

LEVEL 5 DEGREE ASSIGNMENT SPECIFICATION

SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL HOTEL MANAGEMENT

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How to engage employees throughout the employee lifecycle

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Employee engagement is “the involvement and enthusiasm of employees in their work and workplace” (Gallup Institute 2013, p.02). The earliest definition by Kahn (1992) focused on how employees “express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally” in their workplace. Robinson et al. (2004) defined it as “positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its values”. Therefore, the relationship between the manager and employee is an important element for creating and fostering employee engagement (Raina and Kalse, 2018). It helps to manage and measure employee’s engagement in team building. Moreover, the engagement evaluates how Human Resource (HR) practices connect with employees to influence positive business outcomes in hospitality industry. The way company treats their employees and employees interacts amongst themselves can positively or negatively influence the business outcomes. Besides, the business environment is facing radical changes where employees are questioning business ethics and meaning of their work. Therefore, companies need to effectively understand employees’ concerns, manage talent and develop employee skills for seeking comprehensive solutions towards sustainability, better corporate social responsibility (CSR) and employee engagement (Casey and Sieber, 2016). Though employee engagement is vital for performance evaluation, managers should focus on both engagement and well-being. Moreover, it should be differentiated from job quality, management actions and employee behaviour and stop relating it to job satisfaction or psychological state of employees (CIPD, 2021).

Today’s competitive business environment deploy HR practices to enhance competitive advantage, customer focused, goal oriented, to reinforce organization’s strategic position (Itam et al., 2020). In high-performing businesses, joy, interest, commitment and love describes employees’ engagement (Fredrickson, 1998). Besides, employee engagement is directly linked with employee turnover, productivity, profitability and customer satisfaction where social and ecological issues can affect long-term competitiveness in the hospitality industry (Casey and Sieber, 2016). Many studies found employees have strong emotional affiliation with workplace and their job satisfaction is gradually decreasing (Wissmann, 2013, p.21). Report from Gallop Institute (2013) depicts, only 13% employees are actually engaged in their jobs worldwide and 35% are actively disengaged. Consequently, diminishing business performance by limiting value creation

from employees and potentially promoting hostile environment and negative employee engagement. Moreover, Gallup study have found engaged employees are the most productive workers and make a difference for the organization during tough times (Sorenson, 2013). His study has nine performance outcomes for employee engagement including profitability, productivity, turnover, customer ratings, shrinkage, safety incidents, quality, safety incidents and absenteeism (Sorenson, 2013). Top-quartile work units in employee engagement have outperformed bottom-quartile units in all key business outcomes. Therefore, creating an informed, productive and involved workplace is vital for hotels to gain loyalty, empowerment, innovation, increased desire and commitment from employees (Stevens, 2022). This shift in company culture can establish effective employee engagement and attract more revenue, encourage active employee participation, involvement and better customer services.

Recent studies have shown positive relationship between employee engagement and high-performance including innovation, retention, efficiency and health and safety performance (CIPD, 2021). Therefore, companies need to offer friendly and cooperative work environment for employees to engage and perform for enhancing both productivity and profitability. Bailey et al. (2017), have found employee engagement have positive association with high task performance where employees have high motivation in their work role to positively contribute towards higher profitability, productivity, customer satisfaction and employee retention (Tanto et al., 2017).

Employee Lifecycle (ELC) offers six stages of engagement between the employer and employee. ELC is an on-going relationship and is a method to visualize who engages with the business they are part of (Biasi, 2017). Through cognitive, emotional and physical engagement, the hotels can improve work relationships, build strong company culture and extent the overall ELC from attraction to separation (Stevens, 2022). The hotels require two-way relationship between employer and employee for positively influencing performance determinants such as procedural knowledge, declarative knowledge and motivation (Tanto et al., 2017).

In the attraction stage, it is important to attract right talent and retaining them for organization's growth strategy. Employers try to enhance their brand by being well known in the industry, offering great work culture, attractive benefits and compensation

packages. As employee engagement should be considering employee well-being along with performance. The HR department of hotels are developing practices and investing more on employee to be more flexible, increase firm's value, exploit new opportunities and positive news for publicity (Raina and Kalse, 2018). Therefore, hotels should get the employee value proposition right while attraction new employees. Encouraging independent decision-making, sharing values, goals and vision help to create highly effective employees performing in engaging environment (Cattermole, 2019). In fact, 85 per cent employees of the world's largest hotel chain, Marriot, have voted as a great place to work (Gibbons, 2020). While attracting employees two approaches of engagement need to be satisfied. Firstly, they should have the resource available for the work and feel psychologically engaged in their work and secondly availability of constructive job resources such as: job security, supervisor support and autonomy (Xu and Thomas, 2011). In hospitality industry, taking care of employees motivate them to offer superior customer services which in return increase sales and profitability for hotels (Gibbons, 2020).

Recruitment stage is crucial for employee engagement. Asking for referrals from the existing team, using different platforms for recruitment, involving and reviewing existing employees become important. In the UK, 131 million working days are being lost to sickness absence which is costing the economy between £74 billion and £99 billion (CIPD, 2020). The HR department of many hotels are focusing on employee engagement as it is directly linked with hotel's performance and work engagement to outweigh the costs over benefits (Raina and Kalse, 2018). Multinational hotel chains in UK emphasise on the employee engagement, recruitment and talent management to overcome recruitment and retention challenges (Hughes and Rog, 2008). Moreover, managing for sustainable employee engagement through open, fair, positive and consistent interpersonal interactions, using organizational resources efficiently to handle employee conflicts and problems, offer clarity, guidance and knowledge to demonstrate responsible decision-making, developing empathy and considerate interaction with employees and supporting development and progression for employees (CIPD, 2021).

Onboarding is very significant stage for outlining the expectations clearly, explaining the company norms, values, mission and vision (Raina and Kalse, 2018). CIPD (2020)

reports, 1 in 4 employees have negative mental and physical impact because of their job in UK. This is concerning, as 1 in 5 feel exhausted at work or under excessive pressure and 1 in 10 feel miserable (CIPD, 2020). Therefore, to create a highly engaged workforce employees need to be empowered, align goals with strategies, promote collaboration and teamwork, provide support and recognition and growth and development from within (Raina and Kalse, 2018). In hospitality industry, differentiating products through superior customer experiences have become necessity to drive loyalty and create brand affinity among customers (Gibbons, 2020). Moreover, engaging managers can motivate and support employees through effective communication, integrate them with the business values, involve and consult them in decision-making (Stevens, 2022). This is return will increase productivity, customer engagement levels, sales growth, higher operating and profit margins (Hughes and Rog, 2008).

Consistently encouraging professional for skill building and mentoring them to build future career path is in the development stage. This promotes innovation, offers better productivity and quality services. As employees become more engages with their organizations when provided with decision making authority. Employees commit to show higher levels of engagement when the managers act in favour of supporting or developing them (Xu and Thomas, 2011). Moreover, training improves service quality and recognition improves both engagement and development among employees. The remuneration, benefits and professional opportunities are similar in most hotels. The only thing that separates them is employee engagement and determines their ability to attract top talent (Gibbins, 2020). Therefore, overall work experience is crucial for hotels to maintain long term business and make the bottom-line employees to stay. CIPD (2021) have developed six dimensions of good work which includes pay and benefits, contracts, work-life balance, job nature and design, relationships at work and employee voice. Adopting these methods can improve the quality of people management and offer better health and work cycle. Furthermore, effective implementation of HR practices focuses on recruiting, developing and rewarding employee talent based on high potential and high performance which improve bottom-line results and maximise the talent of all employees (Hughes and Rog, 2008).

Retention stage is about maintaining great relationship with the team, able to communicate the team mission openly, motivate the employees, seek the employees' feedback and promote retention by frequent morale measures (Itam et al., 2020). Researches from CIPD have shown that enhancing employee engagement and reducing stress at work offers higher life and job satisfaction and sustainable employee engagement. As excessive pressure and stress affects productivity, exposes to anxiety and depression which in turn can lead to heart diseases and higher chance to accidents (CIPD, 2021). Besides, recognition, feedback and validation are the most key components for employee engagement (Stevens, 2022). Both positive and negative feedbacks from managers and employees should be analysed and evaluated through periodic performance evaluation to allow them to work in the best interest of the organization. Moreover, both public and private recognition from managers can encourage employees to remain engaged, consider themselves as an asset and provide opportunities for managers to validate their employees (Stevens, 2022). Therefore, hotels can follow the Marriot model of practicing employee engagement: help frontline employees as they would guests, align employees around company purpose and prioritizing employee well-being (Gibbons, 2020).

Get honest feedback, reaffirm the commitment to the team concludes the employee lifecycle with separation stage. Treating the employee engagement as a psychological state and focusing on broad strategic area of people focus becomes important (CIPD, 2021). While moderating the effects of leadership on engagement, many researchers have found transformational leadership is positively associated with employees' commitment, job satisfaction and work motivation (Xu and Thomas, 2011). As Gallup's research have found that employees become more receptive to criticism, advice and compliments when they believe their managers and response to helpful feedback (Gibbons, 2020).

The ELC is driven by the highly engaged employees through participation and autonomy, trust and integrity, offers growth opportunities, align individual goals with company performance and have positive interpersonal relationship with co-workers and manager (Hughes and Rog, 2008). Engaging employees make effective decision making through vigour, dedication and absorption, as they have both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to

be dedicated in aligning both personal and company goals (CIPD, 2021). In 2019, a survey from PwC have found that only 28 per cent of global employees felt connected to company goals and 63 per cent of the engaging employees felt motivated, excited, pride, sense of purpose and job satisfaction (Gibbons, 2020).

It is vital to create attractive and engaging workplaces to make employees feel engaged and motivated. Moreover, hotels can implement employee a system to evaluate employee engagement and its impact on team and business performance (Sorenson, 2013). By creating healthy and happier workforce, employees can be more productive which will give competitive advantage to businesses, boost overall economic development and prosperity and promote social wellbeing and wealth in the society (CIPD, 2021). Moreover, best HR practices such as Leader Development, Employee Empowerment, Training and Knowledge Building, Employee Recognition and Cost Management can improve meaningful employment through retention and training of skilled manpower in the hospitality industry (Itam et al., 2020). For instance, Marriot follow five core values to provide great work experience and keep the bottom-line people happy. Its people-centric culture includes: “put people first, pursue excellence, embrace change, act with integrity and serve the world (Moody, 2019). Therefore, companies need to offer friendly and cooperative work environment, better recruitment and retention policies for employees to engage and perform with greater degree of satisfaction and higher motivation (Casey and Sieber, 2016). As hotels in the hospitality industry can survive and possibly thrive during tough economic times by concentrating on employee engagement (Sorenson, 2013).

Overall, HR department and policies in the hospitality industry should focus on employee engagement to ensure all the employees feel empowered, motivated, productive, loyal and drive themselves to positively contribute for the overall business growth of the hotels. As highly engaged employees contributes to the development of positive employer brand, foster commitment, share positive views about the hotels and offer superior effort to positively influence variables such as customer satisfaction, productivity, service quality, sale and profitability, thereby minimizing employee turnover and attrition rate (Hughes and Rog, 2008). Therefore, employee engagement strategies in hotels should focus on motivating employees as they are the biggest assets of the company, align employee

goals with organization vision and performance to make them feel committed and dedicated to their work (Cattermole, 2019).

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