A Study on Employee Engagement

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Abstract

Maintaining a high standard of performance over a prolonged period and achieving exceptional business results is one of the hardest difficulties facing business executives in today's dynamic business environment. The path to corporate success is through employee engagement. Motivating and retaining employees is one of the main issues that businesses face. Employee commitment, vigor, and productivity are all encouraged in an engaged workplace, which enhances overall corporate performance. Better profitability, reduced employee attrition, and more job satisfaction are all correlated with improved employee engagement.The following paper aims to investigate the idea and different aspects of employee engagement in detail.

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1 Introduction

As explained by Kahn's (1990), engagement at work is the "harnessing of organizational members to their work roles." Within this framework, employee engagement pertains to how actively workers use their bodies, minds, and emotions to express themselves while performing their roles. Employee engagement is thus the level of commitment and involvement an employee has towards the organization and its values. 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 organization must work to develop and nurture engagement, which requiresa two-way relationship between employer and employee. Thus Employee engagement is a barometer that determines the association of a person with the organization. Employee engagement, also called worker engagement, isa business management concept. An "engaged employee" is one who is fully involved in, and enthusiastic about their work, and thus will act in a way that furthers their organization's interests. According to Scarlett Surveys, "Employee Engagement is a measurable degree of an employee's positive or negative emotional attachment to their job, colleagues and organization that profoundly influences their willingness to learn and perform it at work". Thus engagement is distinctively different from employee satisfaction, motivation and organizational culture. A modernized version of job satisfaction, Schmidt et al.'s influential definition of engagement was "an employee's involvement with, commitment to, and satisfaction with work". A disengaged employee will stumble around the office with lower morale and cost the company money. The idea of employee engagement is relatively new to researchers. While the theories of this construct may be blurred, many companies are beginning to see the clear picture – an engaged employee is a valuable, productive asset that can help the organization achieve its goals.

Kahn's (1990) was the first to suggest that employee engagement would positively impact on organisational level outcomes. The reasoning behind his contention was that because employees want to work for reasons other than "they get paid to do it", they will work to pursue success for their organisation. Bhatla's (2011) focused on the need for engaged employees and how their presence can improve the progress and work efficiency of the organization as a whole. Also focused on the challenges faced by the HR managers to improve employee engagement for an organization's survival. Sundary, Kumar's (2011) focused on various factors which lead to employee engagement and what should company do to make the employees engaged. Proper attention on engagement strategies will increase the organizational effectiveness in terms of higher productivity, profits, quality, customer satisfaction, employee retention and increased adaptability. Mathur's (2015) reinforced the importance of employee communication on the success of a business. She revealed that an organization should realize the importance of employees, more than any other variable, as the most powerful contributor to an organization's competitive position

2 Objectives Of The Study

- To understand the concept of employee engagement.
- To study in detail about the types of employee engagement.
- To understand the drivers of employee engagement.
- To analyze the various employee engagement activities.
- To examine and analyze the employee engagement strategies implemented by Indian companies in comparison to those employed by global organizations.

3 Employee Engagement and its Types

According to Paul M. Sanchez's (2007), employee engagement is defined as "an outcome of how employees perceive their work, leadership of their organizations, the recognition and rewards they receive, and the communication ethos of the organization". Cook's (2008) defined Employee engagement as the term that is "personified by the passion and energy employee have to give of their best to the organization to serve the customer. It is all about the willingness and ability of the employees to give sustained discretionary effort to help their organization succeed". Saks's (2008) argue that organizational commitment refers to a person's attitude and attachment towards their organization, whilst engagement is not merely an attitude; it is the degree to which an individual is attentive to their work and absorbed in the performance of their role. The 'Ten C's of Engagement' represent key steps management can take to enhance employee engagement. These include Connect, where management shows care and values its employees, and Career, which focuses on providing meaningful work that promotes professional development. Clarity ensures employees understand the organization's objectives, policies, and procedures, while Convey involves management sharing goals and providing feedback. Recognizing excellent work through Congratulate boosts morale, and Contribute highlights an employee's role in the organization's success. Control allows employees to lead and participate in decision-making, and Cooperate emphasizes teamwork over individual pursuits. Management's Credibility through transparency and integrity is essential, as is building Confidence by maintaining high moral and performance standards, fostering a positive workplace identity. Together, these elements create an environment of trust and motivation, leading to higher employee engagement. There are three types Of Employee Engagement: engaged, disengaged and actively disengaged

a Engaged

Engaged employees are enthusiastic, passionate and completely absorbed in their work. They always act in ways that are in the best interest of their organization (Ghani et al., 2023). They are driven and will always ensure that they know what their role in

the organization is. These individuals are known to have high levels of performance. They want to use their skills, abilities and competencies every day at work. Engaged employees are committed to their organization, tend to stay with the organization longer and are more committed to quality and growth. These employees are very proud of their organization and will tell everybody about their organization. Employees are engaged when:

- They have a strong relationship with their manager.
- There is clear communication between them and their manager.
- They have strong interpersonal relationships with colleagues.
- They encourage and motivate others to take risks and strive for excellence.

b Disengaged

Employees who are not engaged will put in the necessary time to finish a task, but will have no energy or passion for their work. They have no positive or negative feelings about their organization and go through the motions daily without committing themselves. These individuals are task orientated rather than goal orientated (Govindarajo, Dileep Kumar, & Ramulu, 2014). They expect to be told what to do, rather than take initiative and do something of their own accord. These employees tend to feel that their efforts are not appreciated and that their full potential is not being tapped. Disengaged will most likely cost an organization a lot of money.

c Actively Disengaged

These individuals are opposed to everything. They are not just unhappy at work, but they are actively living out their unhappiness at work. These individuals will not miss a chance to spread negativity. Actively disengaged employees are not interested in the goals and mission of the company; they rather openly express feelings of mistrust and hatred towards it. Employees that are highly disengaged will hold back physically, cognitively and emotionally. When they work they behave in a robotic, passive and detached way. These types of employees can hurt the image and functioning of the organization.Following could be possible causes of actively disengaged employees :

- Poor management.
- Lack of career growth and advancement opportunities.
- Poor communication.
- Lack of recognition.
- Employees' salaries are not market- related.
- Lack of training.
- Constant work overload.
- Lack of teamwork.

4 Drivers of Employee Engagement

I Senior management' s interest in employees' well-being : Employees want to know what management thinks and what they believe. They also want the opportunity to give their input; this will give them responsibility and accountability. A very damaging fact is that sometimes there is a huge gap between what management says and does. This can destroy trust and engagement very quickly.

II Challenging work : Some jobs are repetitive and mundane by nature. There are, however, ways how employers can promote a stimulating and challenging environment (Mossavar-Rahmani & Zohuri, 2024). These include encouraging people to take initiative, being open and accepting change, coaching and developing individual's skills, and holding people accountable for their performance.

III Decision-making authority : Employees will accept increased risk much easier if they think that they have control over decisions; have the relevant information and tools to make a sound decision.

IV A clear vision from senior management about future success : It is thus clear that individuals who experience a strong sense of purpose at the work-place, who believe that they have all the necessary competencies to effectively do their work, who believe that they have the ability to influence the system they are in and who have self-endorsed goals are more engaged in their work (Sutin et al., 2023; Zhenjing et al., 2022).

5 Strategies and Activities to Build Employee Engagement

Organizations can enhance employee engagement by implementing targeted strategies and activities that foster a positive, productive work environment.

5.1 Strategies to Build Engagement

1. Use the Right Employee Engagement Survey: When a company asks for employee opinions, there is an expectation that meaningful action will follow. Surveys should be specific, relevant, and actionable across all organizational levels, and focus on data proven to influence key performance metrics.

2. Focus on Engagement at Local and Organizational Levels: Real change begins at the local workgroup level but requires leadership to set the tone. Leaders should integrate engagement into managers' performance expectations, empowering both managers and employees to identify barriers and opportunities for improvement.

This collaboration drives innovation, enhanced performance, and better workplace experiences.

3. Select the Right Managers: Great managers understand that their success depends on their employees' achievements. They recognize employee strengths, provide growth opportunities, and seek out ideas and feedback. Selecting managers with the unique talents required for effective people management can significantly improve employee engagement.

4. Coach Managers and Hold Them Accountable: Research shows that managers are primarily responsible for engagement levels. Coaching managers to actively build engagement plans with their teams, track progress, and maintain a focus on emotional engagement is critical. Managers should use employee engagement tools like the Q12 to create a structured, engaged workplace.

5. Define Engagement Goals in Realistic, Everyday Terms: Leaders must translate engagement goals into meaningful, everyday terms. By describing success in powerful and relatable language, employees can connect with the goals. Engagement should be part of daily interactions, discussed in team meetings and one-on-one sessions to embed it into the organization's culture.

5.2 Employee Engagement Activities

- Create Team Values: Encourage teams to create their own culture by defining 2-3 core values or ground rules. This collaborative process nurtures team identity and accelerates the development of a positive work environment.
- Encourage Personal Projects: Allow employees to dedicate 1-2 hours daily to personal projects. This fosters cross-departmental interaction and idea exchange, bringing fresh perspectives to work.
- Assign a Buddy or Mentor for Newcomers: During onboarding, a mentor helps newcomers adapt by answering essential questions and offering guidance. This connection ensures smoother transitions and quicker integration into the team.
- Team Photos: Display team photos around the office—group shots, candid moments, or event photos. This fosters camaraderie and helps employees feel more connected to their colleagues.
- Encourage Volunteering: Offer employees a couple of days a month to volunteer for a cause they support. This promotes a sense of purpose and social responsibility while building team spirit.
- Increase Pay: Compensation is a fundamental driver of employee satisfaction and engagement. Offering competitive pay reflects the organization's commitment.

- Acknowledge and Promote Creativity: Encouraging creativity leads to innovation. Employees who feel that their contributions are valued are more likely to stay motivated.
- Honor Accomplishments: Recognizing achievements, big or small, reinforces that employee efforts matter. Regular acknowledgment can prevent burnout and maintain high levels of motivation.
- Appreciate the People: Celebrating milestones such as birthdays, promotions, retirements, and welcoming new employees highlights the organization's appreciation for its workforce.
- Give and Receive Feedback: Open feedback channels are vital for growth and engagement. Employees who feel heard and have opportunities to give input are more likely to be committed to their work.
- Incorporate Unique Engagement Ideas: Small gestures, like introducing colorful mugs or air fresheners, can have a surprising impact on office morale and contribute to a more pleasant work environment.
- Be Respectful: Respect is foundational to all workplace interactions, regardless of hierarchy. A respectful work culture strengthens trust and engagement across all levels.
- Inspire Learning: Supporting employee learning and skill development enhances job satisfaction and engagement while preparing the team for future challenges.
- Encourage Sustained Participation: Engagement should be an ongoing effort. Develop a long-term employee engagement plan with specific goals and review it regularly to ensure continuous improvement.

By combining these strategies and activities, organizations can create a dynamic and engaging workplace that drives employee satisfaction, productivity, and long-term success.

6   Encouraging Employee Engagement at National and Global Levels

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) encourages innovation among its team members by mentoring them in developing creative solutions for work-related challenges. This has resulted in the creation of helpful items that have contributed to prosperous commercial ventures. TCS developed the 'Ultimax' platform, an online forum where employees from various levels and locations can interact, promoting cross-cultural collaboration. TCS's diversity across geographic locations and cultures is reflected in its team dynamics. Similarly, Bharti Airtel Ltd. honors new hires and top performers by organizing special dinners or lunches with the company's Chief Operations Officer, fostering a sense of recognition and belonging among its employees. The Aditya Birla Group, through the chairman-led Organization Health Study (OHS), tracks employee engagement levels regularly. It provides employees with a platform to express their views openly and anonymously on various topics. The Aditya Birla Awards for Outstanding Achievement competitions such as the Value Leaders' Poll and Vision 2015, fosters engagement and recognition across the group.

In the hospitality sector, Indian Hotels, which operates the Taj network, evaluates staff performance based on customer focus and guidance from senior executives. This approach strengthens employee engagement by aligning individual efforts with organizational goals. Tata Motors, on the other hand, promotes engagement through the Tata Club in Jamshedpur, where staff and their families can socialize and network. Community Development Centres (CDCs) and merit awards for employees' children are also part of their engagement initiatives. Additionally, Tata Motors Cultural Group organizes cultural events, encouraging creativity and talent among employees and their families. Microsoft India, through its Employee Involvement Program, promotes professional and personal growth by fostering collaboration across groups and communities, thereby broadening employees' perspectives and enriching their workplace experience. Vodafone has introduced a "customer-centricity" strategy, centered on the principles of Speed, Simplicity, and Trust, with the aim of enhancing both employee and client satisfaction. ITC promotes collaboration and creativity among its workforce by consulting with local unions and employees before implementing major operational changes. This participative approach ensures that all voices are heard, contributing to a harmonious work environment. Lastly, Godrej & Boyce promotes a fun and engaging work culture with initiatives such as birthday celebrations, team lunches, and movie nights, while Tata AIG General Insurance hosts town halls where company leaders share updates and celebrate employee accomplishments.

6.1 Employee Engagement at International Level

At ABC Supply, the late CEO Ken Hendricks believed in putting people first to ensure that employees put customers first. He created a people-centric business built on relationships, fostering an engaged workforce across 350 locations in 45 states. Hendricks made an effort to treat his employees as friends and peers, dedicating time each day to interact with managers and employees face-to-face. His relationship-building initiatives included hosting weekly parties at his home and creating yearbooks for every ABC Supply location, which featured staff pictures, goals, and lists of employees. These personalized efforts helped build a culture where employees felt valued, supported, and connected to the company's mission. This focus on relationships proved to be a powerful employee engagement tool, ensuring staff loyalty and long-term commitment to the company and its customers. Similarly, Zappos, an online shoe retailer, has built a reputation as one of the best places to work due to its commitment to corporate culture. The company is highly selective in its hiring process, seeking candidates who align with Zappos' core values and company culture. Through a rigorous interview process and social gatherings such as luncheons and happy hours, the company ensures that new hires are a good cultural fit.

Reebok took a different approach to employee engagement by aligning its workforce with its company mission of "getting consumers moving." The athletic apparel company converted one of its warehouses into a CrossFit training facility exclusively for Reebok employees, encouraging staff members to adopt a healthy and active lifestyle that mirrored the company's external brand messaging. This initiative not only improved employee engagement but also strengthened Reebok's commitment to its mission by involving its employees in the lifestyle it promotes. This strategy helped create a more cohesive workforce that was deeply connected to the company's goals. Through such initiatives, both ABC Supply and Reebok have demonstrated that aligning company values with employee engagement efforts can lead to higher levels of motivation, satisfaction, and overall performance. Through these strategies Employee engagement leads to numerous positive outcomes for a company. Engaged employees are more likely to remain loyal, advocate for the company and its products, and contribute to its financial success. They tend to be more motivated, perform better, and foster stronger connections with the business, which translates into higher customer satisfaction and improved service quality. A strong correlation exists between employee engagement and profitability, as engaged workers are deeply committed to the organization's goals and policies. It has thus provided a competitive environments, engagement fosters loyalty, enhances trust, and creates a dynamic, stimulating workplace.

7   Conclusion

Employee communication is frequently referred to as employee engagement. It has a wide range of effects on businesses and is quickly growing in acceptance, utility, and significance in the workplace. Employee engagement highlights how crucial employee communication is to a company's success. Thus, people should be seen by an organization as the single most important factor influencing a company's ability to compete. Employee engagement should therefore be a constant process of education, development, evaluation, and action. Therefore, we would draw the conclusion that a company is responsible for fostering and sustaining employee engagement, and that accomplishing so demands the ideal balance of time, effort, commitment, and investment.

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