

Issues and Challenges Faced By HR Managers in Employee Engagement in It Sectors

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ABSTRACT: Employee engagement is the key to making sustainable changes in an organization. An ‘engaged employee’ is the one who is fully involved in and enthusiastic about his work and thus will act in a way that furthers his organizational interest. The success of any organization depends on the engagement and involvement of its employees at work. The engaged, responsive employees are identified by the degree to which they fully occupy themselves as well as on the strength of their commitment to the employee and role. The present paper analyses the drivers of employee engagement and assesses the relationship, if any between the organizational practices relating to HR and employee engagement.

I.WHAT IS EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT?

As we can see from the definitions below, a definitive definition is difficult to develop as each organization develops its own interpretation:

- ❖ ‘Creating a sense that individuals are a part of a greater entity.’ (Best Practices, LLC)
- ❖ ‘Employees’ willingness and ability to contribute to company success.’ (Towers Perrin)
- ❖ ‘Staff commitment and a sense of belonging to the organization.’ (Hewitt)
- ❖ ‘Employees’ commitment to the organization and motivation to contribute to the organization’s success.’ (Mercer)
- ❖ ‘Employees’ exertion of “discretionary effort”...going beyond meeting the minimum standards of the job.’ (Hay)
- ❖ ‘Engagement represents the energy, effort, and initiative employees bring to their jobs’ (Harvard Business Review)

Engagement is about motivating employees to go the extra mile in the workplace. It is about encouraging employees to have a passion for their work, and identifying the organization as more than a place to earn money. A recent Harvard Business Review article explained that ‘employees are motivated by jobs that challenge them and enable them to grow and learn. They are demoralized by those that seem to be monotonous or to lead to a dead end’.

Employee engagement is at or near the top of most surveys that cover the concerns of HR Managers. However, there is far too little focus on the problems or issues related to engagement. The process of gathering engagement data and the

International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering and Technology

(An ISO 3297: 2007 Certified Organization)

Vol. 3, Issue 6, June 2014

interpretation of it both improve dramatically when program managers and users are fully aware of all of its potential problems.”

II.EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT ISSUES

- ❖ Managers and employees don't understand engagement
- ❖ The goals and metrics of engagement programs are often limited.
- ❖ Engagement is not productivity or an output
- ❖ Outside factors may influence engagement
- ❖ Diverse employees and different generations are engaged by different things
- ❖ Difficulty in understanding fluctuating mind of youngsters
- ❖ Underestimating the significance of employee engagement in the organizational success.
- ❖ Lack of co-operation and co-ordination from management.

Motivating and Retaining Top Talent through Employee Engagement

According to a recent poll conducted by The Gallup Management Group only 30% of U.S. employees are fully engaged in their jobs. Improving employee engagement can increase productivity and profitability while also reducing employee absenteeism and turnover.

According to Ted Marusz, Hewitt Associates, prior to the 1990's 'employee surveys were focused on employee satisfaction. [They] found, however, that satisfied employees did not necessarily produce the type of performance that helped organizations to succeed.'

Marusz's comment echoes Frederick Herzberg's theory of motivation which states that the factors which motivate people at work are different to, and not necessarily the opposite of, the factors which cause dissatisfaction. Herzberg claimed that 'positive hygiene factors' such as work conditions and salary simply satisfy basic employee needs, whereas motivators (e.g. achievement and recognition) encourage employees to work above and beyond the minimum requirements. In 2006, the HR Daily Advisor reported that 89% of employers *think* their people leave for more money, while only 12% of employees actually *do* leave for that reason.

'Compensation alone is not enough to keep the highly skilled, motivated and experienced workforce your business needs to excel' (Greenburg, 2008). In a four year analysis of more than 100,000 employees worldwide, the Corporate Leadership Council discovered that while workers 'join companies for rational motives (better compensation, benefits, and career opportunities), they stay and work hard

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The Gallup Management Group (reported in Dernovsek, 2008) showed that improving employee engagement is important because engaged employees have:

- ▀ 51% lower turnover
- ▀ 27% less absenteeism
- ▀ 18% more productivity
- ▀ 12% higher profitability

Increasing Employee Engagement

“What is it that your organization is doing to ensure that people don’t feel like numbers?”

When asked in the Strategic HR Review why managers were switching from employee satisfaction to engagement, Ray Baumruk, Hewitt Associates, responded: ‘employee satisfaction was really a measure of “how people like it here” as opposed to measuring behaviors that will help organizations become more successful for employees, shareholders and customers. Through research of best engagement practices, I have devised a list of key factors for increasing employee engagement.

SUGGESTIONS

- ❖ Remember that employees are seeking to gain more than just money from their job and career.
- ❖ Engage employees through direct communication by involving them in important decisions and keeping them informed of new developments or changes within the company.
- ❖ Get to know your employees as well as their goals and aspirations, so that together you can develop a clear path for advancement and opportunities for growth.
- ❖ Develop a strong employee-manager relationship. It is often true that when employees leave an organization, they are in fact leaving their manager.
- ❖ Provide efficient and ongoing training for new and experienced employees as well as offering rewards and recognition for employees who excel and/or demonstrate a strong passion for their work

Finding and hiring qualified candidates is important to HR for two reasons.

- ❖ First, professionals expect to work with peers who are competent. If this does not occur, employee engagement decreases.
- ❖ On the other hand, when teams of highly competent people are brought together, employee engagement tends to grow.
- ❖ Second, the competition for talent is expected to get tougher as there is a demand for more services.
- ❖ In addition, engaged employees are more likely to stay with the organization. Higher levels of employee retention are tied to better quality care, as well as lower costs for temporary and overtime staff.

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SOLUTIONS FOR ENHANCING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

- ❖ Standardize the interview process to hire better quality employees
- ❖ Provide employees with clear cut goals then track ,communicate and encourage their progress.
- ❖ Promote communication between management and employees.
- ❖ Provide educational opportunities to employees.
- ❖ Offer positive feedback and employee recognition.

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