EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT CULTURE

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"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? We were born to make manifest the glory of god that is within us. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same."

Marianne Williamson

Abstract

Today, more and more corporate leaders are turning to volunteer employee programs as a key strategy to help realize their business goals while positively engaging their employees in helping to meet the needs of the local community. Promoting employee engagement is thus part of the ongoing evolution taking place in the private sector to move beyond a sole focus on the bottom line to becoming socially responsible corporate citizens. Employee engagement is the level of commitment and involvement an employee has towards their organization and its values. An engaged employee is aware of business context, and works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization. It is a positive attitude held by the employees towards the organization and its values.

With the impending retirement of the baby boomers, a global job market, and the current competition for talent, job seekers have more choices available to them than ever before and can afford to be selective. Therefore, it is critical that workplaces focus on creating a culture of engagement to attract and retain star performers and top talent. The paper focuses to know the key factors in engaging employees and how to develop a culture of employee engagement?

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INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement has become a hot topic in the workplace, and is a growing priority for many organizations. Most organizations today realize that a 'satisfied' employee is not necessarily the 'best' employee in terms of loyalty and productivity. It is only an 'engaged employee' who is intellectually and emotionally bound with the organization, feels passionately about its goals and is committed towards its values that can be termed thus. He does the extra mile beyond the basic job responsibility and is associated with the actions that drive the business. Moreover, in times of diminishing loyalty, employee engagement is a powerful retention strategy. The fact that it has a strong impact on the bottom-line ads to its significance. Engaged employees are those who are committed to their work and feel connected to the success of their organization, believing in its values, mission and purpose. They are motivated to go above and beyond the minimum of what is required of them, find enjoyment in the work that they do, and have a passion for excellence.

The concept of engagement has evolved from studies on high involvement, empowerment, job motivation, organizational commitment, and trust. "Engaged" is defined as being involved or being committed to something. Employees feel engaged when they find personal meaning and motivation in their work, receive positive interpersonal support, and function in an efficient work environment. An engaged employee feels that he or she has a stake in the outcome, with the desire to contribute to achieving more than personal goals. In short, a motivated and inspired employee is an "engaged" employee. Yet, creating an engaged workforce remains to be a challenge for many organizations. It requires effective leadership and other organizational factors to help employees realize their full potential and value. Particularly with a volatile economy, organizations need to concentrate on optimizing

employee productivity and available organizational resources.

Employee Engagement – Definition

Employee Engagement is the means or strategy by which an organization seeks to build a partnership between the organization and its employees, such that:

- Employees fully understands and is committed to achieve the organization's objectives, and
- The organization respects the personal aspirations and ambitions of its employees.

It is seen largely that the organization's responsibility to create an environment and culture conducive to this partnership.

Employee Engagement – Aspects

There are three basic aspects of employee engagement according to the global studies.

- The employees and their own unique psychological make up and experience.
- The employers and their ability to create the conditions that promote employee engagement.
- Interaction between employees at all levels.

Employee engagement creates greater motivation within employees for the work they do and increases their commitment to the organization. It is about creating an enthusiasm for their roles, their work and the organization, and ensuring they are aligned with the values of the organization, well informed and well integrated with their colleagues and the fabric or culture of the organization.

Important Factors in Engaging Employees

Developing a culture where people know their work matters and their contributions to the organization's goals are valued, are two of the most important factors when it comes to engaging employees. Other factors that are important to employees are:

- Interesting/Challenging work.
- Good rapport/interactions with coworkers/colleagues/managers.

- Opportunities for professional growth and development.
- Receiving regular, balanced feedback from managers (redirect and reinforcing).
- Clear objectives and expectations.
- Meaningful recognition, being valued and respected.
- Receiving fair pay.

How to Improve A Culture of Employee Engagement

The manager plays a key role in the engagement of employees and there are a number of ways they can work towards creating a culture of engagement.

Build positive working relationships with the members of your department, area or team

This is considered to be one of the most important drivers for employee engagement. When managers engage their employees they communicate regularly, again, connecting the daily work of the employee to the overall purpose of the organization and its success.

Effective managers set clear objectives, provide regular feedback and encouragement, and build on the strengths of their employees.

Seek your employees' input and provide appropriate decision-making authority

Rather than telling your employee(s) how things will or will not be done, seek their input. Very often these are the individuals at the frontlines who have first – hand knowledge or experience with the topic at hand. When making decisions, seek their input, ask questions, and genuinely take their perspective into consideration. Involve those who will be impacted by the decisions being made.

Provide employees with decision-making authority where appropriate. This demonstrates that you have confidence in their abilities and allows them to take ownership of their roles.

Find out what matters to your employees

You've most likely heard of exit interventions, but what about stay interviews? On a regular, one-on-one basis, find out what matters most to your employees. Ask questions such as,

"What about your role…. Motivates you to come to work everyday? Makes you want to press snooze?**"**

"If given the opportunity, what would you change about your role?**"**

Don't just stop there, though. Be sure to use this information and act on things that you have direct control over and take this information into consideration when you have the opportunity to influence.

Support the growth and development of employees through learning opportunities

Encourage employees to make use of various learning opportunities available to them in the workplace (i.e. Learning & Development Workshops, Academic Programs / Courses / featured presentations, Library resources, etc.). Also, be aware of your employee's strengths and interests and bring them in on initiatives or projects that would compliment these. In an ideal situation, this person would be an asset to the project team or committee, and would most likely appreciate the acknowledgement of their knowledge and skills, welcoming the challenge or opportunity.

While managers play a large role in creating an environment that fosters employee engagement, employees also need to take responsibility for the work that they do and the level in which they are engaged. Since employees know best where their interests lie and what their strengths and personal aspirations are, they need to communicate these to their managers.

CONCLUSION

Employee Engagement should be viewed as a partnership between employees and the institution, each supporting one another in achieving their goals. An engaged employee is someone who is motivated, finds personal worth in his work, and is committed to the accomplishment of goals. He considers his contribution to the organization as essential to achieving organizational goals.

In conclusion, that raising and maintaining engagement lies in the hands of an organization and requires a perfect blend of time, effort, commitment and investment to craft a successful endeavor.

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