

Will Technology Be Able to Solve The Engagement Challenge?

Through data mining and predictive analysis HR technology is enabling the managers to take real-time decisions, empowering employees to express themselves and subsequently enhancing the whole employee engagement function. But how far has it been able to solve the engagement challenge? Lets find out here.

The Gallup State of the Global Workplace Report 2017 suggests that 85 percent of employees worldwide are not engaged or are actively disengaged in their job. The report further suggests that the low percentages of engaged employees represent a barrier to creating high performing cultures around the world, given that business units in the top quartile of Gallup's global employee engagement database are 17% more productive and 21% more profitable than those in the bottom quartile.

Even, in Deloitte's Human Capital Trends Report 2017, employee engagement is listed as one of the top talent priorities for HR and business leaders.



Although the importance of employee engagement is pervasive, however, it is now moving away from conversations and connects with a reactive approach and organizations are now turning to technology to create predictive steps to identify and correct behaviors proactively.

There was a time when the process of identifying and measuring the engagement levels was perceived as a major challenge. Through various feedback forms, surveys and conversations, HR and managers measured the engagement levels, circled out the critical areas to address and later formed strategies to rectify behaviors. This whole process involved the HR to go through both operational and strategic processes. Now, the tedious task of measuring employee engagement and identifying the pain points has been made simpler and more comprehensive by technology. Various technological solutions, things like data mining and predictive analysis have evolved and have led to better decision making.

While there are challenges which technology has been able to overcome, it has its own set of limitations. To understand the impact of technology on employee engagement we reached out to the experts who are providing these solutions and the experts who are implementing them in their organizations. Here are a few insights of the two perspectives:

How are HR Tech startups solving the engagement challenge?

Arun Krishnan, CEO and Founder, nFactorial says, "Intra-organizational communication is the key to ensuring that employees are engaged and have a great experience. Our platforms help in enabling intra-organizational communication and in fostering the right behaviors."



nFactorial is addressing the engagement challenge with products like n!Gage, which is a continuous employee feedback platform that allows managers to get real-time data and insights about what their employees are feeling. Another Singapore based startup EngageRocket is providing bite-sized action plans to guide managers. These action plans are informed by their team's pattern of data so that managers never need to be lost as to what to do with people problems again.

CheeTung, Co-Founder and CEO, EngageRocket said, "By equipping leaders and managers at all levels in an organization with the data they need about their people, in real-time, companies can be more agile with change, spend more efficiently with their HR initiatives, create more employee engagement, and have higher performing teams." He also feels that one of the challenges can be around user adoption and program implementation and these are aspects any enterprise software needs to address.

Hyphen, another HR tech startup with its mobile-first listening & engagement solution is enabling organizations to create an open platform for all the employees to crowd-source conversations, ideas, feedback and suggestions in a socially engaging and real-time manner.

Arnaud Grunwald, Co-Founder and CEO, Hyphen said, "Hyphen combines top-down communication from the management through employee experience & engagement surveys and pulse polls, with bottom-up employee voice, where the employees can express themselves openly. They can have meaningful conversations with their peers and ask them questions, without the fear of judgment. This provides access to a rich content, which we like to call the goldmine. It captures 'what' people are talking about and 'how' they are talking about in real time, giving timely, actionable and precise insight."

Besides mobile-first platforms and other technological tools, chatbots have also entered engagement space and one such HR tech startup is inFeedo. With its product Amber, a chatbot, it is leveraging the power of A.I. in HR to improve employee experience/engagement that asks questions in tenure based manner with an objective to predict human behavior in enterprises.

Tanmaya Jain, CEO and Founder, inFeedo believes that a product like Amber has enabled HR to introduce "Predictive People Analytics" to reduce top talent attrition and has automated "Continuous Culture Evaluation" to diagnose culture issues."

Technological solutions like these empower employees, create more awareness among management through real-time data and actionable insights and also allows them to take care of future cycles. But technology also has some limitations.

Limitations of HR Tech solutions

While Arun Krishnan believes in the benefits of technology he also highlights that ultimately technology is an enabler.

He said, “Any technological tool or platform will fail if the organizational culture is not conducive to its enablement. Continuous feedback platforms can be game-changers, but they are also a massive change-management exercise within the organization. They will fail if leadership is not completely vested in the platform. It requires a sound change management strategy to enable such platforms to be enmeshed within the organizational processes. Ultimately though, it is all dependent on managing the organizational culture and in ensuring that the company values percolate through the hierarchy and are seen as guiding principles by the employees.”



Tanmaya also reiterates the same. He says, “While tools like Amber are great for diagnostics, they're not solutions in themselves. The shift towards adopting talent analytics and using the insights from them is more of a mindset shift and the willingness of the HR leaders to take that leap. While companies like GE, MakeMyTrip, Airtel and 50 other are already using Amber's insights to build a more proactive culture, some HR leaders still have a misbelief that implementation is a costly and a high effort affair. These challenges need to be addressed first where technology takes a backseat, and the human touch is needed.”

He also talked about the importance of technological readiness and how it can be one of the major roadblocks, and said, “If organizations are unwilling to embrace new ways of working then technology will fail.”

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