

IMPACT OF HR OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE ON EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE AND RETENTION

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Abstract: The global organizational landscape is facing unprecedented technological disruption. Organizations around the world are increasingly using automation technologies to achieve several ends: ensuring operational efficiency, cost reduction, and enhancement in the quality of decision-making. Human Resource departments, which conventionally have been administrative centers, are being transformed radically by adopting automation tools and technologies in HR. HR Automation ranges from RPA for routine tasks to AI-powered analytics for strategic workforce planning. In this way, the evolution of HR automation reflects trends found more broadly in organizations: from transactional to strategic HR, data-driven decision-making, and putting employees at the forefront of organizational design. Yet, despite substantial investments in HR automation technologies, organizations often report mixed outcomes—while some achieve quite spectacular gains in efficiency and employee satisfaction, others face resistance, implementation challenges, and other unintended negative consequences. The inconsistency raises critical questions: What are the factors that determine automation will lead to organizational effectiveness? Why do some succeed while others do not?.

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Introduction:

Human Resource Management (HRM) has undergone a remarkable transformation over the past few decades. What was once seen as an administrative, support-oriented function has now become a strategic cornerstone of organizational success. Modern HRM integrates technology, data-driven decision-making, employee-centric policies, and continuous improvement practices to manage the complexities of today's workforce. In contemporary organizations, HR operations encompass a wide spectrum of activities—ranging from talent acquisition, onboarding, and competency development to performance evaluation, compensation management, employee welfare, and statutory compliance. These functions ensure that the organization not only attracts and retains skilled employees but also maintains an environment where individuals feel motivated, valued, and aligned with business objectives. For large and diverse industrial enterprises such as Jayaswal Neco Industries Ltd., the significance of HR operations is even more pronounced. As one of India's leading players in the iron and steel sector, the company manages a vast workforce spread across integrated steel plants, foundries, casting facilities, and engineering units. In

such labor-intensive and operationally complex settings, HR plays a crucial role in maintaining workforce discipline, ensuring adherence to safety standards, fostering productivity, and sustaining employee well-being. The organization's adoption of advanced technological tools—such as ERP systems, biometric attendance solutions, payroll automation platforms, and digital communication channels—reflects its commitment to strengthening HR efficiency and transparency. Employee engagement has gained prominence as industries navigate challenges like fierce competition, technological disruption, and evolving employee expectations. Engaged employees exhibit higher commitment, improved performance, reduced absenteeism, and stronger loyalty toward the organization. In manufacturing environments, where work can be physically demanding and routine in nature, engagement initiatives such as welfare programs, recognition systems, motivational activities, and effective communication become essential in sustaining morale and long-term retention. Furthermore, the integration of digital HR technologies—ranging from automated leave systems and online appraisal tools to real-time HR analytics—has revolutionized how HR professionals operate.

These innovations enhance accuracy, simplify workflows, and free HR personnel to focus on strategic initiatives rather than repetitive tasks. As Jayaswal Neco continues to expand and modernize,

What is Employee Experience?

Employee experience encompasses everything an employee encounters, feels, and observes throughout their journey with an organisation—from the initial recruitment process to their eventual exit. It's a holistic view that includes the physical workspace, the company culture, the tools and resources provided, and the interactions with managers and colleagues. A positive employee experience can lead to higher engagement, productivity, and ultimately, retention.

Why Employee Experience Matters for Retention

Employee experience is directly tied to how valued and supported employees feel within their roles. When employees feel engaged and appreciated, they are more likely to stay with the company, contributing to a lower turnover rate. On the other hand, a poor employee experience can lead to dissatisfaction, disengagement, and eventually, the decision to leave.

Here are a few reasons why a strong focus on employee experience can significantly impact retention:

1. Enhanced Job Satisfaction:

- A positive employee experience often leads to higher job satisfaction. When employees feel that their needs are being met—whether it's through professional development opportunities, a supportive work environment, or recognition of their achievements—they are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs. This satisfaction reduces the likelihood of employees seeking opportunities elsewhere.

2. Increased Engagement:

- Engaged employees are those who are emotionally and psychologically invested in their work. They are more productive, motivated, and committed to the organisation's goals. A well-rounded employee experience fosters this engagement by ensuring that employees have the tools, support, and culture they need to thrive.

examining how these technological advancements influence HR performance and employee experience becomes vital for understanding the overall effectiveness of its HR ecosystem.

3. Stronger Company Loyalty:

- When employees feel a strong connection to their organization, they are less likely to leave. This loyalty is built through positive experiences—like feeling heard and valued, having opportunities for growth, and working in an environment that aligns with their personal values. A focus on employee experience helps to cultivate this loyalty.

4. Better Work-Life Balance:

- Today's workforce places a high value on work-life balance. Companies that prioritise employee experience by offering flexible working conditions, mental health support, and a culture that respects personal time are more likely to retain their employees. Work-life balance isn't just a perk; it's a necessity for modern employees, and organisations that understand this will have an edge in retaining talent.

5. Reduced Burnout:

- Burnout is a significant issue in many industries, leading to increased turnover rates. When employees are overworked, stressed, or feel unsupported, they are more likely to experience burnout and eventually leave the company. By focusing on employee experience, HR can implement measures to prevent burnout, such as reasonable workloads, supportive management, and opportunities for rest and recuperation.

Strategies to Enhance Employee Experience

Given the clear link between employee experience and retention, HR professionals must take a proactive approach to create a positive work environment. Here are some strategies to enhance employee experience:

1. Regular Feedback and Communication:

- Open communication channels are crucial for a positive employee

experience. Regular feedback sessions, where employees can voice their concerns and suggestions, help them feel valued and involved in the company's progress. Moreover, transparent communication from leadership about company goals and changes fosters trust and alignment.

2. Invest in Employee Development:

- Offering professional development opportunities is key to keeping employees engaged and satisfied. Whether it's through training programs, mentorship, or career advancement opportunities, investing in employee growth shows that the company is committed to their long-term success.

3. Create a Positive Work Environment:

- The physical and cultural environment of a workplace significantly impacts employee experience. Ensure that the workspace is comfortable, safe, and conducive to productivity. Additionally, fostering a positive company culture—one that promotes inclusivity, respect, and collaboration—can greatly enhance the overall employee experience.

4. Recognise and Reward Contributions:

- Recognition is a powerful tool for boosting morale and job satisfaction. Regularly acknowledging and rewarding employees' hard work and achievements helps to reinforce their sense of purpose and belonging within the company.

5. Focus on Health and Wellbeing:

- Prioritising employee health and wellbeing is essential for a positive employee experience. This can be achieved through wellness programs, mental health resources, and initiatives that promote work-life balance.

Employee Experience

Employee experience is described as how a company creates an environment where individuals will show up without the company having to wait for them to be

"needed" (Morgan, 2017). This transition from "needs" to "wants" is the first change that companies around the world are starting to notice. Several companies have made investments in health programs, maternity and paternity leaves, employee perks, and workplace flexibility, to name a few examples. In recent years, the notion of employee experience has received a lot of attention and relevance, mostly from professionals (Lewis, McSilver, Reilly, & Ignatova, 2020). The idea of employee experience was derived from the idea of customer experience. To establish a sustainable, world-class customer experience, an organization must first create a sustained, world-class employee experience (Wride & Maylett, 2017). It is beneficial to explore the emergence and starting of the notion of employee experience to comprehend this advancement. Organizations must restructure Human Capital strategies and operations to improve the whole employee experience, similar to how marketing concepts have shifted from customer satisfaction to total customer experience. The case study here is based on a delivery model that was first used in the service industry, with positive results in terms of sales and financial performance (Tasya, 2020). The concept of a pleasant employee experience has become a new contract between the employer and the employee, according to a Deloitte analysis based on past research in the domains of Human Capital and Organizational Behavior (Walsh & Volini, 2017). Morgan (2017) envisioned the employee experience as a pyramid with multiple tiers stacked on top of each other. The Reason for Being is at the bottom of the pyramid, and it serves as the foundation for how the company handles and thinks about employee experience. The organization's reason for being is ultimately what binds the individuals together. There are also the three employee experience contexts of culture, technology, and the physical environment to consider. Everything a company does in regards to employee experience will fall into one of these three categories. Compensation and benefit increases, flexible work programs, management training, the tools employees utilize to do their tasks, and everything in between is all part of this. Then there are the 17 variables that build up such environments: COOL places, ACE technology, and a CELEBRATED culture, to name a few. These are the 17 things that employees care about and value the most in their company, according to Morgan's research (Morgan, 2017). The moments that matter is at the very top of the pyramid. These enable businesses to customize the employment

experience to the greatest extent possible. Organizations accomplish this by identifying significant times in an employee's life and then incorporating the 17 variables into those moments whenever possible. Organizations can more effectively and correctly identify these instances by utilizing numerous feedback mechanisms. The moments will differ depending on the organization, which is why it is critical to question employees and to keep asking them because these moments might change at any time. Let us look deeper into the three environments of employee experience according to Morgan (2017). The physical environment is where employees work, and it accounts for 30% of the whole employee experience (Morgan, 2017). This refers to the physical environment, which includes anything from the art on the walls to the catered meals provided by the company to the cubicles or open floor plans in which workers may work (Morgan, 2017). Many people care about this physical area because they want to spend their workdays in places that invigorate and motivate them. Employees that work in these environments are more creative, engaged, and connected to the organization they work for. Surprisingly, many individuals feel that offices would perish as a result of the rise of coworking spaces, worldwide connections, and collaboration tools. The traditional office concept is doomed to fail. The buildings, on the other hand, are undergoing a design renaissance, and instead of disappearing, offices are resurfacing as employee experience centers. Together with the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic situation that forces people to stay at home, Morgan's (2017) theory has considerations on this too through workplace flexibility. Flexibility in the workplace continues to be a popular desire among employees and a priority for businesses. Work-life balance has been demolished in today's hyperconnected global environment, and work-life integration has taken its place. As a result, employees may bring their personal lives to work and their professional lives home with them. To continue working in this environment, we must reject the concept of a 9-to-5 workweek and instead empower employees to work whenever and from wherever they want (Morgan, 2017). As a result, there is a belief that employees should have as much freedom as possible. Employees that are truly able to choose when and where they work, whether that means coming into an office, working from home, going to a coffee shop or coworking facility, or going anywhere else where they can get their work done, are considered flexible.

Employee Engagement

Employees used to have a very clear and straightforward relationship with their business and employer decades ago. The engagement period shifted the emphasis from hard work to smart work, focusing more on how and why workers work for the company. Employee engagement has been studied by both practitioners and academics, who have found that engaged employees are more productive, devoted to the enterprise, and keep happy and healthy (Itam & Ghosh, 2020). Employee Experience and employee engagement have been used interchangeably by certain academics (Morgan, 2017). However, some other researchers suggest that a favorable employee experience leads to higher levels of employee engagement (Plaskoff, 2017). Even though these two concepts are not identical, they are complementary and can be regarded as cause and effect (Morgan, 2017). Employee engagement is defined as an emotional condition in which employees are engaged in their work and feel passionate, energetic, and committed to it. Employees, in turn, totally invest their best selves in the work we perform, including their emotions, spirits, minds, and hands (Maylett & Warner, 2014). Employee engagement begins with the individual's work experience and is a decision that cannot be imposed. Individual employees, not companies, are involved. As a result, employee engagement is an individual-level rather than a group-level idea. Employee engagement, on the other hand, is an active, work-related psychological state that encompasses perceptions, emotions, and behaviors, as well as energy and involvement (Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019). According to one study, employees who were highly engaged were five times less likely to leave than those who were not (Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), 2017). High levels of engagement encourage employees to stay with the company, develop consumer loyalty, and boost organizational performance and stakeholder value (Budriene & Diskiene, 2020). Employees who are engaged are passionate about their jobs and their workplace (Gallup, Inc., 2021). They are psychological "owners", and they drive performance and innovation while also propelling the company ahead. Employees who are not engaged are emotionally detached from their jobs and organizations. They are putting time into their work, but not with intensity or passion because their engagement demands are not being fully addressed. Employees who are actively disengaged are not just unhappy at work; they are also resentful that their demands are not being met, and they are expressing

their dissatisfaction through behavior. Every day, these employees may jeopardize the efforts of their more engaged teammates. Furthermore, seven dimensions of employee engagement can be developed based on the outcomes of the integration of the many theories in the bag, allowing for more thorough coverage (Febriansyah & Ginting, 2020). (1) physical and psychic energy; (2) pride in the institution; (3) intention to stay in the company; (4) proactive attitude; (5) constructive criticism; (6) resilience; and (7) promote the institution are the seven dimensions.

Conclusion

In today's fast-paced business environment, focusing on employee experience is no longer optional—it's a strategic imperative. By understanding the critical link between employee experience and retention, HR professionals can implement practices that not only keep their employees happy and engaged but also ensure long-term organisational success. Investing in employee experience is investing in the future of your company. When employees feel valued, supported, and connected, they are far more likely to stay, thrive, and contribute to the company's ongoing success.

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