



Organisational Insight Report

Understanding attrition at Patil Press

Patil Press Pvt Ltd

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Engagement Type: Organisational Inquiry

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Illustrative Case: Fictional Organisation and Data

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Summary

What was asked

Why are employees leaving production roles at Patil Press and what does evidence suggest would change that?

What was done

142 employees were invited to complete an anonymous survey and 87 responded. 27 employees were invited for an interview and 22 participated. 14 of the interview participants were from the production department.

What was found

High confidence: Production schedule had become difficult to plan around.

76% (31 out of 41) of the respondents in production could not plan their time outside work. During interviews, they described schedules coming later than they used to and even changing after being published. The evidence pointed strongly at unpredictability becoming an issue.

Moderate confidence: Some problems remained unresolved.

Managers were supportive but even after repeatedly escalating concerns, they remained unresolved. Scheduling and equipment issues remained unsolved for long but the evidence does not establish the reasons for the same.

Moderate confidence: Pay did not appear to be the main issue.

Current employees did not indicate pay as a broad issue and multiple interview participants felt that working conditions or scheduling were greater issues than their salary. The 12% pay rise was not irrelevant, employees valued it but it did not address their concerns. It also does not establish why the previous employees left the organisation.

Uncertainty

The inquiry cannot give reasons for the departure of the previous 19 employees. It also cannot determine why some concerns were not solved once they were escalated by the production managers because the managing director and operations director were not interviewed.

What evidence points towards

1. Increase the predictability of the schedule
2. Create clearer ownership for issues that remain unsolved
3. Do not treat a general increase in pay as the only response
4. Fill the gaps in evidence before making a large retention decision

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Question

Initial description of the situation by Patil Press:

“We’re losing production staff faster than we can train them. We put through a 12% increase across production last year specifically to fix it and it barely changed anything. I spoke with HR and they said it might be the current market in which everyone’s poaching. I don’t know if I’m convinced. I need to know whether I’m going to have to pay even more or if something else is going on.”

The agreed question was framed as:

Why are employees leaving production roles at Patil Press and what does evidence suggest would change that?

The focus was on a solution and whether another pay increase was needed to reduce the turnover before it was clear why employees were leaving.

Therefore, the question was reframed to understand why employees were leaving. This opened the investigation to explanations beyond pay and allowed the evidence to determine what really might be contributing to turnover.

Context

Patil Press Pvt Ltd is a single site commercial printing business in India with 142 employees working across Production, Prepress and Design, Sales, Logistics, Administration, Finance and Human Resources.

The business is under second generation leadership and the current Managing Director took over in 2021. A new Operations Director also joined from a larger competitor in early 2024.

In the last 18 months, 19 employees have left the organisation and the turnover has been mainly in the production department. There were several steps taken in response. In March 2025, employees in production received a 12% hike in pay and supervisor training began in September of the same year. Formal HR exit interviews and a referral bonus were also introduced during this period. An additional pay review for production was also considered and it had an estimated annual cost of ₹40 lakh.

Scope

Hence, production was the primary focus of this inquiry but employees across the organisation were included to understand whether other functions were affecting production and to compare it with departments experiencing a lower turnover.

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Method

The inquiry used a mixed-method approach. An anonymous digital survey and semi-structured interviews were analysed together so that the patterns in the survey could be considered along with the experiences of the employees.

The survey used items made specifically for this fictional case. Names, email addresses, IP addresses or any identifying information were not collected. Participants had the option to provide their department or tenure range to support group-level comparisons.

Since the topic of attrition is sensitive, departmental findings were only reported when at least 8 people had responded. So smaller groups remained part of the analysis but were not reported separately to reduce the risk of individual responses being identifiable.

Interview participants were selected purposively to include the perspectives relevant to the inquiry across different departments. Participants received an information sheet and provided consent before taking part. Interviews were audio recorded only with permission and where permission was declined, brief notes were taken during the conversation and expanded afterwards.

All data was treated with confidentiality and participants could withdraw their interview responses until 7 days after the qualitative collection had closed.

Who took part

	Invited	Took part	%
Survey	142	87	61.3
Interviews	27	22	81.5

Table 1: Participation in the inquiry

Participation differed across the organisation. All departments were represented in the survey responses but not every department was reported separately because of the confidentiality threshold. The interviews included employees from several departments but the Production employees on night shift were underrepresented.

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Findings

The findings below combine the survey and interviews. Survey figures describe the collective answers of the respondents while the interviews describe the experiences of the interviewees and are used to understand the pattern.

Note: The interviews are not used to estimate how common something is across the workplace.

Confidence	Meaning
<i>High</i>	It is supported by multiple sources and is recurring across participants or groups.
<i>Moderate</i>	It is supported by the evidence gathered but with a limitation.
<i>Exploratory</i>	It may be important but is not yet sufficiently supported by the available evidence.

Finding 1: Production schedules had become difficult to plan around

Confidence: High

What the evidence showed: Thirty-one of 41 production respondents (76%) disagreed that they could plan their time outside of work and only 5 of 41 (12%) agreed. The responses were concentrated in the disagreement categories. Additionally, 25 out of 41 production respondents (61%) could not see a reason to still be there in 2 years. The survey does not establish that the planning difficulty explains the *intention to stay* result.

The interviews explain the planning difficulty more specifically. Participants in the production department described that they were receiving their shift schedules later than before. In some cases, they were getting the schedules for the following week on Thursday or Friday and said that schedules continued to change even after they were issued. They also mentioned their commitments outside of work were becoming harder to manage. P11 mentioned that schedule notice was reduced from 4 weeks to about a week or less whereas P12 described receiving the scheduling requirements late even while trying to manage requests that employees' had.

The participants that did not have an issue with scheduling refined the finding. A participant did not mention any issue as they preferred their shift. Some found it easier to manage than

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others because their seniority or personal circumstances gave them flexibility. This suggests that the issue was about unpredictability and short notice.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N
I can plan my time outside work.	37% (15)	39% (16)	12% (5)	10% (4)	2% (1)	41

Table 2: Production responses finding 1

“I would leave this job if something better came up.”

“Is there anything here that would make you stay?”

“...knowing my week”

What this may mean: The evidence suggests the loss of predictability and control over time outside of work had become an important difficulty. Shift work seemed manageable when the schedules were not unpredictable.

4 participants directly connected this issue with thoughts about staying or leaving the organisation. However, this evidence does not support generalising this to all the employees in production who responded or to treat scheduling as the only explanation for turnover.

What would change this finding: It would weaken if employees with similarly late or flexible schedules report less difficulty in planning or employees with predictable schedules reported the same problem. A direct survey measure of schedule notice and changes would test it more directly but here it was not possible as the survey was conducted before the interviews.

Finding 2: Problems could be raised without being resolved

Confidence: Moderate

What this evidence showed: Manager access was not a weakness. 28 of 41 respondents in production (68%) agreed that their manager was available when they needed help but if there were issues, solving it was not consistent. 19 out of 41 (46%) agreed that something usually happened when they raised a problem while 12 (29%) disagreed. Responses on whether concerns were taken seriously were divided almost equally: 15 positive, 15 negative and 11 neutral.

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The interviews helped explain the difference. Participants described supervisors as supportive and that they made adjustments or escalated concerns yet the issues being addressed were not solved. This happened in scheduling requests and in equipment problems. P13 said that the scheduling issue was repeatedly raised but nothing came back and so they stopped bringing up the issue.

The machine problem also showed the same pattern. 3 participants stated that problems in the equipment impacted the output but employees were held responsible for it even after the problems were brought up repeatedly.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N
My manager is available when I need help.	5% (2)	12% (5)	15% (6)	46% (19)	22% (9)	41

Table 3: Production responses finding 2

“I kept raising the scheduling issue but nothing happened so I just gave up after a point.”

What this may mean: The evidence suggests that problems might remain unsolved when actions are required which are beyond the authority of managers. They can try to help but the problem can persist.

The evidence does not establish why actions were not taken.

What would change this finding: It would weaken if evidence showed that concerns were usually resolved after escalation. Additionally, if there is evidence that managers had sufficient authority to solve the issue but they consistently chose not to do so.

Finding 3: Pay did not appear to be the core issue for the current employees in the production department

Confidence: Moderate

What the evidence shows: Employees in production were not uniformly satisfied with their pay. 17 out of 41 (41%) were satisfied with their pay, 12 (29%) were neutral and 12 (29%) were dissatisfied with it.

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The interviews also matched the pattern. 5 interviewees said that their pay is not their main concern or that pay is adequate. Another participant mentioned pay being important whereas one described it as being not great but didn't make it their main concern. The participants who spoke about the 12% increase were happy about it but did not describe it as solving other problems that they were experiencing.

However, there is contradictory evidence. P14 believed that pay is still the main reason for the turnover and HR also reported that formal exit interviews had also cited pay as the reason for resignation.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N
I am satisfied with my pay for the work I do.	7% (3)	22% (9)	29% (12)	32% (13)	10% (4)	41

Table 4: Production responses finding 3

“...the pay increase helped a bit but it doesn't change much...”

What this may mean: The evidence suggests that dissatisfaction with pay alone does not explain the other concerns that production employees voiced.

This does not mean that pay is not relevant here. It is possible that better external offers could still be a reason for employees to leave but it was not measured here.

What would change this finding: If evidence from past employees shows that pay was consistently the most significant reason for leaving. Also, if evidence suggests that intention to stay changed in response to higher pay but that relationship was not measured here.

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Alternative Explanation

Many other explanations were considered along with the findings.

One possibility was that shift work itself was the main difficulty in the production department. But the evidence weighed against this explanation as participants mentioned the loss of advance notice and schedule changes as the problem. It was also explicitly mentioned that it used to be manageable before.

Another explanation was that the unresolved problems reflected poor immediate supervision but the evidence showed a different interpretation. The employees were positive about their managers and issues occurred when it went beyond the authority of the manager.

The final plausible reason for turnover could be pay and external job opportunities. HR reported pay and better offers as common exit reasons and a production supervisor also believed the same. However, the results showed that employees in production were mixed and several interview participants placed other concerns ahead of their salary. Hence, the evidence supports that only money does not account for the experience in the production department yet it cannot reject that better external offers may have been an important reason for past employees leaving the organisation.

Limitations

The inquiry collected primary data from current employees and did not include an analysis of the exit interviews or any direct interviews with former employees. As a result, the findings can only identify the experiences of the current employees of the organisation.

The survey did not directly measure schedule changes or appeal of external job opportunities. Some groups were also underrepresented. For example: just one production night shift employee participated in the interview which limited findings about the specific shift. Additionally, the managing director and operations director were unable to participate. Hence, the opportunity to identify why some issues remained unresolved could not be investigated from the perspective of the senior decision makers.

Moreover, the engagement took place after the 12% pay increase in the production department. So the pay satisfaction reflects the current pay and cannot show what satisfaction would have been before.

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It is also important to mention that interviews took place during paid work time. Participation was voluntary and consent was obtained but being individually invited during work hours might have created an expectation to participate. Hence, it may have impacted the attendance or openness but this cannot be established.

Lastly, some information was deliberately withheld to protect participants. This included identifiable details from an interview and reporting for groups below the confidentiality threshold. These exclusions reduce the available detail but were necessary to avoid making individuals identifiable.

Strengths

There are many parts of Patil Press that are working well and worth protecting.

Immediate access to managers is one of them. The survey responses were generally positive about being able to reach their manager when they needed help, this was also reflected in the interviews.

Predictable work arrangements already exist within the organisation in different departments. The employees in logistics described that they knew what to expect in advance in terms of their schedule and could plan ahead.

The 12% pay increase was also valued by employees who discussed it but they did not mention it as solving the other issues that they had raised.

Decision Options

These are not recommendations. They are responses the evidence could support along with the assumptions that each would need to work.

Option 1: Increase the predictability of the schedule for production department	
Responds to	Finding 1
Strength of evidence	High
What it assumes	Some of the late notices and changes after the schedule is published can be reduced without consequences
What would indicate it is working	- Shift schedules are issued earlier and changed less often

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	-Requests reduce for fixed shifts or to change shifts -Production response on ability to plan time outside work improve
What would indicate it is the wrong response	-Planning difficulty remains even after schedule is made more predictable -Giving the schedule early is not feasible as production requirements are not known in time so schedule keeps changing, thus remaining unpredictable
Who would need to own it	<i>Ownership is not assigned here as formal decision rights were not mapped in this inquiry.</i>

Table 5: Increase schedule predictability (decision option 1)

Option 2: Create clear ownership for issues	
Responds to	Finding 2
Strength of evidence	Moderate
What it assumes	Some issues remain unresolved because responsibility beyond the immediate supervisor is unclear or ineffective
What would indicate it is working	- Concerns that have been escalated receive a clear decision -Recurring scheduling and equipment issues reduce -Survey responses during a possible follow up on this improve
What would indicate it is the wrong response	-Issues move through the process visibly but remain unresolved for the same underlying reasons -Evidence shows that main issues are resources or other constraints instead of ownership
Who would need to own it	<i>Ownership is not assigned here as formal decision rights were not mapped in this inquiry.</i>

Table 6: Create clearer ownership for unresolved issues (decision option 2)

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Option 3: Do not treat pay increase as the only response	
Responds to	Finding 3
Strength of evidence	Moderate
What it assumes	Current pay is acceptable to a large part of the production department and other issues are important
What would indicate it is working	-Pay satisfaction remains stable -Issues are resolved and intention to stay measures improve after conditions unrelated to pay are addressed
What would indicate it is the wrong response	-Pay dissatisfaction increases -Employees keep citing the same reasons for leaving (pay and better opportunities)
Who would need to own it	<i>Ownership is not assigned here as formal decision rights were not mapped in this inquiry.</i>

Table 7: Do not treat a pay increase as the only option (decision option 3)

Option 4: Solve remaining evidence gaps before making a larger retention decision	
Responds to	Findings 2 and 3
Strength of evidence	Moderate
What it assumes	Cost of acting on uncertain explanation is high so understanding the missing gaps first becomes important
What would indicate it is working	The organisation establishes why escalated issues remain unsolved and better understands the reasons for attrition from exit interviews or by increasing trust through consistent actions
What would indicate it is the wrong response	Delay allows avoidable problems to continue despite having sufficient evidence for the reasons to act on the issues
Who would need to own it	<i>Ownership is not assigned here as formal decision rights were not mapped in this inquiry.</i>

Table 8: Close evidence gaps before a large retention decision (option 4)

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Possible next steps

Patil Press could first decide which of the decision options it wants to follow and assign clear ownership for each.

If the schedule is made more consistent, the effect could be checked using the same survey item. Some practical measures, like how far in advance schedules are issued and how often they change after publication, can also be tracked.

For unresolved concerns, the next step could be to clarify where responsibility sits once an issue moves beyond the production supervisor and how decisions are communicated back.

Before making big decisions on retention or pay, the organisation could also strengthen how reasons for leaving are gathered so that the reasons can be examined in depth.

It might be helpful to assess external salary benchmarking but that is outside Merian's scope and would require a separate specialist.

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Appendix

Survey Structure

Construct	Number of items
Role clarity	4
Communication	4
Psychological Safety	4
Manager Support	4
Work Sustainability	4
Intention to stay	4
Pay satisfaction	4
Total	28

Table 9: Illustrative survey structure

Note: Full survey questions are not included here because this is not a real case so the survey items were created for it but are not indented for use in a real engagement.

Survey and Quantitative Analysis

Survey responses were cleaned and checked before analysis. Item-level response distributions were reviewed first, followed by construct summaries and relevant group comparisons. Pivot tables were used to examine patterns across departments and tenure groups. The confidentiality threshold was applied before subgroups were reported and distribution shapes were also reviewed before relying on single summary figures.

Interviews and Qualitative Analysis

Interview participants were selected purposively across production and other departments.

A document was made with each participant's response summary and it included the domains, codes, potential quotes and notes. Then codes were grouped into themes and tested against contradictory evidence and other explanations. Later the stronger interpretations were checked to ensure that they did not depend on just a single participant or a small group of them.

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All the quotations that were considered for publication were checked for identification risk before use.

Tools

Data collection and analysis used:

- Zoho survey
- Excel
- SPSS
- NVivo

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About this work

Merian is an organisational research practice. Its interpretation is formed independently of the client's preferred conclusion and is not subject to client approval.

The client received the report and a discussion of the findings. The raw survey data, interview transcripts, recordings or any identifiable participant information are not shared. The report provides evidence and interpretations along with decision options and possible next steps. But the decisions about what actions to take remain with the organisation.

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