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Employees Engagement in Marks & Spencer

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The practices of human resource management are alone not enough to explain the employees' engagement and their decision to stay in an organization or leave. Socio-demographic characteristics also determine the choice. Psychological characteristics are also important dimensions that help to explain some attitudes of employees towards their work (Chang, 1999). People have expectations about their jobs, and their behavior depends on the correlation between these expectations and their perception of reality.

Since 1960, employee engagement is an important concept for researchers and even for managers (Suliman & Iles, 2000). Nature of commitment defines the relationship between an employee and another entity. Most often, this kind of commitment is conceptualized in terms of commitment of employees to their employer, but this relationship may also have other targets, such as a service or supervisor (Fedor et al., 2006). Organizational commitment is associated with the intention of the employee to keep his job and therefore the stability of the staff. It is therefore essential that managers develop the commitment of their employees so that they have the intention to stay in their jobs. In reality, there are a number of organizational and personal characteristics that can influence the quality of organizational engagement of employee. For example, employees develop a sense of organizational commitment when they have an attachment to their managers (Lee, 2004). It is an act of reciprocity in a relationship between the employee and the manager. This is why it would be helpful for a supervisor to develop and

encourage effective communication with subordinates as quality of this relationship influences the attitude of the employee and the work environment.

There are five dimensions which indicate workers' expectations towards an employment act: job involvement, commitment to employment, commitment to career, organizational commitment and job satisfaction. These concepts take consideration of the fact that individuals do make a distinction between their jobs, their organization, their profession and work. If HRM practices should be modified to increase the attraction and employee's engagement, it is essential that managers understand why individual is likely or not to leave the organization.

#### Employees Engagement at Marks and Spencer

Marks & Spencer is the largest fashion retailers of UK. Marks & Spencer knows that the retention of employees is one of the biggest challenges for the company. Hence, the company highly stresses on employees engagement. According to the HR director of M&S Tanith Dodge, the company emphasizes on four factors to engage its employees. These four factors are:

1. Opportunity and Well-Being;
2. Pride in the company;
3. Trust and
4. Involvement

#### Opportunity and Well Being

M &S HRM practices, acting in accordance with the psychological and organizational behavior of employees and have an impact on engaging them into the organization. Well being of

an employee contributes to the establishment of a stable organization with very safe and secure work environment carrying values of loyalty to the organization and work satisfaction, in which everyone is willing to make the necessary efforts to achieve the objectives set by the company.

As emphasized by Mitchell et al. (2001), several reasons determine the employee engagement and have a link with the work situation, either with the reality outside the workplace. These Pull factors consist of individual, family, socioeconomic and some reasons relating more particularly to the company and its immediate environment. All these variables affect course of the individual at the time of personal and professional decision making. Considering the many pull factors, the worker after all that fits in a normal process of seeking balance between realization of his desires and his participation, integration into a social context and organization meeting their aspirations.

#### Pride in the Company

Marks & Spencer believes that pride in the company is an important factor to achieve employees' engagement. The employees of M&A take pride that their company is the largest fashion retailer of UK which is also an ecological retailer. Marks & Spencer notices that with pride in the company the worker feels the need to maintain here the benefits of his decision to remain with the company. He always considers the opportunity cost associated with having to break the link with the M&A. The level of employees' pride in the organization increases when they perceive that these costs are too high, the benefits associated with the new position does not really worth.

For the employee, the act of leaving M&A for another company may be very expensive, especially if he has the feeling of losing certain advantages and its association with another

company does not compensate it for their loss. Finally, the individual can demonstrate a moral commitment if he feels deeply within himself the obligation to maintain the link with the organization (Lee, Carswell & Allen, 2000). Because of its ethics, its values and its principles, it is his duty to continue working for the same employer. For him, it is inconceivable to join another company.

### Trust

Creating a relationship of trust and confidence is important for employees' engagement however, it is a daunting task. "Polls show that 7 out of 10 employees don't trust their boss or the company they work for. The only way to build trust is for leaders to really demonstrate that they live the values; that they walk, talk and embed the values." (Maclachlan, 2011). In order to gain trust of the employees, M&S makes it necessary that the prime objective of manager or business leader is that his team members must feel comfortable in terms of communicating with him without feeling any possible barrier. This is only important if a friendly atmosphere at work is fostered in the first place.

This has created an environment of trust in M&S which provides all team members an opportunity to share their difficulties and problems that they experience in terms of encountering any complications as far as the workload is concerned. Another prime advantage that is also attributed to this is manifested in the form of developing confidence and a level of trust between different employees that work under the same conditions and environment.

The environment of M&S is based more on interaction and facilitation of communication on inter departmental basis as numerous documented and published evidences have proved that such procedures help and play a vital role in enhancing the level of productivity from the employee end (Martin, 2005).

### Involvement

Involvement at work tells about the importance an individual given to his job, and this compared to other aspects of his life in general. More work is a fundamental value for the person occupying a central role in shaping its identity, its involvement will be high but here, the cultural conditioning plays a major role and influence on perceptions of the worker, so his choices.

M&S is of the opinion that involvement plays a key role in enhancing employees' engagement. M&S uses employees' involvement as a tool for their personal development, growth, self-realization or social and moral obligation and the employees in turn actively participates and sees company's performance as an essential part in pursuit of his personal value. More the individual is engaged in his work, the more he will be in office; these high levels involvement resulting in a stronger desire to remain with the employer.

### Conclusion

The review of strategies adopted by M&S to enhance their employees' engagement confirms that the above mentioned factors play an important role in enhancing employees' engagement which is one of the most powerful influencers often validated by researchers (Lee et al., 2000).

Indeed, the person whose emotional commitment to the organization is weak and who demonstrates a high level of commitment to the career will have more tendency to leave his job. Chang (1999) states, however, in this connection that, if the employee's emotional commitment is strong, he will only consider very rarely to leave his job, and this, even less if it also demonstrates a strong commitment and respect to his career.

There is a direct relationship between the rate of employee engagement and business results. Getting professionals to voluntarily contribute more than is sufficient to fulfill their role in the workplace is a luxury for organizations, because it is the trigger of its commitment to business goals: providing more because this contributes to professional enrichment which increases their employability and ultimately, helps to make the organization more profitable.

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