Employee Engagement

This module was developed by HR Strategies, on behalf of the former Employer Alliance, now part of the Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices.
Employee Engagement: Overview of Content

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- What is employee engagement?
- Persona and behaviours of an engaged employee
- Business case for employee engagement

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- The Employer – Employee Exchange
- Drivers of engagement

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- Prevalence of engagement
- Hidden costs of employee disengagement
- Assessing employee engagement
Employee Engagement (cont’d):
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- What are FWAs
- Typical process for developing FWAs
- Implementing FWAs – challenges & tips

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Part 1

- What is employee engagement
- Behaviours an engaged employee is likely to demonstrate
- Business case for employee engagement
Employee Engagement does not mean Employee Happiness.

An employee might be happy at work, but that doesn’t necessarily mean they are working hard and productively on behalf of the organisation.

While company game rooms, free massages and Friday parties are fun—and may be beneficial for other reasons, making employees happy is different from making them engaged.
Employee Engagement is...

The state in which individuals are emotionally and intellectually committed to the organisation.

Emotional commitment is demonstrated when employees actually care about their work and their company. Employees don’t work just for a pay check, or just for the next promotion, but work towards the organisation’s goals.

Engagement focuses on behaviors that produce results.

Employees are engaged when they care enough to use discretionary effort to ‘go the extra mile’.
An engaged employee is:

- A computer programmer who works overtime when needed, without being asked
- A retail clerk who picks up the trash on the store floor, even if the boss isn’t watching
- A TSA agent who will pull a suspicious bag to be searched, even if it’s the last bag on their shift
- An airport employee who goes the extra mile to ensure the customer gets his bags on time
- A school janitor who cleans behind the cupboard, because the children like to play there
An engaged employee exhibits various forms of organisational citizenship behaviours, such as

- Works hard and put a lot of effort into the job.
- Takes a proactive approach to the job and come up with new ideas and better ways of doing things.
- Is helpful and cooperative to others.
- Wants to stay with the organisation.
- Is a strong advocate of the organisation.
- Participates actively in the life of the organization.
- Comes to work on time
- Shows no or low intention to leave the organisation
- Is not unduly absent from work
Engaged employees lead to better business outcomes. According to research conducted:

- **Towers Perrin** says, companies with engaged workers have 6% higher net profit margins.
  
  Engaged Employees lead to:
  
  **higher service**, quality, and productivity, which leads to...
  
  **higher customer satisfaction**, which leads to...
  
  **increased sales** (repeat business and referrals), which leads to...
  
  **higher levels of profit**, which leads to...
  
  **higher shareholder returns** (i.e., stock price)

- **Aon Hewitt** suggests, a strong correlation between employee engagement and financial performance even in turbulent times. Organisations with high levels of engagement consistently outperform and post a 22% higher total shareholder return.

As former Campbell’s Soup CEO, Doug Conant, once said, “To win in the marketplace you must first win in the workplace.”
Comparing highly engaged employees with the less engaged provides some insights into how engagement can affect business outcomes.

Key findings from one such comparison studies show that employee engagement is associated with higher product quality, better customer service, better cost control, and greater employee loyalty.

- **Quality**: 84% of highly engaged employees believe they can positively impact the quality of their company’s products, compared with 31% of the disengaged.
- **Customer Service**: 72% of highly engaged employees believe they can positively affect customer service, versus 27% of the disengaged.
- **Cost Control**: 68% of highly engaged employees believe they can have a positive impact on costs in their job or unit, versus 19% of the disengaged.
- **Loyalty**: 59% of highly engaged employees plan to stay with the current employer, versus 24% of the disengaged.
Part 2

- The Employer-Employee Exchange
  - Drivers of engagement
The Exchange

Employer Provides

Drivers of Engagement

Employee Provides

Time, talent effort and results
Drivers of Engagement

• The 6 drivers represent the factors that enable an organisation, offer an engagement value proposition that holds value for both the organisation and the employee.

• An effective engagement strategy should engage employees and foster their commitment to deliver desired business performances and results.
Drivers of Engagement (con’t)

Pay & Benefits
- Fixed & Variable pay
- Benefit programmes
- Recognition programmes

Management Style
- Leadership
- Communication
- Decision making

Learning & Development
- Career Opportunities
- Training & Development

Quality of Life
- Physical Work Environment
- Work-Life Harmony

The Job
- Work Activities
- Resources
- Processes

Company Practices
- Policies
- Performance Management
- Organisation Reputation
- Diversity

The 6 drivers are interrelated; they do not act in isolation
Part 3

- Prevalence of engagement
- Hidden costs of employee disengagement
- Assessing employee engagement
Typically in organisations there are three categories of engaged employees:

- **Top 20% of employees**: These employees are passionate about their work and feel a profound connection to their company.
- **The middle 55% of employees**: These employees do their jobs, but without much personal investment.
- **The bottom 25% of employees**: These employees are actively disengaged.

The above percentage figures are indicative and can vary depending on the particular research study examined.
Disengaged employees are one of the three biggest threats facing business, according to a study done by The Economist.

According to Gallup estimates, the overall cost of disengagement to the US economy is as much as $350 billion per year.

A few costs generally associated with employee disengagement include:

- Disengaged employees take more sick days
- Disengaged employees undermine the excellent work of engaged colleagues, their cynicism and negativity is infectious
- Missed deadlines and poor sales results are common characteristics of disengaged employees
- Customer complaints often rise with employee disengagement

Increased employee disengagement also leads to increased risk of talent loss. The high costs associated with training and developing these high potential employees and costs involved with training new employees cannot be ignored.
There are various survey tools, used by companies to assess employee engagement. These include:

- Opinion surveys
- Focus groups
- 1-on-1 Employee Discussions

Employee survey tools are easy to administer and can be tailored to address specific workplace concerns or overall working conditions.

Surveys that measure employee engagement usually focus on multiple specific areas.
Employee opinion surveys may be written or computer based. These are usually confidential and gather employee opinions on a number of issues.

When asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 5, employee responses on the various question areas shed light on employee views and perception. Common employee opinion survey inquiry areas may include:

- Compensation
- Communication
- Work-life balance
- Leadership
- Career & Growth

Survey responses are analysed to determine if problems with engagement are organisation-wide or localised.

Many consulting companies have developed robust proprietary survey tools and processes for measuring work engagement, including BlessingWhite, Hewitt Associates, Sirota, Gallup, Towers Perrin, Valtera, and Watson Wyatt Worldwide among others.
Assessing Employee Engagement (con’t): Focus Groups

Focus groups obtain information from employees in a manner that encourages open and candid dialogue.

Organisations may use human resources staff or an external expert to conduct employee focus groups and facilitate discussion among small groups of 5 to 7. Using an external focus group expert helps ease employees’ apprehension when sharing sensitive information.

During the focus group session, participants share information about their enthusiasm, or lack thereof, and comment on what the employer can do to improve motivation levels and interest in their jobs.

Focus group responses are reviewed to determine any patterns concerning employee interest, morale and satisfaction. These factors when viewed in combination assist in identifying the level of employee engagement.
These discussions are focused purely on the disengaged employees.

This is a time-consuming process but helps in gathering meaningful and in-depth data.

One-on-one discussions enable the facilitator understand the context of disengagement and the situation in which specific behaviours were demonstrated, thus enabling the design of focused solutions.
Part 4

- Work-Life – The business case
  - What are FWAs
  - Typical process for developing FWAs
  - Implementing FWAs – challenges & tips
Today, the boundaries between work and life are blurred. One of the ways in which organisations can enhance employee engagement is by recognising and respecting work-life harmony as a critical employee need.

"There's no such thing as work-life balance. There's work, and there's life, and there's no balance,"

Sheryl Sandberg
Chief Operating Officer, Facebook
Work-life programmes give employees what they want – and they give back to the company.

The more employees are engaged in the company and feel appreciated, nurtured and trusted by the company, the more they go the extra mile for the company's success.

Work life programs get results:

- A study of 11 organisations in Singapore that have implemented work-life strategies found that for every $1 invested in a work-life programme, $1.68 flows back into the company in the form of higher productivity and reduced turnover.

- A study of more than 1,500 managers and employees in the US found that 7 in 10 managers said flexible work arrangements increased productivity and improved quality of work.

- When Hewlett-Packard implemented a compressed work week in the US, the number of transactions conducted daily went up by 200%.
• In a study polling 2,191 managers of different workplaces in Britain, 97% of those in workplaces with extensive work-life programmes reported an above-average financial performance, compared to 59% for those in typical workplaces.

• A study covering 500 companies in 12 Asia Pacific countries (including China, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan) showed that flexible work arrangements increased shareholder returns by 3.5%.

• An innovative study of Fortune 500 companies showed that when a company announced a new work-life programme, its stock price rose an average of 0.48%. This amounted to an average dollar value of US$60 million per company.

Drivers for Flexible Work Arrangements

Individual initiates or supervisor suggests

“Balancing organisation and employee needs”
Flexible Work Arrangements to better manage Work-Life

Employee Needs:
• Flexibility to meet family needs
• Quality of life
• Time with family
• Fair pay for a fair day’s work

Organisation Needs:
• Job must be done to achieve business results
  (i) Quality
  (ii) Quantity
  (iii) Timeliness
• Engaged workforce
• Balance costs and outcomes
Flexible Work Arrangements – What is it?

Flexible Work Arrangements

Flexible Work Arrangements

Flexible Time

Flexible Location

Flexible Job

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Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs)

Common FWAs
• Staggered Start and End Time
• Telecommuting
• Flexible Hours
• Satellite Office
• Compressed Work Week
• Part-Time Work
• Employees’ Choice of Days Off
• Project-Based Work
• Shift-Swapping

Less Common FWAs
• Job Sharing
• Weekend Work
• Phased Retirement
• Phasing In or Out
• Seasonal Work
• Retirees Cover for Workers on Leave
FWA Development Process

- Identify organisation needs
- Choose appropriate FWAs

- Gather feedback from senior management, line managers and employee groups
- Articulate needs; Organisation level and employee level
- Assess readiness
- Identify appropriate FWAs that address these needs
- Identify implementation challenges

- Develop policies, processes and guidelines
- Redesign jobs where required

- Design policies and processes
  - Eligibility
  - Applicability
  - Processes
- Align other HR processes
- Redesign jobs
- Identify roles and responsibilities for Employees, HR, Line Managers, FWA Committee and Top Management
- Identify Training needs for managers and employees
- Identify support and resources
- Pilot test

- Communicate
- Train

- Identify Change Champions and Change Agents
- Develop communication channels and material
- Train managers and employees
- Put in place process for gathering feedback for refinement
FWA Challenges – Perceived and Real

• Management/organisation culture
• Not all jobs equally open to FWAs – Equity issues
• Lack of performance measures
• Employees view FWAs as right rather than a privilege
• Employees do not take ownership - Abuse/misuse of facility
• Management and employees lack skills and perseverance to sustain programme
• Security, management of confidential data
• Short term implementation cost(s)
Tips for Implementing FWAs

- Approach with ‘why not?’ rather than ‘why?’
- Business feasibility must be the prime consideration
- Introduce on a trial or pilot basis
- Provide training for managers to define and manage performance
- Job redesign must be considered to facilitate flexibility
- Deal promptly/decisively with delinquent behaviour

Pre-empt Manager Fears
Pre-empting Manager’s Fears

- Increased time spent in managing employees on FWAs
- Loss of control /abuse of flexibility
- Resentment from those unable to work flexibly
- Reduced opportunities for face-to-face collaboration
- How will I appraise performance?
- Will it impact communication flow within the team?
Part 5

• Case Studies demonstrating how FWAs drive employee engagement

• Key Themes for Success
### The Organisation
A company in the restaurant business. It employs over 700 employees across their various restaurants.

### The Need
- Manpower Crunch
- Tap into non-traditional pools of talent (inactive and mature age women)

### FWAs Offered
- Part-time work

### Winning Strategies
- Redesign jobs to enable and suit part-time work
- Train restaurant managers to explain the FWAs to potential hires and existing employees
- Institutionalise processes to encourage retiring employees move to FWAs to retain them for longer periods
- Increase communication to employees to explain entitlements (benefits and bonus) for staff availing of FWAs

### Benefits
Company A has been able to:
- Tap into a larger pool of talent
- Hire the right quality and number of employees
- See an increase in take up rate for part-time work
## The Organisation
A home grown, family owned hardware retail chain with 23 stores in Singapore and 11 overseas. They have over 180 employees, 150 in retail sales, 41% of the employees are under the age of 30.

## The Need
- Deal with perennial manpower crunch and combat high staff turnover

## FWAs Offered
- Part-time work
- 5-day week

## Winning Strategies
- Offer a 5 or 6 day work week to full-time employees
- Committee to develop and sustain work-life efforts
- Institutionalise performance management for part timers
- Extend prorated benefits to part-timers (merit allowance, sales incentive schemes, recognition awards)
**Winning Strategies**

- Engage middle managers to disseminate HR policies and practices
- Train managers to manage part-time workers and mature age workers
- Share success stories to recognise good people managers and role models
- Regularly review part time policies to build engagement and commitment of part-time workers

**Benefits**

- Decreased reliance on foreign workers (only 19% of current workforce is made up of foreign workers as against the 45% they are entitled to)
- Decrease in employee turnover from 3.3% to 2%
- Increased engagement of part time employees
The Organisation
A company providing financial advisory and investment planning services. (Gen X and Y employees, comprise 90% of their workforce)

The Need
• Achieve higher levels of employee engagement, through work-life integration, regardless of age, gender and designation

FWAs Offered
• Part-time work
• Telecommuting
• Staggered Hours

Winning Strategies
• Recognition from the top that flexible work arrangements is not an option but a necessity
• Clear, formalised work-life programs & policies
• Encouraging open communication through continuously seeking employee feedback to refine FWA policies and programmes
• Formation of a Work-Life committee comprising employees of different ages and departments to surface and resolve employees’ work-life concerns
Winning Strategies

- Presence of strong Change Champions (CEO+Work-life Committee members)
- In addition to work-life arrangements, organisation and top management supports a work-life culture through provision of:
  - Time off for community service, volunteering activities, family game days
  - Employee support schemes such as additional medical insurance coverage, enhanced medical leave, etc.
  - Family friendly spaces such as a place for kids to come visit parents, lactation rooms

Benefits

- Highly engaged employees (culture of trust and collaboration)
- Employees recognise the need to meet the organisation’s business objectives
## The Organisation
An educational institution that believes “everyone wants to give of their best”. Policies are created to benefit the majority, rather than hold back for fear of potential abuse by minority.

## The Need
- Position themselves as an employer of choice, thereby attracting the best educational talent and improving employee satisfaction and well-being.
- Offer employees variety, flexibility and choices spanning different life stages (multi generational workforce)

### FWAs Offered
- Part-time work
- Compressed work week
- Staggered Hours

### Winning Strategies
- Management recognises that FWAs help take care of the family, so that employees can engage better at school
- Culture of open communication & respect between employees and management when negotiating FWAs
- Departmental heads authorised to approve FWA requests based on operational needs
- Coach managers, through meaningful conversations to:
  - Help them negotiate employee work-life requests while meeting organisation needs
  - Better understand the intent behind work-life policies
Winning Strategies

• Extended work-life programmes to management staff so that they strongly advocate FWAs too
• Performance management system measures outcomes, irrespective of type of work arrangement
• Enhanced leave schemes offering leave benefits catering to different life stage needs e.g. childcare leave for children up to 12 years old as against the national standard of 7 years, parental care leave, family leave, first day of school leave
• Employee support schemes such as a flexible medical and hospitalisation policy, lactation rooms, parenting courses, elderly parent support scheme

Benefits

• The institute today accedes to over 90% of employee FWA requests
• Engaged teaching staff who believe that the organisation cares for them
### The Organisation
A professional audit and accounting firm with a team of 12 employees

### The Need
To help employees effectively manage their work and personal responsibilities to raise employee morale and productivity

### FWAs Offered
- Part-time work
- Job sharing
- Telecommuting
- Early time off on Fridays
- Staggered Hours

### Winning Strategies
- Strong leadership that championed work-life and led by example
- Constant employee communication and interaction to reinforce benefits of work-life
- Regular monitoring and evaluation of FWAs to evaluate work-life program effectiveness
- Regular initiatives to enforce the organisation’s corporate values and beliefs
- Encourage employees to multitask and gain a variety of skills
- Job redesigned to make conducive for FWAs
- Enhanced leave benefits such as leave for birthdays, marriage, paternity, Family Care, bereavement, studies and emergencies

### Benefits
- **Decreased**
  - Absenteeism
  - Employee Turnover
  - Medical Costs

- **Increased**
  - Employee Productivity
  - Employee engagement & customer satisfaction
  - Cost savings on office space and operating costs
  - Ability to attract women into the workforce
  - Ability to maintain part-timers to cater to seasonal demands of work
## The Organisation
Country operations of a global MNC bank

## The Need
- Raise productivity by reducing time wastage due to travelling
- Increase retention of women
- Offer more than the ordinary to attract and retain talent

## FWAs Offered
- Part-time work
- Job sharing
- Telecommuting
- Staggered Hours

## Winning Strategies
- The Human Resource department responsible for policies and framework to ensure uniformity
- Policies on performance & benefits was clarified
- Individual line managers implemented
- Widely communicated within the bank: during the early days, the HR Head travelled to each of the branches to explain the policies
- All line managers & employees went through training to understand policies and better use FWAs
- Senior management reinforced the importance of FWAs as an attraction and retention strategy

## Benefits
- Productivity and retention increased
- Bank was able to tap into alternative talent pools such as stay-at-home mothers
- Bank was perceived as an attractive employer
The Organisation
Country operations of a global conglomerate

The Need
• Retain key talent in the workforce (specific emphasis on women)

FWAs Offered
• Part-time work
• Job sharing

Winning Strategies
• ‘Inclusiveness’ is at the core
• Focus groups with employees
• Drafted framework with supervisors
• Worked with leadership to get buy-in

• Telecommuting
• Staggered Hours

• Aligned HR & benefits policies
• Engaged supervisors & employees to address concerns
• Training and handbook to manage flexible workforce
• Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

Benefits: Different Conversations – Higher Retention
• “I am comfortable talking about my flex needs with my manager.”
• “I have just got my kid into the company day care centre.”
• “Have to take care of my dad, will be telecommuting for a while.”
• “Hey, do check out the flex handbook to know more about the part-time work options at our centre!”
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<th>The Organisation</th>
<th>The Need</th>
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<td>An IT Multinational</td>
<td>• Attract and retain talent</td>
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<th>FWAs Offered</th>
<th>Winning Strategies</th>
<th>Benefits:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Part-time work</td>
<td>• HR custodian of polices and processes</td>
<td>It is among the top 5 HR differentiators for the company. One of the key reasons for:</td>
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<td>• Staggered Hours</td>
<td>• Line managers implement</td>
<td>• Choosing to join the company</td>
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<td>• Used extensively to brand the company as Employer of Choice</td>
<td>• Remaining with the company</td>
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<td>• Results/ performance on job matters-geography agnostic</td>
<td>• Provide appropriate connection tools for all employees</td>
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<td>• Training and change management are cornerstone</td>
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<td>• ‘Why not – rather than Why’</td>
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Organisations that have successfully implemented FWAs share the lessons they learnt under 3 broad themes. They attribute their success to:

- Consistent and Continuous Communication
- A Positive Culture
- Strong Leadership
Communicate clear goals and expectations to your employees

Employees want to be a part of a compelling future, want to know what is most important at work and what excellence looks like.

Share information and numbers

Let employees in on what is going on within the company as well as how their jobs contribute to the big picture. Keeping employees informed helps them feel a greater sense of worth. Keep communication hopeful and truthful – do not be afraid to share bad news, instead be more strategic in delivering it.

Encourage open communication

Use surveys, suggestion boxes and team meetings to gain insights. Be open-minded and encouraging to help employees express their ideas and perspectives without criticism. Listen well and address concerns in the best way you can.

Not communicating or communicating late can damage engagement

Hearing about an important update from media, colleagues or family and friends can have a negative impact on employee engagement. Ensure employees hear these messages from the business as soon as possible.
Key themes for Success (Con’t)

A positive culture

Share experiences
Encourage employees to tell their own stories about what they are doing to support company strategies or embody organisational value. Hire employees who are a personal fit with the company culture.

Create opportunities for shared experiences
Build a strong team environment to encourage employees interact and participate. Non-work activities foster relationships and increase employee engagement.

Recognise & Appreciate
When employees know what they’re doing well, they’ll keep doing it – or, even better, do more of it. Provide feedback and recognition on what they’re doing well to boost morale. Feedback must be regular and balanced.

Collaborate and share on problem-solving
Make problem solving a shared responsibility between managers and employees. This helps build employees sense of empowerment, and increases engagement. Encourage employees to take responsibility, and work through problems or issues on their own, or collaboratively. It is not the manager’s job to fix all problems.
Help Employees Create Connections

Leaders should help employees see the “big picture” of how their role and objectives fit into the organisation’s objectives. This helps employees feel connected to the organisation.

Appreciate People

Recognition is an important part of motivation and engagement. Leaders must express genuine appreciation. Providing praise and giving credit where credit is due is key. The best recognition is immediate, specific, and personal.

Motivate Others

Leaders with higher degrees of emotional intelligence tend to get better results through inspiration, persuasion, empathy, and integrity. Use listening, persuasion, and influence skills to inspire and motivate people to work toward a common goal.

Support Growth

Leaders should initiate conversations with employees about the direction they’d like to see their career path take, and help them identify opportunities for personal and professional development that will help them achieve those goals. Care about employee growth and aspirations.
Part 6

- Details of Research Studies
Various researchers have measured employee engagement at the organisational level and connected it to business outcomes. The best examples of original research in this area are the studies by Gallup and Towers Perrin.

**Gallup** has provided convincing evidence of the link between engagement and company financial profits (based on the number of studies conducted, the large sample sizes in the studies, and advanced methodologies that enabled them to use data from company records and archival databases).
An analysis of many Gallup studies showed that having a work environment that promoted positive employee engagement was consistently associated with beneficial business outcomes, including reduced employee turnover, greater customer satisfaction, employee productivity, and company profits.

**Towers Perrin** explored the link between company-level engagement and business success at mid to large-size companies. In one study of 50 global organisations, the findings showed that high engagement companies (those with the highest average employee engagement scores), had higher 12-month change in net income (14% vs. -4%, respectively) and higher 12-month growth in earnings per share of company stock (28% vs. -11%) than low-engagement companies (those with the lowest average employee engagement scores).
Many studies indicate that effective communication between management and employees creates greater employee engagement, and that communication is a leading indicator of organisational financial performance.

For example, a 2006 survey of British employees found that allowing workers the opportunity to share their views and opinions with management was the single most important driver of engagement and that when management keeps employees informed about what is going on in the organisation it builds more employee engagement.

Watson Wyatt Worldwide conducted a series of in-depth studies to explore the link between the nature of management communication practices at companies, employee engagement, and the future financial performance of the business.

A key finding was that companies that communicated effectively with their employees were four times more likely to have high levels of employee engagement than firms that communicated less effectively. Thus, greater employee engagement was associated with better corporate communication practices.
The results of Mercer’s 2002 People at Work Survey provide some insights into why better communication by management is related to employee engagement and company financial success. The survey queried over 2,500 U.S. workers and found that when senior management communicated a clear vision for the future direction of the organisation, fewer employees were dissatisfied with the organisation compared to when senior management did not communicate its vision effectively, (7% vs. 39%, respectively); fewer employees said that they did not feel a strong sense of commitment to the organisation (6% vs. 32%); and fewer employees said that they were seriously thinking about leaving the organisation (16% vs. 40%).

Thus, better communication from company executives was associated with better engagement from employees.
According to HR solutions’ International Research Institute, only 27% of employees are actively engaged while 60% are ambivalent/not engaged and 13% are actively disengaged. Much of this disengagement is attributed to a lack of respect for work-life balance on the part of employers. Additional research that supports this claim:

- 86% of male employees and 67% of female employees work more than 40 hours a week (The Three Faces of Work-Family Conflict, 2011).
- 74% of people say it is important to them that their organisation consider and where possible, support flexible scheduling arrangements or job sharing (HR Solutions Research Institute).
- 87% of employees say it is important to them that their organisation allows employees to choose from a variety of benefits to meet their individual needs (HR Solutions Research Institute).
- In 1960, only 20% of mothers worked. Today, 70% of children live in households where both parents are employed (The Three Faces of Work-Family Conflict, 2011).