

TITLE: A MEASUREMENT OF THE LEVEL OF EMPLOYEE
ENGAGEMENT USING GALLUP'S Q12 QUESTIONNAIRE IN
AN IRISH FINANCIAL INSTITUTION CURRENTLY
UNDERGOING SUBSTANTIAL ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

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School of Business
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2011

DECLARATION

This report is strictly confidential and may not be made available as an educational resource. The names of the employees surveyed and that of the organisation have been withheld both on request and to protect participant confidentiality.

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment of the programme of study leading to the award of Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Human Resource Management, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research report is to examine the levels of employee engagement in an Irish financial institution. The importance of employee engagement in organisational change will be considered.

This study explores some of the main theory behind employee engagement such as, Kahn's psychological conditions theory, Maslach et al's theory of "job burnout" and Fairhurst & O'Connor's link between employee engagement and employee well-being.

The research methodology outlines the method, procedure and design of the primary research. A brief background of the history, development and the rationale for using Gallup's Q12 questionnaire is included here.

A visual display of the results are graphed in chapter four including a more comprehensive table of results for the Q12 questionnaire responses.

The findings are discussed and linked to the literature. Company x is found to have a neither engaged or disengaged workforce. These findings are explored in more detail in chapter five.

Recommendations for company x are made in chapter six. These recommendations are made in the following areas:

- Leadership
- Culture
- Reward and recognition
- Employee participation

In this report, the benefits of employee engagement are two fold. Employee well-being improves as a result and the employer benefits from having a committed, creative and innovative workforce.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Organisational context

This research report is analysing the current level of employee engagement in a financial services institution (company x) currently undergoing massive organisational change. Company x lies in an industry that is also undergoing huge change. Presently there is a great deal of uncertainty within this particular workplace, and the workforce has and will reduce substantially. The researcher finds it interesting to measure the level of employee engagement in a company that lies in such an ambiguous environment.

Liebermann and Hoffmann '08 maintain that due to increasing likeness of product characteristics in the service industry, quality of service provided by the workers has become paramount. There is not huge potential for product differentiation within this industry, so the company must rely on using its human capital to increase its competitive edge. This study has shown that sustained employee engagement leads to committed, creative, energetic, focused, effective and absorbed employees which in turn increases organisational performance. It provides benefits to both employee and employer. Previous research has shown that sustaining employee engagement in a dynamic work environment is an intricate task that requires proactive action from the organisation's senior level management down to operational or line management.

1.2 Why be concerned with employee engagement?

As people spend most of their waking hours at the workplace, workplace psychology and behaviour provokes a lot of interest for researchers. Managing and enriching the work environment is challenging and critical for organisations from a working relationship point of view and a competitive advantage standpoint. (Harter et al '09)

It is evident that in today's difficult and dynamic business environment, organisations are confronted with a set of objectives that may seem conflicting and challenging:

- Provide a differentiated customer experience while reducing the cost of delivering that experience
- Generate significant growth while continuing to manage the bottom line
- Use technology to drive efficiency without sacrificing the "personal" connection to customers, employees and other stakeholders
- Standardize.... And customize (Gebauer '08)

"One common element grounds organizations' ability to advance through this environment: People" (Gebauer '08) Gebauer highlights the importance of investing in your organisation's human capital in the form of increasing employee engagement. She outlines how people are an essential source of a company's competitive advantage. Gebauer articulates how only one in five workers today is "giving full discretionary effort on the job, and this 'engagement gap' poses serious risks for employers because of the strong connection between employee engagement and company financial performance." Even more worrying is the fact that from previous Towers Watson research, results have shown that "close to four out of 10 (38%) are what we called disenchanted or disengaged." (Gebauer '08) Maslach has performed extensive studies on the concept of job burnout. This is a phenomenon that happens

when an employee has completely disengaged. It is the direct opposite to employee engagement. Research on burnout prevention and solutions has not only highlighted the benefits of engagement to organisation survival but it has also made an important contribution to people's health and well-being. (Maslach et al '01)

1.3 Research questions

Objective one of the research is to explore previous studies on employee engagement and disengagement and to outline the main theory and concepts on the subject. Objective two is to perform primary research to determine the level of employee engagement on the organisation in question using Gallup's Q12 questionnaire. The research questions are based on Forbringer's grouping of the Q12 questionnaire into four levels.

Research Question 1: Are the employee's basic needs met?

Research Question 2: Do the employees in this company have a positive image of their individual self esteem and worth?

Research Question 3: Do the employees in this organisation feel that they fit?

Research Question 4: Do the workers feel that there is a focus on their progression and that they have opportunities to learn and grow at work?

Research Question 5: Are the employee's in this organisation engaged? (Forbringer '02)

1.4 Outcome of the research

The intended outcome of the research is to answer the research questions and to produce knowledge in the field of employee engagement. The knowledge in the form of primary and secondary research results will be collated and analysed to generate

results and recommendations. Thus the significance of employee engagement will be demonstrated.

1.5 Limitations

The research location for this report is a single financial institution due to lack of access to employees in other institutions. Although the uncertainty highlighted in section 1.1 applies to other Irish financial institutions, the results of this research may not be directly applicable to them as each institution is undergoing varying change and has a different organisation structure. The participants in the primary research are located country wide and are working in different areas of the company including frontline offices and various head office departments. With that, there will be respondents with different working arrangements, roles, locations, levels and supervisors. Studies have indicated that some of these variables can impact on employee engagement levels. These factors may give rise to bias in the results of the primary research.

“Locations, branches or stores within a single company can have remarkably different environments and varying productivity, employee retention and satisfaction rates”
(Forbringer ‘02)

1.6 Structure of the report

Chapter one introduced the research topic and outlined the organisational context. The reasons the author is concerned with the concept of employee engagement, its potential significance for the organisation, the research aims, questions and limitations.

Chapter two will include a review of the previous literature on the topic. Important theorists and researchers will be mentioned with an overview of the key models and concepts they have developed or researched.

Chapter three is concerned with the research methodology. The author has outlined the background and design of Gallup's Q12 questionnaire, the reasons for choosing this particular research method and the procedure and setting used.

Chapter four is a visual representation of the results of the data in the form of graphs and tables.

Chapter five includes a discussion, analysis and interpretation of the resulting data forging links with the literature from the secondary research. The findings will be related to the research questions. Appropriate recommendations based on research results will be made in this chapter.

Chapter six is a summary of the report drawing on any conclusions made.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The topic around which the literature review is centred is of the concept of employee engagement and disengagement. The main source of research is from journal articles and research papers. Employee engagement is defined by the main theorist around the subject, William Kahn, and by other key researchers such as Maslach, Saks, Gabauer and Schaufeli. Employee engagement theories and models are summarized. This chapter includes research and study of the importance of employee engagement and change and how effective leadership can positively affect this concept. There is a brief outline of how to support and promote employee engagement, finishing with a concise summary of the most important concepts.

2.2 What is employee engagement?

Kahn separates employee engagement into personal engagement and personal disengagement. He describes it as the behaviours that individuals bring or leave out of their “personal selves” during work performance. Kahn defines personal engagement as “the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles;” With engagement Kahn demonstrates how individuals employ or express themselves “physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performance.” Alison Gill supports this statement with “How we think (cognition) and how we feel (emotion) influence how we act.”. Kahn defines personal disengagement as “the uncoupling of selves from work roles;” Disengaged individuals then remove themselves from the job role physically, cognitively and emotionally. (Kahn 1990)

Maslach et al define employee engagement as the “positive antithesis” of job burnout. Her research has found that examining the positive opposite to disengagement or “burnout” ie. Engagement, allows focus on positive states of “human strength and functioning.” Maslach et al’s research paper on Job Burnout discusses engagement as being characterized by energy, involvement and effectiveness - the complete opposite of the three burnout dimensions – exhaustion, cynicism and ineffectiveness. Employee engagement is a complex and thorough perspective of a person’s relationship with work. It is separate and more intricate than other such individual organisational psychology constructs such as job satisfaction, commitment and job involvement. (Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter ‘01) Both Kahn and Maslach’s definition of employee engagement centres on the comprehensive psychological relationship that the individual has with their job role and workplace components and environment. Saks defines the engagement phenomenon as “not an attitude; it is the degree to which an individual is attentive and absorbed in the performance of their roles.” (Saks ‘06) Similar to Kahn’s definition, Saks also maintains how the concept has to do with how people employ themselves in the “performance of their job”. All the above theorists mention how emotions and actions impact on levels of engagement. Schaufeli defined engagement as “a persistent, positive affective-motivational state of fulfillment in employees that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Gebauer simply describes the phenomenon as “the extent to which employees “go the extra mile” and put discretionary effort into their work-contributing more of their energy, creativity and passion on the job.”

2.3 Employee engagement theories and models

Kahn

William A Kahn's paper on the *Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at work* is one of the first and the few theoretical studies on employee engagement and disengagement. Kahn describes how there are three psychological conditions of employee engagement and disengagement:



Particular moments in role performances or situations that offer more psychological meaningfulness and psychological safety results in more psychological availability. Kahn hypothesised that the more individuals draw on their personal “selves” to perform their roles at work, the more rousing their work execution and the more content they are within their role. Kahn outlines three concepts/stances of engagement that vary throughout the work role:



Kahn focused on how presence and absence relate to engagement and disengagement. The research he carried out on two completely different organisations was focused on individual's experiences of themselves, their work and it's contexts. (Kahn 1990) Kahn surmised three factors from his research that influence his psychological condition concept of psychological meaningfulness:

- Task characteristics
- Role characteristics
- Work interactions

He described four factors that most influence psychological safety:

- Interpersonal relationships
- Group/intergroup dynamics
- Management style and process
- Organisational norms

Data from the research indicated four distractions that influence the phenomenon of psychological availability:

- Depletion of physical energy
- Depletion of emotional energy
- Individual insecurity
- Outside lives

(Kahn 1990)

Kahn wrote another paper *To be fully there: psychological presence at work*

This article concentrated on the concept of psychological presence. Kahn outlines four aspects of this concept:

People, in their role or task performance, feel and are:

- Attentive – to oneself and to show empathy
- Connected – focus on helping
- Integrated – integrate different aspects of oneself in the role
- Focused – to be fully present

(Kahn 1992)

May

Douglas May tested Kahn's theory of the effects of the three psychological conditions psychological meaningfulness, physiological safety and psychological availability on

employee engagement. His research proved that these three conditions impacted on employee engagement in varying ways.

Results:

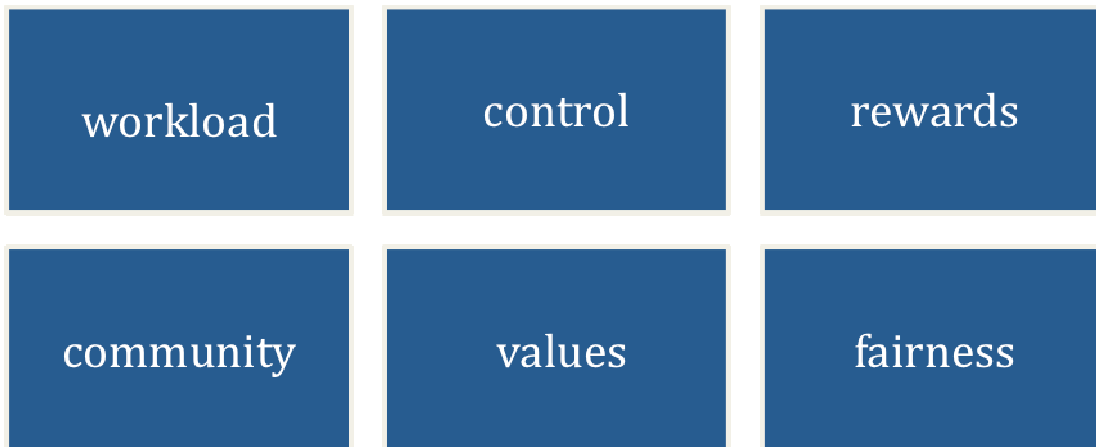
- Meaningfulness displayed the strongest relation
- Work role fit and job enrichment positively linked to psychological meaningfulness
- Reward and supportive supervisor relations were positively linked to psychological safety
- Self-consciousness and adherence to co-worker norms negatively affected psychological safety
- Resources available were positively related to psychological availability
- Participation in outside activities negatively related to psychological availability

(May, Gilson and Harter 2004)

Maslach

Job burnout or disengagement has provoked research as it can impact negatively on job performance including lower productivity, decreased job satisfaction and commitment, negative impact on co-workers and disruption. In more major cases it leads to job withdrawal, absenteeism and turnover.

Maslach conceived the job burnout theory where if there is a major mismatch for an employee in any or all of the following six areas of worklife - this could lead to job burnout or disengagement.



Employee mismatches may be weighted differently according to the individual and there is some tolerance to some levels of mismatch. This highlights the importance of looking at the individual in context

Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter 2001

Recently, research on burnout has led to new concepts and has become more focused on its direct opposite - employee engagement. The initial research around this phenomenon was based on the working relationship and it can be a source of reward or in contrast, emotional strain. Job burnout is where a worker becomes detached from the job emotionally and cognitively with a loss of passion, ineffectiveness and feelings of extreme fatigue. It is linked to other concepts such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment and turnover. Their research paper highlights the importance of an employee's relationship with work. Maslach identified how coping strategies had "valuable implications for job behaviour". The significance of strong organisational values is highlighted in this research paper and how the violation of the psychological contract (similar to chronic mismatches in the areas above) can impact on burnout.

Maslach et al '01

Expanding the construct of burnout: Job Engagement

Maslach further researched the issue of burnout in this research paper and concluded that better matches in the above areas should result in job engagement. Her study has shown that burnout relates to job demands and engagement is related to job resources. (Maslach '03) Concentrating on the positive antithesis of burnout – employee engagement, contributes to our understanding of employee's well-being. (Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter '01) This concept of concentrating on “strengths based psychology” was at the heart of Dr Donald O. Clifton's studies that ran parallel to Dr George Gallup's early work on employee engagement. (Harter et al '09) Maslach et al developed some ideas about how to deal with job burnout adding that some organisations focus on treatment and some on prevention. They argue that burnout must be tackled from three sides – the individual the organisation and the positive antithesis to burnout, engagement. In respect to changing the individual, their ability to cope can be enhanced through educational sessions but bearing in mind that applying the information acquired in the workplace can be difficult. With changing the organisation, focus on the work environment and how the individual fits is critical. Concentrating on building engagement helps the organisation form a closer merger with the company's mission and strategy.

Christina Maslach Job Burnout: New directions in research and intervention 03

This research by Maslach again underpins the importance of focusing on the positive opposite of burnout- building engagement when choosing interventions to reduce or prevent job burnout. And supporting the above ways to tackle burnout, the study on the solution to burnout in this article centres on: the positive focus on job engagement,

the six areas of work life, and a model of job-person fit. (effectiveness still not evaluated)

Gallup

Gallup maintains that many of the decisions and actions that an employee undertakes is down to their own intrinsic motivation but he also argues that their environment and how they are treated can also influence their actions positively or negatively. Employee actions then have an impact on organisational performance. (Harter et al 09)

Towers Watson Fairhurst & O' Connor

Fairhurst and O'Connor make a direct link between employee well-being and employee engagement. Towers Watson define employee well-being as three connected features of an individuals 'work life'.

- Physical health
- Psychological health – in relation to stress, satisfaction, accomplishment etc
- Social health – in relation to work relationships, work/life balance etc

As Gallup stated, Fairhurst and O'Connor also reiterate that modern workers spend a significant amount of time at the workplace. The workplace environment impacts on an employee's wellbeing, which in turn, impacts on engagement and organisation performance. Towers Watson have outlined factors that influence employee well-being:

- Physical environment
- Leadership effectiveness
- Working relationships
- Need for personal growth being met

- Fairness
- Rewards and recognition

Fairhurst and O'Connor's model of well-being and sustained engagement shows that both engagement and well-being can work "in tandem" or "in opposition". They maintain that having an engaged employee with low well-being, results in unstable engagement. A disengaged employee with low well-being, results in chronic disengagement. Having an employee with high well-being and high engagement, results in sustainable engagement. An employee with high well-being and low engagement leads to complacent disengagement. These researchers concluded that an organisation needs to "understand and measure both engagement and well-being" and to "focus on effective leadership". Within their article they draw on Gebauer and Lowman's "road map for a high-performance work environment"

Know them – being as familiar with your employees as you are with your customers

Grow them – people commit to companies that encourage learning and development

Inspire them - ensure their work has meaning

Involve them - empowered employees add value

Reward them – treat your employees fairly and they will give back in time and creativity

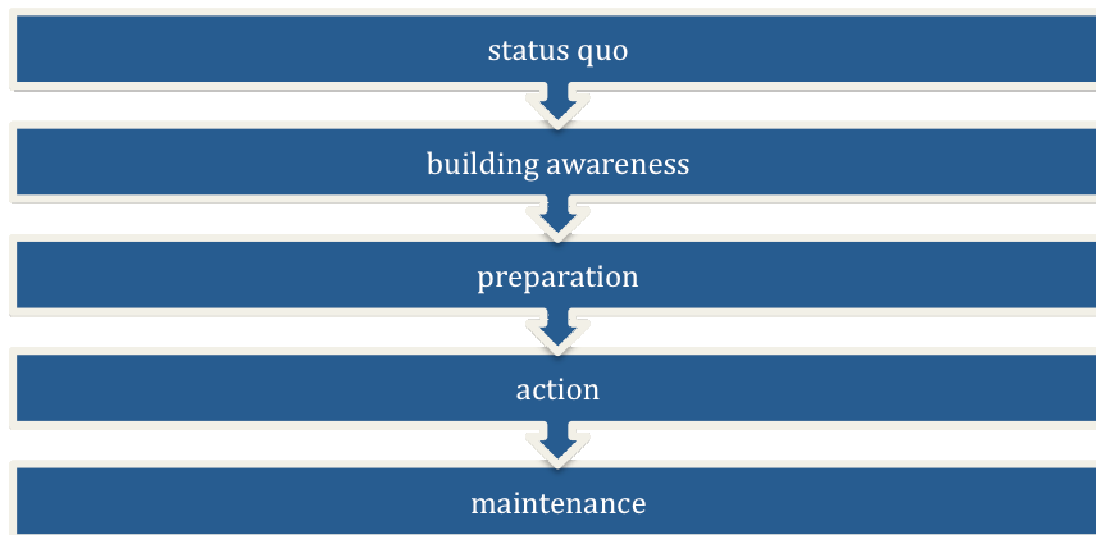
Fairhurst and O'Connor articulate how the organisation should "Focus on training and development", "Align total rewards" and "Develop the capabilities of frontline managers." (Fairhurst and O'Connor)

2.4 Employee engagement and change

Alison Gill- Employee Engagement in a change environment

Gill maintains that change is inevitable for both people and organisations alike and that managing change is a core skill. Lasting and successful organisation change is best achieved through engagement in behavioural change. Occasionally with change, “cognitive dissonance” can occur. This is where the message communicated is contrary to the evidence of what is seen to happen for real. This can lead to the organisation struggling to engage its employees. Gill articulated how using *Crelos’s ‘the precision business psychology approach’* five-stage model of changing behaviour can help to effectively manage change.

Managing these five stages tightly through psychological preparation and planning will help to move an organisation through the stages of change and achieve the benefits of change more quickly and reliably.



- 1- **Status quo:** defining precisely the current and future state and what the journey will be like to get there. Identify that clients needs are changing and new innovation is needed to address their needs. Status quo is articulating

what attitudes, behaviours and skills are required to deliver this, why it is important and how these skills will be developed.

- 2- **Building awareness:** assessment of the gap in terms of behaviours, attitudes and skills and the key stages of change required. The challenge of what to change needs to be clearly communicated at a personal and organisational level. A detailed evaluation of people that is crucial to success
- 3- **Preparation:** personalising the journey and understanding what needs to happen for the change to take place, which mental models need to be redesigned, how success will be measured and who will be involved. What they must do to make the required change. Pivotal activity is to explore the risks of failure and the positives of success. Individuals and groups formulate their own solutions about what they will do differently. This stage is the usual starting point for organisations without any prior investment in inspiring, assessing and engaging the people. This may explain why so many change programs fail.
- 4- **Action:** teaching, learning, developing and celebrating success. This is where the organisation should focus on developing its people. Right learning and development experiences should be delivered at the right time.
- 5- **Maintenance:** recognising change, engaging others in mentoring the change and continuing to celebrate success. Change has been achieved but it is not the end. It involves learning from the whole experience and it is a time to reassess business aims and strategy in light of the changed situation.

Gill shows the effectiveness of the five stage model of changing behaviour through an analysis of a case study where the model was used on an organisation which operates in the UK construction industry. (Gill '09)

Eileen Wubbe 'The Morale Stimulus Plan'

Wubbe outlines how employees are a company's biggest asset. Employers are creating new ways to keep morale and motivation on the upswing. Wubbe outlines how employees feel that the work they do, for example a project they worked on, can remain unrecognised and they are often unaware as to how extra work they undertake affects the company.

Following on from Crelos's five step change model above, Wubbe also highlights that after organisational change, it is important for companies to:

- 
- express empathy for what people have gone through
 - communicate to staff to maintain engagement
 - involve employees in work redesign post change
 - try to give staff an outline of potential career opportunities
 - recognise and show employees how their work contributes to the company

Wubbe highlights how morale and motivation have become increasingly important in organisations due to the turmoil in the economy. Increased workloads and budget cuts

etc have led companies towards becoming creative and strategy driven to keep employees motivated. Despite this, organisations usually do the same things even if they have not worked in the past.

During recession companies must own up for their wrong doings and express empathy for people experiencing the negative effects of this within the company. Communication, employee involvement and teamwork are key strategies post organisational change. Kim Angeli (vice president AccuVal Associates Inc) within this article expressed how implementing a “goal-based performance management system where employees can see their goals link to an organization goal” contributes towards employee motivation. She also says how involving people in change such as how to deal with increased workloads during the appraisal process, can engage employees in designing the change. Identifying what motivated employees, what is important to them and inspires them helps management to find ways to engage employees and encourage them to align their goals to organisation goals.

Wubbe highlights the continuous importance of morale and human capital either in a recession or not. People will continually need to be developed and organisations will be able to handle challenges thrown at them by investing in their human capital. (Wubbe 2010)

Jan Ferri-Reed ‘get your employees engaged 2010

Again the importance of employee engagement during a recession or during organisational change is highlighted. In a business downturn there is conflict between employees and the employer where staff can feel overwhelmed and underappreciated and employers are afraid to discuss potential career opportunities in case there are none. This can lead to losing staff to other companies when the recession has finished.

Ferri-Reed states how this time is critical to measure employee engagement to get real results not assumptions and to understand the commitment levels of employees at this time. If staff are disengaged productivity levels can fall, careless mistakes increase and loyalty is low. The true cost of employee disengagement can be huge losses in turnover. Downsizing leading to increased workload can contribute hugely to employee exhaustion leading to disengagement. And again Ferri-Reed outlines how top staff in the recession are likely to change jobs when they become available again. This highlights again the power of engagement and measuring it.

Engaged employees are:

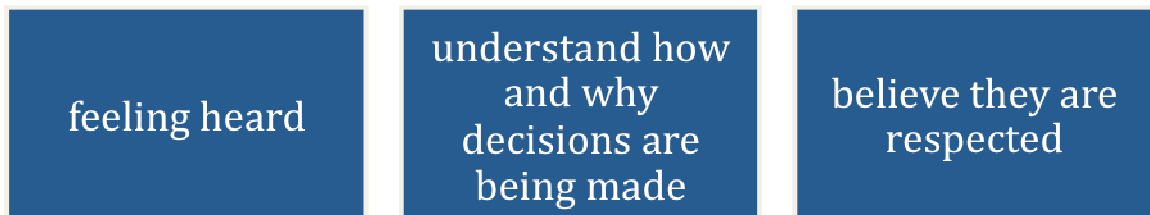


Jon Katzenbach and Paul Bromfield 'How to cut costs in a recession- with help from employees' 2009

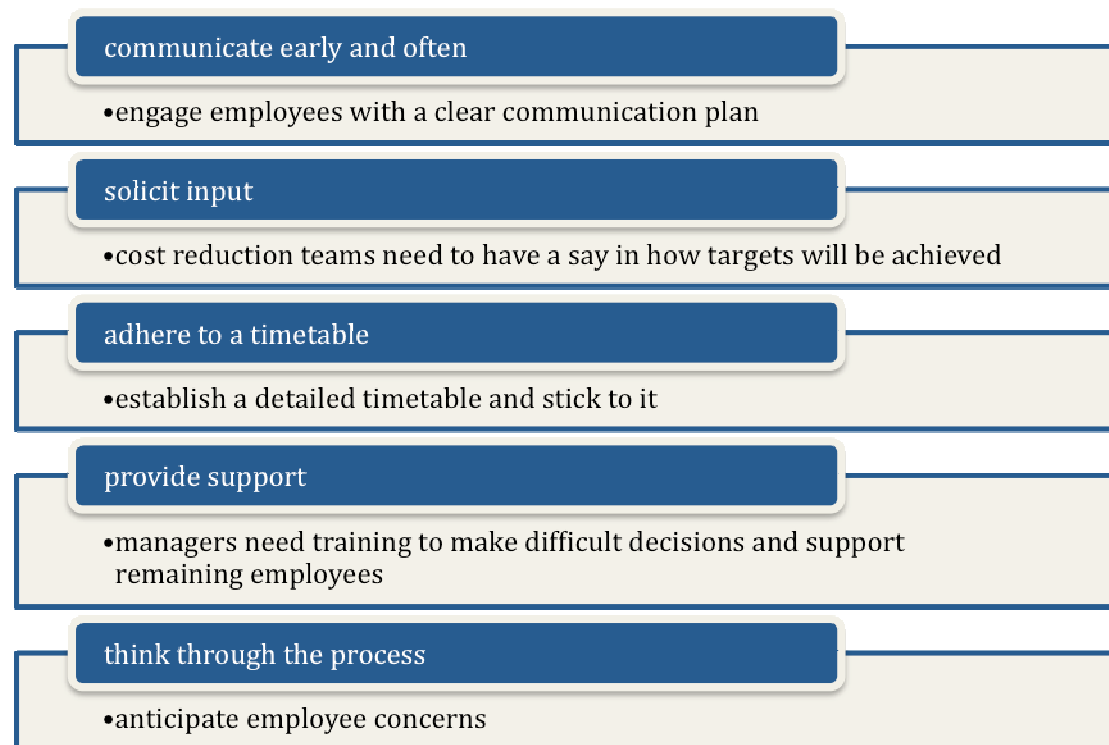
Many organisations ignore the need to invest on securing employee commitment and gaining positive emotional support from staff during cost reduction initiatives in a recession. It is critical that a workforce is actively involved in the initiative. The Motivating Cost Discipline approach has been used at a number of organisations:



Having an engaged workforce during times of cost cutting or organisation change has massive benefits. An engaged workforce are more likely to buy in to change when they believe that they are:



Katzenbach and Bromfeld have conducted research on effective cost-cutters and most follow the same steps:



Gallup’s extensive research discovered that change is most efficient at the frontline. Participation in decision making from frontline staff members provides information to ensure the best decisions are made at a senior level. (Harter etal ‘09)

2.5 Measuring and encouraging employee engagement

Ferri-Reed underpins the importance and ease of administering employee engagement surveys.

“Employee engagement surveys can be administered easily with a minimum of disruption in the workplace. Armed with a concrete measure of engagement, your organization can effectively craft strategies to rejuvenate company culture, training and development; do succession planning; and promote career development.

How to encourage employee engagement:

(Ferri Reid 2010)



Chris Bart Employee engagement- killers and cures 2011



2.6 Employee engagement, leadership and trust

Seaworks-Bill Day

Bill day is the managing director and strong and passionate leader of Seaworks a large ocean salvage and marine company in New Zealand. He is a well respected entrepreneur in New Zealand. He views every member of his organisation as a

valuable contributor in their own right. He is known for dismissing undesirable and unproductive divisions that naturally crept up in the company. Bill Day is quoted in saying that he has only hired people that he believed better than him so that he could concentrate on the more strategic side of the business. His trust in his workforce allows for the growth in competent, committed and confident staff resulting in engaged employees. Senior level management may not be able to show an interest in each individual staff member, but there must be concern shown for staff to help create a culture of trust. As Bill Day exemplifies, there should be strong, passionate and prideful leadership in successful organisations as indifferent managers lead to employee distrust and disengagement.

“Companies should not try to increase the level of control over their employees to try to prevent things from going wrong. Tightly controlled employees feel vulnerable and threatened, and will adopt a self-protective stance by disengaging from the organization. Control should instead be dispersed throughout the organization. Employees do not expect their leaders to be perfect, but do need to be trusted and to have a sense of control if they are to give their best in their working lives.”

The article reveals that key determinants of employee engagement are a sense of trust between employees and their managers as well as a sense of personal control. Trust must be communicated through the firm’s culture and must start from the top of the organization.

Michael Laff “Employee Disengagement Strikes Early” 2007

Laff outlines how it is evident that employee disengagement is a real and serious concern for the retention of staff in organisations. Laff studied research carried out by Kenexa Institute of New York. From a survey conducted on multinational companies in the United States and in the United Kingdom, 72% of new hires are actively engaged but by only the third year of employment this rate drops to 57%.

Jeffery Saltzmann of Kenexa New York believes that employees disengage because of :



Richard Pech - Delegating and devolving power: a case study of engaged employees 2009

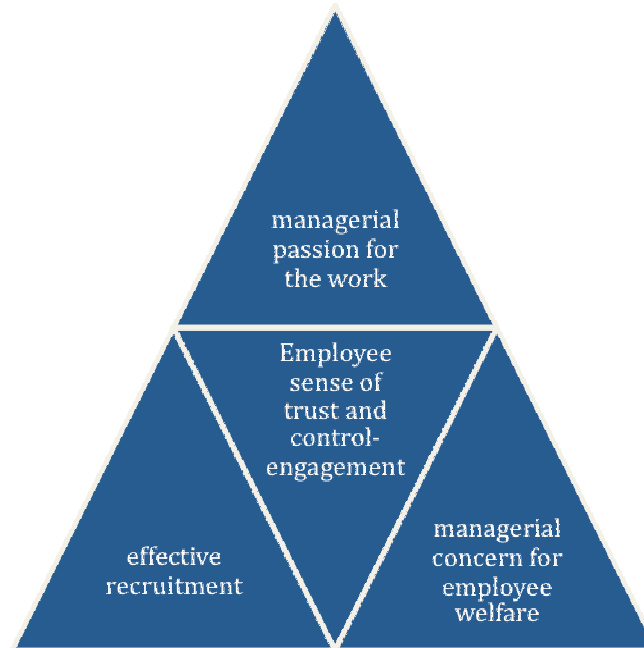
Organisations rarely work at their full potential. Lack of trust between staff and employer leads to demotivation and cognitive withdrawal. Disengagement has negative effects for not only the employer (inefficiencies, lack of commitment and reduced productivity) but also the disengaged employee. Pech maintains that the sense of detachment, demotivation and cynicism that results from disengagement serves no constructive purpose but to protect from stress. Pech mentions a link between the learning organisation and an engaged workforce.



Engagement and disengagement revolves around issues of trust and control. Pech Summarizes how a conflict exists in relation to this phenomenon. Employees need and want control and managers have it but refuse to share it. Pech has researched into how levels of control at work can have implications on individual's health and well-being. Therefore an employee deliberately disengaging from work where there is perceived low control, is a 'stress response mechanism' used to protect the individual from stress and help to cope. Pech highlights the importance of trust in organisations, focusing on the most common type of organisational trust:

social
trust

Social trust relates to the perceived motive of the individual. Its absence contributes towards disengagement and suspicious and defensive employees. Pech uses the example of Bill Day owner of Seaworks, New Zealand to exemplify great leadership and trust within an organisation.



“Employees are not asking for perfection, but if you want them to be engaged in their work, they will ask for trust and a sense of control.” (see above)

2.7 Other research

Employee Engagement Remains Stable- Ann Pace 2010

Pace summarized how research on US companies spanning all industries using a recent Sirota Survey Intelligence report indicates that employee engagement has remained stable pre and post recession. This is due to empathy employees feel to other individuals who have lost their job and the benefits that come with steady employment. The data has also shown that there has been an increase in organisation’s communication, involvement and efficiency from 2007 to 2009. In contrast to the positive results, it can also be seen that employees feel that service, security and development have decreased within the same timeframe. In contrast to other research, Pace concludes that having engaged employees does not necessarily equal retained employees.

2.8 Summary

From the review of the literature, the characteristics of employee engagement are:

- Individuals expressing themselves at work physically, emotionally and cognitively
- Employees having energy involvement and effectiveness
- Individuals being attentive and absorbed in their performance
- Workers having vigor, dedication and absorption
- Employees creating energy, passion and creativity through extra discretionary effort

A summary of the key theories reviewed:

Kahn's three psychological conditions of employee engagement and disengagement:

- Psychological meaningfulness- influenced by task, role and work interactions
- Psychological safety- Influenced by company culture, interpersonal relationships, management style and group dynamics
- Psychological awareness- influenced by physical and emotional energy, outside life and insecurities

Kahn's three stances of engagement are:

- Commitment
- Involvement
- Alienation

Kahn also wrote about psychological presence and that this concept has four aspects which indicate presence:

- Attentive
- Connected

- Integrated
- Focused

May tested Kahn's psychological conditions theory and demonstrated how they impacted on employee engagement. Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter generated theory on the "job burnout" concept. Maslach conceptualised how if there is a major mismatch or perceived mismatch with the employee in relation to the following six areas, this could lead to the destructive "job burnout". Workload, control, rewards, community, values and fairness. This is significant to employee engagement as research on this subject led to focus on its positive antithesis-engagement. It established the importance of employee engagement on preventing job burnout. Fairhurst and O'Connor established a correlation between employee well-being and employee engagement. They maintain that the two concepts can work in tandem or in opposition to one another. Fairhurst and O'Connor illustrate Gebauer and Lowman's "road map for a high-performance work environment" where leaders should, in relation to their workforce, know them, grow them, inspire them, involve them and reward them. The importance of maintaining employee engagement during or following organisation change is paramount. This research is significant to the organisation that is being researched as it is currently experiencing high levels of change. The literature review also studies other research on the relationship between trust, leadership and employee engagement. Examples have demonstrated how great leadership and high trust levels have impacted positively on employee engagement. Obviously measuring and encouraging employee engagement is an area of interest for the researcher as it helped to form recommendations from the primary research results.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the research philosophy and data collection method chosen by the author. It includes a background of the development of Gallup's Q12 questionnaire, why it was chosen and the significance of the Q12 and the idea of employee engagement. The concept behind the design of each question is outlined along with Forbringer's four levels analysis of the Q12 which will be used in the examination of the data obtained.

3.2 Procedure

The author followed a positivistic or deductive research philosophy where a quantitative research approach was used with a view to providing explanatory theories to understand or measure the concept of employee engagement. (Collis & Hussey '09) The research questions are then confirmed or rejected by subsequent analysis of the pure quantitative data. (Bryman & Bell 1999) (Howitt & Cramer '08) Quantitative research is any data collection method that produces numerical data. Quantitative data is measurable, quantifiable, objective and predictable. (Gargan 09) A 'mono method' of data collection was used. This is where a single quantitative approach is used in the form of one quantitative questionnaire. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill '07) A questionnaire is a structured, clear and concise survey which consists of asking a defined population for information. The Q12 questionnaire is composed of rating and ranking questions. (Coolican 1996) The participants specified their answer on a five-point likert-type scale from (i) strongly disagree to (v) strongly agree. (Saks '06) The Q12 questions are simple, clear and concise and therefore express 'face validity'

which indicates what the test measures on face value. (Rothmann & Cooper '08) Due to the size and location of the sample population of company x, the author preferred this research approach for the ease of distribution and collection.

The data for this study was collected by workers currently employed at company x. After receiving written permission from the company, the Q12 questionnaire was distributed via email to 200 potential respondents. The data collected was then graphed and analysed.

3.3 Participants

Participants included 300 employees currently working at company x. There were 167 respondents. The participants are working in a wide variety of different roles and locations. For reasons of accessibility a random 'opportunity' or 'non-probability' sample was taken from the population ranging from having managerial roles to subordinate workers. (Horn 09) The sample also included full time and part time staff. The average age of the respondents was 30 – 39 (47.9%) and the average length of working time in the company was 5 – 10 yrs (27.5%).

3.4 Background

Harter Schmidt Killham Agrawal Q12 Meta-Analysis: The relationship between engagement at work and organisational outcomes.

George Gallup founded the development of scientific sampling processes to assess popular opinion. His interest in employee engagement research stemmed from finding that less than half of the working population in North America and less again in other regions of the world were "highly satisfied with their work". Clifton and Gallup

deduced that measuring employee satisfaction alone was inadequate to generating sustainable change.

Gallup developed the Q12 instrument for measuring employee engagement from repetitive and refined previous research. In parallel with Dr Clifton who researched strengths and factors that positively contribute to the work environment, Dr. Gallup assessed high performing teams and individuals. The concepts of both talent and environment were entrenched in the Q12. The Q12 allows for the study of the relationship between job satisfaction and employee engagement. The author chose to test the Q12 as it has been administered to more than 15 million employees in 169 different countries and it was based on more than 30 years of broad quantitative and qualitative research and its reliability has been proven. Gallup maintains that “The only items kept were those where the most engaged employees answered neutrally or negatively”. The significance of using this instrument to measure employee engagement in company x is that in using it, Gallup has proven that “business units at the highest level of employee engagement have an 83% chance of having high performance.” In contrast to this “this compares to a 17% chance for those with the lowest level of employee engagement.”

“This meta-analysis, repeated across time, has found consistently that there are positive concurrent and predictive relationships between employee attitudes and various important business outcomes.” (Harter et al ‘09)

The Q12 questionnaire is a means of measuring “actionable issues” or “engagement conditions” where employee attitudes can be predicted and ultimately engagement is measured. (Harter et al ‘09)

3.5 Design

The following is a discussion on the concepts behind the 13 questions/statements in the Q12 questionnaire.

Q00. On a five-point scale, where “5” is extremely satisfied and “1” is extremely dissatisfied, how satisfied are you with your company as a place to work?

Because this is a “satisfaction” item, a “satisfaction scale is used instead of an “agreement scale”. This is an “attitudinal outcome” of how individuals feel about their place of work. The other issues in the 12 questions that follow, explain why individuals are satisfied or not satisfied, therefore, why they become engaged or disengaged.

Q01. I know what is expected of me at work.

According to Gallup, this is possibly an employee’s most basic need and manager’s main responsibility to provide in the workplace.

Q02. I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.

Gallup maintains that providing the right materials and equipment to employees, demonstrates that the employee is valued and that they have support.

Q03. At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.

This positively implies that the organisation nurtures the talent of the employee and managers aware of their staff member’s talents are better able to position the individual in the right work environment or role.

Q004. In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.

The concept of receiving frequent feedback in the workplace is a positive contributor to becoming engaged.

Q05. My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.

This idea of having someone in work who cares about the individual implies that the employee is listened to.

Q06. There is someone at work who encourages my development.

Recognising the talent of an employee allows management to provide opportunities in line with the individual's talents which will benefit both the staff member and the organisation.

Q07. At work, my opinion seems to count.

Employees are generally more knowledgeable about the first hand day to day processes etc and are therefore very beneficial in participating in the decision making process. This is advantageous for the employee and to the organisation.

Q08. The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.

Managers who demonstrate how their staff's work contributes to the organisation's overall mission will give the employee's a sense of purpose and in turn help the organisation's mission to be embedded within the culture.

Q09. My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.

The concept behind this question is for management to select "conscientious employees" which increases the opportunity for quality interactions in the workplace.

Q10. I have a best friend at work.

Management should encourage staff to get to know each other not hinder the process. This is a "basic human need" which can then "influence communication, trust and other outcomes".

Q11. In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.

Regular meetings between managers and their employees about the individuals goal's, aspirations regarding their career and where they are currently allows managers to give guidance and learn about their employees.

Q12. This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.

Managers should know what training best suits individual employees and individuals have a need to be recognised for their good work and know that they are progressing and have opportunities. (Harter etal '09)

The questions include “extremes” for example that make it hard to answer with a “strongly agree/disagree”. This was chosen purposefully removing extremes from a question removes the variability of the answers. (Forbringer)

Forbringer groups the 12 questions into levels 1 to 4 and displays why the Q12 questions are asked in the sequence that they are in. Level 1 “What do I get” includes Q01 and Q02 and these are the participant employee's basic needs and these questions need to be answered to be able to focus on the subsequent issues the Q12 questionnaire studies. Level 2 “What do I give?” includes four questions Q03 to Q06. This is where the participant focuses on how they are doing as an individual and how others in the workplace perceives them. Level 3 “Do I belong here?” includes Q07 to Q10. The participant will begin to question how and whether they fit in their organisation and the previous questions will have inspired the thought process needed to answer them. Level 4 “How can we all grow?” includes Q11 to Q12. Forbringer argues that when the participant employee can answer all 12 questions positively, they are an engaged employee employing their best qualities in the workplace every day with a clear focus and a shared sense of purpose. Forbringer illustrates how it is

difficult to remain engaged at all times as working in a dynamic organisational and economic environment presents many challenges. (Forbringer)

3.6 Summary

The research methodology highlights that due to the large scale size and location of the organisation, a quantitative research method was the most suitable to obtain the data needed to answer the research questions outlined in the introduction. The rationale for using Gallup's Q12 questionnaire was argued and its previous validity and reliability along with the extensive research that has gone into its development led to the choice of its use in the research method. Forbringer's method for analysing the Q12 questionnaire will be used in the next chapter for interpreting the findings from the data.

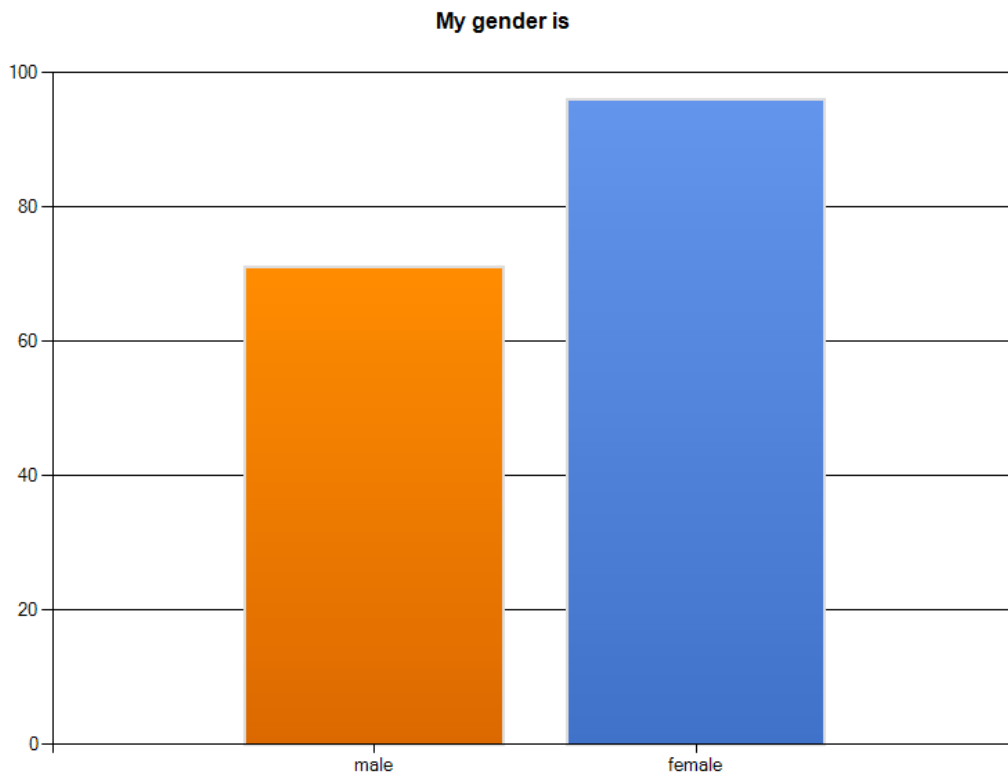
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The author will outline in this chapter the findings of the primary research that was described in chapter three. The results will be graphed visually and a table of results will accompany the Q12 graph. A brief summary of the results will be outlined underneath each graph. The analysis of the results will be discussed in chapter five. The purpose of the analysis is to establish the levels of employee engagement in company x during a period of organisational change.

4.2 graphed results

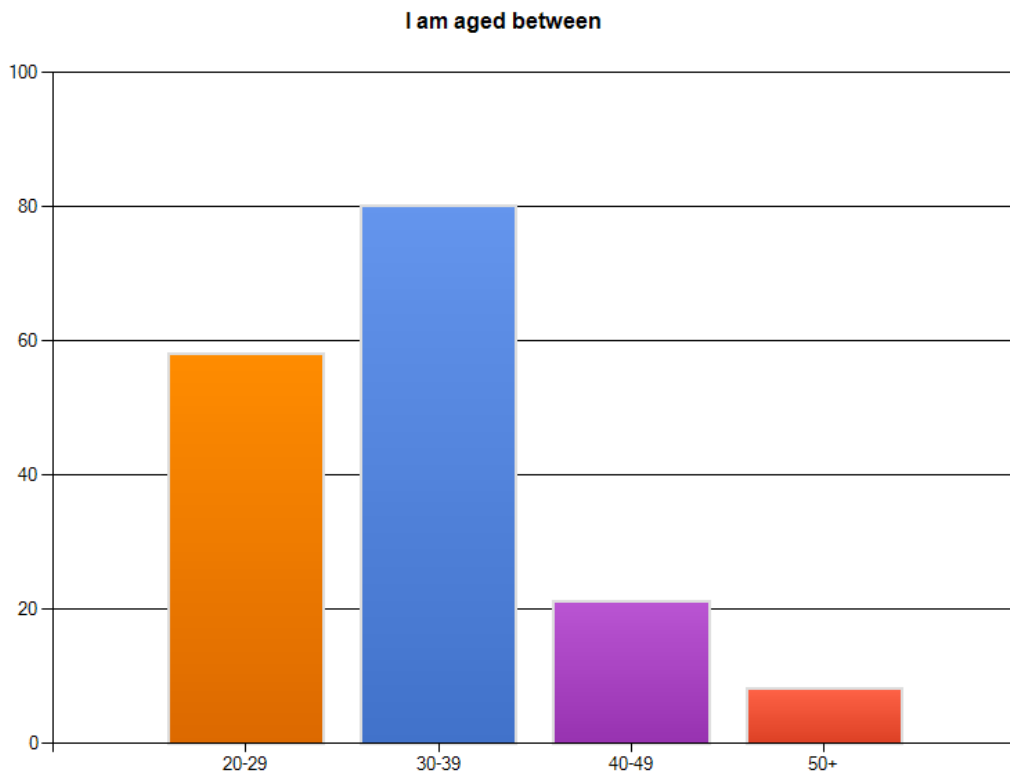
4.2.1 Graph (i)



Question: My gender is:

Answer options	response percent	response count
Male	42.5%	71
Female	57.5%	96
Answered question:	167	
Skipped question	0	

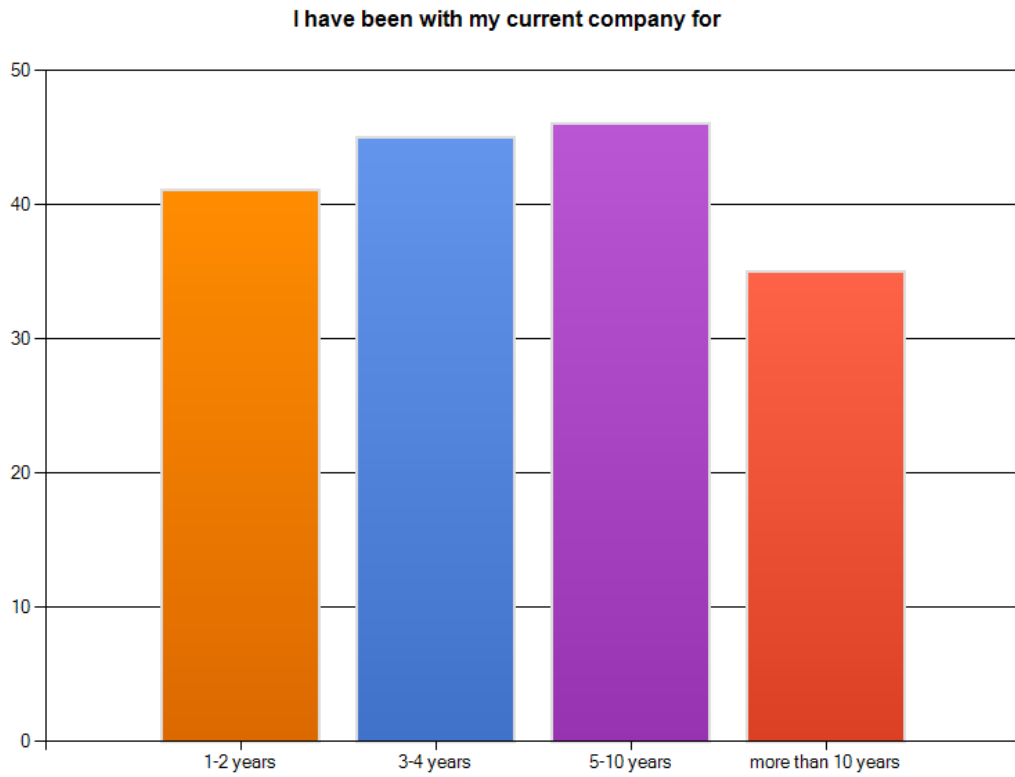
4.2.2 Graph (ii)



Question: I am aged between:

Answer options	response percent	response count
20-29	34.7%	58
30-39	47.9%	80
40-49	12.6%	21
50+	4.8%	8
Answered question	167	
Skipped question	0	

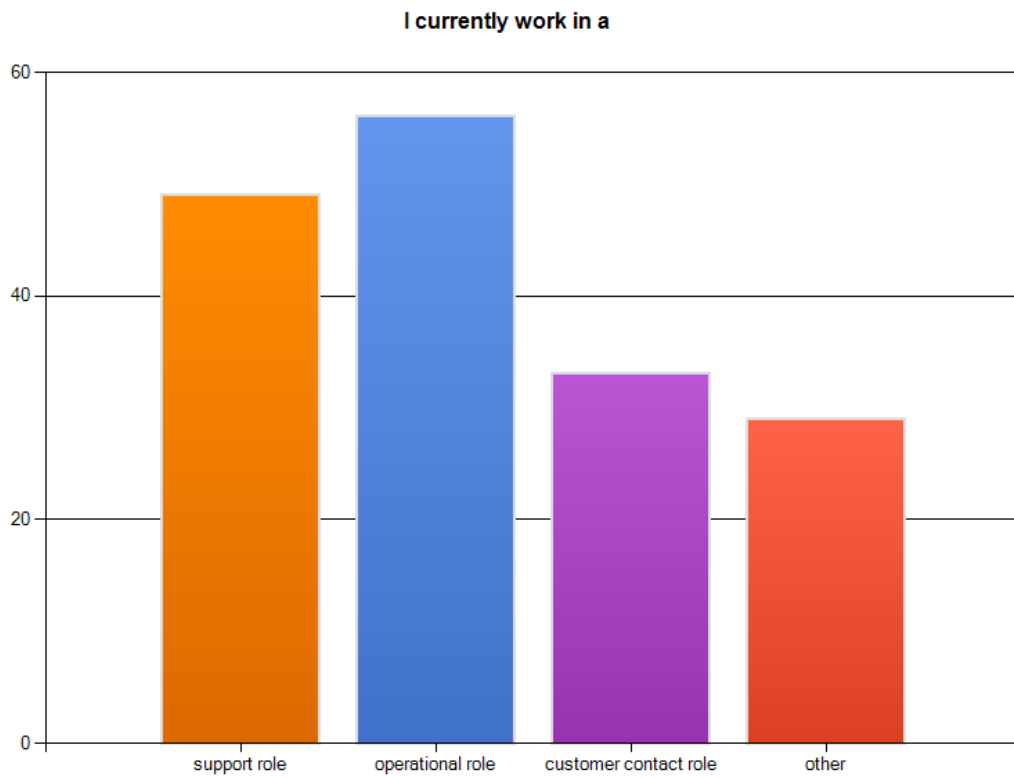
4.2.3 *Graph (iii)*



Question: I have been with my current company for:

Answer options	response percent	response count
1-2 years	24.6%	41
3-4 years	26.9%	45
5-10 years	27.5%	46
more than 10 years	21.0%	35
Answered question	167	
Skipped question	0	

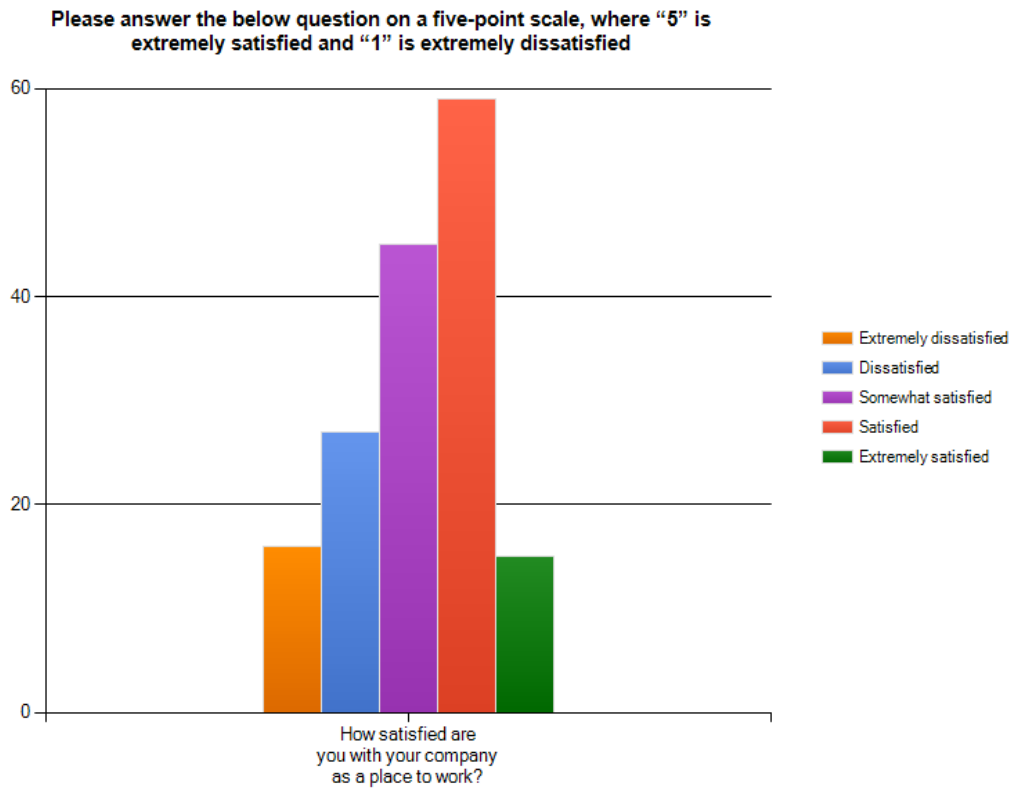
4.2.4 Graph (iv)



Question: I currently work in a:

Answer options	response percent	response count
Support role	29.3%	49
Operational role	33.5%	56
Customer contact role	19.8%	33
Other	17.4%	29
Answered question	167	
Skipped question	0	

4.2.5 Graph (v)

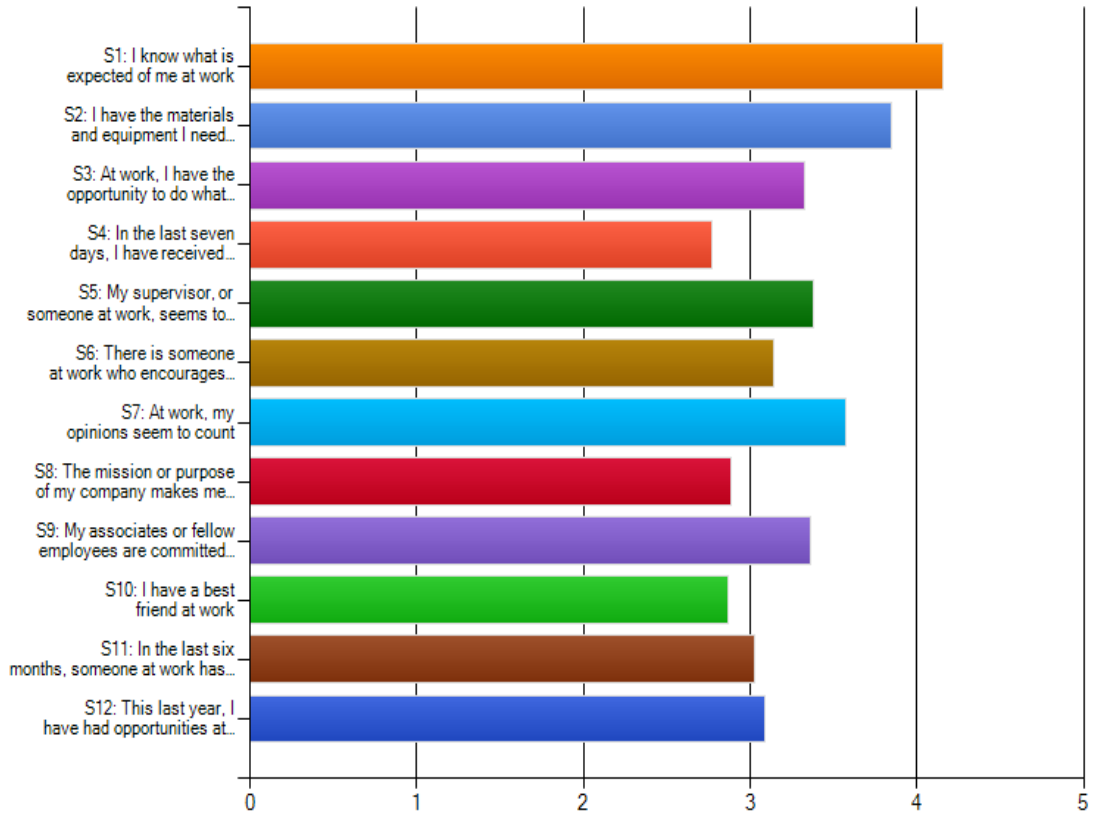


Question: How satisfied are you with your company as a place to work?

Answer options	response count
Extremely dissatisfied	16
Dissatisfied	27
Somewhat satisfied	45
Satisfied	59
Extremely satisfied	15
Answered question	162
Skipped question	5

4.2.6 Graph (vi)

Please rate the below statements using from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).
Alternatively please indicate if the statement does not apply to you.



Q12 questionnaire results

Answered question: 155

4.2.7 Table 1

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Q01	0.6% (1)	3.2% (5)	12.9% (20)	45.8% (71)	37.4% (58)
Q02	5.2% (8)	5.2% (8)	18.1% (28)	43.2% (67)	28.4% (44)
Q03	4.5% (7)	20.0% (31)	23.9% (37)	38.1% (59)	12.9% (20)
Q04	16.2% (25)	28.6% (44)	15.6% (24)	24.7% (38)	11.7% (18)
Q05	7.8% (12)	13.0% (20)	20.1% (31)	35.7% (55)	20.1% (31)
Q06	11.7% (18)	19.5% (30)	24.7% (38)	28.6% (44)	14.9% (23)
Q07	4.5% (7)	12.3% (19)	24.0% (37)	36.4% (56)	22.1% (34)
Q08	17.5% (27)	22.1% (34)	24.0% (37)	20.1% (31)	14.9% (23)
Q09	5.8% (9)	13.0% (20)	23.4% (36)	41.6% (64)	13.6% (21)
Q10	11.7% (18)	25.3% (39)	25.3% (39)	23.4% (36)	11.0% (17)
Q11	13.6% (21)	15.6% (24)	17.5% (27)	31.8% (49)	15.6% (24)
Q12	12.3% (19)	17.5% (27)	21.4% (33)	26.6% (41)	18.2% (28)

Q01-Q12

- Q01** I know what is expected of me at work
- Q02** I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right
- Q03** At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day
- Q04** In the last 7 days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work
- Q05** My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person
- Q06** There is someone at work who encourages my development
- Q07** At work, my opinions seem to count
- Q08** The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important
- Q09** My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work
- Q10** I have a best friend at work
- Q11** In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress
- Q12** This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will include a discussion of the findings from chapter four in detail. The findings will be referred to and related to previous literature. The results and findings will be tested against Forbringer's Q12 notion of levels within the Q12 questionnaire. The research questions will be tested with support from the literature review. Possible limitations to the research will be discussed.

5.2 Interpretation of results

The primary data results from the Q12 questionnaire on company x will be interpreted using Forbringer's study of the Gallup's Q12 questionnaire.

Level 1 "what do I get?" groups the answers from Q01 to Q02. In order to focus on improving employee engagement the organisation must ensure that the employee's basic needs are met. A worker's basic needs according to Forbringer, are knowing what is expected of you and having the resources to perform your role.

Q01 – 45.8% of the participants agreed that they know what is expected of them in this company. 37.4% strongly agreed with this statement. This data indicates that the majority of the company's employees who participated in the questionnaire feel that they know what is expected of them in work.

Q02 – 43.2% of the respondents feel that they have the materials and equipment they need to do their work right. 28.4% strongly agree with this statement. This suggests that the majority of the participants feel that they have the necessary resources to perform their role.

Level 2 “what do I give?” groups the answers from Q03 to Q06. As you move through the questionnaire, this next segment of questions invoke you to contemplate on how you are doing as an employee and what your perceptions are of how others think you are doing.

Q03 – 38.1% agreed that they have the opportunity to do their best every day. 23.9% somewhat agreed with this statement. This data shows that the majority of the participants feel that they at least have the opportunity to do their best every day in the workplace.

Q04 – 28.6% disagreed and felt that in the last seven days they did not receive recognition or praise for doing good work. In contrast 24.7% agreed with the statement. It is interesting to note the contrast of responses to this question from employees in the same company. This illustrates the influence of line management style on employee engagement.

Q05 – 35.7% agreed and felt that a supervisor or someone at work cared about them as a person. 20.1% strongly agreed with this statement and 20.1% somewhat agreed. The majority of the participants agreed in some form with the above statement.

Q06 – 28.6% feel that yes there is someone at work who encourages their development and 24.7% somewhat agreed with this statement. There are positive responses in all areas of level 2 except for how employees feel about being rewarded and recognised. This is an area company x should study further for a possible solution.

Level 3 “do I belong here?” groups the answers from Q07 to Q10. The previous questions should have widened the perspective of the participant and helped them to

answer the next set. This level questions whether the participant feels that they belong or fit in the organisation.

Q07 – 36.4% agreed that their opinions count in the workplace. 24% somewhat agreed with this assertion.

Q08 – 24% agreed that the mission of this organisation makes them feel that their job is important. In contrast a similar percentage, 22.1% disagreed with this statement.

Q09 – 41.6% of the participants feel that their fellow associates are committed to doing quality work and 23.4% somewhat agreed with this statement.

Q10 – 25.3% disagreed and somewhat agreed that they have a best friend at work. 23.4% agreed that they do have a best friend at work. This is the level that the employee's of company x feel most negatively about. This illustrates that company x has some work to do on developing it's strategy and culture to foster employee engagement.

Level 4 “how can we all grow?” includes answers from Q11 and Q12. This is the advanced stage of the questionnaire and the focus is on learning, growing and innovation. Pondering the previous 10 questions will prepare the participant in answering the final two questions.

Q11 – 31.8% agreed that yes in the last six months someone in the organisation has spoken to them about their progress. 17.5% somewhat agreed with this.

Q12 – 26.6% of the participants agreed that within the last year, they have had opportunities at work to learn and grow. 21.4% somewhat agreed with this. Despite the problems with level 3, the majority of the respondents from company x feel that there is room for learning, growing and innovation in the workplace.

5.3 Testing the research questions

Research Question 1: Are the employee's basic needs met?

In company x, the employee's basic needs are met. This is proven from the findings from the Q12 questionnaire as the majority of respondents answered that they somewhat agree, agree or strongly agree with the two questions at level one of the questionnaire.

Research Question 2: Do the employees in this company have a positive image of their individual self esteem and worth?

The author agrees that the employees of company x have a positive image of their individual self esteem and worth, but can feel that they do not get the reward and recognition for their work. This potential lack of recognition and reward could lead to the employee's levels of positive self image and worth decreasing.

Research Question 3: Do the employees in this organisation feel that they fit?

The employees of company x are struggling with this concept. They feel their opinions count and that their colleagues are doing quality work, but they struggle with seeing how their work fits in with the overall company strategy. The employees of company x that participated in the research, feel that they have a best friend in work, and nearly the same amount feel that they do not. This is another management issue, the significance of working relationships should be realised and encouraged to flourish.

Research Question 4: Do the workers feel that there is a focus on their progression and that they have opportunities to learn and grow at work?

Yes the majority of the staff that participated in the Q12 questionnaire feel or somewhat feel that there is a focus on their progression and that they have opportunities to learn and grow at work.

Research Question 5: Are the employee's in this organisation engaged?

From the analysis of the findings, the author would say that this organisation's workforce is enrolled and partially disenchanted. Apart from questions Q04 and Q10, the majority of the respondents from company x responded to the statements in a generally positive way – from 'somewhat agree' to 'strongly agree'. The author maintains that a percentage of the participants are also partially disenchanted. This is demonstrated with the higher negative responses to questions Q04 and Q10 which deal with the emotional side of employee engagement in the form of reward, recognition and feeling like the individual has a best friend at work. (Gebauer) This is good news for company x as despite the fact that the organisation is currently undergoing substantial change, the workforce is not suffering from disengagement. There is still some work to go in relation to reaching full engagement and sustaining this. Overall the author feels that the majority of respondents answered in a positive way to Gallup's Q12 questionnaire. Forbringer suggests that this indicates that the employees work in business units with potentially high levels of productivity, profit, retention and customer satisfaction. This also establishes a link between employee opinion and business performance. The findings from the Q12 questionnaire would point to the fact that individuals answers were shaped by the ability of their immediate supervisor. (Forbringer)

Kahn's theory of the psychological conditions of engagement and disengagement:

As discussed in the literature review, Kahn maintains that there are three psychological conditions to employee engagement- meaningfulness, safety and availability. Kahn argues that if employees find themselves in roles or situations that stimulate psychological meaningfulness and safety, that this will lead to the individual

becoming psychologically available, or engaged. The author believes that positive responses to the following questions on the Gallup Q12 questionnaire suggests an employee is experiencing psychological meaningfulness in the workplace. Q03 (positive response), Q06 (positive response), Q07 (positive response), Q08 (positive response), Q11 (positive response) and Q12 (positive response). The author believes that positive responses to the following questions on the Gallup Q12 questionnaire suggests the employee is experiencing psychological safety. Q04 (negative response), Q05 (positive response) and Q10 (positive and negative response). These findings would indicate that the majority of respondents experience psychological meaningfulness in the workplace of company x. In contrast the data suggests that the majority of respondents struggle with feeling psychologically safe in the workplace of company x. This illustrates that the participants of company x are not yet fully psychologically available and at the stage of full engagement. It is important to note that May's research on Kahn's theory argued that psychological meaningfulness displayed the strongest relation to employee engagement and that meaningfulness indicated that there was correct role-fit and job enrichments. As the author has suggested May illustrates how reward and supervisor support are linked to the condition of psychological safety. May deduced that if resources in the work environment are available, this positively relates to psychological availability. The majority of respondents from company x answered positively to Q02 which shows how the participants feel that they have the materials and equipment (resources) they need to do their job right. (Kahn 1990) (May etal '04)

Maslach et al's theory of job burnout:

As has been previously discussed in the literature review, Maslach et al developed the job burnout theory and the significance of its positive opposite, employee engagement. The job burnout theory is where there is a major mismatch in any of the six areas outlined.

Workload- Apart from the obvious, this area can also mean not having sufficient skills to manage a workload. The author believes that a negative response to Q06 represents a mismatch in this area. The majority of respondents answered positively.

Reward- The author believes that answering negatively to Q04 would indicate a mismatch in this area. The majority of respondents answered negatively.

Control- If an employee feels that they have insufficient authority to pursue their work effectively this can illustrate a lack of control. The author believes that responding negatively to Q07 would represent a mismatch in this area. The majority of participants answered positively.

Community- This is an area where an employee needs to feel a connection with others in the workplace. The author believes that responding to Q09 & Q10 negatively would represent a mismatch in this area. The majority of respondents answered positively to Q09 and positively and negatively to Q10.

Fairness- If role evaluations are handled inappropriately, this can be perceived to be unfair to an employee. The author believes that responding negatively to Q11 would represent a mismatch in this area. The majority of respondents answered positively to Q11.

Values- A mismatch in values could mean a mismatch in an employee's personal aspirations and the company mission or strategy. The author believes that responding

negatively to Q11 and Q12 would represent a mismatch in this area. The majority of participants answered positively to both Q11 and Q12.

The findings above illustrate that due to the lack of mismatch for the majority of respondents in most of the above areas, the phenomenon of job burnout or employee disengagement does not exist in company x. Maslach et al also signifies that mismatches may be weighted differently according to each individual and therefore it is important to look at the individual in context. This is a limitation to the research carried out in this report as it would not have been feasible to test this theory at an individual level. (Maslach et al '01)

5.4 Conclusion

The findings and results of the research have been analysed and compared with the literature. The author has attempted to determine the level of employee engagement in company x. A summary of the findings show that company x is not fully engaged but it is by no means disengaged either. The majority of its employees who participated in the research are “enrolled” and perhaps “disenchanted”. The staff that took part in this research study have experienced Kahn’s psychological condition of meaningfulness in the workplace. May illustrates a significant link in experiencing the presence of this condition and having employee engagement. In comparison to meaningfulness, the condition of psychological safety did not result as positively. With the lack of psychological safety, Kahn maintains that psychological availability (engagement) will not exist. From the comparison of the findings with Maslach’s theory of job burnout, it is worth noting that there is no evidence of major job burnout. However, Maslach has maintained that it can be worth studying potential job burnout at an individual level. The discussion highlights the interpretation of the

results with Forbringer's Levels in Gallup's Q12 questionnaire. The results indicate that at level 1 majority employee needs are met, at level 2 the employee respondents feel that their need for reward and recognition are not being met, at level 3 there is a mixed opinion on how important the employee's feel their role is in relation to the mission of the organisation. There is mixed responses to how if staff feel they have a best friend at work. At level four the majority employee needs are being met. In the concluding chapter, The author will make recommendations to help increase employee engagement levels in company x based on the results of the research in the following areas – line management style, employee participation and organisation culture.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Recommendations

In conclusion, The majority of the respondent employees from company x feel that their needs are met at Forbringer's level 1 and level 4. This illustrates that they feel that they know what is expected of them, they have the resources to do their job and that there is focus on learning, growing and innovation in their workplace. Managers should focus on meeting worker's needs at level 1 and level 2, as Forbringer claims that if employee's needs are not met at these low levels, all other efforts at high level may be a waste of time and resources. Generally managers have been trained to focus at a high level so it may be difficult to move away from this habit and start at the "beginning". "Great managers take aim at level 1 and level 2."(Forbringer) Company x should focus on making change at level 2 in the form of ensuring there is adequate reward and recognition for each employee for doing good work. 22.1% of respondents find it difficult to see how their role fits in with the overall company mission and 25.3% feel that they do not have a best friend in the workplace. The author summarizes that the three main areas that company x need to concentrate on are reward and recognition, organisation mission or culture and encouraging and developing friendships in the workplace. This "engagement gap" can be closed by:

- Having effective and engaged leadership at the top
- Aligning work force strategies with business unit objectives
- Shaping and customizing the culture and workplace
- To be as interested in the needs of the employees as the needs of customers
- To understand the employees needs, issues and values (Gebauer)

A very effective way to develop the culture or mission of an organisation and in turn cultivating employee engagement is by having employee participation.

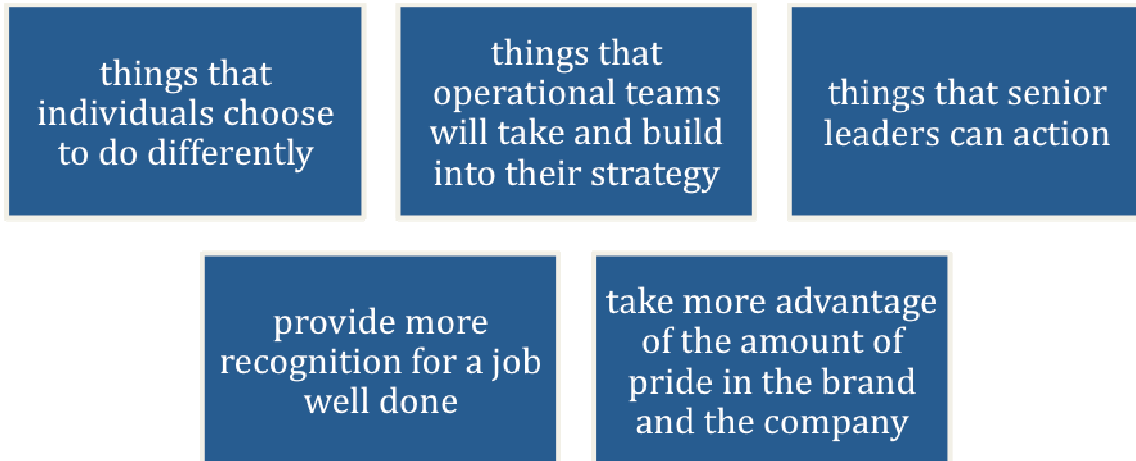
Amanda Jongeneel and Penny Randall- Using World Café to rebuild optimism at Renault Trucks UK

Re-engaging a workforce need not be impossible or expensive. The World Café (EM(IC)) concept was applied at Renault UK to improve morale and increase engagement.

How World Cafes work:

1. an employee group is taken out of the conference room environment and into a relaxed café style room
2. the group is split into smaller groups of 5 or 6 with a World Café facilitator at each table
3. organisation objectives are set and the employee group is involved in discussing ideas and participation
4. emotive questions and the facilitators help to focus discussions in a positive and creative way
5. senior leaders are encouraged to move around the room as observers offering encouragement
6. output is then collated, published in a newsletter and used in company strategy

Output from Renault World Café categories:



This strategy would be a cost effective and innovative way of employing buy in from the workers, developing the culture and mission, increasing two-way communication and enhancing senior management visibility. Encouraging and sustaining employee engagement should start from the top down from senior management to line management.

“senior leaders are a far more potent engagement factor than immediate managers. While “my manager” clearly matters and plays some role in a number of dimensions that foster engagement, we believe it’s a dangerous oversimplification to assume that engagement is all about the supervisor”. Gabauer outlines the top ten drivers of employee engagement and it can be seen that these happen mainly at organisational level not at local or departmental level. The idea is that it filters down the layers from business strategy to business unit culture.

Gebauer: top ten drivers of employee engagement globally

- senior management being sincerely interested in employee well being
- improved my skills and capabilities over the last year
- organization’s reputation for social responsibility
- input into decision making in my department

- organization quickly resolves customer concerns
- set high personal standards
- have excellent career advancement opportunities
- enjoy challenging work assignments that broaden skills
- good relationship with supervisor
- organization encourages innovative thinking (Gebauer)

At the same time, in order to achieve high level goals for employees, consistent expectations should be set for workers all the while continuing to view each employee as an individual. “The manager’s or supervisor’s position, though, allows him or her to take the lead in establishing a culture that values behaviours that support these perceptions” (Gallup)

. Managers should:

- care
- challenge
- create roles that use individual talents
- give regular praise

(Forbringer)

Fairhurst and O’Connor argue that to sustain employee engagement and retain talent in the organisation, the company needs to understand employee well-being and recognise ways to measure and track it. Measuring employee engagement will allow for the development of specific strategies and interventions to correct, encourage and sustain it. Company x should realise that they cannot become complacent about employee engagement in particular in times of organisational change. (Gebauer)

Gebauer highlights the effects of consistently producing effective leaders within the

organisation. “Engagement is about the work environment and nature - even texture – of the work experience. It’s about the unique intangibles that effective leaders create over time by delivering value to customers and communities, treating employees with fairness and respect, and demonstrating genuine interest in the mutual success and growth of all stakeholders.” (Gebauer)

For effective leaders to emerge, organisations can draw on Gebauer and Lowman’s road map for a high-performance work environment. This, as outlined in the literature review, is where leaders follow the five principles of encouraging an engaged workforce. Know them, grow them, inspire them, involve them and reward them. (Fairhurst & O’Connor) Company x should focus on inspiring, involving and rewarding it’s employees. Company x is experiencing huge levels of industrial and organisational change. The organisation should adhere to Crelos’ precision business psychology approach by ensuring that they define specifically the current and future state of the organisation, assess gaps in terms of employee behaviours, skills and attitudes, clearly communicate the necessary change, prepare for the change by involving the employees and looking at possible risks and success scenarios, focus on developing it’s workforce and concentrate on maintaining the change by examining what went right and what went wrong. (Gill ‘09)

6.2 Conclusion

This report emphasizes the importance of increasing and sustaining employee engagement. This is of paramount importance in a company undergoing organisational change. The author carried out a review of the main literature around the subject and summarized the key themes and models from the main theorists in conjunction with supporting research. The research methodology for answering the

research questions including the procedure, background and design was outlined. From analysing and discussing the results, a number of recommendations were made in relation to improvement of employee engagement in company x. The author believes that focusing on having an engaged workforce in any organisation especially in times of change, leads to having a motivated, productive, creative, innovative, happy and committed workforce which leads to increased organisational performance and competitive advantage in a highly competitive industry. This report has outlined the many benefits that employee engagement brings for the employer and the employee. These benefits can be achieved through effective leadership and organisational culture, having employee participation and excellent work/role fit along with regular measurement of employee engagement levels. Many aspects of employee engagement in company x scored highly particularly in the areas of resources, expectations, perceptions of co-workers and having someone who cares about you at work. The author believes that the Gallup Q12 questionnaire was a reliable indicator of employee engagement levels.

“engaged employees are not born, but made.” (Gebauer)

APPENDICES

CHAPTER 7: REFERENCES / BIBLIOGRAPHY

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