

How to engage **employees** **throughout the** **employee life cycle?**

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Human Resource Management is an essential aspect to assist a business to achieve its objectives by adequately managing its prime assets, its employees or human capital. A company is well known by how good and happy its employees are. This makes Human Resource department or management an essential part for the well-being of any type of the company. In this report, Premier Inn belonging to the UK hospitality industry, Whitbread PLC is considered to analyse how employees are kept engaged throughout their lifecycle (Afsar, Al-Ghazali, and Umrani, 2020). Premier Inn has human capital of over 10,000 people, in around 700 hotels in UK. And its present employee recruitment rate is more than 5% of its existing human capital.

Customer service and satisfaction is of utmost importance for the success of businesses in hospitality industry. And with this, employees are at the forefront, which makes it crucial as well as critical for HRM to effectively function for employee's satisfaction and retention. As per U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics, human resource department administer interview and recruitment of the employees. They are a proven interlink between employees and management. In this current challenging job field, HRM must seek to develop a dedicated and skilled talent resource and retain them too. Annual workforce report states that there is existence of employee engagement concerns globally, and in UK, round about only 11% of employee's experience engaged at their workplace (Arslan, and Roudaki, 2019). With such data, it is evident why employee engagement needs to be focused upon by HRM/ management. In addition, numerous employee engagement placements, frameworks and articles of research are found even in the hotel industry.

Human Resource in the hotel industry should focus on ensuring effective communications between employees and management, in order to minimize the concerns of misunderstandings and tensions between the two. For effective employee engagement, HRM should work on eradicating information silos to let knowledge be easily accessible. This will then ensure specific employees have chance to benefit and learn from the resources, guidance and working circumstances. Leaders should primarily focus on employee's psychological engagement. This can be attained by

providing them often recognition, positive environment at workplace and window for personal growth, resulting in maximizing their productivity and engagement at work. HRM/management should have a comprehensive understanding of the employer-employee contract to achieve better employee engagement (Turner, and Turner, 2020). This will make sure that employees possess the precise skills, instruments, and surroundings to complete their jobs with excellence. Such engaged employees dedicatedly function in achieving both organisational and personal targets.

In case of Premier Inn, HRM function well in keeping their employees engaged which can be evident from its score of 74% in employee engagement (Balwant, Mohammed, and Singh, 2020). They ensure that pay scale of their employees is in accordance with regional industry rates. They also provide cash bonuses and incentives to employees for enhancing their productivity and keep them motivated. This proves to be of benefit for the hotel to improve and achieve employee satisfaction. HRM of Premier Inn takes full responsibility to inspect and take necessary actions, if any, against misconduct complaints by employees. They follow policy of non-tolerance towards discrimination (Verčič, 2021). Employees here are enthusiastically involved with the community and participate in their initiatives too. In a study too, it was noted that their employees generally catch up once a week outside their work.

Through employee engagement within hospitality industry, employees will tend to remain in company for a longer time, and thus helping company to save costs in replacing them. Engaged employees are 17% more productive resulting in profitability and durability of the company (Burnett, and Lisk, 2019). Furthermore, with enhanced output, there comes increased commitment from employees such as providing training to new employees and developing effective processes. Such employees are generally focused on accomplishing hotel's goals. As per Gallup, high engagement rate companies tend to show minimal absenteeism. This has a positive influence on output and results (Wang, Hsieh, and Wang, 2020). Better employee engagement within hotel industry, results in secure customer service, which converts into increased sales and business. Similarly, higher employee engagement, at Premier Inn, is one of the driving

factors in its success and achievement. Therefore, Premier Inn has been labelled as one of the UK's finest workplaces by Top Employers Institute, which is given based on excellent working conditions for their employees.

Every company or hotel should plan or design a model for employee engagement. One such organisational framework is Employee Lifecycle, which describes the stages in the process of their engagement with the company. Here are the stages of Employee Lifecycle:

A crucial stage is attraction, this is where the company realises the need of attracting new and fresh talents towards their brand. In this stage, it is shown that how great their company is to work at (Wu, and Wu, 2019). Similarly, Premier Inn makes sure to offer attractive compensation and benefits to appeal employees for top level, to be ahead of its competitors.

Then comes the recruitment phase which is the stage where management hunt for and recruit the best of expertise to be a part of their company. This is the process of becoming an employee from applicant. One of the best adopted hiring strategies can be asking referrals from the current employees. For instance, Premier inn provides complete details of their job postings at Zippia platform, where people can apply for (Chaudhary, 2019). Individuals also apply on their official website for jobs and are called for interview then.

After recruitment, the employees are welcomed and on boarded in the company. This assists to help employees know and get adapted in with its culture. In case of Premier Inn, they have a separate on boarding portal for the ease of employees (Lemon, 2019). They on-board their employees by communicating them with their values and visions and outlining their expectations. They also provide them with an in depth online training that is to be completed alongside their work allowing to experience what they learn with appropriate support nearby.

This employee development stage is what would come next and is also very crucial to raise employee's productivity. This helps employees to perform their role effectively. Premier Inn has adopted hybrid working model to ensure the development of their employees with work and personal life balance. They launch training schemes like Force for Good for their employees to help them excel at work (Chen, and Peng, 2021).

Retention is the stage which supports the employee's stability in the company. This stage focuses on keeping the employees, especially at top level, satisfied with their job. This will lead to minimized costs in replacing employees suffered by the company. For Premier Inn, initiatives like holiday leaves and medical insurance are provided to employees. They seek out feedback from their employees and work on them to motivate their morale, so that they retain in the company for a longer time.

The last stage of Employee Lifecycle is separation. Due to various reasons like new job, retirement, medical emergency or personal concerns, there comes this separation stage in employee lifecycle. And this is of equal relevance as the other stages. Thus, HRM of Premier Inn makes sure that they recognise the reason for employee's resignation (Johansen, and Sowa, 2019). They conduct an exit interview to learn the honest feedback about their company and work on it.

Employee engagement models work as a blueprint for understanding and acknowledging that what makes employees more productive and make them feel motivated in their workplace. For understanding this management experts have given several employee engagement models. Each model draws the organisational psychology in order to assist the companies in developing their own system for improving the employee's engagement.

Here is one employee engagement model and how these model Premier Inn can implement in its organisation.

The Zinger model is recognised as the most successful model of employee engagement. This engagement model mainly focuses on 10 essential actions that managers must take to engage the employees. This employee engagement model was proposed by David Zinger (Kim, and Kim, 2021). This model follows a pyramid shape structure. This engagement model put more emphasizes on that why the employee engagement is more important in an organisation and what are the needs and requirements of the employees. In simple terms it is all about knowing the wellbeing of the employee and their meaningful work and then working the way up to results. This is a step that must be taken in order to encourage the employee engagement in the working environment of the organisation.

The bottom row of this Zinger pyramid gives light on the essentials that are required by humans as their basic needs and necessities. Businesses can follow this pyramid structure and learn to focus on the wellbeing of its employees. This step has several benefits such as it leverages the strengths, make the meaning of work and enliven the energy.

The second row of this pyramid structure works as in uniting the company. In this row of the pyramid it builds on the essential requirements to connect with the individuals with larger organisation (Mani, and Mishra, 2020). Businesses should try to build healthier relationships among its employees via giving several tasks and activities, give emphasis on master moments, foster recognition etc. Doing these tasks management can boost and increase the employee engagement in the organisation.

The third row of this pyramid structure model shows the individual and communal engagement into the practical ways to reach the results. In this step Businesses should focus on the analysing and tracking the progress on organisation in its hotel with a aim of maximizing the performance (MM, 2021). To increase the productivity of employees and maximizing the performance companies should elaborate the task to its employees and tell them the reason and objective behind their tasks that they are performing.

The final row of the pyramid structure model is the end of the goal of employee engagement initiatives, engaged employees contribute more to their work and enhance their profitability (Raza, and et. al., 2021). So, Companies should ensure that

employees achieve the results and organisation should clearly define the strategic engagement.

Premier Inn, through WINcard, which is its performance management tool, analyses and supervises their employees and recognise it by giving them incentives accordingly (Rodrigues da Costa, and Maria Correia Loureiro, 2019). An engagement survey is conducted too in this hotel annually, where awards are presented as per team and individual achievements. They have also introduced Employee Value Proposition plan as a part of employee engagement initiative. Following are few other instances from hotel industry for employee engagement. Companies like Starbucks provide method and initiatives for career progression of their employees (Saks, 2022). Hilton believes that investing for positive employee experience is one of the productive investments, which ensures increased profitability and growth of the hotel. HRM at Hilton also train their employees on social and environmental responsibilities as part of their ESG strategy, to be supportive in their careers and personal growth (Santhanam, and Srinivas, 2019). Tesla Inc., was worked up by the increased instances of accidents at its assembly plant of Fremont car, adopted and followed more clear communication as its employee engagement strategy to improve and refurbish safety (Sharma, and Kumra, 2020). This was done by notifying employees to report about the injuries in detail to the management, to take precautionary measures to avoid them from happening again in the future.

From the above information, it can be concluded that engaging employees throughout their lifecycle is a critical yet crucial process for success and longevity of the business. Engaged employees are considered as true assets of the company. Effective engagement can be attained through smooth communication, recognition of achievement, focusing on personal career growth and others. Effective employee engagement results in increased productivity of employees, thus helping the company to achieve its goals. When the human capital directs their effort and energy in the appropriate way, it then positively affects business outcomes. This challenging task

can be achieved through support from and efforts of Human Resource Management team. This helps firm to keep employees motivated and entitled with sense of organisational responsibility.

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