

# Navigating HR Complexity During Organizational Scaling: A Case Study from the Indian QSR Sector

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**Abstract.** This case study explores the challenges of managing human resources during rapid organizational scaling through the story of Vishal, an Assistant Manager at Quick Bites. Despite having the right credentials, Vishal resigned within a month of employment due to rigid HR policies and a lack of empathetic leadership. The case highlights the interplay between organizational expansion goals and employee expectations, emphasizing the consequences of misalignment. It also presents the perspective of Ruby, a pressured HR professional tasked with navigating policy constraints and complying with operational urgency. The study offers rich insights into the importance of psychological contracts, leadership empathy, and retention-focused HR strategies. This case study is a fictionalized scenario developed for academic discussion and teaching purposes. Any resemblance to real organizations or individuals is purely coincidental.

**Keywords:** employee attrition, HR policy, servant leadership, psychological contract, QSR industry, organizational empathy.

## 1. Vishal's Resignation

Vishal, an Assistant Manager at Quick Bites, submitted his resignation within one month of completing his training program. Upon completion of training, he was transferred to Bangalore without prior consultation, in accordance with the company's deployment policy. The relocation conflicted with his personal circumstances and career plans, and his request for reconsideration was not accommodated. Despite his experience and initial performance during training, the posting decision remained unchanged. Within weeks of joining his assigned store, Vishal disengaged and exited the organization.

At the corporate office in Delhi, Ruby, an HR professional at Quick Bites, prepared to report Vishal's resignation to senior management. His exit was one among several early-tenure resignations occurring during the company's expansion phase. Although Ruby had facilitated Vishal's recruitment and training and had limited authority over deployment decisions, she was required to account for the attrition outcome within an HR system that emphasized policy compliance and hiring targets over post-deployment flexibility.

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## **2. The Meeting**

Vishal's resignation highlighted underlying challenges in Quick Bites' human resource management approach during a period of aggressive organizational growth. While the exit created immediate operational disruption, it also pointed to a broader systemic issue: expansion strategies that prioritized speed and standardization over employee alignment and support.

During internal discussions, Ruby and Saket, a senior operations manager, identified the company's rigid deployment policy as a recurring source of dissatisfaction. Employees were frequently transferred across locations with limited consideration of personal circumstances, and communication regarding postings was minimal. This lack of flexibility and support contributed to disengagement, early attrition, and increasing strain on the organization's expansion plans.

## **3. About Quick Bites**

Quick Bites (a fictional name) was a large Quick-Service Restaurant (QSR) chain in India, operating 130 outlets across 19 cities and generating approximately USD 30 million in annual revenue, with a year-on-year growth rate of 16%. Of its total outlets, 69 were located in southern India. As part of its strategic roadmap, the company planned to expand to 470 outlets over the following seven years. With a legacy spanning more than six decades, Quick Bites combined the characteristics of a heritage brand with the operational demands of rapid national expansion, requiring standardized processes, consistent service delivery, and accelerated talent acquisition across locations.

## **4. The Indian QSR Industry and Workforce Context**

The Indian restaurant industry, particularly the QSR segment, had expanded rapidly over the previous decade, driven by urbanization, changing consumer lifestyles, exposure to global food cultures, and increased disposable incomes. While this growth had created significant business opportunities, it had also intensified workforce challenges. High attrition rates, especially at frontline and supervisory levels, had become a defining feature of the sector.

Prior research highlights the organizational costs of workforce instability in labor-intensive service industries. Lepak and Snell (1999) note that employee turnover is particularly costly where service consistency and tacit knowledge are critical. Similarly, Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) observe that high churn disrupts team cohesion and service quality, ultimately affecting customer experience and