Employee Engagement for the C-Store Industry
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Employee engagement is very popular with leadership in the business community. It has received an immense amount of coverage in the popular press extolling its virtues, mostly relating to the benefits to organizations for having an engaged workforce. Many of the claims put forth are without supporting evidence. However, since its emergence, there has been a growing research literature aimed at defining the construct of employee engagement and identifying its antecedents and outcomes. Thanks to this research quite a bit is known about employee engagement. It is now generally accepted that employee engagement is a state of mind characterized by *vigor*, *dedication*, and *absorption*. The research on employee engagement has linked it to important outcomes such as employee job performance and an organization's financial and business performance. Further, research has identified an array of antecedents to employee engagement. Broadly speaking, these antecedents are related to the culture of the organization and the job resources and demands that employees encounter in their jobs.

Employee engagement (EE), also referred to as work engagement, job engagement, role engagement, organization engagement, or simply engagement, has received widespread interest in the business community.[1,2] "Rarely has a term that represents a 'soft' topic resonated as strongly with business executives as employee engagement has in recent years" (p. xv).[1] In 2008, a Google search on EE resulted in 645,130 "hits."[3] In spring 2016, the "hits" had climbed to 9,550,000. Within this context, member companies of the NACS/Coca Cola Retailing Research Council are exploring the characteristics of a culture of engagement and how such a culture might be created in their work environments.

The positive value of an engaged employee makes common sense. What organization wouldn't want an employee that is engaged? But questions remain. Is the employee engaged with the work, the organization, or something else? Is engagement a novel concept, adding useful new knowledge, or just a repackaging of something already well-known? Is engagement a "state," which is essentially a condition caused by environmental factors; is it a "trait," which is essentially a built-in characteristic of the individual; or is it a "behavior," such as showing initiative? If engagement is a novel concept, does it predict important organizational effectiveness outcomes? Can it be incorporated into a company's business growth strategy? Are there identifiable antecedents of engagement that would allow organizations to take actions to foster engagement in their employees? In its employee selection process, can an organization select for engagement?

In the popular literature, which is dominated by consultants, bloggers, sales organizations, and news reports, EE is often referenced by its presumed positive consequences, rather than defined in terms of the construct itself. When it is defined, EE is frequently described in terms of constructs that are not new, e.g., job satisfaction, employee empowerment, job

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involvement, or organizational commitment.[1] Additionally, these descriptions are often at variance with the empirical evidence of the efficacy of EE.[4-6] Given the questions that exist about EE, this review was undertaken on behalf of the NACS/Coca Cola Retailing Research Council to explore the research literature on EE in organizations to examine the nature or EE in organizations, and, more importantly, to determine if evidence-supported organizational interventions exist that would help companies to take actions to create a culture of engagement.

The first mention of EE in the research literature occurred in 1990.[7,8] It was conceptualized according to the general conditions and components of an engaged employee and focused on the behaviors employees "bring in" to their work performance. This was generally classified as how employees "express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances" (p. 694).[8] Research on EE was slow to ramp up. In 2008, only 100 studies were found in a search of the topic.[3] However, by mid-2015, a similar search found 7,848 articles.

Given that EE is frequently described in terms of well researched constructs such as job satisfaction, the first important question to answer regarding EE is, Does it differ from these constructs or is it simply "old wine in new bottles"? Decades ago, using new words to describe old ideas was termed the "Jangle Fallacy."[9] The general consensus is that EE is related to well-known constructs such as job satisfaction, employee empowerment, job involvement and organizational commitment, but is enough different that it should be regarded as a stand-alone concept. [5,10-13] Job satisfaction, employee involvement, and employee commitment are facets of EE, but not equivalent to EE.[5]

If EE differs from other well-researched constructs such as job satisfaction, the next question to answer is, "How is EE defined? EE is typically conceptualized as "attitudinal" or "behavioral."[14] As an attitude, EE has most frequently been defined as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by *vigor*, *dedication*, and *absorption*." Vigor refers to "high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties", while dedication is characterized by " sense of significance, inspiration, pride, enthusiasm and challenge." Absorption refers to "being fully cconcentrated and engrossed in one's work."[15]

The behavioral focus on EE typically encompasses "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances."[8] Between the attitudinal and behavioral approaches to defining EE, the attitudinal approach is dominant;[16] however, in terms of outcome prediction, both approaches show a high degree of overlap.[14,17]

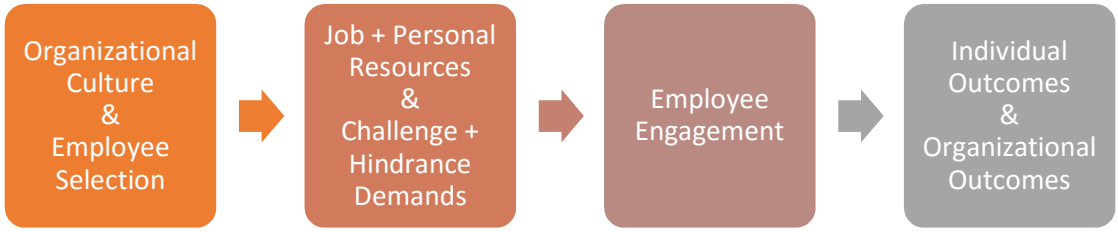
The next question to answer is, If EE is a distinct construct, can it be reliably and accurately assessed? The most popular and most widely researched EE assessment is the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES).[10,15,16] It is based on the *vigor*, *dedication*, & *absorption* definition of EE. In a scan of the Business Source Complete database conducted for this review, the UWES was used in more than 370 research studies. The UWES has been found a reliable and valid

measure of EE in multiple countries in many different organizations across a variety of organizational levels and jobs.[18-22] It is available in 19 languages and has been administered internationally to more than 30,000 employees.[3] There are two versions of the measure. One containing 17 items and a short version containing 9 items.[23]

There are three other scales that measure EE at a macro level that have been reported in the research literature that are worth noting: 1) The Job Engagement Scale is another well-developed, but less widely used EE assessment measure.[14,16] Its 18 items measure the physical, emotional, and cognitive components of EE; 2) The 9-item Intellectual, Social, and Intellectual (ISA) Engagement Scale.[24]; and 3) The Productive Energy Measure (PEM), a 14-item survey that measures the affective, cognitive, and behavioral aspects of workplace energy.[25]

There are a number of commercially available, proprietary surveys available for a fee from a number of well-known consulting organizations.[7] Perhaps the best known of these surveys is Gallup's Q^{12} engagement survey.[26] The 12-item survey has been criticized as being more a measure of employee satisfaction, than a measure of engagment[3] and for being an indirect, rather than a direct measure of EE.[27] Nevertheless, the Q^{12} is backed by research showing that it is related to significant organizational outcomes[28] and incorporates important antecedent components of EE.[3] The Areas of Worklife Survey (AWS) is another well-researched proprietary survey consisting of 29 items that measure and organization's workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values factors.[29]

Where does EE fit in the scheme of things within organizations? There are numerous models that suggest employee engagement is an intermediate process, having *antecedents* and *outcomes*.[5,11,30,31] The following is a simplified version of a model that incorporates the major components typically found in these models.[32]



This model suggests several interesting things. First, the culture of the organization has an important impact on things that lead to engagement. Second, a focus on employee selection suggests that facets of the individual have a bearing on engagement. That means that engagement is not solely caused by the organization, but the nature of the individual has an effect. This further suggests that individuals can be selected for these facets. Third, the resources available to employees, both organizational and individual, and the demands placed on employees are antecedents of engagement. Thus, engagement can, in part, be influenced by changing the resources available to employees and the demands placed on employees. Fourth, as already discussed, EE, as a function of its antecedents, can be specifically described

and measured. Fifth, employee engagement leads to predictable outcomes for both individual employees and their organizations.

Employee Engagement Outcomes

A critical question for organizations is, Is EE related to important organizational outcomes? The answer to this question is, Yes. EE is related to numerous organizational outcomes. Listed below is a brief summary of what the research has shown:

- **Financial Performance**. In a variety of studies, EE has been shown to be positively related to annual revenue, year over year improvement in operating income, return on assets (ROA), profitability, shareholder value, and diluted earnings per share.[1,28,31,33-36] These findings are robust, involving thousands of companies, diverse job levels, and millions of employees in myriad international locations.
- **Employee Performance**. Employee performance can be described in two ways: task performance, which focuses on the effectiveness of the performance that is a core part of an employee's job—essentially the work the employee is paid to perform—and contextual performance, which is performance, often discretionary, that is not a formal part of the job but creates a productive social and psychological climate for the job.[37]
    - **Task performance**. EE has been shown to be positively correlated with employee task performance in numerous studies summarized in meta-analyses.[11,38] Some of the studies demonstrated the effect across a variety of job levels[39-41]; others demonstrated the effect in specific jobs, e.g., sales[42], government[43], public administration[44], security[45], public safety[16], customer service[46], healthcare[47], research scientists[48], and retail.[24,49]
    - **Contextual performance**. Rather than role-prescribed activities (task-related performance), contextual performance focuses more on the approach to the job taken by the employee, e.g., with enthusiasm, helping and cooperating with others, following the rules, supporting the organization, and voluntarily going beyond the minimum job requirements.[37] Discretionary effort is often used to describe this type of performance and is often a key element of EE.[34,35] Meta-analyses have shown contextual performance to be predicted by EE.[11,14,50]

Considering the evidence, the research literature clearly supports the positive link between EE and employee performance, both in-role (task) and extra-role (contextual).[14]

Apart from financial performance and employee performance, there is evidence that indicates EE is related to other important business-related outcomes:

- Engaged employees have fewer absences than non-engaged employees.[51,52]
- Engaged employees have lower turnover rates and longer retention rates than non-engaged employees.[28,52]
- When asked about their intention to leave the organization, non-engaged employees leave at a faster rate than engaged employees.[4,53,54]

- Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) is helping behavior directed at fellow employees or workgroups and supporting the organization.[37] Evidence indicates that EE is positively correlated with OCB.[4,16,55]
- EE has been hypothesized to have an effect on health and well-being.[56] Studies indicate that engaged employees handle stressors better than non-engaged employees,[57] promote general health,[47] have better physical and mental health,[58] have lower levels of depression and anxiety,[59,60] feel psychologically safe,[61] have fewer workplace safety incidents,[62] and have fewer workplace accidents and injuries.[63]
- EE has been shown to have a significant negative relationship to merchandise shrinkage.[62]
- EE has been shown to have a positive relationship to customer loyalty,[62] customer engagement,[64] service climate,[65,66] and customer experience.[36]

The literature is replete with studies focused on measuring EE and linking it to important outcomes, which are either employee-focused or organization-focused. This leads to the next important question, What drives EE? The answer to this question is not simple, but there are identifiable drivers of EE. Referring to the simplified model presented previously, these drivers can be pegged to two broad categories: 1) organization culture, including organizational leadership and employee selection; and 2) job demands and resources.

Organizational culture

Creating and engaged workforce is not a once and done event. An engaged workforce requires a sustained effort, creating an organizational culture that attracts employees predisposed to take advantage of the engagement culture—where EE is the norm.[1] The generally accepted definition of organizational culture is

a) a pattern of basic assumptions,
b) invented, discovered, or developed by a given group,
c) as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration,
d) that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore
e) is to be taught to new members as the
f) correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.[67]

In essence, culture is what employees perceive and how these perceptions create beliefs, values, expectations, and behavior. Basically it's the way employees experience the organization and the meaning they attach to that experience. Culture is communicated to employees by what leaders pay attention to and measure, how leaders allocate resources, the types of behaviors leaders model for others, and how employee are recruited, selected, developed, and fired.[68]

Thus, in a general sense, and organization's culture is related to EE. Organizations with more positively viewed cultures have more highly engaged employees.[22,69,70] However, there are specific facets of organizational cultures that appear to be particularly important to EE:

Fairness. Fairness is the extent to which work-related decisions and actions are seen as fair, respectful, and equitable and is seen as foundational for the development of EE.[27] It has been shown to be an early indicator of higher levels of EE.[71,72] Fair cultures can be characterized as equitably allocating resources, merit-based, showing a willingness to listen when the fairness of an action or decision is challenged, having managers and supervisors that treats employees fairly and respectfully, lacking in favoritism, and apolitical.[29]

Trust. Trust is built up over time, and it is the extent to which employees believe that they are cared about and supported and that those they trust are competent and capable.[73] All levels of management and supervision showing employees they can be trusted and employees trusting management and supervision are seen as a necessary conditions for the development of an engaged workforce.[1] Trust has been shown to be related to EE in multiple studies.[54,61,74,75] Elements important to trust building in organizations include open and distortion-free communication, showing respect and confidence in employees, keeping promises and commitments, listening even in the presence of disagreement, and active cooperation.[76]

Psychological Safety. Psychological safety is an employee "feeling able to show and employ ones' self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career" (p. 708).[8] Paired with a feeling that making a statement matters, this sense of safety is often referred to as the willingness of employees to express *voice*.[77] A sense of psychological safety has been shown to be positively correlated with EE in numerous studies.[36,53,61,78] Elements important to safety and employee voice involve making recommendations, speaking up, communicating opinions that are at variance with the employee, keeping up with job related issues, getting involved, and offering new ideas.[79]

Socialization. Socialization is the process that brings employees into the organization or new jobs within the organization, and it is a key to insuring that they are brought into the culture of the organization or job unit,[80] setting the stage for a more engaged workforce.[1] Effective socialization, also called onboarding, has been shown to be important in helping new employees fit with their new organizations and jobs, which, in turn, has a positive relationship with EE.[81] Effective socialization processes focus on social tactics that are uniform vs. idiosyncratic, let newcomers quickly become a member of the workgroup, contain activities that follow a specific rather than ambiguous sequence, set expectations for how long specific onboarding process will take, involve veteran employees in the new employee onboarding process rather than leaving the employee alone, and reinforce newcomer learning with positive communication and social support.[82]

Individual differences. Individual differences are factors or personal characteristics that vary from person to person, but, for a particular individual, are relatively stable over situations and time.[30] Researchers have suggested that individual personality characteristics are related to EE.[5,8] If individual differences are related to EE, then employee selection programs, employing evidence-based assessments, could incorporate them into their selection process.[27] There is ample evidence that personality characteristics dispose individuals to become engaged—or

not.[11,14,38,83] These studies, which summarize the results across many studies, and other individual studies not covered, indicate a significant relationship to extraversion, conscientiousness, emotional stability, openness, optimism, self-esteem, self-efficacy, core self-evaluation, and proactive personality.[11,14,16,84-86] Given the demonstrated relationship of certain personality factors to EE, the recommendation is to incorporate an assessment of these factors into an evidence-based selection program to identify prospective employees with a propensity for engagement.[11,27,87] A caveat to this recommendation is that if organizations do not invest in systems, processes, and practices that support EE, they should not select for engagement.[32]

Fit with the Job and Organization. Fit concerns how well the nature of the employee fits the job and the organization. It's the degree that a person's skills, personality, and values overlay the skill and personality-related requirements of the job and the values of the organization. Thus, the individual's make-up is congruent with the organization's, the individual fulfills an organizational need, or the organization meets an individual's psychological needs.[88] Good fit allows employees to derive meaningfulness for their work, which is a key component of EE. Research has shown that how well a person fits with the job and the organization is predictive of EE.[61,70,81] Maximizing fit has implications for at least five areas for focus: 1) the hiring process, where a focus on assessing fit before hire is warranted; 2) insuring that current employees' fit with subsequent jobs is taken into account for promotion or job rotation decisions; 3) allowing employees' autonomy to influence the design of their jobs; 4) training managers and supervisors regarding the conditions that promote engagement; and 5) insuring that formal socialization programs to get employees onboard and oriented are operational.[70,81,89]

Leadership. Leadership, whether an executive, a manager, or a supervisor, affects EE. Over many studies, leadership effectiveness has been shown to have a significant positive impact on EE.[11,14] Leader-member exchange (LMX) is one leadership orientation that's been identified as an engagement driver. LMX relates to the nature of the relationship between a leader and follower, where the relationship is characterized by two-way trust, mutual respect, and the prospect of a future positive relationship.[51,90] Overall, however, in most of the studies, transformational leadership behaviors have been shown to have a positive correlation with EE.[31,91-94] Transformational leadership behaviors encompass idealized vision, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.[95] Leadership actions linked to EE can by enhanced by training in transformational leadership;[92,96] leaders and supervisors can be coached to establish positive relationship with their employees as early in the employment of new hires as possible;[51] leaders can insure that their employees have a clear picture of the direction the company is headed and provide clear performance expectations;[97] leaders can focus on supporting, training, and recognizing their employees;[72] and leaders can work to provide a psychologically safe work environment.[61]

Job Demands and Resources

Cultural conditions establish the environment for EE; however, these conditions, while necessary, are not sufficient to create and engaged workforce, which, in turn leads to positive organizational outcomes such as increased customer loyalty, employee retention, profitability, and market share.[32] There is considerable research, much of which is guided by the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model of burnout and engagement, that focuses on more specific antecedents of EE.[56,98] In the simplified model previously presented, these antecedents directly affect EE and are broadly classified as *resources* and *demands*.

Resources. Resources are typically classified into two types: Job Resources and Personal Resources.

- **Job resources**. These are the physical, social, or organizational resources that reduce job demands associated with physiological and psychological costs, help achieve work goals, or stimulate personal growth, learning, and development and play an important role in the motivation to do the job.[10,66,99] Typically, the research on resources has concentrated on various aspects of job design, including some of the contextual aspects of the job, e.g., performance feedback. Significant relationships have been found on the following job resources:

    - Task variety (performing a number of different tasks in a job) has been found related to EE in meta-analytic studies and individual studies not incorporated into the meta-analyses.[11,14,100]
    - Task significance concerns aspects of the job that employees see make a difference to others and the organization.[101] Across studies task significance has been shown to be positively related to EE.[11,14,61]
    - Autonomy is the amount of freedom employees have to carry out their jobs, including scheduling, making job-related decisions, and choosing the methods of performing tasks.[102] Across many studies, research indicates autonomy to be an engagement driver. [11,13,14,49,103] Autonomy has been found to be less prevalent in less individualized jobs where EE tends to be lower.[34]
    - Performance feedback refers to the clarity of information received directly from the job, as opposed to feedback from others, regarding the effectiveness of task performance.[102] To the extent that jobs provide this type of feedback, EE tends to be higher.[11,14,104]
    - Social support is the degree to which a job provides opportunities for assistance and advice from coworkers and supervisors.[102] Jobs in which employees receive support from their colleagues and supervisors have higher EE than jobs where such support is lacking.[11,14,21,84,105,106]
    - Supervisory coaching and support is related to social support, but it is also different. Supervisors occupy a position that provides more direct, job-related resource support to employees and has a great impact on EE because immediate supervision creates the environment where employees work.[107] In numerous

studies organizations and groups where there were higher levels of supervisory support, there were higher levels of EE.[11,46,47,75,108]

Taken together these resources, often referred to as job characteristics, help establish the meaningfulness of jobs, which is a key component of EE, and the capacity to perform jobs effectively.[8,14,109]

- **Personal resources**. Personal resources are positive self-evaluations linked to resiliency and refer to individuals' belief in their ability to control and have an impact on their environment.[69,99,110] Some personal resources are grounded in personality constructs such as conscientiousness, emotional stability, and extraversion. These were discussed in an earlier section. Primarily, the remaining personal resources focus on self-efficacy, resilience, self-esteem, and optimism.[83] There is considerable evidence that these factors are positively related to EE.[14,111] For example, self-efficacy, which is an individual's personal belief regarding their capability to produce required levels of performance, has been found to be related to both EE and job performance.[45,69,103]

Demands. Job demands are "those physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical or mental effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological and psychological costs (e.g., exhaustion)" (p. 501).[56] Subsequent research differentiated job demands into two categories: Challenge Demands and Hindrance Demands.[112,113]

- **Challenge demands**. Challenge demands are important for employees to engage themselves in their jobs and roles.[109] They may be stressful, but tend to promote personal mastery, growth, and learning and are positively related to EE.[112-114] However, challenge demands are positive when there are sufficient resources are available to deal with the challenges.[115] This suggests that demands interact with resources to produce a positive relationship with EE.[98,116] A survey of studies indicate the following are challenge demands that are positively related to EE given the availability of sufficient resources: problem-solving, level of responsibility, job complexity, time urgency, and work load.[14]
- **Hindrance demands**. Hindrance demands are stressors, and have the potential to thwart personal growth, learning, and goal attainment and are negatively related to EE.[112,113] Over a number of studies the following items have been identified as hindrances that negatively affect EE: organizational politics, red tape, administrative hassles, role ambiguity, role conflict, role overload, concerns about job security, and emotional conflict.[14,116]

General findings

EE is not a categorical construct, meaning that you either have it or you don't. In every study reviewed, EE was treated as a variable that varied on a continuum from high to low, or negative to positive. Therefore, there are "degrees" of engagement. EE has been found to vary:

- From company to company and even among divisions in the same company.[21,62,117-119] This suggests that EE programs need to be tailored to the unique needs and circumstances of specific companies.[117] Thus, EE programs will likely vary from company to company.
- From individual to individual.[4,14,87,120] Although a group, department, or company can be more or less engaged, the level of engagement can also vary from person to person within these entities. However, there is some evidence that EE is contagious, making it important to have a core of engaged employees that might possibly, just by their presence, influence others toward engagement.[6]
- Within a single individual from time to time.[33,57,121,122] Therefore, an individual at one level of engagement at one time could be more or less engaged at a later time and, again, more or less engaged at a third time. This intra-individual engagement is often related to factors such as amount of autonomy at work, supervisory support, and perceived challenges.
- Country to country. As a construct, EE operates across international boundaries and job levels, although drivers of engagement may vary from country to country.[34,35,123-125] While these reports show variation in EE by country, there is no universal evidence-based list of "the" drivers of EE. Drivers differ by report, and given the research-based findings that EE varies from company to company and even by job within company, there is no single, definitive path to EE within a specific country.

Given sufficient job and personal resources EE can be long lasting.[60,83,108,126] This points out the need for constancy within the work environment. Given the known predictors of EE, role-clarity, supervisory support, etc., it is incumbent on organizations to stay the course with interventions designed to promote EE and points to the fact that facilitating the development and maintenance of EE will require the adoption of progressive management practices.[31,32,95]

Implementing an engagement strategy requires a multifaceted, long-term approach,[4,31] recognizing that there is no "one size fits all" approach to EE[119] and that EE is determined by multiple drivers simultaneously.[127] This requires an understanding that engagement approaches should vary from company to company depending on the needs of a particular company. Multi-faceted means that it is likely than there will need to be a focus on more than one engagement driver, depending on the circumstances of the company or job group that is the focus of the engagement intervention.

Though most of the discussion has focused on engagement drivers that are innate (personality) or driven by the organization (e.g., job design to increase task variety), the individual can take a self-initiated approach changing modifiable drivers through the process of job crafting.[128] Job

crafting is defined as the changes that employees may make to balance their job demands and job resources with their personal abilities and needs.[129] Through job crafting, employees work to increase the level of available resources, increase the number of challenge demands, and decrease the number of hindrance demands.[115] Job crafting has been shown to be positively related to both EE and job performance[130,131] and can affect the level of job demands and resources, which, in turn, will have an effect on EE.[128,129] How an employee approaches job crafting can also be reliably measured.[132]

Roadmap to an Engaged Workforce

Enhancing EE within an organization will take a multi-pronged, concerted effort over time that is supported by top management with the resources necessary to ensure success. The quest for an engaged workforce should be incorporated into the organization's strategic planning process. The following is a broad outline of the steps that need to be undertaken for the engagement effort:

- Company executives, managers, and supervisors embrace the concept of employee engagement and act accordingly, understanding that they have a personal role in facilitating employee engagement.
    - Establish employee engagement as a core organizational value.
    - Establish and communicate the mission and strategy of the organization.
    - Recognize that engagement drivers may lack uniformity across workers or locations, that is, that engagement is multifaceted.
    - Understand that EE is multi-faceted and a long-term undertaking.
- Create an organizational culture that is engagement-friendly.
    - Commit resources to employee engagement interventions, including management and supervisory training.
    - Employees trust executives, managers, and supervisors.
    - Employees feel positively that fellow workers will act for them and with them.
    - Employees feel safe.
        - To express their "voice."
        - To take action on their own.
- Focus selection strategies on acquiring talented employees with a propensity for engagement.
- Measure the workforce for the current level of engagement and status of engagement drivers.
    - Assess organizational culture & climate
    - Assess the general level of employee engagement
    - Assess the current status of engagement drivers
- Create engagement interventions that foster employee engagement.
    - Develop and administer a culture, climate, and engagement survey.
        - Understand that employee engagement is different than employee satisfaction and employee commitment.

        - Include general (feeling) items, behavioral (antecedent) items, and personal resource items in the survey.
    - Compare survey results to known other companies. This is to provide a sense of how the company is doing relatively speaking, not to identify other companies' practices to emulate.
    - Provide feedback on the survey results to company leadership as well as those that completed the survey.
- Commit to taking action on the survey results
    - Provide the resources required to support the interventions identified as important to EE.
    - Identify and implement interventions suggested by the assessment process:
        - Interventions that build trust.
        - Interventions that enhance self-efficacy and resilience.
        - Interventions that provide for employees to exercise their "voice."
        - Interventions that enhance social support.
        - Interventions that enhance supervisory support.
        - Interventions that provide resources to do the job.
        - Interventions that provide challenge demands.
        - Interventions that remove hindrance demands.
        - Interventions that promote outcome fairness, i.e., fair distribution of pay and rewards.
        - Interventions that enhance leadership skills.

Evidence-based Interventions

This review indicates that there are quite a few evidence-based recommendations for processes and programs that organizations can undertake that enhance the facilitation. Appendix I contains a listing of key findings and suggested practices gleaned from the literature reviewed. Here is an extract from that table. All items listed have been documented in multiple studies as being predictive of EE.

- Increase the amount of feedback employees receive about their work
- Help employees see the significance, or importance, of the tasks they are performing
- Allow employees to have more autonomy, or control, over when and how tasks are completed (job crafting)
- Create systems for social support and mentoring
- Encourage employees to take short breaks to recover levels of engagement
- Hire individuals that fit within the work environment and job role
- Develop programs for employees to voice their opinion in a safe environment
- Examine how employees can take on tasks that are viewed as a positive challenge
- Enhance the task variety that an employee can complete
- Reduce administrative hassles and role overload

- Improve reward and recognition initiatives
- Select staff with a propensity for engagement
- Train staff for engagement
- Promote self-efficacy through training and feedback programs
- Support transformational leadership training for top management
- Invest in human capital and employability
- Design or redesign jobs to maximize employee autonomy, challenge, variety, skill utilization, and scope for learning and development
- Provide strong organizational support for the engagement program
- Reward and promote managers using their ability to engage employees as a key criterion
- Insure fairness of treatment and trust in management, using a range of voice mechanisms
- Insure extensive and effective two-way communication
- Create a context that reinforces job security and flexible working
- Adopt a strategic HR strategy that reflects the values of engagement and recognizes the need to integrate the components of an 'engagement system.'

Conclusion

There is little doubt that EE is an evidence-supported *reality* that is positively linked to important organizational outcomes such as financial performance and employee performance—outcomes that can promote business growth. EE has been extensively studied, and there is reliable evidence that EE can be measured and that there are identifiable evidence-based antecedents to EE that that can be used in the development of EE programs and initiatives.

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Appendix I
Employee Engagement Review
NACS/Coca-Cola Retailing Research Council 2015

The following table contains an extract of studies reviewed for this project. It contains the major findings and recommendations (suggested practices) from the research papers.

Source	Findings	Suggested Practices
Airila 2014[108]	Job (supervision, interpersonal relations, task resources) and personal (self-esteem) resources have a long-term effect on EE and, consequently, on work ability (health or the capacity to do the job).	Implication: Providing supervisory resources (e.g., support), reducing conflicts, and providing enhanced task resources (e.g., decision-making ability related to work, use of knowledge and skills on the job, feedback) will promote work ability.
Akhtar 2015[87]	EE predicted by personality factors: • Big 5: Openness, Extraversion, & Conscientiousness • Work-related factors: Interpersonal Sensitivity, Adjustment, & Ambition • Trait-base Emotional Intelligence	Include personality factors in selection decisions.

Source	Findings	Suggested Practices
Albrecht, et al. 2015[32]	• Relatively low levels of engagement are reported in organizations across the globe. • Organizational climate can effect job resources & demands. • EE differentials top and bottom performing firms in terms of economic outcomes. • HRM practices likely to be important for promoting EE: ○ Selection ○ Socialization ○ Performance management ○ Training	• Develop selection programs for engagement ○ Personality (conscientiousness & Extraversion ○ Structured interviews ○ Reference checks • Enhance organizational socialization ○ Reduce newcomer anxiety & uncertainty ○ Build on the excitement that newcomers bring to a job • Improve performance mgmt. ○ Set performance & development goals ○ Provide feedback & recognition ○ Manage employee development ○ Conduct appraisals ○ Create climate of trust & empowerment • Engagement management ○ Performance agreement: Employees & supervisors agree on goals ○ Engagement facilitation: Job design, coaching & social support, and training ○ Performance & engagement appraisal & feedback: • Training, learning & development ○ Provide optimal mix of job demands & resources ○ Optimize personal resources via training ○ Encourage employees to engage in job crafting
Amah 2013[133]	• Significant positive relationship between EE & profitability • Significant positive relationship between EE & productivity • Significant positive relationship between EE & market share	• Maintain involvement culture • Involve employees in decision-making • Encourage empowerment.

Source	Findings	Suggested Practices
Bakker & Demerouti 2014[98]	• JD-R predicts absenteeism & job performance • Employees achieve best job performance in challenging resourceful environments.	Four possible interventions: 1. Job redesign: how jobs, tasks, and roles are structured, enacted, and modified. 2. Job crafting: Employees actively change their jobs by choosing tasks, negotiating different job content, and assigning meaning to their jobs and tasks. 3. Training: Acquire new skills, technical knowledge, and problem-solving abilities. 4. Strengths based intervention: Match skills, and strengths to job needs; person-job fit.
Bakker & Sanz-Vergel 2013[57]	• Demands can be classified in two ways: o Challenging: Obstacle to overcome to learn and achieve o Hindering: Demands that unnecessarily thwart personal growth & goal attainment • Work pressure is more hindering than challenging. • Emotional demands are more challenging than hindering • Personal resources are positively related to EE in times (weeks) that emotional demands are high, but unrelated when emotional demands are low.	Focus on individualized job design and coaching rather than a "one size fits all" approach.
Bakker 2015[134]	• EE can be predicted by job & personal resources and job demands (challenge [obstacles to overcome to learn & achieve] & hindrance [thwart personal growth & goal attainment). • Different orgs have different causes of EE. • Approach to EE can be Top Down or Bottom-Up	**TOP DOWN** Organizational process: 5. Interviews with stakeholders to identify important resources and demands for EE. 6. Management prioritizes resources (job & personal) that will be targeted. 7. Carry out interventions, preferably by mgmt. & empl. 8. Survey to assess impact. Success dependent on 1. Mgmt commitment 2. EE interventions clearly communicated 3. Use reliable & valid assessments 4. Inform emp of survey results **BOTTOM-UP** Job crafting: "actions emps take to shape, mold, & redefine jobs". Emps seek feedback & social support • Increase structural resources • Increase social resources • Increase challenge demands • Decrease hindrance demands Job crafting training

Source	Findings	Suggested Practices
Bakker, Demerouti, & Saenz-Vergel 2014[30]	Job Resources: • Help achieve work goals, reduce job demands & stimulate personal growth. • Most impt predictors of EE	• Optimize job demands by reducing demands such as role ambiguity, job insecurity, and conflict. • Enhance challenge demands. • Teach teams & depts. to combine challenge demands with sufficient resources. • Increase job resources such as social support and performance feedback. • Start with assessment of JR that need attention.
Bakker, Albrecht, & Leiter 2015[6]	• Practitioners typically define engagement as affective commitment and extra-role behavior that promotes effective organization functioning. This can confuse constructs, leading to the Jangle effect. • Researchers typically define EE in terms of facets of vigor, dedication and absorption, which encompasses energy & identification/involvement. • Measures of EE should have clear theoretical bases, e.g., the Utrecht Work Engagement Scales (UWES). • EE for individuals can vary across time. • EE is related to organizational climate: employees' shared perceptions about formal and informal organizational structures, events, practices, policies, and procedures that are rewarded, supported, and expected in their organizational context. Climate is well researched and widely considered to encompass the following: workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values. • Leadership—especially transformational leadership—leads to EE. • Engaged employees can lead to engagement in other workers. • Employees can "craft" their jobs, thus leading to EE. • Over-engagement can have negative consequences, e.g., "workaholism." • EE "interventions" can be classified as Organizational-, Job-, and Individual level.	• Sustained effort, not good intentions and lofty ideals • Senior leadership should endorse EE as a core value. • Leaders and supervisor promoted EE. • Increase job resources, e.g., job rotation. • Build personal resources (psychological capital), e.g., efficacy beliefs, optimism, hope, and resiliency. • Train & coach.

Source	Findings	Suggested Practices
Bakker, Demerouti, de Boer, & Schaufeli 2003[135]	Job demands positively correlated with absenteeism and job resources negatively correlated with absenteeism.	
Barrick et al. 2015[31]	• Transformational leadership and collective organizational engagement (OE) related to firm performance. • Work design related to OE • Strategic implementation mediated relationship of work design & OE. • HRM practices related to OR • OE requires strategic, deliberate management or organizational resources. • Multiple, rather than a single action is required for OE	• Redesign entry-level jobs to provide more feedback and greater autonomy, identity, variety, and task significance. • Link compensation to performance. • Have CEOs seek to inspire and motivate by persuading employees that they are working toward a meaningful and significant purpose. • Insure that actions are directed to achieving organizational strategy.
Christian, Garza, & Slaughter 2011[11]	Work engagement: "a relatively enduring state of mind referring to the simultaneous investment of personal energies in the experience or performance of work." Engagement positively related to: • Autonomy • Task significance • Feedback • Problem-solving • Job complexity • Social support Engagement negatively related to: • Physical demands • Work conditions Engagement positively related to: • Conscientiousness • PA (Extraversion) • Proactive personality • Leadership: Transformational & LMX Engagement s predictive of task performance & contextual performance. Satisfaction is a facet of EE, but is not equivalent to EE.	• Select for Conscientiousness, Proactivity, and Extraversion • Design jobs that include motivating characteristics such as task significance and task variety.
Crawford, LePine, & Rich 2010[113]	• Job demands appraised as challenges positively related to WE. • Job demands appraised as hindrances negatively related to WE. • Job resources are positively related to WE.	Provide additional resources: • Increased supervisory support • Increased job variety. Reduce hindrances such as administrative hassles, politics, and role conflicts. Increase challenge demands.

Source	Findings	Suggested Practices
Gabriel, & Bennett 2015[136]	A review of several articles, but no specific findings reported.	• Increase the amount of feedback employees receive about their work • Help employees see the significance, or importance, of the tasks they are performing • Allow employees to have more autonomy, or control, over when tasks are completed • Create systems for social support and mentoring • Encourage employees to take short breaks to recover levels of engagement • Hire individuals that fit within the work environment and job role • Develop programs for employees to voice their opinion in a safe environment • Examine how employees can take on tasks that are viewed as a positive challenge • Enhance the task variety that an employee can complete • Reduce administrative hassles and role overload • Improve reward and recognition initiatives
Guest 2014[27]	• JD-R model identifies 29 antecedents of EE • Measure WE with a well-designed instrument • Effective EE interventions require measurement and evaluation	Core practices to enhance EE: 1. Select staff with a propensity for engagement 2. Train staff for engagement 3. Invest in human capital and employability 4. Design or redesign jobs to maximize employee autonomy, challenge, variety, skill utilization, and scope for learning and development 5. Provide strong organizational support 6. Reward and promote managers using their ability to engage employees as a key criterion 7. Insure fairness of treatment and trust in management, using a range of voice mechanisms 8. Insure extensive and effective two-way communication 9. Create a context that reinforces job security and flexible working 10. Adopt a strategic HR strategy that reflects the values of engagement and recognizes the need to integrate the components of an 'engagement system' as outlined in Steps 1-9.

Source	Findings	Suggested Practices
Halbesleben 2010[38]	• Resources are the best way to increase EE • Self-efficacy has a particularly strong positive relationship with EE	Increase self-efficacy by: • Insuring employees have challenging tasks • Recognizing successful employees • Providing support and encouragement • Reducing emphasis on competition • Enhancing control and autonomy • Developing social support systems • Making system-wide positive changes to organizational climate
Hallberg & Schaufeli 2006[13]	• EE is related but differs (overlap is not close to 100%) from job involvement & organizational commitment. • EE correlated with employee health. So did org commitment, but at a lower level. • Overall. EE had a different correlation pattern with health factors, job factors (autonomy, feedback, role overload, role conflict) and personal factors (motivation & turnover intent) than org commitment and job involvement.	Results suggest to increase EE: • Increase autonomy • Increase feedback • Reduce role conflict
Hicks, O'Reilly, and Bahr 2010[137] driving forces	EE related to • Empowerment • Financial reward • Work support • Customer focus • Intention to remain with the company • Work demands • Team leadership • Senior leadership	Use findings to create programs to manage engagement drivers.
Miralles, et al. 2015[121]	• Events' appraisal a significant predictor of positive & negative affect and state of EE. • How an employee evaluates a work event is related to EE. • These relations vary from day to day.	• Interventions to promote EE might be designed to impact on a daily basis. • There are certain times when RR needs to be fostered: ○ When introducing new tasks or processes ○ Situations characterized by high adversity. ○ Mergers & other situations requiring employees to go beyond their average level of EE

Source	Findings	Suggested Practices
Mone et al. 2011[138]	Performance management drives EE. 8 direct predictors of EE: • I am encouraged to look for ways to improve my work processes and productivity • The company communications I receive help me to understand XINC's strategy, vision • Overall, I have the resources I need to do my job effectively • [This company]'s leadership acts with the best interest of employees in mind • I am satisfied with my opportunities for career progression and promotion • I consider the total value of my compensation, benefits and work experience when I think employment • My manager is someone I can trust • My manager provides me with ongoing feedback that helps me improve my performance	• **Set performance and development goals** ○ Jointly set goals ○ Help employees understand how their work supports the overall company strategy and direction • **Provide ongoing feedback and recognition** ○ Provide a satisfactory amount of recognition ○ Provide feedback that helps improve performance • **Managing employee development** ○ Provide sufficient opportunities for training ○ Support career development efforts ○ Conduct career-planning discussions • **Conducting mid-year and year-end appraisals** ○ Conduct an effective performance appraisal discussion • **Build a climate of trust and empowerment with employees** ○ Encourage employees to be innovative and creative ○ Encourage employees to improve work processes and productivity ○ Value ideas and opinions ○ Treat employees fairly and with respectful ○ Listen to and act on needs and concerns of employees ○ Be trustworthy ○ Provide the resources and decision-making authority to perform effectively ○ Provide control over the quality of work
Musgrove, et al 2014[65]	• Revenue enhancement has a greater positive effect on service climate than cost containment. • Revenue enhancement & cost containment have a positive relation to job engagement. • Organization engagement is positively related to service climate.	• Firms should devote resources to promoting organizational engagement after hiring individuals with a propensity for EE. • Focus on revenue enhancement strategies to enhance service climate.

Source	Findings	Suggested Practices
Peccei 2013[14]	Antecedents of EE ordered by predictive power within category: **Job Resources** • Job variety • Work-role fit • Task significance • Opportunities for development • Job autonomy/control • Feedback • Social support • Leader-member exchange • Positive workplace climate • Transformational leadership • Rewards and recognition **Challenge Demands** • Problem solving • Job complexity • Time urgency • Job responsibility • Work load **Hindrance Demands** • Organizational politics • Role conflict) • Role overload • Emotional conflict • Resource inadequacies • Administrative hassles **Individual Differenc**es • Self-efficacy • Proactive personality • Optimism • Trait positive affectivity • Conscientiousness **Non-work Factors** • Family-work conflict • Recovery EE has intra-individual variation. WE is significantly correlated with outcomes: • Task performance • Contextual performance • Health (lower psychosomatic health complaints, anxiety and depression • Turnover intention	• Develop positive, resource rich environments ○ Emphasize person-job fit ○ Job discretion & autonomy ○ New learning & development opportunities ○ Systematic communication & support for employees ○ Participation in decision-making ○ Procedural justice • Progressive HRM systems ○ Systematic recruitment & selection ○ Extensive training & development ○ Extensive information sharing ○ Longer term job security • Contain & minimize hindrance demands. • Build recovery time into jobs. • Measure & evaluate EE initiatives

Source	Findings	Suggested Practices
Rich, Lepine, & Crawford 2010[16]	• EE predictive of task performance and organizational citizenship behavior	• Selecting employees with high core self-evaluations and values that fit with the organization. • Following hiring: use mentoring, enhance socialization practices, and insure that values are aligned with organizational practices.
Robinson et al. 2004[119]	Fundamental importance to EE • Quality line mgmt. • Two-wan, open communication • Effective cooperation • Focus on developing employees • Commitment to employee well-being • Clear, accessible HR policies and practices • Fairness in relation to pay and benefits • Harmonious working environment	• Senior management demonstrates that employees are values • Insure employees can voice their opinions • Act on good employee suggestions • Promote employee development • Management engages in active listening • Involve employees in decision-making • Organization shows concern about employees' health and well-being.
Rothmann, Mostert, & Strydom 2006[139]	• Showed that a 42 item Job Demands-Resources survey could be used across a variety of organizations and job types. • Factors were the same across organizations, although effect differed by organization. • Management resources are important for developing EE.	Survey results could be used to plan and implement interventions.
Saks 2006[4]	• EE related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intention to quit. • OE related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intention to quit. • There is a meaningful difference between EE & OE • EE & OE predicted by ○ Job characteristics (autonomy, task identity, skill variety, task significance, feedback from others, and feedback from the job). ○ Perceived organizational support ○ Supervisor support ○ Rewards and recognition ○ Fairness	• Focus on employees' perceptions of support they receive from organizations, e.g., programs that address employees' needs and concerns (e.g. surveys, focus groups, and suggestion programs) and demonstrate caring and support (e.g. flexible work arrangements) might cause employees to reciprocate with higher levels of engagement. • Recognize the importance of social exchange, i.e, provide employees with resources and benefits that will oblige them to reciprocate in kind with higher levels of engagement. • Recognize that EE is a long-term and ongoing process.
Sarti 2014[21]	• Learning opportunity the strongest positive predictor of WE • Co-worker support is a significant positive predictor of WE • Supervisor support a positive predictor of WE	• Determine the most suitable set of resources for any organization give that the impact of resources can vary from org to org. • Continuous attention to job design and redesign. • Provide training in feedback skills.

Source	Findings	Suggested Practices
Schaufeli & Bakker 2010[3]	• Many practitioner claims for EE are not substantiated in peer reviewed journals • Many practitioner measures of EE confound EE with satisfaction and commitment constructs and conceptualize engagement as something that "puts old wine in new bottles."	
Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova 2006[23]	• The 17-item Utrect Work Engagement Scale (UWES) could be reduced to a shorter 9-item survey measuring the concepts (vigor, dedication, & absorption) of the original, longer scale. • EE is a chronic rather than transient state.	
Schaufeli, Salanova, González-romá, Bakker 2002[15]	Support for measurement of Vigor, Dedication, Absorption measurement & definition of engagement. 17 item Engagement survey provided.	
Shantz & Alfes 2015[51]	• WE related to voluntary absenteeism • The relationship between WE and absenteeism is mediated by organizational trust and quality of the relationship between leaders and employees.	• Insure that employees trust the organization and have a high-quality relationship with their leader.
Scherbaum, et al 2010[127]	Relative importance analyses or model averaging approaches are likely the best way to identify engagement drivers. Drivers based on the recommended approaches in general order of importance: 1. Employee development 2. Organization's vision 3. Top leadership 4. Focus on collaboration 5. Focus on innovation 6. Managerial support 7. Organizational culture 8. Internal communications 9. Competitive rewards 10. Nature of the work 11. Resources & processes 12. Global orientation 13. Work-life balance	
Verbeke 2011[42]	WE is a factor that drives sales performance	Dedicated sales people should be motivated to take responsibility for their job and maintain a proactive attitude.

Source	Findings	Suggested Practices
Wollard & Shuck 2011[117]	• Individual antecedents: Constructs, strategies, and conditions that were applied directly to or by individual employees & believed foundational to EE • Organizational antecedents: Constructs, strategies, and conditions applied across an organization as to the development of EE • Different organizations will come to create an employee engagement culture in different ways, using different strategies and methods that are unique to their organization. In no literature did a one process model fit across all antecedents or strategies. • Facilitating engagement is not a fixed prescription; it's a plan unique to each organization, its culture, style, and objectives.	• Assess individual antecedents of EE • Assess organizational antecedents of EE