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Management

WHY EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IS CHALLENGING IN ORGANIZATION?

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ABSTRACT
Employee engagement is referred as the degree to which employees has a compelling desire to do their job, are dedicated to the organization, and put sincere efforts in their work. The success of any organization depends on workforce productivity which in directly related to employee's commitment towards his organisation. Engaging employees may seem easy, but it is no simple. In an organisation there would be employees from different age group and please and have different likings and expectation, thus, "one size fits all" does not work as far as expectations from an organization is concerned. This paper is attempts to analyse the challenges involved in keeping the employees engaged for the successful growth of an organisation. The author also makes an effort to understand the drivers of employee engagement with the help of review of literature.

INTRODUCTION

Managers and senior leaders are continually looking for ways to create a work culture in which employees are motivated and engaged. Loyal and motivated workforce has high levels of morale and commitment towards the organisation and its goals and objectives. Without them, managers have difficult time in reaching productivity targets (Abraham, 2012). Dealing with disengaged employees are one of the major disappointments to managers while actively engaged employees are the cause for organizational sucess. Truly engaged employees are attracted to, and inspired by, their work ("I want to do this"), committed ("I am dedicated to the success of what I am doing"), and fascinated ("I love what I am doing"). Engaged employees are those who care about the growth of the company and show interest in investing their efforts – Above & Beyond the Call of Duty – for the growth of their organization. Having a engaged workforce will result in improved job performance, task efficiency, productivity and work quality (Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010; Shuck, Rocco, & Albornoz, 2010).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

There is no formula for employee engagement and every organization uses different techniques to ensure that employees are engaged in with the organization. However, to keep the employees engaged and establishing is strong foundation for the organization is undeniably important. With this in mind, the following objectives were raised for this study:
1. To determine the factors influencing employee engagement
2. To identify the challenges that are involved in keeping and employee engaged.
3. To analyse the cost of disengaged employees in an organization

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper is designed to address the challenges and organization face in keeping their employee engaged. Secondary data has been analysed and conclusion has been derived in a meaningful manner. Researcher focused on the current practices of human resources and their impact on employee engagement. One of the assumptions in this research paper is that the articles published online is reliable and accurate. We can identify the potential links between the Human resource concepts but the results can be more subjective in terms of the analysis of the data and its meaning towards the organizational performance. The author tries to study the advantages and the challenges faced by the organization to keep their employees engaged.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

Saks (2006) defined Employee Engagement in new way and helped us to identify two types of engagement, organization engagement and job engagement. To add, he also examined the concepts of job engagement and organization engagement and identified that they are different in terms of their antecedents and behaviour consequences. He evidently proved that both serve different purposes and share different relationship. The difference and the relationship between the two terms of Employee engagement were further reinforced by Harter et al., 2002. They concluded that, "…employee satisfaction and engagement are related to meaningful business outcomes at a magnitude that is important to many organizations".

According to Robinson (2006), employee engagement can be attained by creating an environment where positive emotions such as involvement and achievement are encouraged, resulting in lower employee turnover, better health and improved organizational performance. The experience of employee engagement has been described as a fulfilling, positive work-related experience and state of mind (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004), and has been found to be related to good health and positive work affect (Sonnentag, 2003). West (2012) opined that when employees are positive about the organization environment, they see it as opportunity and tend to think in a open-minded pattern and also likely to enjoy greater self-control, cope more effectively and become less defensive in the workplace. The higher the employees are engaged the better the organizations employees retention. The 2006 CIPD survey on engagement confirm the above fact (Truss et al.,2006). The findings of Agrawal (2015) identified that an employee fit and good job role provides opportunities for employees to get more involved at their job. This has a positive influence on their attitude towards work and their self-development as well.

However, engagement is considered as an individual-level aspect and it does always lead to positive business results, it must first impact individual-level outcomes. The Gallup Organization (2004) found critical links between employee engagement, customer loyalty, business growth and profitability. In 2004, International Survey Research (ISR), the consultancy completed a major survey into the cause and effect of employee engagement and how organziations can improve engagement to enhance business performance. The

survey was conducted across ten of the world's largest economies -Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Hong Kong, the Netherlands, Singapore, the UK and the USA, involving nearly 160,000 employees from across a broad spectrum of industries. The research demonstrates that one size does not fit all when it comes to motivating employees to engage with their company and work. Previous research (Hofstede, 1997) has proved that organizations must be flexible to adapt to different cultural values and norms when it comes to motivating, retaining and attracting staff.

COMPONENTS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

The policies and practices in an organization in the sphere of human resource management is one important factor that influences employee engagement. It provides the conceptual frame work to explain as employees choose to become more or less engaged if they find their job interesting and enough resources are available to do the work. An employee feels comitted to the organization when they receive socio and economic benefits as becomes willing to repay back to the organization in the form of engagement. Moreover, the environment of an organization influences a lot. If employees find positive environment, a sense of team work, learning opportunities, then they tend to stay longer in the organization.

Employers looking to further increasing engagement employee levels in organizations can be guided by the following factors in engaging their workers' heads, hearts, and hands:

Respect: Employees demand for respect and recognition in return for the effort they put at work. Biaz, contempt, torture or insult will not work hereafter. Employees expect basic respect in the workplace (Safiullah, 2016). Working with others is a lesson learned at an early age. We can relate this to team assignments given at school, though it has some benefits it involves chaos, ill-defined goals and clash of egos. We have gone all these either as student or parent. But in a team sports like football and cricket, we have defined roles, crystal clear plans, and a spirit of good friendship is shared between the players. Good organizational culture helps build team collaboration and caring co-worker relations create better job experiences for employees and gain beneficial performance outcomes. A win-win.

Rewards / Recognition: Performance related rewards are a way to ensure that employees are involved and perform up to the mark (Sundaray, 2011). Numerous studies and surveys have showed that employee recognition is one of --- if not the top--- the most essential factors in driving employee engagement (Vdovin, 2017). In a highly engaging organizations, there is no need for managers to speak about employee recognition program language. It is the responsible for the managers to know when and to praise an employee when a job is done well. Every employee enjoys the warm and fuzzy feeling that comes with recognition. Public or private, compliments are a simple, that moment would be enough to carry them for the rest of day and keep them happy and productive thus increase the engagement quotient. The management should learn to identify their employees who are performing creditably in a sincere and timely manner. This will boost the morale of the workforce, resulting in higher engagement level among the employees.

Job Security: If the foundation is good, you will build a structure and even super structure over it. If the foundation is not strong, we cannot imagine how the structure would become. Similarly, if the company gives assurance of security that they will not lose their current job, employees find the company worth working. Security has two aspects. First, the company must have a strong vision and mission for existence. Second, the management must implement clear policies in

regards with hiring and firing (Safiullah, 2016).

Opportunities for Skills: Everyone is born with inbuilt skill. It is common fact that there can be no single person in this universe who is totally devoid of possessing any skills. Everyone possesses different type of skills, but eventually everyone has a skill. If an organization provides it employees with opportunity of utilising their special skill, employees enthusiastically attend the workplace. Variety is the spice of life. Employees seek for growth opportunity, to want to keep getting better at what they do and to acquire transferable skills along the way. Nothing opens the revolving door of exiting employees faster than stagnating careers. High engagement occurs in environments where people are challenged with meaningful work and provided with opportunities for learning and career development.

TRUST AMONG EMPLOYEES AND SENIOR MANAGEMENT:
Trust and engagement – are they the same or different? In 2012, the global CIPD organization conducted a survey on workplace trust. In their research, they found a distinct difference between how employee groups saw trust versus engagement. Engagement, they found, is an "exchange relationship" that can be cognitive, emotional or physical. With engagement, one "gives something" and receives something in exchange (ex. pay, recognition, safety). Conversely, trust was "about accepting a certain amount of uncertainty". It is about a willingness to be vulnerable and accept vulnerability in others. For managers, this is a supreme challenge. Employees will show up, but not trust. They will "do the job" but not trust. Conversations about trust take on a whole different meaning.

It must be 360 degree trust. Colleagues must trust one another. Superior and subordinate must trust each other. For many employees, their immediate supervisor represents the management. If a leader is biased, its natural that the employees will be unmotivated at work. It will result in employee being prompted to leave the company because of his poor working relationship with their leader. Thus, companies should train their leaders to become more competent in developing trust with their employees by providing on time and accurate feedback on their performance and delegating some of the implementation's tasks at the appropriate level. A team lead or a manager who oversees a department or team is a cog in the organizational wheel; the gatekeeper for employee questions and concerns. When people trust one another there is open-door communication which goes a long way towards supporting employees in their work and encouraging them to give their best level of performance.

Corporate culture: Management should at all means try to maintain good corporate culture in the workplace, as people would be proud to be represent an organization where there is meaningful work, deep employee engagement, and strong leadership.

Mission, Vision, and Values: Employee engagement not only refers to the involvement in work but also the commitment the employees they have towards the mission, vision and goal of an organization. These are the fundamental building of which you construct your life and future an organization. It explains how the organization intends to achieve its goals and what principles, or standards of behaviour define its path. An indicator of high employee engagement is when employees understand and aware of their fit and how their contribution connects them to the growth and success of their organization.
Communication: Pugh and Dietz (2008) identified that communication is powerful tool which can boost workplace productivity, and drive business growth thus increasing employee engagement. When employees are kept informed and given the information needed to do their jobs there's a

sense of connection. Rather than feeling like outsiders left to fend for themselves in the dark, thoughtful, inclusionary communication helps staff understand how their contribution fits into the bigger picture.

Employee empowerment: In simple terms it is known as a shift in power to the employee in lower levels in the hierarchy of the organization (Ukil, 2016). It is the responsibility of the organization to providing their workforce with training, resources and opportunities they need to be successful. Leaders need to empower employees through information sharing and increased responsibility and autonomy. Those who empower employees encourage them to educated risks, seek novel solutions, and treat mistakes as learning opportunities. At the corporate level, a company empowers its workforce by developing and adhering to policies and procedures that facilitates productivity and creativity instead of impeding it (Paul L. Marcianao, 2015).

Supportive feedback: Giving supportive feedback arm employees with information to help focus, shape and direct their behaviour. Whether positive or negative/corrective in nature, all feedbacks should be delivered in a supportive manner. Mangers must be extra vigilant about not just their intentions while communicating feedbacks. They should make the employees feel that their feedback comes from a place of caring about the employee being success-ful not only for the sake of the individual but also for the sake of the team and larger organization. Keeping in mind that a manager's primary responsibility is to increase the human capital of his or her organization, providing ongoing supportive feedback is one of the most powerful tools in managerial toolbox.

IMPACT OF POSITIVELY ENGAGED EMPLOYEES

In todays corporate world employee engagement is treated as miracle drug for workplace challenges. Discretionary effort of engaged employees starts a events of chain reaction, it leads to higher service, quality and productivity which leads to improved customer satisfaction, which reflects in improved sales, which in returns higher levels of profit and higher shareholder return and ultimately to the success of the organization.

Motivates the individual: The most important benefit of employee participation is that it keeps the employee motivated in the long run. Previous research (Hofstede, 1997) has shown that organizations must adapt to different cultural values and norms when it comes to attracting, motivating and retaining staff. It helps to employees understands that the good is not good when better is. Motivating employees is also very important because it helps in the growth of employees as well as the organization.

Creative work is delivered: The more the participation, more the work delivered is creative. It drives employees to take efforts to understand a broader sense of organization perspective which helps in increasing creativity of the employees. That creativity of employees can be seen in the work assigned to them. When diverse group of employees participate in a group discussion, it is obvious that the takeaway of the session will be pool of creative ideas as every person would give his or her own thought and that ultimately will distinguish the work of the group from others. Allow employees to express their creativity or else the drive and desire to contribute gets killed.

Effective Decision making: When organizations adopt decentralized decision making, their employees feel more valued and in return perform tasks effectively (Macky and Boxall, 2007). When you are given responsibility to take a decision and the decision turns to be wrong, we do everything to correct the decision and make things right. The same applies to everyone. When employees are involved in decision making the chances of the decision being a success increase since the employees involved in the decision making are committed to correcting the parts of the decision that are not in alignment with company's vision and values. The decision making process is not every one's cup of tea but when the employees are given an opportunity, they feel motivated and do make sure to come to decision which is backed with evidence. So, the employee participation of engagement of employees in the decision making process becomes strong and effective.

Increases their work capacity: Motivational things not only help in increasing the capacity of working of the employees but also reduced the need for any additional workforce. When employees are delegated with additional work, the need of hiring the other or say extra staff gets vanished. They get a chance to prove their potential as engaged employees get a good platform to perform. The employees tend to work more effectively, creatively, and collaboratively as they also become part of the policy making process. This ultimately increases their capacity to work and enhances the success of an organization.

Sense of accountability increases: The employees feel a great sense of accountability when they are given responsibility. Responsibility goes along with the authority. So, when they are given responsibility, they automatically feel authority to work which is again a sign of positivist. It is beneficial both for the organization as well as the employees. Their focus at work increases.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Human mind consistently changes with situation and that why keeping employees engaged becomes challenging in any organization. Most organizations try to measure employee engagement with a one-size-fits survey and a numeric score. The intentions of these surveys are often good, but sometimes they may cause more harm than anticipated. The major drawback is the result of the survey hardly provides insight into reasons, or why, specific workplace lacks employee engagement. Ultimately the organization will have insufficient information needs to make meaningful decision and thus make improvements to workplace conditions where engagement is most likely to occur for employees.

There was always a concern that focusing on keeping employees engaged can itself be a barrier to better performance if it's taken to an extreme. When employees are too focused on getting along, they will probably not care so much about getting ahead.

Another constrain that is foreseen is difficulty of an employee to match the IQ level. The meetings in which senior leadership team sit and discuss, it becomes difficult for them to match the discussion as per the subordinates. This way discussion gets imbalanced and the difficulty level increases to larger extent which is not a positive sign but also it waste lot of time.

Giving an unfair edge to certain personality types: Personality is one important factor in employee engagement. People who are naturally more optimistic, positive, emotionally stable, agreeable, and extraverted, can be easily engaged – regardless of the circumstances. The challenge here is these kind of people inflate engagement scores but will have less productive; on the other side we are unfairly eliminating people who are more pessimistic, introverted, demanding, or moody. Generally different personalities thrive in different contexts; for example, having engaged service staff who love their jobs is helpful for driving service quality and customer satisfaction. But for those who are innovating or working on complex problems, higher engagement may be relatively trivial, and a degree of dissatisfaction might be more useful.

Pushing employees into burnout: Work life balance becomes a challenge for highly engaged employees. This is because they become so involved in their job that they igonre about other important parts of their lives. Employees who fail to take care of themselves can end up damaging their own health. Even if companies would like employees like to hire workaholics, that prospect shows that the organization is not concerned about employees' long-term wellbeing – and even the company's own long-term health. When engaged employees become burned out employees, on-the-job performance can suffer.

Security is at a greater risk: Sharing the valuable information with large group of employees in organization can turn into greater risk as the chances of getting information leaked is more. This also involves cost to the company is not positive. Also it is hard to identify the employee who spread the word about the important information affecting the good will of the organization.

Employee freedom: Employees expect freedom and authority like their managers. But the challenge is that freedom should be given as per the responsibility and the authority of the individual. If the subordinates are given more freedom, there are chances they misuse the given freedom, they might not perform well thinking they are now no longer subordinates as they share equal space like their managers in the meetings. It becomes tough to hold them accountable for their task and can expect disruptive behaviours if questioned.

Expectation of employees increases: Providing employees with too much of good things will increase the expectation of employee from the organization. Their expectations will sometime not comply with the organization policies.

Providing them proper training: The employees cannot always part of the meetings and the discussions, because at times it is difficult to for them understand certain concept on which the discussion is to be done and how should be done. It is possible to make the employees understand the concept one time but for every time it is not possible. So, for that the employee need proper training and they should adopt self learning process and only then engaging them to the important discussions will be fruitful.

Expensive procedure for the company: Providing training to all employees involves cost. It is an expensive procedure. The training involves proper involvement of money and complete participation of the employee. If there is lack of interest from the employee side, the end result will not be as expected. Conducting training involves making invitations to invite the employees at the event and all that is needed for providing training to the subordinates. This shakes the budget of the company if the extras are invited for the events.

Message turns into rumour very fast: Sometimes providing too much of information to employees than required may enhance grapevine communication in an origination. This creates unnecessary confusion among employees and inside organization. Out of experience we know that a simple message discussed in a team meeting converts to rumour very fast as the discussion on the topic turns into grapevine communication. The concern is grapevine communication is that message spreads like the branches of the grapevine and goes in unexpected direction which cannot be controlled. The message goes in varied directions and even the relevant message turns into the rumour which is not good for the growth of the organization.

Existence of chaos and uncertainty: While focusing on keeping the employees engaged, adversely the traditional style of management reduces, thus uncertainty and chaos increases. This is because the level of difficulty increases in identifying the different level between the management and the employees. The company always has designated leaders to engage during the meetings and however it is not essential to get the employees to do the same thing. So, for this reason, it is a challenge to engage the employees during the meetings and the vital discussions.

CONCLUSION

In today's corporate world successful hiring an employee does not alone mean the technical skills but also the ability to compete in the modern world. The human resource function is indeed a critical dimensions and management should empower than to come up with programs which can keep the employees engaged. The predominate philosophy in many companies is to focus on the positives to boost engagement and employee morale, we should be careful not to overlook the benefits of negative thinking. We need to take a more balanced view of employee engagement. Managers need to think about how to create just enough tension in their workforce in order to trigger healthy competition and intrinsic motivation. In short, managers should ensure that when people come to work they should not leave their hearts at home.

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