

Monitoring and managing employees emotions in the workplace



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Particularly in today's volatile business climate, the emotions of employees are running higher and more unpredictable than ever. Between personal finance worries and concerns about the possibility of unemployment, more and more organizations are wondering what they should do—if anything—to help in the process of managing employee emotions.

Until recently, monitoring and managing employee's emotions were considered a forbidden topic in the workplace. They were nobody's business, and they had no place in business. They were not to be discussed at organisational level; they were to be left at home and dealt at individual level. Monitoring and managing emotions by organisations has risen due to a few of the factors which are given below;

The increasingly explicit use of emotions to get job done.

The interest in emotional intelligence at work and its role in performance.

It is more specific feelings such as mood and emotions, rather than general feelings such as stress or satisfaction, that are now regarded as vital in understanding work behaviour.

By becoming more knowledgeable about how emotions affect the primary sources of competitive advantage, HR managers can help their organizations to recognize the critical connection between employee emotions and the bottom line. HR Managers are central in managing negative and positive emotions at work. This is not just down to the behaviour of individual managers but also the whole strategic approach to thinking through how policies and practices will affect employees emotions.

The emotions are not easy to manage; after all, it's difficult to make someone feel a particular emotion. Crude attempts to control emotions are likely to backfire as people recognise when their emotions, good or bad, are being manipulated. Simply telling employees they should be happy or feel valued is unlikely to work unless it is consistent with the wider actions of the organisation. Organizations should recognize that addressing employee emotions is not a warm, fuzzy thing to do, but a smart business strategy that directly affects the business profit. Hebb (1949) once called humans " the most emotional of animals". Organizations are gearing up to the fact that their success is directly related to their ability to work productively with employees emotions. They are realizing that how well they elicit and sustain positive emotional states in their employees plays a major role in their organization's success or failure.

This is because emotions directly influence the six major (PICOPE) sources of competitive advantage in today's marketplace as discussed below. Here PICOPE means Performance, Intellectual Capital, Customer Service, Organization Responsiveness, Productivity and Employee Attraction & Retention.

Performance

Emotions are important because they have profound implications for the way employees behave and perform at work. The negative emotions that can be produced when, for example, a grievance is badly handled, a poorly designed promotion procedure is implemented, or a manager who lacks social skills is appointed, can deeply affect an employee's behaviour and performance. Likewise a well-handled dispute, an appraisal system that is <https://assignbuster.com/monitoring-and-managing-employees-emotions-in-the-workplace/>

seen as fair and the sincere thanks from a manager for a job well done are likely to promote positive emotions hence increasing performance of organization.

In most cases particularly at work, emotions are produced by interactions and relationships with other people or things, such as our line manager, co-workers, the organisation, and our work and career. In large part, someone's relationship with their organisation is directly affected by what an organization does, or doesn't do.

Emotions are a natural part of an individual's makeup. Where managers err is, if they ignore the emotional elements in organizational behaviour and assess individual behaviour as if it were completely rational. As one consultant aptly put it, " You can't divorce emotions from the workplace because you can't divorce emotions from people (Nelton, 1996)." Managers who understand the role of emotions will significantly improve their ability to explain and predict individual behaviour and increase their organisations overall performance.

Emotions can hinder performance, especially negative emotions (Weiss et al. 2005). That is probably why organizations, for the most part, try to extract emotions out of the workplace. Emotions can also enhance performance. Emotions can increase arousal levels, thus acting as motivators to higher performance and emotional labour recognizes that feelings can be part of a job's required behaviour. For instance, the ability to effectively manage emotions in leadership and sales positions may be critical to success in those positions.

Intellectual Capital

In today's economy, an organization's success is profoundly influenced by the knowledge, expertise, and innovative capacity of its workforce. The general emotional state of a workforce plays a major role in both the amount and liquidity of an organization's intellectual capital. Emotions directly affect the amount of intellectual capital – how smart and innovative the workforce is — because emotions directly affect intellectual functioning.

HR Managers must build an emotional enterprise, not just a rational one. They do this by creating external emotional capital so that people buy into the brand and organisation. Customers want to buy from organisations they like and that are like them. They also create internal emotional capital by treating employees as intellectual and emotional investors. The primary role for an HR manager is to create emotional wealth for competitive advantage.

Researches show that when people are in a negative emotional state, their thinking becomes less flexible, creative, innovative, original, and discerning. Conversely, when people are feeling confident, secure, and passionate about their work, they are more likely to envision new possibilities, generate creative solutions, and make wise decisions (Grawitch et al. 2003). Today's environment requires the sharing of information, knowledge, and expertise throughout the entire organization. The greater the liquidity of intellectual capital — the more freely it is disseminated and used – the more successful the organization.

Emotions affect liquidity. Whether or not an individual's intellectual capital is liquid — i. e. available for use by others — depends upon how safe, valued,

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and committed they feel. If people feel insecure, they are unlikely to share their knowledge and expertise, for fear of losing their power base. If they don't feel valued or committed, they will withhold their knowledge and insights as a form of payback. Either way, the organization loses out when intellectual capital is kept out of circulation. Thus, emotions affect people's intellectual functioning and their willingness to share their knowledge and expertise with others — two essential components of maximizing intellectual capital.

Customer Service

With 70% of the world economy being service-related, providing excellent service is central to most businesses' success. A key requirement in many service sector jobs, such as cabin crew member, call centre agent, waitress, nurse or receptionist, is to display and hide particular emotions. Giving employees rigid instructions about the emotions they have to display and the way they have to behave can make these displays seem fake and removes control and initiative.

According to research, in service based organizations customers frequently become a “second boss” for the employees. When managers use customer evaluations to reward and punish employees, organizational leaders must temper and contextualize customer service programs with information that helps employees with positive emotions, recognize and negotiate the boundaries between selling a smile and accommodating customer abuse or harassment. When leaders appeal to their employees strengths they engage the primary driver of human performance — values. The real drivers of

performance are not sticks and carrots but values and vibes. The things that
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really matter to people are feeling valued and having the chance to contribute value.

The connection between emotional state and customer service is obvious. If employees are angry, demoralized, or disinterested, no amount of training will offset the service climate their emotional state creates. The economic consequence of not addressing front line employee emotions is disastrous. Customer service research shows that 68% of customers defect from a company because they were treated with an attitude of indifference (Tsai et al. 2002). Thus, 68% of what leads to customer defection is related to emotion – or in this case, the lack of emotion. Research has shown that if an organization reduces its defection rate by only 5%, it can improve its business profit by 30% to 85%. Thus, when an organisation doesn't address what is creating a disinterested, dispirited workforce, they are deprived of extra 30% to 85% profit (Reichheld et al. 2005).

Organizational Responsiveness

In today's high velocity, constantly changing marketplace, organizations need to be extremely responsive. Being responsive means being both fast and flexible. Emotions affect how fast and flexible people are in their responses, and therefore how fast and flexible organizations are in their's. If people are feeling threatened, stressed out, or dispirited, they will resist change. Employees who feel secure, committed, and passionate, find organizational and marketplace changes energizing. They see these changes as something that adds spice to life, not something to be feared and resisted. Thus, an organization's ability to respond nimbly in the marketplace is directly related to employee emotions (Lee, 2007).

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The latest findings from research found no single factor predicts the productivity of an employee more clearly than his or her relationship with a direct supervisor. More specifically, the main drivers of productivity for employees were feeling cared for by their supervisor or someone at work and receiving recognition or praise.

Building emotional capital as an organizational strategy adds real value to the balance sheet. Organizations, which are high in emotional capital, create value and influence through their capacity to identify with the aspirations of their employees and build shared identities with them. They are able to establish trust because they understand people's need to belong to a group. They create and communicate compelling visions, they develop blueprints for action and they lead through their ability to motivate people to act together. In short, emotional capitalists represent leaders with an advanced capacity to incentivise staff by engaging with their prime motivators – emotion. Some key strategies are as follows.

- Treat employees as investors – provide recognition and praise regularly;
- Build and maintain well-planned and managed emotional relationships;
- Benchmark talent – measure emotional capital in the business;
- Establish a climate of trust – communicate what's going on regularly, to everybody.

Productivity

Although productivity has always been an issue, in today's do more with less workplace, it is more important than ever. Emotion is sometimes defined as energy in motion. When people feel happy and excited, they have far more energy at their disposal than people who are depressed or disinterested. On a practical level, the happier an employee is with their work and their organisation, the more likely they will work hard.

Without an emotional-management component, a work environment can become toxic. When workers perform out of fear, loathing or anger, a company usually isn't productive. And a workplace where emotions run rampant can turn off employees, vendors and customers alike. Imagine the problems facing a restaurant where the manager routinely berates his waiters in public. Even when the problems aren't obvious, they can damage an organization's productivity.

Having an open door policy among all staff, allowing employees to come to managers and talk about emotional issues can be beneficial to organizations, managers and employees. Helping to manage employee emotions concerning job, life and home can help managers to understand why they may not be as productive as usual and helps the employee to get their problems off of their chest by talking to an authority figure they know and trust. This builds a deeper, but still professional, rapport between the organisation and employees and lets them know the organization care about them as a person as well as an employee. Managers could also guide them in the right direction to seek additional assistance in resolving their emotional problems.

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Employee Attraction & Retention

In today's tight labour market and ultra-competitive marketplace, an organization's success depends more so than ever on its ability to attract and retain high quality employees. Employee emotions clearly influence an organization's ability to attract and retain employees. The happier employees are, the more likely they will want to stay. If an organization has a reputation for being a fun place to work, a place where employees are treated well, and an organization that inspires pride and passion; people will want to work there. Thus, such organizations not only reduce costly turnover, they also benefit from their ability to attract the best of the best.

If organisations want to retain their employees and attract high quality employees, they should refocus their emotional management strategy. A poorly evolved strategy, which shows conflict, mistrust, insensitivity towards the emotions, where the value system supports excessive control, punitive steps for failures and mistakes, where there is low preference towards human sentiments and relations, no cordial-cohesive environment to work with lack of recognition etc. cannot win employee's unconditional trust and co-operation. In today's environment, the organisation provides a culture which is emotionally sensitive i. e. it caters to the emotional needs of the employees, where failures and mistakes are dealt with emotional maturity and which provides emotional support in times of their crises be it personal or professional. In short, a culture which should leave the employees with a feeling of happiness, contentment, being valued and respected.

Conclusions

In conclusion, organisations need to create an environment, which is emotionally sensitive, where emotions are considered as important as other aspects of work life and is given due importance, which empathizes and supports employees in times of crises or failures and where is genuine concern about the well being of the employees. Each emotion expressed has an antecedent, whether it has personal factors or professional factors. Organisations must pay attention and react appropriately to emotions especially the negative ones – like fear, anger disgust, apprehension, frustration etc. when they are being expressed.

Managing, the emotions expressed (whether the organisation empathizes or remains indifferent) becomes important because, it governs the interpersonal dynamic in the organisation and various organisational activities and it will shape the attitude and behaviour of the employees. When an employee is in a state of despair, organisations must provide emotional support just like a family does. The family doesn't abandon its members even they commit the gravest mistake. It may scold them, often punish them but along with this it shows that it cares for them and they will still be treated as they were earlier. The organisation needs to have this approach while handling employee's emotions.

By helping organizations create an environment that elicits and sustains positive emotional states in employees, HR Managers can directly contribute to their organization's business goal. The first step in this process is to help managers see how employee emotions directly affect the primary sources of competitive advantage. Only after this connection is made, will management

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be willing to do the work necessary to create an organizational environment that elicits and sustains positive emotional states in its employees.

Appendix A: Reference List

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