

CAREER DEVELOPMENT - A LEADING DRIVER TO JUMPSTART EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Where Organizations Go Wrong and What to Do About It



ABOUT EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

The link between employee engagement and productivity is irrefutable. Time and again, scientific research has demonstrated that engaged employees are more productive, innovative, ambassadors of an organization's employment brand and involved in their work, thereby acting as a means to drive their organization forward.

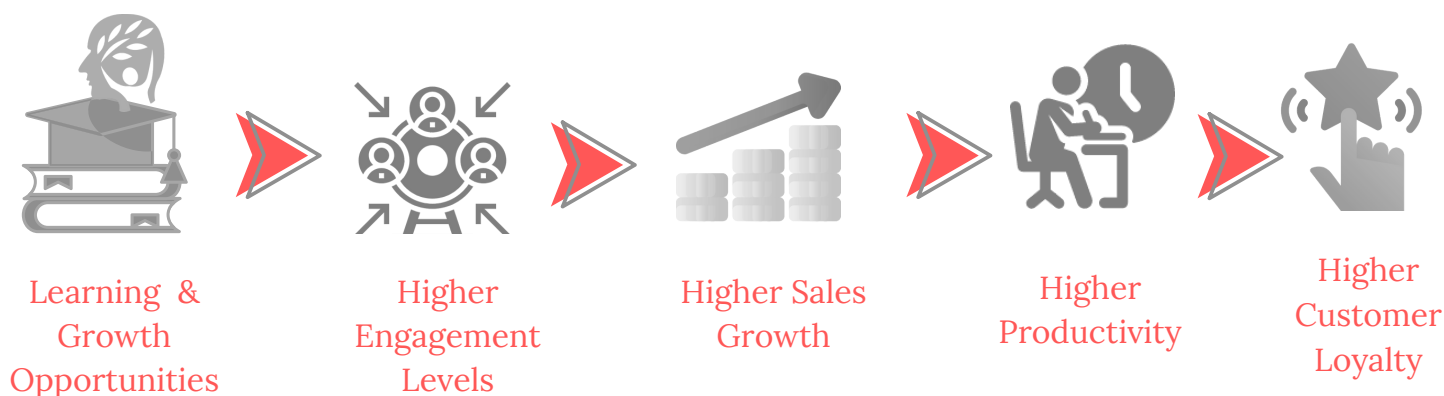
Given that engaged employees play a significant part in business success, organisations are increasingly talking about engagement - causes, effects and how to transform into an organization that boasts of an engaged workforce and sustain the same.

Various surveys, studies and other attempts at studying and measuring employee engagement have given rise to various drivers of employee engagement amongst which learning and growth factors in as an important driver.

LET'S START WITH THE SCIENCE

According to a Gallup survey, work groups in which employees report that their supervisor (or someone else at work) talks to them about their career progress, encourages their development, and provides opportunities to learn and grow have lower turnover, higher engagement levels, higher sales growth, better productivity, and better customer loyalty than work groups in which employees report that these developmental elements are scarce.

BENEFITS OF BUILDING A 'CONTINUOUS LEARNING CULTURE'



42%

OF EMPLOYEES PERCEIVE
L & D AS THE SIGNIFICANT
FACTOR WHEN DECIDING WHERE
TO WORK

83%

OF EMPLOYEES
PARTICIPATING IN A MENTORING
PROGRAM ADMITTED THE POSITIVE
INFLUENCE OF THEIR EXPERIENCE
ON THEIR DESIRE TO STAY AT THEIR
ORGANIZATION

Given that learning and development opportunities play a significant role in enhancing engagement levels, organizations spend billions of dollars on learning & development initiatives.

Unfortunately, the numbers do not show a pretty picture. For example: In 2018, organizations spent 87.6 billion dollars globally on training, but were it worth it?

NOT WHEN YOU CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

70%

70% of employees report that they don't have mastery of the skills needed to do their jobs

12%

Only 12% of employees apply new skills learned in L&D programs to their jobs

25%

Only 25% of respondents believe that training measurably improved performance

WHERE DO ORGANIZATIONS GO WRONG WITH LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES?

- *Flaw in the timings when initiatives are introduced*

Employees often learn topics at a time when it bears little immediate relevance to their role —and their learning suffers as a result

- *Flaw in the purpose of L & D initiatives*

Employees often signal through continuous professional education (CPE) credits rather than focusing on its business impact

- *Flaw in the content of the L & D initiatives*

Today's employees often learn uniform topics, on L&D's schedule or some other course with little alignment to their needs

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

It's quite evident that both the business and employees agree that learning and growth opportunities are important in the general running of the organization. But what we're most interested in knowing is how can we leverage that fact to boost employee productivity. Let's have a look at a few things we can do.

Creating Continuous Learning Culture Best Practices



1. PRIORITIZE LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

According to a Gallup poll, 87% millennials and 69% non-millennials value career development in their jobs. Employees look at both professional and personal growth opportunities before deciding to join an organization. They want to learn new skills and seek newer challenges, which in turn lead to higher engagement, as employees are constantly productive. Hence, prioritization of employee growth and development aids in keeping them actively

engaged. In fact, organisations are quickly picking up this trend to the extent that learning is the top-rated challenge among 2019's Global Human Capital Trend. In order to cater to this growing need and effectively utilize learning and growth to drive employee engagement, it is necessary that an organization acknowledges the importance of the same and prioritizes accordingly.

SOME KEY QUESTIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONS TO REFLECT ON ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- *How can leaders and managers who work within the organization guarantee that the business strategy will work, the day-to-day tasks are updated and redesigned and the workforce still remain engaged?*
- *How do we respond to the constant change in business today?*
- *What does a career look like in our organization today?*
- *Do our systems and processes support career development and succession planning for the next generation?*
- *How do we measure results and does our career development process support those results?*

2. START FROM THE TOP

A learning culture can only grow when it is supported and actively encouraged by top leadership and management. In fact, the manager's involvement is a crucial component to help increase employee engagement through learning.

A LinkedIn report says that 56% of employees would take a manager suggested course

When managers and senior executives show strong, continuous support and recognition of effort towards the same, employees give more importance to their learning and

growth and are more engaged as they feel that the organization believes they are worth investing time and effort into.

SOME KEY QUESTIONS THAT MANAGERS SHOULD ANSWER ARE:

- *How do I serve as a career advocate for my employees?*
- *How often do I talk with my employees about their career goals and what matters most to them?*
- *Do I provide candid and frequent feedback to my employees about what they need to do to grow in their careers?*
- *Do I link employees to the resources and information they need in support of their careers?*
- *Do I take career growth plans seriously? What amount of time do I devote to planning?*
- *Do I provide information to employees about the future of the organization and look for opportunities for employees?*

3. FOCUS ON ONBOARDING

The engagement levels of an employee are often highest during the first six months of joining. The challenge is to sustain or increase it during the employees' life cycle. One of the most effective ways is to develop a learning attitude and a smooth transition from the very beginning starting from onboarding. **The efficacy of an effective onboarding process should be assessed through answers to the following two pertinent questions:**

1. Does it fulfill the promises made during the hiring process?
2. Does it lay the foundation for long-term engagement and performance?

4. PERSONALIZATION AND FLEXIBILITY (LEARNING IN THE FLOW OF WORK)

One of the most effective ways to promote engagement is to give employees a choice. Generic one-size-fits-all learning plans can backfire if it's not relevant to the employee's current work or desirable future development. Another issue is that employees often find it difficult to make time for learning initiatives. To tackle such issues, it is important that learning

initiatives and personalized according to a person's needs and future paths. At the same time, in order to make it easier for employees to learn, the delivery method has to be customized according to what works best for the employee both in terms of convenience and learning styles. Here technology can certainly help create opportunities for employee to learn as and when they find fit.

5. COACHING AND MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS

Coaching and mentoring is one aspect of learning and growth that greatly helps towards employee engagement. Through

mentorship, the mentee receives support to deal with workplace challenges and navigate through their career plan. It helps employees

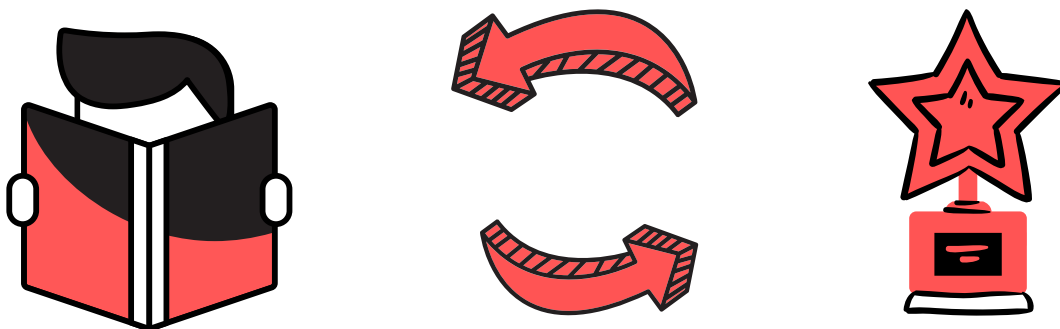
overcome obstacles, learn, grow and develop which are vital to develop engagement. The mentee learns how to achieve goals more rapidly, helped by real-world experiences. Beyond support, a mentorship program allows for the mentee to tap into the mentors network and knowledge to gain a deeper understanding of the organization.

Google's famous people analytics team examined data from thousands of employee surveys and performance reviews to find out which behaviors characterize its most effective managers. Coaching topped a list that also included helping with career development

6. LINK LEARNING AND RECOGNITION

Despite being well proven that employee recognition is a huge driver in engagement and productivity, it is still often treated as a point in a checklist. Recognition should be offered before it is demanded. The traditional reward for a job well done would be in terms of a raise or a promotion and many don't dare to think further. Monetary awards, while important, are only one perspective. Informal recognition through verbal means or through peer to peer

recognition also plays a great role on the employee psyche. The effect of employee recognition and reward is most strengthened when it is consistent and specific. Behavior that is desirable should be encouraged through positive incentives. The same goes for a learning culture. Incentivized learning programs encourage greater and more satisfying participation further leading to growth and development.



7. ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO TAKE ONUS OF THEIR OWN DEVELOPMENT

Employee should not expect or wait for someone else, such as his boss or employer, to make things happen for him. For building accountability, when planning your team's work, may ask employees to identify both how they can contribute and what they would like to learn. This gives employees

primary responsibility for clarifying what they want to learn and for proposing ways to incorporate on-the-job learning. It also helps to avoid having employees volunteer to perform only the tasks that they are already highly skilled at.

8. OFFER MICRO COURSES

Employees may get short, bite-sized learning opportunities which they can take as digestible, hour-long courses on topics

of relevance to their immediate challenges or opportunities.

9. ACTIVATE PEER LEARNING

When employees want to learn a new skill, they typically don't google or refer any

learning management system; most of them ask a colleague.

CONCLUSION

Adopting new practices always involves challenges and resistance. However, the results speak for themselves. When done effectively, investment into an employee's learning and development allow for significant motivation and engagement and organizations gain a competitive edge due to their workforce.



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