

When sky is your limit, how far will you go?

“The bad news is that time flies, the good news is that you’re the pilot.”

~Michel altshuler

What is promotion? If you ask this question from a common man the answer will be giving the meaning of enhancement, up gradation, upliftment and elevation in the status or the position, the person is already having. Going back to the history, the promotion became relevant for the defense personnel more than anybody else because the promotion used to link with the change in role, responsibility and authority.

Coming to the aviation sector, it is known with power, position and authority. Basically, promotions are identified as various ladders in the triangle of hierarchy where the bottom is broad with narrow apex. Everybody wants promotion in life, whether he is a professional or not. Even a housewife requires change in status. She becomes a mother to get authority for commanding children and with a span of time as mother-in-law she gets greater command over the daughter-in-law and it goes on to the stage of becoming a grandmother. The idea of giving these examples is to generalize the issue for easy acceptability.

Now let us talk in terms of today’s aviation scenario where the changes have occurred in leaps and bounds with the objective performance appraisal and compensation management, especially when financial incentives are losing its charm. There are large numbers of professionals who are having monotonous job throughout their life in spite of stepping up in the ladder of hierarchy like Air Traffic Controllers, Pilots and the women working in the ground support services. Now the question comes whether everybody wants promotion and if the channels are not available, what should be the alternative to have self promotion.

It is in the hands of boss to generate the feeling of self promotion in his subordinate. Again the core issue comes to my mind as to “What is promotion? Much away from the general concept of designation. Yes, promotion is having the meanings which are relative and naturally differs from person to person depending upon his priorities, value, upbringing, interests and also influence on his emotional and psychological state of mind.

I experienced that not everybody is ready for promotion, it all depends on “At what cost? Am I ready for promotion at the cost of my ethical values? Certainly the answer will be “NO” yes the answer is a BIG NO. There are people whose hobby is profession, the lucky persons “very few now”. Can you lure them? They have their own definition of promotion, yes they want promotion of their skills in the form of enhancement to acquire expertise. I have analysed this issue from different dimensions, especially when the roles are changing and human resource management is becoming pre-dominant. The idea is

to have optimum utilization of available human resource in order to achieve organizational objectives and to pay in correlation with performance. Your boss becomes the most important person for giving the real meanings of promotion rather he becomes a catalyst and sole inspirer for motivating the subordinates by generating the feeling of self-promotion.

Now let me talk about the methodology which was adopted by me while dealing with Human relations at all metros Airports of the country as head of HR discipline dealing with thousands of employees. I may recall that as a manager I had a stenographer with me. Now, crossing the ladders of hierarchy as General Manager today I find the same stenographer with me as my secretary with no change in her job profile. She says, Sir, you have enjoyed at least 7-8 promotions with power, position and change in responsibility & authority, but look at my level, I was coming to you for a dictation 25 years back with a short-hand book to type the same on typewriter. Now, today as your secretary, nothing has changed except that you are speaking and I am typing on computer directly though today, my designation is Manager (PS) which was there earlier as Stenographer. Is it a promotion for me? What meaning I should give?

The above experience made me to think about the self promotion methodology. How we can achieve that? Yes, the answer is affirmative. In the aviation sector it is not possible to have the hierarchy like bureaucrats, police and defense personnel. Here my endeavor is to think about self promotion as to how one can achieve? The majority of evocations are giving opportunity by offering visible promotions.

There is a triangle for elevation with the broad base and narrow apex. Everybody cannot reach to the top. The aviation sector is having lot of challenges, glamour and excitement. You enjoy a job right from the stage of trainee as a pilot, air traffic controller, Airport manager, electronics engineer, fire personnel, ground handler and for that matter any position in the hierarchy at air site or terminal building. Instead of crying and feeling dissatisfied you need to enjoy the job because everything is related to your age, energy level and comfort zones. Here, the family life is important. A pilot, air traffic controller and shift duty Airport manager do not carry any problem to his home, after finishing the duty. This is the most fascinating aspect of aviation working.

Now, how one can feel self-promotion and what can be the methodology for achieving this line of action. I feel that the Boss can play an important role in making the self-promotion concept as a reality. When you have full faith, trust and confidence in your subordinate than why you cannot delegate the authority. The head of the institution delegates authority to his immediate subordinate without giving promotion in a formal manner. But by giving some freedom of decision making and exercise of financial powers on your behalf can really make him to experience promotion within himself. The self-confidence, self-esteem and self-respect are the key words for enjoying self-promotion. This can only work, if there is constant and willing support.

Now again, I come back to the core issue of "Are you ready for promotion? Well, while undertaking my research for management of Stress by different professionals, I observed from the responses to my detailed questionnaire that it is not non promotion which comes as stressor for most of the professionals but it is job dissatisfaction which is the cause of stress.

Let me touch the most important aspect of this article where I am going to talk about the people who are not interested in the promotion though they are eligible to rise in the ladder of hierarchy. Let me take the example of a ground handling staff who is qualified and experienced, the management conducts the departmental examination and he successfully qualify in the written examination, group discussion and interview. Finally, based on his merit, he is offered promotional transfer but he declines the promotion and prefer to remain at the same Airport. Over a period of time a situation comes when his colleague who accepted promotion come back with power, authority as Airport manager to old station as his boss. It is quite surprising that the concerned employee is not feeling demotivated or frustrated because it was his own decision to decline the promotion and he was well aware about the pros and cons. According to him, the family commitments and stability at a particular place was more important rather than promotion. Moreover, passenger facilitation, interaction with the new people every day, modernization of the system with advanced technologies gives him unique excitement and he enjoys the job. He is comfortable because financially there is hardly any difference in his salary as compared to his boss. How do we justify this position?

I have seen while working as HR Head at the International Airports at Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai that a large number of subordinates are there who are qualified, hard working, and sincere, with required job knowledge and having a great amount of potential to grow in the ladder of hierarchy. But still they refuse and decline promotion and prefer to remain at subordinate position because the life after duty hours is more important for them. It was a great surprise seeing their batchmates as their bosses who have accepted promotion, but it is not generating any inferiority complex to them. They do not lose self-esteem, they do not compromise with their work. I could not observe any frustration in their mind reflected in the work for not getting the promotion. Rather with pride they say "I refused promotion because I love my job and my Airport".

Lastly, I would like to summarize that promotion should be given the meaning not as a word but as a meaning which differs out of sensibility of a person. I say words have no meanings but we give meanings to the words. I write here the alphabets "GODISNOWHERE" Now, take the meaning GOD IS NOW HERE or GOD IS NO WHERE, it is all individual perception. Similarly, promotion or non-promotion, the meanings are in your hand as you take it. Enjoy your job like a hobby, aviation is the only field where multi-skilling works.

At a small Airport like Agatti at Lakshadweep Islands, you can find air traffic controller performing the multiple jobs of commercial, finance, human resource, public relation and what not. Besides doing his primary job of air traffic controller you cannot imagine the satisfaction level and contentment he enjoys as a real Aerodrome Controller. We can comfortably say that in the aviation industry it's the job which matters not the promotion. You have a feeling of fulfillment by achieving your goal, i.e., passenger facilitation. After all, our salary comes from the ticket purchased by a passenger.
