

CES Conference, Geneva, September 2010  
Forum on Human Resources and Training

Actions to retain and motivate new staff at the  
Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics – IBGE

Antonio Fernando de Andrade Alves, Sérgio da Costa Côrtes  
[antonio.alves@ibge.gov.br](mailto:antonio.alves@ibge.gov.br); [sergio.cortes@ibge.gov.br](mailto:sergio.cortes@ibge.gov.br)

## Abstract

This paper presents the main actions taken in the last ten years at IBGE aiming at retain and motivate newly admitted staff, offering them an opportunity to grow academically, professionally and personally.

## 1. Introduction

Brazil is a continental country, with an extension of 8,514,876 Km<sup>2</sup> and a population of over 194 million inhabitants. It is politically divided into 26 States, a Federal District and 5,565 municipalities.

IBGE is an institution ruled by the Federal Government. It is 74 years old and its mission is to portray Brazil by providing the information required to the understanding of its reality and the exercise of citizenship.

Acting in the whole national territory, IBGE holds physical facilities in the 26 Brazilian States and in the Federal District. It also has 532 data collection and information dissemination agencies.

IBGE coordinates the Brazilian statistics system, carrying out many statistics surveys in the economics, social and population fields. An important feature, which sets IBGE apart from other statistics institutes around the world, is that it is also responsible for the production of geographic, cartographic, geodetic, natural resources and environmental information. It has also created and been in charge of a statistics school for the past 54 years. The school presently offers graduation, post-graduation and specialization courses in statistics.

In order to carry out all these activities, IBGE's workforce is made of permanent and temporary civil servants. The permanent ones, also known as "active federal civil servants", are the bulk of IBGE workforce. They are hired through a national selection and can build a career in the institution, with an indefinite appointment. Many of them stay until they retire. On the other hand, temporary staff is selected through a simplified selection process and their contracts cannot exceed 2 years.

As of July 2010 IBGE has 7,169 permanent and 2,862 temporary staff to collect data in all the national territory, besides 221 trainees posted mainly at HQ.

The scope of this paper is related to the actions taken to attract and, moreover, retain the 7,169 permanent staff.

## **2. Understanding the origin of IBGE's workforce**

A key determiner in the formation of IBGE's workforce was its customary activity of carrying out a census until the 90's. Every 10 years IBGE carries out the demographic census (housing and population). Until the 90's it did agricultural and economic censuses (industry, trade, services, civil construction, transportation, insurance and financial institutes) every 5 years (those ending in 0 and 5).

Until the 80's, despite the high technology of the IBM mainframe computers used for counting and reviewing IBGE researches, there was neither equipment nor technology for the gathering and entry of data. We used to say there were lots of arms but little brain. In a demographic census, for instance, 1,500 people were needed to prepare the questions (codification) and 2,000 more to entry the data (typing).

Along the change in the labor legislation and the implementation of the "unified legal status" to Brazilian civil servants in 1990, determined by the new Brazilian Constitution, many of these people were compulsorily absorbed into IBGE as permanent civil servant, forming a great contingent of people with little academic background (at most high school or technical education).

With modern technology and equipment, mainly for data gathering, such as personal digital assistant (pda), tablet, smart phones, netbooks and notebooks, and the development of intelligent software for data gathering, review and accountability, the profile of new employees at IBGE will change: graduated people for the planning, management, HR, logistics, communication, infrastructure, statistics, informatics, dissemination and geosciences activities; and technicians restricted to administrative support, computer operation, infrastructure and data gathering in housing researches and census. We already have more brain than arms.

Another key factor for the constitution of IBGE's workforce, since 1990 as well, was the mandatory use of national public selection to hire new people.

## **3. IBGE's workforce between 2001 and 2010**

As of July 2010 IBGE has 7,169 permanent staff divided into two groups: 1,766 graduated and 5,403 middle level.

After a 10 year prohibition of hiring new staff (between 1991 and 2000) IBGE was authorized in 2001 to make public selections and hired, as of July 2010, 1,930 new staff as follows:

**TABLE 1 – Admission of new staff in the last decade**

	2002	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
Graduated staff	687	107				13	352	<b>1,159</b>
Middle level staff			649	117	122			<b>888</b>
Total new staff	687	107	649	117	122	13	352	<b>2,047</b>

In order to better evaluate the actions taken to retain those admitted in the past 10 years it is necessary to look at their term of service, according to the educational level. This can be seen in the table below.

**TABLE 2 – Term of service – Graduated level**

Years of service	Graduated staff	Cumulative frequencies	%	Cumulative %
less than 5	336	336	19,03	19.03
5 to 10	542	878	30,69	49.72
11 to 20	56	934	3,17	52.89
21 to 25	214	1148	12,12	65.01
26 to 30	271	1419	15,35	80.35
31 to 35	240	1659	13,59	93.94
over 35	107	1766	6,06	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>1766</b>		<b>100</b>	

Table 2 shows that out of the 1,159 graduated staff admitted into IBGE between 2001 and 2010, 878 were kept, which represents an evasion of 24.3%. It is important to mention that the ones who quitted did so after 2 years of work, which is the validity of the public selection, making it impossible to hire another person for that vacancy.

In the same period (10 years) out of the 888 middle level staff admitted into IBGE between 2001 and 2010, 827 were kept, which represents an evasion of 6.89%.

**TABLE 3 - Term of Service – Middle level**

Years of service	Middle level staff	Cumulative frequencies	%	Cumulative %
less than 5	797	797	14.75	14.75
5 to 10	30	827	0.56	15.31
11 to 20	58	885	1.07	16.38
21 to 25	1007	1892	18.64	35.02
26 to 30	1802	3694	33.35	68.37
31 to 35	1417	5111	26.23	94.6
over 35	292	5403	5.4	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>5403</b>		<b>100</b>	

Taking into consideration the total number of employees, one can see that out of the 2,047 new staff 1,705 were kept, which represents an evasion of 16.7%.

The attraction and retention of talents are considered strategic by the IBGE management and have guided its HR politics.

Because of the long time it could not hire new people due to governmental decisions, which will not be analyzed here, IBGE has passively seen the progressive aging of its workforce. Despite having hired 2,047 people in the last 8 years, around 75% of its workforce has been in service for more than 20 years and about 22% could retire already.

To face this situation, increase staff satisfaction and prevent them to seek employment in other public or private institutions, IBGE has implemented and improved a set of actions as part of its present politics of talents retention.

#### **4. Actions taken to retain talents**

Keeping the workforce of a company is a big challenge for any institution, whether private or public. In recent years, the area of Human Resources began to assume a fundamental role, especially the study and use of techniques towards the human being, considering their values, needs, abilities, fears and desires, making evident that institutions are made of and by people. If they are not happy to work in their business nor proud of their companies they will fail to make the most of their abilities, minds and hearts. We will not be able to have our institutes of statistics producing with the efficiency and effectiveness our societies need.

Thus, in order to retain talents we need to develop a set of actions. The ones developed by IBGE are described below:

- a. **Encouraging professional qualification** - In 1993 IBGE included in its career plan a financial incentive for employees with an MBA, Masters or PhD degree in areas of expertise of the institute. This incentive currently represents respectively 10%, 20% and 50% of the basic salary.

The nomination of employees for participation in study programs may be made by the management - to meet a certain lack of training in their teams - or by choice of the employee - depending on their skills and university education. An internal committee evaluates the requests for participation in post-graduate programs, checking the relevance of the course, the training chosen and, especially, the quality of the university. In 90% of the cases people are fully released from their activities for the course, only returning after the conclusion of the thesis or dissertation.

The direct consequence of this investment in people was an increase in the academic qualification of staff and the development of professionals to work in areas previously lacking personnel with high degree of excellence. Considering only the graduated employees, in 2000 13.1% of them had a Master and 3% a PhD degree. In 2010 these figures were 21.5% and 8%, respectively.

In public selections of new staff, an MBA, Master or PhD diploma guarantees points in the composition of the final score, increasing the chance of admission. Thus, in recent selections we had admitted of highly skilled people in their fields.

- b. **Wages consistent with other federal institutions and the labor market** - One of the problems experienced by IBGE until 2005 was the evasion of new employees because of lagging wages in comparison with other institutions of the federal government and the national labor market.

To correct this distortion, the IBGE Board has negotiated with the Ministry of Planning and was authorized to modernize its career plan, proposing a payment consistent with the importance of the work and with that paid by other governmental institutions.

This new career plan was approved and implemented in 2006, resulting in a significant increase in the salaries of IBGE staff. Over a period of three years, wages were increased in a range from 88% to 156%; the most significant increases were concentrated in the lower wages. Its most important objective was to motivate people to join IBGE and remain in its workforce, making a career in the institution.

- c. **Professional growth through performance appraisal** - Since the year 2000 IBGE has individual and institutional performance appraisals which take place every six months. They set goals previously established individually and collectively. Collective goals are set by IBGE Board and widely circulated to all employees. Individual goals are established in the plan of work by each employee and their immediate supervisor.

The results of these appraisals are used both for the payment of a monthly bonus and for the employee's career progression. For the progression it is also taken into account time of service, qualification and participation in training courses. It is at the moment in the regulatory process with the federal government.

- d. **Integration program for new staff** - One of the first activities for new employees is the Integration Program for New Permanent Civil Servants. Its main objective is to make them part of IBGE.

This integration counts with the participation of staff with many years of work. It presents IBGE as a whole and gives a brief description of the jobs carried in the institution, conveying the institutional culture and its ethical values. The President and the whole Board take part in it.

Besides placing the new employee at IBGE, this activity motivates all IBGE staff as they prepare an environment of friendship, respect and companionship in order to welcome new employee and show them how important they are for the future of the institution.

- e. **Possibility to lead a state representation based on competency** - Since 2003 the selection of the Head of the IBGE representation in all 26 states and in the Federal District has been made through an internal selection process, open to all employees.

This process consists of a test to assess the candidates' technical knowledge; an assessment of the professional resume, taking into account previous experiences, such as holding a position of leadership; role plays to observe some of the professional skills necessary; and an interview made by a steering committee.

This selection has motivated employees, both new and old, to come forward when new vacancies open. It is regarded by all as an excellent growth opportunity in the company through their own skills and experience, and an excellent example of fairness and transparency in a selection process.

- f. **Access to a continuous training program** - The provision of training courses for all its employees has always been a problem for IBGE due to its branches being spread throughout the vast Brazilian territory.

The development of training programs used to come up against budgetary and logistical constraints, most often impassable, limiting these programs to employees from headquarters in the city of Rio de Janeiro and at the most in the states capitals.

Since 2008, with the creation of its Virtual School ([escolavirtual.ibge.gov.br](http://escolavirtual.ibge.gov.br)), IBGE has been investing in Distance Learning, having already offered several courses to all employees, regardless of their duty station. In 2009 the program "Certification for the 2010 Census" trained about 4,200 people across the country.

A large scale training strategy has focus in management. Since 2008, 80 people have joined an MBA in Management, also as distance learning, in one of the best management schools in Brazil, which will bring governance capacity for the units located in all the states. Besides this training, 150 managers have attended a leadership program with broad participation of managers from technical areas and the coordinators of state representations.

Besides the regular training programs, various seminars are developed by all directors to present innovations and relevant work for everyone, as well as share experience and bring renowned speakers from outside IBGE to present new growth opportunities.

- g. **Staff health protection program** - IBGE has two actions for the promotion and protection of its staff health and the prevention of diseases, work related or not.

One of these actions is the Periodic Medical Examination (EMP, in Portuguese), accessible to all employees, which consists of clinical and complementary examinations according to gender, age and occupation.

The EMP, which is held every two years, produce important epidemiological information on the health of IBGE employees and give feedback to the health programs of the institution.

The other important initiative is the annual national vaccination campaign against influenza, which this year vaccinated against seasonal and H1N1 influenza.

This campaign is always preceded by lectures and dissemination of information in order to expand the adherence to institutional health programs.

## **5. Conclusion**

Over the last ten years we have observed a shift in focus for new staff, from the remuneration paid by IBGE to the ethical and social values, personal satisfaction in a group and the pursuit of happiness in the workplace. These are some important aspects for retention of new employees:

- a. The opportunity to grow in IBGE;
- b. The possibility of high standard academic education;
- c. A broader networking, both internally and with other statistical offices, the scientific community, universities, research centers and with producers and users of statistics;
- d. Remuneration consistent with other federal agencies and the private sector;
- e. A great work environment with companionship, friendship and a proactive leadership committed to the goals of the institution;
- f. Access to cutting-edge technologies, such as high speed Internet, specific software to carry out the activities and HR systems directed to Web 2.0.

As further evidence that this policy is on track, a recent survey with 350 new employees revealed that for 86.76% of them the main motivation for joining IBGE was the prospect of professional development within the institution.

Retaining talented and skilled people is a big challenge that can only be achieved if the Board, HR and all the technical areas of the Institute of Statistics work together and realize that institutions are made of people, we will not be around forever and that the future success of our institutions depends on who we hire today to make a brilliant career.

## **6. Bibliography**

Borges-Andrade, J. E.;Abbad G.S.; Mourão L et al.. *Treinamento, Desenvolvimento e Educação em Organizações e Trabalho: fundamentos para a gestão de pessoas. Porto Alegre:Artmed, 2006.*

Robbins, S. P. *Comportamento Organizacional. 11 ed. São Paulo: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005.*