

Qualification: CIPD Diploma in Applied Human Resources

Module Name: Understanding Employee Engagement

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Signed: 

Date: 7th February 2022

1.

I work for Swansea Council as a Workforce Analytics, Recruitment and Changes Officer based in the Service Centre, and discussed the Authority's current approach to employee engagement with my line manager. As Swansea Council is a local Authority, the employee structure is hierarchal. Because of this, there is no way to blur the lines of job roles and pay cannot be negotiated. Therefore, we are unable to do as Google does where innovation can be embraced from all over the organisation regardless of job titles, formal authority and strategic rules (Olson and Simerson, 2015). This discourages employee engagement as it goes against MacLeod's (2015) strategic narrative (Johns and Ellis, 2016, p. 83).

However, within my team, we have a team meeting once a week where our line manager gives us updates with regards to work and what is going on within the organisation. We are also encouraged to share ideas within the team which helps us feel valued.

Since the pandemic, the Service Centre at Swansea Council have monthly one-to-one meetings with their line manager. A set of questions are asked to the employee which includes asking them to rate from one to ten how they are feeling and how they feel about working from home. We are asked if there are any problems we would like to discuss and if there is any further training we would like to try. We are then told our stats for the month and goals are set for the next month which are personal for each employee. Praise is given when employees do well with their stats and if stats are low then our line manager tries to get to the root of the problem before it escalates. These one-to-one meetings fit the engaged manager description by MacLeod (2015). Our line manager often acts as a coach and our next steps are planned together to reach our goals which are also decided together. Being offered training in each one-to-one meeting is great for employee engagement as it allows each employee the opportunity to grow professionally (Jouany and Mäkipää, 2021).

Employee voice (MacLeod, 2015) could be seen within the Service Centre when our manager sent out an employee engagement survey when we started working from home at the beginning of the pandemic. The results of the survey were sent to us, and our answers were taken on board. A survey is also sent out to the whole Authority annually which we can take part in. However, I feel that more can be done in this area as the Service Centre have not received another employee engagement survey which could be useful now that we have been working from home for longer. The results could identify areas that need addressing. As a team, we are given a voice and our managers have an open-door policy and are very approachable.

Integrity (MacLeod, 2015) is very prominent in our team and can be seen with higher management. The 'values on the wall' match the behaviours shown by management so there is no need to distrust their motive and they are taken at face value. This saves on time and resources.

Flexible working was introduced to the Service Centre before the pandemic. Employees no longer had to work their contracted hours but could complete work in their own time as long as there is cover. If targets are met before the end of the day, the employee can clock off work as their work has been completed. This can be beneficial for work-life balance but in reality, many employees do not work in this way and since working from home, many employees are actually working more hours than before. Employees often feel guilty for leaving work early if everyone else is carrying on working.

As remote working has become the norm since the pandemic for the Service Centre, this has increased employee engagement for some employees as they feel they have a better work-life balance. There is no longer the need to commute so employees have more time for themselves (Jouany and Mäkipää, 2021). However, remote working can lead to burnout, loneliness and lack of communication which can have negative effects on employee engagement (Buffer, 2021). Using an example such as the 'Dublin Go Dark' scheme where employees have to hand their laptops in at the end of the day to stop them from over working could help overcome the burnout that some employees feel since working from home (Kellaway, 2014)

References

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2.

Swansea Council values can be found on their website. The first value is 'people focus' which states that we are community focused and should work to improve the lives of people in Swansea and also respects employees and have high integrity. The second value is 'working together' where it states for us to work across services to maximise resources and knowledge. The third value is 'innovation' where it says we should think and work differently to improve our work and learning should be shared across the council (Swansea Council, 2021).

These values fit in to what MacLeod (2015) says on how to promote employee engagement in the workplace. The goals are clear which is to improve the lives of people in Swansea and to do this we must share knowledge, work together, have high integrity, be adaptable to change by sharing what we learn across the council. These fit the description for strategic narrative, employee voice (Johns and Ellis, 2016, p. 83). These values promote a culture where everyone works together to reach the organisation's goals which creates higher levels of employee engagement (Reidy, 2022).

There is a bulletin new letter sent out to all employees by email every week. This includes the latest news in the Council, often there is an advert for training in the Welsh language and there is also a list of job vacancies available within Swansea Council included. This encourages career development for employees which creates higher levels of employee engagement (Jouany and Mäkipää, 2021).

There is also a weekly blog written by the Chief Executive. This includes updates of what the Council is doing, highlights of the week for the Council and any challenges we may be facing. There is often praise given within the blog to certain employees who go above and beyond. By giving praise to employees this encourages employee engagement as it shows that their work is appreciated (MacLeod, 2015). The Chief Executive is also open in the blog about finances and challenges for the council so this shows that they are open with all employees. This creates integrity and trust (MacLeod, 2015). There is also the opportunity for employees to comment at the bottom of the blog which the Chief Executive can respond to. This gives employees a voice and a chance to be involved with feedback which creates higher levels of employee engagement (MacLeod, 2015).

Swansea Council does not have an employee handbook but has a list of policies that are available on StaffNet. This includes policies on leave, performance management, health and safety, equality, harassment and bullying, training and development and maternity/paternity/adoption leave. These topics promote employee engagement as some can create a better work-life balance which shows trust within the organisation (Johns and Ellis, 2016).

References

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3.

After completing the assignment for the Understanding Employee Engagement module, I am confident that I am aware of best practice when it comes to employee engagement. Therefore, I believe I know the tools and approaches needed to drive employee engagement.

I understand that the manager needs to act like a coach to employees and be willing to listen and take action on feedback so I know how to assess management practices and behaviours and their impact on the worker experience.

Wellbeing in the workplace is a priority since the pandemic and I feel like I am to know the factors which impact wellbeing at work and how to create wellbeing interventions for workers. I also understand how trust works within the workplace and how this impacts employees. Integrity must be shown by managers by them behaving in a way that reflects the values they teach (MacLeod, 2015).

Communication is key to creating an employee engaging culture in the workplace and I understand how to use and assess the effectiveness of different communications channels and approaches.

Going forward I would like to aim to design communication plans which positively impact the worker experience using know knowledge from this module. This can help the organisation feel like more of a partnership and I believe we can do more in this area.

I would also like to improve my abilities to assess employee engagement across the organisation. By taking examples from Google such as the Googliest survey I believe employee engagement can be monitored better (Nguyen, 2020).

I would also like to learn how to drive forward the outputs from work voice tools. By showing that employees voices are heard and listened to this can drive forward employee engagement (Johns and Ellis, 2016, p. 83).

References

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