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Contact center firms urged to invest more

By Louella D. Desiderio | Updated March 17, 2012 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines - Contact centers in the country will have to invest more in programs focused on their employees to encourage them to stay in the company and provide better service to customers, a top executive of a contact center service provider said.

Speaking at the Asia CEO Forum held on Thursday, David Rizzo, president for Asia Pacific of Teleperformance said that investing in retention activities need to be done by contact center firms that intend to continue to grow their business given the number of employees choosing to leave the industry and the high competition among firms in finding workers.

"It is very critical to focus on retention initiatives to ensure not having to replace the employment pool while growing at the same time," he said.

He said that employees in contact centers leave for reasons often related to the job.

He cited that some employees opt to leave the business due to the overnight work hours which they may not be used to or the stress caused by customers who may be challenging to handle.

He said that customers who receive an incorrect bill, for instance, may be hard to deal with particularly when they start complaining and taking their anger on the call center agent.

Some employees, he also said, leave the job because they find the work too technical or unable to meet their expectations.

He noted that in the industry, the employee retention rate ranges from 40 to 80 percent.

Given the limited supply of talent available in the market and the high competition among contact center firms for supply of workers, he said, investing in programs that keep employees satisfied with their job becomes even more important.

He said that contact center firms can for instance, provide spaces for recreation in the workplace such as gym, sports facilities and karaoke rooms, which their employees can use.

Contact center firms, he also said, can offer employees who cannot work overnight a daytime shift.

Career management programs, he said, may also be developed by contact centers for their employees.

He said that while investing more in employee-engagement programs may mean additional costs for the company, it is expected to yield results favorable to the company since its workforce is its main asset.

"We are not going to let price pressures get in the way of investing in our people. After all, happy employees translate to happy customers," he said.

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