

AN INTRODUCTORY APPROACH TO EMPLOYMENT ENGAGEMENT

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Abstract: This paper deals with the factors which influence employee engagement practices. This paper is based on the reviews of the previous papers. It is based on the secondary published information. The source of the information has been taken from the previous articles, journals, text books on the employee engagement. The descriptive method is used to explain is used to explain the factor of employee engagement. The paper focuses only the factors like Vigor, Dedication, Absorption, satisfaction, feedback, Rewards, Reorganized, and etc. which influence the employee engagement. This paper is an introduction to the approach and concept of employee engagement which became very interesting in last decade which saw both the boon and bane phases of economic business cycles. While we have not taken any model or analytics in this paper we have tried to present it as base on which we can further explore other dimensions of employee engagement.

Keywords: employee engagement, job satisfaction, organisational commitment

1. Introduction

Since 2004 Google has had '20% time', which enables employees to develop their own projects at work, while spending the other 80% on their 'proper' job. This has generated a lot of great ideas for the company. The global online empire also provides free legal advice, extra cash for new parents and provides themed meeting rooms – think 'Irish pub' or 'Swiss chalet'¹

Employee Engagement is a concept gaining significant importance in the past 10 years. It is the level of commitment and involvement an employee has toward his organization and its values. It is a measureable degree of an employee's positive or negative emotional attachment to their job, colleagues and organization which profoundly influences their willingness to learn & perform at work. An Organization might aim at achieving profitable growth

with the help of streamlined operations, robust finances and aggressive marketing. However, its human resources carry out all these functions. Hence, if any business enterprise wants to truly maintain its stronghold in the market, it must nurture and develop its human capital. A happy and committed workforce can steer an organization to success, while demoralized and demotivated employees can paralyze the enterprise's growth.

Employee engagement is a matter of concern for leaders and managers in organisations across the globe, as it is recognized as a vital element in determining the extent of organizational effectiveness, innovation and competitiveness. The term employee engagement is rooted in academic research, though it was considered largely as practical consultancy issue till 1990s. Each study on employee engagement explores it under a different context. As a result, there

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is absence of a universal and unanimous definition and measurement of employee engagement. In addition to this, employee engagement has been associated with other well researcher and established constructs such as 'organisational commitment', 'Organisational Citizenship Behaviour', 'Job Involvement', 'Flow', etc (Bedarkar and Pandita, 2014).

Goffman (1961) defined engagement as the "spontaneous involvement in the role" and a "visible investment of attention and muscular effort". Katz and Kahn (1966) stressed on the general need for employees to engage with their work and organisations. Csikszentmihalyi (1982) expressed employee engagement as a flow concept, wherein flow is a holistic sensation which employees experience when they are totally involved in their work.

2. Kahn's Contribution

W.A. Kahn defines personal work engagement as the "harnessing of organisation members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally, during role performances". Kahn associated three conditions, viz. psychological safety,

psychological meaningfulness and psychological availability, which lead to employee engagement. Employees experience psychological safety in the presence of other members when they relate themselves to their role performances and they are provided with sufficient personal resources to dedicate themselves to such performances. Their work is sufficiently meaningful to them. As employees feel psychologically safe and their work is meaningful to them, they are psychologically available. Thus, the condition of psychological availability refers to a situation, wherein employees and draw on their whole selves in an integrated and focused manner to enhance their role performances. Thus, Kahn's definition of employee engagement suggests that employee engagement is a multi-faceted construct. Kahn claims that the more of ourselves we give to a role, the more exciting and comfortable is our performance. Goffman and Kahn both observe that individuals do not assign themselves equally to each role. Employee Engagement describes employees' emotional and intellectual commitment to their organization and its success. Engaged employees experience a compelling purpose and meaning in their work and give their discrete effort to advance the organization's objectives.

<h1>WHAT IS EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT?</h1>		
Competing frameworks and definitions...	...contradicting advice...	...and widely differing claims for ROI...
<u>Sample Engagement Definitions</u>	<u>Sample Engagement "Advice"</u>	<u>Claimed Benefits of Engagements</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement is a positive emotional connection to an employee's work • Engagement is affective, normative, and continuance commitment • Engaged employees are inspired to go above and beyond the call of duty to help meet business goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become a "great place to work" through building trust in colleagues and ensuring employee pride and enjoyment • Segmentation is the key to managing employee commitment and productivity • Great managers are key to achieving an engaged workforce • To achieve motivation, give the employee a "kick in the pants" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase total shareholder return by up to 47 percent • Reduce absenteeism • Better customer feedback • Less shrinkage of inventory • Higher sales

Source: Allen, Natalie, and John Meyer, "Affective, Continuance, and Normative Commitment to the Organization:

Engagement at work was conceptualized by Kahn (1990) as the “harnessing of organizational members’ selves to their work roles. In engagement people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performance. Employee engagement has also been conceptualized as having two dimensions: Cognitive Engagement – the extent to which the worker is aware of his mission at work and his role in the organization – and Emotional Engagement or physical engagement – the extent to which the worker empathizes with others at work and connects meaningfully with his or her co-worker (Kahn, 1992 and Luthans & Peterson, 2002).

Work engagement is different from job satisfaction in that it combines high work pleasure (dedication) with high activation (vigor, absorption); job satisfaction is typically a more passive form of employee well-being (Bakker, 2011).

An Examination of Construct Validity,” *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 1996; Herzberg, Frederick. “One More Time: How do You Motivate Employees?” *Harvard Business Review* (Classic), January 2003; Coffman, Curt and Gabriel Gonzales-Molina, *Follow This Path: How the World’s Greatest Organizations Drive Growth by Unleashing High Potential*, New York: Warner Books, 2002; Towers, Perrin, *Understanding What Drives Employee Engagement*, 2003; Age Wave and Harris Interactive, *The New Employee/Employer Equation*, 2003; Watson Wyatt, *WorkUSA2000: Employee Commitment and the Bottom Line*, 2000; Hay Group, *The Retention Dilemma: Why Productive Workers Leave—Seven Drivers for Keeping Them*; Hewitt Associates, LLC, *Best Employers in Canada*, 2003, <http://www.greatplacetowork.com/>; Corporate Leadership Council research.

Meere (2005) describes three levels of engagement: *Engaged* - employees who work with passion and feel a profound connection to their organization. They drive innovation and move the organization forward; *Not engaged* – employees who attend and participate at work but are time serving and put no passion or energy into their work; and *Disengaged* – employees who are unhappy at work and who act out their Unhappiness at work. These employees undermine the Work of their engaged colleagues on a daily basis.

It would appear that there are sufficient grounds for arguing that engagement is related to, but distinct from, other constructs in organisational behaviour (Saks 2006). A study on “Antecedents and

consequences of employee engagement” he conducted a survey among by 102 employees working in a variety of jobs and organizations. The average age was 34 and 60 percent were female. Participants had been in their current job for an average of four years, in their organization an average of five years, and had on average 12 years of work experience. The survey included measures of job and organization engagement as well as the antecedents and consequences of engagement. Results indicate that there is a meaningful difference between job and organization engagements and that perceived organizational support predicts both job and organization engagement; job characteristics predicts job engagement; and procedural justice predicts organization engagement. In addition, job and organization engagement mediated the relationships between the antecedents and job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intentions to quit, and organizational citizenship behaviour. Furthermore, arguing that organisational commitment also differs from engagement in that it refers to a person’s attitude and attachment towards their organisation, whilst it could be argued that engagement is not merely an attitude; it is the degree to which an individual is attentive to their work and absorbed in the performance of their role.

3. Meaning of Employee Engagement

Following propositions were given by (Macey and Schneider, 2008) to understand the phenomenon of employee engagement in a much broader sense.

Proposition 1: Satisfaction when assessed as satiation is not in the same conceptual space as engagement. Satisfaction when assessed as feelings of energy, enthusiasm, and similarly positive affective estates becomes a facet of engagement.

Proposition 2: Organizational commitment is an important facet of the state of engagement when it is conceptualized as positive attachment to the larger organizational entity and measured as a willingness to exert energy in support of the organization, to feel pride as an organizational member, and to have personal identification with the organization.

Proposition 3: Job involvement (including task engagement and job commitment) as traditionally conceptualized and assessed is an important facet of the psychological state of engagement.

Proposition 4: Feelings of empowerment that

connote an inclination to action vis-a-vis work (feelings of self-efficacy and control and impact from one's action) comprise another facet of state engagement.

Proposition 5: Positive Affectivity associated with the job and the work setting connoting or explicitly indicating feelings of persistence, vigor, energy, dedication, absorption, enthusiasm, alertness, and pride occupies a central position in the conceptualization and measurement of state engagement. Conversely, measures of psychological states that are devoid of direct and explicit indicants of affective and energetic feeling are not measures of state engagement in whole or part.

Proposition 6: State engagement additionally refers to the investment of the self in the person's work and the perceived importance of work outcomes and organization membership to that person's identity.

Proposition 7: Engagement behaviours include innovative behaviours, demonstrations of initiative, proactively seeking opportunities to contribute, and going beyond what is, within specific frames of reference, typically expected or required.

Proposition 8: Engagement behaviour includes actions that, given a specific frame of reference, go beyond what is typical, usual, ordinary, and/or ordinarily expected.

Proposition 9: Role expansion, behaviour that reveals attention to a wider range of tasks than is typical or usual, is a facet of engagement behaviour.

Proposition 10: Behavioural engagement is adaptive behaviour intended to serve an organizational purpose, whether to defend and protect the status quo in response to actual or anticipated threats or to change and/or promote change in response to actual or anticipated events.

Proposition 11: Trait engagement comprises a number of interrelated facets, including trait positive affectivity, conscientiousness, the proactive personality, and the autotelic personality. These all suggest the tendency to experience work in positive, active, and energetic ways and to behave adaptively (i.e., displaying effort by going beyond what is necessary and initiating change to facilitate organizationally relevant outcomes).

Proposition 12: State and behavioural engagement are more likely under some conditions than others with the nature of the work people do and the leadership

under which they work central to their choosing to be attitudinally and behaviourally engaged.

Proposition 13: Feelings of trust mediate the relationship between leadership behaviour and behavioural engagement such that feelings of trust are the psychological state between leader behaviour and behavioural engagement. Thus, leaders create trust in followers, and it is the trust.

Proposition 14: Trait engagement interacts with work and organizational conditions to produce state and behavioural engagement. Alternatively, work conditions not only have a main effect on state and behavioural engagement, but they also may moderate the relationships between trait engagement and state engagement as well as relationships between state and behavioural engagement.

Above propositions provides a clear perspective why organisation needs to engage their manpower and get best out of them, in terms of commitment, productivity, satisfaction, vigor, dedication & many other attributes. Engagement is beyond simple satisfaction level with in the employment conditions; occasionally it is misunderstood by employee's loyalty towards organisation. It's ironic that engagement is more related to commitment and passion for work of the employee instead of loyalty.

Main stress is on traits which are directly and indirectly affects the working environment, job involvement, and willingness to work beyond expected with an ease of satisfaction and self driven approach and Positive attitude is attributed from level of satisfaction which he/she is getting from organisation in response of his work and effort invested. When manpower is treated as 'part of a family' it provides a sense of connectedness which drives best team work and cooperation.

4. Drivers of Work Engagement

Job Resources

Job resources refer to those physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that may (a) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; (b) be functional in achieving work goals; or (c) stimulate personal growth, learning, and development (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Hence, resources are not only necessary to deal with (high) job demands—they also are important in their own right (Bakker, 2011)

Job resources are assumed to play either an intrinsic motivational role because they foster employees' growth, learning, and development or an extrinsic motivational role because they are instrumental in achieving work goals. In the former case, job resources fulfill basic human needs, such as the needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Job resources may also play an extrinsic motivational role, because resourceful work environments foster the willingness to dedicate one's efforts to the work task. In such environments, it is likely that the task will be completed successfully and that the goal will be attained. For instance, supportive colleagues and performance feedback increase the likelihood of being successful in achieving one's work goals. In either case, be it through the satisfaction of basic needs or through the achievement of work goals, the outcome is positive, and engagement is likely to occur (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Personal resources

Personal resources are positive self-evaluations that are linked to resiliency and refer to individuals' sense of their ability to successfully control and have an impact on their environment (Hobfoll, Johnson, Ennis, & Jackson, 2003). It has been convincingly shown that such positive self-evaluations predict goal setting, motivation, performance, job and life satisfaction, and other desirable outcomes (for a review, see Judge, Van Vianen, & De Pater, 2004). Several authors have investigated the relationships between personal resources and work engagement. For example, it has been shown that self-esteem, self-efficacy, locus of control, and the abilities to perceive and regulate emotions are positive predictors of work engagement.

In their longitudinal survey and diary studies, Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, and Schaufeli (2009a, 2009b) examined the role of three personal resources (self-efficacy, organizational-based self-esteem, and optimism) in predicting work engagement. Results showed that engaged employees are highly self-efficacious; they believe they are able to meet the demands they face in a broad array of contexts. In addition, engaged workers have the tendency to believe that they will generally experience good outcomes in life (optimistic) and believe they can satisfy their needs by participating in roles within the organization (self-esteem) (Bakker, 2011).

Employees tend to stay with organizations,

which are "talent friendly" and progressive (Towers, 2006). Seijts and Crim (2006), while summarizing the existing literature on how leaders can 'engage employees' heads, hearts, and hands' identified ten factors, named the 'Ten C's of Engagement' steps that the management may take to enhance the level of engagement of the employees.

These may be enumerated as follows:

1. **Connect:** the extent to which management convey that it cares for and values the employees. Feeling of connectedness leads to satiation that will result in commitment and loyalty.
2. **Career:** the extent to which the management provides to the workers work that is 'challenging and meaningful' and fostering one's career growth. Advancing from one level to other in your career gives satisfaction and feeling of growing is exaggarating.
3. **Clarity:** the extent to which the goals, rules and the organizational operations are transparent and understood by the employee.
4. **Convey:** the extent to which the management communicates goals and provides feedback. It is known best and effective approach to communication is to have feedback with feed forward result.
5. **Congratulate:** the extent to which good performance brings praise and recognition. Appreciation is the key to motivate emotionally. By appreciating employee's his/her morale is raised which leads to satisfaction.
6. **Contribute:** the extent to which one's contribution to the 'success and future' of the company is understood.
7. **Control:** the extent to which the management allows the worker to participate in decision making and drive initiatives. Level of control defines how much freedom employee is provided to give his/her view in contribution to the organisational goal.
8. **Collaborate:** the extent to which the organization upholds team work over pursuance of self-interests. Team work is a key to success, in order to have a effective team, it should to collaborated above the level

of satiation. effectiveness of team work increases and goal is achieved as expected

9. **Credibility:** the extent to which the management demonstrates transparency and high ethical standards.
10. **Confidence:** the extent to which the organization demonstrates high ethical and performance standards, creating a sense of positive identification among the employees.

Employee Engagement Strategies (Markos and Sridevi, 2010)

Employee engagement strategies, if used effectively in a predefined procedure will help an organisation to avoid employee disengagement.

1. *Start it on day one:* Most organizations do have clear new talent acquisition strategies. However, they lack employee retention strategies. Effective recruitment and orientation programs are the first building blocks to be laid on the first day of the new employee. Managers should be careful in pooling out the potential talent of the new employee through effective recruitment. The newly hired employee should be given both general orientation which is related to the company mission, vision, values, policies and procedures and job-specific orientation such as his/her job duties, and responsibilities, goals and current priorities of the department to which the employee belongs in order to enable him/her to develop realistic job expectations and reduce role conflict that might arise in the future. After the hiring decision is made, the manager has to ensure role-talent fit when placing an employee in a certain position and exert all managerial efforts needed to retain that talent in the organization.
2. *Start it from the top:* Employee engagement requires leadership commitment through establishing clear mission, vision and values. Unless the people at the top believe in it, own it, pass it down to managers and employees, and enhance their leadership, employee engagement will never be more than just a "corporate fad" or "another HR thing". Employee engagement does not need lip-service rather dedicated heart and action-oriented service from top management. It requires "Leading by Being example"
3. *Enhance employee engagement through two-way communication:* Managers should promote two-way communication. Employees are not sets of pots to which you pour out your ideas without giving them a chance to have a say on issues that matter to their job and life. Clear and consistent communication of what is expected of them paves the way for engaged workforce. Involve your people and always show respect to their input. Share power with your employees through participative decision making so that they would feel sense of belongingness thereby increasing their engagement in realizing it.
4. *Give satisfactory opportunities for development and advancement:* Encourage independent thinking through giving them more job autonomy so that employees will have a chance to make their own freedom of choosing their own best way of doing their job so long as they are producing the expected result. Manage through results rather than trying to manage all the processes by which that result is achieved.
5. *Ensure that employees have everything they need to do their jobs:* Managers are expected to make sure that employees have all the resources such as physical or material, financial and information resources in order to effectively do their job.
6. *Give employee's appropriate training:* Help employees update themselves increasing their knowledge and skills through giving appropriate trainings. Generally it is understood that when employees get to know more about their job, their confidence increases there by being able to work without much supervision from their immediate managers which in turn builds their self-efficacy and commitment.
7. *Have strong feedback system:* Companies should develop a performance management system which holds managers and employees accountable for the level of engagement they have shown. Conducting regular survey of employee engagement level helps make out factors that make employees engaged. After finalizing the survey, it is advisable to

determine all the factors that driving engagement in the organization, then narrow down the list of factors to focus on two or three areas. It is important that organizations begin with a concentration on the factors that will make the most difference to the employees and put energy around improving these areas as it may be difficult to address all factors at once. Managers should be behind such survey results and develop action-oriented plans that are specific, measurable, and accountable and time-bound.

8. *Incentives have a part to play:* Managers should work out both financial and non-financial benefits for employees who show more engagement in their jobs. Several management theories have indicated that when employees get more pay, recognition and praise, they tend to exert more effort into their job. There should be a clear link between performance and incentives given to the employees.
9. *Build a distinctive corporate culture:* Companies should promote a strong work culture in which the goals and values of managers are aligned across all work sections. Companies that build a culture of mutual respect by keeping success stories alive will not only keep their existing employees engaged but also they baptize the new incoming employees with this contagious spirit of work culture.
10. *Focus on top-performing employees:* A study conducted by Watson Wyatt Worldwide in 2004/05 on HR practices of 50 large USA firms shows that high-performing organizations are focusing on engaging their top-performing employees. According to the finding of the same research, what high-performing firms are doing is what top-performing employees are asking for and this reduces the turnover of high-performing employees and as a result leads to top business performance.

5. Current issues in engagement (Bakker, 2011)

Although research on work engagement is flourishing, there are still many lessons to be learned about engagement. For example, not all researchers agree on the definition and measurement of engagement. Although most authors use the three-dimensional model of Schaufeli and Bakker (2004)—

including vigor, dedication, and absorption—some authors have argued that the definition should include a behavioural dimension (Macey et al., 2009). In addition, not much is known about how leaders influence their followers' engagement and the mechanisms that explain this influence. Do leaders set the stage for follower engagement by offering the right mix between job demands and resources? Do effective leaders fulfill their followers' basic needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness? Future research should try to answer these questions by conducting multilevel studies of leaders and their followers. Furthermore, it is conceivable that more engagement is not always better. Employees cannot always be engaged; they need moments of absence and opportunities for recovery.

6. Concluding Remarks

Concluding upon we assert that employee engagement practice has a positive effect on organisation performances, the positive effect is in terms of increasing productivity, employee retention, low attrition rate, positive attitude of manpower, efficiency, increase market value, mutual growth, effectiveness, overall development of both the parties involved.

Employee satisfaction and engagement are related to meaningful business outcomes at a magnitude that is important to many organizations and that these correlations generalize across companies. An efficient composite of items measuring issues at the heart of the workplace—issues that are important to employees and those managers can influence— has substantial implications for a further understanding of the true nature of overall satisfaction at the business unit level (Harter, Schmidt and Hayes, 2002). Engaged employees are physically, cognitively, and emotionally connected with their work roles. They feel full of energy, are dedicated to reach their work-related goals, and are often fully immersed in their work. Work engagement is predicted by job resources and personal resources and leads to higher job performance. Thus, work engagement is an important indicator of occupational well-being for both employees and organizations. Human resource managers can do several things to facilitate work engagement among their employees (Bakker, 2011)

Above conclusion is structured as it describes how Employee engagement have come into existence recently earlier it was present with a different name and different approach, after years of research and

findings engagement have crossed its level from job satisfaction to higher dimensions. It also includes various levels of engagement (engaged, not engaged and disengaged), prepositions, dimensions and strategies followed by researcher for achieving employee engagement in their organisation.

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