

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Module: Managing People

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Employee Engagement

Zoya Danailova ID 1815751

Lecturer: Mary March

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Drivers of Employee Engagement	3
Leadership and employee engagement	4
Work-life balance and employee engagement	4
Communication and employee engagement	4
Feeling valued and Engaged	5
3. Diagnostic Tools to Measure Engagement	5
Vigor.....	6
Dedication.....	6
Absorption.....	7
4. Strategies to Raise Levels of Engagement	7
5. Employee Value Proposition	8
6. Conclusion.....	9
7. References	10

1. Introduction

Many employees are not just looking to work for any company these days; they want to be enthusiastic, involved and committed to their fellow employees in the organisation. Employee engagement has been shown to increase productivity among employees. It is also beneficial for organisation due to creating better customer experiences (Harvard Business Review, 2014).

Torrington, et al (2017, p.16) says that involving employees during decision making is vital due to the impact it has on their lives and welfare, enhancing an employee's job satisfaction and engagement with the organisation's objectives

An employer's involvement in the employee's affairs can positively affect the employee's engagement, thus boosting the employee's productivity and increasing their loyalty to the organisation (Shoaib, 2019). In this paper we will review the topic of engagement by evaluating the drivers of engagement as well as the possible ways to measure engagement. Finally the report will suggest different ways to raise the level of engagement derived from the ideas discussed.

2. Drivers of Employee Engagement

Employee engagement refers to having a good mindset towards an institution and its ideals by an employee. An employee who is engaged in an organisation is aware of the organisational goals and can work with fellow co-workers to improve performance at work for the organisation's good. On the other hand, the organisation works towards developing engagement between the management and the workers. As a result the workers have belief in the organisational mission and products/services (Armstrong, M., 2014)

The key driver for employee engagement is feeling valued and engaged. Other drivers that majorly affect employee engagement include; having trust and integrity between the employee and the employer, also the nature of the job being undertaken by an employee, career growth opportunities is also hugely important, the behaviour of the other employees, flexible working hours that would enable an employee have a healthy work-life balance, the kind of leadership being exhibited in an organisation and the communication between the employer and the employee (Bedarkar and Pandita, 2014).

Leadership and employee engagement

Leadership is a crucial factor when it comes to employee engagement. Some forms of leadership behaviour exhibited by the senior leaders of an organisation have been shown to directly impact employees' motivation, job satisfaction, and proactive actions from the employees. That support, trust and the creation of a blame-free environment by the leader are components of mental wellbeing, contributing to employee engagement. Leaders of an organisation and employees interact in high-quality relationships, trust grows. Leaders with integrity are fair, caring and have good communication with their employees, which encourages the same behaviour from the employees to their leaders. An organisation concerned with its employees' issues is open and is fair in decision-making, enhances employee engagement (Bedarkar and Pandita, 2014, p.111).

Work-life balance and employee engagement

A healthy work-life balance is vital to an individual in order to improve one's physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. An employee's ability to find work and family time is critical for improving their work performance. An organisation that can provide flexible working hours to an employee would have more employee engagement. This is because such an organisation has accorded employees the freedom to choose when to start and end their work engagements while also considering the need for the employee to have some personal time off. (Bedarkar and Pandita, 2014, p.112).

Communication and employee engagement

Communication plays a critical role in enhancing employee engagement. Poor communication has been identified as a barrier to engagement by employees. Employees require clear communication from their management. Clear communication within an organisation conveys their values and what is expected of the employees, which increases employee engagement. Through communication the organizational values are transmitted to all employees as a result of whom the organizational goals are successfully achieved. (Bedarkar and Pandita, 2014,p.112).

Feeling valued and Engaged

The feeling of being valued and being involved in an organisation has several components; the employees feel that they are involved in decision making, they are also able to give their ideas, and the leadership listen to the ideas and take note of the positive employee contributions, the opportunities that the employees are given by their employers to further develop their careers and the extent to which the employer values the employee's health and wellbeing (Armstrong, M., 2014)



For example Google is a company that has been rated as one of the best companies to work for because of the kind of values they stand for, transparency. They have a culture of encouraging the breaking of barriers and encouraging their employees' creativity and collaborations. This, in turn, impacts the employees positively as they feel they work in an organisation that values transparency. They are also empowered by the fact that at google, they are encouraged to spend 20% of their time outside their regular work duties, which fosters creativity (CMI, 2015).

3. Diagnostic Tools to Measure Engagement

Job commitment is the presumed opposite of burnout. A stark contrast, however, to those who are affected by mental exhaustion, employees who are engaged have a sense of enthusiasm

and a meaningful attachment to their jobs and see themselves as in a position to deal well with the expectations of their employment (Schaufeli and Bakker, n.d.).

The Utrecht model of engagement can measure the different levels of engagement among employees in an organisation. This model assesses three dimensions of engagement; vigor, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli and Bakker, n.d.).

Vigor

Vigor refers to the individual capacity, mental agility, commitment and the investment of continuous effort to one's work. Also vigor is described by high energy levels with maximum efforts to achieve organizational goals. Exhaustion, on the other hand, is associated with reduced energy levels coupled with poor attitudes towards work. Vigor, as an aspect of work engagement, implies elevated energy levels and mental resilience during work.

Evaluation of vigor is done using the six markers, which correspond to high levels of energy and resilience, the desire to increase one's commitment, not becoming fatigued easily, and endurance during difficult periods. (Schaufeli and Bakker, n.d.).

- When I am at work, I feel full of energy
- I feel good and energetic at my job
- I feel like going to work every morning when I wake up
- I can keep working for a prolonged period of time
- At work, I am psychologically strong
- When things do not work out well at work, I still stay strong

Dedication

Dedication refers to when an individual is inspired, feels enthusiastic and is highly involved by their work. Assessment of dedication is done by five markers that derive a sense of significance from the job that one does, being enthusiastic and proud of the job that one does and feeling challenged and inspired;

- The work I do has a lot of meaning and has purpose
- I am passionate about what I do

- I find inspiration from the job I do
- I take pride in the job I do
- My job challenges me

Employees who score high on commitment highly identify with their roles because they experience it as being meaningful, inspiring and at the same time demanding. Individuals who score low on dedication do not feel proud, nor are they enthusiastic about their job (Schaufeli and Bakker, n.d.).

Absorption

Absorption can be described as having a sense of alienation from your environment and having a high degree of focus on the work at hand. A general lack of conscious awareness of the amount of time spent doing work. Absorption is measured by six markers that refer to being happy and immersed in one's job and having challenges detaching yourself from work. One doesn't notice how quickly time goes by and forgetting everything else that is around.

- Time goes by quickly when I work
- When I work, I forget my surroundings
- When I work deeply, I feel happy
- I am engrossed in my work
- I get carried away when I work
- It is difficult to separate myself from my work

Individuals who score high feel that they are usually happy when engrossed in the job they do, passing time would go unnoticed while working and become detached from work becomes difficult. Individuals who scored low do not feel immersed in their jobs nor have any difficulties getting detached from work (Schaufeli and Bakker, n.d.).

4. Strategies to Raise Levels of Engagement

Getting engaged employees is a rare feat for any employer. It is, therefore, important for employers to find ways of getting employees who are engaged. According to a Gallup survey, they found that 15% of employees are engaged at work, while only 33% of the employees are engaged (Gallup, 2016).

Engaged employees are the main driving force for many organisations. They can push beyond the limits and become innovative for organisations due to the connection they feel they have to an organisation (Gallup, 2016).

Communication: This is one of the significant strategies that can be used to increase employee engagement. The structures that have been put in place in an organisation to facilitate communication have a major impact on employee engagement. An organisation's effective leadership in communicating with its employees has increased employee satisfaction, motivation, and engagement. Organisations that are open in sharing information with its employees and have them participate in the running of the organisation encourage engagement from employee. Communication has a two-way dialogue and success and depends on the support of management. An effective approach to internal communication builds a culture of trust. (CIPD, 2020)

Rewards, benefits and compensation: Employee engagement can be increased if there is adequate compensation, rewards and benefits that they may get from the organisation to make up for the kind of work or risks that the employee takes for the company. The benefits that an organisation may offer an employee should have value and efficiency to the organisation (Torrington, D, et al, 2017).

5. Employee Value Proposition

This refers to a set of benefits that an employee is set to receive in return for the skills, experiences and abilities they bring to an organisation. Employee value propositions are what act as magnets to potential employees and also determine the levels of engagement from the employees (Talentlyft, 2019).

The most important EPV's elements are:

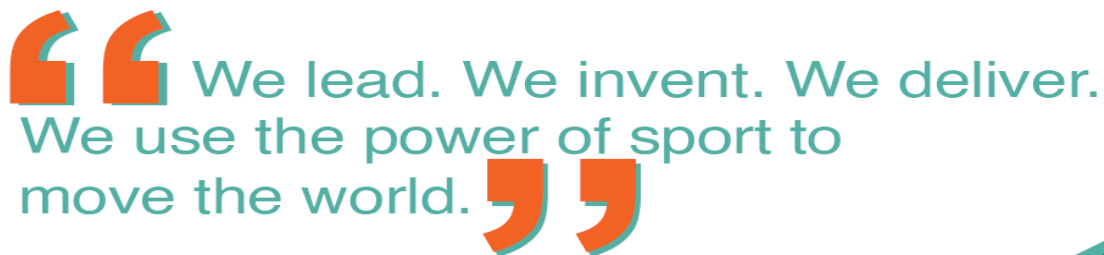
Compensation: An employer can offer employee compensation in terms of salary and other cash incentives like bonuses for achieved results.

Benefits: Other benefits such as holidays and comprehensive health insurance, flexible working hours and an attractive package for retirement.

Career development: The organisation should provide a work-life balance environment, the organisation should provide assurances for job security and training opportunities.

When creating an EPP, the most important question that needs to be answered accurately and clearly is - “What do we currently offer to our employees in exchange for their time and effort?”

The EPV statement makes it easy to see the value the company offers. Example FOR Employee Value Proposition is Nike. (Workology, 2018)

A graphic featuring the Nike Employee Value Proposition statement. The text is in a teal, sans-serif font. It is framed by large, stylized orange and teal quotation marks. The text reads: "We lead. We invent. We deliver. We use the power of sport to move the world."

We lead. We invent. We deliver.
We use the power of sport to
move the world.

- Nike

Source: workolo.gy/evp

WORKology

6. Conclusion

Employee engagement is vital to many organisations as it helps drive up levels of productivity and efficiency. It is important for organisations to come up with strategies that promote engagement from employees as it has benefits to both the company and the employees. Employee engagement is the engine of a successful company. In fact, it is a business strategy in which all employees and leaders have turned into behaviour and culture. Engaged culture is essential to the success of any company. According CIPD “A strong employer brand should connect an organization’s values, people strategy and policies, and be linked to the company brand. A key part of an organization’s culture and values are the ethical standards that the employer upholds through the practice of its employees. Employer brand is therefore influenced by the ethical perspective that prospective and current employees take, as well as through business actions.”(CIPD, 2020)

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