

Achieving Employee Sustainability through Engagement, Involvement and Empowerment – A case study

Mrs. Michelle J. Francis

Sr.Asst. Professor (Training & Consultancy) & Placement Officer,
National Institute of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Hyderabad, TS
Mobile: 9703178671, Email: michellenithm@gmail.com

Dr.D.Maheswara Reddy

Asst. Professor, Dept. of Management,
National Institute of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Hyderabad, TS
Mobile: 9666401771, Email: dmreddy70@gmail.com

Abstract: *Everyone wants to be happy and, aspire's a dream to live a better life. For an individual, that means behaving in a sustainable manner in his or her personal life. For a company, that means having a meaningful and strategic purpose and finding ways to tie that purpose into the values and day-to-day work of individual employees.*

Every person wants his or her working life to have a higher purpose that goes beyond doing a job and earning an income. Yet too many people spend most of their time in workplaces that fall short of providing that higher social purpose. Many companies are trying to resolve the tension people feel between their personal values and the best interests of the work performances, so by having a highly engaged and productive workforce; business will be benefitted achieving employee sustainability through engagement, involvement and empowerment, therefore also would be proud to play a part in bringing positive change to communities around the world.

This paper would examine how employee engagement, involvement and empowerment can have achieved employee sustainability.

Key words: *Engagement, Involvement, Empowerment and Employee Sustainability.*

Introduction: The typical reaction at many of these firms is: “Yes, it’s important, but it’s someone else’s job and I have more important things to do.”

Few companies make sure they have significant personal engagement by employees in sustainability issues. Companies have training programs, to build their future leaders that include sustainability as a core component. The presence of such champions goes a long way toward making sustainability relevant and palpable throughout the company.

Besides the financial benefits that sustainability practices like energy conservation provide, studies have found that employee retention, productivity, and overall engagement all go up. Nevertheless, it is hard for companies to operationalize sustainability goals, even when the people working for these companies, including their leaders, care about sustainability in the world. The problem is that not enough companies have yet figured out how to link their employees’ values and support for sustainability with the employees’ daily work and the company’s operations. In other words, it’s not in the *why* but in the *how* of embedding sustainability where the gap lies. This paper contrasts how leading sustainability companies succeed in making a stronger link between the values of their employees and their daily work for the two way benefit, for employer and employee.

Review of literature:

According to Robert Half, 2022, Some employees will certainly leave the organization at some point of time. But employers can at least make employees decision through providing value and support employees during their tenure at the organization. Employees are likely spread positive note about the organization and, indeed those who left the organization may rejoin to work for organization.

Achievers, 2021, HR manager need to extend techniques to impact and influence employee retention. With feedback, building a way of life of

recognition, and totally different indispensable ways in which, the organization can enhance the retention of the staff.

Objective of the study: Leading sustainability companies have another thing in common; they want to make a bigger impact by influencing a sense of unity among employees because they see that achieving sustainability is not just about themselves, or even their own company, but rather a societal issue with global implications, all of which inspires them to join in. Company's openness creates profound cultural shifts within the organization and helps to unite employees around the higher social purpose. Therefore, the objective of the study is based on:

- 1) The understanding of organizational culture of Accor Group of Hotels.
- 2) To examine how Employee Engagement; Involvement and Empowerment can bring about sustainability
- 3) Employee Happiness Index can be achieved.

Research Methodology:

- Secondary Data from Articles and Accor website
- Period of study: 2018-2021
- Sample of Accor Novotel Hotel Hyderabad Airport
- Critical evaluation of manning vs attrition 2018 – 2021

Data Analysis and Discussions:

ACCOR, A GROUP COMMITTED TO ITS PEOPLE AND ITS COMMUNITIES: Naturally Diverse, An international company with more than 266,000 employees in 100 countries from all four corners of the globe, with an incredible wealth of talent and diversity. The commitment of its people has allowed Accor to grow strongly over the last 50 years and to become a global leader in the hotel industry. Hospitality is synonymous with a human touch; where the employees are its most valuable asset.

The Accor group has been driven to promote equality in the workplace and prevent discrimination this powerful driver of collective performance. Accor's long-standing and proactive approach with diversity is structured around priorities: Gender **diversity and equality; the integration of people with disabilities; Richness of social, ethnic, racial and cultural diversity.**

Diversity & Inclusion governance: Diversity & Inclusion Commitment at an operational level, wherever Accor exists, they have been brought together under the Group Diversity & Inclusion Commitment. Accor's international network for gender equality and diversity is now called **RiiSE**. Why the 'ii'? It symbolizes women and men who are committed to the values of sharing knowledge, of solidarity and of combating stereotypes. A team of 14,000-member network on every continent and encourage the men and women, to take action for equality and diversity in the broadest sense of the term. Riising goes beyond equality—riising is about being better, getting better. To Riise is to not only be equal, but to flourish, to grow with the values that Accor Group holds dear. And a new ambition: "At AccorHotels, we all RiiSE to new heights".

Initiatives of ACCOR (Making a Positive Impact)

1970: Accor adopts its first Gender Equality at Work Charter, with the implementation of an action plan for women in the workplace.

1988: Accor is recognized for its “best environmental policy” based on its initial charter of 65 actions.

1994: Accor becomes the first CAC 40 company to create an Environment Department, recast as the Sustainable Development Department in 2000.

2006-2010: Accor creates Earth Check, the hospitality industry’s premier sustainable development program.

2008: Accor sets up the Accor Solidarity endowment fund, tasked with fighting exclusion and empowering, training and protecting the most vulnerable people.

2009: Accor launches Plant for the Planet, a global agro forestry initiative to promote greener agriculture.

2012: Gender equality becomes a Group-wide objective with the launch of its Gender Equality Network, RiiSE.

2015: Accor seals a partnership with Energy Observer, a revolutionary catamaran embodying its support for the ecological transition.

2016-2021: Accor rolls out Planet 21 – Acting Here, a corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy summed up in six commitments serving as an industry benchmark. In 2020, Accor developed a climate trajectory driven by the demands of science and compatible with the collective ambition of keeping global warming below 1.5°C. The Group also upheld its ambition of eliminating single-use plastics from the guest experience and established the ALL Heartist solidarity program for employees most affected by the health crisis.

Caring for People: Accor is a **people-centric group** in a highly labor-intensive business (tourism accounts for one job in ten worldwide). It has a responsibility to take care of the people whose work is the foundation of its business and to contribute to their development. This

applies not only to its employees, but also to all the people working right across the value chain.

Accor's corporate culture calls on every employee to be a **Heartist**; that is to do everything from the heart and to excel in their every endeavor. It gives them scope to serve guests with generosity, inventiveness, freedom and efficiency. In 2019, Accor redefined its employer promise: ***“Be limitless: Do what you love. Care for the world. Dare to challenge the status quo***

The *“Be Limitless”* employer promise brings with it a new framework for the organization and improvements to programs that already existed within the Group. It is built on the following four pillars:

Best Human Resources Practices:

1. Hiring Employee's:

- a. **Come as you are:** Accor aims to be an inclusive company and to welcome everyone, embracing the richness of their differences.
- b. **Work with purpose:** Accor wishes to give everyone the opportunity to show their personal commitment by participating in its positive hospitality programs, and by striving for sustainable development for the environment and local communities.
- c. **Grow, learn and enjoy:** Accor aims to be an international school par excellence, where everyone can leverage training and career plans tailored to their ambitions and passions to develop their expertise in hospitality and lifestyle services.
- d. **Explore limitless possibilities** For Accor, hospitality extends far beyond the walls of its hotels. The Group creates lifestyle experiences that set new trends. Hotels, restaurants, co working spaces, nightclubs, spas and start-ups at the cutting edge of technology are all part of the Accor universe offered to its employees, with no fewer than 44 brands for living, working and playing.

2. Valued & optimized teams: Offer employees the best training. Hire the best talent by leveraging a high-audience digital ecosystem. Creating Values, for many years, lifestyle, entertainment and places that nourish the soul have formed the cornerstone of Accor's development and growth strategy. Lifestyle is enjoying significant popularity amongst guests who are increasingly looking for hotel concepts that embody values and lifestyles that resonate with them. Therefore Accor also imbibes the values for not only guests but also its employees by valuing them.

3. Talent & Culture: Identifying and championing employees, managerial and cultural transformation for multi-disciplinary teams.

4. A successful social commitment: Accor focuses on sustainable development to improve performance. The Ethics & CSR Charter is the cornerstone of this commitment. It structures the Group's responsibilities and informs its environmental, social and societal policies.

5. Overall compensation policy: Accor has established a global compensation policy that is adapted to each country's local practices. It is based on five underlying principles: take into consideration the performance and potential of each employee; offer competitive compensation in relation to the relevant markets and countries; ensure that employee compensation is determined fairly; promote employee savings and share ownership; strengthen employee healthcare coverage and other benefits. During the pandemic Accor introduced a 17 days Covid paid leave to help its employee's. This was given for Covid affected persons and for quarantine.

BEST PRACTICES at Novotel Hyderabad Airport carried our 2018 - 2021

1. Combating moral and sexual harassment:
 - a) ICC - Internal Compliance Committee

- b) IWC - Internal Welfare Committee
 - c) Earth Avenger Planet 21
 - d) RiiSE Committee for Women Employees
2. Committee sexual harassment
- a) IWC - Internal Welfare Committee
 - b) Earth Avenger Planet 21
3. Health, Safety and Working conditions:
- a) First aid, Fire Fighting, Bomb threat and basic safety training sessions to every employee.
 - b) Table topic for HOD's in the presence of GM on different topics such as Terrorism attack, bomb threat, Occupational hazard etc.
 - c) Safety messages for every week
 - d) ERT (Emergency Response Team) members
 - e) OHS - Occupational Health and Safety Committee
4. Work-Life Balance:
- a) We are providing Transportation facility to every employee up to 10kms from Hotel
 - b) Cake voucher for employees during their birthdays
 - c) Annual sports for every year
 - d) Cricket, Volley Ball, Caroms, TT for free time and less Occupancy
 - e) Fun activities and games for every week to recharge and reduce the stress of employees.
 - f) Marriage Gift – Hotel Stay
 - g) City Tour for New Joiners
 - h) Team Outings
 - i) Theme Food Festivals
 - j) Accor corner for employees with free Wi-Fi
 - k) Library facility
 - l) Movie Time
 - m) Free Cobbler Service for Employees
 - n) On duty meals
5. Rewarding Performance:

- a) Employee recognition program to recognize employees every Quarter. This is designed on Accor hotels core values.
 - b) Best Employee of the year
 - c) Perfect Attendance person of the year
 - d) Best Supporting persons of the year(Committee members)
 - e) Vendor Recognition
 - f) Long Service Awards
 - g) Employee Referral Scheme
6. Training & Career Support:
- a) Smile Campaign.
 - b) Team building activities.
 - c) AELP – AccorHotels Emerging Leadership program
 - d) IELP - Emerging Leadership program
 - e) GLP – Global Leadership Program
 - f) GM Pass Program
 - g) IHMP – International Hospitality Management Program
7. Safety and Food Hygiene:
- a) Hygiene message for every week
 - b) Hygiene sessions for all new joiners by Hygiene Manager
 - c) Cleaning drives(lockers, Back offices, Hotel Surrounding areas), “Team UP to Clean UP”
 - d) Dedicated notice board for Health awareness.
8. Health and Nutrition:
- a) Heath talks and Checkups for every month
 - b) Healthy & good food habit posters in café Novotel
 - c) Dedicated GYM for all employees
 - d) Bicycle for Employees.
9. Community Relations :
- a) Supporting to ZPH School, Mamidipally & Shamshabad Donation of Books, Benches,

- b) Supporting to Nireekshna Children's (People effected with HIV) - Books, Merit Scholarships, Diagnosing Equipment.
- c) Supporting to Devnar – (Learning and care centre for visually challenged)
- d) Wall of kindness
- e) Supporting to The Nest Old Age Home groceries and cloths.

10. Environment :

- a) Save water campaign pledge
- b) Effluent treatment plant(water recycling)
- c) No bin day
- d) Best out of waste competition
- e) No print outs day
- f) Herb Garden

Table 1.1: Manning & Attrition

Year	Manning - December	Attrition %'age
2018	244	29%
2019	254	31%
2020	188	35%
2021	194	45%

Source: HR Records of Accor Novotel Airport

From the above table 1.1, it is clearly observed that the Manning and Attrition for 2018 & 2019 shows, that employee attrition was less than 31%, when their employment manning was

less than 254. This gives a significant understanding that Accor's employee engagement; involvement and empowerment activities of their best practices helps in bringing about sustainability and it helps achieve employee happiness Index. Accor Novotel Hyderabad certainly brings a change to every employee's Work-Life Balance and also ensures to have Rewarding Performance and attains employee happiness Index.

It's not enough to have sustainability champions at the top they must be cultivated at all levels in the organization. Systematic Training has led to widespread adoption of sustainability among employees. In fact, 76 percent of Accor's 1,66,000 employees feel their role at work enables them to contribute to delivering to the sustainability agenda, and about half of all new employees entering the company imbibe the ethical and sustainability policies as the primary reason for wanting to join. In a world where fewer than 20 percent of people go to work and feel happy, a workforce like Accor has almost 80 percent of people who feel engaged, and it is a competitive advantage, to their happiness.

Accor's has a high employee engagement in the co creation of sustainable practices with many employee initiatives. Accor's way of nudging behavior is by "naming and faming" people in the organization who have made a difference. This helps keep their visibility high and reinforce the idea that achievements in sustainability are meaningful for the company, it is also important to celebrate success when goals are reached or awards won. Employees need to feel they have played a part in achieving goals and recognition. It reinforces their resolve and strengthens their identification with the company.

External engagement is a critical component of transitioning to a sustainable business; it is also a key to building credibility and legitimacy, and consequently pride and identification, with employees. This fosters a sense of unity among employees because they see that achieving sustainability is not just about themselves, or even their own

company, but rather a societal issue with global implications, all of which inspires them to join in.

Openness between Employer and Employee creates profound cultural shifts within the organization and helps to unite employees around the higher social purpose. Every person wants his or her working life to have a higher purpose that goes beyond doing a job and earning an income. Yet too many people spend most of their waking hours in workplaces that fall short of providing that higher social purpose. Companies that can resolve the tension people feel between their personal values and the best interests of the business will benefit by having a highly engaged and productive workforce—proud to play a part in bringing positive change to communities around the world.

Conclusion: Every successful company shares one thing in common that is strong leadership. **Few best practices are** 1. Make every employee a Sustainability Champion 2. Co creates sustainable practices with employee's 3. "Naming and Faming" people in the organization who have made a difference. 4. External Engagement 5. Openness between Employer and Employee.

Suggestion: Create sustainability knowledge and competencies, to make every employee to be a sustainability champion, encourage healthy competition amongst employees, and showcase the higher purpose by creating a transformational change.

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