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Redesigning employee engagement practices in the digital era

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Abstract
In the ongoing climate of digital transformation, the interrelationship between employee and employer has been redefined. The technological era has caused a drastic change in business functioning and traditional hierarchies. A paradigm shift is being witnessed in production as well as service delivery models. The companies are now altering their whole corporate model from conventional to hybrid. Thus, employee engagement practices do not remain untouched by this ongoing change. Web-based technologies are transforming HR services; hence, HR professionals today need not only skills and knowledge but also their implementation via digital mode. As digitalization spreads to every corner of business functioning, its effective and significant presence in HR strategies for engaging and retaining employees will prove to be more fruitful than the traditional approach. Digitalized engagement models provide benefits not only to the organization but also to the employees, as they provide more transparency and flexibility in practice and ultimately lead the business to achieve optimum efficiency. This paper is based on secondary data, for which extensive literature reviews and information from HR magazines and news articles were gathered. An attempt has been made by the researcher to find out employee engagement practices and the role of digital innovation in employee engagement with their redesigning in changing scenarios. The paper also suggests how to engage employees more effectively by using digital technologies and to achieve greater efficiency and sustainability.

Keywords: Employee engagement, digitalization, and web-based technology

Introduction
Digitalization has changed the ways and means by which people converse and their interactions with each other. Due to this, the way of doing business has also changed. Hence, it becomes highly essential for any organization to understand and implement the required change to maintain its remarkable state in intense competition. The use of digital technology is not only needed in the organization's internal environment but also to sustain it in the external environment.

To attain market leadership, there is a need to deliver various types of products and services that are desired or expected by consumers. Today, the market demands everything that relates to technological advancement and technological upgradation, and our employees must always be in a position to accept and adapt to these changes because every expectation of consumers will be more effectively fulfilled with the help of technological advancement and the joining hands of the "digital workforce". The digital era" is a term used to describe the environment where companies use digital transformation to maintain the balance between changing demands and technology. The emerging ecosystem in the digital era has brought a revolutionary and radical change in aspects of doing the tasks of an organization's learning, owning, and motivating the workforce. How businesses are operating and creating value is going through a paradigm shift because digitalization has disrupted the fundamental way of doing work.

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Successful employee engagement

*Source***:** https://www.business2community.com

Before exploring digitalization and its impact on employee engagement, it becomes essential to understand the concept of employee engagement. Managing human resources is always a very tough task for organizations, as everyone differs from each other on various grounds. It is only through human resources that flourishing success stories can be made by a company, so it becomes significant to focus more on the satisfaction and involvement of employees, which will lead them to meet
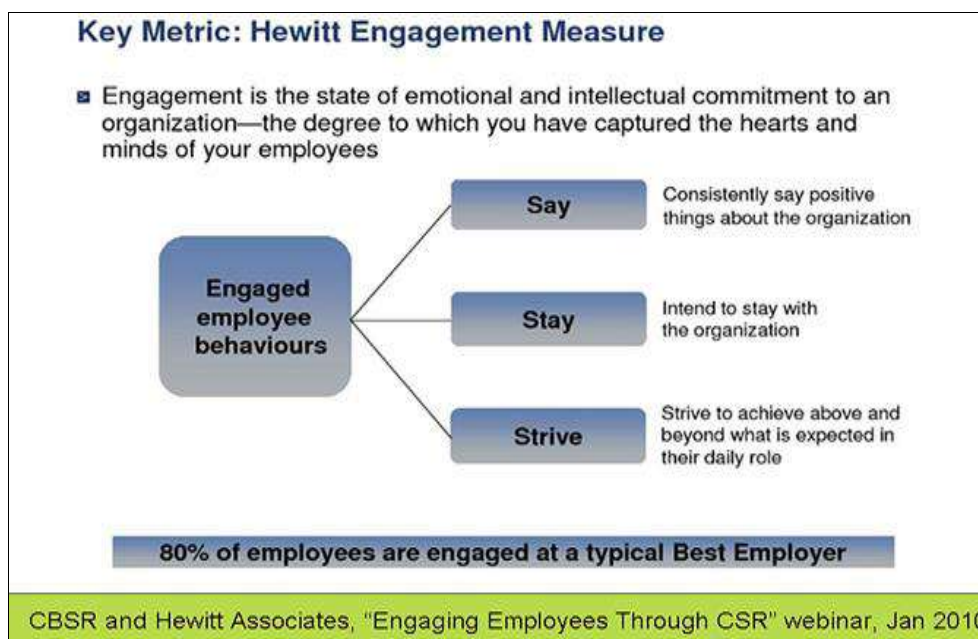
*Source***:** CBSR and Hewitt Associates

Fig 1: Employee engagement defined

According to Forbes, "Employee engagement is the passionate duty the representative has to the association and its objectives"

The NHS (national workforce project) considers engagement to be a measure of how individuals associate with their work and feel focused on their work as well as their organization's objectives. Individuals who are exceptionally occupied with action feel energized and eager about their role; their time passes rapidly at work; they relate themselves and others with regards to their work; they

consider the inquiries or difficulties postured by their actions amid their interruption; and they welcome others too at their workplace.

Employee engagement is defined as an employee's love and affection towards their company, how much they care about prospects' growth and success, and the organization's mission. Employee engagement refers to the emotional attachment of employees to the organization's vision and goals. It is the ability with which an employee is willing to contribute. Engagement differs from satisfaction too in

many ways; rather, it includes the involvement and attachment of employees in every piece of the task being

performed, as retention of talent and their attrition at the top level are always influenced by engagement.

Source: Gallup Hotel Profitability Advisors

Fig 2: The three types of employees

The past few years have been tough for the economy, which has changed the traditional definition of engagement for both employees and employers. With the emergence of technological advancement, even during the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations carried out their work with their human resources from home, and since then, HR departments of various organizations, along with employees, have supported the change intended to be made in employee engagement in a digital era. It has been realized that as digitalization spreads toward every corner of business functioning, its effective and significant presence in HR strategies for engaging and retaining employees will prove to be more fruitful than a traditional approach. The digitalized engagement models would provide benefits not only to the organization but also to the employee, as they would provide more transparency and flexibility in practice and ultimately lead the business to achieve optimum efficiency.

Thus, this paper is an attempt to find out the engagement activities practised and the role of digital innovation in employee engagement with their redesigning in changing scenarios. This will provide a framework to adjust and maintain engagement. The paper also suggests how to engage employees more effectively by using digital technologies and to achieve high efficiency and sustainability.

Review of literature
Khan W.A. (1990) [16] a notable and popular work on employee engagement emphasizes that staff members who are engaged express themselves through their work performance and tasks, whereas those who are disengaged lack creativity and energy and become robotic.
Highlighted engagement as a way that working together helps and motivates others to achieve and develop their technical, managerial, and behavioural knowledge, skills, and abilities in achieving organizational objectives and goals.
Zinger (2010) [17] analyzed employee engagement as an art and science, engaging people in authentic and recognized

connections to strategy, roles, performance, organization, community, relationship, customer development, and energy, and transforming the work connections into final results.
Arnold B. Bakker (2011) [2] pointed out that employees who are engaged in their work are fully connected with their work roles. They are overflowing with energy, dedicated to their work, and immersed in their work activities. Engaged workers have a more open attitude toward new information, are more productive, and are more willing to go the extra mile. Moreover, engaged workers proactively alter their work environment to stay engaged.
T. Suhasini and K. Kalpana (2018) [6] defined employee engagement as not a single process that should be performed only once for any policy. Whether they are or not, their benefit will not result in the desired outcome of the process. There is a need to use proper training programs to ensure superiors build a supportive environment for subordinates through transparency, accountability, a sense of involvement, positive emotions, and emotional employment opportunities.
E. Kaviya, ad S. Puroshothaman (2020) [5] highlighted the factors influencing employee engagement conditions-working conditions, superior support towards the co-worker, career growth opportunities, organizational support, and reward and recognition. Also identified are some other additional factors such as emotional opportunities and visibility of another development.

Objectives
To explore employee engagement practices in the digitalized era.
To suggest ways for redesigning and improving employee engagement in the digital era

Research methodology
The study is designed to explore employee engagement practices with digitalization and is based on secondary data. The collection was done from various research papers from quality journals, news articles, HR magazines, and websites

that were studied and analyzed to draw conclusions.

Redesigning employee engagement practices in the digital era

Today, the current climate is not only demanding happy people and better engagement but also shifting toward building relationships between employees and employers. Redesigning is required because of rethinking the relationship between the company's performance goal and transactional approach to fulfilling the desired outcome

As engagement is not a one-time activity but an ongoing process that is embedded and circulated in the functioning of the organization, redesigning is required for what is being done, whether it depicts the required result or not, with a check on the working of engagement practices and adding

something innovative to it.

Now that we are not in digitalization but have become digital, attention is turning to how to manage and maintain human resources in this scenario. Digital innovation does not accelerate engagement; it provides and ensures tools for engagement, communication, and collaboration. When there are platforms for connection and understanding the company's strategies and its expectations of employees, engagement will reach a practical level. With such changes, companies are now more concerned and have shifted their attention to effective engagement with digitalization.

When we are going digital or redefining digitalization on our ground several terms should be practised to maintain engagement more fruitful and employee-oriented

Source: https://a.storyblok.com/benefitsofdigitaltransformation

Fig 3: Benefits of digital transformation

Factors of digital engagement

Digital learning: In the present scenario, the digital environment is prevailing in the organization's system. Management cannot deny the fact that digitization shows a new and innovative path for doing business and engaging the workforce. It is evident from various studies that learning acts as a powerful driver for engagement. Continuous learning and development will not only upskill but also enhance the student's abilities and knowledge. Today, digital learning is the need of the hour. As a framework, it will provide how learning policies should be framed, such as an analysis of employees' present skills and knowledge, what is required in the future, and fulfilling the required gap.

E-learning: This way of learning will provide an opportunity and access to learn and enhance their skills at their convenience, whether it is from home or at the office. Digital learning will empower and upgrade the requirements, and it will give the benefit of 24*7 continuity. The new entrants joining the organization usually prefer an environment where everything is digital Hence, this e-learning will make them learn more interestingly. The organizations too can develop a learning module in which there should be a special focus on the organization's vision and policies, and management can track the employee learning process and progress.

Digital leadership: The digitalized way of learning should be practised at all levels, whether at the top or bottom to

maintain uniformity. To attain maximum competitive advantage it has becomes a need to be a digital master. Amalgamating innovative ideas with technological frameworks will provide new and progressive business models. Digital leadership will act as providing every leading service within a digital environment, it will not only open up a new door towards sustainability but also the way of doing things done by others will also be transformed.

Communication with the downline and within the organization will be re-established, as it is now based on technology and innovation. Digital leadership will redefine the relationship between superiors and employees, as it will not only become an order to follow but a process in which everyone has to take part to make it done in a better way. It will also change the style, approach, and culture of the work environment as digital leaders will think differently and they are required to design a digital culture in which complex problems are solved with better efficacy ultimately it will enhance communication and collaboration

Digital design: Digitally designing of organization will involve various functions which will all sum up to maintain digitalization
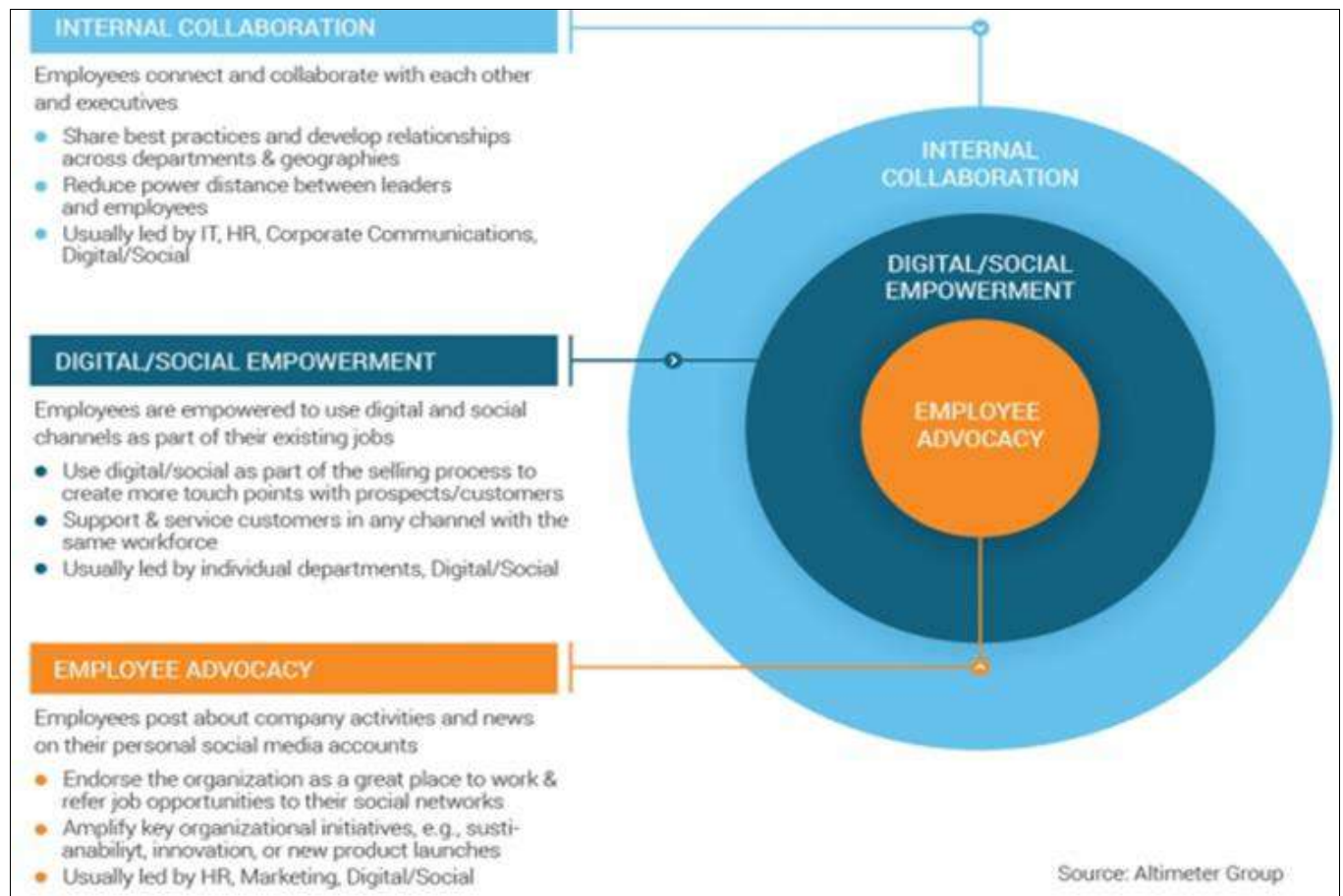
Digital culture: It is a common set of beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions that are practised in the organisation, there is a need to redesign the culture in which everything goes towards a digital way of doing things and service delivery modules should be transformed in a digitalized way.

Performance management - engagement is done through a

series of activities. Performance management stands in a remarkable position in this list to engage the workforce in a better way the time has come to make their evaluation digital. This will not only reduce errors but also promote trust, loyalty, and retention rates.

Rewards and recognition - employees will be more engaged if they are recognized from time to time, as what they are doing needs proper attention and recognition. Various modes of giving rewards should be adopted, and proper strategies and policies need to be designed digitally to avoid any kind of error during the delivery of rewards.

INTERNAL COLLABORATION

Employees connect and collaborate with each other and executives

- Share best practices and develop relationships across departments & geographies
- Reduce power distance between leaders and employees
- Usually led by IT, HR, Corporate Communications, Digital/Social

DIGITAL/SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT

Employees are empowered to use digital and social channels as part of their existing jobs

- Use digital/social as part of the selling process to create more touch points with prospects/customers
- Support & service customers in any channel with the same workforce
- Usually led by individual departments, Digital/Social

EMPLOYEE ADVOCACY

Employees post about company activities and news on their personal social media accounts

- Endorse the organization as a great place to work & refer job opportunities to their social networks
- Amplify key organizational initiatives, e.g., sustianabiliyt, innovation, or new product launches
- Usually led by HR, Marketing, Digital/Social

Source: Altimeter Group

Source: Altimeter Group

Fig 4: Three types of digital employee engagement initiatives

Ways for redesigning and improving employee engagement in the digital era

Though the engagement of employees has been practised for many years, with various evolutions and revolutionary changes in technology, it has become an important issue of concern for organizations to cop –with the digital era. It is evident from various studies that the attachment level of employees directly influences the organization's profitability. Hence, there is a need to redesign all aspects that increase their satisfaction and commitment levels.

Following are certain ways for redesigning and improving employee engagement in the digital era

Communication and connectivity: As the world is becoming a global village and business has expanded beyond the geographical boundaries of a nation, redesigning is required to enhance and upgrade the channels and mediums of communication so that every employee in the system is comfortable expressing his ideas, opinions, and feedback. It also becomes much more important to relook at the flow of communication between superiors and subordinates to make an effective relationship within the organization, the strategies must be practised with the alignment of the digital era to make the best and maximum output. A supportive and sensible connection needs to be developed to build an environment in which employees feel a 'sense of belongingness' and are interconnected with every individual's performance. Technology can help a lot in maintaining an effective connectivity channel and easier monitoring, as it makes it much easier to be in connection with geographical dispersion.

Collaborative working and community building: Today, employees differ from each other on several parameters. There are different groups that are not in a position to form a common platform. Redesigning is required to frame a strategy so that one will feel isolated. With digital expression, it becomes easier and smoother to maintain a common community platform where all come to interact and develop a common shared understanding. If we are trying to make an efficient engagement then it is a must to take employees' practised single aspect, whether it is organization-centric or employees-centric both need to be specifically conveyed to the employee then only it will depict the same meaning that the management wants to convey. Thus, the formation of groups with a sense of being interconnected within the organization will automatically boost engagement.

Culture: With the emergence of technological advancement, the way of doing business is changing, and as a result, culture needs to be redefined too. A set of all the belief systems on which an organization relies-the sum of all shared values, attitudes, and assumptions that an organization embodies— is important for defining the toxicity or pleasure environment, working towards set values, expectations, and practices that guide and inform the action of all team members. It is affected by an individual's upbringing in social and cultural contexts too. Culture is shaped by every activity done in the organization. When traditional aspects are aligned with the modern digital approach, it becomes more crucial to redesign every bit of the task and its continuous evaluation to make necessary changes as and when required. Redesigning cultural aspects is required in the era of digitalization, as it will lead to more enriched and advanced cultural practices.

Continuous change and consistent support: Engagement is not a one-time activity; rather it is a process that involves a series of activities so the organization should always be in a position ready with the mindset to track the change and initiates it according to it. After the pandemic, there is a radical shift toward the physical and mental health of employees and now any organization cannot ignore it, thus organizations should always be in a position to change themselves according to the situational requirements to make engagement fruitful and effective. The same criteria are required in the case of continuity in the support system our employees should experience a proper and strong supportive culture in which they will get what the situation demands and as a result, engagement will be witnessed more efficiently. Today technological advancement has made it much easier to keep an eye on change happening and adapt to it.

Celebrate success: Gone are the days when celebrations are decided at adequate intervals now to foster engagement it is the need of the hour to enjoy every tiny achievement that is focusing towards bigger platforms. Our strategies should be redesigned in such a practical manner that they will engage employees toward the organization's and employees' individual achievement simultaneously. Providing real time appreciation with the digitalized framework is an innovative concept that in output makes employee engagement more joyful and convenient to track what need to be recognized in a planned and attractive way.

Continuous feedback: To maintain discipline and attain proper and desired outcomes, it is most important to take feedback consistently; what is implemented in the organization has to depict proper results. Employees will be more engaged if their suggestions and views are taken into consideration. Whether problems are faced on the ground or suggestions are made at the top level, both depend on what the employees want. Digitalization will help to design a system in which every individual involved in the organization will participate in a proper way to add his specific views. Feedback should not only be given at the time, but with each minor, it becomes necessary to know its necessity.

Customized Strategies: Redesigning is required in developing strategies for management as there is a need for customized strategies**.** Rethinking the area as there are diverse requirements and aspects for different groups Strategies should focus on each group separately to deliver better outcomes Technology seems very useful in Itelp to design an approach in which engagement practices can be framed taking the views of all employees into account and adjusted to foster engagement rather than digitalized engagement.

Digital competence: Employees can only take part in digital transformation if they are competent enough to cope with the digital environment and advancement. Whether it is external hiring or with existing staff, it becomes crucial to maintain digital flow within the organization's internal environment. To enable engagement in the digital era, reshaping existing skill sets and flexible engagement practices must be practised. Redesigning will only be possible when skills are up to par and competent enough to be adaptable according to situational requirements. Customizing, implementing, and maintaining are the key drivers for bringing flexible engagement, which not only considers the current preview but future sustainability too.

Conclusion

Today, the current ongoing climate is not only demanding happy people and better engagement, but also the shifting witnessed in building an inter-relationship is spreading in every corner of business; hence, there is a need to adopt such employee engagement changes like providing digital training (on the job and off the job), workshops, and other knowledge enhancement and enrichment methods that should be practiced continuously to make a smooth ride with digitalization.

It is being evident from various studies that digital technology has bought higher transformation in operations, business modeling, and customer experiences, and operational efficiency is having a tremendous and significant impact on organization growth with that of engagement.

The talent pool is shifting towards digital accommodation and demands a more collaborative, participative, flexible, purposeful, and inclusive work culture. Companies should adopt digital leadership for a happier and more engaged workforce. Employees who are more actively involved with their work feel much more connected to their workplace. Better practices that engage the employee to their maximum possible extent are very much required and beneficial for an organization. Redesigning engagement practices is required to fulfil the nature of changing demand and market conditions, as there should be proper and continuous up gradation to develop and sustain the scenario in the long run.

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