

Sweeter to be a desi firm employee on Diwali

MOST COMPANIES TIME this bonus around Diwali, but as most MNC employees earn well above the ₹21,000 limit, they are not eligible for this bonus.

But for businesses rooted in India, the cultural connect is higher. For instance, proptech startup NoBroker, whose annual revenue reportedly crossed ₹1,000 crore in FY26, places particular emphasis on celebrating the people who often work behind the scenes. “Diwali begins with the people who are usually the first to arrive and the last to leave: our housekeeping, security, office support, electrical and maintenance teams, almost 250 outsourced staff. We hold a grand celebration in their honour and felicitate them with a gift chosen for its usefulness to them and their families. A festive dinner is organised and everyone is included,” said Amit Kumar Agarwal, CEO of NoBroker.

Last year, the company distributed silver coins, while this year, it has planned gifts worth ₹4,000 each for over 250 outsourced staff, which comes to around 20% of their monthly salary (average



salary around ₹20,000). Shaily Mehrotra, CEO and co-founder of skincare brand Fixderma and FCL (Fixderma Cosmetic Laboratories), said her company is stepping up its festive gifting this year for its workforce of around 700 employees. “We are giving our employees a ₹5,000 Diwali bonus along with a trolley bag. Last year, we shared sweets and dry fruits with the team. We see this as a gesture of appreciation for the hard work and commitment our team brings throughout the year.” The company has a reported revenue of approximately ₹275 crore.

At Gurugram-based FMCG company LT Foods, which has more than 2,700 employees and reported consolidated revenue of ₹11,023 crore for FY26, Diwali

celebrations include cultural activities, a traditional puja and festive gatherings. “Employees receive a box of sweets alongside a special hamper of LT Foods products, besides a Diwali bonus,” said Palash Aggarwal, chief human resources officer at LT Foods.

Experts say MNCs usually follow global practices when it comes to incentives, which are usually linked with performance instead of any particular festival. “The timing and amount of the bonus depend on the company’s internal policies. However, given the cultural significance of some festivals and based on local customs and practices, companies may offer festive gifts or vouchers instead of a cash bonus or align disbursement of bonuses with the festive month,” said Neeraj Agarwala, senior partner, Nanigia & Co, a tax advisory firm. However, any bonus is subject to tax, but if the aggregate value of these gifts remains below ₹15,000 for the entire financial year, they are tax-exempt, said Agarwala. Based on market

experience, Aditya Mishra, MD & CEO, CIEL HR, an HR solutions company, estimates that corporate gifting is growing at an estimated 15-20% annually. “Gifting is becoming a year-round activity, with companies planning budgets in advance. But many traditional Indian companies, especially smaller businesses, continue to offer employees a Diwali bonus alongside festive gifts. For these organisations, the practice is rooted in established traditions and the importance of celebrating festivals with employees. MNCs, on the other hand, generally follow structured compensation cycles, with bonuses linked to individual performance, organisational results, or both.

These payments are typically aligned with the calendar year or financial year rather than a particular festival. This does not necessarily mean that MNCs offer fewer rewards; their approach to employee compensation is organised differently,” said Mishra.