Employee engagement and recognition: A strategic tool for retention and productivity - The Business & Financial Times

Source: gnews-employee-engagement-broad | **Published:** June 09, 2025 | **PMS Relevance:** PMS RELATED | **Type:** Opinion/Commentary | **Geography:** Africa

Source URL: https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMivAFBVV95cUxNdl9wYlRKOTd3SVhrZjc5UHBKQ3A

Executive Summary

This article, authored by R. Esi Asante (PhD) and published in The Business & Financial Times, examines employee engagement and recognition as strategic tools for workforce retention and productivity, with particular reference to organisational contexts in Ghana and sub-Saharan Africa. The author argues that employee engagement — defined as the emotional and psychological commitment of employees to their work and organisation — is directly linked to recognition practices, and that both are critical determinants of organisational success. Drawing primarily on Gallup's 2024 State of the Global Workplace report, the article presents data indicating that only 23% of employees globally are engaged, costing the world economy approximately US$8.9 trillion (9% of global GDP). Key drivers of disengagement identified include generational shifts, the rise of remote and hybrid work, economic anxiety, lack of managerial support, and poor recognition cultures. The article notes that 70% of team engagement is attributable to manager behaviour. It also references research by Gallup and Workhuman (2024) linking strategic recognition to improved retention, belonging, and tenure. The article concludes by outlining building blocks for engagement — including empowerment, enablement, and connection — and highlights the need for organisations to develop purposeful recognition frameworks.

Key Insights

1. Global employee engagement fell from 23% to 21% according to Gallup 2024, with manager engagement declining from 30% to 27%, and 70% of team engagement attributed to manager behaviour.

2. Low engagement levels cost the global economy approximately US$8.9 trillion (9% of global GDP), with 62% of employees categorised as 'quiet quitting' and 15% as actively disengaged.

3. Strategic recognition is identified as an underused lever: employees in strong workplace communities are reported to be eight times more likely to feel belonging, with a 43% increase in retention and 84% increase in estimated tenure.

Practical Takeaways

- Organisations operating in Ghana and sub-Saharan Africa face documented challenges including poor management practices, inadequate communication, limited career development, and lack of recognition — all identified as barriers to engagement in the local literature.

- Recognition programs that embed company values, foster peer appreciation, and track achievements are described as components of a comprehensive retention and engagement strategy, particularly relevant as Gen Z enters the workforce and millennials move into leadership.

Frameworks Mentioned

Three Pillars of Engagement — A framework attributed to Flickinger (n/d) identifying empowerment, enablement, and connection as the three foundational pillars for building a comprehensive culture of engagement within organisations.

Critical Analysis

Strengths: The article draws on well-known and widely cited sources including Gallup's 2024 global workplace report and a Gallup/Workhuman study, giving portions of the piece empirical grounding. It usefully contextualises global engagement trends within a Ghanaian and sub-Saharan African setting, a geography underrepresented in mainstream PMS discourse. Limitations: The article contains internal statistical inconsistencies — it cites global engagement as both declining from 23% to 21% and separately states that only 23% are engaged, without clarifying the timeframe. The cost of disengagement is cited both as US$438 billion and US$8.9 trillion in different paragraphs without explanation of the discrepancy. Ghana-specific evidence relies on a small number of studies, mostly from higher education and hospitality sectors, limiting generalisability. Biases: The article is written in an advocacy tone, selectively citing statistics that support the case for engagement investment. Several sources — including Motivosity (2025), a vendor platform — are cited alongside peer-reviewed literature without differentiation. Attribution to 'Dennison and Dennison (2024)' and 'Forbes Advisor (n/d)' lacks full citation context. The article does not present counterarguments or limitations of recognition programs.

Organizational Practice

Organisations in Ghana and globally are described as implementing employee engagement initiatives including recognition programs, flexible working arrangements, peer appreciation platforms, milestone tracking, and social feed tools. Recognition programs are described as embedding company values, offering reward access, and generating reports on cultural health. Managers are described as being empowered to lead rather than micromanage, with governance models introduced to bring structure and accountability.

Strategic Implications

The article reflects a broader global trend in which organisations are repositioning recognition not as a peripheral benefit but as a core retention mechanism, particularly in response to generational workforce shifts and post-pandemic disengagement. The data cited suggests that manager capability is a primary leverage point for engagement outcomes, with implications for how organisations structure leadership development within PMS. The sub-Saharan African context highlighted in the article points to a regional engagement dynamic that diverges from global averages, suggesting that PMS frameworks developed in Western markets may require contextual adaptation for African organisational environments.

Validation Status: passed
