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Infosys' cash prizes to beat Bangalore traffic

Sreejiraj Eluvangal. Mumbai



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Ashok Lucose, a 25-year-old who recently joined Infosys' Electronic City campus in Bangalore, always preferred to work early. But a week after he joined Infy last month, he received a mail from HR pointing out some serious financial advantages to doing so.

"In my previous job, I used to work 9 to 5," says Lucose, who lands up at his new workplace by around 7:40 am.

"But I hate sitting in the bus for a long time. Here the rules are that you can start work at any time and, if you start early, you can leave early as well. So I can avoid the rush-hour traffic and save time. But I was pleasantly surprised when I got an email saying that people who come in early can get cash prizes by lots," he says.

Lucose and his colleagues at the Electronics City campus are undergoing a pilot study by Stanford University's Precourt Institute for Energy Efficiency to find out how incentives can bring down transportation costs.

Headed by Balaji Prabhakar, the pilot study measures the impact of cash rewards on work timings.

Under the scheme, employees who report to work before 8 am are eligible for cash rewards of up to Rs 12,000 every week. About Rs 96,000 is on offer every week and 700 people have won prizes, said a presentation by the Stanford professor.

The impact too, has beaten expectations. The Infosys office at Electronics City now sees around 13,500 employees by 8 am, about 3,000 more than before the experiment, called Instant. Thanks to this, buses spend lesser time on the road and the firm saves Rs 20,000 per day in fuel costs.

Studies revealed that buses that start by 7 or 7:15 am typically saved around half an hour due to the lower number of vehicles on the road. "8 to 8:30 am is the peak hour for traffic at the stretch before reaching Electronics City since most of the offices expect their employees to report by around 9," said an Infy employee.
e_sreejiraj@dnaindia.net

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