

Creating a Culture of Engagement -- Insights for Application

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Abstract

Harvard's Clayton M. Christensen (2012, 2013, 2016) has repeatedly emphasized the critical importance of engaging employees at all organizational levels to achieve and sustain competitive advantage in today's fast moving global marketplace. At the same time, other scholars have noted that many leaders and organizations are ineffective (Pfeffer, 1998) and Angela Duckworth (2016) has reported that two-thirds of today's employees describe themselves as not engaged in their organization. The challenge of creating a culture of engagement and commitment has increasingly been addressed by scholars and practitioners and acknowledged to be critical to the success of the modern organization (Hayes, Caldwell, Licona & Meyer, 2015; Caldwell, Licona, & Floyd, 2015; Schein, 2010).

The purpose of this paper is to identify the critical importance of creating a culture of engagement and to clarify key roles of the top management team, the human resources staff, individual supervisors, and non-supervisory colleagues in creating that culture. We begin this paper by briefly defining employee engagement and explaining its important place in organizations that seek to improve quality, profitability, and innovation. We then identify the important roles of key individuals and groups in creating a culture of engagement and offer six propositions to test related to increasing employee commitment and creating a culture of high engagement. We conclude with a brief summary of the contributions of this paper.

Keywords: Employee engagement, Culture, Psychological contracts, Trust, Communication

1. Understanding Engagement

Macey and Schneider (2008, p. 3) defined employee engagement as referring "to psychological states, traits, and behaviors as well as their antecedents and outcomes." Saks (2006, p. 602) similarly defined employee engagement as "a distinct and unique construct consisting of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components . . . associated with individual role performance." Shuck (2010) explained that employee engagement consists of long-term emotional involvement and is an antecedent to job satisfaction and commitment (cf. Wagner & Harter, 2006). Engaged employees have a high level of enthusiasm for their work (Buckingham, & Coffman, 1999), and consistently produce at higher levels than unengaged employees (Meere, 2005).

Surprisingly, however, only about one in three employees self-describes as being "engaged" and the modern organization is notoriously ineffective at creating a culture of high trust, high performance, and high engagement (cf. Schein, 2010). The Gallup organization has measured self-reported levels of employee engagement since 2000. The 2014 survey included 80,837 randomly selected adults and found employee engagement had risen somewhat, but only to 31.5% (Adkins, 2015). According to Adkins (2015) the majority of employees (51%) were "not engaged" and 17.5% were "actively disengaged". Ketter (2008) showed that organizations with highly engaged employees were more profitable than those organizations with fewer engaged employees. Rath and Clifton (2004) estimated that the cost of unengaged employees in the United States was \$250 to \$300 billion per year – potentially rising to \$1 trillion per year when other related costs such as turnover, absenteeism, fraud, and workplace illness are factored into the equation.

In contrast, research about high performance and high trust work systems has shown that highly committed employees resulting from organizations that engage employees by creating such systems are financially more successful, produce more innovation, provide better customer service, and are more likely to be sustainable

long-term than other organizations (Pfeffer, 1998; Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007; Pfeffer & Sutton, 2013). According to Lockwood (2007), employee engagement is key to customer satisfaction, company reputation and overall stakeholder value. Davenport (2013) is just one of many scholars who has explained that today's knowledge workers must be engaged and committed employees, deploring "traditional" top-down high control management systems that characterized the industrial age – but that are still practiced in many organizations. In times of organizational change within a global marketplace, organizations must embrace the understanding that enhancing employee engagement can result from a direct relationship between the employee and his/her immediate supervisor. As frequently stated, people leave managers, not companies (Lipman, 2015).

Clearly, the importance of highly committed and engaged employees is in every organization's interest – yet it is the unusual organization that successfully creates an organizational culture of high trust, high performance, and high employee commitment (Federman, 2009; Burchell & Robin, 2011). Although scholars like Harvard's Lynn Paine (2003) have documented the need to merge social and financial imperatives to create better organizations, many organizations and their leaders continue to be focused on downsizing, reducing their commitment to employees' welfare, and focusing on short-term profits in their pursuit of organizational success (Covey, 2004; Brown, 2005; Perrini, Russo, Tencati, & Vurro, 2011).

2. Creating a Culture of Engagement

Organizations that successfully create a culture of engagement recognize that doing so requires aligned programs, practices, policies, and systems (Pfeffer, 1998; Caldwell, Licona, & Floyd, 2015). Weinzimmer, Robin, and Michel (2012, p. 81) have defined organizational culture as "a complex set of shared values, beliefs, philosophies, and symbols that define the way in which a firm conducts its business." Robbins (2001) confirmed that organizational culture defines appropriate boundaries and performance standards. Huhtala and colleagues (2015) explained that an organization's culture articulated its values – and especially its ethical expectations for organization members.

The relationship between employee engagement and creating a culture of engagement is understood in terms of the nature of engagement's key dimensions. Schaufeli and Bakker (2010) explain that the cultural beliefs of employees support the goals and values of the organization. At the emotional or affective level, the culture of engagement also creates pride, a sense of belonging, and affiliative attachment to the organization. At the behavioral level, those beliefs and attitudes are then translated into organizational citizenship behavior or the willingness to go the extra mile in the pursuit of organizational objectives.

Manion (2012) has defined a culture of engagement in terms of the ongoing need for organizations to manage change. Teneja and colleagues (2015) identified a culture of employee engagement as a key to strategic success for the modern organization and defined that culture as reflecting a two-way long-term commitment between employees and their organization. In addition, Tenja and colleagues (2015) enumerated the importance of creating a culture of engagement in retaining an organization's best employees.

Freeman (2010) reported that studies about employee engagement indicate that only from 11% to 29% of employees describe themselves as fully engaged. But Rothwell (2014) also noted that creating a culture of engagement was directly related to increased employee ownership and commitment; reduced turnover and health and safety problems; and improved productivity, profitability, and customer satisfaction. In 2012, Gallop conducted a meta-analysis which included 192 organizations within 49 industries. The study spanned 34 countries. Gallop researchers statistically identified relationships between employee engagement and nine organization performance measures: quality (defects), customer ratings, profitability, productivity, turnover, safety incidents, absenteeism, shrinkage (theft), and patient safety (Sorenson, 2013).

3. Increasing Employee Engagement

In this section of the paper we address key elements associated with creating a culture of employee engagement, identify the key roles of organizational members in enhancing engagement, and offer six propositions about increasing employee commitment, motivation, ownership, and extra-mile behaviors.

4. Engagement and a Culture of Trust

High trust or high performance work systems focus on treating employees as valued owners and partners (Block & Piersanti, 2013) and empower employees by decentralizing responsibility for decision-making, creating self-managed teams, learning organizations, sharing key information, reducing status barriers, and creating aligned human resource management systems that value employees and treat them with dignity and respect (Caldwell & Floyd, 2014; Kivland, 2016; Pangarkar, 2011; Loehr & Schwartz, 2005). For organizations, trusting employees equates to giving them the power to innovate, take personal initiative, be creative, and make decisions within

value-based parameters without being micromanaged (Pfeffer, 1998; Pfeffer & Sutton, 2013). Organizations whose values include trusting employees, empowering them to become their best, and assisting them to develop skills that benefit themselves and the organization demonstrate that they are committed to both the transformational goals of the organization and the welfare of their employees (Covey, 2004). In a study of leading CEOs in Chicago, trust; specifically the ability to convey to someone that the manager was confident in the employee's ability to meet work expectations and goals, was identified as one of the most important attributes for effective leadership (Cherniss, Grimm, & Liataud, 2010).

Similar to trust (Brower, Schoorman, & Tan, 2000), engagement and employee commitment are measured on a continuum (cf. Senge, 2006). Table One explains that continuum of employee buy-in to organizational goals and values, from passive-aggressive obedience to employee stewardship.

Table 1. The Compliance – Commitment Continuum of Employee Engagement

Employee Response	Brief Description	Engagement Level	Organization Impact
Passive-Aggressive Compliance	Employees comply strictly with rules and regulations, knowing that doing so actually impedes goal achievement.	Engagement is actually negative and is intended to withhold trust and commitment.	The organization suffers due to employee efforts that are often retaliatory toward management.
Reluctant Indifference	Employees accept management or organizational requirements but may do so with minimally acceptable effort and commitment.	Trust is often conditional and employee engagement may focus on doing enough to avoid being terminated in order to retain employment.	The employee participation is motivated by self-interest and may be based upon a standard of minimum compliance and contribution.
Transactional Acceptance	Employee performance is typically based upon a quid pro quo exchange of work for incentives.	Distrust may be present to some degree but the expectation is that the exchange relationship obligates both parties.	Employee engagement and participation is essentially purchased by the employer in exchange for compensation and benefits.
Willing Participation	Employees demonstrate a commitment to the organization's goals and values.	Engagement is moderate and reflects occasionally high levels of performance and generalized trust.	Contributions are made to organizational goals and the organization benefits from employee efforts.
Engaged Cooperation	Employees demonstrate generally high compliance with organizational policies and endorse articulated values.	Engagement is generally very good and occasionally outstanding. Trust in leaders is also generally very good.	Cooperation leads to organizational goal achievement, progress, and improvement. Wealth is created and value is added.
Employee Stewardship	Employees act as if they are true "owners and partners" committed to the organization's best interests.	Engagement and employee commitment are at its peak and employees willingly go the extra mile.	Wealth creation and value added is at its highest level. Creativity, innovation, and continuous improvement are achieved.

Follower commitment enhances the ability of organizations to create wealth and compete successfully, but that commitment is tied to employee perceptions about the trustworthiness of those who lead them (Hayes, *et al.*, 2015) and the culture that those leaders create (Schein, 2010). Peshawaria (2013) makes the logic simple: If employees trust their organizational leaders, then those employees will give 110% to their work.

Schein (2010) has clearly articulated the important role that an organizational leader plays in creating an organizational culture, articulating and defining its values, and ensuring that organizational systems are in place to operationalize that culture. The perceived trustworthiness of leaders is based upon the degree to which their behaviors and actions are consistent with the organization's articulated culture, its espoused values, and the alignment of human resource policies and procedures with those values (Pfeffer, 1998; Covey, 2004; Hosmer, 2010). Consistent with the relationship between the levels of employee engagement and the culture within an organization, we present our first proposition.

P₁: Organizations with leaders who create a high trust employee culture with aligned values, policies, and practices will also have employees who demonstrate higher levels of engagement than organizations without those culture elements.

5. Engagement and Psychological Contracts

The degree to which commitments between individuals or between an individual and an organization are perceived to be honored is often a subjective perception that is based upon each party's interpretation of the psychological contract that exists (Rousseau, 1995). Psychological contracts between employees and supervisors are typically individually perceived but rarely mutually understood in the same terms by the two parties (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). Psychological contracts are generally associated with social exchange theory and involve reciprocal mutual obligations, typically creating a "balanced exchange" which is usually perceived to be ethical and just when the contract is mutually understood (Johnson & O'leary-Kelly, 2003). However, Kickul (2001) noted that employee expectations associated with psychological contracts were broad and often resulted in the perception that the non-fulfillment of their expectations created a breach wherein 1) a desired outcome did not result, 2) perceived procedures were not followed, or 3) treatment by the supervisor was perceived as unfair.

Thompson and Hart (2006) explained that psychological contracts have their roots in moral and ethical assumptions of the parties to a social contract. A breach of expected outcomes can impact employee loyalty and commitment and reduce levels of engagement or extra role behavior (Hart & Thompson, 2007). Supervisors can reduce employee perceptions of psychological contract breach by 1) clarifying and carefully following organization policies and rules, 2) establishing relationships with individual employees in which supervisors have a clear understanding of employee perceptions, 3) listening carefully and asking employees what they expect of the organization in performance coaching and evaluation meetings, and 4) going the extra mile to honor promises made and demonstrate their commitment to employees' welfare, growth, and wholeness (Covey, 2004). Organ, Podsakoff, and MacKenzie (2005) have noted that employees prone to organizational citizenship or extra role behavior reflecting high engagement were much more likely to exhibit those behaviors when supervisors were perceived as ethical. The fulcrum for effectively leveraging and sustaining psychological contacts with employees is directly correlated to the actions of their immediate leader. An article released by the Corporate Leadership Council (2004), highlighted the following characteristics of leaders that promote employee engagement: 1) show strong commitment to diversity; 2) take responsibilities for successes and failures; 3) demonstrate honesty and integrity; 4) help find solutions to problems; 5) respect and care for employees as individuals; 6) set realistic performance expectations; 7) demonstrate a passion for success; and 8) defend direct reports.

While top organizational leaders may desire to establish a culture of employee engagement, translating that vision through all levels of leadership is often not given the Human Resource Development attention necessary to fully facilitate the desired transition. Without the commitment and reinforcement of first-level leadership, any attempt at increasing a more highly engaged workforce may prove problematic.

Consistent with this research about psychological contracts, we offer our second proposition.

P₂: Organizations with supervisors who understand the nature of psychological contracts and who play close attention to understanding employee perceptions and honoring commitments are much more likely to have their employees respond with higher levels of engagement and commitment.

6. Engagement and Aligned Human Resources

The strategic integration of human resource management systems creates organizational cultures that communicate a powerful message to organization members about the competence and integrity of their organization and the quality of those human resource systems (Ulrich & Younger, 2012). In creating organizations that successfully create high trust, creative and innovative cultures, and profitable performance, Pfeffer and Sutton (1998) identified the importance of aligned human resource management systems that consistently integrate human resource management systems with company values. Human resource managers can foster an environment for engagement by developing a targeted, proactive strategic communication plan (Lockwood, 2007). Clear, consistent and honest communication is an important management tool for employee engagement.

It is well documented in the management literature that aligned human resource management policies and systems create greater impact on employee commitment and organization performance than organizations with human resource management systems that are only partially aligned in their systems and values (Hollenbeck & Jamieson, 2015). Manroop and colleagues (2014) offered evidence that integrated human resource systems and practices are also perceived as more ethical than unaligned systems and practices. Akinlade and Shallack (2016) suggest that the

systems and practices of human resource management should be both strategic and mission driven to be most effective and to be perceived as values-based. In keeping with this information about the alignment of human resources with company values, we present our third proposition.

P₃: Organizations with human resource departments that integrate and align human resource management systems and practices with company values have employees who are more engaged and likely to participate in extra role behaviors than organizations that do not have human resource departments with systems and practices that are integrated and aligned.

7. Engagement and Beneficence

Creating a culture that encourages high commitment, willingness to risk, the drive to constantly improve products and systems, and the curiosity to create new knowledge is best achieved when leaders model behaviors that demonstrate that they value employees as “yous” rather than as “its” (cf. Buber & Smith, 2011). Beneficence is the interpersonal treatment of one person by another that demonstrates a commitment to the welfare, growth, wholeness, and best interests of that other party (Caldwell, *et al.*, 2014). Whereas benevolence is an attitude, beneficence encompasses the behaviors and actions that one individual takes in treating others with kindness, respect, and an authentic concern for their best interests (Beauchamp, 2008). Beneficence in actions demonstrates the trustworthiness of one party to another and is a fundamental characteristic of transformational leadership (Burns, 2010).

Kouzes and Posner (2012) noted that the most effective leaders in their extensive research treat others with a commitment to their best interests and “encourage the heart.” Bennis and Nanus (2007) similarly noted that today’s organizations demand a “transformative” approach to creating relationships with employees by creating an open and empowered culture that values the individual and seeks their best interests – as well as the best interests of the organization. Schein (2010) placed the responsibility for creating a great organization culture on the organization’s top management team, emphasizing that their ability to build culture required that the leaders model the values that they advertise in honoring relationships and empowering employees. Block and Piersant (2013) also noted that leadership was a special stewardship in which employees were treated as valued owners and partners, rather than simply as hired help. DePree (2004) declared this obligation to pursue the best interests of employees as a “covenantal duty” and a sacred obligation of organizations and leader – noting that by honoring duties owed to employees they will then reciprocate by becoming valued contributors to the organization’s success. Having this “employee orientation” (Bowers & Seashore, 1966), involves taking an interest in workers as human beings, valuing their uniqueness and giving special attention to their personal needs. Northouse (2015), puts it this way: Relationship leadership is about three things: 1) treating followers with dignity and respect; 2) building relationships and helping people get along and 3) making the work setting a pleasant place to be.

Consistent with this discussion of beneficence and its impact on employee engagement, we present our fourth proposition.

P₄: Organizations with top management teams that demonstrate authentic concern for employees’ interests and treat them with beneficence are more likely to have highly committed and engaged employees than organizations that do not demonstrate concern and beneficence.

8. Engagement and Coaching – Front Line Managers

Managers are important when coaching employees (Ellinger, 2012). A direct supervisor has the most access to his or her employees and thus has the opportunity to listen, observe, and to monitor for levels of work stress or overload. Great managers consistently motivate their teams to achieve outstanding performance (Atkins, 2015) and thus, front-line supervisors have the opportunity to coach employees in order to encourage direct reports to do their best and deliver outstanding performance. Coaching from the front-line manager who functions as an organizational leader has been evidenced as a preferred method which has produced positive results (Kilroy & Dundon, 2015).

According to Ashkenas, Ulrich, Jick, & Kerr (2015), the contemporary boundaryless organization trains all employees and offers strategic education to various levels of employees and supervisors. Regular training helps elevate employees’ concerns when working in a dynamic, global market as well as during times of organizational change. Increased training has resulted in a greater desire for promotion from within (DeVaro & Morita, 2013). In contrast to proposing higher levels of external recruitment (when new employees and supervisors dedicate time to learn the annual business cycle and understand the organization’s culture), companies that dedicate to training new and existing employees develop new supervisors within the organization and experience higher productivity and lower costs of turnover (Colombo & Stanca, 2014; Ashar, Ghafoor, Munir, & Hafeez, 2013).

However, developing today's supervisors as coaches within the non-hierarchical organization presents a challenge (Burke & Noumair, 2015). In manufacturing, time away from production is often minimized in order to support productivity goals for the company through daily production schedules. In addition to being asked to be organizational leaders and coaches, today's managers must be open and approachable to the people they lead (R. Peters, personal communication, May 16, 2016). This is a significant shift in the front-line supervisors' leadership expectations and thus, it is unrealistic and perhaps unfair to expect that previously successful front-line managers will be able to migrate quickly to new methods of leadership, including coaching. Even when development opportunities are made known and are clearly communicated, the best organizational development efforts can lack transfer of training over time as front line managers revert to their old ways (Robbins, De Cenzo, Coulter, & Woods, 2013).

Lack of training and development effectiveness has been acknowledged by the Association for Talent Development. Of \$164.2 billion dollars spent on learning and development programs annually in the United States, only 20 percent of dollars invested resulted in permanent transfer of training or positive impact to organizations' profits (ASTD Research, 2013). Kivland and King (2014) identified six reasons leadership training fails:

- 1) Companies fail to require measures of the permanency for leadership training. "If you can't measure it, you can't improve it" - Peter Drucker.
- 2) Lack of manager's support. The immediate supervisor does not ensure time for training and practice to integrate what is learned for the learner, or, rewards systems do not support development of new skills.
- 3) Top leaders do not walk the talk. When leadership training and development focuses only mid-management and frontline employees, the critical component authentic leadership support is missing.
- 4) Low levels of training evaluation are used. Most organizations rely on Level 1 Kirkpatrick evaluation which does not provide evaluation of transfer of training and more important, on-the-job behavior or skill shifts.
- 5) Absence of audit and feedback. Level 3 Kirkpatrick evaluation looks at long-term transfer of training. When initiating leadership development programs (including coaching) observation and feedback over time are needed.
- 6) An absence of pre-screening to determine the leadership trainee's compatibility to the training and its culture to the training and its culture. This acknowledges the challenge of busy production schedules as well as factors such as the trainee's willingness, motivation, and attitude toward leadership development.

To develop capable coaches, the organization must provide time for training as well as opportunities to incorporate new coaching skills. Top leadership support by walking the talk illustrates the importance of leadership development within the organization. A comprehensive measurement and evaluation process ensures progress for those learning new or improved coaching skills as well as offers tangible evidence of training effectiveness to the organization's leaders. Consistent with research regarding engagement, coaching and front-line managers, we present our fifth proposition.

P₅: Front line managers who are supported by their organization while learning leadership skills to develop coaching techniques will in turn develop more engaged employees than organizations that do not support front-line managers' leadership development.

9. Engagement and a Sense of Belonging

Adkins (2015) identified that the least engaged employees were the millennial generation. Since the millennial population represents a significant hiring pool for today's organizations, concerns about millennials' impressions of self-belonging are critical to consider. The sense of self-belonging is created through the development of trust between organizational leaders and employees (Kirkland, 2016). The foundations of this relationship have often been overlooked by traditional leadership training programs (Kivland & King, 2015)

Organizations create relationships with their employees based upon the behaviors that they exhibit, the programs and policies they carry out, and the way employees are treated on a daily basis. In so doing, organizations and their leaders demonstrate how employees are truly valued – separate and apart from what may be the proclaimed principles and priorities that mark a corporation's walls or annual report. Many organizations reduce or eliminate status barriers (Caldwell & Floyd, 2014; Pfeffer, 1998) in their efforts to treat employees as partners rather than as subordinates. Engagement is enhanced in organizations when an organizational culture creates a sense of community or belonging among its employees (Graham, 2014).

Recognizing employee contributions and giving credit to those employees, providing profit sharing or gain sharing compensation systems, celebrating organization successes, and saying "Thank you" effectively and meaningfully also encourages a sense of organization commitment to employees and generates a sense of belonging and employee loyalty (Pfeffer, 1998). Organizations recognize that one of their most important tasks is to create strong connection

with their employees, and that this connection or sense of belonging enhances employee commitment and a firm's ability to compete in the marketplace (Caldwell, et al., 2015). The empirical research about employee satisfaction confirms that organization identification and employee engagement are closely linked (Karanika-Murray, et al., 2015).

Building on this research about the nature of employee engagement and organizations that create a sense of belonging, we present our sixth proposition.

P₆: Organizations that consciously seek to create a sense of belonging by treating employees as partners in the business and building relationships of high loyalty to employees who help the organization succeed have higher levels of employee engagement and extra role behavior than organizations that do not seek to create that sense of belonging.

We note, as we indicated hereinabove, that organizations who recognize and adopt all of these six contributing factors to employee engagement create aligned human resource management systems and an organizational culture that involves top management, human resource staff, supervisors and managers, and other employees in the process of creating that culture. Moreover, the empirical evidence suggests that organizations that adopt all of these factors are much more likely to see direct benefits, as measured by greater employee involvement and ownership, than organizations which adopt individual factors on a piece-meal basis.

10. Contributions of the Paper

Employee engagement can enable organizations to substantially improve their long-term profitability picture and their competitive advantage by utilizing the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other capacities that are so often underutilized in the modern organization (Caldwell & Hansen, 2010). The following are four contributions of this paper to the employee engagement literature.

- 1) We identify the importance of engagement as an employee behavior achieved by empowering employees and creating a high trust organizational culture. Engaged and empowered employees who are treated as valued organizational partners have been shown to consistently improve organizational productivity and profitability.
- 2) We explain six factors related to creating a culture of engagement and provide insights about the importance of each of these factors in strengthening employee commitment and ownership. Each of these factors implicitly involves the fact that employees are the key contributors to value creation in today's knowledge-, wisdom-, and information-based economy (Covey, 2004).
- 3) We frame employee engagement as a complex ethical relationship associated with the subjective nature of psychological contracts – the often unspoken and unwritten assumptions about duties owed that influence the degree to which employees perceive that they are fairly treated. Understanding the ethical and value-based assumptions of individual employees enables supervisors, managers, and organizations to strengthen their partnership with employees and optimize their commitment and creativity.
- 4) We offer six propositions about engagement that scholars and practitioners can reflect on, examine, and apply to determine their validity and practical contribution to organizational effectiveness. The propositions in this paper are eminently testable and provide opportunity for managers and supervisors to measurably improve employee commitment. They also provide a framework for academicians and scholars to test each proposition.

Although this paper is certainly not an exhaustive summary of the nuances of creating a culture of engagement, it nonetheless provides practical information and insights about the importance of increasing employee commitment by implementing an aligned human resource management system that treats employees with high regard.

11. Conclusion

As illustrated throughout this paper, abundant literature suggests that organizational dynamics are dramatically evolving, given the complexation of a more diverse and younger workforce. Strategic leaders must begin preparing their organizations for the inevitability of this labor market shift. Going forward, it is suggested that the next generation employees will be motivated to perform radically different from previous workforce generations. As workplaces become even more boundaryless, with the blurring of organizational structure, finding new and creative methods of ensuring employee engagement will bring new challenges to leaders. Creating a climate for success, sustaining customer service and promoting innovation will be harder for leaders to sustain, if they cannot effectively engage individuals in their work.

In order to conduct the appropriate and necessary analysis to appropriately diagnosis organizational performance through the prism of engagement, it is crucial to define and understand employee engagement and its varying

components. From that, it is incumbent on organizations to establish a vision that creates and supports a culture of engagement. In doing so, it is important to deliver the appropriate messaging throughout the organization, but especially to first-level leaders. The focus of the organization's vision is supported by top organizational leaders promoting trust and openness at all levels. This may require a significant shift in leadership performance goals and practices. Appropriate HRD may be required to support those leaders needing assistance with the transition. Human Resource professionals may be uniquely positioned to support this effort and help establish systems to more fully support organization-wide employee engagement activities. This might also include developing new processes and systems to facilitate organizational acceptance. Lastly, organizational leaders must work diligently to create a culture for engagement. Without the support of an organization's top management and supervisors for creating an organization responsive to employee needs and desires, individuals may find it necessary to look elsewhere to meet their personal and professional career plans.

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