



CHANGING TRENDS IN THE PRACTICE OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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ABSTRACT:

Employees Engagement is making the employees to be more committed in the organization and increase the high productivity. Employee engagement is characterized by the presence of workers at work place, fulfillment of its responsibility, leadership relationship with workers and leadership consideration of workers as focal point for organizational performance. This paper makes an attempt to identify the emerging trends in employee engagement practices in across sectors with the supporting reviews.

KEYWORDS:

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT, EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT, CAREER DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Engagement is a good practice for the company and employees. High levels of employee engagement help businesses and performance. Engaged employees feel a sense of closeness to their job and the organization. Employees who are engaged are more likely to be highly involved and absorbed in their work. Engagement impacts on customer reliability in many ways than simply interactions with staff. Engaged employees show their care and concern about their organisation and work to contribute towards its success.

CONCEPT OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

According to Scarlett Surveys, "Employee Engagement is a measurable degree of an employee's positive or negative emotional attachment to his job, colleagues and organization which profoundly influences his willingness to learn and perform at work."

Kahn (1990, p. 694) defines employee engagement as "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances."

There are three factors influence positively employee engagement: Quality of training and learning opportunities, learning through continuous assignments & Frequency of learning opportunities.

Engagement is making a view for human resources to bestow with their managers, employees and organization. It's notice is to form an environment where employees are encouraged and connected with their job in real concern to do a high-quality job.

Employee engagement is the creator of positive

organizational performance and it is clearly showing the two-way relationship between employer and employee compared to the three components: job satisfaction, employee commitment and organizational citizenship behaviour.

Human Resource practitioners trust that the engagement challenge has a lot to do with how employee feels about the about work experience and how he or she is treated in the organization. It has a lot to do with emotions which are fundamentally related to drive bottom line success in a company. There will always be people who never give their best efforts no matter how hard HR and line managers try to engage them. "But for the most part employees want to commit to companies because doing so satisfies a powerful and a basic need in connect with and contribute to something significant".

LITERATURE REVIEW

Malavika Desai et al., (2010) in their article titled, "**Study on employee engagement in two Indian businesses**" said that the degree of employee engagement was significantly high in the manufacturing sector than the IT firm. The main causes for a higher engagement in the manufacturing sector were found to be as – the impression that the firm cares for and values the employees, free and frank communication with immediate supervisor, empathetic attitude of the latter towards the former, recognition of one's contributions towards the organizational goals, and freedom to participate in the decision making process.

Pratima Sarangi (2016) in her article titled, "**Employee Engagement and Its Impact on Organizational Success – A Study in Manufacturing Company, India**" observed that the current level of employee engagement and the work related aspects need to be improved for the purpose of employee engagement.

Swarnalatha (2012) in her article titled, “**Employee Engagement – A Review of Literature**” concluded that Engaged employees can help your organization achieve its mission, execute its strategy and generate important business results. Therefore employee engagement should be a continuous process of learning, improvement, measurement and action. organizations need to better understand how different employees are affected by different factors of engagement and focus on those in order to achieve the strategic outcomes as well as to improve overall effectiveness.

Kruse (2012) in his research paper, “**Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction**” stated that engaging the employees brings an emotional commitment towards the organization and its goals. Employee engagement creates to increase the productivity and profitability.

Swathi (2013) in her study titled, “**Effecting Employee Engagement Factors**” highlighted factors of feedback, rewards, recognition and leadership influence the employee engagement process. Communication plays a vital role in developing the employee engagement. The way the human beings thought process is changing day by day. Accordingly, the management needs to change the strategy in dealing with employees.

NEED FOR EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Employee engagement is a work place approach to ensure that the employees are committed to the organization values and goals. It is contributing to organization success and to enhance the sense of well-being. Engagement helps to improve the employee’s performance and productivity. Job involvement is being higher in this practice. Innovation will be increased in the higher level practice of engagement. Engagement approach helps to deal with the challenges of recession. Engagement is needed to meet the new challenges of emerging economics. It creates a sense of loyalty in a competitive environment. It helps to increase the brand image and contributes towards the business growth.

CIPD (2006) suggests that key drivers of employee engagement are:

- employees having opportunities to feed views upwards
- feeling well informed about what is happening in the organisation
- thinking that their manager is committed to the organization

Employee engagement is essentially given an outcome of the higher performance / good people management. The strategies adopted by the organization are to be aimed at increasing employee engagement are aiming to identify priorities for leveraging performance.

MODELS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Peter R. Garber (2007, p. 5 – 6) identifies 10 employee engagement key factors:

1. Commitment

Employee engagement describes the level of commitment that employees have toward the organization.

2. Attitude

An engaged employee has a positive attitude toward his/her organization and its values, goals, and operating principles. In an engaged workplace, the employee and the organization mutually respect each other’s values. Both parties see mutual benefit to the employment relationship. Employee development is an important part of the organizations overall growth objectives. Employees receive the support they need to perform their jobs to the best of their abilities and potential.

3. Alignment

The recognition and reward systems are viewed as being fair and just and are aligned with the goals of both the employees and the organization. Employees actively work toward achieving the organizations success. Engaged employees understand and support the organizational strategy. They understand the connection between individual performance and organizational achievement.

4. Communications

There are effective, consistent, and trusted two-way communications between the organization and employees.

5. Goals

An engaged employee understands the organizations business objectives and works together with coworkers to support the achievement of these goals. In an engaged work environment, everyone is on the same team, focusing their energies on the same end results.

6. Customer focus

Everyone is dedicated to meeting the needs and expectations of the customer in any way they can.

7. Commitment

Employees on all levels of the organization are willing to exert that extra effort to ensure that their job is performed to the best level possible. Employee commitment is not important just to the short-term goals but to the long-term success of the organization.

8. Loyalty

For engaged employees, loyalty goes beyond just staying for a paycheck or other benefits that accompany employment with the organization. They exceed what is required and expected of them by the organization because they want to, not because they have to.

9. Involvement

Engaged employees do extra things, put in extra effort, and become emotionally and intellectually involved in supporting the organization without expectation of additional compensation or even recognition, although they appreciate compensation and recognition when it is given. Engaged employees are emotionally committed and tied to the organization, its goals and objectives, and its ultimate success. They internalize these goals and objectives of the organization with their own.

10. Ownership

Engaged employees behave as if they were the owner of the organization, putting forth the same effort and commitment that someone who owns the business would in every situation.

Model of an engaging work environment by Development Dimensions International, Inc., 2005-2015

1. Aligning effort with strategy

Engagement begins with employees' clear understanding of what they should be doing on the job. Each employee needs a solid job description and a clear set of performance expectations. Even more critical is their understanding that their individual goals are connected directly to the organization's goals. Unfortunately, less than half of employees (47 percent) are satisfied with their organization's system for managing their performance. Some organizations do an especially good job of creating alignment early in an employee's tenure with the organization. Building a strong sense of alignment with strategy requires a good communication system and strong accountability. Employees should be kept well informed about the changes that affect their work groups so that they aren't confused or surprised when those changes are introduced. Additionally, when organizations provide a clear sense of direction and keep employees well informed, employees are able to make the best use of their time, resources, and budgets, and, therefore, don't get off track when setting priorities or "spin their wheels" when taking action.

2. Empowerment

William C. Byham's 1988 book, *Zapp! The Lightning of Empowerment*, was one of the first to examine the nature of employee empowerment. Empowerment is a feeling of job ownership and commitment brought about through the ability to make decisions, be responsible, be measured by results, and be recognized as a thoughtful, contributing human being rather than a pair of hands doing what others say. It implies having the authority to make decisions, follow through, and get things done.

Organizations build empowerment by choosing employees who take personal pleasure in the work they do and by giving employees the ability to make important decisions about their work. Employees feel empowered when a task appears to have a specific goal or purpose that is of value to the individual. Employees working in health care and nonprofit organizations often point to the rewarding qualities of their work and the alignment between their personal beliefs and the goals of the organization in spite of lower pay or stressful work tasks. In other industries, the value of employees' work may be less apparent, and it is more difficult to develop a sense of purpose or see the impact of one's efforts.

3. Teamwork/Collaboration

In the context of engagement, teamwork and collaboration require good relationships both within the work group and across work groups. Many organizations have strong teams with members who work well with each other. However, these teams or work groups must also work effectively with other teams or work groups in the organization. Many organizations have "silos" or competing work groups that fail to recognize the need to unite their efforts toward a common goal. When work groups become insulated from other groups, they can develop an "Us vs. Them" mentality that ends up hurting the organization in small ways each and every day, and in big ways in the long run. Studies have shown that *teamwork* and *collaboration* within and between groups can predict an organization's shareholder value and long-term team productivity and effectiveness.

4. Growth and development

DDI's 2004 *Selection Forecast* study found that many employees leave their jobs for better growth and development opportunities, often offered by other organizations. Most employees want to keep their jobs fresh and interesting by learning new approaches and building new skills. Organizations can create engagement in their workforce by building a learning culture and creating individual development plans for every employee. Promoting employee growth and development requires focused attention in several areas of the organization. First, organizations need to select employees who have a willingness to learn and can adapt their behaviors to a changing work environment. This willingness to grow and learn promotes innovation and creativity in the workforce. Second, leaders need to work with employees to understand strengths and development needs, and provide opportunities to leverage or build skills and knowledge. Most employees want to use their best skills and will feel engaged when organizations recognize and

capitalize on their unique strengths, rather than placing emphasis on fixing weaknesses. Third, organizations also need to provide meaningful development plans and opportunities that include programs such as training, succession management, special projects and assignments, and mentoring.

5. Support and recognition

Employees who feel they are listened to, supported, and recognized for their contributions are likely to be more engaged. People like to be recognized for their unique contributions. In the Walker Information study *Halfway Out the Door*, care and concern for employees emerged as one of the most important factors influencing employee commitment to their employers. The U.S. Department of Labor confirms that lack of employee appreciation plays a critical role in employees' decisions to leave their organizations. Support and recognition can mean several things in the context of creating an engaging work environment. In one sense, support means that employees are appreciated for their ideas and efforts. Instead of treating employees as pawns, engaging organizations support contributions from employees by listening to them and responding to their ideas and concerns.

STRATEGIES TO BUILD EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Four key principles are involved to propose the strategies. The principles are employee involvement and participation, internal communication, recognition and rewards and career development. The employee engagement will be gained maximum if the organisation needs to implement these principles.

1. Employee Involvement and Participation

Employee involvement is a process for empowering employees to participate in managerial decision making and improvement activities appropriate to their levels in the organization (Lawler,1986). Beardwell and Claydon (2007) said that engagement comes through employee involvement. It is about capturing the ideas of the employees and securing their commitment. To involve them you have to allow them to contribute and share openly.

2. Internal Communication

Communication is a vital aspect of engaging your employees. According to Towers Watson, organisations with high engagement levels enjoy six per cent higher profit margins, and according to Kenexa, engaged workforces mean five times higher shareholder returns for their employers. The study conducted by Watson Wyatt (2007-08) has been quoted by Bill Trahan (2008) shows a strong correlation between effective employee communication and superior organisational performance.

3. Rewards and recognition

Maslach et al. (2001) have also suggested that while a lack of rewards and recognition can lead to burnout, appropriate recognition and reward is important for engagement. Rewards and recognition also helps to increase the relationship between the team members and can strengthen the behaviors needed to succeed. There are generally three different ways including money, prizes, or gifts, recognition and praise awards, and development and empowering work (Cacioppe, 1999).

4. Career Development

According to Armstrong (2001), career development is of great importance to both the individual employee and the organization. There are two main reasons for paying attention to the career development. One is for people and organization to realize their full potential, and the other is to enable people and organization to manage change in the structure of employment opportunities. Organizations with high levels of engagement provide employees with opportunities to develop their abilities, learn new skills, acquire new knowledge and realize their potential. The desired outcome of a Career Development Program is required to match the needs of the employee with those of the organization.

CHANGING TRENDS IN THE SECTOR MANUFACTURING SECTOR

According to Gallup's Employee Engagement Index, roughly 23% of employees in the manufacturing or production sector were engaged in 2014. This 23% employee engagement average in the manufacturing sector is significantly below the 31.5% national average across all sectors. The full numbers from 2012 are perhaps more telling still - according to Gallup's 2012 Employee Engagement Index, 24% of manufacturing or production workers were engaged as of 2012, up from 18% in 2009, while 50% of manufacturing or production workers were "disengaged" in 2012 and 26% were "actively unsatisfied." Put simply, as of 2012, 1 in 2 of every manufacturing workers was disengaged with another 1 in 4 unhappy and undermining of his or her employer possibly resulting in potential quality issues with the product.

Improving employee engagement in a manufacturing setting is much like improving in other settings, with some key differences. In the 2013 State of the American Workplace Report, Gallup makes three main recommendations on how employers can improve employee engagement:

- 1) Select the right people,
- 2) Develop employees' strengths, and
- 3) Enhance employees' well-being.

Employees of good health and general well-being are significantly more likely to be engaged, while at the same time engaged employees are generally healthier and have

healthier habits than those who are not engaged or who are actively disengaged.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

In the present setting, IT sector is going through rapid changes. These changes are due to economic reforms, global competition, low cost manufacturing, forcing organizations to search actively engaged 'employees to accomplish the organizational growth and development. Engaged employee is passionate to work and is a key player in the business development of the organization. Kennedy (2003) emphasized that employee efficiency as a key factor for the success of organizations and it is influenced by several organizational factors. India is referred as the electronic housekeeper of the world (Budhwar, Varma, Singh, & Dhar, 2006). Although this sector is increasing in economic significance, it continues to be scarcity of research especially in the field of employer branding. Employee Engagement has gained a lot of importance in the recent years and the IT companies are spending a substantial amount of their time, effort and resources in those practices which are assumed to improve Employee Engagement. In such a scenario, it becomes important to do a reality check as to whether the practices are yielding the right results or not. Companies rely on their IT talent to create new products and services, solve problems, and maintain a competitive advantage. Although IT employees are recognized as vital assets, many firms struggle to retain them. Kim (2004) had explained how job characteristics, work environment, and human resource management practices influence state IT employee turnover intentions. Many employees in information technology sector are neutral for their opinion towards turnover intention. It means employee retention is an issue in information technology sector. With the practice of employee engagement, high retention may take place and employees value their organizational efforts.

SERVICE BASED INDUSTRY

Employee engagement is very crucial to any organization that seeks to retain valued employees. It is important for effective utilization of human resource and smooth running of the organization. Without employee engagement, organization is not in position to run their business in the long run. The Ministry of Tourism Government of India has introduced the concept of "Atithi Dev Bhawan" for providing better hospitality and to enhance the level of hospitality services. If the employee is engaged towards the job in the hospitality sector, they will surely provide better hospitality to the guest. The effects of employee engagement on hospitality industry are:

- Engaged employees stay in the organization for a longer period and show care about its products and services.
- They are well motivated towards hospitality and services
- Engaged employees creates emotional attachment with the guest

- and the guest is also get connected with the organization and comes again and again
- Engaged employees improves customer satisfaction and service levels.
- Engaged employees Provides a high energy working environment.

Employee engagement is the necessity for the hospitality industry. It is the recent human resources practice which has been implemented by each and every organization, not only to increases their productivity and profitability, but also to reduce employee turnover (Harter, Schmidt, and Hayes, 2002). For nurturing the environment of engagement, hospitality organizations need concrete systems and strategies that help to promote and support engagement. Building an engaged employee is a long-term and ongoing initiative, because it requires a coordinated, consistent effort from leaders, organizational systems, and individuals. It must also be aligned and linked with the most important organizational business drivers.

CONCLUSION

Engagement requires a two-way relationship and commitment between employer and employee. Many research suggest that a positive relationship between engaged employees and customer engagement and it is expressed the customer loyalty. Engaged employees are more likely to advocate the organisation as a place to work and actively promote its products and services' (Scottish Executive Social Research, 2007 p.23). Leaders and managers who inspire confidence in individuals, giving them autonomy to make decisions with clear goals and accountability, are perceived as engaging.

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