

16 April 2020

Good morning, Ashish

I refer to the proposal for expressing Appreciation for Services provided by Antara Staff. I have raised this issue before and am very glad that a “Staff Welfare Fund” now exists.

2. I have advised Rajesh that quite apart from the Rs. 5000 mooted in this first instance with regard to Residents’ appreciation of services provided during the COVIND19 lockdown – I have deposited this into the specified account - I am happy to contribute henceforth Rs.5000 per month to the Fund.

3. It is none of my business – repeat, none of my business – about how Antara runs the Fund. That said, and in the context of professional advice I give to enterprises for optimising the value of similar ‘Staff Funds’, I offer the following comments to the Antara Management.

4. It is a common practice in enterprises – from Australia to Indonesia to India – to ‘express appreciation’ to staff by holding parties, dinners etc., using the Welfare Fund. However, such events add nothing to “staff welfare”; money contributed with good intentions is consumed with good intentions. Apart from a few hours of merriment between donors, staff and management, nothing substantive of value is added to “staff welfare”.

5. Based on my work elsewhere, I believe that there is an excellent opportunity here in Antara to actually use donated moneys to actually enhance Staff Welfare.

6. The Antara resident community consists of some of the brightest brains in India with backgrounds in business, management, academia, diplomacy, etc. At the same time, Antara has some of the best trained (young) staff who are as aspirational as any in the world wishing to further their careers in hospitality industry or whatever other. They have dreams, but need guidance on how to advance themselves. In turn, Antara Residents have the experience and the know-how – and presumably the time - to counsel and mentor them. Why should their expertise lay fallow?

- 7.** Once a pattern of career interests emerges, the Fund can be used to hire relevant professional advisors to run workshops, counselling sessions, etc. There can also be personal mentoring. This will assist in building foundations for career advancement of aspirational, enthusiastic and loyal staff members – to advance individual Indians and India as a whole. I would imagine that the generous denizens of Antara would be willing to share their experiences to support such an initiative.
- 8.** Quite apart from anything else, such an activity would complement all the other events you encourage for developing a cohesive community with shared interests.
- 9.** In the final analysis, the Equation is simple: Antara’s vision is to help “seniors improve and enrich their quality of life”, and to create a platform for “a positive social impact and enriching the quality of every life it touches”. Equally, these objectives cannot be achieved without corresponding commitment to them by its Management and Staff on the ground, whose “life it (also) touches”.
- 10.** In effect, the “Antara Community” consists not only of Residents but also of its Staff and it is vital to recognise that fact to advance mutually beneficial goals.
- 11.** Ashish, I would be willing to volunteer in developing a framework for this initiative should it be considered worthwhile.
- 12.** [One word of caution though: A similar proposal 3 years ago was emphatically rejected by a MD on the grounds that there was no point in “giving choices to good staff”; they might leave and “we will have to start all over again”.]

Rakesh