Empowering employees through technology

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Insight from Ricky Majer, chief technology officer at SBFM

One of the biggest problems faced by FM companies is how to engage frontline staff. It's difficult enough to engage staff that are in one central location every day, a problem which is only magnified when staff are spread across thousands of sites.

So how can we make sure our people are engaged? One way is by using technology such as gamification.

Engagement levels worryingly low

Employee engagement in the UK is very low. 2022 research from Gallup found that as few as 9% of UK employees feel enthusiastic about their work[1].

This lack of engagement has a knock-on effect to work; HR Director writes, "Workplaces with high employee engagement achieve higher productivity, better customer relationships, lower employee turnover, and higher profitability."[2]

Constantly replacing staff will prevent them from truly feeling like a part of your company, and this in turn will prevent them from becoming advocates for your brand. After all, it's hard to advocate for something you don't believe in.

Using gamification to engage team members

Gamification is something that's becoming more and more prevalent in all kinds of industries, and is being

used for many purposes.

Whilst lots of companies are introducing it as a way to motivate and engage employees in roles that may be fairly tedious or repetitive, some places are using it completely differently. Google, for example, use it in their education pages to empower teachers to provide better lessons to their students. Nike have incorporated it into their fitness app, rewarding users with badges and other things when they hit certain benchmarks.

Gamification is a wide-ranging strategy that is becoming more and more popular. And it's something we can all use to boost employee engagement.

How gamification can boost engagement

With gamification having such a wide scope, there are many ways it can be utilised to help grow your employees' engagement.

One way is, like Google and their education suite, to make learning more enjoyable and more rewarding. Adding badges for completing mandatory training, including extra bonuses within the training itself, and mixing up the training by adding in quizzes can all help bring it to life for employees, making them more interested and engaged with it.

Another way is to add immediate and real time employee recognition. Whilst most companies will have monthly or yearly employee recognition, gamification allows you to do this a lot more regularly.

You can thank staff the moment they complete certain tasks, for example, or reward those who pick up extra work once their own is completed.

Interactive leaderboards are another way that gamification can boost employee engagement. Whilst they may not be possible in all workplaces due to the nature of the work, they're a brilliant way to get employees a lot more motivated in their roles. Real time updates can show employees who's performing best, and what's needed to match or beat their performance. Friends within the company can compete with each other, as can teams and departments.

Technology is a driving force

Since we've applied the use of technology, in particular gamification, to our frontline employees we've seen engagement rates skyrocket.

One of the biggest issues we face as a leading FM company is the fact that our frontline staff are spread across the country; because of this the majority aren't in touch with their line managers every day which creates issues when it comes to engagement. Line managers are often the best way to make sure team members are motivated and engaged in their roles, so where this isn't possible alternatives need to come into play.

As well as gamification we've integrated WhatsApp into our employee comms, meaning not only can frontline employees receive company updates straight to their smartphones, it allows us to offer extra opportunities to them with ease.

Like all industries, FM must make sure it moves forward hand in hand with technological advances. Not to

do so will see companies being left behind, and those that do embrace tech will flourish ahead of their competitors.

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[1] https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/employee-engagement-levels-uk-gallup-report/

[2] https://www.thehrdirector.com/business-news/employee-engagement/uk-employee-engagement-falls-record-low/