

Employees Engagement through Personal Fitness and Health

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Abstract: Employee engagement portrays the commitment and energy that employees bring to work and is a vital indicator of their involvement and engagement to the organization. Employees who are engaged are more productive, content and more likely to be loyal to an organization. The growing attractiveness of wellness programs shows that more and more operatives have come to realize that a healthier workforce offers a way to control continually increasing healthcare costs and contribute productively towards organizational excellence. When organizations employ sound HR practices in place, they are more likely to discover that employees feel satisfied, happy, secured and will work to their full potential. Engaging an employee actively is more holistic and takes into consideration the physical, environmental, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, occupational and mental health of employees. Employee Wellness doesn't just benefit the employee — an organisation filled with healthy, balanced and fulfilled employees is a conducive workplace that retains its employees. Gallup defines engaged employees as those who are involved in and enthusiastic about their work and workplace. But the majority of employees are indifferent, sleepwalking through their workday without regard for their performance or their organization's performance. As a result, vital economic influencers such as growth and innovation are at risk. Employees feel miserable while at work, and that misery follows them home, compounding their stress and negatively affecting their overall well-being. Organizations need to understand what managers are doing in the workplace to create or destroy engagement. Engaged employees are more likely than their colleagues to say their managers help them set work priorities and performance goals.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Wellness, HR practices, Holistic involvement, Organisational Excellence.

I. INTRODUCTION

A person's lifestyle is a major which accounts for 75 percent of the money spent per year on healthcare of any nation. Meanwhile, fact sheets report that 65 percent of adults do not participate in regular, leisure-time physical activity. Individuals spend an average of 56 hours per week not moving – either staring at computer screens, driving, or collapsed in front of their televisions. This is literally killing them, by way of obesity, ophthalmic issues, heart disease, diabetes, occupational hazards and other illnesses.

Crabtree (2005) notes that correlation exists between health and engagement at work. It may be that those who feel their jobs positively affect their health are simply more optimistic overall and are therefore more likely to be engaged in their work. Employees appreciate the low-tech solution that they don't have to download or charge, as well as the simple convenience of using instructions —on their own or with a group of coworkers. But most importantly, employees feel valued and are grateful that their employer concerns about their well-being.

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II. LITERATURE INPUTS ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND ITS RELATED COMPONENTS:

Most often employee engagement has been defined as emotional and intellectual commitment to the organisation (Baumruk 2004, Richman 2006 and Shaw 2005) or the amount of discretionary effort exhibited by employees in their job (Frank et al 2004). Although it is acknowledged and accepted that employee engagement is a multi-faceted construct, as previously suggested by Kahn (1990), Truss et al (2006) define employee engagement simply as 'passion for work', a psychological state which is seen to encompass the three dimensions of engagement discussed by Kahn (1990), and captures the common theme running through all these definitions.

Kahn (1990:694) defines employee engagement as "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances". The cognitive aspect of employee engagement concerns employees' beliefs about the organisation, its leaders and working conditions. The emotional aspect concerns how employees feel about each of those three factors and whether they have positive or negative attitudes toward the organisation and its leaders. The physical aspect of employee engagement concerns the physical energies exerted by individuals to accomplish their roles. Thus, according to Kahn (1990), engagement means to be psychologically as well as physically present when occupying and performing an organisational role.

Gallup studies have found the levels of engagement in Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand and Singapore to be 18 per cent, 12 per cent, 9 per cent, 17 per cent and 9 per cent respectively (Gallup 2004).

Nevertheless, this does not change the implication that engaged employees are more likely than others to view their jobs as healthy. The experience of engagement has been described as a fulfilling, positive work-related experience and state of mind (Schaufeli and Bakker 2004), and has been found to be related to good health and positive work affect (Sonnetag 2003). These positive experiences and emotions are likely to result in positive work outcomes. An individual's expressed intention to leave their organisation is generally regarded as an important measure of how they are feeling about their work.

As noted by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), engaged employees are likely to have a greater attachment to their organisation and a lower tendency to quit. The findings from Truss et al (2006) confirm this.



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They found that, overall, engaged employees are less likely to leave their employer. However, the longer employees stay with an organisation the less engaged they appear to become (Ferguson 2007). The findings of the 2006 CIPD survey on engagement confirm this also (Truss et al 2006). Such findings emphasise the importance of continually advancing the understanding of engagement in the workplace.

However a considerable number of employees agree that their company is not a good place to work, suggesting they are emotionally unhappy, whilst others argue emotions should not be allowed to flow free, and that employees are more productive when their emotions are managed (Holbeche and Springett 2003). Engagement has been found to be closely linked to feelings and perceptions around being valued and involved, which in turn generates the kinds of discretionary effort that lead to enhanced performance (Konrad 2006).

Employee Engagement Practices in different Organisations - A Comprehensive Package

Creating a healthier workforce, however, is not simply a matter of encouraging employees to eat better and work out more (although those are certainly two good ideas). If you are a business owner who really wants to significantly improve the overall health of your employees (and your bottom line), you have to understand the current state of their health. Engagement indicates alignment of purpose and values, or when extrinsic motivation (the employer's desire for a healthy workforce) aligns with the individual's intrinsic motivation to pursue healthy behavior change. It is imperative for organizations to invest in employees to build healthy workforce. A culture to be reinforced to boost and support healthy environment. There are simple steps like Health screening, Health assessments, Health advising, coaching, Fitness plans for individuals, Diet counseling and wellness programs. The top reasons why employees did not engage and were not achieving their goals are: The first was that they did not have time. Second, they were too stressed out at work. The deadlines that were fast approaching, the long hours and the pressure to focus on work took away from wellness. While many companies offer wellness initiatives related to food and exercise, mental and emotional stress are not often addressed properly. The following strategies are compiled from the ongoing engagement practices of certain organizations-

➤ **Stretch bands for everyone**

In an organization the on-site health promotion manager sought a solution that would reach the company's workforce throughout the country as well as inspire employees to make time for a brief fitness break. Employees receive a stretch band, instruction sheet, and note from the director of Human Resources explaining the health benefits of using the stretch band. Simple exercises are taught for reducing fatigue to improve balance, coordination and posture. In this world of apps, fitness trackers attract employees. Employees appreciated the convenience of receiving a stretch band delivered to their desk with easy-to-use instructions for stretching and strength training.

➤ **90/10 Rule at Johnson and Johnson**

In 2008 Johnson & Johnson established a Wellness & Prevention business platform to deliver new growth for the Company through a portfolio of products and services focused on preventing chronic disease, keeping people well and restoring faculties lost to aging. the "90/10 Rule," which says "as long as you stick to your plan 90 percent of the time, you'll succeed". From time to time there is updation of personalized fitness plan.

➤ **Have wellness tie into the work of employees:**

At Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, they have found creative ways to integrate wellness into the work of employees. For example, their ad sales team has incorporated wellness initiatives and activities with their clients so both can benefit. To this day they have received lots of feedback from employees about how they appreciate all HR has done to make it a great place to work. Employees feel like the company cares and they definitely notice all of the initiatives they have been implementing regarding health.

➤ **Aligning the Incentives:**

Employers should consider a number of incentives to encourage participation in wellness programs including: increasing contributions to health care premiums, offering free or discounted fitness gear, granting additional personal days off, awarding gift cards, etc. Such employee incentives work best if all five of these tips are implemented together since the best odds for long-term engagement comes from a comprehensive program.

For example, one creative incentive is the concept of "gamification," in which techniques from video games are applied to wellness programs. Employees, for example, may receive virtual badges of honor for accomplishing certain milestones. These badges can be redeemed for meaningful "prizes" such as a day off for eight virtual merit badges or a \$25 gift card for a specific merit badge.

➤ **Engage the Disengaged:**

- **Spend time outdoors "smelling the roses"** – Spend 15 minutes outside observing nature and life around you. Earn one point each day you do this.
- **Share lunch with a co-worker** – go out to lunch, or enjoy a brown bag lunch with a co-worker in the lunchroom, the goal should be to get to know your colleagues better. Each lunch earns a point.
- **Actively support a charitable cause** at work – employees hold a campaign to select a single charity to adopt at work. Presentations lead to a company-wide vote. The person or team, behind the selected charity, wins the Challenge.
- **Plan an office "healthy" potluck luncheon** – everyone who brings a healthy dish to share wins the Challenge
- **Do a "Noon Walk"** with co-workers – see Noon Walk description above
- **Host an employee**



birthday celebration and honor them with sincere praise – during the “Host a Birthday Party Challenge” sign up to host a birthday party for a co-worker and win the Challenge

- **Compliment a co-worker** – offer a sincere compliment to a co-worker and earn one point. Earn up to 3 points per day.
- **Enroll in a class or program** to improve your professional skills – complete the class or program and win the Challenge
- **Health Check ups-** At a minimum, every employee should have their blood pressure, BMI, fasting glucose, and cholesterol levels checked annually. This aids in early detection of problem areas before they turn into chronic health problems. . The forward thinking companies design customized health program to address specific issues of their employees. The purpose on health focus is to encourage healthier lifestyle behaviors.

➤ **Maintain Physical Condition:**

- **A minimum of 7 hours of sleep** – get one point every day that you sleep for a minimum of 7 hours.
- **Physical exam or health screening** to understand your current health condition – if you take the exam you win the Challenge.
- **Drink 32 oz. of water** during the work day to stay hydrated and avoid fatigue – earn one point each work day that you drink 32 oz. of water on the job.

➤ **Focus on Exercise & Fitness:**

- **Participate in “Mile-Per-Day” program** – choose from two dozen different aerobic activities each day and complete the minimum minutes to equal one mile. A Monthly Certificate of Achievement is awarded each month.
- **Walk or bike to work** – count each trip to and from or count the miles.
- **Stair climbing competition** – count the stairs climbed everyday toward achieving an established goal for total stairs climbed over a given time period.
- **Avoid the elevator** – get a point every time that you take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- **Stretching** – earn one point each day when you spend specific minutes of stretching.

➤ **Balanced Diet plan for high level of Nutrition Intake:**

- **Eat 5 servings per day of fruits and/or vegetables** – get one point for each serving of fruit or vegetables. One serving of fruit = a medium apple, banana, or orange, a ½ cup of cooked or canned fruit (chopped),

or ¾ cup of fruit juice. One serving of vegetables = one cup of raw, leafy vegetables, ½ cup of other vegetables (chopped, cooked or raw), or ¾ cup of vegetable juice.

- **Eat healthy snacks** – get one point each day that you only eat fruits and/or vegetables for snacks.
- **Avoid eating junk food** – get one point each day that you do not eat any junk food
- **Reduce calorie intake** by 100 calories each day – eliminate 100 calories (use any known reliable mobile phone app for calorie counting) from diet each day by eating smaller portions or avoiding certain foods or beverages.
- **Keep track of calorie count** – use a calorie counter to count the calories in everything you eat and drink. Try it for a week at a time. Receive one point for each day that you successfully account for everything you eat and drink.
- **Share healthy meal recipes** that can contribute to a company Healthy Cook Book – receive one point for every healthy recipe contributed.

The following are five tips, that when implemented together with the suggested strategies can actively engage employees for long-term success:

- Make it easy as possible to participate
- Periodic reminders
- Develop innovative engaging programs
- Provide incentives that motivate employees
- Strengthen social support systems

No one approach is best for every company. Instead, businesses should experiment with creative programs to explore the ones that work best for their employees

III. CONCLUSION

When managers help employees grow and develop through their strengths, they are more than twice as likely to engage their team members. The most powerful thing a manager can do for employees is to place them in jobs that allow them to use the best of their natural talents, adding skills and knowledge to develop and apply their strengths. The opportunity is huge for better-run organizations and a higher quality of life for workers. There is a need for creative approaches to augment employee engagement and to improve the well-being of their employees. In the future, it’s a good bet that the most successful companies will continue be the ones with the best managers.

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