

Quiet hiring and the boomerang employee

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A recent report on trends from consulting firm Gartner suggests that in the wake of 'quiet quitting', human resource (HR) managers have turned this concept on its head and will in 2023 apply 'quiet hiring'.



Image source: Getty Images

Quiet quitting is when employees perform the minimum required in their employment contract and do not go 'above and beyond' in their work. Quiet hiring, on the other hand, is where employees are temporarily moved within the organisation. In some instances, it can also mean that someone with the necessary skill is offered a short-term contract, instead of new, fixed appointments being made.

Enter the boomerang employee: someone who has left an employer to pursue different career goals and higher salaries, but after a time returns to the original employer as they have come to realise the grass is not greener on the other side. The concept of the boomerang employee is not new. However, combined with quiet hiring, it is changing the strategies HR managers use to hire talent.

The boomerang talent pool offers many benefits to the organisation:

- A past employee already understands the company culture, policies and procedures, and the systems in operation.
- An employee returning to the organisation has gained new skills and possibly a deeper appreciation of the culture and opportunities of the company.
- A study by Workplace Trends also highlighted that boomerang employees remain at the organisation longer than other new hires.

Considering South Africa's dire skills gap, it may be worthwhile for HR managers to begin to tap into boomerang talent pools, such as setting up alumni networks and maintaining engagement with promising and skilled employees who are exiting the organisation.

Another untapped talent pool is the number of skilled South African emigrants making their way back to their homeland, as well as the various work-visa programmes being offered to non-citizens to live and work in South Africa. There is much that can be done to attract South African employees back to the country, such as active international campaigns or even keeping a database of graduates who are pursuing their careers internationally.

One must also remember there was a reason why the boomerang employee left the organisation in the first place. Organisations should pay close attention to the reasons and make necessary adjustments in the workplace to be able to offer a boomerang employee a real alternative to the greener pasture.



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