

Employee Engagement-Best Practices of Successful Companies- Study of Gallup Great Workplace Award

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Abstract

In current age, human resource is not only subject of Human Resource Management team but canvas is wider and it needs involvement of top level leadership. People/worker/employee engagement terms frequently used by practitioners and researchers for involvement of people (physically and emotionally) during performing their roles for improved results in organization goals. Current paper provides the best practices of the successful companies which received higher financial, organizational growth and employee satisfaction results with employee engagement initiatives. The finding indicates the policies, practices, trends and involvement of senior leadership for employee engagement. Applications of selected best practices of employee engagement will save the time and research cost, replication can provide an opportunity of achieving paramount results without spending any additional cost in human resource and trainings and facilitate to condense employee turnover, provide effect in saving hiring and training expenses. These practice also reduced the number of actively disengaged employees (workplace prisoners), who are instrument of dissatisfaction at organization. A “Workplace Prisoner” is someone who indicates they will stay at their organization despite a lack of motivation to give their best effort and a lack of positive things to say about their organization.

Keywords: Employee Engagement; Employee Assistance Programs; Employee recognition and wellbeing

Introduction:

We are living in the continuous changing world, an era of fast evolving technology. Generation is growing up with vast flow of information, it resulted changes in different work place behaviours. Diverse generational groups of employees have different work characteristics and desired different style of leadership (Yu & Miller, 2005). The bookish theories regarding business management and especially management for human resources are not truly valid at this point time, as these were in their initial period. We can agree with the fundamental laws, principles

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and theories of the management but cannot hold all these truly effective in current situation. The recent study “Re-witting the rules for the digital age” by Deloitte Insights explains “the accelerating rate of change in business, the economy, and society challenges both business and HR to adopt new rules for leading, organizing, motivating, managing, and engaging the 21st-century workforce (Deloitte, 2017)”

In current age, human resource is not only subject of Human Resource Management team but canvas is wider and it needs involvement of top level leadership. There are direct connecting resources from CEO to Worker placed at the any corner of the world. The strong leadership speech of CEO, easily accessible to watch/hear live for every employee and each employee can contact CEO/top leadership within minutes through different modern modes of communications. The employees are no more at their homes as worker in silos but through social media everyone can be a resilient brand ambassador of the organization. Today, many organizations need an exclusively different kind of leader: a “digital leader” who can construct teams, keep people connected and engaged, and get-up-and-go with a culture of innovation, risk acceptance, and continuous development (Deloitte, 2017). This situation needs strong employee engagement, where employee emotionally connected with the vision of the organization, his/her personal behaviour endorsed the mission of organization. The concept of employee engagement is evolving from last two decades (Mohapatra & Sharma, 2010). People/worker/employee engagement terms are frequently used by practitioners as well as researchers during past few decades. This is involvement of people (physically and emotionally) during performing their roles for improved results in organization goals. The term employee’s engagement was under discussion in early 1990s and practically used by the experts and researchers in 2000s. William Kahn (known as father of employee’s engagement) professor of Organizational Behaviour at Boston University formally defined the employee engagement “personal engagements as “the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances.” (Kahn, 1990). Engagement at the work is strong bond between oneself and the job responsibility, where the employee fully expresses himself physically, emotionally and cognitively at work.

What is employee engagement?

An engaged employee is a person who is fully involved in, and enthusiastic about, his or her work. According to Tim Rutledge the employee engagement and behaviour expert explain in his book, Getting

Engaged: The New Workplace Loyalty, explains that truly engaged employees are attracted to, and inspired by, their work (“I want to do this”), committed (“I am dedicated to the success of what I am doing”), and fascinated (“I love what I am doing”). Engaged employees care about the future of the company and are willing to invest the discretionary effort – exceeding duty’s call – to see that the organization succeeds. In his book, Rutledge urged managers to implement retention plans so that they could keep their top talent. (Rutledge, 2005). An engaged employee influences others to increase the efficiency of the work in order to escalation the image of organization and scaling up the profit (Devi, 2009).

Employee engagement is valid and reliable concept (Hassan & Ahmed, 2011). The employee engagement is process where the team members involved according to his/her behavioural traits. In addition to above, it is also discussed at different places that it is true reflection of employee’s attitude and psychological position for the organization and its work. The work engagement can be improved through adopting some work related behaviours (Attridge, 2009). Employee attachment can be improved and such team member respond in positive manner. “Employee engagement is desirable condition, which has an organizational purpose, and brings involvement, focused effort, commitment, passion, enthusiasm and energy, so it has both attitudinal and behavioural components. The engagement is related with the emotional state of the employee and reflection how he/she behaves in response of his/her feelings (Macey & Schneider, 2008).

Background:

In the early stage of the industrialization, the term human resource used for the managers and main role of these managers were mainly focused on the pay roll management, leave record, employees working hours etc near to administrative work. The employee also presumably, the more people draw on their selves to perform their roles within those boundaries. The more stirring are their performances and the more content they are with the fit of the costumes they done (Kahn, 1990). With the passage of time the role was enhanced and it was felt that training and capacity building, identification of skill improvement is also areas of Human Resources team. This need opens avenues for the involvement of HR management to the people development. In the recent era, it was strongly communicated that this is not only domain of the human resource department. So question arise here “how an organization create culture of engagement and make engagement happen?” there are many stake holders like HR, people managers, the individual employees

and senior leaders are involved in nurturing the culture of engagement but the leaders are the ultimate owners.

Top leadership plays key role to engage their workers. When dealing with the effects of leaders on their workers, most of the scholars have the leaning focus on the leaders' attitudes and their common behaviours. The study was also assumed that the team members who follow have the same perceptions towards the leaders and behaved in quite similar pattern when they were requested to complete some jobs. On the other hand, the leaders also ordained similarly towards the employees or the workers were directed the same approaches in order to attain the mission of the organizations (Ilies, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007). Employee engagement is in not only the job of managers, especially the human resources and personnel management, but the main drivers are at the top, from CEO to Directors to junior most employee of the organization. Leaders should actively try to identify the level of engagement in their organization, find the reasons behind the lack of full engagement, strive to eliminate those reasons, and implement behavioural strategies that will facilitate full engagement. Conventional wisdom may view HR as the owner of employee engagement, but current research by the Aon Hewitt presented the role of the HR professional is to support the leaders of the organization in achieving the engagement agenda. HR owns many programs required for engagement, such as setting a strong employee value proposition (EVP), pay, development programs, and often managing an employee survey program. HR business partners also typically support the delivery of action plans at a managerial unit level. Another critical stakeholder is the people manager, who owns the delivery of employee growth and performance. Managers play a big role in the delivery of career planning and coaching (essential elements for building a primary driver of engagement—career opportunities). While HR and people managers have traditionally been the primary stakeholders in an engagement agenda, we see a rapidly accelerating shift in responsibility toward two other critical stakeholders required to create a culture of engagement—senior leaders and the individuals themselves (Hewitt, 2015 Trends in Global Employee Engagement, 2015).

Literature Review

Role of leadership and economic contribution of employee engagement:

“Both employers and employees see leadership who makes of breaks employee engagement efforts” (Hewitt, Aon, 2012). In the report, it was also discussed that majority of Best Employers Organization experience strong leadership. This creates primary difference between the average companies and best employers. Companies at top in the

leaders study, best leaders are decisive and provide clear vision to the future their company. Finally great leaders kept engaged themselves. Employee engagement is a strategy where the leaders without additional cost increase the business results. Examples like to avoid workplace conflicts can produced greater results. The engaged employee's means less conflicts, Catrin Mills discussed in report optimising employee engagement and conflict management that mediating with the team members will increase engagement, resulted the low workplace conflicts and its effects are awesome in shape of involved workers and improved outcomes of the organization's goal (Mills, 2011).

Return of employee engagement is loudly appreciated by the researchers. In current report by the Aon Hewitt Trend in Global Employment Engagement report 2015, presented the return against employee engagement. The financial implications of an engaged workforce are significant, research reveals statistically significant and consistent relationships among higher levels of financial performance and employee engagement. Studies found that a 5% increase in employee engagement is associated to a 3% increase in revenue progress in the consequent year. The total shareholder return (TSR) of actively engaged companies is 57% higher against the average companies (Hewitt, 2015 Trends in Global Employee Engagement, 2015).

Employee engagement is very near to heart agenda of all committed leaders of fast growing companies. These leaders understand that employee engagement is force that drives real business outcome. The best companies construct and stand with a culture of engagement, led by CEOs who recognize that employee engagement is not just a "nice to have" but critical to achieving business results. Leaders in these elite companies also realize that employee engagement is principally their responsibility.

Engaging leaders who involve others are not just use this as an option—they are the key component to crafting a culture of engagement that endures business results in continuous-changing and compound global environment. Organizations in which business unit front-runners actively involved, following the announcement of engagement strategies, get greater engagement and financial performance. The result of Top Companies for Leaders a study about the companies that invest significantly in the leadership engagement have higher operating income 29%, against those who do not (Hewitt, Top Companies for leaders, 2014). Creating a culture of engagement entails pulling several levers and traversing through many organizational stakeholders. As one leader in an Aon Best Employer organization put it, "Go big." Silver bullets do not work and depend on only HR or the manager is not enough. This

type of universal approach is difficult, but attracting thousands of individuals can be done through leader-led struggles. Only the leaders make engagement happen at the desired level.

Current status and future of Employee Engagement:

However, Employee engagement is still a challenge globally. According to GALLUP report only 13% employees are engaged, 87% are not engaged (62% not engaged and 24% actively disengaged). We have discussed the engaged employees, however Disengagement defined by the father of the engagement Kahn as “I defined personal disengagement as the uncoupling of selves from work roles; in disengagement, people withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively, or emotionally during role performances” (Kahn, 1990). It is necessary that there should not be a gap between, what the worker says, what he/she wants from the organization and what he/she actually get in response. This leads to disengagement (Srivastava & Bhatnagar, 2008). Actively disengaged employees are comparatively more harm full than not engaged employees. The actively not engaged employees are not those who are just un happy at work- they are busy acting out their unhappiness. Every day these workers undermine what their more engaged co-workers try to accomplish (Attridge, 2009). There is possibly a worse to having a subgroup of disengaged employees. Just think employees were not Saying and not Struggling, but also had full intention to Stay with the company. These are not simple typically disengaged employees. These are the employees who are disengaged at job but also are not interested to find for other jobs and have low motivation level to either improve or move to the next company. While disengaged employees are most likely to “self-select” out of the business. Expert defined these employees who plan to stay with the organization regardless of being disengaged are “Workforce Prisoners.” They neither are motivated to give their best and not intention of leaving (Hewitt, Actively Disengaged & Staying-Dealing with “prisoners” in the workplace, 2016).

Gallup found positive movement in comparison of two different periods of the study 2008-09 to 2012-13. The percentage of actively disengaged employees has reduced from 27% to 24%. But, actively disengaged employees stay to engaged employees by nearly 2-to-1 — point toward that at the global level, work is more frequently a source of frustration than one of accomplishment. It also defines countless workplaces globally are less safe and productive than they could be and are less probable to create badly desired new jobs. First time in 2009 and 2010, Gallup took initiative to collect engagement results from employed and workers worldwide and generated 2010 State of the Global

Workplace report. In last report it provide an update of the prior results using data collected in 2011 and 2012 from nearly 230,000 part time and full-time workers from 142 countries. The Gallup report found that the proportion of employees in these 142 countries who are “engaged” in their jobs has moved upward from 11% to 13%, while the percentage that are “actively disengaged” has fallen down from 27% to 24%. This slight improvement, low levels of engagement amongst global workers remained to hinder gains in economic efficiency and life quality in these countries of the world.

Methodology:

In this paper researcher used to review the best practice of companies which are actively concern about employee engagement with leadership focus of selected organizations, which are heavily involved in the team building and bring into line team member towards the vision and mission of the organization. It is challenge to set selection criteria for companies, which are actively involve and resilient in employee engagement. In current study, the researcher used the data of GALLUP "Great Work Place Award" and selected companies among the award winners. The award was started from 2006 and in year 2017 Gallup announced 11th Award for best companies. For this study, those companies were selected which won this award for more than 5 times (50%) in this 11 yearly rounds.

Introduction of Great workplace award:

This award was created to recognize these excellent companies for their exceptional ability to created really engaged workplace culture. Gallup's scientific research links employee engagement to nine integral performance outcomes: customer metrics, profitability, productivity, turnover, employee safety incidents, shrinkage, absenteeism and quality. Companies with this combination have a competitive edge – organizations with highly engaged workforces can grow at a rate that is 4.3 times greater than that of their competitors.

Criteria for Gallup Great Workplace Award:

In addition to demonstrating measurable business impact, winning organizations must meet minimum criteria to be considered for the award. A panel of Gallup workplace experts evaluates applicants and assesses them against criteria established by the most comprehensive workplace study conducted.

Gallup has defined following criteria for organizations that are interested to participate in the competition.

A-For organizations that purchased the Gallup Q12 survey from q12.gallup.com:

Future of Marketing and Management (FMM 2017)

- A organization ensure total of at least 50 respondents representing a census of the organization
- Overall GrandMean of 4.40+
- The organization is able to link engagement with business outcomes
- Data of local level engagement (if available)

For all other organizations:

- A organization ensure total of at least 50 respondents representing a census of the organization
- Final Q12 response rate is at least 80% or higher
- GrandMean of 4.20+
- <20K employees: 60% of eligible business units at GrandMean of 4.20+
- 20K to <100K employees: 55% of eligible business units at GrandMean of 4.20+
- 100K+ employees: 50% of eligible business units at GrandMean of 4.20+
- The organization is able to link engagement with business outcomes

Gallup invites online application from companies who falls under the above criteria. The companies also bound to follow the below process and share required information;

1. Fill an online application
2. A 10 slides based PowerPoint presentation, where companies present how their link of engagement with business outcomes, supported by the analysis of trends at the organizational or workgroup level.
3. A PowerPoint presentation with details of engagement in action within your company. (Optional)
4. Official company logo in .eps or .ai file formats

This is endless journey, efforts should be on-going. Employee engagement is hard to achieve and if not sustained by leaders it can wither with relative ease.

Selected companies with their best practices:

There are 1000 organization participates in this award competition annually and only few win this award as best workplace organization. In this paper we have 12 organizations which won this award for more than 05 times. This paper will discuss the brief introduction of organization, vision statement or message of senior leadership and best practice/actions/policies for employee engagement.

ABC Supply Co., Inc. (11-time winner)

ABC Supply is the US largest wholesale distributor of select exterior and interior building products. Since its founding by Ken and

Diane Hendricks in 1982, ABC Supply's sole focus has been serving professional contractors—taking care of them better than any other distributor and offering the products, services and support they need to build their businesses. An 11-time Gallup Great Workplace Award winner, ABC Supply is an “employee-first” company that treats its associates with respect and gives them the tools they need to succeed. In 2017, ABC Supply celebrates its 35th anniversary and continued commitment to helping its customers and associates achieve the American dream.

Commitment of the leadership for their people made ABC Supply number one organization in this competition. ABC is continuous winner for 11 times from the start of the competition. President and CEO Keith Rozolis shared that ABC Supply's success is a result of being an associate-first company. ABC's goal is to create opportunities for people to grow and succeed. “At ABC, if you work hard, there's nothing you can't accomplish. And we know that if we take care of our people, they will take care of our customers,” said Rozolis. “Our associates embrace this idea every day, and it shows in their passion and commitment to each other and to our customers. We are like a big family, committed to helping each other achieve our goals and dreams, and that is what makes ABC special.”

The message from the shared chairman of the company "Diane Hendricks" after the winning moment is, “I am extremely proud that ABC Supply has once again been recognized as one of the best workplaces in the world,” shared Chairman further added that “Our devoted associates are what make it all possible. Their dedication is responsible for our continued growth and our ability to provide our customers with exemplary service (Supply Co. Inc, ABC Supply Co. Inc. Named Gallup Great Workplace Award Winner for 11th Consecutive Year, 2017).”

Engagement activities of ABC Co. Inc:

I. Engagement is part of Mission Statement of the company ABC Supply has continued to thrive, living by its mission “to increase customer engagement through increased employee engagement.” The little details have made all the difference.

II. Workers are associates of the company. The chairman of the company Diane Hendricks, “Our dedicated associates all over the country have made that dream a reality. They are the reason for ABC's success.”

III. “Sign my year book?” ABC Company had yearbooks printed for ABC Supply employees in all 350 locations, complete with photos, employee lists, and each office's

goals for the upcoming year. The yearbooks, as well as management's commitment to strengthening inter/outer-office relationships, have proved to be powerful employee engagement activities that keep employees committed to the organization and to each other.

IV. The Ken Hendricks Award

The Ken Hendricks Award is presented annually to ABC associates who have continually shown their dedication, commitment and a desire to serve people in a manner that best represents the core values of ABC Supply. Award recipients will be honored each June during ABC's Founders' Celebration and will be recognized in news releases and feature stories. The crystal award itself has been designed exclusively for ABC and displays the core values ABC was built upon and stands for today (Supply Co. Inc, Ken Hendricks Award, 2017).

Hendrick Health System (11-time winner)

For 90 years, the Hendrick name has been the first name in healthcare in Abilene, Texas, and the Texas Midwest. The Hendrick family of services includes a 522-bed medical center, a women's center, rehabilitation hospital, cancer center, hospice center and numerous other innovative services.

This is another example of dedicated and committed leadership for the employee engagement. Tim Lancaster, president and CEO of Hendrick Health System. "We are very intentional in the hiring and retention of the best employees. We take great effort in training all employees to create work environments that allow outstanding employees to do what they do best, which ultimately benefits patients that choose Hendrick for their healthcare needs. (Center, 2017)". "The world's top-performing organizations help lead the global economy by engaging their workforces," said Dr. Jim Harter, Gallup's chief scientist of workplace management and well-being.

Engagement activities of Hendrick Health System:

I. Engagement as core value:

The organization is committed for the employee engagement and placed it in the core values. Engagement as value defined as: "Cultivate an environment of commitment, communication, personal and professional growth, and a shared vision for success".

II. Employee Recognition

Announce quarterly Employee and Physician of the Quarter, honouring six employees and one physician. Nomination as Above and Beyond, available to patients and employees to recognize an employee, who has gone above and beyond to serve others.

III. Annual Picnic for employees

Organization arranges one picnic event under, Hendrickfest, annual employee picnic.

IV. Employee wellness

Hendrick announce employee's wellness program included pro care worker injury program, medical insurance coverage and employee's health club (System, 2017).

Winegardner & Hammons Hotel Group (11-time winner)

This is a full-service hotel management company, founded in 1958 having more than 10,000 employees with a reputation for progressive and successful property management in the hospitality industry. At WHG's mission is to meet and exceed our customers' expectation through exceptional hospitality management services and quality hotel products. They are committed to our customers that allow WHG to deliver the consistent, proven results our ownership groups expect. Management is very keen in employee engagement with proven track record. According to Winegardner & Hammons Executive Vice President Kent Bruggeman experience of employee engagement turned his company's senior leaders into believers. And they began thinking about the impact they could achieve by replicating top performers in key roles across all Winegardner & Hammons properties. "Those talent indicators are real," he said. "To discount them is foolish." Analysis shows that the company's hotel properties that are more engaged have 35% lower turnover and 11% higher profitability than properties that are less engaged (Kenkel & Sorenson, 2014).

Engagement activities of Winegardner & Hammons Hotel Group:

I. Culture of organization:

The top management believes that people are the top priority of organization and it's Mission Statement indicated (Why join WHJ?, 2016):

- ✓ Customer satisfaction
- ✓ Human Resources - Positive working environment
- ✓ Product Quality
- ✓ Profit
- ✓ Growth

II. Selecting the right employees

Winegardner & Hammons began working with Gallup to devise a talent selection program for the hotels it manages. Gallup rigorously studied the company's most successful performers to design a set of customized selection tools that identify the applicants with the highest potential for success in specific roles.

III. Accountability of employee engagement.

The company holds managers accountable not only for running a successful hotel but also for taking care of the employees who work in it. And the focus on talent doesn't stop there. The company considers the quality of its employees a key differentiator for its brand. Beginning with their first day on the job, employees receive a copy of the Q12 items and are challenged to maintain an open dialogue with managers and peers about their needs on each of the engagement items and to participate in action planning.

IV. Engaging employees through great managers

The company understands that its employees could become disengaged if its culture doesn't support their success. Because managers are most responsible for engaging employees, Winegardner & Hammons makes investing in managers the linchpin of its engagement strategy. The company hires managers with the talent to motivate and engage others. And it goes to great lengths to make sure they gain the knowledge, skills, and experience they need to capitalize on that talent. The managers aren't in it alone, Winegardner & Hammons ensures that leaders spend time supporting and developing managers and helping employees take responsibility for their own engagement.

V. Building a strengths-based workplace:

Strengths based development is more of a grass-roots movement, according to executive vice president Bruggeman. He says general managers are given considerable autonomy when it comes to finding what works at their location. "I carry the list of strengths themes for everyone on my team in my briefcase," Bruggeman says. When an employee doesn't shine in his or her role? that strengths finder themes of that employee can offer clues as to why (Kenkel & Sorenson, 2014).

Self Regional Healthcare (10-time winner)

Local business leader and philanthropist James C. Self is the founder of Self Regional Healthcare, began as Self Memorial Hospital in 1951 and was built to be one of the most advanced hospitals in the United States. Mr. Self's commitment to advanced care with leading-edge technology continues today. The hospital grown into a major referral and medical center that provides advanced healthcare services to a population of more than a quarter of a million people. From a broken arm, to the birth of a child or chemotherapy, Self was always there and close to home with the latest technology and finest doctors. To separate Self from the community would be impossible. Community is a huge part of what we

President and CEO of Self Regional Healthcare Jim Pfeiffer shared views as "Our team members are the cornerstone of this

organization, and to not only know, but have the world also recognize that they are happy to work here and are engaged daily in their work, makes this award that much more special (Hyatt, 2017).”

Engagement activities of Self Regional Healthcare:

I. Culture of the organization

“Our goal for Self Regional team members is to encourage health and wellbeing, as well as provide a work environment that promotes those two ideals. We are always pleased to receive any recognition that shows we have been able to meet that goal. Healthy lifestyles for our patients and our team members are of utmost importance to us” said Jim Pfeiffer, President and CEO of Self Regional Healthcare (South Carolina Hospital Association , 2017).

II. Employee recognition.

SELF describes 05 strategy pillars for growth of organization. People is most important pillar and at the top. Organization Rewards and recognition to include employees of the month and celebration socials for our "wins". Organization also recognizes technical team with Physician of the quarter award.

III. Offsite activities with team

There is a renewed emphasis on leadership development. Quarterly off-site leadership educational sessions are held, and employee forums are also conducted quarterly in an effort to improve communication throughout our 2,300 employee organization.

IV. Employees wellness program

Organization cares for the team members and announced numerous programs for employee wellness, especially health and medical facilities, insurance coverage, Wellness Works Membership Discounts and other attractive packages under this hat (studergroup, 2017).

Stryker Corporation (10-time winner)

The Company was founded in 1941 by Dr. Homer Stryker and incorporated in 1946 as the Orthopedic Frame Company. In 1964, the Company’s name was changed to Stryker Corporation. Stryker is one of the world's leading medical technology companies and, together with customers driven to make healthcare better. The Company offers a diverse array of innovative products and services in Orthopaedics, Medical and Surgical, and Neurotechnology and Spine that help improve patient and hospital outcomes. Stryker is active in over 100 countries around the world (Becker, Yin C., 2017).

Engagement activities of Stryker Corporation:

I. People as core value:

Company has its four core values integrity, accountability, people and performance. Company is committed to its motive "we grow talent".

II. Employee recognition.

The organization is providing opportunity to nominate someone for the Manager of the Year award, with a panel of workplace experts selecting a winner from the pool of outstanding nominees (Stryker Corporation , 2016).

III. We strive for wellbeing

Interactive wellbeing program called Strive for Wellbeing has many components that encourage and help our employees to live healthy, happy lives. Strive for Wellbeing includes free biometric screenings, free flu shots, personalized wellbeing coaching and a variety of activity challenges that appeal to people in all stages of their wellbeing journey. The program uses a social media interface where participants can track their progress toward their health and wellbeing goals, sync their activities to their fitness device and share their experiences with other participants. Participants in the challenges earn points and receive incentives for each level they achieve. The program incentives have a total value of \$825 for employees and \$225 for spouses/declared domestic partners.

IV. Our employee resource groups foster diversity and inclusion in the workplace

Employee resource groups provide a means for employees to network, exchange views about managing common business challenges, and continue their professional growth and development. They align with our business objectives to drive a great workplace for all by embracing diverse perspectives, approaches and backgrounds and by energizing employee engagement by mirroring our communities and customers. Two of most influential ERGs are Stryker's Women's Network (SWN) and Stryker's Allies for Equality (SAFE). SWN improves Stryker's results by fostering the development and retention of talented women. SAFE fosters a more inclusive workplace for our employees, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression (Great Place to Work, 2017).

PNC Bank (nine-time winner)

PNC Bank NA is the principal subsidiary of the PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. Based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, PNC Bank offers consumer and corporate services in 2,520 branches with wide range from individuals and small businesses, to corporations and government entities. PNC also owns 22% of publicly traded fund manager Black Rock. PNC has also subcontracted with Nationwide Bank and Washington Federal to process its home equity and auto loans (wikipedia, 2017).

Engagement activities of Stryker Corporation

I. Engagement focused in core values

PNC bank has 07 core values, employee engagement and team focused in core values. In value Diversity is defines as "PNC recognize the value of our differences and endeavour to create an environment where every employee is engaged and has the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to the success of the company" and in core value Quality of life focused engagement as "PNC advocate for the physical, financial and personal well-being of our employees, customers and communities, and we support the pursuit of work-life balance" (PNC, 2017).

II. Employee recognition

Annual Performance Award- PNC recognized employees during its annual Performance Awards ceremony, which provides executive leadership with the opportunity to honor an elite class of employees during a ceremony that is live-streamed across the company.

Spotlight- Employee recognition program, continued to extend its reach as millions of recognition messages and award points were distributed to employees across all regions and businesses.

Annual Market All-Stars dinners and awards ceremonies, which occur in each of the regions where PNC operate, celebrated the accomplishments of high achievers across the company.

III. Quarter Century Club

PNC inducted 340 employees into the quarter century club, it recognizes 25 years of service with the company, at celebratory luncheons across the country. The honorees' managers, as well as employees with 26 or more years of service, also were invited to share in this milestone achievement.

IV. #OneTeam Becomes #GreatKids

In 2014, managers in PNC Technology & Operations (T&O) were searching for a way to make employee recognition more meaningful for both managers and employees. By focusing on how they could recognize individuals while also helping the community, a new pilot program, #OneTeam, was born. he program allows managers and employees to recognize one another for doing great work and achieving strategic goals by distributing award points through PNC's Spotlight employee recognition program. While employees typically are awarded points for their personal use, when #OneTeam is included in the recognition, points instead go toward the purchase of iPads for PNC Grow Up Great-affiliated organizations. As an added incentive, employees can participate in delivering the iPads (PNC, 2017).

Mars Inc. (eight-time winner)

More than 100 years ago, a young Frank C. Mars started making candies in his Tacoma, Washington kitchen. From that simple beginning, his son

Forrest built Mars into the mature company it is today, first by creating the MILKY WAY® bar with his father and later by expanding the business overseas and diversifying into new categories like pet care and food. Today, the Mars family of Associates is 80,000 strong in 78 countries around the world (Mars, Incorporated and its Affiliates., 2017).

Employee Engagement at Mars Inc

The company is actively involved in employee engagement program and call its workers as "associates". Our 80,000 Associates experience a global workplace that has no walls, no borders, no limits on what's possible and a culture that affords uncommon freedom, responsibility and ownership of work.

I. Make The Difference Awards:

The Make the Difference Program spotlights individual Associates and teams who are bringing The Five Principles of Mars to life and creating growth opportunities possible for fellow Associates, consumers, customers, partners in our value chain and the planet. Through Make the Difference, Associates celebrate the impact the work by an individual or a team can make on entire organization, and Mars communities. This inspiring program reinforces our long-standing belief in the power of win-win relationships to support growing responsibly and sustainably over time.

II. Health & Wellness:

Mars is a family owned business, so we know, firsthand, the importance of family. We believe that all Associates have the right to work-life balance as well as a healthy and safe environment that provides them with great care and protection. We are fully committed to the health and wellbeing of our Associates and have developed a structure with practices, policies and training to support our ambition, which includes benefits from Day one of employment, stress management, weight management, and other wellness programs.

III. Open Offices:

Every Mars site in the world has an Open Office layout, a core part of our ways of working. It creates an environment that encourages networking, openness, and communication that spans physical and organizational barriers. This type of collaborative environment encourages all Associates to engage with one another, regardless of their level or title.

IV. Pets @ Work:

For some Mars sites around the world, pets at the office are as commonplace as the Associates who work there. Many Mars offices are helping create a “better world for pets” by making their sites pet-friendly

environments. This practice aligns well with the company's focus on research into the positive effects that companion animals bring to individuals and to society in general (Great Place to Work, 2017).

Adventist Health System (seven-time winner)

Medical pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church established an innovative health care program in Battle Creek, Michigan, in 1866, looking to the healing ministry of Christ for inspiration. Part of this worldwide network, Adventist Health System was founded in 1973 to support and strengthen the Seventh-day Adventist health care organizations in the Southern and South western regions of the United States. Today it is a national leader in quality, safety and patient satisfaction, comprised of 46 hospital campuses and more than 80,000 employees. With 46 hospital campuses and more than 8,200 licensed beds in 9 states, Adventist Health System facilities incorporate the latest technological advancements and clinical research to serve more than 5 million patients annually (Adventist Health System, 2017).

Employee Engagement at Adventist Health System

I. Organization Culture:

"We are intentional about having a workplace culture that attracts and cultivates highly engaged, mission-driven employees," said Terry Shaw, president/CEO for Adventist Health System. Art Mastrapa, who has been employed in various roles with Adventist Health System for more than 50 years, believes the organization's focus on engaging employees has been pivotal to fostering a positive culture and work environment (Roberts, 2017).

II. Cloud-based software to crowd source employees

The idea is for improving clinical information system workflow. Doctors, nurses and other practitioners use the clinical workflow system to track a patient's treatment, history and other data to plan their care. The previous system relied on manual updates and had no mechanism for prioritizing suggestions. The crowd sourced feedback system lets employees who normally wouldn't be involved in making decisions share ideas for improving the workflow system, vote other ideas up or down, and make comments. Based on employee suggestions, the 100-person clinical information system department reduced time spent on clinical workflow by more than half, from a cumulative 25 days a year to 12. The changes directly benefited 9,000 employees, or slightly less than half of Adventist's workforce (Rafter, 2017).

III. Employee's Health and Wellness

The Adventist Health System improve employee engagement through health and wellness activities, which mainly covers; Wellness tools and Education, Personal wellness profile, Tobacco free and personal wellness

program, Employee assistance program. Many facilities also have onsite wellness centers complete with exercise equipment, fitness classes, pools, saunas and showers so employee can stretch muscles and relax their mind whenever it's convenient for them.

IV. AHS support your loved ones

Family of employee is our family, and AHS is committed to caring for them just as much as it cares for employee. Whatever stage of life team member in, whether it's preparing to welcome a new baby, strengthening relationship with spouse and kids, caring for an elderly parent, or grieving the loss of a loved one, AHS offer programs and resources to help along the journey. This includes adoption assistance, free counselling, parental leave, and robust medical coverage for those closest to employee (Adventist Health System, 2017).

Bon Secours Health System (six-time winner)

Bon Secours Health System Cork is Ireland's largest private hospital, and it is also one of the largest private hospitals in Europe. Hospital was established in 1915 and has more than 300 beds. Hospital employ more than 1,000 staff and admit about 35,000 patients every year. It is a general hospital providing an extensive range of medical and surgical specialties for adults and children. Bon Secours Health System Cork is a teaching hospital of UCC (University College Cork). It makes a significant contribution to undergraduate teaching in medicine and nursing (Bon Secours Health System, 2017).

Employee engagement of Bon Secours Health System:

I. Employee engagement in vision statement and strategic plan 2020:

The vision statement of the BSHS explains employee engagement as, "Empower staff to reach their full potential". According to strategic plan 2020 of BSHS, strategic goal 04 "provider and employer of choice" focused on improved employee engagement in the organization. It discussed details for EE elements as, developing an engagement strategy to continue to attract and retain leaders in clinical practice. Investing in our people and developing an overall HR strategy for Bon Secours Health System. Introducing career development programmes for all our staff (Bon Secours Health System , 2016).

II. Employee Recognition:

BSHS focused on recognition and celebration for the hard work and dedication of staff, as they strive for excellence in the care they provide, is marked in an annual Staff Awards Event. This ceremony showcases the great work done by individuals, Teams and Hospitals across the Health system and celebrates the strong commitment, quality improvement and high standards of their achievements. This event is

surrounded by a sense of fun, healthy competition and by the collegiate acknowledgement of professional excellence.

III. Family events for employees:

For staff to feel included and to promote a family spirit, the BSHS organises family events such as Winter Wonderland. BSHS Host Family Fun Days across the Group- which are great days out for all the family. Other local events and occasions are organised at hospital/site level, in response to staff interests and enthusiasm.

IV. Employee well-being

Long-term health and staff well-being are also a priority for BSHS. Organization ensure to look after the health and wellbeing of staff and are committed to caring for them through different activities e.g. Mindfulness training, Wellbeing Promotions e.g. staff Mindfulness, Pilates and yoga programmes. There is an active Sports and Social Club in all Hospitals across the BSHS and staff actively encouraged to become members of the Club (at a nominal deduction from your monthly salary). The committee organises sports and social events throughout the year. BSHS also offer a Bike to Work Scheme for those of you who are more energetic, so employee cycle in for his/her shifts (Bon Secours Health System, 2017).

Hyatt Corporation (six-time winner)

Hyatt was founded by Jay Pritzker in 1957 when he purchased the Hyatt House motel adjacent to the Los Angeles International Airport. Over the following decade, Jay Pritzker and his brother, Donald Pritzker, working together with other Pritzker family business interests, grew the company into a North American management and hotel ownership company, which became a public company in 1962. As Hyatt continues to grow in hospitality business, it doesn't lose sight of what's most important—people. Hyatt is a workplace where co-workers become friends (Corporation, Hyatt, 2017).

Employee engagement at Hyatt Corporation:

I. Diversity Business Resource Groups:

A key part of Hyatt's diversity & inclusion efforts has been the establishment of affinity groups or Diversity Business Resource Groups (DRBG). These DRBGs can be formal or informal gatherings of colleagues who share a common cultural heritage, race, gender, age or interest. Benefits include basic business networking, mentoring each other and others in their communities and developing professionally.

II. Rest and Relaxation Lounges and Free On-Site Dry Cleaning:

In an effort to promote a relaxing atmosphere to colleagues in-between shifts and during breaks, Hyatt provides rest and relaxation lounges where colleagues have access to computers, TVs and video games, as well as comfortable, lobby-like lounge furniture and libraries. Hyatt colleagues are provided with access to free on-site dry cleaning for uniforms and work suits so they do not have to worry about this during their time away from work.

III. Housekeeping Flex time Program:

The housekeeping “flextime” program provides a model where room attendants can begin or end their shift when it is convenient for them. If a colleague completes their work assignments prior to the end of their shift they will be paid for a full 8 hour regardless of actual hours worked. Offering room attendants the flexibility to choose when to start their day, work at their own pace and leave when they finish gives them a unique opportunity to increase their work and home life balance.

IV. Adoption Assistance:

Hyatt colleagues are eligible for \$5,000 to help cover legal fees and other costs associated with the adoption of a child (Great Place to Work® Institute, 2017).

Nationwide Insurance (six-time winner)

Over the last 85 years, Nationwide has grown from a small mutual auto insurer owned by policyholders to one of the largest insurance and financial services companies in the world, with more than \$158 billion in statutory assets. Today the company still owned by policyholders, but it protect a lot more than just autos owned by Ohio farmers. Nationwide is a Fortune 100 company that offers a full range of insurance and financial services across the US, including car, motorcycle, boat, homeowners, pet, farm, life and commercial insurance, as well as administrative services, annuities, mortgages, mutual funds, pensions, long-term savings plans and specialty health services (Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company, 2017).

Employee Engagement of Nationwide Insurance:

The nationwide insurance company call their workers associates. Company has a culture of people, who care deeply about doing what’s right. It believes "We work hard to make an impact for each other, our members and our communities".

I. Core Values put the focus on people:

Nationwide core values help it to stay true to being More Than a Business. The core values focus employee with engagement (Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company, 2017)

- We value people

Future of Marketing and Management (FMM 2017)

- We are member-focused
- We act with honesty and integrity
- We trust and respect each other

II. Associate Resource Groups:

Our Associate Resource Groups (ARGs) help associates find meaningful ways to connect with one another and move our D&I strategy forward. These groups offer networking opportunities, develop leadership skills, volunteer in the community, and perhaps get involved in advising the business. We've seen tremendous growth in participation due to our intentional efforts to ensure every associate is aware of and can join any of our ARGs. Starting on day one, new associates are provided with an opportunity to join the ARGs that interest them.

III. Catalyst for Change:

At Nationwide are comfortable discussing things that matter. As a result of recent events that have impacted our local communities and our nation, senior leaders began hosting a series of Catalyst for Change associate exchanges. The purpose of the exchanges is to facilitate a fact-based, solutions-focused dialogue between associates and most senior leaders of company. Leaders and associates use the ideas and suggestions discussed in these dialogues to bring about positive change at workplace and communities.

IV. Jeans, please and My Flex Policies:

Extending to flexibility in terms of dress code has been a theme associates have suggested over the years — in particular, including jeans when appropriate. On March 1, our CEO announced our business casual dress guidelines now include jeans! This change speaks to how Nationwide leadership takes associate suggestions to heart. Nationwide committed to helping associates balance their personal lives with their work lives. In 2016, expanded its programs and launched MyFlex, a new site where associates can learn about the variety of flexible work arrangements company offer at Nationwide. These include time off, support for unexpected life events, work from home and flexible schedules (Great Place to Work® Institute, 2017).

Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces (six-time winner)

Established in 1903, Taj Hotels Palaces Resorts Safaris is one of Asia's largest and finest group of hotels, comprising 98 hotels in 61 locations across the globe, including presence in India, North America, United Kingdom, Africa, Middle East, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bhutan and Nepal. From world-renowned landmarks to modern business hotels, idyllic beach resorts to authentic Grand Palaces, each Taj hotel offers an unrivalled fusion of warm Indian hospitality, world-class service and modern luxury. For over a century, The Taj Mahal Palace,

Mumbai, the iconic flagship has set a benchmark for fine living with exquisite refinement, inventiveness and warmth. Taj Hotels Palaces Resorts Safaris is part of the Tata Group, India's premier business house.

Employee engagement of Taj Hotel Resorts and Palaces:

I. Recognition-as-Reward System:

In 2001 the Taj Group created a Special Thanks and Recognition System (STARS) that links customer delight to employee rewards. Employees accumulate points throughout the year in three domains: compliments from guests, compliments from colleagues, and their own suggestions. Crucially, at the end of each day, a STARS committee comprising each hotel's general manager, HR manager, training manager, and the concerned department head review all the nominations and suggestions. The members of this group decide whether the compliments are evidence of exceptional performance and if the employee's suggestions are good. Then they post their comments on the company's intranet. If the committee doesn't make a decision within 48 hours, the employee gets the points by default.

By accumulating points, Taj Group employees aspire to reach one of five performance levels: the managing director's club; the COO's club; and the platinum, gold, and silver levels. Departments honor workers who reach those last three levels with gift vouchers, STARS lapel pins, and STARS shields and trophies, whereas the hotel bestows the COO's club awards. At an annual organization-wide celebration called the Taj Business Excellence Awards ceremony, employees who have made the managing director's club get crystal trophies, gift vouchers, and certificates (Deshpande & Raina, 2011).

II. Split-shift works (Flexi Time):

The other revolutionary measure that the Taj is initiating relates to the work schedule of its kitchen and food and beverage staff. Since the hotels work 24X7, staffers put in gruelling hours. The prolonged work hours, combined with a short break, are known as "split-shifts" or "break-shifts" in hotel industry parlance. This is how a split-shift works: A captain checks into the hotel's restaurant at 11 am, s/he continues to work till 3 pm after which s/he takes a break for a few hours and then resumes the shift till the restaurant is closed for the day. Under "straight shift", the captain can start early morning with the hotel's banquet section, move to the restaurant in the afternoon and then call it a day by 4 pm. This gives the staff an entire evening to themselves, promoting a better work-life balance (Zachariah, 2016).

III. 10-day-a-year stay offer:

The 10-day-a-year stay offer on Taj properties from Mumbai to Maldives is applicable to all employees, regardless of the profile and rank, and

their families with a complimentary breakfast and a 50 per cent discount on other meals. And for those who are unable to pick up the tab even after the 50 per cent discount (Zachariah, 2016).

IV. Real time management of employee engagement:

Taj made efforts empowering associates to drive the success of organization and deliver the signature Taj Experience to all our guests. At Taj, management intend to learn from employees, especially from our frontline talent who serve our customers with warmth and sincere care. Taj simply applied the same yardstick when it comes to interactions with colleagues as well. For example, while there are mechanisms to measure customer engagement in real-time and take remedial actions to ensure customer loyalty, Taj is also institutionalizing a process to understand employee engagement on a real-time basis in order to make impactful decisions. When this behaviour gets replicated down the line, it results in the vibrant, warm and energetic workplace that Taj is known for the world over (Taj, 2017).

Limitation of study:

Employee engagement is blue eyed topic for leaders in recent era. Many companies introduced different policies, engagement activities and attractions for increasing employee engagement. This paper did not cover all engagement activities. This paper only discussed the companies which participated in Gallup Great Workplace Award, so many other famous and successful companies like Google, American express, southwest airline, Virgin and many more which are highly appreciated for their employee engagement are using some other activities to engage their employees. The data of engagement activities in this paper was also collected from annual report, company websites, news articles and blogs for these companies. Discussed companies may use some other activities to engage their employees.

Result and Findings:

Employee engagement is the subject, where organization with some efforts makes work place better for their employees. Employment activities used by companies in the study translated in employee's satisfaction and increase their engagement at work place. These resulted in two ways, economic advancement of organization in shape of increased profits and reduce the turn over which helps in reduction of cost for re-hiring. The study also finds that employee engagement need real time involvement of senior leadership, these are not only activity to conduct surveys and filling the questionnaire from the team, but it requires, actual commitment of leadership in against of response received and make policies which actually increase the employee engagement. Actively disengaged employees are the danger signs in the organization,

they will demoralize the employees and increase the employee commitment for the goals of organization.

The study encompasses the activities of the employee engagement from different fields. The leadership focus on employee engagement increases the worth of strategy. The study presented that scenario that using the employment engagement team members from top to bottom seems well connected with the goals of organization. The participation in Gallup work place award is overhauling of the employee engagement and winning the competition brings cheers and proud from senior leaders to workers. Employee engagement increased motivation and commitment of the team members with the goals of organization without additional heavy financial burden, inline of these efforts results were healthy and attractive for increasing employer loyalty and citizenship.

Conclusion:

The current paper analyzed the best practice of organization from different fields as health care to hospitality management, from banks to insurance and candy manufactures to hotels. Every organization was striking for the best employee engagement. The leadership is highly committed for participation and appreciated to receive Gallup award. The ongoing support of Gallup experts and future strategies for increasing employee engagement keep on moving these companies to increase engagement. Reflection of award winning news in annual reports, blogs and news reports of the companies increased the attention for engagement point and results were blended in the policies as future engagement strategies. These all as whole, resulted to advancement in the goodwill of organization internally (within organization) and externally (market and share holder).

Activities which were highlighted in the study provided flavour of organization engagement. These can be replicated in other organizations for improving employee engagement and encourage more organization to participate in the competition for employee engagement under professionals like Gallup and Aon Hewitt awards.

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