Employee Engagement and Social Media the Perfect Partnership

Pavithra S

Assistant Professor, New Horizon College of Engineering

Abstract:

Social Media has changed the entire scenario in today's world. Social media has become an integral part of the society and on an average people spend 2 hours in a day on social media. Organizations are integrating social media in all their practices from recruitment, development and engagement practices.

The study aims to focus on how social media has played a role in employee engagement. It helps us to understand how organizations are considering the need and desire to use social media for their growth in this competitive world to stay in competition.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Social Media

Introduction:

In 2013, organizations finally began in earnest to integrate social technologies into recruitment, development and engagement practices. At present social integration is the status quo of all organizations. Employee engagement is a workplace approach designed to ensure that employees are committed to their organisation's goals and values, motivated to contribute to organisational success, and are able at the same time to enhance their own sense of well-being.

David Macleod (2009) describes employee engagement as "How we create the conditions in which employees offer more of their capability and potential." An 'engaged employee' is one who is fully involved in, and enthusiastic about his work, and thus will act in progress of his organization's interests. The positive attitude and energy from an engaged workforce pays dividends in employee retention and attraction of top talent.

Employee engagement is a key business driver for organizational success. It helps to differentiate the organizations, and with high level of employee engagement, firms can promote retention of talent, foster customer loyalty and improve organizational performance and stakeholder value. Employee engagement is influenced by many factors-from workplace culture, organizational communication and managerial styles to trust and respect, leadership and company reputation.

Social Media: Online networks and two-way communication channels connect users in the virtual world, establishing new relationships that expand users' networks and facilitate user participation in interactions and exchanges. Social Media has become an integral part of the way we live and work. Social media comes with great advantages to teams, individuals, and the collective knowledge of an organization. Companies agree that social networking has become an integral part of the business world.

Employers who acknowledge the need for social interaction in the workplace offer internal social media platforms, called enterprise social networks, to channel the need for social activity. An enterprise social network is an exclusive network only accessible to the business and its internal users. An enterprise social network meets company and employee needs to be engaged. Users can share thoughts, photos, updates, and more without leaving the work environment. According to a Microsoft survey of 9,000 workers across 32 countries, 31 percent would be willing to spend their own money on a new social tool if it made them more efficient at work.

Need for the study

The top three people oriented success factors identified in the study conducted by Harvard Business in September 2013 were, achieving a high level of customer service, effective communications and achieving a high level of employee engagement focusing on employee engagement as a top-three business priority.

Literature review indicates that there is lack of empirical research done on impact of social media on employee engagement. Use of the internet and social media has grown substantially over the last decade, and the use of these new web-based technologies for work related activities has been a major part of that. Among employees, 61 per cent make use of the internet at work, spending on average seven hours a week online at work (Dutton Helsper & Gerber 2009).

An enterprise social network makes it easier for employees to do their work—by collaborating, communicating, sharing, giving feedback, suggesting, questioning, and recommending. It helps employees to be more engaged in the business and see more of the big picture. It is known that employees who are engaged at work provide their customers better service, are more productive, and are more likely to stay with the company.

Internet and mobile Association of India (IAMAI)came out with the report (source: Economic Times, Nov 18 2015) that India will have second largest   internet user base by Dec 2015 overtaking US by 402 million internet users and presently Indians are very active on different social networks with 88% of users spending time on various social networking sites.

There is paucity of research studies in India as only 3 articles were found which are theoretical in nature and quite few researches have been carried out in western countries but not in Indian context. Hence there is a need to study the impact of social media on employee engagement and it will eventually contribute towards the productivity in both manufacturing and service sectors.

Research Methodology:

This paper is mainly descriptive in nature and the data is gathered from secondary sources. Data is gathered from many sources like Newspaper (Both Local & National), Magazines, Research data.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the role of social media on Employee Engagement
2. To understand how Organizations are using social media as a tool for Employee Engagement

Literature Review:

Employee Engagement

Kahn (1990) was the first to suggest that employee engagement would positively impact on the Organisation's outcome. The reasoning behind his contention was that because employees want to work for reasons other than "they get paid to do it", they will work to pursue success for their organisation. Research by Gallup has found low to moderate correlations between employee engagement and a range of outcome measures, including customer satisfaction, profit, productivity, turnover and safety Harter et al, (2002). Research consistently shows that low levels of employee engagement are detrimental to performance. In fact, it has been found that employees that are highly engaged are twice as likely to be top performers Taleo Research, (2009).

A workplace approach designed to ensure that employees are committed to their organisation's goals and values, motivated to contribute to organisational success, and are able at the same time to enhance their own sense of well-being." MacLeod and Clarke, (2009 pg. 9). Findings from the 2011 WERS were released in 2013 Van Wanrooy et al (2013), a survey was conducted and found out that engagement is enabled by factors such as discretionary effort, loyalty, and job satisfaction

In 2009, Harter et al. conducted a meta-analysis encompassing 199 research studies across 152 organisations in 44 industries and 26 countries. They statistically calculated the available data on business/work unit level relationship between employee engagement and performance outcomes within in each study. The studies covered 32,394 business/work units and 955,905 employees Harter et al. (2009). Their findings quantified significant differences between business units ranking in the top and bottom 25% on engagement. They found an 18% drop in productivity between the top and bottom performers. Additionally, there was a 60% drop in quality (measured by defects in products). In a similar study into Fortune 100 companies, it was

found that there was a dramatic 1,000 percent increase in errors among disengaged versus engaged employee populations Gonring, (2008).

Engaged employees are less likely to leave their job. If an employee has no emotional commitment to their job, there is a greater chance that they will leave to pursue a job that offers, for example, higher remuneration or more flexible work conditions Haid & Sims, 2009; Schaufeli & Bakker, (2004). The Corporate Leadership Council (2004) found that the most engaged employees are 87% less likely to leave their organisation. Organisations enjoy 26 percent higher revenue per employee when employees are highly engaged Taleo Research, (2009). Engagement is most closely associated with the existing construction of job involvement Brown (1996) and flow Csikszentmihalyi, (1990). Job involvement is defined as 'the degree to which the job situation is central to the person and his or her identity Lawler & Hall, (1970). As Purcell explains, "engagement is a combination of attitude and behaviour. The attitude is 'commitment', and the behaviour is 'going the extra mile" Purcell,(2010)

Social Media

According to Kaplan & Heinen (2010), as cited in Majchrzak, Faraj, Kane, & Azad (2013), social media is "a group of Internet-based technologies that allows users to easily create, edit, evaluate, and/or link to content or to other creators of content" (p. 38). Li and Bernoff (2011) say the groundswell created by social media has changed the balance of power by creating a scenario where individuals have the power to undermine the communication efforts of organizations (p. 13). Kaplan and Haenlein, (2010) state that the platforms of this large group of applications can be categorized on the basis of two aspects – 'Media richness' and 'Social presence'. Social media is a means for social interaction, as a superset beyond the natural social communication. As enabled by the existing and expanding communication techniques, social media have changed substantially communication between both organizations and individuals Kietzman et al, (2011); Henricks, 2009).

Social media started as a way for people with similar interests to get to know one another and interact. One of the earliest sites that could be considered social media was MUD or Multi-User Dungeon (the "D" could also stand for Dimension or Domain) and it was a place for those interested in role-playing games to interact with each other and chat Edosomwan, Prakasan, Kouame, Watson, & Seymour, (2011).

Leonardi, Huysman, & Steinfield (2013) define enterprise social media as a "web-based platform that allows workers to communicate messages with specific co-workers or broadcast messages to everyone in the organizations; explicitly indicate or implicitly reveal particular co-workers as communication partners; post, edit, and sort text and files linked to themselves or others; and view the messages, connections, text, and files communicated, posted, edited, and sorted by anyone else in the organization at any time of their choosing" (p. 2).

Social Media and Employee Engagement

Social Media can also be thought of as the "media which is primarily used to transmit or share information with a broad audience. Social networking is an act of engagement as people with common interests associate together and build relationships through a community" Cohen, 2009; Hartshorn, (2010); Edosomwan et.al. (2011, p. 83).

Social media has the potential to achieve employee engagement, enhance productivity and increase collaboration, C. J., Davison, R. M., Zhong, X., & Liang, Y.,(2010). APCO Worldwide and Gagen MacDonald jointly sponsored an online survey on employee engagement and found out that 63% used Internal social Media (ISM) in workplace such as wikis, blogs or internal community sites and it helped demonstrating innovation, stay connected with others and likely uphold company's brand and reputation.

Gigi G. S. and Dr. P. Umarani (2013) stated that employees' voices can be a very powerful medium across the various social platforms. Empowering and engaging them to speak on behalf of an organization can be a fruitful endeavour for both the company synergy efforts as well as its social strategy.   Social media can be utilized as an internal communication tool to engage with both existing and potential employees, Parry and Solidoro (2013).

Shilpa Roy P (2013) states that Social Media Usage helps leaders share experience, provides opportunity to generate new ideas, people feel more connected and increases employee engagement. Bob Kelleher (2013) Social media is a huge engagement, staffing, retention, and increasingly, branding tool, companies use social media to link both product and employment brand, and to get their customers to sing their praises or live their brand. Erin Dick, Manager (2011), of Health & Wellness discussed in Employee Engagement conference; that using social media and other leading-edge engagement strategies can drive performance, productivity and bottom line results linking social media and wellness programs to improve employee engagement.

Private (enterprise) social networking sites are IBM's Beehive and HP's Watercooler system Leonardi, Huysman, & Steinfield, (2013). IBM's Beehive is an enterprise social media for the use IBM employees. The site allows for employees to develop profiles, search for other people, interact with other employees by commenting on content, share content such as photos, and even RSVP to events organized through the site Lee & Xue, (2013).

The work of Michael Brzozowski in the year (2009), describes Water Cooler, a tool that aggregates shared internal social media and cross-references it with an organization's directory. They also deployed the WaterCooler in a large global enterprise and present the results of a preliminary user study which reveal that - WaterCooler changed users' perceptions of their workplace, made them feel more connected to each other and the company, and redistributed users' attention outside their own business groups.

APCO Worldwide and Gagen MacDonald jointly sponsored an online survey and found out that 63% used Internal Social Media (ISM) in workplace such as wikis, blogs or internal community sites and it helped demonstrating innovation, stay connected with others and likely uphold company's brand and reputation.

Social Media can also be thought of as the "media which is primarily used to transmit or share information with a broad audience, which social networking is an act of engagement as people with common interests associate together and build relationships through a community" Cohen, (2009); Hartshorn, (2010); Edosomwan, Prakasan, Kouame, Watson, & Seymour, (2011, p. 83).Social media is the system versus social networking which is the process of communicating Edosomwan, Prakasan, Kouame, Watson, & Seymour, (2011).

Conclusion:

Social media has changed human behavior from last 10 years. 80% have a social media profile, and two hours are spent on social media every day by the average person. Organizations are not just using LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and the like to engage their employees.

Social media has emerged as one of the powerful tool creating opportunities for organizations to promote collaboration between employees and to improve employee engagement. social media is positively related to affective commitment, but in many study has no strong relationship between commitment in workplace and using of social media.

References

1. APCO Worldwide and Gagen MacDonald (2011) online survey on Employee Engagement study December

2. Bennett, James, et al. (2010): "Workplace impact of social networking." Property Management 28.3 p.p.138-148.

3. Bill Rorbers (2012) "Social Media Gets Strategic". HR Magazine, SHRM Vol. 57 No. 10.

4. Bob Kelleher, (2013) "The Good, Bad, and Ugly - Social Media's Impact on your Brand"

5. Christoffer Ellehuus, Piers Hudson: (2004) " Driving Performance and Retention Through Employee Engagement", Corporate leadership Council, Employee Engagement Survey

6. Corporate Executive Board: (2007), "Driving Performance and Retention through Employee Engagement" Retrieved from http://www.executiveboard.com.

7. Cross, R., & Parker, A. (2004) "The hidden power of social networks: Understanding how work really gets done in organizations". Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

8. Dejin Zhao, Mary Beth Rosson (2004) "How and Why People Twitter: The Role that Micro-blogging Plays in Informal Communication at Work" – GROUP '04,

9. DiMicco, Joan, et al. （2008） "Motivations for social networking at work." Proceedings of the 2008 ACM conference on Computer supported cooperative work".

10. "Driving Performance and Retention Through Employee Engagement" source www.corporateleadershipcouncil.com

11. Edosomwan, S., Prakasan, S. K., Kouame, D., Watson, J., & Seymour, T. (2011). The History of Social Media and its Impact on Business. *Journal of Applied Management andEntrepreneurship, 16* (3), 79-91.

12. Erickson, B.H., (2009) "Generalizing social capital processes across two different settings. In Contexts of social capital: Social networks in markets, communities and families", eds. R. Hsung, N. Lin & R.L. Breiger (eds.), New York, NY: Routledge.

13. Gallup Study: "Engaged employees inspire company innovation". Gallup Management Journal, http://gmj.gallup.com/content/default.aspx?ci=24880&pg=1

14. Gigi G. S. Dr. P. Umarani: (2013) "Impact of social media in employee engagement: a theoretical framework", Volume 2, Number 4, October – December', ISSN (P):2319-9032

15. Grawford, G., (2010) Survey: "Social media wins followers". Accessed on 2nd September 2011, http://www.jamk.fi/kirjasto, Nelli-portaali, EBSCO.,

16. Gretcher Hoover (2005)–"Maintaining employee engagement when communicating difficult issues" – Communication World.

17. Haid, M. & Sims, J."(2009). "Employee Engagement: Maximising Organisational Performance

18. Harter, J. K., Schmidt, F. L. & Hayes, T. L (2002)" Business-unit-level relationship between employee satisfaction, employee engagement, and business outcomes: A meta-analysis". Journal of Applied Psychology, 87(2), p.p.268–279.

19. Harter, J. K., Schmidt, F. L., Killham, E. A. & Agrawal, S., T. L. (2009) "Meta-Analysis: The Relationship between Engagement at Work and Organisational Outcomes.

20. Harvard Business Review (2013) Impact of Employee Engagement on Performance Report

21. http://blogs.cisco.com/socialmedia/5-steps-to-success-encouraging-employee-social-media-engagement/

22. https://www.sunlife.ca/static/canada/Sponsor/About%20Group%20Benefits/Focus%20Update/2011/317/Focus_317.pdf

23. Huang, J., Baptista, J., & Galliers, R. D. (2012) "Reconceptualising theoretical practices in organizations: The impact of social media on internal communications. Information & Management", 50, p.p. 112-124.

24. Jue, A.L., Alcalde-Marr, J., & Kassotakis, M.E. (2010) "Social media at work. San Francisco", CA: Jossey-Bass.

25. Kahn, W.A. (1990) 'Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work", Academy of Management Journal, 33, p.p. 692–724.

26. Kaplan A. and Haenlein M., (2010) "Users of the world unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media, Business Horizons", 53, pp 59-68

27. Kotter, J.P (1995) "Why transformation efforts fail". Harvard Business Review, 73(2), p.p. 59-67.

28. Lee, E., & Xue, W. (2013) "How Do Online Social Networks Drive Internal Communication and Improve Employee Engagement".

29. MacLeod and Clarke's Concept of Employee Engagement: An Analysis based on the Workplace Employment Relations Study, ISBN 978-1-908370-50-1

30. Michael J. Brzozowski (2009) "Water Cooler: Exploring an Organization Through Enterprise Social Media" – GROUP '09,

31. NHS Employers briefing 87 – HR and social media in the NHS.

32. Papacharissi, Z. (2011) " A networked self: Indentify, community, and culture on social network sites". New York, NY: Routledge.

33. Parry, E. and Solidoro.A,(2013), "Social media as a mechanism for engagement", Social Media in Human Resources Management, Advanced Series in Management, Vol. 12, pp. 121-141.

34. Postman, J. (2009) "SocialCorp: Social media goes corporate". Berkeley, CA: New Riders.

35. Qualman, E. (2009) "Socialeconomics: How social media transforms the way we live and do business". Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

36. Shilpa Roy P , (2013) ,Eemployee engagement : tool for success of an organisation International Journal of Social Science & Interdisciplinary Research ISSN 2277 3630 IJSSIR, Vol. 2 (5),

37. Steve Batts (2004)– Getting engaged – HR Magazine society for Human Resource Management, Feb..

38. Taleo Research (2009). "Alignment Drives Employee Engagement and Productivity." Retrieved 29 May 2011 from http://www.taleo.com

39. Warwick Business School (2013)," Social media is helping workers become more productive". Retrieved June 15, 2014, from Warwick Business School News: http://www.wbs.ac.uk/news/social-media-is-helping-workers-become-moreproductive

40. Westerman, D., Spence, P. R., & Van Der Heide, B. (2014),"Social Media as Information Source: Recency of Updates and Credibility of Information". Journal of Computer- Mediated Communication, 19, p.p.171-183