



Summary: Reciprocity=intensity of commitment

Conclusion: The greater an employee's engagement, the more likely he or she is to "go the extra mile" and deliver excellent on-the-job performance.

Reference: Employee Engagement and Commitment: A guide to understanding, measuring and increasing engagement in your organization
by Robert J. Vance, Ph.D. For more information contact, Lori Bierman at lbierman@batrushollweg.com

Why this Article is Important: Engagement is a key factor in employee performance and retention. So then, how can you effectively drive and measure the level of engagement within your organization? This article shows how everyday HR practices, such as recruiting, training, performance management and career development, can enhance engagement.

Major Findings: Beyond engagement, this article outlines the impact of an employee's level of commitment to their employer and role. Commitment involves an expectation of reciprocity, wherein the employee receives something in exchange for their commitment such as a secure job and fair compensation. The degree of reciprocity shown by a company impacts the intensity of the commitment. The following pages outline the link between employer practices and employee engagement and commitment.

What does it mean to you?

- a. In order to engage your employees and benefit from that engagement, you must invest in related HR practices and devote resources where you feel you will get the biggest bang for your buck.
- b. Using organizational surveys to measure the level of engagement and assess the relationship to business results can help identify which investments in engagement initiatives are paying off, which are not, and which related HR practices may need to be improved.
- c. Asking employees for their opinions and then taking constructive action based on survey results shows that the organization values them and takes their feedback seriously, thus enhancing engagement.
- d. Determining which HR practices you can leverage to increase engagement and/or commitment requires thinking strategically about what is important in your organization, what you can invest, and what you want to accomplish – and then creating a compelling business case.



Employee Engagement

Everyday human resource practices that provide powerful levers for enhancing engagement:

The Power of Job Enrichment

To Increase Engagement:

Imbue jobs with:

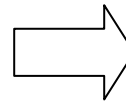
- Meaningfulness
- Variety
- Autonomy
- Co-worker Support

With job enrichment, employee performance on prescribed tasks (those specified in job descriptions) improves. Workers define their role more broadly – and willingly take on tasks outside of their formal job description

To Enhance Commitment:

Demonstrate reciprocity by providing employees with opportunities for personal development.

Increasing
*Knowledge
*Skills
*Experience
*Expertise



Increasing
*Self-Efficacy
*Self-Esteem
*Employer Commitment

Recruiting for Engagement and Commitment

To Increase Engagement:

Target qualified applicants likely to find the work interesting and challenging.

Send recruiting messages that:

- Extol attractive job features to enhance person-job fit
- Encourage those who are not suited for the work to self-select out.

To Enhance Commitment:

For internal candidates, send recruiting messages that:

- Emphasize possibilities for movement/promotion to more desirable jobs to signal reciprocity

For external candidates, send recruiting messages that:

- Highlight the employer side of the exchange relationship – pay and benefits, advancement opportunities, flexible work hours
- Recognize and address commitment congruence (e.g. work life balance)
- Encourage those who are not suited to the organization to self-select out.

Effective Employee Selection

To Increase Engagement:

Select the individuals for the right jobs.

Choose candidates most likely to:

- Perform required job duties well
- Contribute voluntary (above and beyond) behaviors
- Avoid prohibited behaviors (such as absenteeism, counter-productivity)

To Enhance Commitment:

- Present selection hurdles that are relevant to the job in question. Successful candidate will feel good about surmounting such hurdles to land the job
- Create a positive first impression of your company's competence. You will set the stage for growth of long-term commitment.



Training and Development

To Increase Engagement:

Provide employee orientation to establish:

- The employer-employee exchange relationship
- Understanding of how the job contributes to the organization's mission

Offer skill development to enhance:

- Performance
- Satisfaction
- Self-efficacy

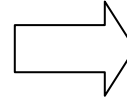
Provide training to encourage prescribed and voluntary performance.

To Enhance Commitment:

Signal commitment reciprocity by:

- Your investments in training
- Modes of training delivery that accommodate employee's other commitments

Increasing
*Knowledge
*Skills
*Experience
*Expertise



Increasing
*Self-Efficacy
*Self-Esteem
*Employer Commitment

Strategic Compensation

To Increase Engagement:

- Equitable exchange – motivates willingness to contribute prescribed and voluntary performance, and to avoid proscribed behaviors
- Pay-for-performance – focuses employees' attention on incentivized behaviors
- Competency-based pay – fosters acquisition of knowledge and skill and enhance employees' performance, satisfaction and self-efficacy

To Enhance Commitment:

- Competitive pay – attracts qualified job candidates
- Equitable exchange – signals commitment reciprocity
- Flexible benefits and perks – facilitates commitment congruence (e.g. work-life balance matched to stage of life)
- Retirement and seniority-graded pay plans – fosters long-term commitment and identification with your company

Effective Performance Management

To Increase Engagement:

Provide:

- Challenging goals that align with your company's strategic objectives
- Positive feedback and recognition for accomplishments
- Recognition and appreciation for extra voluntary contributions

To Enhance Commitment:

Manage performance to:

- Enable employees to experience success over the long term
- Facilitate congruence between employee commitment to your organization and other life commitments
- Value the expertise of experienced employees

Taken from: Employee Engagement and Commitment: A guide to understanding, measuring and increasing engagement in your organization. Robert J. Vance. SHRM Foundation's Effective Practice Guidelines.