

## The 2017 Deloitte Report by Bersin states that “employee engagement has become the top issue on the minds of business leaders, directing us to an entirely new model of management”.

**While we all know engagement is important, most would struggle to define it. Let's start with what it is not...**

Employee engagement does not mean employee happiness. Someone might be happy at work, but that does not necessarily mean they are working hard and productively on behalf of the organisation.

Employee engagement does not mean employee satisfaction. Many companies have ‘employee satisfaction’ surveys and executives talk about ‘employee satisfaction’, but the bar is set too low. A satisfied employee might show up for her daily 9-to-5 without complaint. However, that same ‘satisfied’ employee might not put in the extra effort on her own.

So what is it? A definition could be: Employee engagement is the emotional commitment the employee has to the organisation and its goals.

This emotional commitment means engaged employees care about their work, their team and the company. They do not work just for a paycheck, or just for the next promotion, but work because they are aligned with organisational goals, care about their team's success and are given what they need to flourish at work. This often leads to the use of discretionary effort.

Once we know what we are looking for, we need to be able to measure it, and more importantly, create more of it. Here are a few highlights from the Bersin Report that may assist in improving employee engagement:

### **More employee feedback more often.**

According to a 2004 study, the vast majority of employees who received little or no feedback were actively disengaged. Engagement went up dramatically when employees received feedback about their weaknesses, and even more so when they received feedback about strengths.

### **People analytics will grow.**

In his article published in Harvard Business Review, Sean

Graber argues that it is important to look at employees' perceptions and behaviours and their impact on performance. This becomes even more powerful if the measure is validated and predictive such as a team climate measure. Over time, organisations can track their team's performance and how it relates to key performance indicators (KPIs), such as sales, customer satisfaction and attrition.

### **Team level engagement**

Engagement becomes even more important at the team level. Professor Sandy Pentland's research shows with remarkable consistency that team engagement is the most important predictor of a team's success. Not only that, but it is as significant as all the other factors (individual intelligence, personality, skill, and the substance of discussions) combined.

### **Technology will focus on the employee.**

Bersin explains that the HR technology market moves in 5-7 year cycles of rolling-out, implementing and replacing tech. We are now in a transitional phase between two cycles.

One of the biggest trends we are seeing is the arrival of a “new breed of pulse tools, feedback apps, and anonymous social networking tools”. These advanced methods for having regular check-ins with employees to understand where they are being challenged will eventually replace annual performance reviews.

Business is a living, breathing entity. It undergoes change, grows and recedes, gets broken and heals. The people are the individual cells that work together to ensure that the entity is healthy, productive and thriving.

In 2016 business leaders will have more tools at its disposal to predict and improve employee engagement. Maybe in 2017, Gallup's survey will report a positive radical shift in how people show up to work.