



Accelerating employee engagement in the digital age

Employee engagement has gone beyond the "happy people do better work" adage, and in today's briskly-changing digital workplace, the onus is on the sustenance of a healthy level of engagement throughout the organizations at all times

In the current climate of digital transformation, the influence of employee engagement on business impact has gone beyond the "happy people do better work" adage. The link between engagement (which is a critical performance indicator) and the company's revenue goals has become stronger than before. This transactional nature of the relationship between the company and the employee has metamorphosed into being more fulfilling and goal-oriented.

And one of the biggest reasons for this all-encompassing change is digital transformation — not just in the workplace, but outside of it too.

We are not going digital. We are digital.

It is important to note that digitalization was not thrust upon unsuspecting masses. It just happened. People readily accepted it. In the business world too, the rise of the digital employee was not a calculated move by the employer. The world went digital, as did the psyche of the average employee. And this caused paradigm shifts in the way people perceived people-related processes, performance goals, training opportunities, workplace facilities, and organizational values. It is why these days if the company culture does not act as a catalyst for digital transformation, it invariably turns into a roadblock.

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Technology has accelerated the culture of engagement by providing the necessary tools for communication and collaboration

Gone are the days when employee satisfaction was solely based on annual surveys. Engagement is not a one-time activity. It is a culture that is imbibed into the mindset of the employee. Therefore, successful companies are investing significant resources to build and deploy metrics-driven engagement strategies. Once they gather the insights, they analyze the data to look for hidden pockets of disengagement — what worked, and what didn't, over a period. After formulating clear action items based on these insights, the top management can take the initiative to drive company-wide initiatives to improve existing systems and assuage dissatisfaction.

Start from the top

Leadership is the mothership of engagement. It is the responsibility of top management to formulate, articulate, and initiate their commitment to driving people-centric values. Going beyond policy-making, they must reinforce — through clear and persistent communication — that the needs and concerns of the employee are constantly being taken care of. Unless the workforce has confidence in the ability of its leaders to keep them motivated and rewarded, they may not see eye-to-eye with the growth objectives that have been agreed upon.

Additionally, a core team of ambassadors must be created so that they can ensure that key messages trickle down to every part of the company.

What does technology have to do with it?

Technology disruption is no longer a mysterious figure that companies need to be wary about if they want to sustain a healthy level of engagement in the digital age. It has become an ally in ensuring that employees are productive, satisfied, and well. Of course, digital innovation does not create engagement. It accelerates the culture of engagement by providing the company with the necessary tools for communication and collaboration. Only when they have the platforms to connect with each other can they better understand the company's vision, performance measures, and people-based processes.



From pre-onboarding to performance appraisal to tenure recognition, technology can help in kick-starting the progress of engagement, and then assess its impact on all employees. Some of the tech-driven strategies to accelerate engagement include:

- Centralization of information through Intranets and closed-circuit portals for employees to pick and choose what they want to learn about the company
- Virtual instructions through preferred devices to better understand company processes
- Gamification to simplify knowledge acquisition and to make employees fully aware of their own progress
- Internal social platforms to strengthen employee bonds and enhance network connections
- On-the-job apps that increase user acceptance of training and development initiatives
- Collaboration platforms to host workshops and share best practices

Engagement journeys are different than one-time experiences

Given the availability of tools to gather insights on employee experiences, companies must focus on creating seamless employee journeys. They must consider every facet of their relationship with the workforce, and collect feedback on each one of them while aligning with global best practices. Keeping employees happy is a journey. It is not a series of one-time activities.

In today's briskly-changing workplace, the onus on the sustenance of a healthy level of engagement is at an all-time high. A lot of things may have changed in the area, but the underlying principle remains the same — on any given day, an engaged workforce will outperform the one that is not. 

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