

GUIDELINES

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From the Chairman



Dear Readers,

This month, I would like to throw some light on how strong and healthy inter-relationships between people at work, work best at retaining good talent and eliciting good performance from individuals. The role that a leader / a manager can play in binding the subordinate towards the organization and bringing up the performance of the subordinates, cannot be emphasized enough. That being said, as a leader, being good at work / being an expert, is not enough for building strong working relationships. Knowing your subordinates as people also matters. Personal bonding and, a feeling of being wanted, appreciated and being cared for are unspoken essentials when it comes to managerial responsibilities. Employees like to know and feel that they are contributing to the company, and its mission. They like to know how the company is growing, what are its achievements, and how they would be able to make a brighter future with the company.

Hence managers need to ask themselves these questions: Do you know what are your subordinates' likes and dislikes in terms of work? Do they enjoy their work? Do they have everything that they need to have to carry out the work successfully? Are they aware about what is expected out of them? Are they appreciated ever so often? Are they given feedback often, with clear guidelines towards improvement? These are just some of the questions that will give insight on how much you really know your subordinate, and the keen interest you take in their professional development, as people as well as for the company.

Dr. George Varghese

Chairman & CEO

V SOLVE

Editor's note



Welcome to the July 2012 Edition of the Guidelines Newsletter! In this month's edition, we have covered an important but elusive topic of Employee Engagement. It is important, since several research studies and individuals in senior management positions have agreed and concluded, that compensation and perks are not the only reasons why employees stick to a company. It is the feeling of belonging, and contribution (among other things) too which play a major role. The topic is elusive because, it cannot be clearly defined / there are no clear guidelines on how it can be achieved. Employee engagement is a continuous process, which has to get better each time. It has a different meaning and impact for different companies, and what a company must do to engage their employees better is something that needs to be looked into as a part of the business plan for the year, rather than a one-time effort.

Hope you enjoy reading this article. Feel free to call us in case of any queries or further information on this topic.

Employee Engagement – A necessity for sustained business growth & a competitive advantage

Employee engagement is a buzzword that everybody is talking about today. Industry experts are also saying that it is the “next big thing in HR”. What is employee engagement really? Are we trying to make it more complex than it is? Or has it really assumed so much importance in the current challenging and ever-changing business climate.



Employee engagement is how much an employee feels engaged with / a part of the company. It is the level of belonging, faith, trust and belief in the work that an employee feels. It is a feeling of contribution and making a difference, and, being appreciated / recognized for it. Hence employee engagement is much more than motivation, and encompasses a lot more in its ambit.

Employee engagement can be exhibited in several ways:

- Doing more than what is expected to ensure that work is done in the best possible manner
- Meeting and exceeding performance expectations
- Level of excitement and energy at work
- Going beyond what is expected to solve customer issues
- Culture of continuous improvement, and quality sustenance
- Significant contribution to the team
- Enthusiasm for self & team development
- Commitment towards cost cutting and discovering new ways to do jobs more efficiently
- Full participation in all company related activities, whether related to work, or leisure
- Putting personal agendas aside when at work, and focusing on organizational objectives and tasks

There are several aspects to Employee Engagement, some of which include:

1. *Communication is the key to strong employee engagement:* communicating clearly, consistently and honestly is a way to keep employees motivated, focused on growth and high employee productivity. Sharing knowledge with employees, regarding the company, its progress, new projects, achievements, and future goals and plans, creates an excitement in the minds of employees, and increases their determination to perform. It involves the employee to become an integral part of the company's growth story. Constant communication about their

work, progress, timely feedback, and resolution of issues also builds a confidence about the company and its stakeholders.

2. *Leader-subordinate relationships play an active role:* Getting to know your employees as people, rather than just colleagues, and having personal relations with them fosters a bonding and a long term unspoken commitment. Going beyond your work schedule, to get to know your subordinates' family / friends and knowing the personal situations of your subordinate at any given point in time will personalize the whole experience. It will create an emotional attachment towards the leader. Employees do not leave their jobs, they leave their bosses. So developing the leader-subordinate relationship is imperative to building strong employee engagement.
3. *Engagement is a long-term activity:* employee engagement cannot be achieved in a day, or even completed. It is a continuous effort and takes years of steady improvement. It has to be developed and the process only has to improve over time. It is not "one-time", but "every time".
4. *Driving engagement through strong hiring practices:* companies must hire individuals who have an affinity towards engagement, who believing in developing engagement for themselves, their subordinates as well as for their seniors. This should be the characteristic to look out for when hiring new employees
5. *Employees believe that their values, beliefs, thought processes and motives match with the organizational culture:* create a fit between what the company believes, and beliefs of its employees, and communicate this fit. The company is what its employees make it, sends a strong message to the employees to align themselves to the company's culture, and focus all their efforts towards company growth & productivity
6. *Bringing out the "care" factor:* highly engaged employees will go out of their way to perform, because they care for the company, and its outcome. They will dedicate themselves to make the goals of the company come true. In order to bring out the caring, the employees have to feel cared for, and every company has a different way of displaying that their managers care.
7. *Engagement is a business need and not an HR initiative:* HR personnel have to be actively involved in conducting all the activities that need to take place for better employee engagement. But beyond that, the decision making on budgets, activities, processes to be taken up, and resources to be used, are business decisions which only the key stakeholders / top management need to decide. Since employee engagement has a direct impact on the key resource of a company – its human resource, it has to be a part of the overall company strategy.

Where does employee engagement begin?

Employee engagement begins right from the time of hiring an individual, to ensure that the employee is easy to engage with in the first place. Having the right employees in the right jobs is the next step. Identifying the right role / job for an employee within the organization, in which he / she will excel, will enjoy and will view significant growth opportunities. This is called as a fitment analysis of an employee. When the job fitment is high, the performance, commitment and passion towards completing the job increases, and the employee is more likely to stay longer in the company.



Next comes the role of the supervisor / the manager. It is seen that higher performing managers have subordinates who are more engaged. Factors which inspire engagement in subordinates are training / coaching to develop the subordinates, performance & output driven, managerial skills, highly influential, highly skilled / talented in any domain & builds loyalty towards the organization.

Efforts taken by the company towards fostering employee engagement, forms a strong foundation towards better employee relations and retention. Going beyond compensation & benefits, other areas that employees look into are the goals & values of the company, mission & vision, learning & development opportunities, growth avenues (in terms of knowledge, skills & hierarchy) employee assistance aspects, efforts towards work life balance and recognition to strong efforts made.

The HR department can conduct effective tests to identify employees who are more likely to be engaged on the job and those who are lesser materialistic in order to see the other benefits that the company is providing; since recruitment of the right talent itself is the start to good employee engagement!

- V SOLVE Research Team

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We encourage you to send us your contributions in the form of articles, quotes or comments & thoughts on the discussions in this newsletter.

This is your newsletter, so contributing will strengthen our purpose of publishing it. Further, your life experiences are valuable to us, and could provide other readers with solutions.

Write to us at news@vsolvegroup.com

Share with us 50 or more e-mail ids to expand our reader's database, and be the lucky one to win exciting prizes!

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