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Employee Engagement

Submitted by

Asst. Prof. Ms. Savita Punjabi

Head, Dept. of Commerce,

Bharat College of Commerce & Science, Badlapur (W)

Email id.: savitaudassi@yahoo.co.in

Cell No. : 9890503861

Employee Engagement

Abstract

Employee engagement is the key for a healthy organization and happy employees. Involving the employees at all levels including decision making process makes them feel possessive about the organization. They respond to such feelings by attending the call for work beyond duty hours. They voluntarily work beyond the clock hours to complete their assignments in the qualitative manner thereby unconsciously creating an important stake in the organization. At the managerial level, the authorities must also motivate such environment by giving such employees parallel and open-armed treatment. Beyond the key factors affecting employee engagement and the various dimensions adding levels of involvement, the current paper also probes into such organizations where employee involvement programs are adopted and also vice-versa. It also deals with certain issues and concerns relating to such employee involvement.

Employee Engagement

Introduction

Human Resource (HR) being the most important asset of any organization requires an enabling HR climate with a view to achieve organizational objectives in the most effective manner. An important facet of the management of human resource is employee engagement with a view to nurture, mentor and groom people to realize their capabilities and potentials; help them grow with the organization and thereby enable them to contribute effectively in the attainment of organizational goals. Designing a healthy organisation requires proper human resource management. In absolute terms, healthy organisation and happy employees are abstract, but

relatively they can be defined precisely as the relation between employee engagement and the success ratio of the organisation.

Employee Engagement

Engagement is all about having a psychological commitment towards the assigned task, which is clearly reflected in employee's dedication towards the work. Human capital can provide a competitive advantage to any organization. In today's highly competitive scenario, companies can achieve exemplary levels of performance only when employees exhibit unwavering commitment towards their tasks. There is a need for motivated employees who not only have greater concern to improve their process performance but are also less likely to be carried away by good offers from the competitive industry. Employee engagement leads to a win-win situation for both the employees and the organization. It is a state of emotional and intellectual commitment of employees towards the organization. Once emotionally attached, his/her job goes beyond the call of duty i.e. round the clock rather than 9 to 5 time slot allotted to them.

According to a research conducted by Burke Inc. employees, who are engaged, not only contribute to the bottom line business success, but also act as the company's advocates in its promotion of products and services. Also, such employees are more likely to stay with the organization for a longer period, as compared to the non-engaged ones.

Key Drivers of Employee Engagement

Certain factors responsible for ensuring employees engaged are as follows:

- 1) Type and Nature of Job: Challenging jobs motivate the employees to work well, along with a self-driven interest to outperform in their respective areas of work.
- 2) Relation between the Organizational performance and an employee: Employees must feel the need to integrate their goals with the organizational goals and objectives. This increases the level of engagement in the organization.
- 3) Growth Opportunities: Ample growth opportunities should be given to the workforce in order to make the best use of their talents.

- 4) Brand Name: The brand name of the company makes him feel highly special and engaged. So his confidence level be increased and the feel of association with the company be highly positive.
- 5) Peer Members: Good relations and helping attitude among the peers held to create the sense of emotional attachment and a feel of belongingness towards the organization.
- 6) Skill Enhancement: there should be value addition, better skill development and the overall personality development of employees.
- 7) Relationship with the Boss: A friendly and open communication with the immediate boss helps to avoid grievances, frustration and transparency in the boss subordinate relationship.

Dimensions adding levels of Employee Engagement

- 1) Connect: A sense of connectivity with their superiors, leading to sense of belongingness and bridging the gap with isolated employees.
- 2) Career: An opportunity to advance their own career path by giving them challenging jobs to derive the best of their talents.
- 3) Clarity: The roles and responsibilities of the employees along with a clear vision be communicated clearly to the team members.
- 4) Convey: Clarifying the expectations from their performances and giving a timely feedback can help the employees to improve.
- 5) Congratulate: Occasionally recognizing their efforts, praising them publicly and rewarding them at times will boost their morale.
- 6) Contribute: Employees should be made clear about the contributions made that are helpful to the organization in a meaningful way.
- 7) Control: Creating a culture of involvement in the decision making helps to create a sense of ownership.
- 8) Collaborate: Teamwork and collaborations be encouraged to increase the level of interaction and involvement.
- 9) Credibility: Leaders should strive hard to demonstrate high ethical standards to their subordinates in order to maintain the reputation of the company.

10) Confidence: Instilling a sense of confidence by being exemplars of high ethical and performance standards is required from the management.

Issues and Concerns in Employee Engagement

A. Behavioural Issues

- It is important to encourage open channel communication within the organization and continually promote collective decision making with a view that every staff member irrespective of the hierarchy feels that has a stake and say in the organization.
- Placing highest priority on management ethics and integrity, role modeling by seniors as also on the clarity of managerial communications flowing from top to bottom in the organization is essential so as to minimize false expectations and dysfunctional incentives in the organization.
- Another important issue is to develop institutional measures to avoid misalignment of mutual expectations between different levels of hierarchy, person-job mismatch, poor career advancement prospects and work-life imbalance, which could be huge setbacks to the HR climate. Managing and shaping career expectations is a key issue for the success of employee engagement.
- In any organization with a pyramidal structure, avenues for promotion to higher level naturally decreases and hence, several employees who are otherwise good might not get due promotions. Motivating such people to continue with their level of performance becomes a challenge. This could be done by continuously encouraging them and recognizing their good work through open appreciation, both verbal and in writing as also by way of better placements.
- With a view to improve the performance level of the staff appearing for promotional examinations/interviews and also to ensure capacity building, internal classes/mock interviews should be organized. This also gives employees a feeling that the organization is with them in their endeavors and supports them for improving their performance.
- It is important to make employees believe that their and the institutions growth are two facets of the same coin and are not at all exclusive. The top management should try to instill strong

values and help develop certain skills among staff that are unique in the respective business domain.

B. Managerial Issues

- In today's world where knowledge and specialization are keys to survival and growth, it is important to consciously and regularly promote meritocracy and shun mediocrity. Grooming and mentoring of the young generation is needed to enable them to shoulder future responsibilities in a dynamic environment.
- There is a need to focus on developing leadership qualities along with managerial effectiveness along with functional skills and intellectual capacity of the employees for facilitating the succession planning.
- The system of reward and motivation including incentives and disincentives should be strengthening.
- There should be the right mix of hygiene and motivating factors i.e. a set of pull and push factors including financial and motivational factors.
- Also, a broad-brush management approach must be avoided leading to enforce the process of thinking differently.
- Regular job rotation should be done to break the work monotony.
- The job content should be matched with an individual's competencies and preferences.
- The employees should be deputed to outside organizations for training.
- Post training evaluation along with sharing and transfer of knowledge with the colleagues should be given more importance.
- In-house IT skills enhancement programs be arrange to reduce the problem of technical skill of senior staff.

C. Business and Welfare Issues

- The image of the organization should be improved by undertaking various welfare and health management measures.

- Organizations visibility and market relativity should be improved by attracting best talent, expanding communication and consciously projecting the positive image of the organization.
- Programs like quiz, poetry recitations, sports events, outstation picnics etc. should be regularly organized.
- Contributing to various social causes such as voluntary blood donation camps could also help to project a positive image and provide a sense of satisfaction and attachment to employees.

Organizations undertaking Employee Engagement Programs

The Hay Group and FORTUNE magazine completed their 13th annual World's Most Admired Company **WMAC** survey. They have done a wonderful job of offering elaboration and insight into top companies and employee engagement. They have given a list of top 50 companies that need to be admired and imitated for their employee engagement programs. Apple, Goggle, Johnson and Johnson, Amazon.com, Procter and Gamble, Toyota, Microsoft, McDonalds, IBM etc. are some of them. Organizations like Tata AIG General Insurance Co. Ltd., truly believes in involving its employees in various activities like Friday movie mania, indoor games and competition, annual theme parities, an opportunity called World of World where the children of the employees can spend time in their parent's place of work, a reward and recognition program, called "The Success Matrix", rewards employees on monthly, quarterly and annual basis along with on spot recognition also. At all branches, citations and awards are displayed on the "Wall of Fame".

Tata Teleservices' (TTSL) has earned the fame of being an employer of choice. CN Nagakumar, CHRO, TTSL, believes that his company's commitment to employee engagement is what has earned it this accolade. The company's HR practices include a strong HR model that talks about alignment, assignment, engagement, empowerment and pride of the workforce. The annual employee engagement survey - Darpan - has been designed around the HR model. In order to foster a customer-centric and performance-driven culture in the organisation, the pillars of organizational culture were defined under the acronym CRISP - customer focus, responsibility for results, initiative with speed, self-confidence with consciousness and passion for

achievement. A robust performance management scheme, a reward and recognition policy, and a career progression policy exist in the organisation, besides a number of engagement activities. The performance management system ensures the top down cascade of business goals. The key performance indicators of every employee are aligned to any one or multiples of the five key business levers, namely revenue, profit maximisation / cost optimisation, cash flow, customer satisfaction and employee engagement, aligning the entire organisation towards the vision, mission and business plans of the organisation.

Organisations like HCL Technologies gave birth to a concept like Employee First, Customer Second leading to employee delight. BPOs are putting a lot of efforts in creating a stress-free environment. JK Lakshmi Cement Ltd. have special task force providing open environment to the employees.

Conclusion

Providing a great infrastructure, a great office, an inspiring leader and a challenging work is just not enough to make any employee engaged at work. Organizations have to give their employees, the freedom to make their work exciting and an environment having an engaging work life. With increasing responsibilities at home and a desire to excel in their careers, employees often get distracted from their work which needs to be well taken care of. A workplace that lacks an element of fun and relaxation activities is sure to make an employee feeling bored in his/her workplace. Talents is there in people all around and organisations know the fact very well, but the challenge lies in retaining this talent by various engagement programs that gives an employee a feel of being valued. Employees are the assets of organisations and if they are not given a space whereby they can make a perfect blend of both work and fun, optimum performance from them may be difficult. Thus it is high time to make employees more committed and motivated at work, in order to make a sustainable position in this world of tough competition.

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