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Danube Group pays back salary cuts to its employees

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The conglomerate has also expanded its workforce to complement its business growth

Dubai - In April 2020, when Rizwan Sajan announced that none of its staff would be laid-off, he was making a statement. This statement is loud and clear - the employee is paramount to any business - as Danube Group, a Dubai-based conglomerate, becomes the first-ever company in the Middle East to return the 30 per cent salary cut of its employees during the Covid-19 pandemic. The salaries cuts of the

months of April and May were reversed across the group. The decision is also complemented by the organisation's decision to rehire over 100 people.

Under and Chairman of Danube Group Rizwan Sajjan, said: "In my last 27 years in this company, we have never deducted a single amount from the salaries of our staff. The pay cut was hurting me. Danube Group is where it is today because of its employees. Whether it is Danube Homes or any other subsidiary of the Group, the staff is really attached to our vision and want to work for the well-being of the company. That is why I wanted to give back to the people working here. Even though it has cost us Dh12mn, we still took that call and I am very happy about it."

At a time when other organisations are either cutting down on their workforce or asking their employees to stay on board without being paid for an indefinite period, this move by Danube Group is no less than a motivation for its staff and its prospective employees. As Covid-19 continues to spread across the globe; businesses are facing weakened financial markets, disruption to workplace operations, and economic uncertainty.

Sajan reiterated: "We have seen unprecedented measures taken by the world to prevent the spread of the disease including mandatory work from home instructions and business shut downs. During this time a decision like this will for sure motivate the employees to go beyond the limit and deliver the best possible result to the organisation."

For the employees, the good news couldn't come at a better time than the festive season to uplift their moods. According to an employee, "We are blessed to be in a company who treats us like a family. We are happy to get the same back in our account."

Sajan added to say that, "Even when the business was totally closed during the lockdown, we maintained cut 30 per cent of the salary from April to June. We understand that survival is very important in a country like this. Even though Danube was losing, we did not let our employees take a hit. Hence was our decision to not layoff any employee. Even as things started getting back to normalcy, construction industry was still slow in picking up. We, however, managed to make some returns but not to the pre-Covid levels. Then we took the decision of paying back the employees the salaries cut that happened in April and May 2020. Those efforts have now translated into us being able to hire more people now and return the salary that was deducted."

On the decision of rehiring, Sajjan said that Danube Group saw a lot of growth in its PPE business that it started during the Covid-19 era, as masks and sanitisers. "These six months have taught us that to focus on our strengths because we also weren't travelling and working on the ground. We found that in many departments there was a scope to grow in tandem with the market demands. This is why we have decided to hire more people while honing on the skills of the existing employees. We are driving to improvise on what we are already doing. That is our focus area at the moment."

Decisions like these are required now more than ever to keep the economy in good shape after taking hits after hits due to this pandemic. Earlier this year, Danube Group also distributed one million dirhams worth of food kits across the UAE among those, who were in need of it either because they had lost their jobs during the outbreak or because they required it as they had not been paid salaries due to the situation caused by the pandemic.



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