### SESSION PLAN

**COURSE:** ABE L5 Diploma in Business Management and HR - Employee Engagement

**ELEMENT:** Element 1 – Understanding employee engagement

## **LEARNING OUTCOME 1**

**Analyse the concept of employee engagement in order to explain its contribution to organisational success (Weighting 20%)**

* 1. Discuss the concept of employee engagement within an organisational setting
  2. Explain the importance of the dimensions of employee engagement within an organisation
  3. Analyse the impact of employee engagement on the employee’s commitment to the organisation

**NUMBER OF SESSIONS:** Three - approximately twelve to fifteen hours in total, plus self-study

**SESSION TOPICS:** Session 1: The concept of employee engagement within an organisational setting

Session 2: The importance of the dimensions of employee engagement within an organisation

Session 3: The impact of employee engagement on the employee’s commitment to the organisation

**Note to tutors: this is the recommended session plan for learning outcome 1, element 1 of ABE L5 Diploma in Business Management and HR – Employee Engagement unit. You should follow the plan, using the resources (referenced as ‘slides’ here) and activities provided. It is important to enhance all sessions with local examples and case studies, involving the learners ACTIVELY wherever possible.**

### SESSION 1: The concept of employee engagement within an organisational setting

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| **Approx.**  **Duration** | **Topic** | **Tutor Activity** | **Slides** | **Learner Activity** | **Formative Assessment** |
| 4-5 hours | Introduction to session and learning outcomes | Use file: **5UEE Tutor Presentation E1**  Learning outcome 1,  Assessment criteria 1.1. | 1-4 | Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate. |  |
| What is employee engagement? | Set group activity to identify words associated with employee engagement  Facilitate feedback, identifying common words and themes. Typical phrases used in employee engagement writing include discretionary effort, going the extra mile, feeling valued and passion for work.  Explain that employee engagement has been defined in many different ways. One of the first challenges presented by the literature is the lack of a universal definition of employee engagement. It can mean different things to different people.  Set pair activity to explore what employee engagement means for each individual.  Facilitate feedback, identifying common themes. Typically, common themes include:   * pride * valued * trusted * team-working * respect * confidence * challenging work * success   Go through the definitions.  Explain that employee engagement is generally seen as an internal state of being – both physical, mental and emotional – and that in the next session we will look at the dimensions of employee engagement in detail.    Question for general class discussion: What isn’t employee engagement?  Engagement is not about:   * 100+%’ effort – leading to overworked employees * Compliance - not employee led * Working long hours – lethargy * Top down management initiatives – no ownership | 5-8 | In groups, when you think of engagement, what does it mean to you? Make a list.  Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate.  In pairs, spend 10 minutes or so interviewing each other, using the following questions:   * Tell me about the most valued or engaging experience you have had in your work life. * What was happening that made this possible? * How did this experience make you feel?   Be prepared to feedback your partner’s answers to the group.  Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate.  Participate in class discussion, sharing their ideas about what employee engagement isn’t. | **5UEE E1 LO1 Activity 1 – Words associated with employee engagement**  **5UEE E1 LO1 Activity 2 –** **Personal experiences of employee engagement**  **5UEE E1 LO1 Activity 3 – What employee engagement isn’t** |
| The difference between employee engagement and related concepts | Explain that employee engagement is a concept that has become increasingly mainstreamed into management thought over the last decade. It brings together earlier concepts of such as job involvement and job satisfaction. Explain that we will now look at the difference between employee engagement and related concepts.  **Job involvement** – slide 9  Give definition and explain that employee engagement differs from job involvement in that it is concerned more with how individuals employ themselves during the performance of their job. In addition, while the focus of job involvement is on thoughts, engagement, according to most definitions, also incorporates emotions and behaviours.  **Employee involvement** – slide 10  Give definition and explain that although employee involvement suggests many of the qualities of an interaction that would come under the umbrella of employee engagement, involvement means that employees are involved to the extent that the employer requires or requests them to be. Employee engagement means that employees are actively interested in improving the organisation without being persuaded into it. Simply put, employee involvement is often more of a ‘doing to’, while employee engagement is more ‘doing with’.  **Job satisfaction** - slide 11  Explain that job satisfaction is a complex and multifaceted concept which can mean different things to different people. The concept of job satisfaction is closely linked to that of engagement. On the slide, we can see a definition offered by Armstrong and Taylor (2017).  While the definitions of employee satisfaction and employee engagement may differ from organisation to organisation, generally satisfaction refers to how employees feel — their ‘happiness’— about their job and conditions, such as compensation, benefits, work environment, and career development opportunities.  Set group activity to explore the relationship between job satisfaction and employee engagement.  Debrief: Slide 12.  Engagement refers to employees’ commitment and connection to work as measured by the amount of discretionary effort they are willing to expend on behalf of their employer. Highly engaged employees go above and beyond the core responsibilities outlined in their job descriptions, innovating and thinking outside the box to move their organisations forward.  Chances are an engaged employee is also a satisfied employee; few people are willing to go the extra mile for their employer unless they are fundamentally happy in their jobs. However, it is certainly possible to have a satisfied employee with a low engagement level — someone who shows up to work and goes through the motions, but does not demonstrate a lot of initiative or put in a lot of extra effort to further the success of the organisation.  **Flow** - slides 13/14  Explain that flow is when there is little distinction between self and the environment, with individuals so pleasurably immersed in their work that they don’t notice time passing. When in a state of flow, employees display more ‘discretionary effort’, are more productive, more inclined to come up with good ideas and take the initiative.  Flow is closely related to employee engagement. However, unlike engagement, flow is temporary and depends on the nature of the task. Significantly, engagement focuses on work in general and not a specific task, thereby implying a longer-term and more holistic involvement in work task.  Set group activity to identify ways in which employees can be helped to find ‘flow’ in the workplace.  Debrief.  Slide 15 – explain the key differentiating factors between engagement and other related concepts:   * Focus on organisational aims * What the employee gives * Encapsulates and integrates other initiatives * More emphasis on social engagement and networking   Show the YouTube video ‘What Is the Definition of Employee Engagement?’ by Kevin Kruse  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uu7EG6EZeAM>  Tutor debrief:  The video highlights the difference between job satisfaction and employee engagement. Notice the focus on how engaged employees work on behalf of the organisation. | 9-15 | Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate.  In groups, answer the following questions:   * Can an organisation have a satisfied employee who is not engaged? * Can an organisation have an engaged employee who is not satisfied?   Be prepared to justify your answers.  Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate.  Working in 2-3 groups prepare and deliver a short presentation on ways employees can be helped to find ‘flow’ in the workplace.  Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate. | **5UEE E1 LO1 Activity 4 – Employee engagement and job satisfaction**  **5UEE E1 LO1 Activity 5 – Helping employees to find ‘flow’** |
|  | Company definitions of employee engagement | Set **homework activity** – Activity 6. |  | Individual homework activity - conduct research to find examples of how organisations in the private and in the public sector define employee engagement. List the examples, noting the similarities and differences. | **5UEE E1 LO1 Activity 6 – Company definitions of employee engagement** |
|  | Review of session and learning outcomes | Question for general class discussion: what are your key learning points from today’s session? Allow learners to make reflective notes of their learning. . | 16 | Participate in class discussion, sharing learning points. | **5UEE E1 LO1 Activity 7 – Key learning points** |

### SESSION 2: The importance of the dimensions of employee engagement within an organisation

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| **Approx.**  **Duration** | **Topic** | **Tutor Activity** | **Slides** | **Learner Activity** | **Formative assessment** |
| 4 – 5 hours | Introduction to session and learning outcomes | Use file: **5UEE Tutor Presentation E1**  Learning outcome 1  Assessment criteria 1.2 | 17 | Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate. |  |
|  | Dimensions of engagement | Explain the three dimensions of employee engagement:   * Emotional engagement: being involved emotionally with your work. It concerns the degree to which employees feel connected and trust the organisation and its members. It is about employees having an emotional connection with their work, and the extent to which they have a positive or negative attitude towards the organisation and its leaders. * Cognitive engagement: focusing very hard on work, thinking about very little else during the working day. It concerns the employees’ beliefs about the organisation, its leaders and working conditions. * Physical engagement: being willing to 'go the extra mile' for your employer and work over and beyond contract. It concerns the physical energies exerted by individuals to accomplish their roles   Set pairs activity to explore the extent to which individuals are engaged within each dimension and the factors that influence this. | 18 | Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate.  In pairs, consider the extent to which you are engaged with your work on an intellectual, affective and social level.  What are the factors in the workplace that influence your levels of engagement within each dimension?  Be prepared to share your answers. | **5UEE E1 LO1 Activity 8 –** **Engagement at an intellectual, affective and social level** |
|  | Dimensions of organisational commitment | Explain that one of the key concepts associated with employee engagement is organisational commitment.     * Affective commitment: the employee’s positive emotional attachment to the organisation. The employee strongly connects with the goals of the business and wants to stay part of the organisation and part of achieving those goals. * Continuance commitment: the employee commits to the organisation because of the perceived ‘costs’ of departure and loss. Costs include straightforward economic costs (such as pension rights and salary), social costs (such as friendship with colleagues) and personal costs (such as fear of insecurity and unemployment) * Normative commitment: the employee’s feelings of obligation and indebtedness. For example, if the employer has taken the individual on when other employers have rejected them, then the employee feels a ‘moral’ obligation to continue working and remain in the organisation at least until the ‘debt’ is repaid.   .  Explain that slide 20 helps us to understand how the different types of commitment might be articulated by employees.  Set pairs activity – Activity 9  Debrief: slide 21  Factors affecting the level of commitment include:   * top management value commitment * investment in training and development * rewards that reinforce participation and contribution * selection based on high standards * broad task design and teamwork * effective communication across the organisation * find work challenging * employee involvement in problem solving * a climate of cooperation and trust * good work-life balance * career development opportunities * managers are good in people management   Question for general class discussion: What is the difference between organisational commitment and employee engagement?  Facilitate discussion:   * closely related concepts * organisational commitment differs from engagement in that it refers to a person’s attitude and attachment towards their organisation, whereas engagement is not just an attitude. * employee engagement is also the extent to which an individual is attentive to their work and absorbed in the performance of their role.   Explain that it’s useful to distinguish between engagement and commitment because different policies may be required to enhance job engagement than those need to increase organisational commitment.  Armstrong (2009) offers a useful illustration of combinations of engagement and organisational commitment – slide 23 | 19-23 | Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate.  In pairs, consider which type of organisational commitment – affective, continuance, or normative – is most important to each of you.    Now, consider an organisation with which you are both familiar.   * Which type of organisational commitment do you think is most important to the majority of its employees? * What strategies could the organisation put in place to encourage higher levels of commitment?   Participate in class discussion, sharing their ideas about the difference between organisational commitment and employee engagement.  Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate. | **5UEE E1 LO1 Activity 9** – Building organisational commitment  **5UEE E1 LO1 Activity 10** – **Difference between organisational commitment and employee engagement** |
|  | Positive emotions boost employee engagement | Set **homework** activity to read article. |  | Read the article ‘Positive emotions boost employee engagement: Making work fun brings individual and organizational success’  Human Resource Management International Digest, Vol. 22 Issue 1 pp. 34 - 37  Note three key learning points. | **5UEE E1 LO1 Activity 11 – Positive emotions boost employee engagement** |
|  | Review of session and learning outcomes | Question for general class discussion: what are your key learning points from today’s session? . | 24 | Participate in class discussion, sharing learning points. | **5UEE E1 LO1 Activity 12 – Key learning points** |

### SESSION 3: The impact of employee engagement on the employee’s commitment to the organisation

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| **Approx.**  **Duration** | **Topic** | **Tutor Activity** | **Slides** | **Learner Activity** | **Formative assessment** |
| 4-5 hours | Introduction to session and learning outcomes | Use file: **5UEE Tutor Presentation E1**  Learning outcome 1  Assessment criteria 1.3 | 25 | Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate. |  |
|  | Drivers of engagement | Question for general class discussion: What are the main drivers of employee engagement?  Facilitate the discussion – listing the drivers.  Explain that there’s a growing body of research which is helping to determine the main drivers for employee engagement. Compare list with slide 27.  Drivers include:   * Leadership * Employee voice * Meaningfulness * Job challenge and variety * Person–job fit * Autonomy * Opportunities for development * Supportive work environment * Rewards and recognition   Explain that we will now look at some of these drivers in detail. Remind group that reward and recognition will be covered later in the unit.  **Leadership** – explain the significance of leadership and that ‘leaders play a pivotal role in creating the environment within which employees can engage with their work’. Slide 28  Set group activity to explore what leaders should do to help build high levels of employee engagement.  Facilitate feedback. Compare ideas with those listed on slide 29.  **Employee voice** – Give definition and explain what this means in practice – slides 30-31  **Meaningfulness –** Explain that the CIPD research report ‘Creating an Engaged Workforce’ found meaningfulness to be the most important driver of engagement for all groups of employees – slide 32  **Job challenge and variety –** Explain, highlighting how challenging, creative and varied work gives the employee the opportunity to perform many different activities and to use many different skills, which in turn enhances engagement – slide 33  **Person–job fit** – explain the concept. Highlight that where an organisation that spends time learning about the talents, interests and aspirations of each employee – rather than simply whether the employee can perform the available work – is likely to enhance levels of engagement – slide 34  **Autonomy** – Explain concept. Highlight that autonomy is important because it demonstrates that the organisation and line manager appreciate and support the individual’s discretion in deciding how best to get the work done, within reasonable limitations – slide 35  **Opportunities for development –** When the employee feels capable in their role, their confidence increases and they can work without much supervision from their line manager. This in turn builds their self-efficacy, commitment and engagement.  **Supportive work environment -** The relationships between colleagues form a vital aspect of the work environment, especially the relationship between the employee and their line manager. The line manager / employee relationship needs to be reciprocal with both the line manager and the employee making time for, and listening to, each other. | 26-35 | Participate in class discussion, sharing ideas about the drivers of employee engagement.  Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate.  Working in groups, consider your experiences of leaders in the workplace.  What should leaders do to help build high levels of employee engagement?  Be prepared to share your ideas.  Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate | **5UEE E1 LO1 Activity 13** – **The drivers of employee engagement**  **5UEE E1 LO1 Activity 14**– **Leadership and employee engagement** |
|  | The enablers of engagement | Explain that in the late 2000s David MacLeod and Nita Clarke were asked by the then Labour Government to produce a research paper on the importance of employee engagement to the UK economy. Their influential work, ‘Engaging for Success’, was published in 2009. In the report, Macleod and Clarke outline what they regard as the four ‘enablers’ of employee engagement. Get these right, they argue, and employee engagement will follow.  Explain each enabler.   * Strategic narrative * Engaging managers * Employee voice * Integrity   Show the YouTube video ‘The Four Enablers of Engagement’ in which David Macleod and Nita Clarke talk about the four Enablers of Engagement identified in the Engaging For Success report  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w3XKLhKyM1Y>  Set group activity to complete the ‘Enabling employee engagement’ case study. | 36 | Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate.  Working in groups, complete the ‘Enabling engagement’ case study. | **5UEE E1 LO1 Activity 15 – Enabling employee engagement** |
|  | Review of session and learning outcomes | Set individual revision activity. |  | Individually, answer quiz questions; mark answers in class | **5UEE E1 LO1 Activity 16 –– Revision** |