Leveling the Playing Field

Cornerstone to Employee Engagement

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Employee Engagement

Research has shown that companies with highly engaged employees perform better financially and have higher customer satisfaction. According to the Temkin Group, companies with strong financial results and above-average customer experience in their industry have workforces where 75 percent of employees are highly or moderately engaged.[1]

Unfortunately, 70 percent of employees are not engaged or actively disengaged according to Gallup, Inc.'s *State of the American Workplace*[2] 2013 report. This affects the organization and the economy as a whole—costing the U.S. $450-$550 billion in lost productivity annually. Many organizations fail to provide employees with the four key elements for meaningful engagement:

1 **Clear goals that are role-specific yet still tied to company objectives**
2 **The opportunity to use and develop their skills**
3 **Recognition for their contributions**
4 **A good relationship with their direct manager and coworkers.**

[1] *Employee Engagement Benchmark Study, 2013 and 2014, Temkin Group*
[2] *State of the American Workplace: Employee Engagement Insights for U.S. Business Leaders, Gallup, Inc., 2013*

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Clear Goals

According to the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), a top characteristic of engaged employees is "they are determined to accomplish their work goals and are confident they can meet their goals."[3] Surprisingly, many organizations fail to set clear, role-specific goals for their employees. Or if they do have goals, they may lack an effective means of objectively measuring each employee's performance against them—and may not effectively communicate how these measurements align with overall company goals.

Without an automated, activity-capture model for tracking and monitoring their performance achievement, employees may not trust the data and perceive their contributions as not being fully recognized by the organization or equitably compared against peers.

[3] *Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement: The Road to Economic Recovery, Society for Human Resource Management research report, 2013*

"Fostering an environment that treats all employees equally, as well as one that encourages communication between all levels of workers, can be an effective means of earning trust from employees and increasing their satisfaction with their jobs."[3]

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Skill Development

Engaged employees are often given opportunities to use and develop their skills and abilities, according to the SHRM study. By understanding and cataloguing skill sets, organizations can better retain talent by offering career paths and/or cross-training opportunities. On the flip side, engaged employees who are struggling may seek to improve their skills through coaching and training.

A comprehensive performance scorecard that tracks multiple key performance metrics can help managers quickly identify possible issues, assign training, and/or schedule coaching sessions with employees.

Recognition

Being seen and acknowledged publicly as a valued contributor can greatly enhance an employee's engagement. However, to be most effective, the recognition needs to be timely and specific. A general recognition of hard work for the last year tends to be less effective than a call-out in a weekly executive newsletter for solving a particular customer's problem. Organizations need a real-time, automated means of identifying when performance standards are exceeded.

Some organizations are turning to new gamification solutions to help motivate employees and provide immediate, frequent recognition of top performance. "Gamification is not about turning work into a game, but is instead about offering a new means by which employees can be better engaged through performance quantification, rapid feedback loops and a sense of progression," says Adam Holtby, research analyst at Ovum.[4]

[4] "*Play It Again: How Gamification Can Improve Customer Relations,*" *James O'Brien, Contributor, Skift, Open Forum, March 21, 2014.*

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Manager Relationship

One of the most important relationships for employees is the one they have with their direct manager. Automated, data-driven performance reporting tools can help managers be more effective by enabling them to:

1 Spend less time collecting performance data and creating reports, and more time developing a rapport with their staff, understanding their needs, coaching, and actually managing the business.

2 Identify and address issues quickly—before they become larger problems.

3 Base performance discussions on objective, actual employee activity data versus subjective observation.

In turn, employees can be more confident that they are being evaluated against the same metrics and methodology as their peers—and that their performance is being assessed based on a fairer, more level playing field.

Employee Engagement Example

A leading global insurance company wanted to increase consistency, productivity and employee engagement—and thus drive employee behavior toward achieving its operational excellence goals. This was a daunting task for several reasons:

- Metrics and methodologies were different across the various companies and functions, making a holistic view of operational performance difficult.

- The capture and reporting of activity data was often manual and self-reported, creating doubt and mistrust about its accuracy.

- Reports were manually compiled by managers and reviewed on a weekly basis at best but often monthly.

- The backwards-only view and time delays made it difficult to effectively institute corrective actions or coach employees, as there were no drill-down capabilities to find root causes of issues.

The insurer implemented Verint® Systems' High-Efficiency Performance Management solution to capture activity data directly from the desktop, virtually eliminating the challenges created by self-reporting. The dynamically updated solution includes individual and team-based scorecards, as well as executive dashboards, so that performance issues and trends impacting productivity and service can be flagged quickly for corrective actions.

Because the same framework and measurement system are deployed across the organization, employees can be confident that they are being measured equitably. This confidence has increased employee engagement, which has resulted in greater processing consistency and productivity across the organization. In fact, the insurer has experienced a 36 percent increase in time spent in production applications—and a dramatic decrease in time spent on non-production-related activities, saving the organization millions of dollars.

"Employees gained transparency into their performance. They understand how they are being managed, can see how their performance is trending against peers, and are confident assessments are fact-based."

*VP, Strategic Operations, Global Insurer*

Performance Management Solutions

Performance scorecards have come a long way from the balanced scorecards of old. This new generation of enterprise scorecards has the robust capabilities needed to meet the demands and concerns of today's workforce. It is:

- **Scalable**, to accommodate global enterprises with tens of thousands of employees
- **Flexible**, to capture and measure the metrics that are meaningful to each division and company
- **Fact-based**, to help ensure that employees trust the data and view it as fair.

The new performance management solutions can:

- Capture activity data directly from the desktop.
- Present scorecards that show performance against goal and peers on key, role-specific key performance indicators (KPIs).
- Roll up data to executive dashboards for holistic views of organizational performance.
- Incorporate operational metrics such as work volumes, backlog and service goal achievement.
- Integrate with coaching solutions to monitor the impact of coaching and training.

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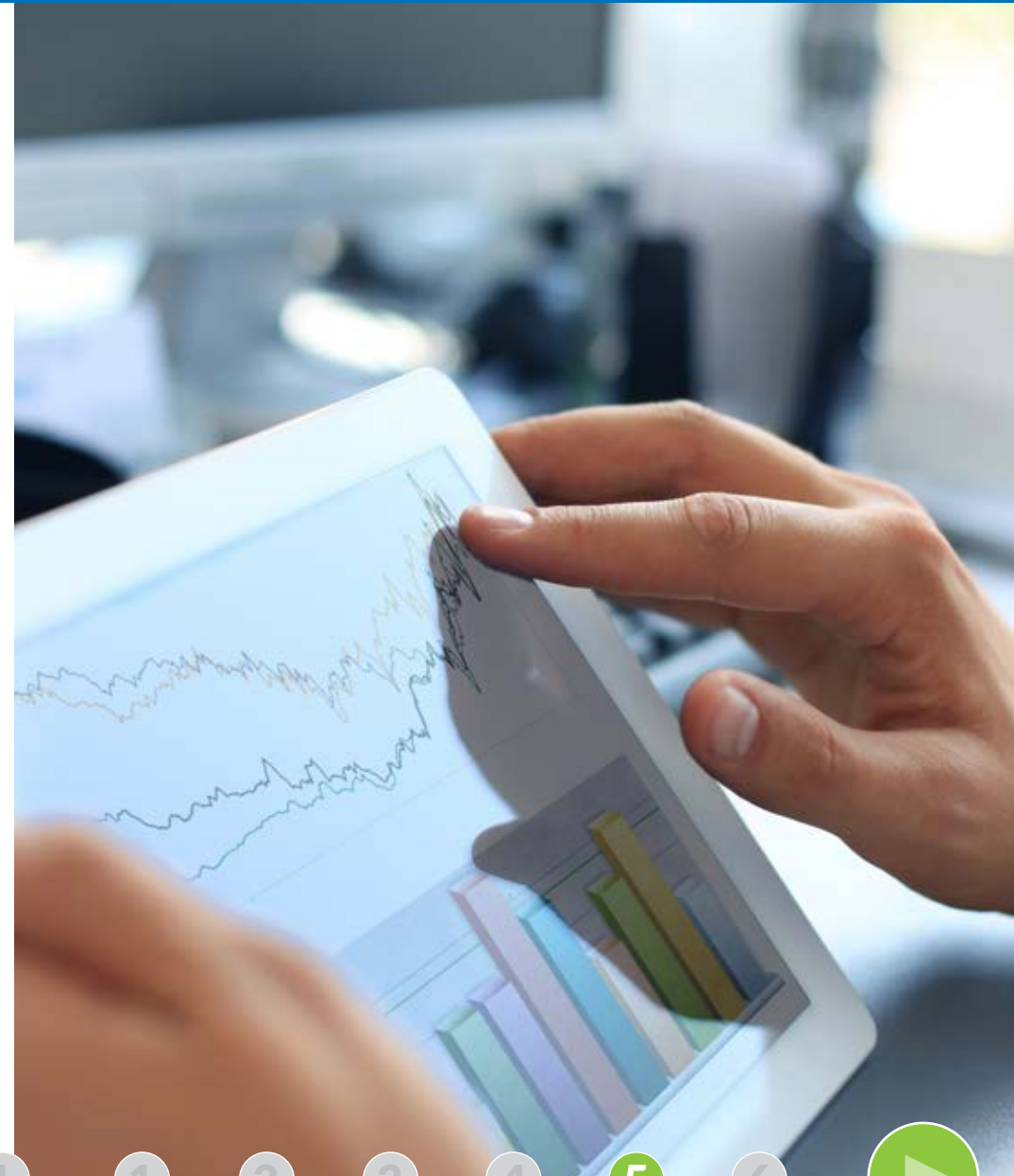
Conclusion

Organizations with engaged employees tend to perform better financially and have greater customer satisfaction. An engaged workforce requires a foundation of trust, which can be built on the equitable, data-driven measurement of activity-based performance metrics and a standardized framework for measuring everyone.

An enterprise performance management framework and solution such as High-Efficiency Performance Management from Verint can help organizations break down barriers and level the playing field for employees. It can provide transparency into performance against goals and peers, helping to motivate employees to own and improve their performance—and as a result, the performance of the entire organization.

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