under the
BONNET

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

easier said than done!

totus consulting services (p) limited

Dear Friends

It gives me great pleasure to present to you the next issue of Under the Bonnet. Apologies for the delay in publishing this issue!

Our theme for this issue is- "Employee Engagement: easier said than done".

As in all our previous issues, we have chosen a topic that seems to be "engaging" the thoughts and minds of senior leaders and HR heads across industry sectors.

The ability of organisations to engage and retain its employees is seen as a core organisational capability in an increasingly fragmented employment market.

What makes some organisations more appealing to its members? What makes these employees want to work and contribute while, in others, attrition and lack of ownership raises its ugly head? The "solution" that is fast seeming to gain ground amongst the HR function and business leaders is "employee engagement".

Just a moment .... we'd like to warn you that we are not about to offer you one more magic formula.

Employee engagement is easier said than done. While organisations and Managers can contribute to it, there are limitations. Let's accept it.

We believe that employee engagement is not about giving a fish every day. It's about teaching fishing. It's about taking the horse to the pond, not making it drink. It's about Human Resource Development, and not Human Resource Management.

Yes, our view is indeed contrary to popular belief.

We are sure you will enjoy reading this issue of UTB and would be delighted to hear from you.

Warm regards

Ganesh Chella

Research team
Latha Nambisan and Anish Raju

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।
आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥

uddhared ātmanā 'tmānām nā 'tmānām avasādayet |
ātmai 'va hy ātmano bandhur ātmai 'va ripur ātmananah॥

what the
bhagavat gita
has to say ...

Let a man raise himself by his own self; Let him not debase himself. For he is himself his friend, himself his foe.

One is oneself responsible for one's distinction or debasement. The contributions that others make in these respects are secondary. It is but usual that one complains that one's enemy has done havoc to one. But no one can be hurt without oneself contributing to it. It is possible for a sadhaka to avail himself of a wrong done to him by his enemy for self-purification. Because of misunderstanding and maladjustment man paves the way for self-debasement. And by doing so he becomes his own enemy. On the other hand, by right understanding and right conduct he elevates himself and thereby becomes his own friend. One is one's own arch-friend or arch-foe. The one that understands this fact, learns an invaluable lesson for life.

On September 5th 1986, in Karachi, Neerja Bhanot, a 23 year old Indian air-hostess, followed the hijack code beyond the call of professional duty: hit by a bullet, she saved the lives of many passengers by resourcefully opening an escape chute and died in a hail of hijackers' bullets.

About 4000 employees of L&T got together on a Sunday to attempt a seven kilometer marathon in memory of the company's founder Henning Holck-Larsen to highlight the cause of "environment protection", something that was dear to the founder.

At Aravind Eye Hospital in Madurai, less than one percent of ophthalmic manpower performs about five percent of all cataract surgeries in India. Harvard Business Review which has written more than one case on this hospital has noted that while the average ophthalmologist in India performs about 200 cataract surgeries a year, an Aravind doctor performs about 1500 an efficiency multiple of 7.5!

The Chairman of the recently formed Centre for Business Process Outsourcing Professionals (affiliated to the global Union Network International) is talking about how his organisation can examine ways of lowering the high attrition in the BPO industry.

Krishnan was the youngest Regional Manager at a Sales and Marketing Organisation, holding the responsibility for the largest and most challenging region. In his five-year tenure, he had risen rapidly from a Senior Sales Executive to the position of Regional Manager. Excited about his job and displaying outstanding achievement every year, Krishnan had always been given the best increases and bonuses as well as choice assignments and nominations to training programs. Out of the blue, one night at 11 p.m. the HR Head got a call from Krishnan, announcing his decision to leave. The HR Head and the CEO were completely baffled - a decision from a person and at a time that they had least expected.

Yes, Employee Engagement is hot!

We chose the theme of Employee Engagement for this UTB, because of its topicality. In all our conversations with industry leaders there appeared to be a sense of urgency and concern.

More and more Organisations and consulting firms are rushing in to define, measure and enhance employee engagement levels. Models, surveys, awards and quick-fix solutions abound.

In fact, some Organisations have gone to the extent of redesignating their Human Resource generalists as Employee Engagement Managers!

At totus consulting, we have a different view, a much more modest one. We believe that the issues involved in employee engagement are far too complex and deep rooted to be enhanced through swift measures. We therefore researched the topic with a band of Indian Companies in each Sector. We also went back to the basics, to the historical roots and tried to understand if these issues are new or have occupied the minds of researchers and others in the past. We also looked at current models and solutions.

The objective of this article is not to offer you a magic potion. It is meant to throw more light on the issue, to make you more aware and help you grasp the fundamentals. Most importantly, we believe it is important for someone to take a *contrary* and *non-party* view of the subject to throw fresh light and provoke fresh thinking!

Awareness of the truth is the beginning of change, we believe. So, read on …..

THE CONTEXT

One of our early and important realisations was that "Employee Engagement" is not exactly a recent phenomenon. Researched from the 1920s, a succession of management and behavioural thinkers have delved deep into this subject and have added significant insight in this area. Known variously as Employee Ownership, Employee Motivation, Employee Involvement, Commitment, Loyalty and so on, they have all revolved around the same quest what it takes to get employees to give their very best, emotionally and physically and continue their organisation membership.

Before we get to grapple with the subject, let us understand reasons for the current flurry of interest in this area:

- For the first time ever, the average Indian employee with appropriate job skills has an unprecedented number of employment opportunities in front of him / her and we have many employers competing for the same talent. This is true for professions ranging from Information Technology, Manufacturing, Sales and Marketing, Human Resources, Finance, Front-line Services and so on. (For a while to come, even Bollywood and Kollywood cannot produce movies depicting a hapless hero going from door to door seeking employment!)

- ✖ As a natural consequence, attrition and the ability to retain talent is becoming a huge challenge for many.

- ✖ However, the very nature of the new opportunities, the organisation structures and the inability to define career paths in terms of vertical movements is causing unhappiness in the young workforce.

- ✖ The "faceless" work that software and BPO workers perform is leading to fears of alienation.

- ✖ Employee Relations and interactions between managers and teammates taking place over e-mail and chat is depriving employees of the opportunity to meet some of their social needs. (Even Employee Engagement surveys are conducted online, with no face time at all - a curiously "disengaged" way to look at Employee Engagement!)

- ✖ Rapid growth (commonly called Ramp Up) in the form of galloping 100% growth rates year on year have put pressure on everyone in organisations and further affected Employee Engagement.

- ✖ New forms of employment contracts (temping, leasing, contracting) are not helping matters.

OUR EXPLORATION

This issue of UTB is organised in four parts:

1. We will first establish a working definition of the term employee engagement.

2. We will then try and understand the drivers of engagement - things that lead to employee engagement. For this purpose:

   a. We will go back in time to try and understand the work of pioneers in their field and see if it holds any key to our search for answers.

   b. Using information in the public domain, we will then take a close look at four of the more modern models of employee engagement offered by four global consulting companies.

3. Next, we will look at the paradox between pioneers' research, recent models of consulting companies and the reality today. We will also understand who actually holds the key to engagement - the Organisation, the Manager or the Employee.

4. We will finally attempt to build a few basic pillars that can form the basis for further thought on the subject.

1. WHAT IS EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT ?

Let us first look at a range of available definitions before culling out the essence:

- ✖ "Productive members of an Organisation who are psychologically committed to a role in the organisation in which they use their talents."

- ✖ "A state of emotional and intellectual involvement that workers have in an Organisation."

- ✖ "Say (speak positively about the Organisation to co-workers, potential employees and customers), stay (an intense desire to be part of the organisation), and strive (exert extra efforts and take on work that contributes to employer success)."

- ✖ "Harnessing of organisational members' selves to their work roles; in engagement people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances."

- ✖ "Differences in performance among people doing the same kind of work reflect differences in motivation."

- ✖ "Employees who freely give discretionary effort."

The key ingredients of an engaged employee seem to be measured by:
- ◙ *Tenure with the organisation*
- ◙ *Display of emotional involvement in what they do*
- ◙ *Doing more than what is expected*
- ◙ *Displaying pride in the place they work*

What is also abundantly clear is that engagement is seen as the end outcome or effect. It is seen as the consequence of a set of deliberate actions.

By its very definition, this group of employees is not universal but only a part of the Organisation's population.

2. THE DRIVERS OF ENGAGEMENT

We will now try and understand the drivers of engagement or things that seem to lead to engagement among employees.

A historical perspective :
Motivation was seen as the key driver of engagement for ages. In fact Abraham Maslow's "A Theory Of Human Motivation" written in 1943 dates back 60 years!

We will review the work of six important pioneers in the field here:

Elton Mayo, 1932 - The Hawthorne Effect
Started originally to examine the physical and environmental influences of the workplace, Professor Mayo's experiments helped him come to the following conclusions:
- The aptitudes of individuals are imperfect predictors of job performance.
- Informal organisation affects productivity. The Hawthorne researchers discovered a group life among the workers.
- Work-group norms affect productivity.
- The workplace is a social system.
- The need for recognition, security and sense of belonging is more important in determining workers' morale and productivity than physical conditions under which he works.

A. H. Maslow, 1943- Hierarchy of Needs
According to Maslow, man was a wanting animal. He saw at least five sets of goals which he called needs.

He called them physiological, safety, love, esteem and self-actualisation.

He saw them arranged in a hierarchy, with the most basic of them monopolising consciousness till they were satisfied. An unfulfilled need served as a source of motivation, and a satisfied need was not a motivator. He also maintained that once a need was gratified, it failed to serve as a source of motivation.

Herbert A. Simon, 1947-Inducements / incentives for Employee Participation
Simon held that individuals are willing to accept organisation membership when their activity in the organisation contributes, directly or indirectly, to their personal goals (inducements).

In return for inducements he offers not a specific service but his undifferentiated time and effort, Simon held.

The inducements that Simon listed included money, status and prestige and relations with the working group.

David C McClelland, 1951- Achievement Motivation
He saw the need for achievement as a distinct human motive and that could be distinguished from other needs and could also be measured.

He believed that the characteristics of achievement-oriented people were:
- Their belief that they could influence outcomes. The risk they took was a function of their perception of being able to influence outcome.
- Concern with personal achievement rather than reward.
- To seek out situations in which they got concrete feedback on how well they were doing based on need for personal accomplishment.
- They spent time thinking about doing things better.

Douglas McGregor, 1957- The Human Side of Enterprise
McGregor saw conventional conception of management as being restrictive and limiting. He called this Theory X.

He proposed the need for a different theory for managing people and suggested Theory Y as:

- It is the responsibility of the Management to organise the elements of productive enterprise.
- People by nature are not passive but have become so by their experience.
- The motivation, the potential for development, the capacity for assuming responsibility are all present in people. He saw it as management responsibility to recognise and develop these.

He presented a few innovative ideas like Decentralisation & Delegation, Job Enlargement, Participation & Consultative Management and Performance Appraisals.

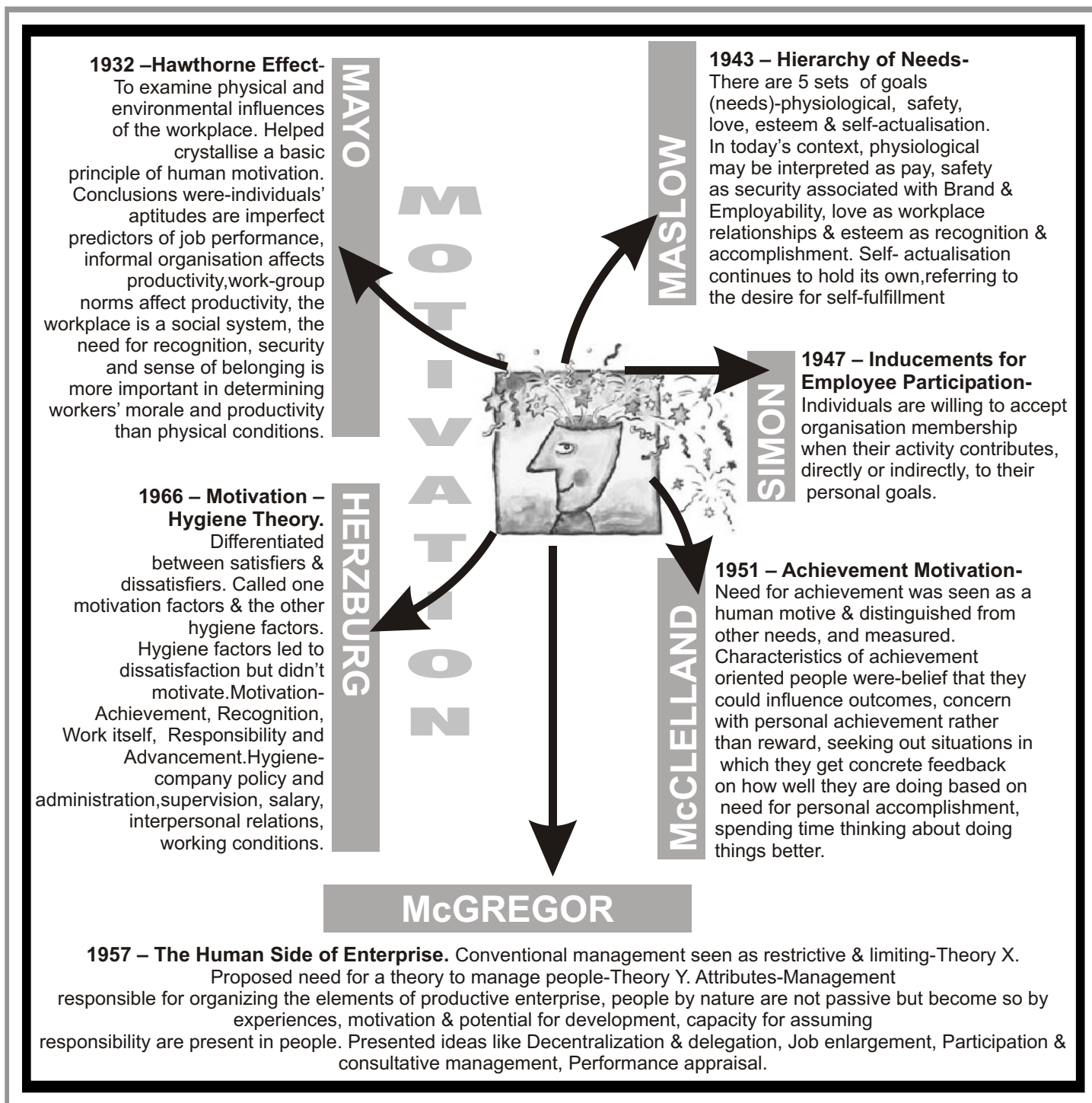### Frederick Herzberg, 1966-Motivation Hygiene Theory
He differentiated between "satisfiers" (man's relation to what he does) and "dissatisfiers" (man's relation to the context or environment in which he does his job). He called

the first, motivation factors and the second hygiene factors.

Motivation included the factors of Achievement, Recognition, Work itself, Responsibility and Advancement.

Hygiene included the factors of company policy and administration, supervision, salary, interpersonal relations, working conditions.

The Motivation Map

MAYO

1932 –Hawthorne Effect- To examine physical and environmental influences of the workplace. Helped crystallise a basic principle of human motivation. Conclusions were-individuals' aptitudes are imperfect predictors of job performance, informal organisation affects productivity,work-group norms affect productivity, the workplace is a social system, the need for recognition, security and sense of belonging is more important in determining workers' morale and productivity than physical conditions.

HERZBURG

1966 – Motivation – Hygiene Theory. Differentiated between satisfiers & dissatisfiers. Called one motivation factors & the other hygiene factors. Hygiene factors led to dissatisfaction but didn't motivate.Motivation-Achievement, Recognition, Work itself, Responsibility and Advancement.Hygiene-company policy and administration,supervision, salary, interpersonal relations, working conditions.

MOTIVATION

MASLOW

1943 – Hierarchy of Needs- There are 5 sets of goals (needs)-physiological, safety, love, esteem & self-actualisation. In today's context, physiological may be interpreted as pay, safety as security associated with Brand & Employability, love as workplace relationships & esteem as recognition & accomplishment. Self- actualisation continues to hold its own,referring to the desire for self-fulfillment

SIMON

1947 – Inducements for Employee Participation- Individuals are willing to accept organisation membership when their activity contributes, directly or indirectly, to their personal goals.

McCLELLAND

1951 – Achievement Motivation- Need for achievement was seen as a human motive & distinguished from other needs, and measured. Characteristics of achievement oriented people were-belief that they could influence outcomes, concern with personal achievement rather than reward, seeking out situations in which they get concrete feedback on how well they are doing based on need for personal accomplishment, spending time thinking about doing things better.

McGREGOR

1957 – The Human Side of Enterprise. Conventional management seen as restrictive & limiting-Theory X. Proposed need for a theory to manage people-Theory Y. Attributes-Management responsible for organizing the elements of productive enterprise, people by nature are not passive but become so by experiences, motivation & potential for development, capacity for assuming responsibility are present in people. Presented ideas like Decentralization & delegation, Job enlargement, Participation & consultative management, Performance appraisal.

The consulting perspective

We will now turn our attention to review currently available models on employee engagement. For this purpose, we will look at models proposed by international consulting companies. We will call them Models A, B, C & D (since names are not relevant).

Model A

Employee engagement is seen as the outcome of 4 dimensions:

Basic needs: Clarity of work , materials and equipment

Management support: Encouragement, caring supervision, recognition, person- job fit

Teamwork: Best friend, co-workers' commitment to quality, clarity of organisational purpose, value for one's opinion

Growth: Opportunity to learn, tangible progress

Employees are categorised into engaged, not engaged and actively disengaged.

Engaged employees are seen as loyal, psychologically committed, more productive and are likely to stay with their company for at least a year.

Model B

Engagement is seen as discretionary effort and as the result of 7 dimensions:

1. Understanding how work contributes to the company's overall success
2. Being personally motivated to help the company succeed
3. Being willing to put in a good deal of effort beyond what is normally expected
4. A sense of personal accomplishment from the job
5. Recommend the company to friends as a good place to work
6. Company inspiring one to give the best
7. Company values being aligned to personal values

Model C

Engagement is seen as a measure of emotional and intellectual commitment that employees have to their organisation.

In this model, the drivers of engagement are seen as:

1. Compensation
2. Opportunities
3. People
4. Procedures
5. Quality of life
6. Work

Model D

This model looks at engagement as translating into a great workplace. As per this model, there are 5 drivers of a great workplace are

1. *Credibility:* Communication, competence, integrity
2. *Respect:* Professional development and appreciation, collaboration in decisions, caring
3. *Fairness:* Equity in rewards, impartiality, justice
4. *Pride:* In ones work, in team output, in Organisation's products
5. *Camaraderie:* Being oneself, friendly workplace, sense of family / team

(The first three are collectively called trust)

JEST FOR LAUGHS

JUMBO NO 5 - the employee engagement song

One, two, three, four, five
Everybody in the firm come and join the ride
To the moolah-store around the corner,
the boys say they want money and on-site trips
but I really don´t wanna have
attrition like I had last year
I must stay deep ´cause talent is not cheap
I like Ashok, Patel, Sailesh and Rita
and as I continue you know they´re gettin´ costlier
so what can I do I really beg you my Lord
to me retaining ...it´s just like a sport
anybody that codes is all good let me dump it
please set in the trumpet

a little bit of offsites in my life
a little bit of work surveys by my side
a little bit of event management is all I need
a little bit of publicity is what I see
a little bit of PCMM in the sun
a little bit of dating allowance all night long
a little bit of processes here I am
a little bit of this makes me the top firm in the land

jump up and down and move it all around
shake your firm to the sound put your talent all around
take one step left and one step right
one to the US and one in the country side
clap your hands once and clap your hands twice
and if it looks like this then you doin´ it right

a little bit of gymnasium in my life
a little bit of social initiatives by my side
a little bit of fancy office space is all I need
a little bit of retention is what I see
a little bit of free press in the sun
a little bit of cocktail parties all night long
a little bit of company t-shirts here I am
a little bit of this makes you spoiled like hell

I do my all to fall in love with employees like you
You can´t run and you can´t hide
You and me gonna touch the sky

3. WHO REALLY HOLDS THE KEY?
THE PARADOX

What seems paradoxical is that while many of the early thinkers placed a fair emphasis on the individual's values, attitudes and beliefs as being key to employee engagement, all the current models seem to largely harp on organisation / manager driven work practices as key drivers of engagement.

(While the work of the early thinkers was rooted in the study of human behaviour and driven by the spirit of enquiry and in fact built on previous insights, much of the current work relies largely on practices that are prevalent in "Successful Organisations" and are presented as proprietary models)

The current models in our judgement appear to be over simplistic and assume a Pavlovian belief that if the organisation follows the ideal practices as currently fashionable, then the employee's engagement is assured.

Promoting this approach are also the whole gamut of Best Employer Surveys - the surveys are nearly always directed towards visibility for the Consulting Organisations, the business magazines sponsoring them and the media savvy organizations that participate in them. The winners go to town with the results in their recruitment ads! In the process, many Companies who quietly do a great job on employee engagement go unnoticed. More importantly, we end up creating either cynicism or the feeling that there are only a handful of "engagement creating work places", both of which are dysfunctional.

It is for this reason that we say that creating employee engagement in today's context is easier said than done. We need to go back to research and unravel the minds of our employees in India before we can offer solutions.

We also need to be sensitive to the variables and constraints that Organisations and Managers are contending with in today's environment. These make it extremely difficult for organisations to do all that they may wish to and also harness the engagement of their people.

What are these obstacles?
The core of the problem according to us is just one single factor: **Incongruence (Organisational, Managerial and Individual)**

Incongruence may be defined as being conflicting, contradictory, incompatible or mismatched. It is basically two or more things that do not fit well together.

All the current engagement models assume in their implementation ability, a certain level of congruence between three aspects:
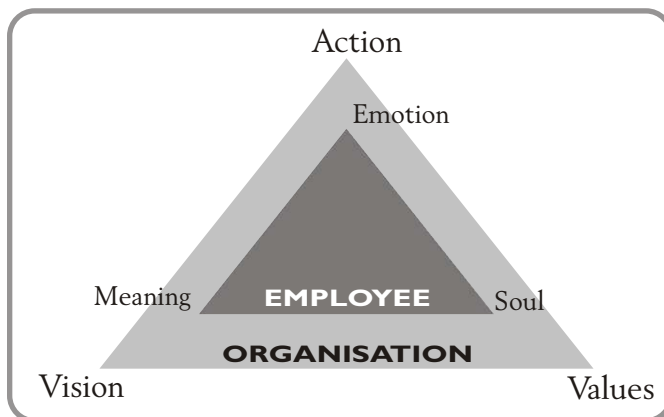
Let us first explain the three vertices of the triangle, before looking at the incongruity that exists:

Vision: What Organisations want to be, how Managers interpret it for themselves and their teams and how it fits with the personal visions of employees

Values: How Organisations want to get there, how much Managers are aligned to this approach and how much they are able to articulate this and how much are they in line with the values of employees themselves

Action: What Organisations actually want done, how well do managers reflect the Vision and the Values in these everyday actions and how do these actions impact employees

Now let's look at some of the evident incongruence that exists today:

Organisations want to save costs and the most important cost is employee costs. Organisations need to move jobs or restructure the employment relationships to manage these costs. Will this impact engagement?

Organisations can no longer protect its employees from the impact of market forces and will expect employees to bear some risk. Will this impact engagement?

Organisations are compelled to be selective about the group of employees for whom it will invest in career development and long-term retention. How will this ensure the engagement of all employees?

Organisations would like to systematically weed out "poor performers" when the causes of poor performance itself have been least understood. Rarely does an organisation take any responsibility whatsoever for having contributed to this poor performance. Will this create anxiety for employees at large?

Organisations would like to rely on "processes", "metrics" and "measurements" to help standardise, control, scale up and grow but would also expect employees to display discretionary effort all this not withstanding. Will this impact the need for quality work and control over one's work environment?

Organisations would like to rate employees and attach labels but would expect them to be open minded about receiving feedback. Will this alter perception of fairness?

Finally, Organisations would like employees to be engaged but may itself choose to get merged, acquired or restructured. Employer engagement somehow does not seem to be a matter to be considered here.

Managers see care and concern for employees as almost always coming in the way of task accomplishment, something for which he is paid.

Managers find little help in becoming aware of and upholding their values about people and feel 'victim' of the system most of the time.

Most importantly, Managers want to become leaders and be human, but see very few powerful role models. They are not certain if being human is a sign of strength or weakness.

In all our discussions with young employees, they have always maintained that they do not see their Managers having to play any role in their functional development. They believe they can do it themselves. On the other hand, they expect the Manager to "take care" of them.

The actions of Organisations and Managers has led only to cynicism and only added to the incongruence that we have spoken about.

The most striking examples of incongruence can be seen right in the heartland of management theories and models-The United States of America.

- Do you need a survey to tell you that the engagement level of the US soldiers is low in a war that they do not want to fight?
- Do you need an expert to tell you that the engagement levels of the employees working in the corporations whose CEOs are in prison is low (and there are many, we understand)?
- Do you need a model to tell you that the engagement levels of employees in Corporations whose jobs are migrating to

countries like India is low?
- Do you need to think hard before concluding that Manpower Inc (the largest employer in the US) will never feature as a great place to work because their employees work for others!

We will continue to live in an extremely incongruent world. Engagement calls for congruence.

Exploring the individual's role in engagement
Given the battle that all organisations and most Managers seem to be battling, we believe that the way forward in employee engagement is to reverse the trend to go back to the wisdom of the early thinkers and re-look at the role that the employee and the understanding of the employee's behaviour plays in ensuring Employee Engagement.

In other words, engagement is not what you do to people. It is what people do to themselves.

In other words, in a stable economic and labour market environment, it is fine to assume that the Organisation and the Manager has a key role in influencing and shaping an employee's engagement.

While we continue to believe that the Organisation and the Manager have a role in shaping engagement, in today's context, it is the employee who has the greatest influence over his level of engagement, as shown below

Employee 50%

Organisation 25%

Manager 25%

What drives employee engagement for the individual?

In this context it is useful to take a look at Chris Argyris' immaturity / maturity theory.

<u>Employee maturity</u>

According to Chris Argyris, 7 changes should take place in the personality of individuals if they are to develop into mature people over the years.

SE7EN
changes that should take place

1. First, individuals move from a passive state as infants to a state of increasing activity as adults.	passive ⟫⟶ active
2. Second, individuals develop from a state of dependency upon others as infants to a state of relative independence as adults.	dependence ⟫⟶ independence
3. Third, individuals behave in only a few ways as infants, but as adults they are capable of behaving in many ways.	behave in few ways ⟫⟶ behave in many ways
4. Fourth, individuals have erratic, casual and shallow interests as infants but develop deeper and stronger interests as adults.	erratic shallow interest ⟫⟶ deeper and stronger interest
5. Fifth, the time perspective of children is very short, involving only the present, but as they mature, their time perspective increases to include the past and the future.	short time perspective ⟫⟶ long time perspective
6. Sixth, individuals as infants are subordinate to everyone, but they move to equal or superior positions with others as adults.	subordinate position ⟫⟶ equal or super-ordinate position
7. Seventh, as children, individuals lack an awareness of a "self", but as adults they are not only aware of, but they are able to control the "self".	lack of awareness of self ⟫⟶ awareness and control over self

Argyris maintains that the culture and personality inhibit and limit maximum expression and growth.

Argyris also maintains that few if any develop to full maturity during their lives.

Needless to say, an Organisation's practices and culture have a significant role in shaping employees' engagement levels.

However, the implication of Argyris' view is that despite efforts and formal processes for motivation and engagement, employees with low maturity are likely to not display engagement. The focus according to Argyris needs to be on building that maturity.

Personal context, career stage and age as possible drivers
We believe that it would be inappropriate to broad brush all employees under one single umbrella when we look at engagement or motivation.

The truth is that there are differences in needs, capabilities and life stages. These differences have significant impact on the extent to which an employee displays engagement.

In fact, way back in 1957, Ian C Ross and Alvin Zander in their study titled "Need satisfactions and employee turnover" in 1957 had categorized women employees into six types for purposes of analysis of needs and motivation.

Their types included single tentatives, married tentatives, objectives, mothers, careerists and permanents.

Building on the thinking of Argyris and Ross & Zander, and based on our own research, we believe there are three employee dimensions that drive engagement.

Personal Context

Age

Career Stage
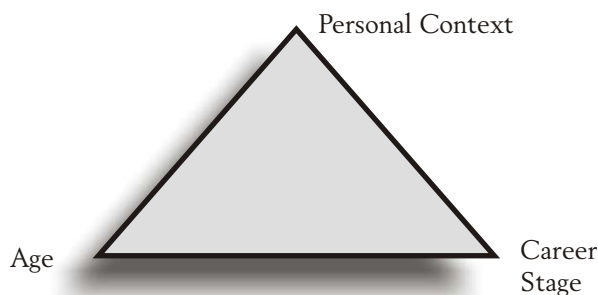
The personal context that an employee comes with has a direct correlation to what keeps him engaged.

The context is dictated by the society he moves in, the demands on him from his family and the demands that life may place on him. As simple as dictating the place that an employee wishes to work in due to his personal context, we also saw cases of employees staying on with big brand Organisations inspite of several dislikes, only in order to conform to social pressure.

The personal context dictates
  The values that employees come with
  Their propensity to trust and be open
  Their perception of themselves
  Their instinctive reactions - emotions
  Their natural states of introversion or
   extroversion and assertion
  Their natural styles of learning

The Age of an employee has a bearing on his engagement at work. We saw factory workers at 55 display a very different

level of engagement from their younger colleagues. Age can also be a factor that influences the employee's personal context.

The Career stage of an employee also emerged as an important factor in engagement.
Taking a page from Maslow, and based on our interviews with present-day employees, we mapped the engagement drivers for employees as follows:

LIVING THE DREAM
STATUS
CAREER
EMPLOYABILITY
MONEY
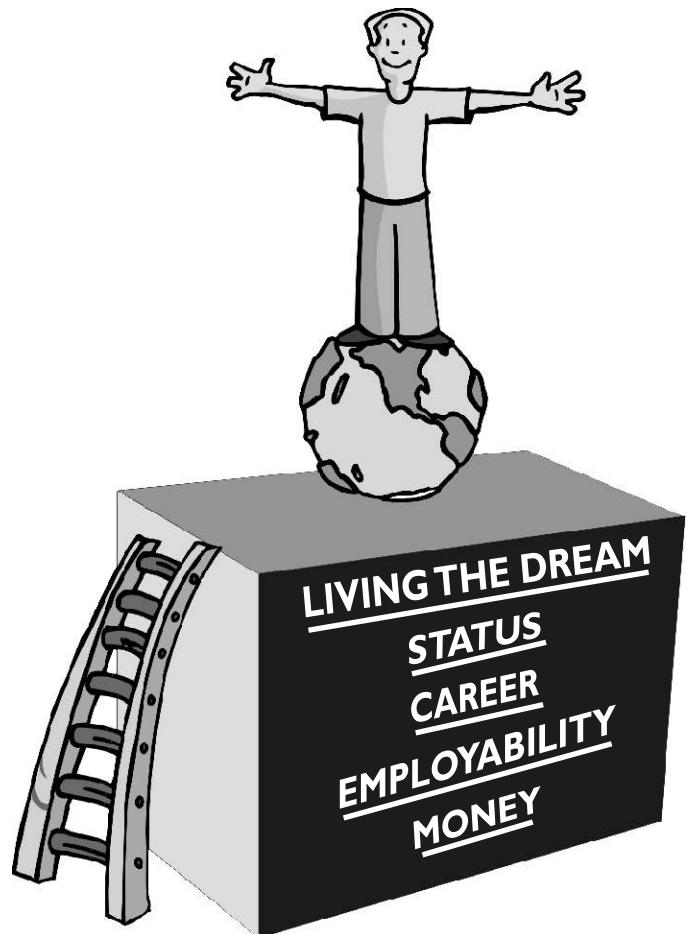
Engagement Drivers for Employees

Fresh out of an institute, an employee seeks to ensure that he gets a job and makes enough money to establish his independence.

Once this is achieved, his focus is on remaining employable- equipping himself with new skills and seeking career changes in this quest. (We came across employees in manufacturing pursuing SAP courses in a bid to change

their career choice entirely. We also saw rampant concern among technology engineers about the short life expectancy of their technical skills).

At the next level, having assured himself of being employable, an employee seeks to build his career and career opportunities tend to be the drivers of engagement.

In the next phase, the employee seeks to establish his status in society through the position he holds at work.

Having achieved all this, in the last phase the person looks for self-actualisation - typically attempting to do what he always dreamt of, getting active in social service or social circles or pursuing the path of spirituality.

In our research we saw that employees who do not achieve the third stage rapidly regress to the stages of a quest for employability and then towards the stage where they seek money again.

4. BASIC PILLARS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT

Having looked at some of the limitations and realities surrounding engagement, we will now turn our attention to identify some possible hypotheses for further exploration and research. This should also serve as food for further thought.

- ✖ <u>Engagement cannot remedy the macro level shortage for talent.</u>
  This is no longer a secret. Every industry survey laments about the same thing. We have a skills shortage in India today. There is an ever growing gap between demand and appropriate supply of job seekers with relevant abilities. In fact the situation is so bad that Organisations are having to spend money to even fight falsification of credentials. Shortage gives even the below average employee the false sense of competence or the sense of being in demand.
  Unless macro level corrections take place, Organisation level initiatives will be of little avail for the Country as a whole

- ✖ <u>Security will the be number one driver of engagement and motivation</u>
  Based on all of the above, the most basic r

engagement driver and the starting point for engagement for employees would be security.

And here starts the trouble. Consider this.

We live in a turbulent world. The globalisation of economies has only added to turbulence. Whether you like it or not, every country is getting dragged into every world conflict and crisis.

9 / 11 haunted us despite being miles away from us physically.

So did SARS. So also did the Iraq conflict.

The new opportunities that India is happy about are not without its problems. Mr.Flecker J. Kirschenhofer S. in his report titled *"Jobs on the Move" (* a part of the "Emergence Project" that tracks job migration) has aptly called it the Butterfly Effect. The study says that, the very same conditions, that lead to job migration into India, may lead to further migration, just like a butterfly moves from blossom to blossom. All this means turbulence.

The new deal of employment comes with clear caveats. Employees share the risk of enterprise.

Older Organisations have to restructure to compete. This means turbulence.

Organisations prefer younger employees for more than one reason. This means turbulence and a search for greater security.

We may say that young employees are attracted by big brands. But do not forget, brands actually signify greater security.

We may declare that the new deal is all about employability. However, seeking and maintaining employability is also about security.

Whether we like it or not, security is the number one source of motivation and the primary driver of engagement today. It has been this way for a while and will be this way for a long long time to come.

Organisations that recognise the importance of security in harnessing employee engagement will do well and Organisations that don't, will find it difficult to build engagement.

✖ Limits to engagement expectations

Let's be honest in admitting that we are not going to be able to ensure all aspects of engagement for all jobs in all Organisations.

Different jobs are structured differently in today's emerging labour market. It would be naïve to hold out the same promise and value proposition to all job seekers. And nor do all job seekers seek the same value propositions! There are indeed different strokes for different people!

The value propositions that different jobs offer are captured below. Organisations can best ensure the engagement of people in their jobs by ensuring the best fit between the aspirations of the person and what the job can offer.

Passionate	⫸	Working for the cause
Belonging	⫸	Working for the people
Professional	⫸	Working for the value
Transactional	⫸	Working for the day
Mercenary	⫸	Working for the deal

If organisations do not match the aspirations of employees to the value the organisation can offer, employees are not engaged and the result is attrition. The biggest victim of this phenomenon is the IT / ITES industry. Take a look at the Wednesday Opportunities advertisements to understand what we are talking about.

Setting the right expectations for each category of employees would be important going forward. Over promising and under-delivering is a sure way of breaching trust and reducing engagement levels.

Employees entering the Organisation with expectations so high are hot potatoes to handle as far as managers are concerned!

✖ Managing the lows as well as the highs

There will be downturns and difficulties for a business or for the industry as a whole. *Organisations would do well to communicate with candour and honesty to employees about these situations .* Ensuring engagement does not involve creating a false sense of well-being.

Business rules could change, cost structures could change, and competitive forces could change. Global downturns could occur. The sign of engagement is the ability to create a sense of involvement in what the organisation is facing, as if it was a family.

Doing artificial stuff in the name of engagement will only lead to greater disappointment.

✖ Start early in building maturity

We discussed earlier the importance of employee maturity. *It would be important for businesses that are dependent on talent from campuses to engage with students early on and contribute to building their maturity.*

It is true that while we in India have an intelligent and compliant workforce, the emotional maturity of the employees when they enter the workforce is quite poor. Organisations end up running finishing schools, counseling schools and life skills schools.

What we therefore have today are not educational institutions that create character and good personalities. What we have today are "employee producing machines".

Industry has a significant responsibility for this. What you sow, so you reap!

✖ Stay clear of fad value

HR Managers are under great pressure to do all the right things, necessary or not. Surveys, capability mapping, assessment centres, outsourcing, open houses, picnics, variable pay, sign-on bonuses, top talent management, weeding the bottom, brand building and so on.

Each intervention has its side effects. Many interventions at the same time will only lead to many side effects all at the same time.

Engagement is a slow process. It does not happen over one year. It needs thought and well-considered actions.

✖ Finding the balance between HRM and HRD

The focus of the Human Resources function in the early days was primarily "Development". In other words, the HR professionals focused on developing individuals' capabilities and thereby their maturity. This obviously had a huge impact on their levels of engagement.

For a variety of reasons, we seem to have gradually shifted (or shall we say, slipped) to focus on the "management" of human resources. The pressures of management include hiring, induction, performance management, retention, rewards, administration and so on. Quite often "management" almost borders on "manipulation".

If the individual indeed plays the most significant role in engagement, the best thing that an Organisation can do is to ensure that it is contributing enough to develop the employees' abilities and maturity. It is this rather long and difficult process that will lead to sustained engagement.

✖ Outsourcing of HR

There is a lot of talk that HR outsourcing is the next big business opportunity. As a consulting company, we wish to submit the following:

1. The development and management of human resources cannot be outsourced. One can at best get help from outside to augment internal capability.
2. What is currently being called HR outsourcing is actually transaction processing. If indeed organisations believe they can outsource HR, then employee engagement is bound to suffer.

✖ Need for further thought leadership in this area

Finally, we must admit that there is very little thought and understanding of what engagement is in the Indian context. There is very little understanding of the mind of the Indian employee, young and old.

The greatest experiments and discoveries in the United States were made by scientists in collaboration with large Organisations that had an open and inquisitive mind.

India is on the threshold of great opportunities. It holds the opportunity to become an economic powerhouse. What is also abundantly clear is that all this will be purely and simply based on our human capital.

As a consulting company, we feel humble in the face of this challenge. We are however keen to collaborate with all of you to increase our knowledge of what keeps us ticking.

Building Employer Brands

It is now a commonly held belief that big brands help attract bright talent. On the merit of this belief, Organisations are embarking on efforts to "build preferred employer brands".

Does this work? How do you build a brand for employees? By advertising, by being written about, by winning awards, by paying above market, or by others endorsing you?

Do you work to build a brand or is it the result of other things, we ask?

In our limited wisdom, great brands are built over years through strong actions. Your brand is what you truly are and not what you say you are. Actions will ultimately speak louder than words. Don't put good money behind a lost cause!

about totus

We are a specialist HR consulting firm that partners with organisations by designing HR solutions that meet their business needs.

Using our expertise in conceptualising, designing and implementing end-to-end HR solutions in a variety of business contexts, we help organisations harness their potential and manage their growth. Thought Leadership and Implementation Excellence are the two pillars on which we build our solutions.

HR@work

This core end-to-end offering from totus addresses the needs of the following clearly defined customer groups:

- ◇ **Interim support for start-ups:**
  totus has the expertise in providing interim HR support to start-ups of any size and complexity.

- ◇ **Institutionalisation support for SMEs, Professional Entrepreneurs and Family Businesses:**
  totus has been working closely with CEOs of SMEs, entrepreneurs & business owners to provide them strategic and operational solutions meant to help institutionalise their HR and organisation building processes.

- ◇ **Improvement support for all Organisations:**
  totus has been working with the CEOs of a wide variety and size of organisations to assist them in their organisational restructuring, change management and performance improvement efforts.

An HR@work engagement would typically last from three to twelve months depending on the complexity involved and the maturity of existing systems. The scope is highly customized to meet the Organisation's needs and covers a wide spectrum of human resource initiatives including:

❌ Organisation Design	❌ Workforce Management	❌ 360-Degree Feedback Systems
❌ Job Design & Capabilities	❌ Career Development Systems	❌ Employee Satisfaction & Sensing Surveys
❌ Performance Management	❌ HR Function Development	
❌ Compensation & Benefits	❌ Change Management	❌ Coaching
❌ Staffing		❌ Service Quality

Learning@work

Learning@work is totus consulting's learning solution. totus specialises in designing industry specific learning systems to facilitate multi-location distributed learning. Run as branded programs, they institutionalise learning and put the organisation - and the learner - in charge.

The specific Learning@work offerings include:

- ◇ Top management workshops for consensus building
- ◇ Customized leadership development program
- ◇ Coaching programs
- ◇ Training trainers and facilitators
- ◇ Developing systems for assessment and certification
- ◇ 360 degree feedback systems
- ◇ Change management workshops
- ◇ Career development programs
- ◇ Design of training modules
- ◇ Capability framework development
- ◇ Assessment Centres
- ◇ Assessment of learning impact on the individual & the organisation