



EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT - ALLURING DRIFT FOR EXECUTIVES

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ABSTRACT

Employee engagement is a property of the relationship between an organization and its employees. An "engaged employee" is defined as one who is fully absorbed by and enthusiastic about their work and so takes positive action to further the organization's reputation and interests. An organization with "high" employee engagement might therefore be expected to outperform those with "low" employee engagement, all else being equal. Employee engagement is a vast construct that touches almost all parts of human resource management facets we know hitherto. If every part of human resources is not addressed in appropriate manner, employees fail to fully engage themselves in their job in the response to such kind of mismanagement. Engaged employees are emotionally attached to their organization and highly involved in their job with a great enthusiasm for the success of their employer, going extra mile beyond the employment contractual agreement.

Keywords: Employee engagement, job Satisfaction

I. Objective of the Study

The main objective of this paper is to get an understanding of Employee engagement concept and Employee Engagement drivers that defines business success.

II. Introduction

Employee engagement first appeared as a concept in management theory in the 1990s, becoming widespread in management practice in the 2000s, but it remains contested. It stands in an unspecified relationship to earlier construct such as morale and job satisfaction. Despite academic critiques, employee-engagement practices are well established in the management of human resources and of internal communications.

Engagement is most closely associated with the existing construction of job involvement (Brown 1996) and flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Job involvement is defined as ‘the degree to which the job situation is central to the person and his or her identity (Lawler & Hall, 1970). Kanungo (1982) maintained that job involvement is a ‘Cognitive or belief state of Psychological identification. Job involvement is thought to depend on both need saliency and the potential of a job to satisfy these needs. Finally engagement may be thought of as an antecedent to job involvement in that individuals who experience deep engagement in their roles should come to identify with their jobs.

Employee engagement is the emotional commitment the employee has to the organization and its goals. Employee engagement is a route to business success. An engaged workplace encourages commitment, energy and productivity from all those involved to help improve business performance. Managers’ eye is on how to keep employees engaged in their job. Employers now realize that by focusing on employee engagement, they can create more efficient and productive workforce. Any initiatives of improvement which are taken by management can not be fruitful without willful involvement and engagement of employees. Employee engagement as a concept is vast. If companies want to increase their performance and competitiveness, they need to improve how they engage with employees. If they can build employee engagement programs that, as a first step, address these five challenges, the content they curate and communicate will be more quickly consumed and ultimately deliver a higher return-on-investment. Engagement cannot be improved through corporate initiatives, perks, or rewards and recognition. To engage individual contributors there needs to be a purposeful relationship and dialogue between that individual and his or her manager.

But managers feel ill equipped to hold such conversations. Performance management dialogue is challenging enough. Now they are asked to align employees to strategy, help team members find high satisfaction at work, and provide long-term visibility on career options in the face of ambiguity in the business.

Managers need to be given an introduction to employee engagement and the opportunity to understand the importance of engagement to their teams, what the drivers and influencers of engagement are, and then – with the help of an expert facilitator – to think through how to tackle engagement with their direct reports.

Categories of Employee Engagement According to the Gallup the Consulting organization there are there are different types of people

Engaged--"Engaged" employees are builders. They want to know the desired expectations for their role so they can meet and exceed them. They're naturally curious about their company and their place in it. They perform at consistently high levels. They want to use their talents and strengths at work every day. They work with passion and they drive innovation and move their organization forward.

Not Engaged---Not-engaged employees tend to concentrate on tasks rather than the goals and outcomes they are expected to accomplish. They want to be told what to do just so they can do it and say they have finished. They focus on accomplishing tasks vs. achieving an outcome. Employees who are not-engaged tend to feel their contributions are being overlooked, and their potential is not being tapped. They often feel this way because they don't have productive relationships with their managers or with their coworkers.

Actively Disengaged--The "actively disengaged" employees are the "cave dwellers." They're "Consistently against Virtually Everything." They're not just nhu appy at work; they're busy acting out their unhappiness. They sow seeds of negativity at every opportunity. Every day, actively disengaged workers undermine what their engaged coworkers accomplish. As workers increasingly rely on each other to generate products and services, the problems and tensions that are fostered by actively disengaged workers can cause great damage to an organization's functioning.

III. Definitions of Employee Engagement

According to IES (institute of employment studies) “employee engagement is a positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its values”.

“The emotional commitment the employee has to the organization and its goals.” Kevin Kruse, Forbes Contributor and NY Times Best Selling Author

“The art of getting people to believe what you want them to believe.” Jim Whitehurst, CEO of Red Hat

“Emotional connection an employee feels toward his or her employment organization, which tends to influence his or her behaviors and level of effort in work related activities.” Business Dictionary

Perrin’s Global Workforce Study (2003) uses the definition “employees’ willingness and ability to help their company succeed, largely by providing discretionary effort on a sustainable basis.” According to the study, engagement is affected by many factors which involve both emotional and rational factors relating to work and the overall work experience.

Gallup organization defines employee engagement as the involvement with and enthusiasm for work. Gallup as cited by Dernovsek (2008) likens employee engagement to a positive employees’ emotional attachment and employees’ commitment.

Robinson et al. (2004) define employee engagement as “a positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its value. An engaged employee is aware of business context, and works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization.

“The illusive force that motivates employees to higher (or lower) levels of performance.” Workforce Performance Solutions

The Corporate Leadership Council defines employee engagement as, “the extent to which employees commit to something or someone in the organization, how hard they work as a result of this commitment, and how long they intend to stay with the organization”.

Engaged employees are loosely defined as those that are passionate about their employer, believe their own contributions are important and valued and actively support management’s strategies.

The organization must work to develop and nurture engagement, which requires a two-way relationship between employer and employee.”

IV. What drives engagement?

Research shows that committed employees perform better. If we accept that engagement, as many believe, is ‘one-step up’ from commitment, it is clearly in the organization’s interests to

understand the drivers of engagement. Analysis of the NHS case study data indicates that opinions about, and experiences of, many aspects of working life are strongly correlated with engagement levels. However, the strongest driver of all is a sense of feeling valued and involved.

This has several key components:

- involvement in decision-making
- the extent to which employees feel able to voice their ideas, and managers listen to these views, and value employees' contributions
- the opportunities employees have to develop their jobs
- the extent to which the organization is concerned for employees' health and well-being.

Employee Engagement: Drivers

There are several drivers for engagement which vary by industry, job functions, group and job level. The State of the American Workplace: Employee Engagement Insights for U.S. Business Leaders report findings suggests that engaged workers contribute significantly to the productivity, profitability and customer ratings; leadership plays an important role in raising the engagement levels of employees and different types of employees need different engagement levels. These drivers are comprised of culmination of various factors affecting each level. Socialization programs help in building a strong culture and it sets the stage for employees to build strong relationships on their first day of job. When employees feel valued both by their superiors for their work done engagement levels increase. Recognition and praise creates a performance culture that helps in building a long term prospects. Good quality line management, two way open communication, effective cooperation, focus on developing employees and their wellbeing, fair pay and benefits, Good HR practices in place and a harmonious work environment serve as the basis for EE drivers.

The Aon Hewitt Employee Engagement Model



V. As a leader in an organization you mainly need to focus on the below seven key drivers of employee engagement to ensure that your staff feels they are:

- ❖ Connected: building relationships with others
- ❖ Contributing: doing something meaningful
- ❖ Free: have a sense of choice and autonomy
- ❖ Growing: developing personally and professionally
- ❖ Recognition and positive feedback
- ❖ Optimize the environment
- ❖ Having Fun: really enjoying their time at work

Connection: Companies with employees who have strong personal ties to each other have far higher employee engagement rates than those who are lacking. To connect with your employees, create greater trust and loyalty by being more authentic. Great leaders connect deeply with their employees by paying attention to what's important to them. Finally, let them know that you and the company care for them. As their need to belong is met, they will give more of themselves.

Contribution: We all want to be doing something significant with our lives and have those efforts recognized. Studies show employees are happiest when they know they are making a difference and helping others. Often their contribution goes unnoticed. Metrics for measuring an employee's contribution should shift from measuring their individual performance to measuring their team's performance.

Freedom: Employees are far more loyal and productive in workplace environments that respect their freedom and encourage their self-expression. To ensure employees feel a sense of autonomy; remind them that everything they do is a choice. Choice is power, and when employees believe they have a choice they will become more engaged in the process. Decentralize whatever authority you can to give your workers more decision-making power. This will empower them and make your company much more efficient.

Growth: If employees feel they are not making progress in their own personal development they will soon become disconnected and seek opportunities elsewhere. Ensure that each employee is constantly challenged so that they can grow. The greater a person's belief in their own power to influence an outcome, the more likely they are to succeed with a new challenge.

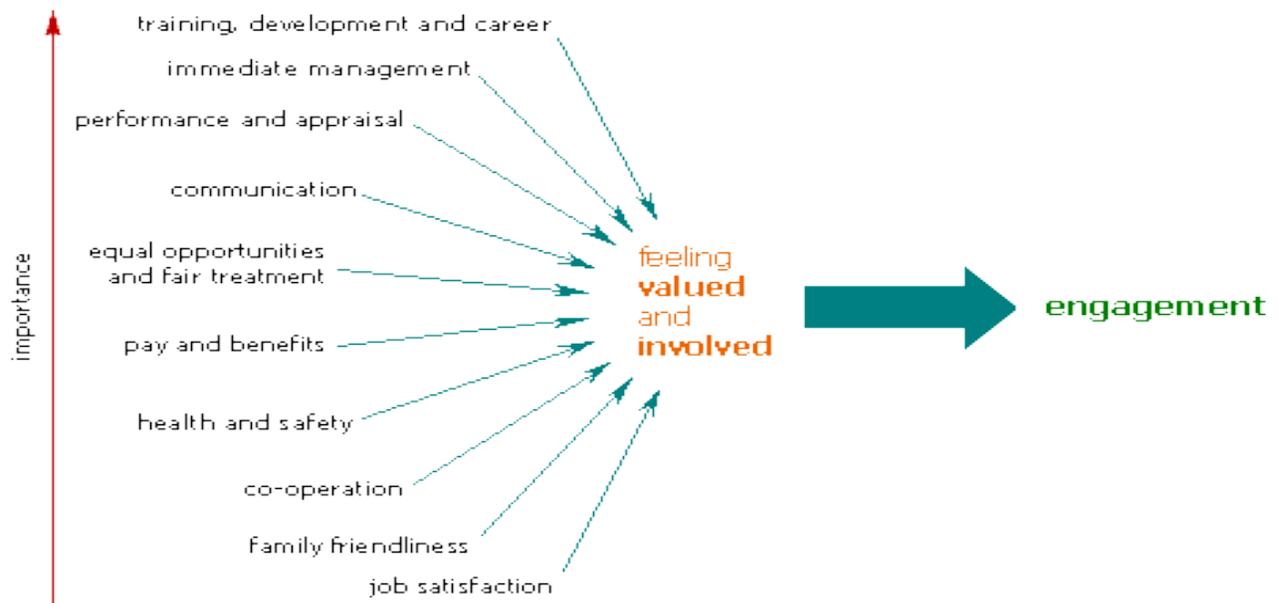
Recognition and positive feedback: These are key to helping employees feel more competent, motivated and open to growth. Negative feedback can devastate those with low self-esteem.

Optimize the environment: Create a vibrant, energetic, stress-free workplace that encourages employees to get the food, exercise, rest and water their bodies need so they can perform at their best.

Fun: If work isn't fun, employees will eventually burnout. Companies like Apple and Google have taken the lead into turning their organizations into work places that encourage freedom and fun. Making workplace fun will raise your employees' morale and energy and is the key to stimulating their creativity and innovation. It will also help decrease stress and turnover, as well as strengthen the relationships of all of your employees.

IES's diagnostic tool

The drivers of employee engagement: a diagnostic tool



Source: IES Survey, 2003

The IES engagement model illustrates the strong link between feeling valued and involved and engagement. In addition to the model, IES offers a diagnostic tool (above), which can be used to derive organization-specific drivers from attitude survey data. Many of the drivers of engagement will be common to all organizations, regardless of sector; however, some variability is likely, and the relative strength of each driver is also likely to be contingent upon the organization being studied.

VI. Employee Engagement in India

Anexi Blessing : Employee Engagement Survey 2008 shows significant differences between what motivates workers in India and what motivates workers in other countries. The global survey shows that 34 per cent of the employees in India are fully engaged, 13 per cent disengaged and 29 per cent are 'almost engaged'. Factors influencing satisfaction would most influence at work for Indian workers are: Development opportunities and training (26 per cent); about how I'm doing (25 per cent); and greater clarity about what the organization needs me to do and why (22 per cent). It is very interesting fact that though HR executives in India continue

to struggle with talent management issues, particularly retention. Yet, 65.54 per cent said “yes” to continue with organization during the recession phase.

VII. Literature Review

Many researchers have tried to identify factors leading to employee engagement and developed models to draw implications for managers. Their diagnosis aims to determine the drivers that will increase employee engagement level.

Drivers of Employee Engagement

- Josh Bershin(2015) in his article titled “ Becoming irresistible a new model for employee engagement” identifies - meaningful work, hands on engagement ,positive work environment, growth opportunity and trust in leadership as the five elements that drive engagement. Work can be made meaningful by doing job enrichment, the right fit between the person and the job, giving tools and autonomy aswell as leisure time to rest and create. The hands on element of employee engagement driver includes hands on management wherein employees have clearly defined goals which are simple clear and transparent are followed up regularly, coaching-leveraging the strength of the workers and enabling them to be successful at their jobs and developing people .Modern performance management system also aid in making employees engaged Positive work environment which includes a supportive and flexible work environment, recognition, diverse and inclusive work culture also drive people engagement. Opportunities for growth and development are another important driver of employee engagement.
- Jung Hoon Lee,, MichaelOkh (2015) on a study done among 394 hotel line employees and managers in the Unites state provided empirical evidence on employee core self-evaluations and perceptions of organizational work environment that is the psychological climate(comprising of customer orientation of the management, managerial support for service ,internal service and information sharing communication)being positively associated with employee engagement .The theoretical frameworks used were of Kahn comprising of three psychological conditions and Demerouti job demands–resources model. The data was analysed using hierarchical multiple regression analysis

- LaiP, leeJ(2015)in a study carried out among a convenience sample of 400 employees working at three to five stars hotels in Penang, Malaysia found that that Training development and coworker support have a positive relationship with employee engagement .and finding of the study point out that training and development and coworker support have significant relationship with Employee Engagement
- Tower Watson(2014) measures employee engagement on the parameters of sustainable engagement which includes three components Engaged, Enabled and Energized. According to the global workforce study 2014 conducted by Tower Watson the top drivers of employee engagement are:1 Leadership(which is defined by interest in wellbeing, of employees, leaders behaving in accordance with organizations core value and interest in job being done.)Followed by Goals and objectives(an understanding about how ones job contributes to the organizations goals),Workload and Work life (balance between work and personal life, flexible work arrangements, reasonable amount of work to be done and optimum number of employees to ensure that the job gets rightly done)Image of the company wherein organization is highly regarded by general public and empowerment of employees where in organization involves employees in decisions concerning them and seeks their suggestion and acts on them
- Rigg Julaine(2012) phd examined the drivers of employee engagement in the Jamacian Hotel industry and studied their relationship with organizational and demographic characteristics.
- Mani(2011)listed employee welfare ,employee empowerment, employee growth and interpersonal relationship as drivers of employee engagement.
- BijayaKumarSundarav(2011) identifies recruitment ,job designing ,career Development Opportunities ,Leadership ,Empowerment ,Equal Opportunities and Fair Treatment ,Training and Development ,Performance Management ,compensation ,Health and Safety ,job satisfaction, communication and family friendliness as the d rivers of employee engagement.
- Riely Phd(2007) suggested that the engagement drivers senior leadership, team leadership, work demands, work support, employee empowerment, continuation, customer focus and financial rewards functioned as positive predictors of engagement.

- According to Saks Alan(2006)perceived organizational support predicts both job and organization engagement; job characteristics predicts job engagement; and procedural justice predicts organization engagement.
- Robinson et.al (2005) reported that job satisfaction, feeling valued and involved and equality of opportunity are the three strongest drivers of engagement.
- According to Robinson(2003) training, development and career, immediate management performance appraisal,communication,equal opportunities and fair treatment ,immediate management,performance appraisal, communication, pay and benefits,health and safety,cooperation, family friendliness are some of the drivers of employee engagement.
- The Towers Perrin Talent Report (2003) identifies the top ten work place attributes which will result in employee engagement. The top three among the ten drivers listed by Perrin are: Senior management's interest in employees' well-being, Challenging work and Decision making authority.
- Robinson et al. (2004) explains further that employee engagement requires a two way relationship between employer and employee that continuously needs to be developed in order to maintain levels of engagement. Allowing employees to have a voice is important when looking at engagement (Rees & French, 2010). This can be established by having effective communication channels that allow both upward and downward communication, which will help create a more open and trusting environment, resulting in higher levels of engagement (Attridge, 2009).
- Purcell et al. (2003) study found a number of factors to be strongly associated with high levels of employee engagement. The most important factor highlighted in this study was related to an employees' involvement in their work. Communication was found to be a factor, as engagement levels were affected by the amount of information employees received about how the company was performing, and how they contributed to the company achieving its business objectives. Furthermore, employees having involvement in company decisions' affecting their job or work was also associated with high levels of engagement.
- To maintain trust during difficult periods such as layoffs, senior management must communicate effectively, provide rationale for the decisions they make, and treat employees in a dignified and respectful manner (Folger and Skarlicki, 1998; Dirks and Skarlicki, 2004).

- The Conference Board (2006) ' on the basis of 12 major studies conducted by research firms such as Gallup, Towers Perrin, Blessing White, The Corporate Leadership Council and others identified 26 key drivers of employee engagement and found that most common drivers for driving engagement were trust and integrity ,the nature of the job, the line of sight between individual performance and company performance, career growth opportunities ,pride in the company ,relationship with coworker team member.
- According to Penna research report (2007) meaning at work has the potential to be valuable way of bringing employers and employees closer together to the benefit of both where employees experience a sense of community, the space to be themselves and the opportunity to make a contribution, they find meaning. Employees want to work in the organizations in which they find meaning at work. Penna (2007) researchers have also come up with a new model they called “Hierarchy of engagement” which resembles Maslow’s need hierarchy model. In the bottom line there are basic needs of pay and benefits. Once an employee satisfied these needs, then the employee looks to development opportunities, the possibility for promotion and then leadership style will be introduced to the mix in the model. Finally, when all the above cited lower level aspirations have been satisfied the employee looks to an alignment of value-meaning, which is displayed by a true sense of connection, a common purpose and a shared sense of meaning at work.
- As Buckingham and Coffman (2005) said, pay and benefits are equally important to every employee, good or bad. A company’s pay should at least be comparable to the market average. However, bringing pay and benefits package up to market levels, which is a sensible first step, will not take a company very far- they are like tickets to the ballpark, -they can get the company into the game, but can’t help it win.
- The CIPD (2006) commissioned a major nationwide survey of employee attitudes and engagement. The research was conducted by Kingston Business School using a sample of 2000 employee’s from across Great Britain. In this report, communication was the top priority. The report singles out employees having the opportunity to feed their views and opinions upwards as the most important drivers of employee engagement. The report also identifies the importance of being kept informed about what’s going on in the organization. This outcome implies that employees want a sense of involvement and to

some extent be in a partnership with their employer. Simon (2011) supports the theory of communication and reinforced the two-way communication channels between employees and managers as a key driver to engaging employees.

The feeling of being well informed about what is happening in the organization and thinking that their manager is committed to the organization were other important drivers according to the CIPD (2006). The Institute of Employment carried out a survey among employees in the NHS and suggested that the drivers of employee engagement were “a sense of feeling valued and involved”, and “the extent to which employees feel able to voice their ideas”, along with “the opportunities employees have to develop their jobs”, (Robinson et al., 2004, p.15). Simon’s (2011) study illustrated that two way communication; high quality line management, a development focus for employees and a commitment to employee wellbeing are among the top drivers of employee engagement within organizations.

VIII. Conclusion

A review of the literature focusing on enabling organization to achieve engagement and academic perspective reveals that drivers of engagement vary in relation to their impact on employee engagement. Organization should work at facilitating employee engagement by concentrating on these engagement drivers. Most studies demonstrate that feeling valued by management, two-way communication between management and employees, management’s interest in employees’ well-being and giving more opportunities for employees to grow are the top drivers of employee engagement. The most successful leaders in the world unleash the energy and creative power of their employees not by mastering employee engagement best practices, staff retention strategies or employee recognition ideas, but by honoring the key drivers mentioned above. Most drivers that are found to lead to employee engagement are non-financial in their nature. Therefore, any organization who has committed leadership can achieve the desired level of engagement with less cost of doing it. This does not mean that managers should ignore the financial aspect of their employees. In fact, performance should be linked with reward. Nevertheless, this is simply to repeat the old saying of Human Relations Movement which goes “as social being, human resource is not motivated by money alone.” HR managers

and the senior management must devise ways to tap into the innate potential of employees and their need for challenging work.

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