

Understanding Employee Engagement- On the job submissions

Word Count:

Activity 1- 780

Activity 2- 425

Activity 3- 315

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By signing below, I confirm that the work/evidence presented is my own, unaided work. I understand the regulations pertaining to candidate malpractice and the action that may be taken as a result.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Carys Ratcliffe', written on a light-colored background.

Date: 30 January 2022.

1. Evaluate whether your organisation's approach to employee engagement needs a review, based on your reading of current trends.

Dutta (2021) identified key employee engagement trends in 2021 and predicted emerging trends for 2022. If these are followed and adapted, organisations will experience a happier, more productive, and increasingly engaged workforce. Bluestone has already implemented some of these trends which encourage employee engagement in our organisation:

We have embraced an element of flexibility in the workplace as we have implemented constructive policies giving employees the option to work from home and flexible working options. However, due to the nature of our business, it is not possible for all employees to adapt remote and/or hybrid working. This only positively impacts employee engagement when communication is maintained using effective channels as this ensures that employees still feel a part of the team. To do this we use Zoom, Teams, Email and phone.

In the last year, we have placed a growing focus on Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace. This forms part of our broader employee engagement strategy and ensures a sense of belongingness is both created and maintained for all employees. This diverse and fair culture creates a more engaged and innovative workforce.

At Bluestone, we also create and provide ample opportunities for career growth and progression. According to Dutta (2021), employees today seek career progression in their profession more than anything. They want a job which helps them grow as an individual, personally, and professionally. 47% of workers said that a lack of progression opportunities or limited career path would encourage them to leave the organisation for a better opportunity (Randstad). Therefore, to retain and engage employees, organisations must create a culture and environment where all employees can learn, grow, and advance. I personally believe that we, at Bluestone create this culture as we invest in learning and development programs provide by both internal and external providers. Additionally, we make recognition and promotion a frequent, timely and fair affair. To make this consistent and visible in a timely manner, we use our employee app to provide live recognition for all employees.

Bluestone also strives to create a culture of transparency. To ensure this is maintained, we are open and honest communicating key information to employees in a timely manner- encouraging employee engagement. This ensures that our employees are aligned with the organisation (Quantum Workplace 2021).

However, after conducting some further reading surrounding employee engagement, I have identified some areas of our employee engagement approach which need a review.

Although we strive to employ a people-first culture, the extent to which this occurs is limited. We have recently implemented an employee app which shows appreciation for employees and recognises achievement company-wide on a real time basis. Unfortunately, the uptake on this app has been limited, only certain line managers are recognising and communicating with employees using this platform. To ensure maximum success and to achieve a people-first culture, all line managers and employees need to download our communication platform to ensure we communicate on a timely basis and recognise employees' company-wide.

Ponomareva (2021) states that one of the employee engagement trends that has been steadily on the increase is employee health and wellness. Companies with wellness programs to promote employees' good health find that it has a direct impact on employee engagement and productivity. A survey by Virgin Pulse found that 85% of companies say that wellness programs support engagement, with 42% of them reporting their top reason to implement one was to improve

employee engagement. Not only this, but wellness programs also positively affect recruitment, retention and can improve overall company culture. Additionally, organisations need to place a growing focus on mental health to create a healthy work environment and alleviate stress. This also promotes a culture of wellness, boosts physical and mental health, and positively affects morale. In Bluestone, this is one area where we fall short. Our Wellness Advisor was recently made redundant, with no additional support, wellness plan or activities put into place following her departure. It is vital that we work to implement a wellness plan and support for our employees to create a culture of wellness and engage our employees.

Employee benefits impact employee's positivity and loyalty towards their employer. It is important organisations pay attention to the benefits they offer to employees as it demonstrates that employees are valued with their employer looking out for their wellbeing. Therefore, employee benefits play an integral role in employee engagement (The Dining Club Group 2018). Currently, Bluestone offers a range of employee benefits. However, most of our benefits are geared towards employees with families. Therefore, in our ECG meetings, employee benefits are often discussed. For example, employees are more frequently requesting medical/dental insurance, enhanced maternity/paternity pay and additional annual leave.

Overall, Bluestone has increased their focus on employee engagement, however more work needs to be done by implementing/focusing on the methods listed above.

2. Examine the employee handbook and any internal staff bulletins within your organisation and make some notes as to whether you can think the content engages employees on topics that matter to them.

I have examined Bluestone's employee handbook. Although the contents encourage employee engagement overall, I don't believe that the content engages employees on topics which matter to them. This is because the handbook is rather outdated. To fully engage employees, I believe that we need to utilise technology to make the document more interesting. Our employee handbook is 70 pages long and is packed full of topics which matter and are important to our employees, therefore it is important all information is understood and digested fully. Personally, the use of videos, images, colours, and different fonts will engage individuals more. If an employee is engaged with the organisation and the employee handbook, they are more likely to read and follow workplace policies and procedures. Therefore, I believe our employee handbook needs to be updated and utilise the use of technology otherwise we are missing an opportunity to engage our employees.

However, our employee handbook provides employees with the organisation's vision statement, mission statement, information regarding our culture, the eight root beliefs and a message from our CEO. Alongside this, the employee handbook includes key policies and procedures. This is vital as it showcases the company and provides value to employees. This is vital as it embeds the company culture and values from day one, ultimately increasing the engagement and therefore longevity of new hires. This also helps ensure the employee handbook creates a personal connection. When this exists, both employee engagement and productivity can increase.

Additionally, the employee handbook contains information surrounding our employee benefits. This impacts our employee's loyalty and positive reinforcing that our employees are valued. This plays a huge role in employee engagement (The Dining Club Group 2018).

Alongside our employee handbook we have an employee app. This maintains our culture of transparency as we are open and honest when communicating key information to employees in a timely manner- encouraging employee engagement. We also utilise this platform to show appreciation for our employees and recognise achievements company-wide on a real time basis. This is a source of motivation, inspiration, and employee engagement.

Finally, we have an Employee Consultative Group (ECG) which encourages employee engagement as it gives our employees a voice in the workplace. It also gives us an opportunity to engage with the wider organisation in regards to policy development, implementation of strategies and corporate priorities whilst encouraging meaningful feedback.

3. Discuss your development needs with your line manager, using the CIPD Profession Map as a basis for your discussion. Consider whether your skills in this area require improvement.

The CIPD Profession Map details what successful and effective HR professionals do to add value to both people and organisations. It describes the high standards of professional practice across every aspect and specialism of the profession and the behaviours, knowledge and skills which underpin this (CIPD). The profession map details six areas of Core Knowledge, these are required to be an expert in people, work and change and to make a positive impact in the work environment. The six areas of Core Knowledge. Within these areas there are 4 'levels' - foundation level, associate level, Chartered Member level and Chartered Fellow level.

After studying the CIPD Profession Map and these levels, regarding 'employee experience' I am currently working at Foundation level, but also completing some elements/tasks of Associate level. This is because I understand Bluestone's approach to employee engagement, how we listen to our employees and understand how our policies impact worker experience in the organisation. Additionally, I understand our methods of onboarding and how to administer them. I'm responsible for designing and implementing Bluestone's integrated onboarding programme and how this reflects our employer brand. Finally, I am aware of our communication channels, how to use them and assess the effectiveness of each (CIPD Profession Map 2019).

However, there are always areas to improve. After a conversation with my line manager, Jess and analysing the Profession Map, we believe that I could improve the following areas:

- Begin to assess the impact of management practices and their behaviours on our employees.
- Focus on our people policies and work to improve their impact on worker's experience.
- Participate in training opportunities to widen knowledge and improve skill set.

I agree with the feedback from Jess and hope that as my career within People Services develops, I will continue to progress through the levels on the CIPD Profession Map and my knowledge of Employee Engagement will continue to expand.

Bibliography

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