### SESSION PLAN

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

**ELEMENT:** Element 5 – Developing employee engagement strategies

## **LEARNING OUTCOME 5**

**Discuss the process of developing an employee engagement strategy (Weighting 20%)**

* 1. Discuss the process of creating employee engagement strategies in an organisational setting
  2. Appraise the barriers to creating effective employee engagement strategies in an organisation

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

**SESSION TOPICS:** Session 1: The process of creating employee engagement strategies in an organisational setting

Session 2:  The barriers to creating effective employee engagement strategies in an organisation

**Note to tutors: this is the recommended session plan for learning outcome 5, element 5 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 process of creating employee engagement strategies in an organisational setting

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| **Approx.**  **Duration** | **Topic** | **Tutor Activity** | **Slides** | **Learner Activity** | **Formative Assessment** |
| 6 – 7 hours | Introduction to session and learning outcomes | Use file: **5UEE Tutor Presentation E5**  Learning outcome 5  Assessment criteria 5.1. | 1-4 | Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate. |  |
| Using strategies as tools to implement engagement | Explain the transactional and transformational approached to employee engagement.  Transactional Engagement:   * Engagement is a reactive set of activities aimed at improving employee engagement, typically in response to an employee survey * Engagement is owned by the HR function or a project team * Once a tick list of engagement activities has been completed, then it is forgotten until the next survey * Engagement isn’t considered to be part of the organisation’s overall business strategy   Transformational Engagement:   * Engagement is a proactive approach where employee insight is regularly sought, harnessed, and acted upon * Engagement is the responsibility of everyone * Engagement is a key part of everything that the organisation does * Engagement is a key part of the organisation’s business strategy   Emphasise that the approaches are not completely separate and organisations might sit somewhere in the middle. However, highlight that to achieve a truly  achieve a truly engaged workforce, an organisation needs to be proactive and develop an overall engagement strategy.  Remind learners of what is meant by strategy – slide 6  Set pairs activity. | 5-6 | In pairs, consider an organisation with which you are both familiar.   * Where does the organisation sit on the transactional / transformation scale? It is nearer transactional engagement or transformational engagement or somewhere in the middle? * What could the organisation do differently to start to move towards transformational engagement? | **5UEE E5 LO5 Activity 1 – Transactional or transformational?** |
| The place of employee engagement in business and HR strategies | Explain that successful organisations have all of their systems, processes, departments, and employees aligned to their strategic goals. With this in mind, to be successful, the engagement strategy must align with the organisation’s overall business strategy – slide 7  Talk through slide 8 – highlighting the importance of both strategic alignment and leadership.  Explain the concept of the employee life-cycle – slide 9 Recruitment   1. Selection 2. Performance 3. Development 4. Succession 5. Transition   Explain that employee engagement needs to be embedded into every step of the ‘employee life-cycle’ from the employer brand portrayed, recruiting and induction, to leadership, learning and development, reward and recognition, and exit. This ensures that engagement is an integral part of the employee experience and not simply a ‘bolt on’.  Give examples - for instance, embed organisational values and the required behaviours into job descriptions, person specifications and selection processes; within performance management, reward positive ‘engaging behaviours’ and encourage employees to use their autonomy; and so on. Encourage learners to identify other examples.  Explain that HR strategies, practices and processes should be designed to ensure that they contribute towards employee engagement and not erode it. Tell learners that they shall be looking two elements of the employee lifecycle – recruitment & selection and performance – later in this session. | 7-9 | Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate. |  |
| The design of employee engagement strategies appropriate for an organisation | Explain that the design on the employee engagement strategy must be appropriate for the organisation. It cannot be considered in isolation.  Question for general class discussion: what factors need to be considered when designing an employee engagement strategy?  Debrief: slide 11 | 10-11 | Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate.  Participate in class discussion, sharing ideas about the factors that need to be considered when designing an employee engagement strategy. | **5UEE E5 LO5 Activity 2 – Designing employee engagement strategies** |
| Measuring employee attitudes using attitude surveys | Explain that engagement attitude surveys provide the basis for the development and implementation of employee engagement strategies. Highlight the significance of there being no universal agreement on what is meant by employee engagement.  Talk through slide 12.- Measuring employee engagement  Explain that there are some key themes that the surveys are likely to include – slide 13  Set group activity to consider the process that should be followed when designing and implementing an engagement attitude survey.  Debrief: - slide 14 as follows:  **Prepare and design**: identify the specific requirements of the organisation and decide the priorities.  **Employee engagement survey**: agree the definition of employee engagement. Design the questions of the employee engagement survey or use a pre-prepared tool. Deploy survey with the help of an appropriate media.  **Result analysis**: Most important step. Analyse the results and disseminate in an appropriate way.  **Action planning**: ‘How to turn the results of the survey in to an action’ is a challenging question that organisations need to answer. May need to develop leaders and line managers so that they are able to put in place the necessary actions.  **Action follow-up**: this is necessary in order to find out if the action has been taken in the right direction or not and if it is producing the desired results. | 12-14 | Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate.  In groups, map out the process that organisations should follow when designing and implementing an engagement attitude survey.  Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate. | **5UEE E5 LO5 Activity 3 –** **Designing and implementing an engagement attitude survey** |
| Embedding employee engagement in recruitment and selection and performance management strategies | Explain that as explored earlier, engagement strategies need to be embedded in all HR strategies, processes and activities.  Talk through slide 15 – Recruitment & Selection  Set pairs activity to how induction can inspire enthusiastic and engaged employees.  Talk through slide 16 – Performance management | 15-16 | Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate.  Read the article ‘Co*-operative Group induction inspires enthusiastic and engaged employees*: *Award‐winning program proves to be great value for money*", Human Resource Management International Digest, Vol. 21 Issue: 5, pp. 19-21.  In pairs, agree your top three learning points from this article.  Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate. | **5UEE E5 LO5 Activity 4 –** **Induction and employee engagement** |
| Leadership style and the implementation of employee engagement strategies | Explain that senior sponsorship for the employee engagement strategy is vital.  Explain that there are some key questions that organisations must ask themselves about their leaders – slide 17 | 17 | Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate. |  |
|  | Ensuring the employee voice is heard | Remind learners of the CIPD definition of employee voice.  *“Employee voice is the means by which people express their opinions and have meaningful input into work-related decision-marking.”*  Explain that employee voice is important in delivering both employee engagement and sustainable business success. There’s a wide array of approaches to facilitating and measuring voice with significant differences by industry, sector and size of organisation.  Distribute Activity 5. Question for general class discussion: What channels can organisations use to encourage employee voice?  Debrief – slide 20  Set **homework** activity. | 18-20 | Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate.  Participate in class discussion (Activity 5), sharing ideas about channels to encourage employee voice.  Follow the link to the YouTube video ‘Employee Voice’ by Cranfield School of Management.  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i8u67DS8osI>  Make a note of your key learning points. | **5UEE E5 LO5 Activity 5 – Employee voice channels**  **5UEE E5 LO5 Activity 6 –The importance of employee voice channels** |
|  | Review of session and learning outcomes | Question for general class discussion: what are your key learning points from today’s session? . | 21 | Participate in class discussion, sharing learning points. | **5UEE E5 LO5 Activity 7 – Key learning points** |

### SESSION 2: The barriers to creating effective employee engagement strategies in an organisation

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| **Approx.**  **Duration** | **Topic** | **Tutor Activity** | **Slides** | **Learner Activity** | **Formative assessment** |
| 6-7 hours | Introduction to session and learning outcomes | Use file: **5UEE Tutor Presentation E5**  Learning outcome 5  Assessment criteria 5.2 | 22 | Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate. |  |
|  | Resistance to change | Developing an employee engagement strategy is likely to require change across the organisation, including the introduction of new ways of working. Some employees may welcome the change, whereas others may resist the change.  Read through and discuss these points from Watson & Gallagher (2005:304) who suggest that people resist change in organisations because:   * **The shock of the new** - people are suspicious of anything that is new, such as new routine or processes, or new working conditions. They are likely to be even more suspicious if they do not trust the motives of managers in introducing the change. * **Economic fears** – people may be worried that the change – for example, to their working conditions, or their job role – might lead to a loss of money, or they might feel that they no longer have job security as a result of the change * **Feel excluded** – if there has been no communication with staff before the change is introduced, they will be suspicious of the motives behind the change, and not feel engaged with the proposed change * **General dislike of the idea** * **Competence fears** – employees may have concern about their ability to cope with new demands or to acquire the new skills required   Activity 8 – put class into small groups (no more than 3 people) to complete activity 8. Once they have discussed in their groups, each group should feed their answers back to the rest of the class, for a group discussion. | 23-24 | Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate  In small groups, consider this scenario:  The HR Manager of a large local employer comes to you, and explains there is a major problem, and she would like your advice.  Her employer has invested huge amounts of time and money introducing a new computer system, which will make everyone’s lives much easier. All staff were trained in the new system and the new processes that go with it. However, months later, people still persist in their old ways. They are still using the paper systems, that take twice as long, and using the computer system as little as they possibly can.  What advice would you give her on:   1. why this might be happening, and 2. recommendations for how to resolve the problem   Be prepared to discuss your answers with the rest of the class. | **5UEE E5 LO5 Activity 8 – Resistance to change** |
|  | The change curve | Explain the change curve diagram, which is widely used in the management of organisational change, and was first developed by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross.  Explain that people fear change, and go through different stages or transitions in how they feel about it. The easier you can make this journey for people, and the quicker they can get through these stages, the sooner your organisation will benefit, and the change will be successful. However if the organisation gets this wrong, the change is likely to fail.  (Remember this only really applies to major change – such as a restructure that will lead to a number of redundancies).  The 4 stages:   1. When a change is first introduced, people's initial reaction may be shock or denial - “it won’t work”, “it will never happen”. 2. Once people the change is really happening, people tend to react negatively. They may worry about what will happen, or feel angry and actively resist or protest against the changes. This is the low point, and will cause disruption within the organisation. 3. This is where things start to feel more positive. Here people start to accept the change. They begin testing and seeing how the change works in practice, and so learn the reality of what's good and not so good, and how they must adapt. 4. Now, they accept, and actually start to like the changes. They rebuild their ways of working. Only when people get to this stage can the organisation really start to reap the benefits of change.   Finally explain that with knowledge of the Change Curve, you can plan how you'll minimize the negative impact of the change and help people adapt more quickly to it.  Activity: put the class into pairs and ask them to work on Activity 9. Answers might include:   * Communication * Team briefings * Invite them to ask senior management questions about the change * Finding people who are positive about the change and ask them to give demonstrations to their colleagues on how it works | 25 | Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate  In small groups, complete the following exercise:  Discuss how an organisation can help its staff ‘move through’ the change curve during a time of major change, so that they do not spend a long time at stages 1 and 2, and, instead, move quickly to stages 3 and 4.  What could HR and/or line managers do to make this happen?  Be prepared to discuss your answers with the rest of the class. | **5UEE E5 LO5 Activity 9 – ‘Moving through’ the change curve** |
|  | Overcoming resistance to change | Explain slide on Overcoming Resistance to Change  According to ACAS (2014) suggests that to manage change effectively an organisation needs to:   * develop an internal communications strategy to put across key messages * talk to internal and external customers directly through targeted communications about the change * involve everyone in making decisions through effective and timely consultation to:   + improve employees’ understanding of the need for change and gain their commitment and engagement   + identify and address employees’ concerns   + tap into the knowledge and creativity of staff. They may well have ideas that the organisation had not thought of, which would make the proposed change more effective, for example.   Give out homework (Activity 10) | 26 | Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate  Complete this homework exercise:  (2014) "VocaLink wins gold for outstanding people practices: Employee engagement smoothes the way for organizational  change", Human Resource Management International Digest, Vol. 22 Issue: 4,pp. 4-7  Read this article and answer the following questions:   1. What policies and practices are highlighted as ways to facilitate organisational change? 2. To what extent would these methods help engagement levels and change in an organisation with which you are familiar? 3. What are the potential barriers that would stop them being effective? | **5UEE E5 LO5 Activity 10 – Overcoming resistance to change** |
|  | Consultation, Negotiation & Persuasion, and  Change Champions | Talk through the slides on Consultation, Negotiation & Persuasion and Change Champion.  Discuss in class: which would be the most effective way of overcoming staff resistance to change? | 27-28 | Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate |  |
|  | Overcoming negative attitudes towards employee engagement strategies | Discuss key methods to help organisation overcome negative attitudes towards employee engagement strategies:   * **Leadership** – important in creating and sustaining high levels of employee engagement. Leading by example, positively promoting the employee engagement strategies with their staff and discussing them at team meetings will all help. * **Communication** with employees is also a valuable strategy in listening to, and addressing, staff concerns, and positively reinforcing the benefits and advantages of the particular engagement strategies. * **Effective change manage strategies** (as discussed earlier) * **“Engagement leaders”**. Similar to the role of ‘Change Champion’ discussed earlier. Working closely with their fellow employees, and fully knowledgeable of the proposed employee engagement strategies, they can work closely to allay fears and promote the strengths and benefits of the strategies.   Question to the class – can they think of any other ways? Discuss  Set Activity 11 to be done either in class, or as a class test | 29 | Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate  Complete Activity 11, either as a class activity or a class test, as instructed by teacher  Individually, read the following article:  Andrew Mayo, (2016) "The measurement of engagement", Strategic HR Review, Vol. 15 Issue: 2,pp. 83-89  Now working in pairs, answer the following questions:   1. According to the author, what are the drivers of employee engagement? 2. What are the barriers to engagement? How do you think these can be removed? 3. How does he suggest that engagement can be measured? | **5UEE E5 LO5 Activity 11 – Overcoming negative attitudes towards employee engagement strategies** |
|  | Organisational features that support, and detract from, employee engagement | Read through slide on the first example of an organisational feature that can support, and detract from, employee engagement – **organisational design.**  Discuss how this can support employee engagement. | 30 | Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate |  |
|  | Organisational features that support, and detract from, employee engagement | Read through slide on the second example of an organisational feature that can support, and detract from, employee engagement – **organisational** **culture**.  Give out Activity 12, to be completed in pairs, and then fed back in a class discussion.  Connections between culture and engagement could be:   * Links between culture and employee engagement become clear and high levels of customer service. * Employees operating in a culture where they are given autonomy in their roles and the freedom to make decisions, are more likely to be engaged. * Links between a culture of employee autonomy and creativity and innovation within the organisation. | 31 | Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate  In pairs, think of a local organisation with which you are both familiar.  What words would you use to describe the organisational culture there – for example is it a friendly culture? Formal? Controlling? Democratic? What other words would you use to describe it?  Now think of the levels of employee engagement in that organisation? High or low?  Are there any connections, do you think, between the culture and engagement in that organisation?  Be prepared to discuss your thoughts with the rest of the class | **5UEE E5 LO5 Activity 12 – Organisational culture and employee engagement** |
|  | Organisational features that support, and detract from, employee engagement | Workplace culture, together with job satisfaction, have a significant impact on wellbeing, as discussed. In a Personnel Today article in 2011, Anna Harrington argued that workplace culture and job satisfaction have a big impact on well-being and sickness absence.  Read through the two quotations from this article on slides 32-33  *“an individual’s ability to work productively and fruitfully will be dependent on the organisational culture. As a result the culture will either positively or negatively affect mental health and well-being”*  *“To secure a positive work culture an organisation needs to influence and develop its managers to adopt behaviours that persuade employees to undertake tasks in a positive and empowering way.”*    Discuss in class. | 32-33 | Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate |  |
|  | Revision of Element 5 | Give out Activity 13 which is a revision exercise for the whole Element. This should be done in pairs, and answers discussed in class.  Questions are repeated here. The relevant slides/answers are indicated in brackets:   1. Describe the difference between transactional and transformational engagement. **(Slide 4)** 2. Give three characteristics of strategy. **(Slide 5)** 3. What are the stages of the ‘employee life-cycle’? (Clue – there are six of them). **(Slide 8)** 4. Give three factors that should be taken into account when designing an engagement strategy **(Slide 10)** 5. What are the five stages in designing and implementing an employee attitude survey? **(Slide 13)** 6. Describe the links between the following:    1. Recruitment and selection **and** employee engagement **(Slide 14)**    2. Performance management **and** employee engagement. **(Slide 15)** 7. Give two examples of ‘employee voice’ and explain how each can assist with high levels of employee engagement. **(Slide 19)** 8. How can an organisation overcome resistance to change? Give three examples. **(Slide 25-26)** 9. How can leaders in an organisation help to overcome negative attitudes towards employee engagement strategies? Give three examples. **(Slide 16 and 28)** 10. How can the organisational culture support high levels of employee engagement? Give three examples. **(Slide 30)** | 34 | Learners to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate  In pairs, complete the ten revision questions in Activity 13. Answers will be discussed in class. | **5UEE E5 LO5 Activity 13 – Revision** |