

A Study on Employee Engagement in Information Technology (IT) Industry

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Article Received: 15 October 2017

Article Accepted: 30 October 2017

Article Published: 08 December 2017

ABSTRACT

This study investigates various techniques employed to engage people in the organization. Since employee engagement has been discussed in the academic literature and corporate reports for more than decades; it is significant to examine the techniques and its consequences. Previous studies have been referred to formulate interview questions. Personal interview was carried out with human resource department people as well as the employees. Employees were allowed to express their opinion unconditionally. The analysis is organized into two sections around the areas of human resource management philosophies and employee engagement practices. The effectiveness of employee engagement program has also been described. The limitation of this study is that it analyses a single IT entity. Findings from various researches have been compared to justify the validity of the interview questions.

Keywords: Employee engagement, Human resource management and Organization culture.

1. INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement is a process of keeping employees engaged towards their organisation's activities in order to achieve their loyalty and increase their belongingness towards organisation. Employees are perceived as a resource to be operated to their fullest, with little or no scope for co-decision making. Because of this stance on the employment relationship, the interests of the employee are subordinate to that of the employer, resulting in a lack of trust by employees towards the employer. This lack of trust will hinder the assistance of the engagement procedure. Employee engagement is a relatively new concept in the academic community but has been heavily promoted by consulting companies (Wefald & Downey 2009b). Scholars and practitioners in the HRM field tend to agree that the required concept of engagement may help explain conduct at work, but they present different definitions of it. Engagement can be defined as individuals giving all of themselves to their work (Kahn, 1990). Specifically, Kahn proposed that engagement is "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances" (p.694). Understanding the pulls of engagement is a popular subject for organizations who wish to maximize employee performance and well-being at work (Robinson, Perryman, & Hayday, 2004).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Evolution of Employee Engagement

Most references relate employee engagement to assessment centers and consultancies. The concept is relatively new for HRM and appeared in the literatures for nearly two decades (Rafferty, Maben, West and Robinson, 2005; Melcrum Publishing, 2005; Ellis and Sorensen, 2007). Employee engagement originates mainly from two concepts that have won academic recognition and have been the subjects of empirical research-Commitment and Organizational Citizen Behaviour (OCB) (Robinson, Perryman and Hayday, 2004; Rafferty et al., 2005). Employee engagement has similarities to and overlaps with the above two concepts. Robinson et al. (2004).

3. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

The determination of this section is to address the conceptual differences among different schools of thought on the definition of employee engagement to improve a conceptual footing for this study. Despite the high profile of employee engagement, there are many different views and definitions of the subject. Having an engaged workforce has become ever more important in recent years for organizations. Employee engagement is at the core of the employment relationship. It is a topic which employers clasp in high esteem because of the idea of having an engaged workforce.

According to Gennard and Judge (2014) Engagement which goes to the heart of the work place relationship is key to overcoming obstacles that employees find difficult to perform at their peak. Armstrong (2012) a skilled HR describes employee engagement as that readiness to go that extra mile. This coincides with employees giving more than they are asked to an organization by working harder and longer than they intentionally must. Employee engagement has been reported to have a strong link with satisfaction and it is regarded as one of the notions of the subject.

Satisfaction according to Abraham (2012) as when an individual's working environment fulfils their needs, values or personal characteristics. It should be noted that satisfaction is not engagement. Engaged employees tend to be more dedicated, giving greater customer service. An engaged employee therefore possesses the qualities that an organization needs to reach the next level giving the organization that edge in the market.

Melo (2011) states that a company no matter its size cannot gain that advantage without an engaged workforce. Organizations that have an engaged workforce see benefits through customer satisfaction, retention and increasing profits. According to Macey, Schneider, Barbera and Young (2009) individuals tend to be engaged when they join the organization firstly and as they work for longer for the organization this tends to wear away. Macey et al (2009) has stated that this is due to when new employees join they feel the need and pressure to be engaged, however as time goes so does this pressure leading them to become more disinterested with their work.

Macleod and Brady (2008) state that "engagement is a tool to be used to make your organization function better, not primarily to make your employees feel better". This emphasizes that engagement is the key to a successful working environment and not a mechanism used to merely create a more satisfied workforce.

Employee engagement has become a hot topic in recent years among consulting firms and in the popular business press. However, employee engagement has seldom been studied in the academic literature and comparatively modest is known about its background and consequences (Alan M. Saks, 2006). Truss, Soane, Edwards, Wisdom, Croll and Burnett (2006) have given a clearer definition on employee engagement, they mention that it is all about feeling positive about your job. Truss et al (2006) also mention that engaged workers are passionate, energetic, committed, immersed and dedicated to their work.

Erikson (2005, p.14) has stated that “Engagement is above and beyond simple satisfaction with the employment arrangement or basic loyalty to the employer. Engagement in contrast is about passion and commitment.” Engagement is therefore clearly a concept derived from the topics discussed below and cannot be directly linked to just one specific topic [1-21] as a similarity.

These relationships are expected because engagement itself is often described as a positive and fulfilling state of mind, assumed to be enjoyable for employees (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Roma, & Bakker, 2002). Given the purported benefits of engagement, identifying and understanding its antecedents is on the agenda of scholars and practitioners alike [22-32].

Kahn (1990) developed a view that “employee engagement is the harnessing organizations members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances”.

4. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this study is to try to find out what encourages employees to have a passion for the job they do, which encourages them to exhibit discretionary determination thus going to the additional mile to do their job to the very best of their talent.

Connecting of high employee engagement has been suggestion to high levels of individual performance as well as increased organizational performance.

5. RESEARCH DESIGN

Primary data Interviews are one-on-one question and answer sessions and provide much information from people and being useful when one wants to get an expert or opinion on a subject. The researcher assumes that in one on one interviews, people discuss their ideas openly.

The researcher’s task is to interview the HR in operations team. As they specialize in HR practices, they are the best people to discuss HR strategies and Employee Engagement.

Before the interview the researcher is asked to sit in the induction session to know about the company’s rules, regulation, policies and procedures. Researcher is informed to consider two things; first thing is that it is mandatory to complete two certifications (a) Security test (b) code of conduct and second thing is to sign the documentation and non-disclosure form. Then researcher is introduced to coworkers and kept under observation for one day, to understand the process of HR operations team.

Later researcher is provided with access, ID card, Official mail Id and companies' kit (Book, Mug, Pen and Holder). Then the researcher is trained to assist in the company's web portal which run with support of oracle software.

6. KEY FINDINGS

Considering the working environment as it is regularly moving and extremely busy which intended that interviewee would have little time during the day to complete the interview. Also it is difficult to get a date and time fixed to spend one to one discussion regarding HR practices in the company.

As the interviewee explained HR activities has been divided into three major divisions in the company namely. Payroll has been out sourced by the company.

1. Operating Team
2. Talent acquisition Team
3. Business partner Team

7. OPERATING TEAM

As the name states operating team takes care complete operations of an employee after joining from onboarding, documentations, background verification, induction program, providing access card, Id card, helping in gift claims, insurance claims and assistance in statutory and non-statutory needs to exit interview and exit procedure through web portal and manual assistance.

8. TALENT ACQUISITION

Talent acquisition is the team which takes care of recruitment through different resources like online web portals, referrals, internal movements, and international movements depending on the client's requirement.

9. BUSINESS PARTNER TEAM

Business partners are the persons who acts as middle man between the organization and the employee. Who is authorized to handle face to face grievance support them through operating and talent acquisition teams.

10. PAYROLL

It is top level management decision to outsource the payroll activity.

11. NO. OF HR'S

Every branch has there set of Business partner HR's, but from Chennai branch all the major activities takes place so, we have around 35 members as constant HR's and 10 HR's in movement.

12. WEB PORTAL

Which is used to update personal information, set goals and appraisals, request travels, take time off, claim expenses and learner zone to guide and step-up the career growth. It also updates you with policies and procedures.

- Make someone happy send an appreciation, which is recognizing the employee's performance instantly through web portal.
- To connect and collaborate across the company, which is like social website that helps in maintaining the group, to keep in touch with one another and keep them updated.
- It is used to upload, share and play back the videos of employee's achievements to encourage them through their career growth.
- It is used to scout the best talent through referrals and interviews.
- It is used to plan, track the logs which is used to enter time, plan your project, assign tasks, track requirements, track defects.
- It is used to visualize the company's performance in revenue, Account margin, cost with trends, account view with planned values and drill down to project level data.

13. HELP DESK SERVICE

It is used to get HR support through web portal which will be supported by HR operations team according to the level of the issue (L1 - Lower, L2 - Medium, L3 - Higher).

1. Based on the level of issues (L1, L2, L3) help desk service is arranged and given importance.

Employee engagement in November

14. REFRESH MEETINGS

Monthly twice a refresh meeting with employees to discuss new ideas and encourage them to apply those ideas further in their career, they can open up and speak to their colleagues and also with their supervisors regarding any changes or needs.

15. DANDIYA CELEBRATIONS

Researcher has given opportunity to organize dandiya night to the employees. It is challenge to researcher as it is new environment and location to organize dandiya. To understand the situation of the organization and its previous celebration method / process/ procedure. All the details has been communicated / circulated to the employees through mails and postures inside the company. With the support from HR team the researcher has been able conduct the employee's dandiya Night successfully.

16. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND JOB SATISFACTION

When an employee is engaged with his will and mind to work and he/she is readily participative that means that he/she is happy / satisfied with his job and company.

17. FUTURE OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

As long as human interference / involvement exist in the area of business, the human resource management involvement will evolve.

18. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Researcher was given opportunity to perform onboarding (certificate verification, documentation) and supporting help desk activities in web portal service. Based on the working environment and support services need the researcher has been given opportunity to explore the on hand job.

Researcher was given freedom to access web portal and allowed to handle situations with guidance and support of HR Team. Researcher was able to understand the importance and responsibilities of HR operation / practices towards employee engagement from induction to exit interview.

In the interview about the employee engagement, interviewee explained being and an employee with job satisfaction was always engaged with company's activities which in turn increase in individual performance and productivity towards organizations growth.

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