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Exploring ways to Develop & Engage Employees at Metaflex Doors India Pvt. Ltd

Teaching Notes

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It is intended to be used as the basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of a management situation. The case was compiled from primary sources and generalized experience. The authors may have disguised some of the names/events and other information to protect confidentiality and maintain professional ethics.

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TEACHING NOTES

Exploring ways to Develop & Engage Employees at Metaflex Doors India Pvt. Ltd

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There are organizations that fail to sustain their success despite great strategies. There could be several reasons contributing to their failures and problems such as, Economic slowdown, political-legal restrictions etc. We are also aware of such organizations that have enjoyed long term profits, highly satisfied & loyal customers in the past but, for some unknown reasons stop performing. However there are some 'built to last' category organizations as well that enjoy greater levels of profits and sustainable success despite all odds and external forces. This unknown, mysterious or hidden force behind their success is called 'Engagement' or 'Employee Engagement'.

In the words of Roy Vallee, CEO, Avnet Inc., "There is nothing more important than getting the right people, in the right jobs, with the right development and with the high levels of engagement. Everything else – superior customer service, profitable growth, return on shareholder value and brand – happens from there."

The result of keeping your maximum number of employees in the category of fully engaged is quite evident with the present literature supporting the belief that organizations with high employee engagement enjoy better profits and increased productivity than organizations with low employee engagement. Research also supports that engaged employees not only ensure greater revenue and sustained market share but are also less vulnerable when it comes to employee poaching from competitors. They do not get easily tempted or dragged away with bigger salaries or improved working conditions promised by the competitors trying to attract them.

Though there are such studies also that suggest that the number of disengaged employees is huge in organizations. This is definitely the biggest cause of worry which sooner or later can so prove to be an exit gate for highly potential but badly engaged employees. This will be big jolt on the efforts of leaders proving that retention strategies are a failure. These studies clearly indicate that only a very small percentage of employees are fully engaged in most organizations, and an increasing number of employees are disengaging—sometimes by seeking employment elsewhere or (potentially worse) remaining in a position without putting forth the necessary energy or commitment

But this is not news to many HR professionals or Leaders or Line Managers. Many leaders have indicated that while they understand the importance of engagement, they find themselves fraught with more questions than ideas about actually creating employee engagement. The cause for that might be that, when it comes to engagement traditionally leaders tend to focus in the wrong place ie, Customer engagement rather employee engagement. This could be resolved by understanding from the very first step that there is a direct and proportionate relationship between employee engagement and customer engagement.

The reality is that the only possible way to achieve customer engagement is *through* their employees. Successful leaders realize that to create customer engagement, they have to first create the conditions for employee engagement. Only *then* can leaders direct their employees' energies toward creating the conditions for customer engagement. The bottom line is, to keep engaged customers, an organization must first have engaged employees!

These leaders understand the importance of managing products, policies, and operations. However, they also devote as much or more energy on *creating the conditions for engagement*. While it is ultimately an employee's decision whether or not to be engaged, these leaders create the working and cultural conditions in which employees are recognized and valued, and feel challenged by their work. When times are difficult, many leaders tend to focus on the numbers and become controlling, which ultimately results in less engagement. Successful leaders recognize that they need to create the conditions under which employees choose to be engaged, and that doing so results in customer engagement.

Identifying appropriate training needs and giving a platform to the employees where they can express their thoughts, talent and create a connect with bigger picture of the existence of the company were some of the concerns that Metaflex Doors Pvt. Ltd. wanted to address. To achieve these goals they created the conditions for employee engagement through streamlined Training and Development process and integrated Employee Engagement initiatives. The approach adopted by Metaflex;

- a) Identified the level of engagement of its employees,

Through a well designed and comprehensive training need Identification and Analysis Survey they could know the number of employees who are suitable for a particular training program, number of employees who fall under the category of 'fully/highly engaged' or 'partially engaged' or 'neutral'.

- b) Explored the key drivers of Employee Engagement

The survey also revealed the expectations of employees which, if fulfilled could be a key factor leading towards more developed and engaged employees.

- c) Covered 3Cs of employee engagement:

Career, Competence and Care are the three Cs of Employee Engagement. Metaflex Doors India Pvt. Limited tried to meet these 3 Cs by designing a relevant training program for different needs of employees performing at different levels of hierarchy. This could successfully cover Career & Competence aspects. An in-house magazine titled, "Hamari Anubhuti", which means, "Our Feelings & Emotions" was an appropriate way to show Care and concern to its most significant asset; "people".

Luckily they were successful in touching the right chord, as Employee Engagement represents the environment and culture under which employees could develop an emotional connect and a choice to be loyal to the organization. This is only possible when they are

committed, dedicated and engaged in their respective jobs to the fullest and best possible ways and levels.

The key lesson in the approach used was that, Employees involved in these initiatives experienced something new. But there is still a vast canvas to fill with colors of employee engagement, development and commitment.