



## EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: A KEY TOWARDS SUCCESS

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### Abstract

Employee engagement is important to any organization to retain and maintain valued employees in a competitive environment. Particularly in a situation of global business environment, where virtual working environment exists through information technological adoption, organizations are forced to engage employees. Employee engagement reduces employee turnover, sick absence, decline accident rates, conflicts and grievances go down and productivity increases. Both academicians and HR practitioners consider employee engagement as a vital aspect that an organization should address due to its various positive organizational and individual consequences.

Employee engagement is about organization action that are consistent with the values of the organization. It is about keeping promises or an explanation why they cannot be kept. The basic element of employee engagement such as integrity, mutual trust, recognition, loyalty, good relationship between employees and manager are important to maintain healthy relationship between employees and organization. Employee engagement is generally agreed to be a psychological aspect that encompasses energy, enthusiasm and engrossed effort of both managers and employees.

Employee engagement may be understood as invisible, intangible, positive, affective psychological work – related state of mind that leads employees to actively express and invest themselves emotionally, cognitively and physically in their role performance. Thus, Employee engagement is a workplace approach resulting in the right conditions for all the members of an organization to give their best each day, committed to their organization goals and values, motivated and contributed to organizational success, with an enhanced sense of their own well – being. Employee engagement exhibits how an employee is strongly involved in his/ her work with experiencing feelings of significance, enthusiasm, passion, inspiration, pride, excitement and challenges from their work. They fully concentrate and immerse themselves in their work without noticing the passage of time.

**Keywords:** *Employee Engagement, Competitive Environment, Productivity, Psychological, significance.*

### Introduction

Corporates and other business enterprises, who focus on good governance, care more for their social responsibility and ethical operations. Corporate social responsibility policies include the aspect of attracting and retaining quality employees in the organization. The employees working in the organization have a feeling that they are engaged and such feeling will bring solace to their mind. Because their engagement with the work in the enterprise and their output or productivity will provide benefit to the society in some way or the other. Corporate social responsibility enables employees to



contribute more of their knowledge and skill to work, which results in employees being more engaged. These necessitates to know the meaning of ‘Employee Engagement’.

Thousands of pages of literature have flown on Employee Engagement in the management literature. Who coined the term “Employee Engagement” is a controversial aspect? Some researchers say that it was coined by Gallup Inc (An American Company involved in analytics and advisory activities, founded in the year 1935). Some researchers say that the term Employee Engagement was coined by Prof. Khan William A, a professor and researcher. Without touching the controversial aspect, it has to be understood that the term Employee Engagement explains the nature of relationship between an organization and its employee. Prior to the usage of this term Employee Engagement, it was called by different named, such as “Employee Morale”, “Work Ethic”, “Vertical Enrichment”.

Employee Engagement is explained in every strategic meeting of a company. Even when performance conversations take place or when companywide survey is been conducted, employee engagement aspects are represented in various figures. It will have an impact on almost all the activities o of the organization. Hence, it may be understood as a “Work place approach resulting in the right conditions for all the members of an organization to give their best, each day, committed to their organizational success, with an enhanced sense of their own well – being.

The meaning has to be analyzed to understand the inner meaning of employee engagement”. It is the strength to the mental and emotional connection employees feel towards their work places”. This means that employees have to develop organizational identity. They should have the sense of belongingness with the organization.

It is not that just employee being happy (spending time freely with co – workers over lunch or enjoying holidays) or satisfied (i.e., measuring satisfaction at minimum level) or enjoying life, both inside and outside the office. But it is all about dedication of employees towards their work which is construed as “Engagement”. This means that employees have to give their full ability, skill and knowledge for organizational growth. With this, organizational productivity maximizes and employee’s engagement or absorption with will be visible.

Thus, employee engagement is a concept which focuses on the increased contribution of employee’s talent for the organization’s sustainable growth. To put it simply, employee engagement refers to dedication of employees in an organization towards their assigned task or work with all sincerity to achieve organization’s objectives and goals. This will happen when they identify themselves with their work. In an emotional aspect. If organizations consider their employees as most valuable assets a treat them well in terms of monetary and non – monetary aspects, employees become well engaged, well connected to the organization. Thus, work harder, stay longer and contribute to their ability to develop the organization. Thus, employee engagement speaks of the employee, who is absorbed in his work and will have a positive approach towards work to maintain good image of the organization.

**Whether an employee is engaged in an organization or not can be determined by examining the following features:**

- 1) Thinking about the organization: How an employee thinks about the organization in terms of its management pattern, Management’s (Top brass) perception of employees, treatment accorded



to employees, ethical practices practiced, treatment of stakeholders including its customers etc., will fix his/her level of engagement of organization.

- 2) Feeling about the organization: Feeling is an emotional aspect. If his/her feeling with the work is positive and comfortable, it means that he/she is engaged. On the other, if it is uncomfortable and negative, it will be construed that employee is not well engaged.
- 3) Is predetermined to achieve organizational goals? – An employee who is proactive and well connects to achieve organizational goals, is considered to be well engaged and otherwise not.

### **Objectives of Employee Engagement**

1. Make non engaged employees to become engaged employees to see that they develop organizational identity.
2. To formulate better working plan for engaged employees.
3. To precisely evaluate and measure employee engagement process.
4. To develop interpersonal support through teamwork and collaboration at work place to respect individual values and to focus on increasing productivity of the employees.
5. To focus on work environment to ensure employee empowerment and to align individual performance and efforts with organizational strategy.

### **Types of Employee Engagement**

The type of employee engagement is determined by employee's emotional attachment to the organization in which he/she works. Emotional attachment that strong bondage an employee shares the organization, based on his / her emotional attachment and level of commitment. Employee engagement is categorized as follows:

- I. Engaged: Engaged employee are those, who fully involve in their work in the organization. They are emotionally attached to the organization, work with full position and introduce innovative work practices to the organization's culture. They develop identity with the organization. They are optimistic and spread positivity among the co – workers. They feel that organization belongs to them. This sense of belongingness increases productivity of both the employee and organization. They are positive, trusted and committed employees who have intrinsic enjoyment of the work. The degree of involvement of these employees with the organization will be very high. Such dedicated employees don't distract themselves from small interruptions at work. Such type of engagement is called "Cognitive Engagement" as revealed by research studies, will be 25 to 30 percent. They stay for long in the organization.
- II. Not engaged: These are the employees who "work to the rule". This means that they don't work with full involvement. They restrict themselves to the discharging of the work assigned to them by their superiors. They are always dependent on their bosses and seek directions to work. They may not waste time in their work places. But they do not work with passion and sense of involvement. Their attitude towards work and organization may be positive and negative. "Emotional Engagement" (as phycologists call) may be employees will be less compared to engaged employees. Degree of involvement in the job is decided by the feeling of employee towards job, which will be low. As per the research results, this type of employee will be more in an organization (around 50 to 60%). Thus, they are neutral and unconcerned with important organizational activities.



III. Activity disengaged: Such employees are unhappy with the work and exhibit negative approach. “Physical engagement” (as psychologists call) can be seen. They are disgruntled workers, who make their team mates inactive. They will always be motivating their co – workers to do less work and also infuse in their mind to give up the job. They live as bad employees of the organization for a long time and also come in the way of engaged employees who are destined to get higher positions in the organizations. As per the research studies, 15 to 20 percent of such employees exist in the organization. In a way, they are detrimental to the growth of the organization. Their productivity will be very low.

Hence, the employees are categorized depending upon their emotional attachment to their work.

### **Drivers of employee engagement –**

The term “Drivers” refers to the factors that influence the employee to be engaged. What are the work place and family that contribute for developing employees as engaged employees? Many psychological studies have revealed number of critical factors which lead to employee engagement. This includes:

1. Making the employee feel valued and involved
2. Explaining clearly the values of the organization
3. Sound compensation system
4. Providing opportunities for personal development
5. Satisfaction in terms of job – profile and career goals
6. Fair evaluation of employee performance
7. Extending monetary and non – monetary benefits to family members, work life balance etc.

These critical aspects emotionally attach employee to the organization which leads his, / her to be engaged.

There are factors which impacts the behaviour of employees to be engaged, they are briefly analysed as

1. **Valuing employee** – Organizations should create an atmosphere inside the work place, which makes every employee to feel that his/her work has significance in the growth of the company. He/she has to be treated as a valued asset of the company. This encourages employees to be more engaged in work.
2. **Clarity of organizational value** – every company, or any other organization (business or non – business) will have written vision and mission to achieve in their life time. These are values and culture of the organization to be implemented for its success. This is one the factors, which has to be clearly explained to each employee to understand and implement these values. Implicit implementation of values and culture drive employees to be engaged. If an employee’s job is not properly defined and necessary materials and equipment are not provided, he/ she gets dejected.
3. **Employee performance** – Most of the enterprise evaluate annually, the performance, of each employee. The purpose is to find work deficiencies and improve their ability to work by training. Evaluation also takes place for promoting them to higher cadres or to enhance compensation. If performance is not fairly evaluated, employees get dejected and will have its impact on productivity. Therefore, employee evaluation should be fair enough. This prompts employees to develops identity with the organization and they become more engaged.
4. **Compensation system** – This is one factor which motivates employees to the core. When reasonable salaries and other perquisites are offered to employees, they work with all enthusiasm and get engaged in work. When they are asked to work – overtime, they should be



given additional compensation and other incentives which should be reasonable. Organizations should have sound compensation policy to get employees engaged.

5. **Employees personal development** – Employees should have scope for their personal development. This means that they should have opportunity to exhibit their talent in their work. Instead of working fully as set policies, if employees feel that the work can be done other way (out of the box) which improves the quality of work, they should be free to do so. This encourages them to work with comfort and get absorbed in work.
6. **Career development** – Top management of the company should provide opportunities to employees to move upwards in the hierarchy of the organization. If employees feel that they can move to higher cadres in the organization with quality work, undoubtedly, they work with enthusiasm and get highly engaged in their work.
7. **Job satisfaction** – This is critical factor of employee engagement. Job satisfaction implies that an employee has to identify with the work he/ she does and happily involve in it. If an employee is deeply absorbed in his / her work, it means that he / she has job satisfaction. Job satisfaction gives solace to the mind and employees work with full steam for the growth of the organization.
8. **Effective communication** – An effective (Two – way communication) that is without barriers with co – workers and higher ups will provide better understanding with each other and the content of communication will be clearly communicated. Distortion in communication may lead to mis – understanding and estrangement develops between the connected people. Hence, one of the factors that contribute for employee engagement is effective internal communication.
9. **Work – life balance** – This concept speaks about how an employee can effectively manage and balance both his / her family and work place activities. If an employee is having major problem (every family will have problems) in the family, if he / she cannot work in work place with a composed mind. This will be barrier for employee engagement. Family culture and behaviour differs from the value and culture of the organization in which one works. Balancing between these two different cultures is a tough task. But it is to be balanced get engaged in organisational work.

## Conclusion

Measuring employee engagement is a critical and complex issue. But it is essential to know, how adopted HR policies are functioning effectively. The measurement of employee engagement facilities to know how out the investment made on HR resources are productive. This also helps HR managers to understand how and where employee engagement can be improved.

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