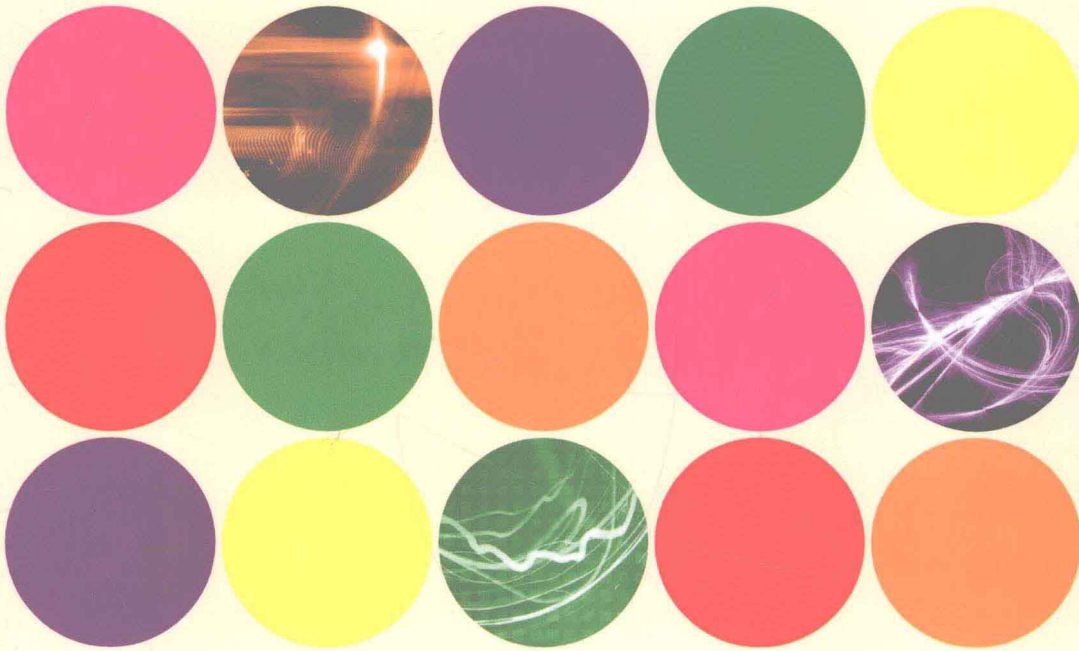


Handbook of Employee Engagement

Perspectives, Issues,
Research and Practice



Edited by
SIMON L. ALBRECHT

NEW HORIZONS IN MANAGEMENT

Series Editor: Carv L. Cooper

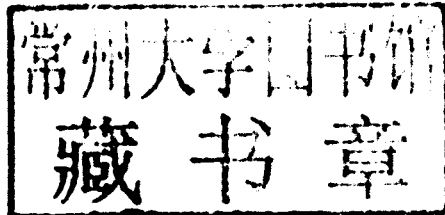
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Edited by

Simon L. Albrecht

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Australia*



NEW HORIZONS IN MANAGEMENT

Edward Elgar

Cheltenham, UK • Northampton, MA, USA

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Published by
Edward Elgar Publishing Limited
The Lypiatts
15 Lansdown Road
Cheltenham
Glos GL50 2JA
UK

Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc.
William Pratt House
9 Dewey Court
Northampton
Massachusetts 01060
USA

A catalogue record for this book
is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Control Number: 2010922141



ISBN 978 1 84844 821 6 (cased)

Printed and bound by MPG Books Group, UK

HANDBOOK OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

NEW HORIZONS IN MANAGEMENT

Series Editor: Cary L. Cooper, CBE, *Distinguished Professor of Organizational Psychology and Health, Lancaster University, UK*

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Handbook of Employee Engagement

Perspectives, Issues, Research and Practice

Edited by Simon L. Albrecht

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Preface

The idea of employee engagement has clearly captured the hearts and minds of many researchers and practitioners across the globe. An internet search of the term “employee engagement” will probably yield in excess of 1.5 million hits. The field continues to grow and to grow rapidly. The proliferation of published research papers, conference papers, practitioner articles, case studies, survey instruments, and internet commentary provides little support for the contention, as some have suggested, that engagement is a mere fad that will soon disappear from organizational discourse and practice.

My interest in employee engagement, and the impetus for this Handbook, grew out of a contract research project I was doing with a large international mining company. Like many other companies that focus on employee engagement, they hoped their genuine attempt to embed a high-engagement culture would result in higher productivity, a more positive organizational culture, and a more positive organizational reputation and profile. As the project unfolded, many varied and vexing questions were thrown up regarding how best to define engagement; how best to measure engagement; the relevance of academic definitions and measures to practice; what are the key drivers of engagement; do key drivers vary across employment levels; does engagement mean different things for individuals, teams, business units and the organization; and what techniques can best be used to develop individual, team and organizational engagement? These represent only some of the issues, challenges and opportunities associated with the study and practice of employee engagement in applied settings. Throughout the project I became convinced of the merit of a single resource to help researchers and practitioners critically evaluate and navigate the “state of play” of employee engagement.

The *Handbook of Employee Engagement: Perspectives, Issues, Research and Practice* has the ambitious goal of covering a broad range of topics relevant to both the science and the practice of employee engagement. The book is intended as a comprehensive collection of conceptual pieces and research studies aimed at summarizing the “state of play” from across the globe. It aims to help researchers and practitioners identify, understand and apply the key theories, models, measures, and interventions associated with employee engagement.

I am deeply indebted to the many eminent researchers and practitioners who so readily said “yes” when I invited them to contribute to the

Handbook. Any success for this book is down to the willingness of so many positive and switched-on people being prepared to apply their considerable minds to the topic and share their very considerable experience and insights. All chapters were double-blind peer reviewed by a specially convened review panel. Unfortunately not all chapters submitted for consideration successfully passed through to the final stage of the review process.

True to intent, a wide cross-section of internationally recognized practitioners and researchers are represented in the Handbook. You will find chapters from world-class researchers and scholars such as Arnold Bakker, Jennifer George, Bill Kahn, John Meyer, Sharon Parker, Alan Saks, Marissa Salanova, Wilmar Schaufeli, Ben Schneider, and Michael West, many of whom have made enormous contributions to the study and profile of employee engagement. Similarly you will find extremely interesting contributions from researchers and consultants working in world-renowned consulting organizations such as Kenexa, SHL Group Ltd, and Valtera Consulting and who have also made extremely important contributions to the conceptualization, measurement and practice of employee engagement.

It is testimony to the richness and complexity inherent in the study of employee engagement that, despite for the most part not directing individual authors to focus on particular topics, there is very little overlap in the 34 chapters that are represented in the Handbook. I simply asked authors to contribute what they thought would best add to an examination of “the state of play”. In order to satisfy a broad but informed readership, I also asked contributors to pitch their contributions more at the level of a keynote conference paper rather than at the level of an individual research paper. I asked for conceptual pieces, empirical pieces, and case studies. I also asked authors to restrict their word count and wherever possible to include a well-developed section on practical applications. No doubt some of the contributors must have struggled to accommodate the rather strict limits on word count, the number of references and the depth of the arguments that they might ordinarily include in their research papers. I am sure the book is the stronger for their accommodation and discipline with respect to these requests. I am also very confident that the authors would be happy to respond to requests for any additional information relating to their chapter.

The structure of the Handbook

The Handbook is organized into six parts. Part I covers the key issues, definitions, theories, models and measures of engagement. Part II focuses on the key drivers, predictors or antecedents of engagement. Issues and

research surrounding the influence of job resources, leadership, trust, voice and individual differences on employee engagement are discussed. Part III focuses on key processes and dynamics which underpin and form part of the experience of engagement. Issues and research surrounding career crafting, fluctuations in engagement, affect, and flow are discussed. Part IV focuses on the influence that management and human resource systems, processes and practices have on employee engagement. Socialization practices, top leadership, team engagement and empowerment are also covered. Part V deals with cross-cultural issues and with the question of how generalizable conceptualizations and measures of engagement might be across different global contexts. Finally, Part VI deals with the questions of how engagement links to performance and of how best to build employee engagement in organizational contexts. A number of innovative and well-grounded intervention strategies are outlined.

It is my sincere hope that the *Handbook of Employee Engagement* will provide an important impetus to ongoing research and practice on employee engagement. There are many new insights, practical applications and areas for future research identified in the Handbook which, I am sure, will spur new questions, new perspectives, new research and new practice.

Simon Albrecht
March 2010

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