

# EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND ITS DETERMINANTS FOR IT ORGANIZATIONS

**Manish Bhalla**

*Jagannath University, India*

## **ABSTRACT**

*In today's world the competition for talent has become extreme. Sophisticated employers no longer talk of mere workers, but of human capital, where strategic investment in personnel has a demonstrable ROI. In the changed business scenario, it is being increasingly realized that organizations can gain and maintain competitive edge through people as creators of assets. It is precisely to that end that employee engagement assumes significance as a way of managing people in organizations because engaged employees are believed to deliver high quality/committed service and they form work teams that produce high quality results. Organizations should increasingly convert from traditionalism to the contemporary learning and individualized corporations. With growing opportunity and greater flow of information, employees today want to be in the best workplaces handling the best suited responsibilities and enjoy greater autonomy. Employee engagement initiatives are aimed at improving organization culture in terms of welfare of employees and congenial work place. This paper aims to gain insights into engagement and attempts to identify factors that shape how engagement proceeds in workplaces. The paper will also look at the role of employee engagement in managing the human capital effectively.*

***Keywords: Career Development, Communication, Emotional Commitment, Employee Engagement, Human Capital.***

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Employee Engagement has been marking its prominence from the year 2000, With the rise Of many ITES MNC's where the attrition rate of the employees went too high in the industry due to many factors such as growth, monotony in the work done by them and so on. There is a great deal of confusion on what is the consistency of the definition, operations and measure of Employee Engagement. With substantial evolution being witnessed, India has become the ideal and most preferred offshore destination (The NASSCOM - McKinsey Study 2002). The blazing growth of ITES industry is a result of huge inflows of investment by foreign companies that have set up large facilities across India in step with the entry of Indian IT industry majors into the ITES-BPO domain. A number of leading Indian industrial groups from the non-IT sector have also arrived on this turf with a view to participate in this emerging sector. Numerous factors such as supply of skilled manpower, global standard telecom infrastructure, proactive and positive policy environment and friendly corporate tax policies have given India an edge in the global marketplace. Of myriad HR-related challenges faced by the industry, the critical one is attrition. A recent report from NASSCOM reconfirms the fact that the biggest challenge of all is to manage the ambitious and transient workforce. As the industry is

predominantly service-oriented, the importance of attracting and retaining talent has become crucial. The boomers and millennials are working together were the millennials are tech savvy and boomers are having the good skill set. Making them engage is a major challenge. Start-ups now mostly comprise of Millennials, who have set the trend of job hopping. Millennials shift jobs at the slightest of increase in salaries. They are very particular about the job role and do not like being micro managed. They are not afraid of getting fired too. (SHRM, 2016) The new information and communication technologies have made possible the interconnection of a company's employees across time and space barriers, the exchange of information in all forms and media, and the management of rich, large-scale repositories of shared information. Whereas numerous information and communication systems have been developed to support such knowledge exchanges, practical applications have found that technology alone cannot ensure that knowledge will indeed be volunteered and exchanged, and whereas researchers and consultants alike have argued that culture and other human variables constitute key success factors, it is not clear what specific variables are at play, nor what management practices can affect those variables.

Given the fact that people are today is the competitive edge, the value of the employee engagement can never be underscored! Employee engagement is a concept which is playing a significant role in the organization from the past decade. It is important in today's scenario to incorporate employee engagement strategies in the business, which actually impacts employee satisfaction, performance and well-being at the work place. Employee engagement has become a top business priority for senior executives. In this rapid cycle economy, business leaders know that having a high-performing workforce is essential for growth and survival. But while most executives see a clear need to improve employee engagement, many have yet to develop tangible ways to measure and tackle this goal. However, a growing group of best-in-class companies says they are gaining competitive advantage through establishing metrics and practices to effectively quantify and improve the impact of their engagement initiatives on overall business performance. Employees being the most important component of an organization's success, it is not just enough for companies to retain them, but also to ensure that they are engaged in the organization. Engagement acts as the spirit to enable employees go an extra mile in attaining the goals and objectives of the company. Employee engagement is a key ingredient in achieving high-quality performance at individual, team and company level.

A lot of researchers and experts in the field of human psychology have spent time, money and energy to understand how important employee engagement is to organizations. Employee engagement is connected with the cognitive, emotional and physical aspects of work and how these factors amalgamated. The concept of employee engagement is often regarded as just another HR strategy, but should not be so. It is a long term process and merged to core tenants of the business like as culture, values and managerial philosophy. One can also define employee engagement as the extent to which people enjoy, believe in their work and feel that they are valued for doing it by the organization. But, engagement is not just that, it is much more. It is the employee's belief in the organization, the desire to make everything better, to understand the organizational goals, to respect and help others in reaching their goals, to have the willingness to go the extra mile and to also work and do the right thing when nobody is watching you.

David Packard, late co-founder of Hewlett-Packard says “A group of people get together and exist as an institution we call a company so they are able to accomplish something collectively that they could not accomplish separately they make a contribution to society, a phrase which sounds trite but is fundamental.”

As per Ken Blanchard: “Connect the dots between individual roles and the goals of the organization. When people see that connection, they get a lot of energy out of work. They feel the importance, dignity, and meaning in the job”. Hence if an employee is able to connect his personal goals with the organization’s objective, it will be in benefit for both the parties.

According to Vance (2006), Employee engagement is the outcome of personal attributes such as knowledge, skills, abilities, temperament, attitudes and personality, organizational context which includes leadership, physical setting and social setting and HR practices that directly affect the person, process and context components of job performance.

This research paper focuses on individual variables (i.e. personality, self-efficacy, and organizational commitment), individual perceptions of how the organization is managed (i.e. job autonomy, rewards associated with knowledge sharing and perceived support from co-workers and supervisors) and individual perceptions about existing knowledge management systems (i.e. availability and quality of the systems). The paper also tries to identify managerial interventions that can foster knowledge sharing within an organization.

## **II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

Initial purpose of the paper is to know about the determinants which are important in creating an engaged workforce and also to identify the measures to be taken to maintain and increase the level of engaged workforce in IT organizations. It also helps in stating and examining what exactly an employee expects from his superiors and as well as the organization as a whole to keep him satisfied with the job he/ she is performing. The main objective of this paper is to investigate a subset of variables to explore their relationships with an individual's likelihood of engaging in knowledge sharing behaviors.

### **The objectives of the present research are as under:**

- I. To explain the concept and importance of employee engagement.
- II. To explore and record engagement practices of the organizations based on the existing literature and current industry practices.
- III. Empirically understand the relationship between employee engagement and its determinants with focus on IT organizations.
- IV. To suggest ways and means to improve the engagement practices in IT sector.

## **III. METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of the research paper is to discuss one by one each of the determinants that were included in the study and the theoretical reasons why they were expected to be related to knowledge sharing in IT

organizations. This exploratory research investigates, some of the psychological, organizational and system-related determinants that may determine individual engagement in intra-organizational knowledge sharing. Finally, we discuss the implications of our findings for effective knowledge management and indicate some aids in decision making. The paper is based on secondary data that has been obtained through journals, books, articles and reports.

#### **IV. MEANING, CONCEPT AND DETERMINANTS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT**

##### **4.1 Meaning and Concept**

Employee Engagement has been marking its prominence from the year 2000, with the rise of many IT organizations where the attrition rate of the employees went too high in the industry due to many factors such as growth, monotony in the work done by them and so on. There is a great deal of confusion on what is the consistency of the definition, operations and measure of Employee Engagement. Employees are engaged when they are actually passionate and are emotionally committed to their work and the organization. It is an ideal condition wherein they don't work just for the pay check or a promotion, but are really committed and their individual goals are aligned with those of the organization. The main reason behind the popularity of employee engagement is that it has positive consequences for organizations.

Philip apple while has listed five major components of Employee Engagement as: Attitude towards work group, General workings conditions, Attitude towards company, monetary benefits and Attitude towards supervision. Other components that should be added to these five are the individual's state of mind about the work itself and about life in general.

Schaufeli et al. (2002, p. 74) define engagement “as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption.” They further state that engagement is not a momentary and specific state, but rather, it is “a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behavior”. Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002: Engagement occurs when employees know what to expect, have the resources to complete their work, participate in opportunities for growth and feedback, and feel that they contribute significantly to the organization. This shows that the employees should be always ready to grab the best opportunities and prove their worth to the organization. According to Perrin (2003) Employee engagement is defined as the employee's willingness and ability to help the organization succeed, largely by providing discretionary effort on a sustainable basis. Baumruk and Marusz (2004) Hewitt Associates defines engagement as ‘the energy, passion or “fire in the belly” employees have for their employer or more specifically what their employer is trying to achieve in the market’. Hewitt Associates also suggest that engaged employee stay, say and drive. In other words, engaged employees ‘have an intense desire to be members of the organization ... are passionate advocates for their workplace ... they refer potential employees and customers ... they go beyond what is minimally required to produce extraordinary service and results for customers and colleagues’. Employee Engagement as defined by (Baumruk 2004, Shaw 2005 and Richman 2006) is stated as an intellectual or emotional commitment with the organization or permissive effort which is exhibited by the employees in performing their job as described by Frank et al, (2004). When a person is engaged in his work, he is investing and building psychological capital for

his future (Seligman, 2004). Rafferty et al (2005), conceptualized that employee engagement has its foundation based on two vital criteria – employee commitment and the organization’s behavior with its citizenship. According to Richard, (2006) employee engagement is a useful recent concept in HRM: it is a composite construct that describes inter alia employees’ commitment, job satisfaction and involvement. Towers Perrin (2006) defines engagement as “the extent to which employees put discretionary effort into their work, beyond the required minimum to get the job done, in the form of extra time, brainpower or energy. Vance (2006) Dell Inc. defines employee engagement by stating, “To compete today, companies need to win over the minds (rational commitment) and the hearts (emotional commitment) of employees in ways that lead to extraordinary effort”. According to Vazirani (2007), 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 work with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization. It is the positive attitude held by the employees towards the organization and its values. Mercer (2007) defines engagement as ‘a state of mind in which employees feel a vested interest in the company’s success and are both willing and motivated to perform to levels that exceed the stated job requirements. It is the result of how employees feel about the work experience – the organization, its leaders, the work and the work environment’. Nokia Siemens Networks (2008) describes being engaged as ‘an emotional attachment to the organization, pride and a willingness to be and advocate of the organization, a rational understanding of the organization’s strategic goals, values, and how employees fit and motivation and willingness to invest discretionary effort to go above and beyond’. Rama Devi, 2009: Success of any organization in the globalized economy can be achieved by building a talent-rich organization that attracts, retains and engages employees. Engaged employees are willing and able to contribute to the success of the company and are, therefore, real assets to an organization. Truss et al (2009) “Engagement is about creating opportunities for employees to connect with their colleagues, managers and wider organization. It is also about creating an environment where employees are motivated to want to connect with their work and really care about doing a good job ... It is a concept that places flexibility, change and continuous improvement at the heart of what it means to be an employee and an employer in a twenty first century workplace.” Employee engagement is defined as the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral energy an employee directs toward positive organizational outcomes (Shuck & Wollard, 2010). Cook (2012) define engagement as “how positively the employee thinks about organization, feels about the organization and is proactive in relation to achieving organizational goals for customers, colleagues and other stakeholders”.

#### **4.2 Determinants of Employee Engagement**

In this section, a few studies are reported which highlights the relationship of the engagement determinants under study. Various attempts have been made by several individuals to describe determinants of engagement. In order to have engaged employees in any organization, managers need to look at the following determinants.

In the paper “the psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety, availability and engagement of human spirit at work” by May et. al. (2004). Douglas May tested Kahn’s theory of the effects of the three psychological conditions psychological meaningfulness, physiological safety and psychological availability on employee engagement. His research proved that these three conditions impacted on employee engagement in varying

ways. In the results meaningfulness displayed the strongest relation. The work role fit and job enrichment positively linked to psychological meaningfulness. The reward and supportive supervisor relations were positively linked to psychological safety. Self-consciousness and adherence to co-worker norms negatively affected psychological safety while resources availability was positively related to psychological availability. Participation in outside activities negatively related to psychological availability. Development Dimensions International (DDI, 2005) states that a manager must do five things to create a highly engaged workforce. They are: align efforts with strategy, empower, promote and encourage teamwork and collaboration, help people grow & develop and provide support and recognition where appropriate. A research report into employee engagement by Melcrum Publishing (2005) based on a global survey of over 1,000 multinationals concluded that from an organization's point of view it is the senior executives that 'set the tone' of engagement in an organization, whatever the size. There are a number of actions and strategies that senior management can make use of to inspire engagement among employees and motivate them to go the extra mile. The six top drivers of engagement from the senior management perspective were found to be, communicating a clear vision of the future, building trust in the organization, involving employees in decision making that will affect them, demonstrating commitment to the organization's values, being seen to respond to feedback and demonstrating genuine commitment to employee's wellbeing. The same Melcrum Publishing (2005) report also examined the role of line managers in encouraging engagement. In this regard, the survey results imply that 'creating a climate of open communication' is the single most important action for line managers in affecting levels of employee engagement, with 60% of those surveyed claiming it is the most important element. Salanova et al. (2005) tested the mediating role of service climate between organizational resources and employee engagement in addition to the mediating role of work engagement between organizational resources (training, autonomy, and technology) and service climate with a sample of 114 hospitality service operations including hotel front desk and restaurants. The results indicated that organizational resources and work engagement predicted service climate and service climate mediated the relationship between organizational resources and work engagement. Seijts, Gerard H.; Crim, Dan (2006) offers several avenues for action which is summarized as the Ten C's of employee engagement namely connect, career, clarity, convey, congratulate, contribute, control and collaborate, credibility & confidence. According to Vazirani (2007) "an organization should have a proper pay system, provide equal opportunities for growth and advancement to all the employees, only a satisfied employee can become an engaged employee, organizations with high levels of engagement provide employees with opportunities to develop their abilities, learn new skills, acquire new knowledge and realize their potential." When banks plan for the career paths of their employees and invest in them, in this way their people invest back in the organizations. The public sector banks may have further emphasis on where the promotions may not necessarily depend on seniority of employees whereas the private sector banks needs to focus employee wellbeing by reducing the stress on employees and improving their work – life balance. Jyotsna (2007), studied on the “Talent management approach of employee engagement in Indian ITES employees: Key to Retention”. Present study indicated that significant level of engagement leads to high Retention of The ITES employees, but only for a limited time. The need for a rigorous employee engagement constructs is indicated by this study. Practical implications for retention in the ITES sector are referred as employee engagement. Bakker & Demerouti, (2008) suggest that feedback also promotes engagement because it fosters learning, which increases job competence

and the likelihood of being successful in achieving one's work goals. Maureen and Justin (2009) describe the results of a study about employee engagement. The study found that only one-third of employees were engaged. The three elements that drive employee engagement include contributions, connections and growth & advancement. Engaged employees are those who know that their work contributes to company success and who feel a sense of pride in the company's goals. Demerouti and Cropanzano (2010) argued that job resources are hypothetical antecedents of engagement, so the current study focuses on job resources in the form of managerial support, training, and development opportunities. As per study of Thiagarajan, and Renugadevi (2011) explores performance orientation, organizational deviance, and organizational citizenship behavior as outcomes of intention to quit of Indian IT professionals. Career development, performance appraisal and motivation factors are connected to employee engagement. The implications are that leaders should be educated on engagement, career development opportunities are particularly important and that performance improvement should champion work life balance, these practices are useful to increase engagement. Christian, M.S., A.S. Garza, et al. (2011), in their study have demonstrated robust cross-sectional links between employee engagement and increases in profits, productivity, innovation, beneficial discretionary effort, customer satisfaction and customer retention. These studies have also demonstrated that employee engagement reduces absence, voluntary turnover, sabotage, and a range of other negative behaviors. Bijaya Kumar (2011) identified the factors of Employee Engagement which influence the performance outcome of organization. These factors included Factors Influencing Employee Engagement Recruitment, Job Designing, Career Development Opportunities, Leadership, Empowerment, Equal Opportunities and Fair Treatment, Training and Development, Performance Management, Compensation, Health and Safety, Job Satisfaction, Communication, Family Friendliness. The highest contributing factor employee recognition was powerful contributor more than any other variable. Dr. Yasmin Janjhua (2011), Employee Engagement: A Study of HPSEB Employees the results showed that job characteristics contribute to job engagement, and organizational engagement. If the employees feel that their jobs provided variety, freedom, identity and proper feedback the employees get more engrossed and engaged in their work thereby leading to more quality, productivity and efficiency. Perceived organizational support was significantly positively related to job engagement and organizational engagement. Sangamitra Chaudhuri et al. (2012) in the journal, Reverse mentoring: A social exchange tool for keeping the boomers and millennials committed. Says the boomer and millennials are working together. In the wake of mass retrenchment and economic crises, there is a greater urgency for HR professionals to focus more on engagement by social exchange tool. The different outcomes of reverse mentoring programs shows future gap for research. According to Alfes et al. (2013) the performance of every organization is, to a greater or lesser extent, influenced by the people within. Employee engagement performs a crucial linking role between line manager behaviors and employee performance. While there is room for discussion about the specific attitudes and behaviors that drive performance in any given setting, the basic premise is that employees play a central role in translating the vision of corporate leaders into reality.

## **V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

There is stiff competition, as we witness numerous start-ups proliferating each day, and every budding organization is now trying novel ways and methods to engage their employees. Any initiatives of improvement which are taken by management cannot be fruitful without willful involvement and engagement of

employees. Employee engagement is a top of the mind issue for senior executives, especially HR, for some time now in IT organizations. Engagement happens when an employee is completely immersed in his job. It signifies a sense of psychological presence when performing an organizational role. High level of Employee Engagement increases the growth of the organization and acts as an effective retention strategy. It benefits both the organization and the employees. Companies can achieve their business objectives only if they attract, engage and retain their employees. To achieve sustainable employee engagement it is required from the management to identify the best methods to engage employee in their work. Employee engagement not only affects the profit of organization but it also leads to development of goodwill of organization.

Hence we conclude that to raise and maintain employee engagement lies within the hands of an organization and this entails a high level of efforts, commitment, investment and an ideal blend of time to craft a successful enterprise. In actual understanding, emotional attachment what an employee feels towards his/her place of work, job and position within the company is employee engagement. Expressing themselves physically and emotionally during their job is what especially people do in engagement.

Even though many people have tried to define employee engagement, there has been no consistent or generally accepted definition and it has been a hot topic for discussion in all organizations. The definitions which are used are mostly about psychological, organizational and system-related determinants in ensuring highly engaged employees. Engaged employees are not just committed, passionate and proud; they have a procession of sight and their own future allied with the organization mission and goal. The goal of engaged employee will be same as goal of organization. An employee is like a treasure to company but it is the responsibility of company to keep the employees happy, engaged and main thing is they should know how to retain the employees in their company.

An Employee is hired to deliver specific duties which are packaged into a job and contributes expertise to an endeavor of an employer. Employers, in order to achieve a profitable and enduring relationship with an employee, they need to balance the interests of the employee with his or her productivity. Employee engagement is used to emphasize the importance of communication with the employees on the success of a business. An organization should recognize its employees, more than any other factor, as powerful contribution to a company's competitive position. Therefore employee engagement must be a continuous process of learning, acquiring knowledge, improvement, assessment and action.

We would hence like to conclude that raising and maintenance of employee engagement lies solely in the hands of the management of an organization and requires a perfect amalgamation of time, effort, dedication and investment to mould a successful endeavor.

Lastly, to get your employees to be committed, driven and passionate, the company has to make sure that the employees are valued and convey to them that what they do is extremely significant and vital to the existence and growth of the company. We feel it is high time that companies start working towards employee engagement to tackle problems such as high attrition rates, dissatisfied employees, employee disengagement and poor organizational performance.

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