

Examples of Employee Engagement Approaches



Employee Engagement through compelling Internal Communication

A successful employee engagement strategy helps create a community at the workplace and not just a workforce. When employees are effectively and positively engaged with their organisation, they form an emotional connection with the company. This affects their attitude towards both their colleagues and the company's clients and improves customer satisfaction and service levels.

There's more than one way to improve the level of employee engagement in a company. In fact, there are many different things that companies not only can do, but need to do.

Most organisations have a range of practices to improve the engagement level of their employees.

One of the pitfalls of any employee engagement programme is a failure – whether real or perceived – to follow through on the initial that the company is felt by their employees. If your organisation is to succeed you must look use as many different approaches as you can.

Here is a round-up of some of the best approaches.

Employee engagement approaches for new employees

Best practice recommends starting right at the selection or recruitment stage with:

- The right person and giving them a realistic job preview
- A strong induction and orientation programme
- Rigorous training and development, from technical to soft skills to leadership development programmes.
- Regular technical/soft-skill updates.

- Certification programmes to drive people towards excellent performance

Employee engagement approaches for all employees

Beyond initial recruitment and induction, employee engagement activities can be broken into a number of groups. These include:

- Communications activities
- Reward schemes
- Activities to build the culture of the organisational
- Team building activities
- Leadership development activities

Communications activities

These help employees find out what is going on within the company outside of their immediate team. They also help to create an environment of trust and openness within the organisation where they are able to talk openly. Employees who feel they are listened to are able to express dissatisfaction and work together to resolve their causes, without it affecting their performance.

Good examples of communications approaches include:

- Communication forums to provide regular feedback to all people, including team meetings, conferences and "away days"

- In-house magazines
- On-line communications, including discussion boards and blogs by company personnel including senior management
- Monthly updates on corporate goals and directions
- Regular employee opinion and satisfaction surveys
- Active soliciting of employee feedback, including opinions and pet peeves

Reward schemes

Reward schemes are an important part of a company's overall employee engagement programme. Studies have long shown that, while money in itself is not a motivating factor, the absence of financial reward can be a significant demotivator. Thus the role of reward schemes in boosting employee engagement is:

- to remove barriers to satisfaction in the organisation;
- to provide a framework for rewarding everyone in the organisation for their performance;
- to give those who are motivated by financial gain an opportunity to achieve this.

Typical approaches include:

- Compensation and benefit programmes
- Stock ownership and profit sharing
- Recognition programmes
- Idea collection schemes linked to rewards for idea generation
- Long service and good performance awards

Activities to develop the culture of the organisation

Giving employees a feeling of belonging is crucial in creating a thriving organisation that people feel committed to and others want to join.

Common approaches includes:

- Clear and humane HR policies

- Pro-social corporate objectives and Corporate Social Responsibility
- Equal opportunities policies and practices
- Initiatives to maintain the quality of work-life and a balance between personal/professional lives
- Developing a safe, clean and inspiring work environment
- Demonstrating a commitment to employees' well being

Team building activities

Culture-building activities are great for generating a feeling of belonging, but all organisations are built out of smaller teams who can get on and work together.

Popular approaches include:

- Small team recreational activities, such as bowling, skating, trips to the cinema (or the pub!)
- Social activities, such as family gatherings and barbeques
- Community outreach activities such as volunteering and fund-raising.

Leadership development activities

A great organisation needs not just a great leader, but people with leadership skills. This stimulates good performance, boosts creativity and eases succession planning.

Good practices include:

- Effective Leadership
- Effective Performance Management
- Fair evaluation of performance
- Empowerment through effective delegation
- Coaching and mentoring activities to give honest feedback by supervisors and peers
- An open and transparent culture to empower people and develop entrepreneurs

Employee engagement in action: Sun Microsystems

Employee engagement becomes that much more critical in such a virtual or global environment. Employee engagement is imperative for an organisation like Sun as they operate in virtual teams across the world:

At Sun the virtual nature is partly due to flexible working practises. While flexible working arrangements are a plus for many employees and reduces facility costs for the organisation, that flexibility comes with some downsides like; isolation, loneliness and an increase in personal distractions

Isolation, especially when paired with the demands of work in an increasingly competitive environment, can wear down the sense of connection, commitment and excitement about any job. Thus a critical challenge for managers of virtual teams is how to keep remote employees engaged.

At Sun, the concept of employee engagement starts right from the top:

- Scott McNealy, the CEO, interacts with Sun employees through WSUN, a forum on Sun's intranet. He uses this to sustain an active an ongoing dialogue on the corporate goals and direction. Through this interactive on-line resource he also solicits their feedback and opinions
- Other senior management members like Jonathan Schwartz, the COO, engages with employees on technology directions through his personal blog
- Business Unit Heads and Executive Vice-presidents have a target of holding six 'town halls' with employees every year across the globe
- At the country level, Senior Management is tasked with constantly engaging employees through various forums, communication media and events to build excitement and passion including some that also reach out to the employees' families.