

## EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN INDIAN SCENERIO- A CASE STUDY OF TATA TELE SERVICES LIMITED (TTSL)

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### ABSTRACT

*Employee engagement is generally the level of commitment and involvement an employee has towards his or her organization and its core values and beliefs. An engaged employee is presumed to be aware of business context, and work dynamics with colleagues and peer groups to improve performance within the job for the benefit and excellence of the organization. It is a positive attitude held by the employees towards the organization and its values. The paper focuses on how employee engagement is an antecedent of job involvement and what should a company do to make the employees engaged. The scope of the study is limited to one organisation i.e. Tata Tele Services which is one of the major players in the Indian services sector. The paper attempts to do an analysis of employee engagement strategies adopted by the organisation on the basis of the widely accepted Ten Cs Model of Employee Engagement.*

**Keywords:** Job Involvement, Employee Engagement, Career, Progression Policy

### INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, and particularly in the past three years, employers and employees have faced human capital challenges and an uncertain economy. The economic downturn that started in 2008 has had a significant impact on companies and the resulting decisions made by management. These decisions have impacted employee engagement levels and perceptions globally, leading to changes in leading drivers of employee engagement. In uncertain times, organizations need to focus on harnessing the discretionary effort

that engaged employee. This makes a difference in how companies are affected during the economic downturn, how quickly they emerge from it, and how strong they are in the future after the downturn passes. Employee engagement initiative has a direct impact on the organization's productivity. Also employee engagement is directly influenced by growth of the organization, value addition experienced by employees and employee perception of the organization. When managers become disengaged, employees

are 37% more likely to be frustrated with company systems, processes, and procedures. (FLS Research 2008-09) This paper is based on a case study of Tata Teleservices. The paper has been divided into six sections. First section is all about introduction to employee engagement which elaborates the issues and its importance for organizations. Section two deals with the conceptual overview and the third includes the literature review. In section four strategies and initiatives linked to employee engagement has been described along with an analysis of different initiatives taken by the organization and its implications based on ten Cs of Employee Engagement model used for analysis. It also elucidates the impact of employee engagement initiatives on organizations performance and employee retention. The fifth section includes the implications and initiatives and the last section i.e. sixth section concludes the paper.

#### **EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT- AN OVERVIEW**

The concept of engagement has naturally evolved from past research on high involvement, empowerment, job motivation, organizational commitment, and trust. All these research streams focus on employees' perceptions and attitudes about the work environment. In some ways they are variations on the same fundamental issue. Obviously, all organizations want their employees to be engaged in their work.

But what can help them predict if their employees will "give their all"? Several standardized tools exist for assessing employee engagement and then providing feedback for making changes. These tools tend to have several common goals and characteristics:

- Create a simple and focused index of workplace engagement-Many organizations are using very short, simple, and easy-to-use measures that focus on the fundamentals of a great workplace. Instead of conducting broad culture or climate surveys with 100 or more questions, many organizations are opting for a focused approach that measures fundamental qualities of the workplace that likely will be important 10 years later (e.g., feedback, trust, cooperation).

- Allow for benchmarking-most organizations want to know how they stand in comparison to other organizations. Using a standard measure of engagement allows an organization to see how it measures up to other companies along a simple set of fundamental work qualities.

- Direct action-Engagement measures tend to be very actionable. This means that an organization can alter practices or policies to affect employees' responses to every item in the measure.

- Show relationship to company performance-without a link to the company's performance or other critical

outcomes, measures of engagement have little value. The whole idea behind engagement is that it leads to enhanced performance. The link to performance outcomes is a necessary underlying assumption of all engagement measures.

■ Empirical research on "employee engagement" is relatively new. "Employee retention" has received the lion's share of the spotlight. This focus on retention however has spawned several studies on "engagement" - since retaining employees is dependent upon the need to "engage" them. Hence, engagement studies are beginning to take center stage. One of the most significant threads in the current research is the discovery that employee engagement is linked to customer satisfaction which is linked to an organization's financial success. Employee engagement/satisfaction distinctly affects the bottom line. These findings are detailed in the studies referred to in this article. Engagement really happens at the team level - a framework called VOICE helps that process. VOICE is an acronym made up of its component parts i.e. V is for vision, which is an emotion as well as a financial connection as to why people should be part of this organization; O is for opportunity. Are there opportunities to grow and develop? ; I is for incentive. If you do a good job do you get financial and non-financial rewards? ; C is for community. Do I like the people I work with? ; C also stands for

Communication, which is about "telling people about what is going on, and gives them the confidence that people care; and E is for entrepreneurship, defined as things such flexibility on how people can work"... "It's about things like flexibility in time so people don't feel they are being a slave to the organization."

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

■ Let us have a look on how employee engagement is defined by some of the consulting firms:

■ Employees' willingness and ability to contribute to company success. (Towers Perrin)

■ Staff commitment and a sense of belonging to the organization. (Hewitt)

■ Employee's commitment to the organization and motivation to contribute to the organization's success. (Mercer)

■ Employees' exertion of "discretionary effort". . . going beyond meeting the minimum standards for the job. (Hay)

■ Creating the sense that individuals are a part of a greater entity. (Best Practices, LLC)

■ A research and information company Melcrum, recently surveyed 1,000 corporate communications and HR professionals and analyzed 40 case studies and found that many respondents credit offering employee engagement programs with the following benefits: More than 50% report improvements in employee

retention and customer satisfaction, 33% report higher productivity, 28% report improvements in employee advocacy, 27% improved status as a "great place to work", 27% report increased profitability and 25% report improved absenteeism. A snapshot of the corporations in this study shows that 74% began focusing on employee engagement between 2000 and 2004 and report performance improvements each year, 36% have a dedicated employee engagement program, 64% apply the philosophy to employee engagement to their people practices. The Forum for People Performance Management and Measurement at North-western University released their report in November 2004, titled *The Impact of Employee Attitudes on Market Response and Financial Performance*, which also links employee satisfaction to customer satisfaction and a company's financial success. This finding is true even if employees have no direct contact with customers. 110,000 surveys were mailed to media companies, with a 34% response rate. Below are key findings from the report:

- The key indicator of employee satisfaction is organizational communication as employee satisfaction is a precursor to employee engagement.
- Organizational culture is a significant driver of employee engagement, where employees must be expected to work together and provide a voice for the customer within the organization.

- When individuals and teams compete to implement optimal behaviours oriented to the market and its customers, such competition can benefit both the organization and its customers.

- 64% apply the philosophy of employee engagement to their people practices.

- Organizations with engaged employees have customers who use their products more.

- It is an organization's employees who influence the behaviour and attitudes of customers, and it is customers who drive an organization's profitability through the purchase and use of its products.

- Incentive programs, as a way to engage employees, have been found to increase organizational performance. The International Society for Performance Improvement released a study last year, *Incentives, Motivation, & Workplace Performance*, which showed that incentive programs can increase performance by as much as 44% among employee teams, 24% among individuals. The study consisted of an analysis of 45 existing scientific studies which were also compared to current practices through surveys of 145 U.S. organizations that use incentive programs. As per the key findings of the study it was found that incentive programs improve performance, engage participants and increase interest in work, attract quality employees. Long-term programs outperform short-term programs. Executives and

employees value incentive programs and quota-based incentive measures work best. Best Practices LLC, a research and consultant firm, recently released a new benchmarking report "Employee Engagement and the Service-Profit Chain" which shares best practices for engaging employees in their jobs and companies. Based on primary and secondary research of leading worldwide corporations, the report's key findings are as follows:

- a reduction in turnover rates by just two percentage points can result in a savings of \$3 million annually
- an effective performance management system is the cornerstone of engagement -- from goal-setting to reward, recognition and incentive programs
- 75% of high performing companies hold managers accountable for engaging their employees. This is in comparison to 35% across the entire study group that holds managers accountable
- high performing companies engage employees by cutting across functional silos to create a sense of connectedness through communities of practice, cross-functional teams, and by creating common work areas
- high performing companies recognize employees for their suggestions employ group brainstorming and utilize group list

to enhance the feeling of connectedness

- employee and customer loyalty attributes reflect each other, supporting the premise behind the importance of engagement which is based on a correlation between customer satisfaction and engagement
- key factors in engagement are alignment of employees toward strategy, enabling employees to have the capability to engage themselves, and creating the sense of engagement -- creating the sense that individuals are a part of a greater entity and top performing companies rank cross-functional teams and councils as the most effective vehicle to help employees understand how their -- as well as team and/or business unit -- efforts contribute to corporate performance.

The research above is powerful - not only for organizations seeking to ensure their financial success, but for those seeking to harness their people power. For employees, or those seeking employment, it offers a tremendous sense of comfort. Their employers (or future employers), if enlightened by the type of research portrayed above, will be interested in finding ways to create an "engaging" workplace.

Ten Cs of Employee Engagement  
"The Ten Cs of Employee Engagement", Gerard H. Seijts and Dan Crim (2006) tries

and understand the various dimensions that can add value to the engagement level of an employee which can make people stay in the organisation for long. The ten Cs is elaborated as follows:

**Connect:** Employees should feel that their work is being valued and should feel a sense of connectivity with their superiors. Having a gap can lead to employee isolation and a sense of non-belongingness to the organisation.

**Career:** People in the organisation should be provided challenging and meaningful work with opportunities for career advancement. Most people want to do new things in their job. Good leaders have to challenge employee; but at the same time they must instil the confidence that the challenges can be met. People should be given tools and knowledge to be successful to keep them engaged.

**Clarity:** Success in life and organisations is, to a great extent, determined by how clear individuals are about their goals and what they really want to achieve. Leaders must communicate a clear vision Employees need to understand what the organisations goals are, why they are important, and how the goals can be attained.

**Convey:** Leaders clarify their expectations about employees and provide feedback on their functioning in the organisation. Good leaders establish processes and procedures that help people master important tasks and facilitate goal achievement.

**Congratulate:** Exceptional leaders should give recognition to the employees for good performance. Recognising their efforts by praising them and giving them an applaud can boost their morale and ultimately make them enthusiastic towards their work



FIG: 1 - Ten Cs of Employee engagement

**Contribute:** People want to know that their input matters and that they are contributing to the organisations success in a meaningful way. Efficient leaders should make sure that the employees feel their efforts are being used in the fulfilment of the overall goal and objectives of the organisation.

**Control:** Employees value control over the flow and pace of their jobs .leaders can create opportunities for employees to exercise their control. Involving your people in decision making creates a culture wherein they can take the ownership of their own problems and can find solutions to them.

**Collaborate:** When employees work in teams and have the trust and cooperation of their team members, they outperform individuals and teams which lack good relationships. Great leaders are team builders: they create an environment that fosters trust and collaboration. Thus a continuous challenge for leaders is to rally individuals to collaborate on organizational, departmental and group goals, while excluding individuals pursuing their self-interest.

**Credibility:** Leaders should strive hard to demonstrate high ethical standards to their subordinates. People want to be proud of their jobs, their performance and their organisation.

**Confidence:** Efficient leaders help create confidence in a company by setting example of high ethical and performance standards. Instilling a sense of confidence is what is required from the leaders.

#### **EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES**

We create job roles which are not just exciting and challenging, but also give

employees a sense of purpose in terms of creating value for the organisation and customers.

- Varadarajan (Raja), Executive President HR (TTSL).

He oversees all the people practices and processes in the company.

**Case study:** Tata Teleservices: HR interventions and Employee engagement Tata Teleservices' (TTSL) many HR interventions have earned it the distinction of being an employer of choice. CN Nagakumar, CHRO, TTSL, believes that his company's commitment to employee engagement is what has earned it this accolade. The company's HR practices include a strong HR model that talks about alignment, assignment, engagement, empowerment and pride of the workforce. The annual employee engagement survey - Darpan - has been designed around the HR model. In order to foster a customer-centric and performance-driven culture in the organisation, the pillars of organisational culture were defined under the acronym **CRISP** - customer focus, responsibility for results, initiative with speed, self-confidence with consciousness and passion for achievement. A robust performance management scheme, a reward and recognition policy, and a career progression policy exist in the organisation, besides a number of engagement activities. The performance management system ensures the top down cascade of business goals. The key performance indicators of every employee are aligned to any one or multiples of the five key business levers, namely revenue, profit maximisation / cost optimisation, cash flow, customer

satisfaction and employee engagement, aligning the entire organisation towards the vision, mission and business plans of the organisation.

The reward and recognition (R&R) policy aims to create a framework for recognising and rewarding the contributions of individuals and teams, and institutionalises a culture of openness, transparency and meritocracy. The recognitions include Spotlight (for on-the-spot recognition), Star of the Month, Super Stars for achievers, Customer First Reward and Valuable Reward. These awards are decided at both the circle and corporate level by various business units and circle R&R committees. TTSL strives to provide career growth in consonance with performance, merit and potential of an employee, while considering organisational needs. The opportunities include Career Progression Policy and CAS (Career Advancement Scheme), Job Rotation Policy and Internal Job Postings. The Career Progression Policy ensures career progression for all employees based on their performance rating, tenure in the role, SPARK Assessment Center scores and potential for growth. It also highlights the commitment to building a leadership pipeline by "grooming talent" from within. To ensure a supportive and encouraging environment, TTSL has focused its efforts towards institutionalising several initiatives like the employee health and well being policy, Long Service Award on completion of five and 10 years of service, Medical Insurance, Liberal Personal Accident Insurance coverage etc. For employees posted in remote geographies like the North-East,

Assam, Jammu & Kashmir, a special geography benefit is provided. The Weavers initiative includes sports and recreation activities for employees, cultural and sports activities for employees' children, career counselling and corporate sustainability initiatives. These policies also seek to create and ensure "a meaningful relationship between the employee and the organisation." The company knows that a relationship of mutual respect and trust is the key to ensuring a motivated workforce. That is why TTSL engages in a number of activities to offer employees an opportunity to display the creative side of their personalities. At the circle level, the company organises various fun activities and games, including hoopla, tambola, carrom and table tennis, besides outdoor game championships for cricket, football and hockey. Many of these teams have participated in inter-corporate events and won for the company's pride.

Leadership development is one of the strategic pillars at TTSL. Assessment centres form the basic tool to identify high-potential employees who undergo a comprehensive leadership developmental programme. The Business Leadership Programme is carried out in association with the Tata Management Training Centre and involves all COOs and high-performing senior leaders. An in-house e-enabled multi-rater feedback system called Reflections has been put in place to enable senior leaders to get 360-degree feedback and create an individual development plan. Team-building initiatives at TTSL are not limited to the top management alone but touch all levels of management, aligning



teams across the company towards achieving the organisational objectives.

Regular Town halls are conducted by the MD and COOs at corporate and circle levels respectively to get to know the views of the people. Initiatives such as Lunch with MD, MD Online and Phone your MD also seek to increase interaction between employees and the MD. A chief ethics officer and local ethics officers have been appointed to deal with ethical issues. A women's welfare committee, comprising senior women employees, has been created to address women-related issues.

Training is an important component of employee engagement. Training employees through innovative workshops, cross-functional teams and collaborative working is also a key focus area in TTSL. TTSL encourages employees to enhance their skills and come up with innovative ideas and best practices through initiatives like Mind Beans, Propel (Six Sigma) and Promising Practices." Employees are also actively encouraged to develop their personalities. The portal Gyaan Jyoti enables people to enhance their skills through e-learning. Employees list their fields of interest and expertise on Gyan Tarang. TTSL then uses its in-house expertise to conduct various training workshops for others, thereby giving employees a chance to learn and teach. TTSL strongly supports the Tata Group program called SCIP (Second Career Internship Program) which enables women who have taken a break from their career, to restart their career. They work on a 6-month project in any one of the Tata Group companies and then confirmed as permanent resources. The motivated workforce is encouraged to

give back to the community as well as TTSL has tie-ups with NGOs like SOS Children's Villages and the National Association for the Blind, and partners with various schools under the Samvedna initiative. It also has an active eco-club, Prakriti, which conducts activities such as tree plantation drives, energy conservation and wealth out of waste initiatives." The company's CSR activities include education and the environment as well, fully leveraging the company's core competencies, in addition to initiatives on affirmative action plans focused on employment generating schemes. DIALog is the monthly Internal Newsletter which covers the latest internal and external news about TTSL. Apart from TTSL news, there are specific write-ups by the senior management, communicating pertinent and relevant issues and news. DARPAN, the Employee Engagement Model of TTSL covers various aspects of employee work life namely Alignment, Assignment, Engagement, Empowerment and Pride. E-Pulse is another innovative tool, which was created to enhance engagement of employees from the moment they join by staying in touch and taking feedback from them from the time they join the organization. It is an IT-enabled engagement tool to ensure that assimilation of new employees happens in a smooth manner. It is these and other similar activities that have helped TTSL gain the trust of its employees and ensured an atmosphere of enthusiasm and commitment in the workplace.

## Analysis using Ten Cs Model

<b>Ten Cs</b>	<b>TATA TELESERVICES</b>
	<i>HR model integrating alignment, assignment, engagement, empowerment and pride of the workforce</i>
<b>CONNECT</b>	Reward and recognition (R&R) policy aims to create a framework for recognising and rewarding the contributions of individuals and teams, and institutionalises a culture of openness, transparency and meritocracy.
<b>CAREER</b>	Career Progression Policy and CAS (Career Advancement Scheme), Job Rotation Policy and Internal Job Postings, SCIP
<b>CLARITY</b>	-
<b>CONVEY</b>	Key performance indicators of every employee are aligned to any one or multiples of the five key business levers, namely revenue, profit maximisation / cost optimisation, cash flow, customer satisfaction and employee engagement
<b>CONGRATULATE</b>	Spotlight (for on-the-spot recognition), Star of the Month, Super Stars for achievers, Customer First Reward and Valuable Reward
<b>CONTRIBUTE</b>	Encourages employees to enhance their skills and come up with innovative ideas and best practices through initiatives like Mind Beans, Propel (Six Sigma) and Promising Practices.”
<b>CONTROL</b>	Organisational culture were defined under the acronym CRISP — customer focus, responsibility for results, initiative with speed, self-confidence with consciousness and passion for achievement
<b>COLLABORATE</b>	Lunch with MD, MD Online and Phone your MD also seek to increase interaction between employees and the MD.
<b>CREDIBILITY</b>	Chief ethics officer and local ethics officers have been appointed to deal with ethical issues
<b>CONFIDENCE</b>	Business Leadership Programme is carried out in association with the Tata Management Training Centre

Table I: Analysis using the Ten Cs Model of Employee engagement

**IMPLICATIONS AND NEW INITIATIVES**

The analysis gives us very clear picture that the organisation is able to meet most of the criteria of Ten Cs to a greater extent. Tata Teleservices has an excellent reward and recognition policy and a career progression policy which shows the connect parameter. It has different programs to congratulate its employees. Further it also provides a platform to the employees to collaborate and increase the interaction between superior and subordinates. The company is high on meeting ethical standards for

which it has an ethical officer to deal with the local issues. It is suggested here that the company can clarify the roles of the employees from the very first step by giving them a realistic job preview and conducting a strong induction and orientation programme as a part of the performance management system. Employee counselling and mentoring techniques can be used to get the feedback from the employee about his role and job performance.

Strategies can be suggested to form some more communication forums including team meetings, conferences, monthly updates on corporate goals etc. to add more to the credibility component. Team building exercises like small team recreational activities e.g. bowling, skating; trips to cinemas etc. once in a month can also be introduced. Employee engagement is a direct reflection of how employees feel about their relationship with boss. Thus, quality of working relationships with peers, superiors and subordinates can be improved by providing more opportunities to collaborate. Though organisations are having their own models of practising employee engagement but to make the strategies more effective they can take into consideration the ten Cs model of employee engagement and try to meet every 'C' as a parameter to the greatest possible extent.

#### CONCLUSION

Acquiring skilled workforce is just not enough in today's changing economy like ours; instead a lot needs to be done to retain, involve and make them committed to the organization and its goals. Thus, engagement is a state where an individual is not only intellectually committed but has great emotional attachment with his/her job that goes above and beyond the call of duty so as to further the interest of the company. Organizations like Tata Tele Services are not only providing their employees a great infrastructure and other facilities but also freedom to make their work exciting and also are providing them an environment wherein they can say good-bye to a monotonous work. The company focuses on retention as an outcome of three HR focus

areas - employee motivation, career growth and remuneration and compensation. Thus working in a safe and cooperative environment adds to the engagement level of an employee.

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