

## **DRIVING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT THROUGH EXPECTATIONS IN SERVICE SECTOR**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Over a period of time Human Resources Management has emerged as a strategic partner of organizations. This change shows the importance of people dimension of every organization. So if an organization does not address the people dimension appropriately then people fail to give their best. Thus a successful employee engagement strategy helps leaders which touch the people dimension to create a community at the workplace and not just a workforce. When employees are effectively and positively engaged with the organization, they form an emotional connection with the organization. This affects their attitude towards both their colleagues and the organizational customers and improves customer satisfaction and service levels. As the service sector is growing very fast in India. Service firms depend heavily on the ability of customer-contact employees to properly deliver their value. This paper focuses on importance of Employee Engagement and Expectation a major factor leading towards engaging employees in service sector.

**Keywords:** Employee Engagement, Expectations, organizational performance, IT sector.

### **INTRODUCTION**

As the organizations are operating in the knowledge economy Service Sector has emerged as the fast growing sector followed by Industry and Agriculture. So the growth is unique in service sector but at the same time there are challenges associated with it. As the sector is growing very fast and employment opportunities are also very broad. So losing the people would be a great loss to the organization which can bang on its competitive advantage. Apart from this, replacing the people professional skills will increase the turnover cost. Therefore retaining the professionals is a challenge to the organizations. Service sector is by nature dependent on people. People have inclination to frequently change their organization. Several studies have investigated the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover and found a clear negative relationship (e.g., Cotton and Tuttle 1986; Muchinsky and Morrow 1980; Tett and Meyer 1993; Trevor 2001), meaning that when employees do not feel satisfied in their job, the turnover is high and they are likely to leave the organization. Hence, the organizations need to understand the importance of Employee Engagement. As Macey and Schneider (2008) noted, that Employee Engagement is a desirable condition, has an organizational purpose, and connotes involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, focused effort, and energy so it has both attitudinal and behavioral components." Having and retaining skilled employees plays an important role in this process, because employees' knowledge and skills have become the key for companies to be economically competitive (Hiltrop 1999).

### **EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT**

An efficient and engaged workforce is the most significant factor in achieving organizational performance and retention of employees. It is often said that an organization's most important assets are its people; however, this does not stop many organizations failing miserably to get the best out of their employees. The challenge of having the right people in the right place with the right skills and attitudes, people who are willing and able to work to their best to achieve the objectives of the organization, and all at an affordable cost, is common to all organizations. Employees are said to be engaged when they show a positive attitude toward the organization and express a commitment to remain with the organization.

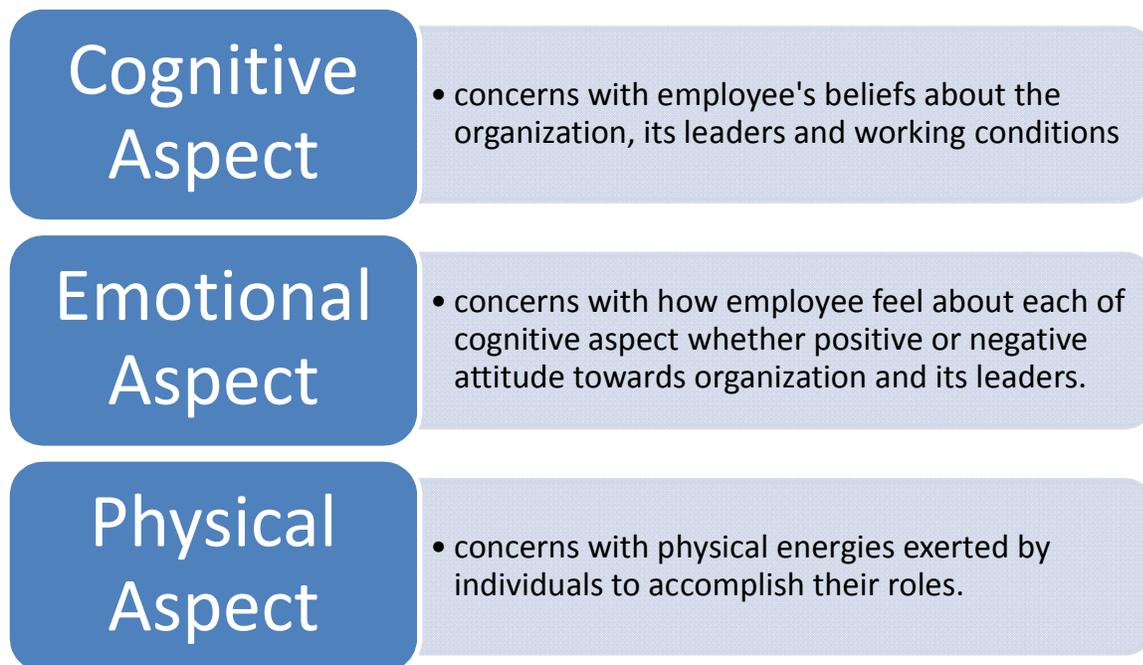
From past two decades, employee engagement is picking up prominence in different organizations. Researches demonstrate that there is a positive relationship between employee engagement and organizational performance as

employee engagement predicts employee outcomes, organizational success, and financial performance (Bates, 2004, Baumruk, 2004, Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Richman, 2006).

The theoretical apparatus for employee engagement has been presented by Kahn (1990) illustrating how “psychological experiences of work and work contexts shape the processes of people presenting and absenting themselves during task performances.” Kahn grounded his conceptual framework in empirical and existing theoretical frameworks. Conceptually, Kahn (1990) started with Goffman’s work (1961), who suggested that “people’s attachment and detachment to their roles varies.”

To gain further understanding of varying levels of attachment individuals expressed toward their roles, Kahn examined several disciplines: “psychologists (Freud, 1922), sociologists (Goffman, 1961; Merton, 1957), and group theorists (Bion, 1961; Slater, 1966; Smith & Berg, 1987) have documented the idea that people are inherently ambivalent about being members of ongoing groups and systems” and “seek to protect themselves from both isolation and engulfment by alternately pulling away from and moving towards their memberships.

Engaged employees go beyond the call of duty to perform their role in excellence. Engagement at work was first conceptualized by Kahn (1990, p. 694) as the “harnessing of organizational members’ selves to their work roles”. He added that in engagement “people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances”.



**Figure 1.** The three aspects of employee engagement (as defined by Kahn, 1990).

The challenge today is not just retaining talented people, but fully engaging them, capturing their minds and hearts at each stage of their work life” (Kaye & Jordan-Evans, 2003). As noted by Nelson and Simmons (2003), employee engagement has been defined more completely as when employees feel positive emotions toward their work, find their work to be personally meaningful, consider their work could to be manageable, and have hope about the future of their work.

#### **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND EXPECTATIONS**

The modern-day global financial environment has changed drastically and continues to do so. A social development such as continuing globalization, technological innovation and growing global competition place pressure on organizations and emphasizes their need to maintain their competitive edge (Burke and Ng 2006), at least in part

through maintaining the skills of their employees. This has created a pressure on employees also to upgrade their skills and keep productive. People want jobs that have significance and provide them with a sense of internal satisfaction and meaning as well as external rewards (Caudron1997). There are various factors that define an employee as an engaged employee. The concept has evolved taking into account the various behaviour exhibited by an employee that is positively productive. Expectation is one of the factors that lead to employee engagement.

**Expectations:** Defining and clarifying the outcomes that are to be achieved is perhaps the most basic of all employee needs and manager responsibilities. How these outcomes are defined and acted on will vary across business/work units, depending on the goals of the business/work unit.

The positive attitude of the employee with his work place and its value system is otherwise called as the positive emotional connection of an employee towards his/her work. Right Management (2006) defines true engagement as every person in the organization understanding and being committed to the success of the business strategy and that this goes beyond more than just simple job satisfaction and incorporates aspects of commitment, pride, and advocacy about the organizations products and proud while the one is in the organization to manage communication effectively to involve employees and align them with the organization, this clearly requires input and feedback from employee as well to make the process work. It is a win-win situation for both employee and employer. One outgrowth of a management research practice that was focused on talent and environment was the theory of talent maximization in an organization:

$$\text{Per-person productivity} = \text{Talent} \times (\text{Relationship} + \text{Right Expectation} + \text{Recognition/Reward})$$

Expectation is one of the factors that contribute positively to those environments and that enable people to capitalize on their unique talents. Understandably, the retention and further development of highly skilled (or valued) employees is often the key priority in terms of a company's human resource management strategy (Dibble 1999). One argument presented in this paper is that human resource management professionals can make an important contribution to the creation of meaningful work experiences that impact performance behaviors and retention. These professionals are in this position because they are responsible for, or at least influence to some degree, those activities that constitute much of our work experience. They make decisions regarding compensation and other benefits which affect the degree to which the job supplies the employee with valued job outcomes. They make decisions regarding the design of jobs and work, which influences employee perceptions and attitudes with the work itself. Employee engagement has been defined as "a positive, two-way relationship between employee and their organization where both parties are aware of their own and the other's needs, and support each other to fulfill these needs." Engaged employees and organizations go the extra mile and both reap mutual benefits (Daniel, 2004). Similarly, employee engagement has also been defined as "the bond employees have with their organization, that when employees really care about the business, they are more likely to go the extra mile" (Lanphear, 2004). It is important to keep in mind that employee engagement is not just purely driven by employees' personal needs but also by the social needs accomplished by the organization. This shows that employee engagement is a two-way process but so far researches have been conducted only on one part, that is, employee but not the other way, that is, organization engagement toward its employees. Further research is required to define the two-way nature of employee engagement. The quality of an organization's human resources is perhaps the leading indicator of its growth and sustainability. Hence the findings of the research will enhance the importance of employee engagement among professional who work in Service Sector.

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