



Employee Engagement Keeping Employees

HR Leaders are Leveraging Technology to Inform and Engage Employees – Improve the Employee Experience

Statistics Tell the Story

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— Improve the Employee Experience

Much has been covered about the importance of employee engagement, and the use of media for learning organizations and workplace training. However, Human Resource (HR) departments face similar challenges, and, as with learning organizations, media can play a critical role in helping HR leaders improve employee engagement and impact the company's business results.

An endless list of statistics validates the need for improved and sustained employee engagement. For example, a recent 2017 State of Employee Engagement Survey conducted by Saba Software found that 75% of HR leaders report employee engagement is more important or much more important than it was just two short years ago. According to Gallup Research, 51% of the U.S. workforce is not engaged. The Engagement Institute finds that disengaged employees are costing the U.S. \$450 – \$550 billion annually in lost productivity. Clearly, there is a great deal of work to do for companies to successfully engage employees and reap the benefits.

According to Maritz Motivation, 78% of companies have a documented employee engagement strategy and nearly 50% measure success. Is this good enough? What do other statistics show? What are companies doing? And, what role is media playing?

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What is Employee Engagement?

There are numerous definitions of employee engagement. Here are the best ones I have found:

Gallup Research defines engaged employees as those who are “involved in, enthusiastic about and committed to their work and workplace.”

Saba Software’s defines *employee engagement* as “the emotional commitment that an employee has to the organization.”

Why is Employee Engagement Important?

The following is a concept first introduced by *Harvard Business Review* in 1998.

“Profit and growth are stimulated primarily by customer loyalty. Loyalty is a direct result of customer satisfaction. Satisfaction is largely influenced by the value of services provided to customers. Value is created by satisfied, loyal, and productive employees. Employee satisfaction, in turn, results primarily from high-quality support services and policies that enable employees to deliver results to customers.”¹

This concept may be more relevant today than it was then, with employee engagement embraced as a known accelerator of business performance. In the State of American Workplace 2017 Report, Gallup finds that highly engaged business units realize a 41% reduction in absenteeism and a 17% increase in productivity. According to Dale Carnegie Training, companies with engaged employees, outperform those without by up to 202%.

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Other findings show that employee engagement can contribute significantly to employee retention. Workplace Research Foundation finds that highly engaged employees are 38% more likely to have above-average productivity and that increasing the employee engagement budget by 10% can increase profits by \$2,400 per employee annually.

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¹ Officevibe, Employee Engagement Solution Guide

In addition, employee engagement can provide companies a significant cost savings by impacting employee retention. According to HR Dive, it can cost 33% of an employee's salary to replace him/her. For an employee with a \$48,000 salary, the potential savings is about \$18,000 if the employee can be retained. HR Dive also finds that 75% of the causes of employee turnover are preventable.

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Combine this with a 2016 LinkedIn study that shows 70% of employees claim they would work harder if they feel their efforts were recognized and it clearly validates the need to keep employees happy.

What do Employees Want, Expect?

Employees want instant gratification and engagement with management and from corporate leadership. They want information when, where and how desired, when and where they are ready to consume the content. It must be readily available and easy to access. Also, employees want to be heard. They will respond to company surveys and submit suggestions. However, they want their responses and suggestions to be considered, and occasionally, implemented.

According to Deloitte, this focus on end-to-end employee experience is still new. However, if done correctly, HR leaders can contribute significantly to employee satisfaction and align employee goals with the corporate purpose. Unfortunately, findings show that when companies do solicit feedback, they do not do it effectively. The 2017 study by Saba shows that 58% of employees think that, when asked for their feedback, their concerns won't be addressed in a timely manner. Also, the study finds that 51% of employees feel their concerns will be dismissed outright. This is not a strong endorsement that management listens and responds.

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How are Companies Obtaining Feedback?

This is the age of big data and where the Internet of Things (IoT) is connecting everything and providing analytics to influence and make business decisions. It is a time where technology is automated, affordable, and available and features robust capabilities. It is a time when everyone carries a mobile device that enables an unlimited amount of ways to communicate, share information and provide immediate feedback.

Bottom line, technology can provide consistent, continuous feedback, which can help companies engage with employees and enable the collection of meaningful input and feedback. According to the Saba report, 83% of HR leaders and 67% of employees agree that modern technology tools are very important to effective communication and collaboration in the workplace. This includes the use of the four screens by individuals for video applications: desktop, HDTV displays (in training, meeting and break rooms; and common areas), smartphones and tablets. Also, it includes the survey, polling, texting, and audio interactive capabilities (as well as other functionality) featured in communication solutions that are part of today's enterprise-wide video ecosystems.

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However, according to Saba only 42% of employees surveyed said they had access to a mechanism through which they could engage with the business and share their feedback. Saba also reports that 33% of employees find training and development programs to not be too effective, or not at all effective. This may indicate that many companies do not have the right tools or approach or have a poorly executed implementation strategy.

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How can Companies Improve the Engagement Process?

At a time where everything about communications is NOW, where employees expect instant gratification, where technology provides automated capabilities, companies should provide readily available and easily accessible feedback channels. The surveys and questions should be wide ranging and on target with regards to timely and relevant topics, issues, etc. Be careful to not issue surveys too often or make them too cumbersome.

The engagement process should be continuous versus the traditional approach via annual surveys. Companies should have someone be responsible for the entire Employee Experience rather than work in siloes.

Occasionally, communicate to employees the company's interest to hear from them. This can drive participation in surveys and provide additional feedback.

Feedback tools should allow for employees to express concerns and address issues/topics. Companies should use a variety of different channels, from surveys and polls to on-line suggestion sites that are text based and accept video clips. The system should allow employees to be anonymous, if desired.

Providing feedback to employees and embracing employee suggestions may be more important in some companies than gathering and evaluating survey results. As indicated previously, the Saba study shows how unimpressed or untrusting employees can be of management or the company, when they do not see results or suggestions implemented. In addition, employees want more from management. They want guidance and perspectives on what to do and how to do it better. According to Zenger/Folkman, “employees would prefer receiving actionable tips on how to improve rather than approval or compliments.”

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What is the Role / Value of Media?

Employee feedback can and should be much more than merely answers to questions and submissions through suggestion boxes. Attaining employee engagement should include the use of employee-generated content featuring their perspectives and story telling about critical issues or topics. According to the report, Hype Cycle for Unified Communications and Collaboration, by Gartner Research, “YouTube continues to inspire the consumerization of video in the digital workplace, and serve as a model for employee-generated video-based communications.”

In fact, all forms of media can be used to supplement and complement a well-executed ongoing survey and polling campaign. Companies should leverage the desire employees have in viewing and creating videos by including clips in on-line surveys and by sharing through various social media channels.

HR Leaders should use the company’s media channels to provide feedback from executives about how employee suggestions are viewed and demonstrate how and when solutions are implemented. They should acknowledge employees who provide valuable feedback and submit productive, beneficial suggestions that help the company meet its business objectives.

These type efforts are what employees are looking for and believe necessary to ensure them that the company (executives) are interested in providing a rewarding employee experience and improve employee retention.

Summary

HR leaders are faced with challenges very similar to learning leaders and executives from other departments – Lower employee turnover and improve employee satisfaction, the employee experience and employee engagement. Through the use of technology and new approaches, this is possible, and in turn, improves the customer experience and the company’s business results.

The use of media is helping many companies attain their goals for improved employee engagement, as they leverage a variety of interactive and responsive media channels, mobile devices and social apps to engage employees and solicit their input. Statistics tell the story. HR leaders will be successful if they embrace the findings.



Enliten tracks industry sources to find trends and innovations relevant to the use of video and dynamic media in the enterprise space. Our experience is gained through analysis, establishing desired future states, developing cost models and business justifications and assisting with the selection of solutions and vendors to meet each customer's specific needs.

Enliten's role and value is to provide information and insight about the *what* (technology and solutions) and perspective and guidance about *how* and *why* which technology will best fit with your business objectives and content strategy.



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