

HR & Marketing Collaboration

THREE IDEAS FOR INCREASING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Marketing
Is the Key to
Optimizing HR's
Relationship
with Employees



HR teams are painfully aware of the challenges in employee recruitment, retention and engagement as well as the mounting human capital costs and inefficiencies facing their organization. Innovative HR professionals are collaborating with their marketing counterparts and leveraging marketing strategies and best practices for engaging their most important audiences – their current and prospective employees.

Struggles with employee engagement and talent acquisition and retention are impacting companies from top to bottom. Thanks to Covid-19, an increasing number of people feel disengaged from their jobs.¹ As employers attempt to remedy this downward spiral by simply replacing disengaged employees, they're spending as much as 200% of an employee's annual salary managing the turnover cycle.³

Reversing these negative trends isn't a straightforward task for companies, nor for the HR experts responsible for implementing employee engagement and retention initiatives. Stop-gap tactics like increased hiring efforts or raised employee salaries are too surface-level to have a long-term impact on disengagement and turnover, especially as the job market expands and employee values evolve.



7 of 10
EMPLOYEES
REPORT being actively disengaged at work, costing companies \$550 billion annually in productivity losses.

What's HR Up Against?

The job market is as large and competitive as it's ever been, which puts a larger, more complex workload on the talent acquisition specialists responsible for identifying new talent. Over 71% of the labor force is actively looking for a new job.⁴ Compounding the challenge is the fact that as many as half of today's HR departments are understaffed,⁵ which leaves many recruiters without the bandwidth to effectively manage the talent acquisition and on boarding process.

Employee values are changing as well. Given the current environment, workplace culture has changed significantly as many are working from their homes. Over half of employees (55%) would prefer to be remote at least three days a week once pandemic concerns recede.⁶

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- ¹ Why Are Workers So Disengaged? - Wall Street Journal
 - ² Surprising, Disturbing Facts from the Mother of All Employee Engagement Surveys - Forbes
 - ³ Retaining Talent - A Guide to Analyzing and Managing Employee Turnover - SHRM
 - ⁴ Job Seeker Nation Study - Jobvite
 - ⁵ HR's Evolving Role in Organizations and Its Impact on Business Strategy - SHRM
 - ⁶ US Remote Work Survey - PwC

HR Can't Do It Alone

With HR teams overworked, budgets stretched thin and the workforce evolving, companies are challenged to find holistic, cost-effective ways of fighting employee disengagement and turnover. To do this, companies can't focus solely on what they're lacking in terms of personnel or budget. Instead, employers should seek ways to optimize in-house expertise through collaboration to approach employee engagement and retention at a deeper level, starting with how they relate to and connect with their workforce.

Many employers may feel as if they're already taking enough HR measures to strengthen their connection with employees. Blanket tools like total compensation statements, automated emails and even more personal efforts like company retreats might convince executives and decision-makers that they're "checking the box" when it comes to building an engaged workforce. But the truth is, all those status quo-practices do is check the box. It's no longer enough for companies to communicate an employee's value in a one-size-fits-all manner. Today's employees are looking for something more – value communication that's more personal and more relevant to what actually drives them to work each day.

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While HR experts have the specialized knowledge and experience to strategize and implement effective engagement campaigns, they may lack the bandwidth and resources to deploy these campaigns in the most targeted, impactful ways on their own. Luckily, experts in strategic content deployment and audience-centric messaging development are right across the hall in the marketing department.

As different as their roles may seem, HR specialists have much in common with their marketing colleagues. Instead of strategizing campaigns and deploying outreach tactics to engage potential buyers, HR teams are looking to engage potential and current employees. Achieving both outcomes requires an understanding of the personal, emotional and psychological variables that may be influencing their audiences' behaviors.

Forward-thinking HR teams are working with marketers to develop empathetic, audience-centric strategies for employee communication in order to better align recruiting, engagement and retention tactics with the needs, goals and values of their employee and candidate bases.

Three Must-Try Employee Engagement Ideas

Analyze Employee Audiences

For both marketers and HR experts, understanding the ever-changing motivations and drivers of their audiences should be the foundation of any engagement campaign. Human emotions, perspectives and mindsets aren't stagnant. Individuals are constantly cycling through elements and variables in life that influence their points of view. Internal factors like age and cultural background have a major impact on behaviors and mindsets, as do external factors like where someone lives or who they spend time with.

To develop effective and lasting engagement and retention strategies, it's essential that HR teams find ways to zero in on the needs, concerns and motivators of their employees, especially as the workforce becomes younger and more diverse, and employee values become less extrinsic. HR can start doing this by defining and segmenting their employee



audiences based on categories like seniority level, department or time with the company. A 30-year C-level executive likely has different workplace concerns and motivators than an entry-level 25 year-old, and the content they receive should reflect that difference. As HR teams gain more insight into their employees they can also start to define audiences based on common values and concerns, like hybrid workplace options, retirement savings, charitable donations or gym memberships. The better defined audiences are, the more personalized the experience HR teams can deliver to employees.

HR can work with marketers to gain practical, empathetic insights for developing an audience-based engagement strategy. Taking the time to evaluate audience trends and ask the right questions may help HR teams identify segments of their employee base they didn't even know they had, giving them the insight to create more impactful content, messaging and engagement campaigns.

MARKETING TIPS FOR EMPLOYEE ANALYSIS



Define employee groups by their values and concerns



Align content with these specific audience groups



Measure engagement with different types of content and adjust segments as necessary

Develop Employee Messaging

Employee values and benefits shouldn't be dictated by a company. They should be dictated by the employee. Total rewards statements and benefit packages aren't going to be a source of engagement if the content flat out doesn't interest employees. HR teams should work to shape their total rewards programs and value communication initiatives around their employee base, deploying content that is relevant and valuable to workers. Common marketing tactics and tools offer more purposeful ways of doing so.

In the same way that batch-and-blast emails often fail to deliver significant engagement results for marketers, impersonal and infrequent communication to employees is often equally fruitless. Tactics like surveys and behavior-based segmentation can give HR specialists the visibility necessary to tailor-fit content and messaging to various employee audiences.

Survey data provides direct insight into points of view, like whether or not an employee found an event beneficial or if they're having trouble interacting with their colleagues from home offices. Collecting behavior-based usage data enables HR teams to identify and target workers with content specific to actions like signing into a benefits portal or viewing a page of a total comp statement. More general strategies like deploying campaigns specific to employee groups, departments and teams are also ways HR can make its employee outreach and communication as personalized and relevant as possible.

The more targeted HR can be with its employee engagement strategies, the more data and feedback they can collect from their workforce, which will help inform future outreach tactics. With a strong understanding of their audience and by leveraging the right tactics and tools, HR can deploy relevant, empathetic content that contributes to workplace engagement and retention rather than just being another email in an employee's inbox.

MARKETING TIPS FOR DEVELOPING EMPLOYEE-CENTRIC MESSAGING



Gather voluntary employee insights through surveys and forms



Gather behavior data based on actions like downloads and page views



Segment employee database by group, team and department



Develop content targeted to employee feedback and data

Identify Employees in the Life Cycle

In a funnel-based marketing strategy, marketers' goal is to use targeted messaging, content and deployment tools to nurture leads from being vaguely aware of a product or solution to actually buying it. To successfully nurture a lead from the top to the bottom of the funnel, marketers need a holistic understanding of not only who their leads are and what their needs, concerns and pain points might be, but also where their leads are in the funnel.

Just as every marketing lead isn't a mouse click away from buying, not every employee is a bad day away from leaving their company. Each employee has an individual life cycle with their employer, and employees' emotional and psychological investment in their job progresses on a continuum. Where an employee falls on the continuum may be dictated by the variety of internal and external factors that influence their workplace values.

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE LIFECYCLE



The Social Workplace Employee Lifecycle - The Social Workplace

MARKETING TIPS FOR IDENTIFYING THE EMPLOYEE LIFE CYCLE



Track employee interactions with content, like whether they open their total comp statement



Prioritize employees based on their specific actions and behaviors



Develop engagement campaigns and outreach based on employee behavior

In addition, an employee's life cycle might be impacted by their unique relationship with their company, like how long they've been with their employer, how much they're paid and whether they get along with their colleagues. For instance, new hires may be hyper-engaged on the job because they're excited about a new opportunity and eager to please their superiors. On the other hand, factors like a lack of advancement potential or a change in an immediate superior may decrease the engagement of veterans, even driving them to look for another employer. HR teams need to be mindful of where their employees fall on the continuum – where an employee is in their life cycle with the company has a huge bearing on what they need to be engaged and productive.

Many HR specialists may lack the right tools and bandwidth to identify and prioritize where their employees are on the continuum with the company, and deploying relevant content may be a challenge. To overcome this challenge on the marketing side, marketers often evaluate patterns in their leads' behavior. By gathering data from actions like page views, content downloads and form submissions, marketers get insights that help them prioritize which leads are the highest value and how they should engage them. Similarly, HR specialists can track an employee's usage and interaction with internal communications to gauge what their engagement level is. An employee that fails to open multiple internal emails or rarely logs into their total rewards program could show HR that worker may be disengaged and require specific outreach.

Engagement and retention tactics will be ineffective if companies attempt to communicate with workers in a vacuum. In addition to being conscious of employees' unique values and motivators at work, HR teams also need to evaluate where employees are in their life cycle with the company. Together, HR and marketing teams can develop content and outreach strategies that align with employee mindsets at each stage of the employee life cycle.



Let the Marketing and HR Collaboration Begin

Organizations looking to grow and manage human capital effectively must adapt to the changing values and motivators of the workforce. Through collaboration and teamwork, HR and marketing can lead the way by shaping employee engagement and retention tactics around a deep understanding of employee audiences, values and mindsets. In doing so, companies not only save time and resources that would be wasted managing a long, unpredictable turnover cycle, they also establish a more cohesive and cross-functional approach that permeates all areas of the business.



About TotalRewards Software

TotalRewards Software is the global leader in on-demand total rewards marketing software and offers HR professionals a choice of versions to get the right fit for an organization's total rewards program. With TRS, companies can also get helpful professional services to aid them in setting up and implementing their system, as well as marketing it to current and prospective employees for maximum benefit.

To learn more about how you can communicate the true value of total rewards to your employee and candidate audiences, visit TotalRewardsSoftware.com.



About Access Marketing Company

Access Marketing Company is a full-service marketing agency specializing in an audience- and data-driven approach to helping B2B companies innovate and grow. Whether by designing complex marketing automation programs or deploying targeted content campaigns, AMC's team has the knowledge and experience to help companies achieve their goals on a variety of internal and external marketing fronts.

Visit AccessMarketingCompany.com for insights and strategies on how to market to your most important audience – your employees.