

# Employee Engagement – the key to achieve Employer’s Branding

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## Abstract

Employee engagement is one of the precious key in the hand of employer which can be used to open the lock of organization’s success. This success is achieved in the sense that the employer can do branding for its own organization. The objective of this paper is to study the concept of employee engagement, to understand why it is important and to identify factors that are critical to the effective implementation of employee engagement in the organization. The present paper depends on the secondary data and information. In this study it was found that different approaches can be used to build employee engagement such as strong induction programs for new employees, training and development programs – in-house or outside the organizations, certification programme and a genuine job preview. The factors identified in the paper can of much help to the managers in designing or redesigning the policy to build employee engagement which will also makes the workforce happy and satisfied with the organization.

## 1. Introduction

In today’s changing business environment companies need to make investment in employee engagement. Companies want to market themselves and one of the contributing factor to this context is “Employees”. Companies should and have to invest in people whom companies have already hired. Company’s experience attracts suitable employees which in turn leads to employees more apt to work for the company. This paves the way for better employee engagement. Infact, employee engagement can be seen as an indicator of employer branding. Good employee engagement eventually becomes employer branding.

Employee engagement is reflected in the key values and culture of a company. DHL Express used the concept of employee engagement. It is reflected in its culture as the company thank its employees through monetary benefits or through giving notes of appreciation on its corkboard. Similarly Google offers free on-site laundry service and stocks its kitchen with free service for its employees.

### 1.1 Engaged Employee

William Kahn (1990) has defined personnel engagement as "the harnessing of organisation members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances".

Macey and Schneider (2008) defined Employee Engagement as “a desirable condition, has an organizational purpose, and connotes involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, focused effort, and energy. Further it explained employee engagement in terms of both the attitudinal and behavioral characteristics. It includes a series of propositions about (a) psychological state engagement (feelings of energy, absorption, satisfaction, involvement, commitment, and empowerment); (b) behavioral engagement (extra role behavior, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), proactive/personal initiative, role expansion and adaptive); and (c) trait engagement (positive views of life and work; proactive personality, autotelic personality, trait positive effect, conscientiousness).

Dvir, Eden, Avolio, and Shamir (2002) described the term active engagement behaviorally as a “high level of activity, initiative, and responsibility.”

Employer branding requires branding initiatives that varies from one organization to another. Branding starts by looking at the ends and then identifying the means to achieve those ends. Productivity is the variable that shows successful employer branding which leads to higher employee engagement.

### 1.2. Employer Branding

Ambler and Barrow (1996) explained employer brand as the functional, economic and psychological benefits which are provided by the company with which the employee is employed.

Conference Board (2001) discussed employer brand in terms of identity recogniser. In other words it gives the identity to the firm as a desirable employer. It embraces the company’s value system, its policies and behaviors directed toward attracting, motivating, and retaining the company’s current and prospective employees”.

Shruti Chadha (2017) explained challenges to employer brand – Lack of employer brand consistency, lack of collaboration and lack of resources. Further the strategies that helps in creating employer brand were discussed. Creating high quality engaging content through photos and videos, communicating about employer brand through social media sites, career website and employee referral programme, creating and empowering brand ambassadors, Differentiating the company and keep doing it are the strategies that helps the employer in creating employer brand.

### 1.3 Objectives of Study

- To study the concept of employee engagement.
- To understand why it is important.
- To identify factors that are critical to the effective implementation of employee engagement in the organization.

## 2. Literature Review

Shrivastava and Dolke (1978) revealed various factors that affect employee organization identification - locus of control, need strength, and need satisfaction. According to Luthans et al., (1987) highlighted personal and organisational factors affecting employee engagement in an organisation.

Bowditch et al., (2001), the personality factors are key factors that influences employee engagement. Robinson et al., (2004) described that each individual has its unique capabilities and these individual differences act as a determinant of employee engagement. Bowditch et al., (2001) also explained the same factor that is personality of an individual acts an important determinant of employee engagement. Saks (2006) found that organizational support is the key predictor of engagement. Ferguson (2007) revealed that there is no relationship between the number of years an employee spends in an organization and employee engagement. Schaufeli et al., (2009) described that resources available at job such as support, autonomy, opportunities to learn, and feedback are the variables that act as a predictor of employee engagement. Xanthopoulou et al., (2009) discussed about two factors - job resources as well as personal resources as an important predictor of employee engagement. Mohpatra and Sharma (2010) studied both age and experience variables in relation to employee engagement. The result found that both age and experience are positively related to employee engagement.

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Garg and Kumar (2012) found that career opportunities to employees, fair pay and benefits, positively influence employee engagement. Andrew et al., (2012) found that the measures taken by an organization for employee development are related to job engagement whereas interpersonal relationships with peers influenced both variables – job engagement and organization engagement. Sharma and Ningthaujam (2013) found a weak but statistically significant relationship between engagement and age as well as level of education. Further it was found that there is no significant association between engagement and either gender or occupational status. Chandani, A. et al., (2016) explained about the factors that affect employee engagement – Career development, effective management of talent, Leadership, clarity of company values, policies and practices, respectful treatment of employee, company's standards of ethical behaviour, empowerment, fair treatment, performance appraisal, pay and benefits, health and safety, satisfaction, Family friendliness, talent recognition, communication, nature of job, organization politics, emotional factors, productivity, personality factors.

### 3. Research Methodology

The present paper depends on the secondary data and information. The sources of secondary data are websites, journals and research papers.

#### 3.1 Factors Affecting the Level of Employee Engagement: Career Development

To achieve employee engagement it is important for an organization to provide opportunities to learn, develop and acquire skills and also to apply these to utilize their potential to the full. For this purpose Career development practices helps. It helps not only in retaining the employees but also helps in personal development of employee.

**3.2 Leadership: To have engaged employees in the organizations** Leadership needs to be visionary, future oriented and should involve the employees in their vision. The quality of leader- member exchange between boss and its subordinate determines the level of employee engagement in the organization.

#### 3.3 Respectful Treatment of Employees

Respectful and fair treatment of employees results in employee engagement. Ideas of employees should be welcomed, two way communications, involvements makes the employee feel valued and acts as a motivator to achieve employee engagement.

#### 3.4 Empowerment

Employees feel empowered when they are given the power to make decisions which are related to or affect their functions. They should be given space to contribute their ideas that might work for the organizations. They develop the sense of belongingness when they are empowered. Furthermore reward and recognition along with control also contributes to make an engaged employee.

#### 3.5 Performance Appraisal

Fair rating of the performance of the employee through a suitable performance appraisal method done in an organization. The method followed should be fair, unbiased and transparent also to win workforce confidence which will ultimately help to achieve employee engagement.

#### 3.6 Health and Safety

Organization should make such a policy where the safety and health of the employees should be the top priority. Once such a policy is followed in the organization employer will make employees more engaged as levels of engagement are correlated with the feeling of security at job.

### 4. Family Friendliness

Employees develop more belongingness and emotional attachment with the organization and job when they are offered with the benefits which are not only for the employee but also for his/her family members.

#### 4.1 Communication

In order to have employee engagement in the organization, organization should make employees understand its policies, strategies, programs and systems related to compensation. Such an employee engagement can be achieved with adequate and good

communication between employer and employee; employees and coworkers.

#### 4.2 Clarity of Company Values, Policies and Practices

Employees should have clarity regarding the values, policies and practices of the organization. It helps to have high level of employee engagement. There is no direct relation between human resource practices and employee engagement rather the relation is indirect. The connecting variables are manager's behavior and Job fit.

#### 4.3 Pay and Benefits

Apart from making monetary benefits in the form of salary, non-monetary benefits should also be given to the employees. Such specific compensation system which includes pay, bonus, stock options, allowances etc. helps to achieve high level of employee engagement.

### 5. Conclusions

It is concluded that there is no fixed model showing the influence and significance of these variables as different employees weigh differently to these variables effecting employee engagement. It was found that these differences are caused by factors such as gender, ethnic diversity, job characteristics and individual own's characteristics etc. Engaging employees is not a one-time activity it is a continuous effort and it has long term impact. It can be achieved by good training programs, opportunity thinking, enhancing employee decision-making and commitment.

Organizations should develop a sense of involvement, belongingness, positive emotions about their work and a sense of community in their employees. Employees ideas should be welcomed and there should be empowerment along with good communication between employer and employee.

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