



Workforce Experience Management

The key to solving engagement and productivity

Employee engagement and productivity has remained flat for the last several decades, despite companies' best efforts to improve these. The answer lies in workforce experience management, which addresses the cause of these challenges. This paper explores the notion of workforce experience management, and how companies can deliver great experiences for their people.

Know your people. Drive your business.

sage People

The challenge

Over the decades, organizations across the globe have invested significant cash and resources on employee engagement programs. Despite this, scores are low and productivity remains flat.

People are not fully productive or engaged

Productivity growth has remained flat over the last several decades (Chart 1). In fact, on the global scale, productivity has declined, particularly in the US and other mature economies. Lack of productivity growth means that companies cannot create more with what they've got, which impacts economic growth. This inevitably impacts the ability of countries to provide support such as welfare and pensions, as they don't get richer.

The average global employee engagement score still sits at just 29%. This means that just one in three employees are fully engaged at work, and fully motivated to do their job to the best of their abilities. Imagine what we could achieve if we could improve that number.



29%

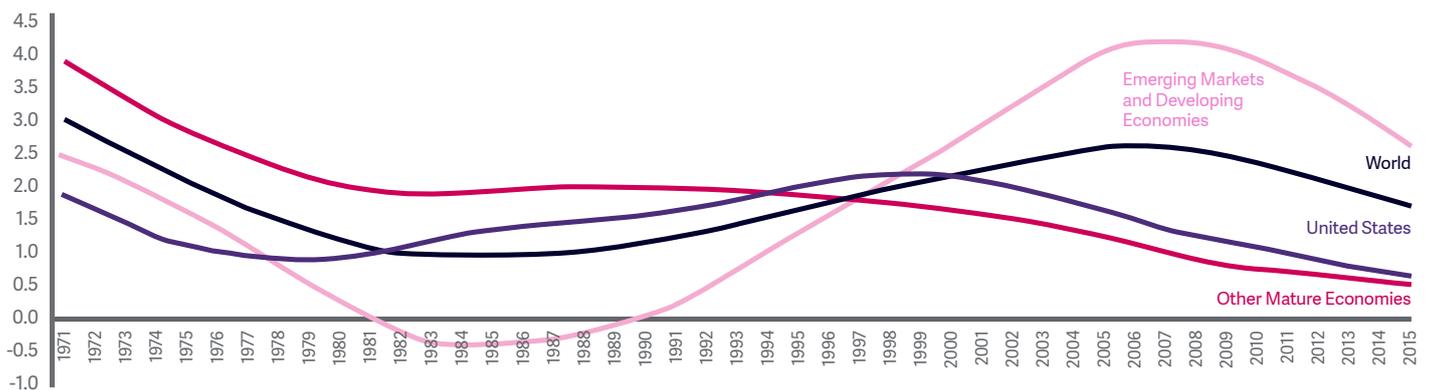
Global average engagement score

Source: Effectory International 2016

Productivity growth is declining

The graph below shows us that productivity growth has declined in the last several decades, despite efforts to improve it.

Trend growth of labor productivity (output per person) using HP filter, major regions, 1971–2015



Source: The Conference Board Total Economy Database, May 2016, <https://www.conference-board.org/data/economydatabase/>

There is a huge cost to this problem

The need for improvements in productivity and engagement may seem like a 'nice to have' objective for some companies, but the problem is very real, and one that is costing the economy a lot of money. In the US alone (source is Effectory International as above), disengaged employees comes at a cost of \$450–\$550 billion each year in lost productivity. That's no small change!

Employee engagement is not the cause but the effect

Employee engagement: we've been focusing on the wrong thing

Most tactics focus on measuring and fixing engagement scores. This is point in time and only measures the here and now, and is therefore going to provide little assistance in helping organizations understand the true motivations of its employees to make long-term improvements to engagement, performance and productivity.

Here's why employee engagement surveys don't work today

Companies have traditionally placed great pride and reliance on annual engagement surveys, which:

- Ask employees repetitive questions about work environments, managers, peers and leadership.
- Finish with a free text box asking for any further suggestions for improvement.
- Take at least 10 to 15 minutes to complete after a rather cumbersome logon process.
- Is completely anonymous, preventing the ability to obtain further feedback for remedial action.

Feedback is collated by an independent third party who doesn't know anything about the company's culture. The senior management team will review and interpret the data, before finally coming up with some actions two to three months later. By this time, the employees have moved on and forgotten what they wrote in the first place.

Companies are already used to such methods for obtaining data and insights about their customers. It's about time they applied that same rigor to their employees.

Sound familiar?

Why does employee engagement matter?

An 'engaged employee' is defined as one who is fully absorbed by and enthusiastic about their work and so takes positive action to further the organization's reputation and interests.

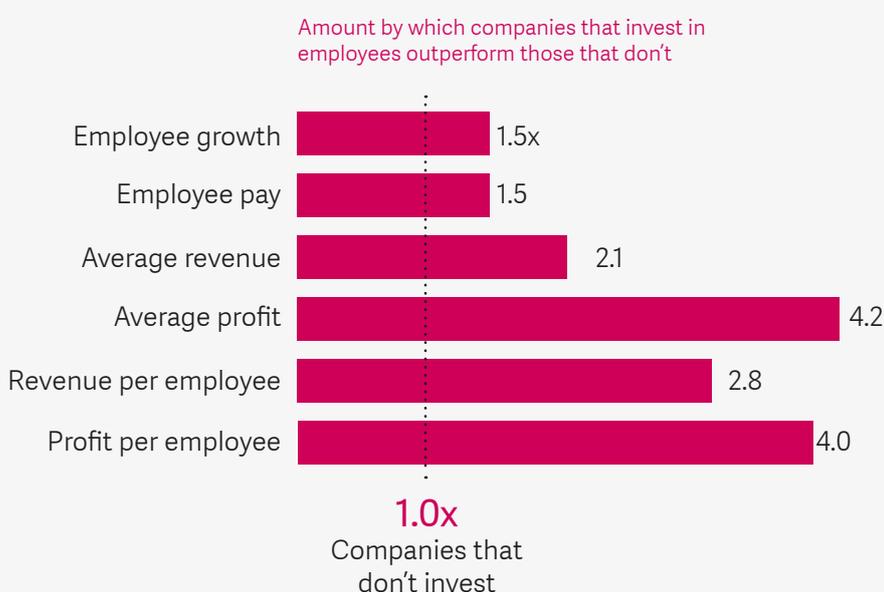
For employees to feel engaged, they need to feel that their core beliefs, motivations and drivers are aligned to what they do at work. Engagement is higher when there is an emotional attachment for the employee. Traditional engagement methods do not address this at all, so it's no wonder that they haven't worked.

The cause lies in workforce experiences

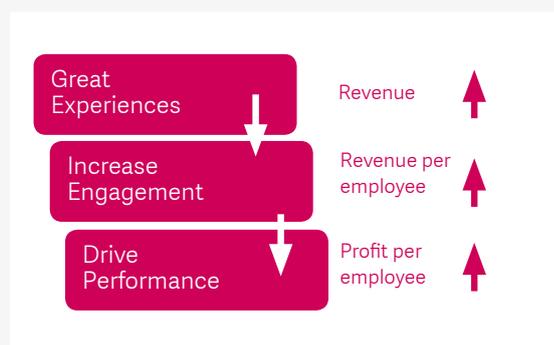
The relationship between experience and engagement

For years, we've focused on engagement alone, and this is not the answer. To drive a significantly positive change in engagement, productivity and performance, we must provide great workforce experiences that resonate with a worker's core motivations and drivers. By doing this, you can expect to see a workforce that is more motivated and compelled to do their very best.

Great workforce experiences drive engagement, which increases performance



Source: The Employee Experience Advantage, Jacob Morgan (Wiley, 2017)



Focus on the workforce, not just employees

The evolving nature of the workforce means that companies are no longer employing people solely based on permanent employment contracts. The workforce is increasingly made up of many different types of worker, all of whom have more choice and expectations about how, where and when they work. Company-employed workers might be working on any type of contract—full-time, part-time, temporary, at-will, leased or even job-sharing with other workers.

Then there is the contingent workforce and the emerging gig economy, which is a rapidly shifting landscape. In the US alone, more than 40% of the workforce is now made up of contingent workers. These worker types include freelancers, independent contractors and consultants, agencies or other outsourced non-permanent workers who might be hired for one-off projects through job-bidding software.

With the emergence and increasing presence of the contingent worker, how effective will your programs be if you only focus on engagement and HR practices for your employees?

Steps for providing great experiences



Step 1

Create a single source of truth

In the same way that companies use data science to gather information and insights about their customers, they must now consider the use of People Science to leverage people data. This is the first step and foundation for creating great workforce experiences; by consolidating all their people data into a single version of the truth, companies can make smarter and more informed people decisions.



Step 2

Understand your employee motivations

To improve engagement levels, we must first understand what motivations will cause an employee to feel more engaged in the first place. This means we need to look beyond the responses people give in annual engagement surveys, and seek feedback that is more personal, emotional and real time.

Companies can gain real-time visibility by using tools like regular pulse surveys or continuous appraisals. With these, organizations can find out what the issues are, and more importantly, they get immediate results so they can take remedial action much more quickly, and ensure their employees feel valued and recognized.

Above all, communication should aim at finding out not just what the workforce thinks, but what it feels.



Step 3

Create truly great workforce experiences

Armed with stronger insights about our employees, we can work back from that to create great workforce experiences that link their motivations to engagement levels. Great workforce experiences focus on the ways in which an employee interacts with the organization over the duration of their relationship (i.e. the employment journey).

People Science, modern platforms and continuous feedback are all key enablers that companies can use to quickly review and improve their people processes. By making improvements in this more iterative fashion, companies will see faster and more efficient changes in engagement and productivity.

Remember; great experiences drive engagement, which increases overall productivity and performance.

The first step to creating great workforce experiences

There are many changes you can make towards creating truly great experiences for your entire workforce. The first step we recommend is to look at how you use technology to set up and manage the ways in which your workforce interacts with your organization. We call this Workforce Experience Management.

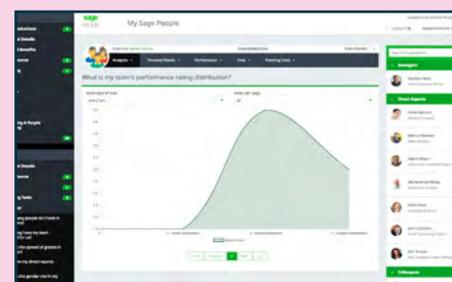
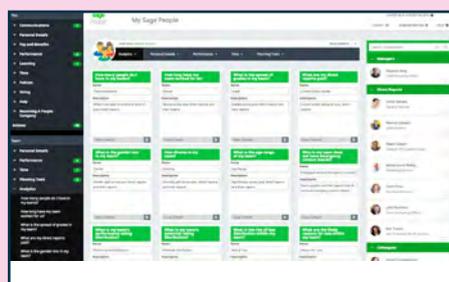
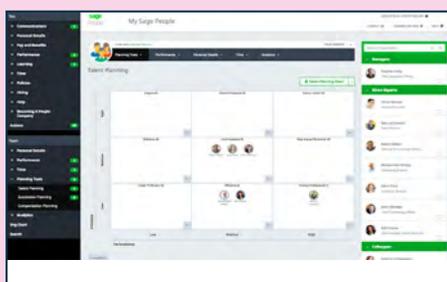
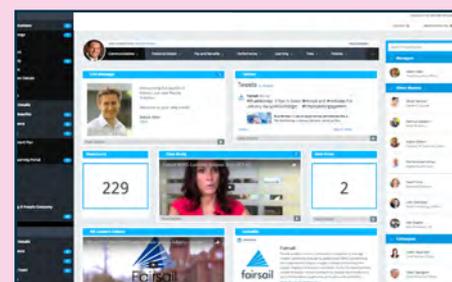
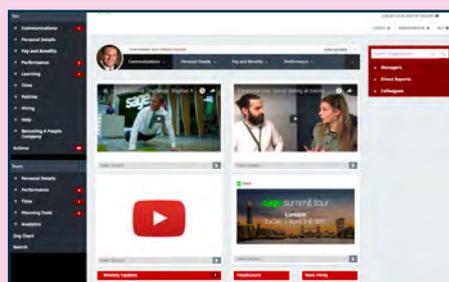
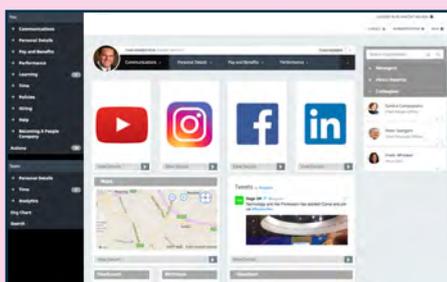
Workforce Experience Management

Company-branded experiences

When trying to attract people, companies must now be able to market in a way they didn't have to before. Employer brand is becoming critical, and companies are recognising that marketing and HR must work closer to align the brand for both customers and employees, and ensure that their external brand is being reflected internally. It's not 'just' about logos and colours, it's about consistent messaging and tone of voice, so your employees are more able to deliver on the brand promise to your customers.

Examples

The Sage People System can be configured to reflect your company's brand, culture and style. Furthermore, you can tailor the experience for your workforce and provide instant access to powerful insights through the system's reporting capabilities.



Tailored processes

The level of automation, workflows and processes should be entirely different for each company depending on its needs and priorities. Larger organizations will have more processes as they typically have more complex and greater requirements. Small companies likely want to keep things simple, but as they scale and grow, they can easily personalize and expand the processes to suit.

Integrated employee communications

Frequent communication can lead to information overload, where employees are overwhelmed with too much information and don't know where to go. Combining your HR and People System with internal communications is another way for managers and employees to get real-time updates and insights, which will ensure your employees are getting the most important people-related information they need to do their job as best they can.

People Science

The tools of a People Scientist will enable you to take all the internal and external information you might need, bring it together and present and analyze it in a smart way. This enables you to better understand what makes your people tick, and align those drivers with the needs of the company. The Sage People System helps you improve your people planning and insights with strong reporting, analytics and modeling capabilities.

Mobile experiences and self-service



Give your workforce the autonomy to manage tasks via self-service access, such as booking holidays.

As of 2016, there are more than 2.6 billion smartphone users in the world; that's more than a third of the global population (DeviceAtlas). In the US, on average, people check their phones 46 times a day (Deloitte via Time).

HR apps have traditionally been built for HR, and therefore deliver a poor experience for workers. A modern app should be built with the needs of the entire workforce in mind, and create great experiences based on what they need, instead of just HR. The Sage People app gives your company the ability to tailor and configure your own layout and features, without the need for hardcoding and additional costs.

Health and wellness

A wellness engagement platform can offer new ways for workers to participate in activities and access information that can help improve health, wellness and productivity. Online health coaches, practical and emotional support, communities and reduced healthcare costs are just some of the ways in which these platforms help to enhance workforce experiences. Organizations benefit via lower stress and sickness levels, which in turn reduces absenteeism and healthcare costs, and creates a sense of wellness and wellbeing throughout the business.

Designing better ways of working



Many best practice HR processes are no longer effective because of the pace of change. Companies need to redesign the way they interact with their employees and create better ways of doing things, all based on delivering great and improved experiences. Most importantly, companies must be able to do this quickly and iteratively in order for the changes to make a positive difference. Tools such as pulse surveys can be used to help you achieve this, giving you simple and immediate insights into what your employees are thinking. Modern systems, like Sage People, enable your people to make these changes immediately through simple click configuration, without the need for complex backend hardcoding changes. Your people will then be able to tell you what you need to do to enable them to do their best work, and improve engagement, productivity and retention.

Discover how Sage People can help you

Great experiences, increased engagement, improved performance.

Sage People is a modern HR and People System that is designed for everybody in your business to use, and delivers great experiences for your entire workforce. A unique set of integrated capabilities in our product enables you to provide great workforce experiences tailored to your organizations and employees, improving productivity, engagement, retention and acquisition. In short, it'll help you solve the problem of engagement and productivity so that you can focus on keeping and attracting the best talent.

Our solution runs on the Salesforce App Cloud which is available globally, and has processes and workflows built in, which enables us to get you set up and running in weeks rather than months. Furthermore, everything is designed by configuration, which gives you the autonomy and control to create really relevant experiences, easily.

With Sage People, you can give your workforce the experiences that they deserve—and that you'll benefit from in return. You'll create a more engaged, committed workforce with a better work/life balance. And that means you'll increase productivity and improve retention, as well as attracting more of the people you want at your company.

Discover how Sage People can support your Workforce Experience Management needs.
Request a demo today.

Learn more about providing great workforce experiences
by visiting us at fairsail.com/sage-people

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