

Renaming HR: Maybe We Should Simply Call It Employee Engagement

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Abstract:

Human Resources Department has been at the helm of businesses spanning across every industry and sector. It has therefore become a ubiquitous department in running day-day business activities and designing a competitive strategy for any firm. Nevertheless, employees seem to underestimate and ignore this department. Why is it so? Does this department require a makeover, in terms of its name, so as to make itself more appealing and relevant?

Keywords:

Human Resource, Employee Engagement, Personnel, Recruitment, Selection, Training, Talent Management, Compensation Management, Performance Management, Organizational Development.

I came across an interesting article while browsing through the latest HR news and happenings back in February 2015. Reading this, a famous adage/quote ran across my mind, I had read somewhere. Although I am not able to recall the exact sentence, it roughly said "... a language that does not change, dies." This excerpt was pertaining to the reasons why English language/other widely spoken languages has survived over centuries. To draw a corollary and probably the most obvious, a department name should also change with time so as to ensure its contemporariness and relevance in the present-day world.

Does it make sense to change the name of the Human Resource Department to Employee Engagement Department? I am not the person to propound the new name, but what I want to do, is to share the thoughts of the global HR fraternity. The corporate world has witnessed an erstwhile, simple and mundane department called Personnel Management Department metamorphosize into a more complex, holistic, all-encompassing and most importantly, a relevant department, the Human Resources Department. I believe it's time to take the next leap towards evolution! Employee Engagement makes perfect sense because of the following reasons:

1. It's all about engaging employees

Am I right? Let's answer a few questions. What does an entrepreneur do? He builds a business. (Actually this is untrue. Zig Ziglar had once stated "You don't build a business, you build people and then the people build the business.") What does a doctor do? He treats patients. What does a Financial Analyst do? He monitors the

portfolio and advises his clients....But what exactly does a HR professional (manager or executive) do??

Well, the answer is pretty simple. All he does is employee engagement! Don't you think employee engagement, the word, in its essence, encompasses the milieu of aspects under the conventional HR vertical? Be it Recruitment and Selection or Talent Acquisition, if you prefer to add a dash of suaveness to the profile; Training/Learning and Development; Talent Management; Appraisal and Performance Management; Benefits and Compensation Management or any other sub-department under the generic HR framework can be related to the term "Employee Engagement".

2. Euphemism (if I may)

Let's face it, there are two types of employees in any organization:

- A) The gregarious ones, who more or less keep in touch with HR regularly,
- B) The indifferent/reticent ones who interact with HR three times during their stay in any organization: induction, annual performance appraisals and parting ways.

Unfortunately, the latter category hosts more numbers. What could be the *real* reason for this kind of disposition? I have often wondered, but still am not sure about the *real* reason, and that is why, before broaching upon this sub-topic I have carefully placed "if I may" in brackets! I believe, such employees happen to categorize HR department as a "Not-to-be-approached Department" / "Least Productive Department"/ "Good-for-nothing Department" / or by any other misnomer. It could be dread, indifference, condescendence, or simple loathing. In order to address such an issue, why not change the department's name and make it more "approachable", because "Employee Engagement" definitely sounds/appears more friendly and warm than the normally perceived rigid, formal and official "Human Resources Department." Thereby, let Euphemism play its game.

I leave the job of finding the *real* reason of such an occurrence to the very able hands of Organizational Development (OD) researchers and consultants.

3. Embellishment

This is the job of any employee intending to sell his product/service. In order to add value (a hackneyed term nonetheless) to the already existing product/service (in this case the Company or the job profile for the incumbent), embellishment is a necessity. In a world, where almost everyone is demanding the best, one has no other option, but to serve his/her dish, albeit in a fanciful manner, appealing to the senses of the consumer. So what's the harm in adding a shade of lustre? Am I sounding like a marketing guy? Indeed, yes. It is the inherent duty of any HR personnel to "sell" the brand of his company, make the job description/specification more appealing in order to attract and later hire the best possible talent from the overly competitive market

where poaching is the order and norm of the day. So, let us get going people, apply another coat to it!

A few reasons for the anticipated transition has been cited, there could be many more. It depends on the HR fraternity (both corporate and academic) whether they accept the newly coined term. Irrespective of whether transition happens or not, this department has been a vital component in the functioning of any business and will continue to do so in the years to come.

Reference:

This is an article inspired by <http://www.tlnt.com/2015/02/11/renaming-hr-maybe-we-should-simply-call-it-employee-engagement/>