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A Study on Employee Engagement Drivers and Trends With Changing Global Scenario

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Abstract
Organizations seek to maximize the productivity and efficiency of their staff whereas individuals seek satisfaction from their work. If both can be done concurrently then it could be a win-win situation for both of them. The impact of an engaged workforce over and unengaged one is dramatic. The author has tried to explore the engagement its drivers and how those are practised has presented through corporate example.

Keywords
Employee Engagement, Attrition, Career Growth, Work Pressure, Tenure

I. Introduction

Employee engagement is defined in general as the level of commitment and involvement an employee has towards their organisation and its values. When an employee is engaged, he is aware of his responsibility in the business goals and motivates his colleagues alongside, for the success of the organisational goals(Anitha, (2014): 308-323.) .Employee engagement is an important topic for both researchers and practitioners .(Seligman, 2011.)(Rothmann, 20 September 2011, Mongena Lodge, Pretoria.); Harter, Schmidt and Keyes, 2002). Harter et al. assert that work engagement is associated with various positive organisational outcomes, including higher customer loyalty, higher productivity and profitability, as well as lower rates of staff turnover. The impact of an engaged workforce over and unengaged one is dramatic. Having emerged from consultancy the term is being discussed and researched in academia (Parkes).Employee engagement is the extent to which employees feel passionate about their jobs, are committed to the organization, and put discretionary effort into their work. Employee engagement is not the same as employee satisfaction; it cannot be achieved by a mechanistic approach which tries to extract discretionary effort by manipulating employees' commitment and emotions. Employees see through such attempts very quickly; this lead instead to cynicism and disillusionment. By contrast, engaged employees freely and willingly give discretionary effort, not as an 'add on', but as an integral part of their daily activity at work. (www)Today, there is widespread agreement among academics and practitioners that engaged employees are those who are emotionally connected to the organization and cognitively vigilant.
According to(Bersin, 2016) by Deloitte, "Employee engagement has become the top issue on the minds of business leaders, directing us to an entirely new model of management".

Employee engagement also affects the mind-set of people. Engaged employees believe that they can make a difference in the organizations they work for. Confidence in the knowledge, skills and abilities that people possess – in both themselves and others – is a powerful predictor of behaviour and subsequent performance. Employee engagement can not only make a real difference, it can set the great organizations apart from the merely good ones. The research on employee engagement began with the work of Kahn (1990). Researchers like Maslach and Leiter (1997) shifted their focus from the negative outlook of burnout to the positive perspective of engagement. Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma and Bakker (2002) continued the research and associated it to the element of energy. They describe an engaged employee as energetic, mentally resilient, dedicated to the work, and one who enjoys the challenges at work. Further, they feel that engaged employees become so engrossed that it becomes difficult to detach them from their work. (Seijts, March / April 2006). Engagement is a deep and broad connection that employees have with a company, resulting in a willingness to go above and beyond what's expected of them to help their company succeed . Engagement is the state of emotional and intellectual commitment to an organization or group. An engaged employee is a person who is fully involved in, and enthusiastic about, his or her work (Falcone, 2006). Engagement is a relevant metric, as it correlates highly to performance. We hear a lot about the engagement today, for good reason. According to the right management, 84 % of the (disengaged) workforce is considering looking for a new job.

II. Employee Engagement and Attrition

The cognitive attrition that comes with a lack of engagement is an area where businesses can improve, and learning how to engage a generationally diverse audience can lead to growth in the marketplace. There are many studies that show the relationship between employee-customer-shareholder satisfactions. Building a culture that fully engages employees of varying generations will serve to ensure that as the economy turns, companies are able to retain their future leaders. According to the Economist "managers will have to make an extra effort to keep the "Next Generation" motivated in times of economic downturn, to prevent an exodus of young talent once the economy improves". The ramifications of not improving the engagement of our various generations has implications on future staffing, leadership development and retention as well as making the most of our current staff. For years organisational leaders have recognised the link between employee engagement and individual performance, team performance, customer service, productivity, and overall financial performance.

III. Literature Review

This study at the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) surfaced four broad meta-themes with related sub-points, identified as barriers to and/or influencers of increased employee engagement at ICBC: Leadership development, transformation management, cultural aspects of ICBC and two-way communication. (Sandiford Hinds, (2010)).
The purpose of this research is to focus on organizational support factors that facilitate organizational commitment among downsizing survivors. High attrition by employees who "survive" layoffs is common and costly. Using a sample of 2,751 employees, a secondary analysis of employee survey data examined the effects of perceived organizational support (POS), Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS) and gender on downsizing survivors'

organizational commitment. Findings indicate that organizational commitment is positively related to both POS and PSS, with POS accounting for a greater increment of variance. When predicting organizational commitment subsequent to a downsizing, POS and PSS compensate for each other in that: POS moderates the association between PSS and organizational commitment, such that the relationship becomes stronger as the level of POS decreases; and PSS moderates the association between POS and organizational commitment, such that the relationship becomes weaker as the level of PSS increases. Gender moderates the two-way interaction between POS and PSS when predicting organizational commitment such that the interaction is stronger among men than for women. Erickson, R. A., & Roloff, M. E. (2007). This paper aims to assist businesses of all sizes in employee engagement, attraction and retention, by demonstrating how fundamental human resources processes can be effectively combined with new technologies to make employee engagement an end-to-end practice. This paper discusses a range of tactics to help ensure engagement, such as regular appraisals, use of social networking and the efficient recording of employee performance and interests, to best optimize the talent management process. The paper takes a practical approach. This paper demonstrates how best to engage employees from before a career even begins, right up until it ends. It offers guidance on using the latest techniques and technology to keep employees engaged and motivated. (Doherty, (2010))

In the present trend all business organizations have realized that compensation alone cannot motivate talented workforce. Gradual changes in generations of workforce revealed changes in expectations of workforce due to shift from industrial to knowledge based society. High engagement allows employees to work with not only their minds and body but also with hearts. The organizations with engaged employees get ultimate success in competitive environment. It is important factor for organizations to recognize the strategic importance of human capital because of the enormous value that better talent creates. High employee engagement increases employee commitment deal with satisfaction and retention. (Suhasini, (2013)). This article is based on a review of the academic and popular talent management literatures. Talent management is an espoused and enacted commitment to implementing an integrated, strategic and technology enabled approach to Human Resource Management (HRM). This commitment stems in part from the widely shared belief that human resources are the organization's primary source of competitive advantage; an essential asset that is becoming an increasingly short supply. The benefits of an effectively implemented talent management strategy include improved employee recruitment and retention rates, and enhanced employee engagement. These outcomes in turn have been associated with improved operational and financial performance. The external and internal drivers and restraints for talent management are many. Of particular importance is senior management understanding and commitment. Hospitality organizations interested in implementing a talent management strategy would be well advised to: define what is meant by talent management; ensure CEO commitment; align talent management with the strategic goals of the organization; establish talent assessment, data management and analysis systems; ensure clear line management accountability; and conduct an audit of all HRM practices in relation to evidence-based best practices. This article will be of value to anyone seeking to better understand talent management or to improve employee recruitment, retention and engagement.(Julia, (2008)). (Shuck, 2011, Vol. 35 Issue 4) This paper examined an employee's unique experience of being engaged in their work. Post data collection, content analysis is used to interpret engagement efforts and experiences. Work by Kahn and Maslow are integrated as conceptual frameworks. Post analysis, three themes emerged: relationship development and attachment to co-workers, workplace climate and opportunities for learning. Findings highlighted the development of relationships in the workplace, the importance of an employee's direct manager and their role in shaping organizational culture and the critical role of learning in an engaged employee's interpretation of their work. Three propositions for human resource development (HRD) research and practice are presented: first, environment and person interact to create engagement or disengagement; second, an employee's manager plays a critical role in developing engagement; and third, personality can effect engagement, however, everyone can engage. (Ferreira, Engaging to Perform: Job Satisfaction as a Mediator, 2014, Vol. 1,) The aim of this paper is to investigate the relation between engagement and companies' performance, when mediated by job satisfaction, as an outcome of engagement. Data was collected using a survey with four main sections: employee engagement, job satisfaction, perceived company performance, and demographics. The sample was made of line managers of several major companies in Portugal. Results show, on the one hand, that engagement is related with job satisfaction and, on the other that company perceived performance is influenced by job satisfaction. Thus some practical implications are related to developing knowledge regarding employees' attitudes and behaviours towards company's performance. (Whan, Nov/Dec2011,)The article focuses on the Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles (GARP) created by the Association of Records Management & Administration (ARMA) International to assist organizations in implementing effective records systems and programs. The author states that employees are the most important factor in the success of an organization. She mentions that GARP enables an organization to target the gaps between existing processes and those best practices that will have the most significant impact on overall performance, including cost and risk. She stresses that the main driver in purposeful employee recognition is accurate employee evaluation, and the main driver in successful employee engagement is purposeful employee recognition. (Yap, 2010) The purpose of this paper is to investigate the association between employees' perceptions of Diversity Training (DT) existence and effectiveness with Organizational Commitment (OC), and Career Satisfaction (CS). The survey included questions about employees' perceptions of their work experiences and outcomes and their organizations' diversity practices. The paper shows that employees who perceived DT to be effective were significantly more committed to their organizations and more satisfied with their careers than employees who perceived DT to be ineffective or non-existent. The paper examines the linkages between DT, OS, and CS based on survey responses from managers, professionals, and executives. Practical implications - DT and in particular when viewed by employees to be effective, increases employees' OC and CS, which are associated with loyalty, lower turnover and higher employee engagement.

IV. Engagement Drivers

Employee engagement drivers differ from one company to another, from industry to industry or from country to country. However, they are fuelled by similar subjective triggers that make an employee want to stay with his company, advocate it or give it his/her discretionary effort.

As defined in the 2013 Employee Engagement Trends Report by Quantum Workplace, these three behaviours are known as engagement anchors. The triggers to these behaviors are engagement drivers. Unlike anchors, engagement drivers are actionable and can be used to improve workplace happiness. There are many engagement drivers and some might weigh more than other, but let's talk about the main three.

A. Management/Leadership

Companies with a highly involved leadership body have the most engaged workforce. To back that up, Deloitte's research shows that more than six in 10 employees (62%) who plan to stay with their current employees reported high levels of trust in their corporate leadership, while only 27% of employees who plan to leave express that same trust. Moreover, 26% of those who plan to leave their jobs in the next year cited lack of trust in leadership as key factor.The most engaged organizations ranked feeling valued, trust in senior leaders and retention the most favorably . Because management has such an essential role in employee retention, it should be leveraged in HR strategies to attract and retain talent.If a company publicly states that its no. 1 priority is talent or people, it should own up to it. Employees are engaged when they feel valued. When their efforts are recognized and when they are encouraged to thrive. Transparency and communication are the basis of building their trust in leadership and gaining their engagement.

An analysis performed by Dale Carnegie to determine the link between supervisor and organization evoked feelings revealed that it's the immediate supervisor who is the chief emotional driver in the workplace; reactions to him or her explain 84% of how employees feel about their organization.

B. Meaningful Work

The forth report in Deloitte's Talent 2020series, surveyed 560 employees across virtually every major industry and global region. One of the three main emerging challenges that they identified: meaningful work. "Engage employees with meaningful work…or watch them walk out the door." According to this report, 42% of respondents who have been seeking new employment believe their job does not make good use of their skills and abilities. Furthermore, surveyed employees who are planning to switch companies cited the lack of career progress (37 percent) and challenge in their jobs (27 percent) as the two top factors influencing their career decisions. It's impossible to be engaged at work if you feel like the work you're doing is not engaging. Situations like these create strong feelings of unhappiness, inadequacy and frustration. Development opportunities are crucial to employee engagement. They're even more important than financial compensations.

C. Growth Opportunities

Engaged employees would rather receive training opportunities than a spontaneous cash bonus –In a recent survey, Deloitte asked employees to choose the three most significant factors that would cause them to seek new employment. Responses gathered around five issues—only one of which is related to money. Lack of career progress was the most important factor, at 27%, followed by new opportunities in the market and dissatisfaction with the manager or supervisor, each at 22%, as pointed out in the figure bellow.

D. Three Engagement Dimensions

According to Aon Hewitt, there are three dimensions through which organizations can measure the strength of their employee engagement – which the consulting firm defines as "the psychological state and behavioral outcomes that lead to better performance". These dimensions are labeled by Aon Hewitt simply as Say, Stay and Strive. Say refers to the tendency for a company's employees to "speak positively about the organization to coworkers, potential employees and customers", while Stay – as the name suggests – indicates whether workers "have an intense sense of belonging and desire to be a part of the organization". Lastly, Aon Hewitt explains that highly engaged employees demonstrate a strong desire to Strive – and "are motivated and exert effort toward success in one's job and for the company". On Hewitt points out that measure for these three dimensions were either stable or increasing around the world between 2012 and 2013. Overall scores increased for Say (2 per cent) and Strive (1 per cent), to reach 67 per cent and 58 per cent respectively. Stay remained stable at 56 per cent. So what does Aon Hewitt pinpoint as some of the specific drivers behind these engagement outcomes?

E. The Employer Brand

The organizational reputation of a company isn't just important from a consumer point of view, says Aon Hewitt. The consulting firm explains that how the business is perceived, both internally among employees and externally to the public can have a big impact on employee engagement.

It is therefore important to consider your employee value proposition, or EVP, and recognize its role in connecting "an external brand promise to customers with delivery on the internal brand promise to employees". Aon Hewitt revealed that around 82 per cent of employees value this aspect of a company's brand, and a solid reputation as an employer of choice can go a long way in engaging employees.

F. Strong Leadership

With so much being discussed about the difference between transactional and transformational leadership, having an engaging leader at the helm is so crucial to employee engagement. According to Aon Hewitt, companies with the most engaging leadership are those that invest in cultivating and developing talent, focus on talent beyond the typical performance management cycle, have leadership programs and practices aligned with the business strategy and recognize that "leadership is a way of life". Having an engaging leader in place, and ensuring this ethos is spread throughout the organization, is crucial to successful engagement.

G. Appropriate Reward and Recognition

Lastly, a strong "performance focus" is essential to employee engagement, explains Aon Hewitt. "Best employer companies focus on clear performance outcomes," their research report reads. "They do this holistically as part of their culture, which is supported by enabling performance management processes, effective people management, ensuring learning and development support the capability required to perform, and reinforcement of performance through rewards and recognition. "With the range of staff incentive and loyalty programs available today, there is no excuse not to take steps to implement a comprehensive reward and recognition plan. Doing so could be the final piece in the employee engagement puzzle.

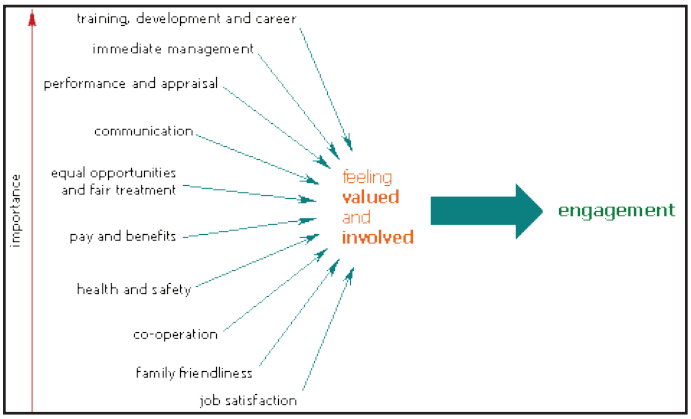

Fig. 1:

V. Changing Trends With Present Global Scenario

A. Engagement Will Go Up (But Just a Little)

According to Gallup's latest poll: employee engagement has been pretty stagnant. Only 32% of U.S. workers were engaged in their jobs in 2015, compared to 31.5% the previous year. Given the other trends below, and the fact that engagement has risen from 29% in 2011, we can expect to see the needle move in 2016. But probably not more than a point or two.

B. Millennials Will (Still) Provide a Challenge

In 2015, millennials became the largest generation in th workforce. That number is expected to rise dramatically as more boomers retire and more graduates start their careers. Some predictions are as high as 75% of the workforce by 2030 .Whatever the specific number, Generation Y is now the majority. Businesses seeking to engage employees in their work will now have to tailor their approaches to this group. Research suggests that they are driven by open communication, a great company culture, involvement with causes, and achieving purpose and fulfillment.

C. More Compassionate Leadership

People don't quit their jobs, they quit their bosses. It turns out that the opposite is true too. An inspiring manager creates more engaged teams. According to research by leadership development experts Dr. Brad Shuck and Maryanne Honeycutt-Elliott, "higher levels of engagement come from employees who work for a compassionate leader—one who is authentic, present, has a sense of dignity, holds others accountable, leads with integrity and shows empathy".

D. More Employee Feedback More Often

We conducted an employee engagement study in 2014 and found that the vast majority of employees who received little or no feedback were actively disengaged. Engagement went up dramatically when employees received feedback about their weaknesses, and even more so when they received feedback about strengths.

Data is always nice to have, but the feedback/engagement connection is also intuitive. How much more engaged are you in any relationship, when you are having open and honest conversation about what matters most?

E. Work/Life Balance will become Work/Life Blend.

The Society for Human Resource Management, found that the best companies are embracing flexibility. For many job-functions there is no longer any good reason to require people to come into the office every day, or for work to be done between the hours of 9am and 5pm. (I am writing this from my kitchen table at 7:30 at night). More companies will continue on this path as long as the numbers prove it's working.

F. People analytics will grow.

In his article published in Harvard Business Review last month, Sean Graber argues that it's important to look at employees' perceptions and behaviors and their impact on performance. Managers can then decide how to shift things to increase engagement. In Sean's consulting, he melds analytics with qualitative feedback by looking at aggregated data from surveys as well as self-reported behaviors:Over time, organizations can track how their employees' engagement changes and how it relates to key performance indicators (KPIs), such as sales, customer satisfaction, and attrition.

G. Technology Will Focus on the Employee

HR technology market moves in 5-7 year cycles of rolling-out, implementing, and replacing tech. We are now in a transitional phase between two cycles.One of the biggest trends we are seeing is the arrival of a "new breed of pulse tools, feedback apps, and anonymous social networking tools". These advanced methods for having regular check-ins with employees to understand where they are being challenged will eventually replace annual performance reviews.

Business is a living, breathing entity. It undergoes change, grows and recedes, gets broken and heals. The people are the individual cells that work together to ensure that the entity is healthy, productive, and thriving. In 2016, the brain (leadership) will have more tools at its disposal to predict and improve employee engagement. Maybe in 2017 Gallup's survey will report a positive radical shift in how people show up to work.

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