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Generational Engagement

Part 1 - Overview

Engagement Facts:

- Only 1/5 of an organization is 'highly engaged'
- Disengaged employees negatively impact the bottom line by eroding customer loyalty
- The most important factor in increasing engagement is a senior management team that demonstrate an interest in employees' well-being

Generational Engagement

A Six Part Series

Part 1 – Overview

Part 2 – Attraction

Part 3 – Orientation

Part 4 – Retention

Part 5 – Talent

Management

Part 6 – Succession

Planning



Definition of Engagement

The term *employee engagement* is defined differently across organizations. For some, it means a workforce that is satisfied, productive and has low rates of absenteeism and turnover. For others, it means employees' hearts and minds are committed to the organization and their role.

At **n-gen**, we define engagement as **a productive relationship between an organization and its employees**. The relationship must align with employees' attitudes,

values and behaviours from a *generational* perspective. Since there are four distinct generational cohorts in the workforce, it is important to create and execute programs and policies that tap into the emotional and rational needs of a multigenerational workforce.

Recently there has been a movement away from measuring employee satisfaction to tracking employee engagement.

n-gen advocates that engagement is not just measured by employee attitudes, opinions or

actions, but also by the qualities demonstrated by an organization's HR programs, policies and practices. This dual measurement approach ensures a deeper understanding and analysis of your workplace environment. By cross-referencing results based on demographics, you will be able to determine how well your organizational strategies align with the attitudes, values and behaviours of different employee groups.

Measuring Engagement

Productivity and business performance are linked to an organization's employee engagement levels. According to a 2003 Towers Perrin report*, organizations with highly engaged employees tend to have higher revenue growth, typically one percentage point above industry average or lower cost of goods sold, one percentage point below industry average.

In addition, as engagement levels rise the likelihood of an employee leaving the organization declines, therefore reduced turnover costs.

The more highly engaged employees are the more likely they will:

- ❖ care about customer satisfaction
- ❖ have the ability to meet customer needs

- ❖ build customer loyalty and retention
- ❖ adapt to market changes
- ❖ strengthen business relationships

* *Working Today: Understanding What Drives Employee Engagement*, Towers Perrin, 2003



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What Organizational Engagement Looks Like

At **n-gen**, we believe there are three key qualities that must be present at an organizational level, in order to create an engaging relationship with employees. They are:

1. Transparency
2. Responsiveness
3. Partnering

Transparency means an organization and its leaders are open, honest and forthcoming with information. Their motives and intentions are transparent.

For example they share information with all levels within the organization and highlight how individual roles, responsibilities and/or accountabilities are impacted.

Responsiveness requires that an organization actively listens to its employee groups and be committed to taking action in a timely manner. While not all employee expectations / suggestions can be addressed, a responsive organization

communicates what they can and cannot do and proactively manages employee expectations.

Partnering means that an organization seeks a 'win-win' relationship with their employee groups. Leaders and managers view themselves as part of the team, not outside of it. Opinions and ideas are valued from all levels.

What Employee Engagement Looks Like

An engaged employee is an employee who expends discretionary effort, is emotionally connected to the organization and accepts accountability.

Strong indicators of an engaged employee include:

- ❖ Assuming responsibility beyond their role
- ❖ Helping team members work

towards a common goal

- ❖ Generating new ideas
- ❖ Speaking positively about the organization and its products / services
- ❖ Accepting accountability for actions, behaviours and performance level

To ensure your work environment is conducive to

creating a strong engagement relationship focus on developing and enhancing people management skills. Also a productive relationship with employees will only exist if senior leaders are committed to demonstrating the three key qualities of an engaged organization – transparency, responsiveness and partnering.

Generational Considerations

With a multigenerational workforce comprised of Traditionalists (60yrs+), Baby Boomers (41-59yrs), Gen Xers (25-41yrs) and Gen Ys (5-24yrs), each generational cohort possesses different attitudes, values and expectations that travel

with them into the workplace. Generational identities translate into behaviours on the job that impact team and organizational performance. By understanding the generational identities and creating *integrated* HR

strategies that speak to all four cohorts, your ability to create an engaging relationship with employees increases. The results are a high-performing workplace that positively contributes to the bottom line.

The next five publications will focus on how to create an engaging work environment by analyzing and designing integrated strategies, programs and tactics throughout the employee life-cycle - attraction, orientation, retention, talent management and succession planning.