

Engagement with an HR Help Desk



HEIGHTENED EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT:
HIDDEN GOLD IN AN AUTOMATED
HR HELP DESK

Introduction

Whether you're studying employment trends or trends in the workplace, one fact is clear: It's increasingly crucial to meet the challenge of engaging top-performing employees. The people who were kept on board through the recession – and those who are staying through the slower-than-anticipated recovery – will be the first to consider jumping ship as the market gains even more steam.¹

One proven strategy for keeping employees engaged and more productive is to make their life on the job more consumer-oriented. This is especially true as today's workforce expects its workplace apps and processes to be as easy to use and navigate as their favorite personal consumer and social media sites.²

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An automated, Web-based HR case management system, such as LBi HR HelpDesk, can do this. Whether it's called an HR help desk, case management solution or case management system, this kind of software technology system empowers employees by giving them an online consumer experience for handling myriad issues around their benefits and compensation.

For HR, a fully featured help desk yields a wealth of analytics that can provide real-time insight into countless aspects of the organization. These analytics can help measure engagement and point to areas in the organization where changes can be suggested and engagement improved.

¹ Mielach, David. Half of American Workers Ready to Jump Ship. Business News Daily. June 2012. <http://www.businessnewsdaily.com/2648-workers-jump-ship.html>

² United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, Talent Management Team. Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y (and Generation Z) Working Together. Undated PDF.

Driving and Measuring Employee Engagement: The Big Picture

There is no longer any doubt that employee engagement yields a positive ROI. In its pioneering research into employee engagement, Gallup found that “increasing employee engagement directly correlates with a positive effect on key business metrics.”³

But what drives employee engagement? The answers vary. However, one common denominator in all of the research is communication. Gallup, in fact, reported that world-class organizations “use their corporate communication touch points to reinforce their commitments to employees and customers.”⁴

Research by Dale Carnegie Training in 2012 suggested three primary factors, all relating to communication, that drive employee engagement: “Employees are treated with respect ... their personal values are reflected, and ... the organization cares about how they feel.”⁵

It’s one thing to know what drives engagement. But how do you measure it? Despite their differences, researchers seem to agree on one point when it comes to measuring employee engagement: It requires solid employee data.

As researchers whose work appeared in the Harvard Business Review said: “Almost every company we’ve studied says it values employee engagement, but some – including Starbucks, Limited Brands and Best Buy – can precisely identify the value of a 0.1 percent increase in engagement among employees at a particular store.”⁶

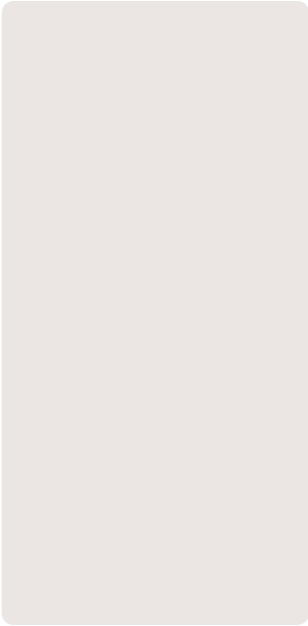
A well-designed automated HR help desk gives an organization a highly effective communication touch point, as well as a process that treats employees with respect and shows that the company cares about them. It also offers a storehouse of accessible, meaningful employee data to help measure engagement.

³ Gallup Consulting. Employee Engagement: What’s Your Engagement Ratio? 2008, 2010.

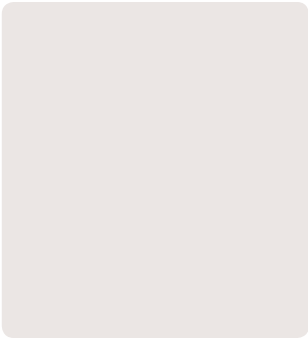
⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Dale Carnegie & Associates Inc. What Drives Employee Engagement and Why It Matters. 2012.

⁶ Davenport, Thomas H.; Harris, Jeanne; and Shapiro, Jeremy. Competing on Talent Analytics. Harvard Business Review. October 2010.



*Increasing employee engagement directly correlates with a **positive effect** on key business metrics.*



Five Ways an Automated HR Help Desk Can Drive and Measure Employee Engagement

For an HR help desk to be a highly effective communication touch point and a storehouse of employee data, it must be extremely user-friendly and designed with an understanding of HR processes. It must also efficiently return accessible and meaningful analytics to HR leaders.

If those criteria are met, an HR help desk can help drive and measure employment engagement in at least five ways.

NO.

1

Employee Engagement Benefit:
Leverage HR Analytics to Improve Productivity Anywhere in the Organization

A quality HR help desk goes beyond providing reports that merely track HR cases. It generates powerful analytics that empower an organization to chart key performance indicators (KPIs) throughout the company. This feature gives leaders actionable data that can pinpoint specific problems – and great opportunities.

“It’s really about finding that needle in the haystack,” said Howard Kaplan, LBi Software director of business development.

Three areas that analytic features of an HR help desk can identify and quantify in real time are:

- 1 Hidden issues in the workplace
- 2 Patterns of workforce behavior
- 3 Reasons for employee dissatisfaction

Let’s assume sales are down in one division for one quarter. There may be several reasons for the dip. How do you know where to start looking for the reason ... or reasons?

“When you have the data warehouse of an HR case management system, you can dig down one level, look deeper into that one division, and review a whole range of reports of KPIs that could directly or indirectly affect sales productivity,” Kaplan said. “Any of these HR-driven reports has the potential to tell you what the problem was in that quarter, in that division, that affected sales.”

For HR, it’s an invitation to help improve the business, particularly if the company is engaged in building digital dashboards and other reporting mechanisms to tell its leaders what’s happening and how it’s happening, in real time. “Now,” Kaplan said, “HR can be a big part of that process.”

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**Employee Engagement Benefit:
Get in Front of Employee Concerns
and Suggest Changes Sooner Rather
Than Later**

An HR help desk centralizes, captures and maintains a record of all of the communications between an employee and HR. This gives HR keen insight into employee concerns across a wide spectrum of issues and throughout the

company. And it does all of that before those concerns can fester and erode employee engagement and performance.

For example, an HR help desk offers a centralized and complete history, at the administrator’s fingertips, of communications centered on:

- Personnel or management grievances
- Legal disputes
- Union-based complaints
- Employee interactions with HR and its related departments (e.g., compensation, performance management, benefits, etc.)

With an HR help desk, all of the information is centralized and gives HR a way to tie together what otherwise are unconnected conversations and cases.

“This is huge,” Kaplan said. “This is telling you what’s happening today. That’s particularly important when issues are not being resolved quickly or when the right information is not being communicated properly.”

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happening **today**.”
Kaplan said.*

Some HR case management solutions, including LBi HR HelpDesk, have the additional feature of integrating with social media platforms. An administrator can monitor when employees discuss the company on public social media, such as Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter. Social media integration may uncover employee discontent or workplace problems that aren't being reported within the organization.

"It's simply a tool that allows HR departments to know what their employees are saying about the company in areas that are already publicly available," said Richard Teed, LBi Software president.

NO. 3 | **Employee Engagement Benefit: Help Ensure Consistent Adherence with Corporate Policies and Procedures**

In many enterprise organizations, the manager in one department handles one area of an employee's work life. Another department manager handles other concerns. And on it goes. Often, there are disconnects between the departments – between payroll and benefits, for example.

*A quality HR help desk can help avoid pitfalls by **ensuring consistency** with policies and procedures.*

Sometimes, there are downright contradictions in what an employee hears from different department managers.

Similar kinds of inconsistencies occur in policies administered by a single department. Business units or remote locations may interpret policies differently. Or they may unknowingly be operating from different versions of the same policy.

"It happens all the time," Kaplan said. "An administrative person in Memphis learns her counterpart in Boston got extra maternity leave compared with what she got."

The result is employee dissatisfaction, decreased engagement and lower productivity. Through its knowledge base and analytics, a quality HR help desk can help avoid those pitfalls by ensuring consistency with policies and procedures. Areas that can be monitored include:

- Government compliance (e.g., the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act, workers' compensation laws, etc.)
- Employee fairness
- Union workplace rules and related federal and state laws

“Regardless of the number of different business units or offices, HR can ensure that a policy is distributed evenly across the board, and everybody benefits,” Kaplan said.

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Employee Engagement Benefit:
***Provide a Consumer-oriented,
Time-saving Experience for
Employees and HR***

Employee self-service and other automated features of an HR case management solution, like LBi HR HelpDesk, give employees the autonomy to handle their HR transactions when they want to, regardless of the issue. The bottom line here is that HR can offer 24/7 self-service online through a single portal.

“Nearly every process in the organization can be automated today, from revising your W-4 to booking company travel,” Kaplan said. “So why not centralize all of it in an HR case management system that is designed with great employee self-service?”

An HR help desk gives employees quick answers to a wide range of often small and unrelated questions: “When will I get my W-2?” “What’s the holiday schedule this year?” “I’m in the Oxford medical plan, what’s my deductible?” The system, meanwhile, frees HR from needing to respond directly to basic employee questions about benefits or pay requests.

Automation features allow HR to immediately see cases that are overdue for action at any step of the process and to automatically generate notices to the responsible manager. The results: faster resolution of cases, heightened employee engagement and more time for HR to focus on strategic activities.

“When will I get my W-2?”
“What’s the holiday
schedule this year?”

Other consumer-like features of an HR help desk that provide valuable communication touch points to help drive and measure employee engagement include:

- Knowledge bases created automatically, based on problems and resolutions that prove to be common
- Service Level Agreements (SLAs) that define the specific time between actions in an HR case
- Audit trails for every case and its communications
- An organization-wide document repository
- Employee satisfaction survey tools

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**Employee Engagement Benefit:
Ensure Confidentiality and
Security in Employee Relations
and Interactions**

Almost without exception, companies that are considering buying an HR help desk share one pain: They're worried that their company's current method

of communicating case information is not secure enough to ensure privacy and maintain employee confidentiality.

"I'd say that **97.5%** of the time, they want to replace an internal IT system that does not have the security and privacy that a help desk can offer," Kaplan said.

The damage that a breach of personal information can have on an employee's respect for the company can be irreparable (in addition to putting the company at risk of being sued). The negative ramifications for employee engagement are enormous.

To provide the level of security that will ensure privacy and confidentiality in the HR environment, a help desk needs to have more than technological sophistication. It also needs to be designed with a deep understanding of HR processes. The LBi HR HelpDesk, for example, is designed to provide "confidentiality walls, with windows into case information" that only a system administrator can authorize.

"A sexual harassment grievance, for example, is not sent using the company's general email," Kaplan said. "It's filed and maintained within the confines of the HR system."

The LBi HR HelpDesk, for example, is designed to provide "confidentiality walls, with windows into case information."

Even within the help desk system, the employee's privacy is protected.

"When the case is escalated to a higher level, all of the communication is still within the confines of that case," Kaplan said. "The thread is stored differently from email, and the case record is available only on an administrator-approved basis."

These safeguards boost employee engagement in two ways. Employees know that only the appropriate manager or above will see their sensitive information. They also know they're going to get a response within the exact time stated in the HR policies (a benefit that's made possible by the system's reports and custom alerts).

"A high level of security tells employees, loud and clear, that the company cares about them, is protecting them and is on top of the situation," Kaplan said. "These are the kinds of things that the researchers mean when they talk about communication touch points that can drive employee engagement."

Conclusion

An automated HR help desk should, of course, achieve an organization's minimum criteria: meet the company's functional needs and be flexible enough to meet its current and future business requirements. But it can also yield a hidden value that boosts the company's return on its investment.

A case management system that is both technologically superior and designed with a true understanding of HR processes can play a significant role in helping an enterprise organization implement a successful employee engagement strategy.

LBI HR HelpDesk is unique in meeting all of those benchmarks. For employees and HR administrators, the scope and depth of features in the LBI HR HelpDesk:

- Create communication touch points that help drive employee engagement and
- Deliver solid analytics to help measure employee engagement

For the employee, features that help drive engagement range from a user-friendly employee self-service portal for conducting all HR-related tasks, to the promise of secure communication and confidentiality with HR, to a centralized site for finding current company policies.

For the HR administrator, LBi HR HelpDesk can help measure employee engagement through assets including flexible reporting options and deep analytics that are delivered via an easy-to-access executive dashboard.

High-performing organizations have active initiatives and solid strategies for driving and measuring employee engagement. LBi HR HelpDesk gives HR the goods to be a major part of that effort.

About LBi Software

LBi Software provides precisely engineered, customer-focused human resources technology solutions developed from more than 30 years of experience in HR technology and HR processes. Our flagship solution, LBi HR HelpDesk, is an innovative case manager and call-tracking workflow solution that creates a rich and powerful knowledge base on the fly. Our organic belief in – and solid reputation for applying – a true client-vendor partnership on every project ensures a highly configurable solution designed to put the power in the hands of the employee. In addition, every LBi project is supported by our rich experience and expertise in Mobile Development, Business Intelligence, Data Warehousing, and Reporting and Analytics.

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