

## **TALENT ENGAGEMENT – THE KEY TO IMPROVE ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In this dynamic and competitive era, the most crucial corporate asset over the next 20 years would be talent. Talent would include people who are smart, responsive, operationally agile, technologically literate and emotionally balanced in their attitudes and behavior. Amongst Money, Machine, Material and Men, it is the fourth M i.e. 'Men' that cannot be replicated and hence it has to be engaged effectively. Talent represents the multi-skilled, responsive, self-motivated and out of box thinkers who can provide competitive edge to an organization. In today's economic environment where an employee's productivity is a crucial element in an organization's success, it is important to acquire, manage and engage the talented employees in an organization. Innovative talent management and talent engagement practices help in increasing employee productivity, improved job satisfaction, lower turnover risk, and reduce stress level by providing better work life balance. In this paper, we specifically focus on advantages, types, strategies and challenges related to Talent Engagement.

**KEYWORDS:** Talent Engagement, Advantages, Types, Challenges, HR Strategies

### **INTRODUCTION**

The renowned Chanakaya was known to be a great strategist, economist, and a king. He was having all qualities of a good leader. He was known as a great teacher, philosopher, and a royal advisor. Once King Nanda defiled Chanakaya. Chanakaya felt bad and he decided to take revenge from him. Chanakaya started searching for a key person whom he can groom and develop to take revenge from king Nanda. Hunt for talent is not an easy process. It took Chanakaya a lot of time and efforts to find the right talent for him. He was searching for a person with the required skills, competencies and knowledge to lead. After travelling far and wide in the hunt for talent, he found a young child who was having the qualities of a leader. He enhanced the competencies of that child by suitable training and knowledge sharing. He eventually succeeded in making him King Chandragupta and settled his score with King Nanda. Hence, from this story, we can get a clear understanding that talent identification, talent management and talent engagement is not something new to mankind. Over centuries new terms have evolved to define it better.

In this dynamic and competitive era, the most crucial corporate asset over the next 20 years would be talent. This talent should be smart, responsive, operationally agile, and globally sophisticated business people. They should be technologically literate and emotionally balanced in their attitudes and behavior. Amongst Money, Machine, Material and Men, it is the fourth M i.e. 'Men' that cannot be replicated and hence it has to be engaged effectively for the best outcomes. Talent represents the multi-skilled, innovative, self motivated and out of box thinkers who can provide competitive edge to an organization.

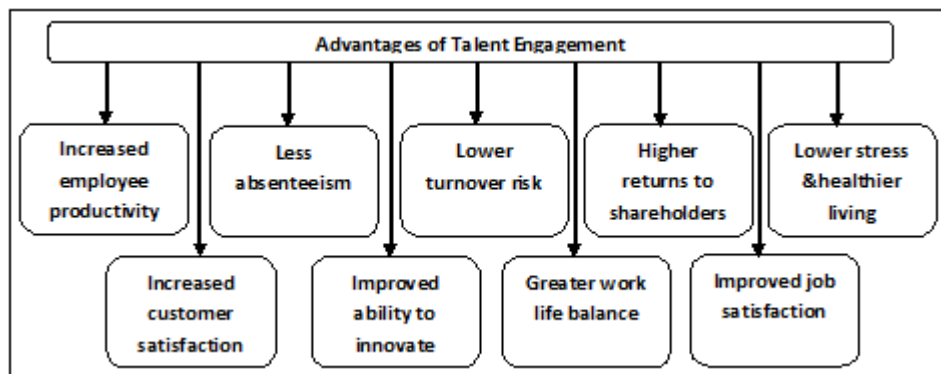
"It takes a talent to identify, develop and engage a talent!" It's being said that only a jeweler will be able to

identify the real worth of a diamond, as for others it's just a stone which has no value. It holds equally true for talent also. Talent is an ability to learn and develop and make a noticeable difference in organization's performance. After the talent is recognized by an organization, it is essential to manage the organization's talent through engaging them. Engagement implies involving the employees in organizational tasks in such a way that the employees become more committed, productive and interested to achieve organizations goals and objectives. CEO's, global managers, HR managers and business leaders are trying to ensure that the employees should be physically as well as cognitively be present, alive, energized and engaged in the organization and emotionally find a connection with their job roles. According to David C. Forman, Chief Learning Officer of the Human Capital Institute, "Talent Engagement represents the extent to which the workforce identifies with the company, is committed to it and provides discretionary effort so that it can be successful. Engagement is a key leading indicator for high performance workplaces, improved employee productivity and subsequent turnover."

India is rich in talent. Every year it produces lakhs of engineering and management graduates. But still, there is a difference between demand and supply of talented employees in companies. This is because companies have observed that the graduates don't have the required skills and practical knowledge that are essential for the job. Therefore the companies have two options, either they can develop their employees by providing required training or they can hire the required talent from outside. In the talent crunch situation, companies should try to have efficient talent engagement practices to maintain and retain the available talent within the organization. In today's vibrant economic environment where employee's productivity is the most important element in an organization's success, it's important to acquire, manage and engage the talented employees in an organization in a valuable way. Hence, in this paper, we specifically focus on the advantages, types, strategies and challenges related to Talent Engagement in an organization.

**Advantages of Talent Engagement**

According to a recent study, it was found out that an increase in engagement of an organization's employees results in improvement in employee productivity (Less absenteeism), improvement in job satisfaction, lower turnover risk, higher returns to shareholders, lower stress and helps in achieving societal objectives by increasing the employees' ability to innovate and live a more healthier living. Effectively engaged employees help in improving customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. All the above mentioned benefits have increased the need for the organizations to adopt employee engagement strategies.



**Figure 1: Advantages of Talent Engagement**

## Types of Talent Engagement

When an employee enters in an organization, he moves into different types of engagements. He can be an engaged employee, not engaged employee or an actively disengaged employee. As per the organization's culture and values, the employee moves from one type of engagement to another. In an organization, an employee can be engaged in three different ways:

- **Engaged Employee:** Engaged employee is one who easily connects himself with the organization's expectations, values and strengths and meticulously try to innovate towards finding new ways to meet expectations and consistently try to give good results.
- **Not Engaged Employee:** If the employee only focuses on completing the task rather than achieving the best possible outcomes then the employee is not an engaged talent. They don't have productive and creative relationship with their managers or colleagues.
- **Actively Disengaged Employee:** The employees who neither actively engage themselves on their tasks not concentrate on achieving their goals are known as actively disengaged employees. Such employees can prove to be a huge cost to an organization and it would be beneficial for the organization to replace them.

An organization should try to have an encouraging, supporting, open, trustworthy culture that would promote an employee to move from actively disengaged state to an engaged state.

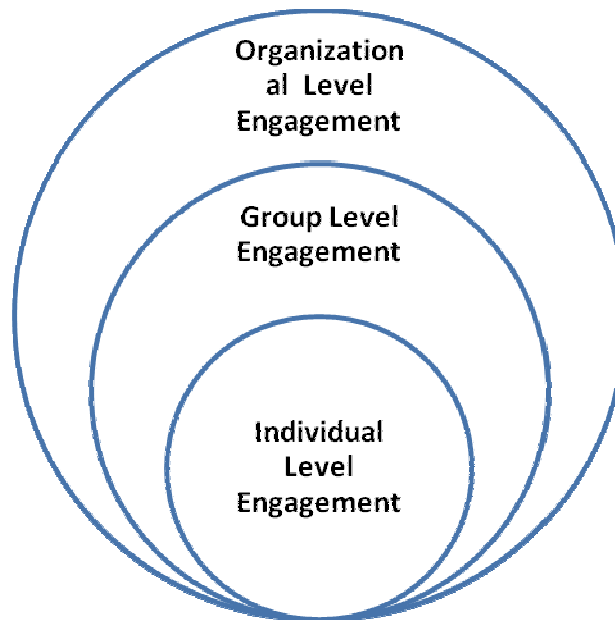


**Figure 2: Types of Talent Engagement**

## Levels of Talent Engagement

Talent can be engaged at organizational, group or individual levels. When the employee is engaged at the organizational level, he focuses on aligning the organizational values to business strategy so as to develop intellectual awareness to effectively achieve organizational goals and objectives. Ever increasing skills and competencies gap, undecided demographic factors, cross-generational and culturally diverse employees and the leadership gaps are affecting the team engagement processes and in turn affects the emotional synergy between teams and their committed motivation. Therefore, efforts should be made to reduce these gaps and to create those leaders who would have supporting, building, listening and communication skills to have more effective team engagement processes within an organization.

These organizational and team engagement processes will help in increasing the individual psychological flexibility and will build a rational orientation towards organization. The employees will start enjoying their job roles and start associating themselves with the company values and strategies, thereby promoting an environment of professionalism and specialized enrichment.



**Figure 3: Levels of Talent Engagement**

### **HR Strategies for Talent Engagement**

With increasing cost pressures brought to bear by extensive competition, progressively more demanding customer expectations, emergence of entirely new-fangled markets and territories the organizations are forced to adopt innovative and more effective talent engagement practices like career content development and management, competency mapping, e-diversity, Human relations management and online advertising strategies. Pioneering practices of talent engagement is required in every function of HR be it Manpower Planning, Recruitment and Selection, Performance Management, Training and Development or Career Mapping and Leadership Development etc. HR managers should realize that unless the organization takes care of the employees' interests, engagement per se will remain a deceptive concept. Several HR activities can support this objective:

- Effective performance management system
- Efficient competency mapping system that would help in aligning individual and organizational goals
- A transparent and open two way communication system of feedback and suggestions
- A supportive leader&a trainer with good team building and leadership skills
- An impartial measurement scales for rewarding
- Recognition and incentive
- Creating common work areas that will help employees in developing their interpersonal skills and communication skills

If these strategies are effectively implemented by organizations then a high level of trust, inspiration, job satisfaction and motivation will develop resulting in a highly engaged workforce at different levels of organization. This helps in establishing an emotional connection between the organization and the employees by providing the employees a sense of psychological ownership in the company.

### Challenges in Talent Engagement

Most of the organizations are nowadays facing the problem of identifying the skilled and competent young workforce who can match up with their strategic goals, value system and culture. Organizations are trying to have more lucrative recruiting strategies, especially for their key employees, to avoid attrition to other fast growing sectors or to competition. While implementing talent engagement practices, companies face some peculiar challenges. Though they are trying to resolve these challenges but still a lot needs to be done. Some of commonly faced challenges include:

- **Employee Motivators:** Money was earlier considered to be a major factor for the employees to make a shift but according to a study, employees value a whole lot of other benefits besides money such as work life balance, perks and organization's culture while considering a shift.
- **Limited Budgets:** A holistic and successful implementation of talent engagement practices are sometimes constrained by the limited resources and budgets allocation. In a recent study it was found that 45% of the chances of retaining the talented employees are restricted by the cost control measures taken by the organizations.
- **Rising Expectations:** With the known state of rising inflation, employee's expectations on salary hikes or increments are rising and organizations are finding it difficult to fulfill these high expectations.

### CONCLUSIONS

Talent is an ability to learn, develop and make a noticeable difference in organization's performance. Engagement means involving the employees in the organizational tasks in such a way that the employees become more committed, productive and interested to achieve organization's goals and objectives. Successful implementation of the strategies like effective two way communication system, a transparent and open system of Competency Mapping, impartial scales for measuring performance and rewarding etc. can help in increasing the employee's and organization's productivity and thereby reducing turnover and stress related problems in an organization. Therefore, organizations should always make an attempt to create a culture which will enable an employee to move from actively disengaged employees to an engaged employees so as to achieve organization's goals and objectives effectively.

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