



Strategic HR Review

Employee engagement creates a brighter economic future at Jupiter Hotels
Gary Cattermole, Jaime Johnson, Diane Jackson,

Article information:

To cite this document:

Gary Cattermole, Jaime Johnson, Diane Jackson, (2014) "Employee engagement creates a brighter economic future at Jupiter Hotels", Strategic HR Review, Vol. 13 Issue: 2, pp.81-85, <https://doi.org/10.1108/SHR-11-2013-0110>

Permanent link to this document:

<https://doi.org/10.1108/SHR-11-2013-0110>

Downloaded on: 02 November 2017, At: 07:10 (PT)

References: this document contains references to 6 other documents.

To copy this document: permissions@emeraldinsight.com

The fulltext of this document has been downloaded 1581 times since 2014*

Users who downloaded this article also downloaded:

(2014), "Determinants of employee engagement and their impact on employee performance", International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management, Vol. 63 Iss 3 pp. 308-323 <[a href="https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-01-2013-0008">https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-01-2013-0008](https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-01-2013-0008)

(2013), "Employee engagement welcomes the dawn of an empowerment culture", Strategic HR Review, Vol. 12 Iss 5 pp. 250-254 <[a href="https://doi.org/10.1108/SHR-04-2013-0039">https://doi.org/10.1108/SHR-04-2013-0039](https://doi.org/10.1108/SHR-04-2013-0039)

Access to this document was granted through an Emerald subscription provided by emerald-srm:616458 []

For Authors

If you would like to write for this, or any other Emerald publication, then please use our Emerald for Authors service information about how to choose which publication to write for and submission guidelines are available for all. Please visit www.emeraldinsight.com/authors for more information.

About Emerald www.emeraldinsight.com

Emerald is a global publisher linking research and practice to the benefit of society. The company manages a portfolio of more than 290 journals and over 2,350 books and book series volumes, as well as providing an extensive range of online products and additional customer resources and services.

Emerald is both COUNTER 4 and TRANSFER compliant. The organization is a partner of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and also works with Portico and the LOCKSS initiative for digital archive preservation.

*Related content and download information correct at time of download.

Employee engagement creates a brighter economic future at Jupiter Hotels

Gary Cattermole, Jaime Johnson and Diane Jackson



Gary Cattermole and Jaime Johnson are based at The Survey Initiative, Frinton-on-Sea, UK. Diane Jackson is based at Jupiter Hotels, High Wycombe, UK.

Abstract

Purpose – This paper seeks to address the role and impact of employee engagement within an organization that has undergone major change. It looks at the issues of how to monitor and increase levels of staff engagement over time to deliver business results.

Design/methodology/approach – It draws on six-monthly employee engagement surveys and a case study to illustrate how HR can drive and monitor change through employee engagement.

Findings – This paper follows a company through economic uncertainty to major organizational change and examines how the role of engagement and monitoring can drive business success.

Research limitations/implications – The case study only looks at the issues over an 18 month time period.

Originality/value – This paper illustrates how an HR department can build employee engagement to drive the business forward. The case study offers best practice material for HR managers.

Keywords Change management, Employee engagement, Employee surveys

Paper type Research paper

The UK's workforce has undergone an extremely long period of economic uncertainty. During this time members of staff have had to work longer hours without a pay increase and industry has also experienced mass redundancies across all business sectors. Morale and stress levels have been affected by these economic challenges; however, a growing number of companies have channeled their business strategy into creating effective employee engagement to keep staff motivated, challenged, and willing to go the extra mile.

The recent launch of the UK government-backed Engage for Success movement supports this drive to invest in employee engagement. The main aims are to develop a better way to work and a better way to enable personal growth, organizational growth and ultimately growth for Britain by releasing more of the capability and potential of people at work (MacLeod and Clarke, 2009).

This case study draws on the experience of Jupiter Hotels to examine the effects of employee engagement during a period of organizational change and view how it can transform a business's bottom line.

A background: Jupiter Hotels

Jupiter Hotels operates 26 hotels under the Mercure brand in the UK and employs a 1,900 strong workforce. The company was launched in 2011 following a management buyout with a 50:50 joint venture franchise agreement with Accor.

Jupiter Hotels senior management team was keen to make changes to realize the group's potential. The hotels benefited by being part of a well-known brand but there were things the

team wanted to do differently to boost profitability within the hotels in a very competitive marketplace. Also, as part of the restructure, redundancies needed to be made to ensure the long-term survival of the chain; the team was focused on supporting employees through this process and to move quickly once the job losses were made to create a lasting benefit in the business for staff and the company's bottom line (Buchanan *et al.*, 2007).

The senior management team was passionate about employee engagement and knew that if frontline staff delivered first-rate customer service (UKCES, 2009; Rees *et al.*, 2009) and would go the extra mile in their day-to-day roles this would have a direct impact on the company's profitability and reputation. A management buyout, like any other organizational transformation, does create a period of change for the business and employees alike. However Jupiter Hotels decided that via staff consultation and swift action employees would feel the benefit of change quickly.

Benchmarking performance

To benchmark performance, Jupiter Hotels decided to work in partnership with a specialist staff survey provider, The Survey Initiative, to ensure the right questions were asked to get to the heart of what staff were feeling about their role within the organization, its management team and the company's strategic direction. By employing an external provider Jupiter Hotels instilled trust into the system and ensured all staff members felt confident that their feedback would be anonymous.

After meeting with the management team at length, and focusing on the key issues affecting the organization, The Survey Initiative created a bespoke survey to analyze the main drivers for employee engagement and motivation.

The first survey helped to benchmark levels of employee engagement within the organization – see Table I. This “starting point” helped the organization develop new ways of working collaboratively with employees on a variety of initiatives to improve employee engagement.

The HR department swung into action

Jupiter Hotels was pleased with its employee engagement results as it had undergone a major restructure with a number of redundancies and had managed to retain fairly high levels of employee engagement. Jupiter Hotels compares well in comparison to survey feedback from other hotels of a similar standard.

However, there were still areas for improvement and thanks to the employee survey the HR team could quickly identify the key areas that needed to be addressed: employee recognition, communications and training/development. The HR department quickly created actions to improve their levels of employee engagement through the following initiatives.

Staff recognition

To recognize the fantastic level of commitment given by Jupiter employees, a new Staff Award scheme was introduced. The awards allow managers to offer on the spot £25 cash awards for outstanding effort and staff can be put forward for employee of the month and employee of the year awards too.

Table I Results from the first survey, February 2012

Overall	Recognition	Communication	Training and development	Job	Company	Manager	Customer
8.07	7.59	8.02	7.65	8.55	7.91	8.19	8.43

Note: The scale used in the survey is a 10-point scale, where 1 is low and 10 is high

“A growing number of companies have channeled their business strategy into creating effective employee engagement to keep staff motivated, challenged, and willing to go the extra mile.”

Time and money has been spent on revamping staff facilities, including ultra-modern staff rooms, improved IT facilities and a new staff uniform. Staff were consulted throughout the process and were also given free rein to create their own mural on the side of one of the staff rooms.

The HR team has also negotiated enhanced benefits for staff with major discounts off products and services within the Accor group of hotels.

Training and development

A new training and development scheme has been launched with a ‘Rising Star’ program to help talent rise through the ranks. The 18 month program was launched in April 2013 with 12 employees nominated to participate. Since then, two lucky employees were enrolled and have been appointed mentors and are currently working their way through their personal development plans. One of the employees has moved into another role to improve their skills within the world of hotel sales.

The employees give the following feedback:

- F&B supervisor, Mercure Manchester Piccadilly: “I don’t know who nominated me for the Rising Stars program but I’m very grateful and I want to make them proud. I joined Jupiter Hotels two and a half years ago as a Food and Beverage assistant, after working summer seasons at hotels in Greece. For me, this is an opportunity to gain new experiences. I’d like to learn about sales and running big events. I’m only 22, so to be a part of a training initiative like this is really good for me.”
- Hotel sales manager, Mercure Bradford Bankfield and Mercure Leeds Parkway: “My general manager has nicknamed me ‘Eddie Piehands’ because I’m always involved in what’s going on. I joined Jupiter Hotels in July 2010 as a reception manager and moved over to events that November. It was scary because I was thrust into Christmas but I love to be challenged – I’ve since become the company’s Social Media Champion too. I hope the Rising Stars development program will help me work on my weaknesses and give me all-round experience so that I can become a general manager one day.”

Communication

To give everyone the chance to find out what is going on in the organization a new newsletter has been developed and is distributed on a quarterly basis. The newsletter actively seeks out feedback from staff members and also stories from staff to add into its news pages. Results of the staff surveys are shared with all members of staff throughout the chain.

Ongoing consultation

Regular ‘snapshot’ surveys were conducted to provide insight and understanding into what engages and disengages employees. Feedback was obtained on all the new tactics put in place to boost employee engagement; and dependent on results the HR team was able to tweak the engagement program accordingly.

The Survey Initiative also delivered group results to see how the business was performing as a whole and individual hotel results too so that the senior management team could pinpoint problem areas in different hotels across the chain (as recognized by Kinnie *et al.* (2005),

Table II Results from the latest survey, October 2013

Overall	Recognition	Communication	Training and development	Job	Company	Manager	Customer
8.48	8.20	8.41	8.12	8.83	8.28	8.58	8.79
+0.41	+0.61	+0.39	+0.47	+0.28	+0.37	+0.39	+0.36

Note: The scale used in the survey is a 10-point scale, where 1 is low and 10 is high

“one size does not fit all”). When issues appear in isolation it is very easy for the senior management team to nip problems in the bud and talk directly to the hotel manager to ensure all issues are resolved swiftly and effectively.

The results were also shared with hotel managers and staff as part of the on-going consultation process to ensure staff knew that their voice was being heard and acted upon (Purcell and Hutchinson, 2003). Following the October 2012 survey it became clear that the majority of the workforce was disappointed that there had been no pay increases following the management buyout. The senior management team got together and decided, although budgets were tight, to create a pay rise program to be implemented across the chain to recognize the hard work put in by each member of staff and this was implemented in October 2013 (Table II).

The way ahead

The success of Jupiter Hotel's employee engagement program will continue to be assessed on an annual basis. During the handover period it was necessary to have six monthly surveys but thanks to the quick action of the HR team, it is now only necessary to run surveys on an annual basis to give new tactics time to “bed-in” and for the responses to be valid against the set actions.

Ongoing change

Often within HR circles the term “change management” is bandied around as a major issue, and of course it is, but with careful management small changes can be implemented quickly and effectively. By careful monitoring and staff consultation the results of tactical changes can be identified quickly too. Competition within the hospitality sector remains fierce, but Jupiter Hotels has everything in place to ensure its staff are content, yet challenged in the workplace, and willing to go the extra mile and deliver exceptional customer service – now who would not want that from their workforce?

References

- Buchanan, D., Fitzgerald, L. and Ketley, D. (2007), *The Sustainability and Spread of Organizational Change*, Routledge, Abingdon.
- Kinnie, N., Hutchinson, S., Purcell, J., Rayton, B. and Swart, B. (2005), “Satisfaction with HR practices and commitment to the organization: why one size does not fit all”, *Human Resource Management Journal*, Vol. 15 No. 4, pp. 9-29.
- MacLeod, D. and Clarke, N. (2009), *Engaging for Success: Enhancing Performance through Employee Engagement, A Report to Government*, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, London.
- Purcell, J. and Hutchinson, S. (2003), *Bringing Policies to Life: The Vital Role of Front Line Managers in People Management*, CIPD, London.
- Rees, C., Alfes, K., Gatenby, M., Soane, E. and Truss, K. (2009), “Work organization, employee voice and engagement: exploring connections”, paper given at the British Universities Industrial Relations Association Annual Conference.
- UKCES (2009), *High Performance Working: A Synthesis of Key Literature*, UK Commission for Employment and Skills, London.

“With careful management small changes can be implemented quickly and effectively.”

About the authors

Gary Cattermole is a co-founder and Director of The Survey Initiative and over the past five years has focused on new business development, account management and survey reporting. He has managed numerous employee research projects for a variety of organizations, from *The Telegraph* to the Natural History Museum. Cattermole has also given up his free time to become a Guru with Engage for Success. Prior to founding The Survey Initiative he was a director at employee surveys Research and Consulting, where he was responsible for consulting and business development. Gary Cattermole is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: gary.cattermole@surveyinitiative.co.uk

Jaime Johnson is a co-founder and Director of The Survey Initiative. She has an MSc in Applied Social Research coupled with nearly ten years employee research expertise. She originally worked within the Ministry of Defence, then a dedicated psychology-based consultancy, before founding The Survey Initiative.

Diane Jackson is the Head of HR at Jupiter Hotels. While studying for a BA in Business Management she decided to specialize in human resources and has not looked back since, working her way up within the hospitality industry over the past 14 years. She has an MA in Human Resources.

To purchase reprints of this article please e-mail: reprints@emeraldinsight.com
Or visit our web site for further details: www.emeraldinsight.com/reprints

This article has been cited by:

1. 2015. Jupiter Hotels helps stars to shine. *Human Resource Management International Digest* 23:2, 19-21. [[Abstract](#)] [[Full Text](#)] [[PDF](#)]