

THE UNDERSTANDING OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES AT BIG BAZAAR IN ORGANISED RETAIL SECTOR THROUGH EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT INDEX (EEI)

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Abstract : *Employee engagement, also called work engagement or worker engagement, is a business management concept. An "engaged employee" is one who is fully involved in, and enthusiastic about, his or her work, and thus will act in a way that furthers their organizations interests. According to Scarlett Surveys, "Employee Engagement is a measureable degree of an employee's positive or negative emotional attachment to their job, colleagues and organization which profoundly influences their willingness to learn & perform at work". Thus engagement is distinctively different from satisfaction, motivation, culture, climate and opinion and very difficult to measure.*

Keywords:- *engagement, employees, organisations*

Introduction

Employee engagement is derived from studies of morale or a group's willingness to accomplish organizational objectives which began in the 1920s. The value of morale to organizations was matured by US Army researchers during WWII to predict unity of effort and attitudinal battle-readiness before combat. In the post war mass production society that Required unity of effort in execution, (group) morale scores were used as predictors of speed, quality and militancy. With the advent of the knowledge worker and emphasis on individual talent management (stars), a term was needed to describe an individual's emotional attachment to the organization, fellow associates and the job. Thus the birth of the term "employee engagement" which is an individual emotional phenomenon whereas morale is a group emotional phenomenon of similar characteristics. In other words, employee engagement is the raw material of morale composed of 15 attitudinal drivers (e.g. Scarlett 2001).

Objectives:

- To understand the concept of employees engagement.
- To understand the tool of measuring the Employees Engagement through Index
- To know the employees engagement in Retail sector i.e. Big Bazaar.

Research methodology:

An in-depth desk research through secondary data was conducted to understand the various aspects that are involved in the employees engagement conducted in various organisation. Primary data was also used to acquire an overview of employee's engagement on the basis of Retail sector through a structured closed ended questionnaire with a three point Likert scale. A descriptive study is done with random probability sampling and statically tool is used to measure the effectiveness of employees' engagement.

Literature Review

Employee engagement was described in the academic literature by Schmidt et al. (1993). A modernized version of job satisfaction, Schmidt et al.'s influential definition of engagement was "an employee's

involvement with, commitment to, and satisfaction with work." This integrates the classic constructs of job satisfaction (Smith et al., 1969), and organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Harter and Schmidt's (2003) most recent meta-analysis can be useful for understanding the impact of engagement. Linkage research (e.g., Tracey) received significant attention in the business community because of correlations between employee engagement and desirable business outcomes such as retention of talent, customer service, individual performance, team performance, business unit productivity, and even enterprise-level financial performance (e.g., Rucci et al, 1998 using data from Sears). Some of this work has been published in a diversity context (e.g., McKay, Avery, Morris et al., 2007). Directions of causality were discussed by Schneider and colleagues in 2003.

For decades, companies said, People are our most precious asset, and then treated people as anything BUT assets. Why? Because business enthusiastically (and quite erroneously) thought CEO's strategy was the only road to success. Referring to the state-of-the-art research by Towers Perrin who studied 3, 60,000 employees from 41 firms in 18 countries and found that when people were engaged, companies were profitable. The study reported that highly engaged people grew profit by 19.2 per cent but profit fell by 32.7 per cent, when people were disengaged. "So is leadership irrelevant? Hardly! Only great leadership can inspire people to get engaged". For those who see the link between people, values and profit, a new day is dawning for HR.

The downturn shattered the illusion of the charismatic CEO, who is ironically known as the hero who parachutes into the company, waves the magic wand and saves the day with cost cuts, especially jobs and a high profile (but impossible to execute) merger. "Unfortunately, the magic wand does not work anymore. New research cited this year in the Wall Street Journal shows that large-scale job cuts shrink profit and stock returns, for as long as nine years after a recession." The only way to sustain long-term success is through employee engagement. "Under growing pressure of finance, some trainers are getting back to the drawing board and innovating, considering the work of US-based Business Advisors Network. The new wealth and jobs are created primarily through the genius of human consciousness than manipulation of information. "Every great product that has ever hit the market (i.e. an Apple iPod, Herman Miller Aeron chair, a Tata Nano car), got there through the genius of human consciousness." In the new economy of consciousness, companies that excel at innovation are most successful and that is where Six Sigma fails. "As one expert puts it, Six Sigma is narrowly designed to fix an existing process, allowing little room for new ideas or an entirely different approach".

Google engineers devote 20 per cent of their time to pet projects. Twice a week, it hosts employee meditation hours featuring brain scientists and Tibetan monks, among others. "How successful would India, the birthplace of mindful silence, become if its corporations were to activate the home-grown strength of meditation?"

Retail industry:-

Retailing performs activities at larger level so it requires massive manpower to handle and manage its operations. Retailing also helps society in general by providing goods and services in reasonable price and increasing their standards of living. "Retailing activity can be viewed as a significant contributor to the economy in general".

The first decade of modern retail in India has been characterized by a shift from traditional kirana shops to new formats including department stores, specialty stores hypermarkets, and supermarkets and across a range of categories. Modern retail formats have mushroomed in metros and mini-metros. In the last few years, modern retail has also established its presence in the small cities, exposing residents to shopping options like never before.

Big Bazaar:-

The visionary leadership of Mr. Kishore Biyani to push the boundaries reinvent the wheel and take risks. It is prevalent in the entire organization.

- Employees encouraged to experiment and take risks (e.g., BPA free plastics - a new category developed by store staff)
- Focus is on implementing ideas rather than spending time on historical analysis
- Creation of rituals to institutionalize best practices:
- Ceremony to appoint store karta by inviting his/her parents has increased the sense of ownership
- Mrs. Iyer Audit created after a busy sales period where store managers were led to believe that -
- Fictional character 'Mrs. Iyer' would visit stores anonymously to check orderly appearance.
- Understanding consumer trends via. kitchen audits, market visits, etc. rather than formal market research
- Mapping consumer usage patterns to tailor product offering e.g. a bundled tea time offering was

- created including a tea cup/saucer, tea and sugar
- Product assortment based on local preferences e.g., Private label 'Ektaa' was launched to cater to varied
- Rich preferences of each state (e.g., Ambemoharin Maharashtra, Govind Bhog in West Bengal)
- Assortment tool for fast and efficient customization of assortment based on local consumer needs
- Store management tool to break large amount of store level tasks into manageable smaller tasks
- WebEx enabled in every store to communicate and share information
- Store walk technology to view stores from head/zonal office(recently implemented)

Employees practices at retail departmental stores in big bazaar-hr executive at big bazaar

Learning and Development- Internal & external trainings are conducted in stores for knowledge transfer. Trainings are based on improvising the behavioural skills and functional /domain knowledge of employees. All the department managers are Store Guru certified- train the trainer programme. All the new joiners' undergo a programme called "Prarambh"- Induction Programme. There is Sampark & Milaap done for these new joiners in stores that is introduction of new joiners to the team.

1.Rewards & Recognition: - One of the retention strategies and to keep employee motivated and reward their efforts stores have monthly Employee of the Month award.

2.They also have Best cashier for highest billing speed, Best Seller Profit Club Card.

3.Fun Activities: - Birthday celebration, Art of Living sessions, Festivals celebrations and other recreational programmes to create a healthy and lively atmosphere.

4.Meetings: - Regular Saturday meetings are held in morning which is a platform for two way communication between the management and employees (team members). All the R&R activities are also done.

Employees' Engagement Index:-

To help organizations use employee engagement to drive business goals, PwC has created the Employee Engagement Index (EEI).. Specifically, engagement is measured by asking employees the extent to which they agree with the EEI attributes.

However, measuring the state of engagement is just the critical first step in PwC's model. While the attributes that define engaged employees remain constant— Advocacy, Commitment, Effort, Pride, Achievement, Alignment—PwC's model is predicated upon the reality that, just as every organization is unique, so too are the factors that can influence employee engagement. Thus, the model is built to also measure the factors, or dimensions, of the employee experience (i.e. CR, ethics or diversity), and through statistical analysis, determine the top drivers of engagement unique to an organization. It is in this way that we are able to determine which factors are most important to focus on in order to improve engagement and economic, social and environmental performance.

1.Alignment

"I understand how my job contributes to the success of the company."

2.Advocacy

"I would recommend the company to friends and family as a great place to work."

3.Commitment

"I intend to stay with the company for another 12 months."

4.Discretionary effort

"My colleagues are willing to go beyond what is expected for the success of the company."

5.Pride

"I am proud to work for the company."

6.Achievement

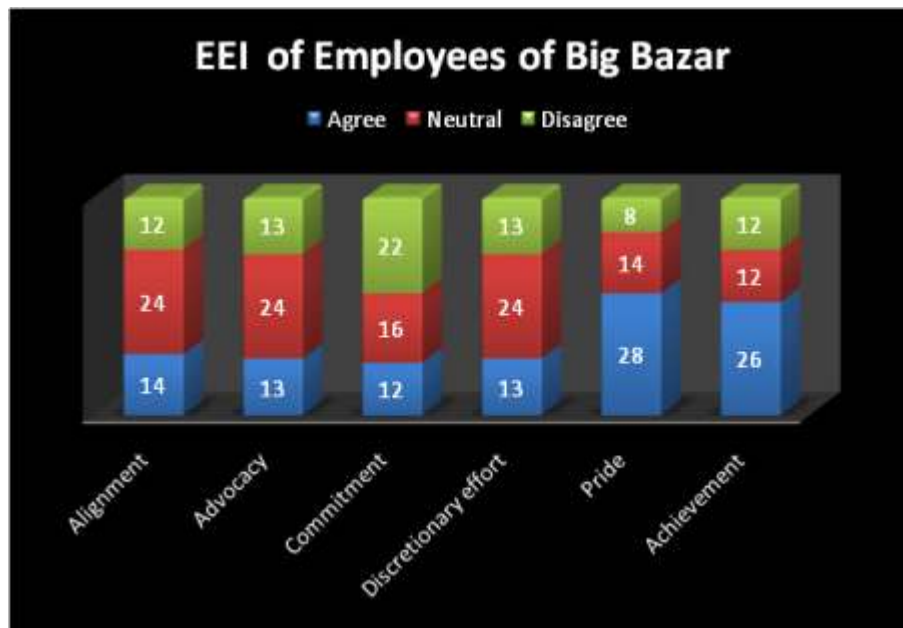
"My colleagues are passionate about providing exceptional customer service"

The EEI is measured on the basis of 3 point Likert scale where 3 says agree, 2 says neutral, 1 says disagree.

Table 1.
EEI of male and female employees of Big Bazaar at executive level

Sr. No	Attribute	3 Agree			2 Neutral			1 Disagree			Total
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	
A	Alignment	5	9	14	12	12	24	8	4	12	50
B	Advocacy	5	8	13	15	9	24	5	8	13	50

Sr. No	Attribute	3 Agree			2 Neutral			1 Disagree			Total
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	
C	Alignment	5	7	12	5	11	16	15	7	22	50
D	Advocacy	4	9	13	14	10	24	4	9	13	50
E	Alignment	11	17	28	9	5	14	5	3	8	50
F	Advocacy	11	15	26	7	5	12	7	5	12	50



Graph1. Showing EEI of Big Bazaar

Conclusion

Disengaged employees drag down companies, costing billions of dollars in lost productivity and resulting in much higher turnover rates. Employee engagement is an evergreen topic for companies, a tool that can support their innovation goals, increase their bottom line, drive corporate responsibility efforts, and advance companies' broadest missions. In each of these cases, companies look to their employees to get it done and when they don't, the costs can be staggering. Various methods mentioned in this paper can create a culture of engagement at the firm and empower employees for personal and organizational success by assessing EEI and motivating them.

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