

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT : TOOL FOR SUCCESS OF AN ORGANISATION

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ABSTRACT

Organisations are under increasing pressure to improve performance and maximise the contribution of every employee. Employee engagement has become an attractive business proposition. The triple bottom line consists of three Ps: profit, people and planet. It aims to measure the financial, social and environmental performance of the corporation over a period of time. People are the most important asset of every organisation. Most of the studies suggest that employee engagement improves the bottom line in almost every instance and it is well worth all organizational efforts to actively engage employees. Engaged employees have an impact on productivity and financial performance. When not addressed, the number of non-engaged and disengaged employees in the workplace offers an alerting signal for many employers. According to the Blessing White employee engagement survey report India has got 37% engaged employees and 12% disengaged employees and the rest fall under non engaged category of employees. Efficient leadership and effective management can take place if emerging paradigm like employee engagement is appropriately understood and put into practice. Employee engagement starts at the first step i.e. recruitment of an employee to the last step i.e. retirement. The HR Practices of an organisation play the most major role in helping the employees walk the extra mile. Effective employee engagement is the key component for improved organizational performance.

KEYWORDS: Employee engagement, HR practices

INTRODUCTION

The triple bottom line consists of three Ps: profit, people and planet. It aims to measure the financial, social and environmental performance of the corporation over a period of time. Most of the studies suggest that employee engagement improves the bottom line in almost every instance and it is well worth all organizational efforts to actively engage employees. Helping employees understand the company's direction and strategic goals from their first day of joining, and the significance of their role in meeting those goals is essential. For employees to be committed to an organization and give more than required, they have to feel they have a stake in the company's success. Engagement occurs when adequately skilled employees are trained and

provided with the appropriate information and tools to make level-appropriate decisions and can lead the organization in the direction of meeting its financial and strategic goals.

Engagement should begin well before the hire (Well begun is half done). Integrating employee engagement in the recruitment process is the best way to begin engagement in our organizations and is essential for long term success. Without the “right” hire for the “right” position, most efforts are lost. Getting it right in the beginning is essential. HR plays a major role and the drivers of employee engagement are as follows:

1. Employer Branding:

“Employee engagement is at the heart of the Employment Brand ”- Libby Sartain – SVP HR Yahoo ! & Mark Schumann – Communications Consultant Towers Perrin. The employment brand as defined by Sartain and schumann (2006) is “how a business builds and packages its identity from its origins and values, what it promises to deliver to emotionally connect employees so that they in turn deliver what the business promises to customers.” Create and communicate an employer’s brand to employees. The organisation should let people know the existence of the organisation and create an image so that the right possible candidates are attracted. The employer brand defines the company value proposition for its employees and enhances the organisations reputation as an employer of choice in the market.

2. Recruitment

A well structured recruitment and selection process will help attract the strongest candidates. While recruiting the employees, let one understand why they were hired truly and what role they are to play and promise them that they are the RIGHT FIT and can help them to evaluate the successes and failures in the role they play. Share with the new employee what it was about them that made them “the one”. Once the person is valued, there is high engagement. Provide the employee with a realistic job preview.

Employer should express his commitment to learning and development of the employees and the organization. Employees who feel employers are interested in helping them meet their personal goals are more loyal and engaged. When employers recruit existing employees for desirable jobs, they enhance their engagement (by maximizing the person-job fit) and commitment (by providing growth and advancement opportunities to employees in return for their loyalty). If they recruit from outside when qualified internal candidates are available, you may unwittingly suggest to current employees that your company is not willing to reciprocate their commitment. Existing staff may then begin questioning their own commitment to the firm.

3. Job design:

The HR manager should design the job in advance i.e. based on the gender, based on the timings, based on job requirement, based on the nature of the work people should be selected. People nowadays are interested in flexi timings, because balancing their work –personal life has become hectic. For a working woman managing home, children, husband, work place is hectic.

Therefore people want employers who can trust them so that they can be emotionally connected and progress well in their respective job roles.

4. Employee Selection

Once recruitment is done and a pool of promising candidates is in, the work gets done more easily and experience fewer performance problems. There is a great passion and high engagement in the job. To enhance engagement through the selection of employees, identify those candidates who are best-suited to the job and your organization's culture.

5. Training and Development

Training and development can serve as additional levers for enhancing engagement and commitment. For new hires, training usually begins with orientation. Orientation presents several important opportunities—including explaining pay, work schedules and company policies. Most important, it gives you a chance to encourage employee engagement by explaining how the new hire's job contributes to the organization's mission. Through orientation, one can describe how a company is organized, introduce the new employee to his or her co-workers, give the person a tour of the area where he or she will be working and explain safety regulations and other procedural matters. In short, you foster person-organization fit—vital for developing productive and dedicated employees.

To get the most from training investments, also explore how one might leverage digital technology and the Internet. Whereas companies once had to deliver training to employees in the same place at the same time, you can now use technology to offer self-paced and individualized instruction for employees in far-flung locations. Such training not only reduces your company's travel expenses; it also helps employees to manage their other commitments, such as family obligations. Consequently, their commitment to your organization increases.

5. Compensation

Compensation can powerfully influence employee engagement and commitment. Some compensation components encourage commitment to employers, while others motivate engagement in the job. It is possible to stimulate one and not the other, though it's generally better to foster both. For example, a company that offers a strong performance incentive system but no retirement plan will probably realize exceptional engagement from its workers; however, they may eventually commit themselves to another company that does offer a good retirement plan. Meanwhile, an organization that offers generous retirement benefits but a traditional seniority-based pay grade system may have committed employees; however, these workers might deliver pedestrian performance as they bide their time until retirement. In designing compensation plans, you therefore need to consider employee engagement and commitment strategically.

Compensation consists of financial elements (pay and benefits) but may also include nonfinancial elements or perks, such as on-site day care, employee assistance programs,

subsidized cafeterias, travel discounts, company picnics and so on. The most effective compensation plans support your organization's strategic objectives.

Incentive pay, also known as pay-for-performance, can directly influence employees' productivity (and thus their engagement) as well as their commitment to your organization (as workers learn to trust that they will be rewarded for good performance). Piecework, annual bonuses, merit raises and sales commissions are familiar examples of incentive pay that rewards individual performance.

Competency-based (or skill-based) pay, which has grown more popular in recent years. Through competency-based pay, you reward employees not only for mastering job-relevant knowledge and skills but also for using those abilities to produce results that your organization values. This type of pay can increase engagement by fostering employees' pride in their new mastery. And it can enhance commitment because workers learn that the company is willing to help them burnish their employability.

6. Performance appraisal

The right performance management practices also can enhance employee engagement and commitment. Encourage managers to include employees in the goal-setting process. This technique helps to ensure that workers understand the goals. It also promotes acceptance of challenging objectives, because people generally feel more committed to goals they have helped define.

Performance management processes operate on a continuous basis. Therefore, they provide perhaps the best ongoing opportunities for employers to foster employee engagement and commitment. For example, managers can use routine discussions about performance and feedback sessions to learn which aspects of the job hold the most interest for each employee and which tasks are most challenging. During such discussions, managers also can define what "going above and beyond the call of duty" looks like and generate ideas for rewarding such contributions.

An employee's aspirations and career goals can receive careful attention during performance appraisal meetings. Without inquiring into an employee's personal life, a supervisor can nevertheless explore ways to enhance the compatibility between the worker's commitment to your organization and the employee's other life commitments. Through such means, the organization personalizes its relationship to each employee and provides support, while also expressing appreciation for their contributions—key drivers of engagement and commitment.

7. Retirement:

Many companies also offer retirement plans as part of their compensation package. Although these plans are usually available to all full-time employees, the specific plans offered may depend on job, year hired, number of years employed, highest salary achieved and so on. As

we've seen, well-designed and secure retirement plans can encourage long-term commitment to your organization.

Some of the recommendations to be included in the HR practices to increase employee engagement could be :

1. Leaders beware!!! Everything is in a click:

There are lessons for leadership to absorb newer trends in social networking and mobile telephony to appeal to their younger generation at the workplace. Recommendations to involve and create a culture of sharing and peer to peer communication include instant messaging, podcasts, virtual training, blogs, internal social networks, wikis and social sites.

2. Consistent Leadership Connect Town Halls/meetings : Every quarter the senior leadership and Office Leads commit time to engage with its people, Share Company updates, take feedback and answer questions face to face. Leaders can now connect with their people through postings, articles, and discussion threads.

3. People Forums: People from different career levels meet up on a recurring basis to interact, engage, and drive initiatives and connection with peers and the organization. The forums such as the manager, director and technology sessions strive to align to the company's charter and the Leadership Team's goals. These are also opportunities to groom future leaders by allowing people to take accountability and initiative.

4. Consistent communication through plasma TVs: Across offices plasma TVs play a roll-up of key company updates in a timely and consistent format. Every week the information is refreshed with a dedicated team monitoring and releasing content on company branded templates. The plasma screens are placed at vantage locations near the reception areas to ensure the information is relayed effectively. Also the slides are pictorial and timed to give people sufficient opportunity to absorb key messages.

5. The People Portal: This represents a key step in the company's commitment to keep its people better connected and informed, and provides an intuitive, easy-to-use experience. A major benefit is its ability to communicate important messages from management in a timely and efficient manner.

6. Company Newsletter: The weekly internal newsletter emailed to every person and posted on the landing page of the People Portal, highlights new messages from leadership, as well as corporate news and success stories from offices worldwide.

7. Social Media Usage: Create CEO ‘You-Tube’ style videos to share company updates and progress against objectives set. The video medium is an ideal communication tool that allows the company to share information in a consistent and timely manner. Feedback on this new format has been extremely positive; people feel the video format helps them connect more easily (than an e-mail bulletin, for example) to leaders’ new ideas. Similarly, leadership blogs written by a pool of leaders share experiences and personal learning from the workplace. The blogs capitalize on their ‘personality’ within the organization, provides an opportunity for leaders to be heard and allows open interaction. It is measured through the number of direct comments from readers, fruitful conversations and increased engagement.

8. Engagement Measurement: The companies should conduct a company-wide ‘pulse’ designed to assess the quality of how its people experience their organisation. The Engagement Survey using qualitative and quantitative questions assesses the company’s performance against a set of unchanging key measures.

9. Career Framework: An organization should invest in career tools to build readiness among its people for rapid growth and expansion into new markets. With an updated, integrated, holistic and standardized set of tools for talent management that better reflect its current and future business requirements, the company is well positioned to meet the needs of both the business and the inspirational needs its people. Online tools support peoples’ understanding of their competencies, areas of improvement and career levels they can move to.

10. People Led Office-Level Programs: Celebrations are encouraged to add a blend of social, leadership-based and even, family-oriented celebratory gatherings, to recognize the value and impact that our people have on the organization. Through office-level social meets, leaders interactions and family gatherings we place a strong emphasis on recognizing the value and success that people bring across the organization in varying degrees.

11.Emphasis on CSR: Employers should believe that corporate social responsibility (CSR) relates to the way organizations integrate social, environmental, and economic concerns into their values, culture, decision making, strategy and operations, thereby establishing better practices within the organization, creating wealth, and improving society.

Conclusion

Engaged employees can help your organization achieve its mission, execute its strategy and generate important business results. This paper has highlighted ways in which different HR practices, including job design, recruitment, selection, training, and compensation and performance management can enhance employee engagement. But they show that employee engagement is more complex than it may appear on the surface. Organizations define and

measure engagement in a variety of different ways, suggesting there is no one “right” or “best” way to define or stimulate engagement in your workforce. The decision to invest in strengthening engagement or commitment (or both) depends on an organization’s strategy and the makeup of its workforce. Employee engagement is essential and impacts your employees well before employment all the way to resignation and/or retirement. There is a strong correlation between effective recruitment, on-boarding/integration, and the financial performance and success of a company. And once you reap the rewards you will easily see that engaged employees are well worth the effort.

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