect to their jobs emotionally and rationally [50]. Loyalty, engagement, and employee retention are intertwined, and engagement is clearly important for employee retention [18]. Loyalty itself does not guarantee engagement or employee retention, it is an influence. Organizations need to monitor retention and pay attention to engagement issues so that preventative measures can be taken before someone leaves or becomes disengaged [58]. Retention and engagement knowledge are necessary to build a committed team [58]. These practices are important for both domestic and global teams. However, it can be more challenging to build loyalty and trust in global virtual teams, a challenge we discuss later.

Develop a work environment that works hard to ease employment barriers for talented individuals in the firm. Hiring the best talent internationally means the employer has to be ready to move people to wherever they are effective in the organization. Easing
the pain for international talent to work abroad is critical to achieve this goal [11]. Furthermore, talent should be nurtured and encouraged to rise to the highest ranks of the global firm regardless of their origin. Many examples in global firms such as Pepsi illustrate the success of global migration of executives. Not many examples of IT executives moving from global parts of a company are documented.

**Effective team and community building within the global firm engender retention.** A strong sense of community offers global employees a “sense of belonging”, as stated in one of the interviews, and is important for not only retaining employees, but also engaging them. Trust, social activities, and an environment that supports communication and listening are important to building a strong community. Using IT tools such as social media to build community networks can allow employees to continually be in touch with each other and feel a strong part of a far-flung firm or team.

One interview participant’s opinion about cultural assimilation is exemplified in the following statement, “it is important to try and make them part of the culture.” The subject affirmed that it is difficult to build community with remote workers. He discussed the importance of bringing remote workers to the corporate office to make them feel like they are part of the organization.

**Engendering trust in global IT employees is a challenge, but extremely important for retention.** Cooperation and trust play a large role in determining employee retention [10]. It is important that employees trust their team members, their supervisor, and the company [58]. Trust and loyalty are closely tied together. Loss of loyalty is the result of loss of trust [18]. Loyalty starts with trust and trust is on the decline [18]. Trust in management continues to fall in many professions [62]. Trust in management continues to fall in many professions (op. cit). The increased importance of trust may also reflect the growing usage of global virtual teams in the IT profession. Many organizations are utilizing virtual teams to bring together a distributed workforce. One of the challenges of working in a virtual team is the lack of face-to-face interaction with team members, which is necessary to build trust.

**Encouraging informal and formal social activities, helps build a sense of community.** Typically, IT work is characterized by project orientation, and therefore, building a team spirit is important and can be achieved through various social activities [3]. Social activities also help IT workers suffering under stress and burnout to better balance their professional and personal lives [4]. Such activities provide a basis for trust building among coworkers, which can be important in retaining IT staff [40]. Given the project-oriented nature of IT work, mechanisms for sharing information internally can help IT staff see the big picture of where their work fits into the overall organization [3]. Formal social opportunities provide IT staff with opportunities to interact with each other and build a sense of community [3]. This can also help teams succeed in high-pressure deadline situations [3]. Community building not only improves retention, but can also positively affect productivity and collaboration [3]. Social activities and community building are important to both domestic and global teams. While it may be easier to promote social activities with domestic teams, both synchronous and asynchronous technologies and social media can promote community building in global teams.

**Employers must communicate and listen to employees on a regular basis.** Communication between managers and employees through formal and informal interactions is very important to IT professionals. Although IT personnel are known for being independent in character relative to non-IT personnel, communication is important [34]. This is even more vital when employees can feel isolated in globally dispersed organizations. Employees want their supervisors to provide open and honest information on the organization’s mission, policies and practices [31]. Employers should also communicate effectively to team members regarding retention and engagement issues [58]. Communication and listening builds esteem in team members [58] and ultimately impacts success. Therefore, it is important that employers spend time both communicating and listening to their employees [50;51;58].

We interviewed a CTO of a globally dispersed IT organization who told us how he encourages freedom of communication with an informal, flat, organizational structure. This structure supports communication at various levels and employees are not limited to hierarchical communication. IM is used to support such communication where employees have direct access to the CTO’s phone number. Although employees can communicate to any level the tension between levels remains a challenge.

**Employers must be cognizant of and willing to allow for lifestyle accommodations of employees in globally dispersed organizations.** Flexibility and work-life balance are central to the goal of retention [31;34]. Most IT employees want a strong balance between managing work, life and family. The
importance of this cuts across generations and professions. Quality of life is important for all employees across all cultures. Some cultures emphasize this balance more so than others do. With the large growing global workforce, particularly in IT, it is important to accommodate the needs of culturally diverse employees. For example, it has been shown that those organizations with large existing immigrant populations providing a natural social support system for new arrivals are more competitive than those that do not [50;64]. Companies can support this desire by offering technology that allows employees the flexibility to work anywhere anytime through remote access and telecommuting. Technology can provide employees the opportunity to be connected from anywhere at any time. However, this can also present a challenge because it can blur the separation between work and family. In our example firm, this flexible work ecosystem is provided and supported using technologies that included various collaboration tools (SharePoint, WebEx), and a number of communication tools such as IM, email, facebook cell phone, Twitter and Skype. These are accessible to employees both at work and at home.

Organizations today are very likely to use global virtual teams (GVTs) to bring together a geographically dispersed workforce. GVTs can also be used to provide flexible work environments to employees. Using technology within the context of virtual teams allows more team members to work from home [18]. However, not all the best and the brightest employees are at the same level of preparedness for an ever changing environment [31]. There is a small, but growing, group of people who are technologically advanced but socially inept [31]. Therefore, employers should form these virtual teams carefully. The opportunity to participate in telework programs and policies that allow employees to work flexible hours is particularly important for IT professionals.

IT professionals are no different from other employees in terms of career development. One of the interview participants indicated that “important career development opportunities depend on the person rather than the job, whether it is IT, sales, or marketing.” Another subject reinforced this statement indicating that “career development is important to all of our employees and we try to offer career development opportunities that are relevant to the job.” One way to retain and attract IT talent is to offer workers ample avenues to further their careers and learn new technologies and skills. Star performers are critical for the IT industry and it is important to reward them proportionately. This includes providing opportunities for learning and growing, rewarding top performers and advancement opportunities.

Career development activities must include ways for employees to learn and grow within the organization. Organizations should develop a culture of learning and growing [31;50]. Such a culture develops and coaches team members to help them grow resulting in greater commitment and loyalty to the organization [58]. Some companies perform mid-year and end-of-year talent reviews to identify key people for succession planning.

This may include setting objectives for employees. Another way to reward performance is to provide perks. In our example company, the CTO reported that they offer employees various toys and gadgets, which are perceived as status symbols by employees. For example, new technologies such as iPhones and iPads are given to employees as an incentive for delivering on projects. In addition, social networking tools such as Facebook and Twitter are part of the enterprise and are available for all to use. They also offer training such as online or on-site training and attendance of hardware and software vendor conferences.

Another option is to provide mentors and advisors to employees [53]. Being a mentor and an advisor is what sets leaders apart from managers [53]. Globally dispersed workers require special attention as their sense of isolation can be reduced through opportunities to interact with other employees such as, mentoring, coaching, education and training. Mentors may assist local and remote workers and help them become familiar with the organizational culture and coach them to further develop their skills relevant to the firm. Formal and informal training are additional methods for offering employees the ability to learn new skills and grow professionally.

Rewarding performance is a sure fire way of getting the attention of it employees. Applauding a job well done is important for both domestic and global employees [53]. Employees will leave a company if they do not feel their work is appreciated (op cit.). Employers should consider creative ways to acknowledge and reward outstanding performs. Such rewards for performance will have to be varied based on generational differences between employees – baby boomers may look for rewards that our different than generation Y. Salary is one of the most obvious elements of competitiveness in any labor market,
especially when comparing developed and developing countries [50;64]. However, it is important to note that salary is important, but not a driving factor for many employees (op cit.). Additional monetary rewards beyond base salary such as competitive benefits and bonuses and other ad hoc inducements are also important [3]. When using pay to reward performance, increases need to be linked to individual performance [50]. Employers need to do a better job of measuring performance and tying rewards to performance [15].

The bottom line about pay is that even though it is not a driving factor, a lack of competitive salary and benefits may cause job dissatisfaction, which in turn can affect job turnover [27]. Employers need to offer competitive pay along with competitive benefits.

Employees need to be rewarded for their contributions, but non-monetary rewards are just as important. Motivational fit plays a large role in determining employee retention [10]. It is important to motivate employees in various ways including acknowledging their contributions [48]. High performance and high potential individuals need accelerated development, exposure to different cultures, appropriate rewards and opportunities to keep them learning and growing [30]. It is also important to recognize contributions of those who are high performers but will not progress to another role (op cit.). Global workers may be out of sight but need to be incentivized in similar ways as collocated workers.

**Attracting and retaining top talent requires employers to offer a diversity of career opportunities.** Employers need to provide an abundance of opportunities to their top talent [53]. Career advancement opportunities should be clearly communicated to all employers in the global workforce [50]. This means providing opportunities for the top IT employees to build not only technical skills but also leadership, managerial and business skills that will enable them to advance in the organization anywhere in the world [3].

5. Future research

By combining previous literature and current data obtained through structured interviews, we have highlighted critical best practices for retaining global IT employees. Future research is needed to examine the influence of demographic variables mediated by perceived job characteristics on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions of IT professionals. Specifically, future research could explore the following issues:

1. What is the relationship between job characteristics and career satisfaction, role stressors, and career performance?
2. What are the differences in the relationship of demographic variables, career performance, career satisfaction, job characteristics, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions between IT and non-IT professionals?

An employee’s stated intention of leaving (“turnover intentions”) an organization has been identified by many researchers as a much stronger predictor of actual turnover behavior than other affective variables such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment [33;46;62]. However, research also shows that the strength of the relationship widely varies across studies (see for example: [35;57]). Despite this variation in results, researchers continue to use intent to quit an organization as a reasonable surrogate for actual turnover behavior. On this basis, researchers have explored the antecedents of IT turnover intentions and produced evidence to show that demographic variables, role stressors, career satisfaction, and career-related variables such as salary, perceived promotability, and extraorganizational career opportunities have a relationship with job satisfaction and impact turnover intentions directly and through organizational commitment (see e.g., [27;29]). There is some evidence in organizational behavior, psychology and IS literature to indicate that variables such as intrinsic job characteristics (e.g., skill variety, task identity, task significance, job autonomy, supportive supervisor and communication quality), personality (e.g., self esteem, locus of control, generalized self-efficacy) and quality of work life (e.g., burnout, social interaction, and work schedule) can also impact organizational commitment, job satisfaction and potentially mediate the influence of demographic variables on an individual’s intent to leave (see for example: [5;27;28;29]). However, there has been little further research in the IS field to enhance and evaluate the various antecedents of job satisfaction and turnover intentions developed in the early 1990s.

Future research is needed to evaluate the various effects on job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Figure 2 offers a model for future research. This model is based on the “model of turnover intentions” developed by Igbaria and Greenhaus (1992), with a few enhancements. The Igbaria model contains demographic variables, role stressors, and job characteristics, which we refer to as non-monetary (intrinsic) characteristics. Their model also includes job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intentions, similar to ours. We have added...
turnover behavior to our model. Turnover behavior is the result of turnover intentions. We also felt it was important to add non-monetary job characteristics as a mediating variable as they can mediate the influence of demographic variables on an individual’s intent to leave (e.g. [5;27;28;29]). There is some evidence that demographic variables can mediate one’s intent to leave. We have included that mediating relationship as well.

Figure 2. Model of IT Turnover Intentions

Several potential future research questions arise. For example, do job characteristics directly influence turnover intentions? Which demographic characteristics directly influence turnover intentions? Do role stressors have a direct influence on job characteristics?

The phenomenon under study is the retention of global IT professionals and the research question is well suited to a survey approach. Therefore, we recommend that the next step in the research process is to employ a survey methodology to further validate the best practices we have identified here. A detailed survey instrument will be designed based on a priori research in the literature and the information collected from the interviews. The survey should be preceded by a pilot study involving interviews within various organizations.

6. Conclusion

The growing need for IT professionals combined with a shrinking labor pool has made recruitment and retention of IT talent a top priority in many organizations. Forward thinking companies are looking to find and retain qualified IT talent wherever in the world it is available at a reasonable price. The best practices and lessons learned reported in this chapter are derived from various findings reported in the literature and interviews with two senior IT executives of globally-oriented firms. They can form the basis for practitioners to develop their own thinking in their particular context.

7. References


[34] Laumer, S. (2009). Non-Monetary Solutions for Retaining the IT Workforce, *Americas Conference on..."


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i An earlier version of this paper has been accepted as a book chapter for Luftman, J. (forthcoming) “Managing IT Human Resources: Considerations for Organizations and Personnel.” Permission has been taken from the handbook’s editor to include material from the chapter in this conference paper.”