Work Place Dynamics for Employee Engagement

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ABSTRACT

Employee engagement is a degree which can be measured as the degree of an employee's positive or negative emotional attachment to his job, colleagues, and organization. This attachment has a direct influence on an employee's willingness to learn and perform at work. The key factor determining employee engagement degree is workplace dynamics.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the paper is to examine the relationship between workplace dynamics and employee engagement i.e. how respectful and enthusiastic workplace will strengthen the degree of association of employees with their work.

Workplace dynamics means creating a respectful and enthusiastic workplace. It is the motivating or driving force, physical or morale present in organization. Thus workplace dynamics can be divided into two key work areas- Physical i.e. infrastructure of organization and Morale i.e. culture of the organization. Physical work area refers to the facilities available to the employees. Morale key work area revolves around three aspects i.e. Self, Team and Corporate.

Self is related to self improvement or self development, more specifically it is self guided improvement- intellectually, economically and emotionally- often with a substantial psychological basis. Team can be better understood as Together Everyone Achieve More. Individual member influence the team dynamics as well, so much so that when the composition of team changes the team dynamics will change. Corporate today faces intense competition; it looks at gaining competitive advantage of having well groomed professionals. Corporate grooming refers to the overall grooming of organization. It has a nexus with work image. Thus Self, Team and Corporate are interrelated with each other. Self improvement leads to good team development which in turn leads to developed corporate enjoying the competitive advantage of having well groomed professionals.

It is very clear that to improve organization’s efficiency an employee should be fully engaged i.e. he is completely involved in and enthusiastic about his work. And to make employee fully engaged work place dynamics plays a dominating role. Thus workplace dynamics and its efficiency determine the degree of employee engagement which leads to strong and sound organization.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT

In today’s era the relationship between employees and employers may be seen upside down. Since the number of job opportunities available for employees has been increasing in a growing world economy, not just employees but also employers need to readjust themselves in order to cope up with the dynamics of business life. Various factors in work place environment can be
considered as keys affecting employee engagement. People working under inconvenient conditions may end up with low performance and low morale causing disengagement or deviance such as Distraction, Lack of interest, Poor decisions and higher absence. The work place is a key root causing employee engagement or disengagement. Work place dynamics involves creating enthusiastic work place which acts as a driving force which provides momentum to the efforts of employees, thus increasing their productivity. In present the most important factor effecting productivity of employees is comfort of employees on the job, determined by work place conditions and environment.

Ergonomics has become popular because of demand of employees for more human comfort. Ergonomics is the scientific discipline, concerned with the understanding of interactions among humans and other variables of an organization considered as a system, and the profession in order to optimize human well-being and overall performance of organization as a whole.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

In the words of Stephen P. Robins- “Employee engagement is individual’s involvement with, satisfaction with, and enthusiasm for the work she does.” Highly engaged employees have a passion for their work and feel deep connection to their company, disengaged employees have essentially checked out- putting time but not energy or attention into their work. Employee engagement is a measurable degree of an employee’s attachment to his job, colleagues and organization.

Dimensions of “Employee Engagement”

Employee engagement can be said to have three dimensions-

- Emotional engagement - A heightened emotional connection that an employee feels for his or her organization.
- Cognitive engagement – Focusing the effective application of knowledge, skills, attributes in the job.
- Physical engagement – The degree to which an employee is ready to work for his/her employer.

A survey on 300 employees of a private foreign bank in Turkey (Journal of Business, Economics & Finance (2012), Vol 1) was conducted. The survey results have proven that workplace environment affects employee performance but behavioral workplace environment has much greater effect on employees’ performance.

A meta-analysis of almost 8000 business units was undertaken to examine the benefits of engagement (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). When levels of engagement were elevated, the business unit tended to be more profitable. Customer satisfaction was high, safety was more often exemplary, and turnover of employees was reduced. Engaged employees seem to reveal more discretionary behaviors to improve the organization as well as fulfill their role more effectively (e.g., Bakker, Demerouti, & Verbeke, 2004).

Many studies have examined the characteristics of the work context that promote engagement. Thus employee engagement and work place dynamics are correlated with each other.

Work Place Dynamics for Employee engagement

Although competitive pressure on most organizations is stronger than ever, some organizations are trying to realize a competitive advantage by fostering well established work place dynamics. IOCL and Infosys have set remarkable examples of work place dynamics. Infosys is recognized for its good infrastructure and is world’s largest corporate training centre. IOCL is considered best in employee benefit schemes.

Work place dynamics refers to developing work place dynamically i.e. creating a respectful and enthusiastic work place. It is the motivating or driving force, physical or morale present in organization.

Work place dynamics gives room to preserve core ideologies while allowing for change. It stimulates progress through effective attainment of objectives, purposeful evolution and continuous self improvement. It creates alignment by translating core values of
organization and individuals into goals, strategies, and practices. Thus, workplace dynamics acts as a motivating tool for employee engagement and reduces deviant behavior of employees. It makes employees passionate towards their work and develops a strong nexus with their organization.

Organization’s efficiency can be improved by making its employees fully engaged i.e. they should be completely involved in and enthusiastic about their work. And to make employee fully engaged workplace dynamics plays a dominating role.

**Key areas of workplace dynamics**

Workplace dynamics comprises of two factors i.e. Physical (infrastructure of organization) and Morale (culture of the organization). Employee engagement is affected by both of these factors.

- **Physical key area:** The preliminary step to achieving employee engagement is job satisfaction. Job satisfaction depends upon the infrastructure of organization. Infrastructure includes organizational lay out, civic amenities, health and safety facilities etc. This thing can be understood by Fredrick Herzberg’s Motivation Hygiene theory. According to this theory the factors that lead to job satisfaction (motivators) are separate and distinct from those (Hygiene factors) that lead to job dissatisfaction. Only a satisfied employee can be fully engaged.

- **Hygiene factors and employee engagement:** Factors such as company policies and administration, technical supervision, interpersonal relationship, salary, job security, working conditions and status- that, when adequate in a job, placate workers. When these factors are adequate people will not be dissatisfied. These hygiene factors will act as a supportive environment for initiating employee engagement through various programmes.

- **Motivational factors and employee engagement:** Herzberg included six factors that motivate employees. These are- achievements, recognition, advancement, work itself, possibility of growth and responsibility. These factors are capable of having positive effect on job satisfaction. Often resulting in an increase in one’s total output. The engagement seekers generally are individuals who are primarily motivated by the satisfiers such as advancement, achievement and other factors associated with work itself.

The dual income family has become the norm and working parents worry about who will take care of their kids when they are out. This is giving rise to crèches in companies. Monika Wadwa, senior manager, Ernst & Young in Gurgaon said that “consulting is a highly demanding job with 24 hours pressure. If it were not for day care, I would have to either slow down or take a break from my career” (20 Nov, 2012 Economic Times, p 11). Thus it is clear that physical infrastructural facilities lead to high degree of employee engagement.

- **Morale:** Morale is basically a group phenomenon. It is a concept that describes the level of favorable or unfavorable attitudes of the employees collectively to three aspects- Self, Team & Corporate. The concepts of job satisfaction, motivation and employee engagement pertain to morale of an individual.

- **Self:** According to Carl Roger, self image is the way one sees one self. The beliefs of a person about who or what he is taken together accounts to his self image. In the context of employee engagement self refers to improvement of Self, which is self guided improvement.

This concept can be better understood with Johari Window. A person must try to increase the area of his open self, which will help him in improving self image by valuing the criticism and appreciation by others.

- **Team:** Team can be better understood as Together Everyone Achieve More. Team building uses high interaction, group activities to increase trust and openness among team members, improve coordinative efforts and increase team performance. Relationship among interactions, actions and sentiments is very well explained in AIS theory of group dynamics.
Highly interactive group activities make team members better understand the sentiments of each other, thus resulting in willful engagement of employees. These highly interactive group activities result in achievement of goals despite of individual incompetency. This participative management through group activity increases the level of affiliation of each individual member with his job, group and organization. It also increases connectedness with leaders. Here connectedness means readily availability of expert/s or leader/s as and when required. This connectedness will maintain an enthusiasm with work, which further results in feeling of affiliation of employees with their work i.e. engagement of employees.

- Corporate- Corporate world is facing intense competition which pushes organizations for having well groomed professionals. Corporate grooming refers to the overall grooming of organization. It acts as a feel good factor among employees of the organization because it either adds some more competencies to the existing talent of the individuals or explores some hidden skills. In fact a large number of corporates have already started coaching in corporate grooming for their employees. Corporate grooming is related to work image, which is nothing but positive personal outlook, good communication skills, personal grooming, and appropriate attire, good behavior and temperament. Corporate grooming, good self image, high morale and motivation all together give rise to organizational citizenship behavior. This is a discretionary behavior i.e. not part of an employee’s formal job requirement but that nevertheless promotes the effective functioning of organization. Successful organization needs employees who will do more than their usual job duties. In today’s dynamic work place where tasks are increasingly performed by team and flexibility is critical, employees who engage in “good citizenship behaviors help others on their team, volunteer for extra work, avoid unnecessary conflicts, respect the spirit as well as the latter of rules and regulations and gracefully tolerate occasional work related impositions and nuisances.”

CONCLUSION

Engagement and an employee’s intention to stay with his organization are influenced by the relationships held at work and the behaviors experienced. Therefore management must be able to develop a sense of community and ensure favorable behaviors are displayed. However the literature indicates that engagement is not what managers do. It includes work place dynamics as a key role. Infrastructure facilities give room to employee engagement by creating a positive environment. A fully engaged employee is one who has improved self image with great passion towards his work. The review also indicates that participative management exercised through highly interactive group activities, also leads to employee engagement. It also results in better attainment of individual goals, group goals and finally organizational goals effectively. Discretionary behavior has been revealed to be an important element i.e. correlated with engagement. It enhances the morale of the employee which results in performance beyond expectations. Management need to pay more attention to job design and creating more opportunities for people. For making a better work place, corporate grooming is also an essential element. Corporate grooming helps organizations to not only gain competitive advantage of professionally groomed employees but also help in fulfilling corporate social responsibility. Professionally groomed employee will perform effectively and efficiently for the organization he is currently working and he will continue this in the same spirit wherever he goes in future. Thus indirectly we can say that corporate grooming benefits individuals which in turns benefit the society.

In a nut shell work place dynamics including infrastructural development and morale development at all three levels i.e. Self, Team and Corporate have a direct relationship with employee engagement which in turn leads to high productivity.

REFERENCES


