

Staff Involvement in the Conditions of Using Digital Management Technologies by Virtual Teams: Methods of Evaluation and Improvement

Ekaterina Kashtanova
State University of Management
Moscow, Russia
e-mail: kashtanovae@mail.ru

Rafik Ashurbekov
State University of Management
Moscow, Russia
e-mail: rafash@mail.ru

Anastasiya Lobacheva
State University of Management
Moscow, Russia
e-mail: aslobacheva@mail.ru

Abstract— The article discusses the current trends in the management of virtual teams. They appeared and began to develop rapidly in a remote form of employment. One of the key questions of the article is to answer the question of how to measure the state of involvement of members of a virtual team. Another task of the authors is to answer the question of what digital technologies allow modern managers to increase the involvement of virtual team members. In this regard, the authors of the article focus a lot of attention on finding relevant solutions to these issues. The article provides examples of modern digital methods and tools that allow you to unite members of a virtual team, track their progress, optimize tasks and help remote team members to establish effective communication and cooperation, not only business, but also informal.

Keywords— Virtual teams, staff involvement, engagement indicators, digital management technologies, remote employment.

I. Introduction

In the conditions of the dominance of digital management technologies and the transition to remote forms of employment, staff involvement becomes a significant indicator characterizing the company as interested in the well-being of its employees within the organization. The introduction of remote work is not a one-time event. Creating a functional infrastructure for remote work in a company is a more important task than most managers think. Team management becomes even more complex when it comes to managing remote workers using digital technologies.

Remote work, of course, offers many advantages, but remote management is not without its problems. When a manager and team members do not work side by side, they are likely to face various obstacles, most often related to a lack of involvement. In the McKinsey report on the state of remote work for 2022, communication and collaboration are named the biggest problems of remote work [1].

When asking how to increase the level of employee engagement, it is necessary to think over certain measurements of the magnitude of a particular level, determine the boundaries of each of them so that you can talk about observations and note the dynamics of engagement.

Let's consider the indicators that allow us, directly or indirectly, to judge the effectiveness of the company's strategy for increasing employee engagement.

At the end of the article, we will present the main digital solutions for managing remote teams.

II. The Main Part

The need for regular assessment and measurement of the state of employee engagement is due to the fact that it is considered as a powerful behavioral tool for managing the system of intra-organizational industrial relations.

Modern companies use their own indicators of employee engagement with measurable results, we will consider the most famous of them [2].

1. Indicator of net employee promotion (eNPS)

Indicator of net employee promotion (eNPS) is one of the most well-known HR indicators for measuring employee engagement. Methodology NPS (Net Promoter Score (literally - the promoter's net score)) was originally introduced to measure the level of customer satisfaction and loyalty. Since then, progressive employers have implemented it internally to get the same information from their employees. Therefore, they ask a simple question: "How likely is it that you would recommend a job in our company to a friend or colleague?"

As a rule, the question is answered on a scale from 0 to 10, where anyone who answers from 0 to 6 is considered a "detractor", answers from 7 to 8 indicate the passivity of respondents, and only respondents who showed 9 to 10 points are considered promoters.

The Net Promoter Score in this case can be determined by the formulas (1) or (2):

$$\text{Employee NPS} = \frac{\text{promoter} - \text{detractors}}{\text{total respondent s}} \quad (1)$$

$$\text{Employee NPS} = \% \text{ of Promoters (9 - 10)} - \% \text{ of Detractors (0 - 6)} \quad (2)$$

2. Voluntary turnover rate

Employees with a high degree of involvement are less likely to voluntarily leave – and this is reflected in the indicator of voluntary departure of employees from the

organization. The more satisfied an employee is, the less likely he is to be dismissed on his own [3].

3. The indicator of successful employment after a probationary period

This indicator reveals the percentage of employees who remain in the team after the probationary period, which can convincingly indicate successful adaptation processes. If employees leave after the first 3-6 months, it may mean either that they were not suitable for this job, or that the company was unable to integrate them into a virtual team.

4. Internal promotion coefficient

One of the main factors of employee engagement is the possibility of professional growth within the organization. If the company pays special attention to personnel management, then you can consider the internal hiring indicator (employees changing positions within the company) and the external hiring rate according to NPS indicators (new employees hired at the employee's suggestion), Formula (3):

$$\text{Internal Promotion Rate} = \frac{\text{total number promoted employees}}{\text{total number of employees}} \quad (3)$$

5. Employee Satisfaction Index (ESI)

ESI (Employee Satisfaction Index) – an indicator that reflects staff satisfaction with the conditions created in the organization, with mandatory completion of a questionnaire on the Gallup engagement model.

Using this indicator, organizations can measure the relationship between employee satisfaction and customer service quality. Unlike NPS, the satisfaction index is based on more than one question, but they are still answered on a scale from 1 to 10. The results may vary from 0 to 100, where a higher score indicates a more satisfied employee.

Here are some questions that should be included in the employee satisfaction survey [4].

Do you feel appreciated in your role?

Do you feel that your job allows you to use your skills?

Do you have a good relationship with your manager?

Do you think that the organization prioritizes your well-being?

6. Employee performance

We can divide employee performance indicators into four categories:

- performance indicators such as the number of errors, the promoter's net score or 360-degree feedback;
- indicators of the amount of work, such as the number of sales, the number of units produced, processing time;
- performance indicators – a balance of qualitative and quantitative indicators of employee performance;
- performance indicators of the organization – income per employee, profitability of human capital.

The analysis of work efficiency and employee engagement will be a clear signal that these two indicators are closely interrelated. Improved engagement will lead to increased productivity, and vice versa.

7. Rating

Employee engagement also has a significant impact on employer branding. Namely, what people say about an employer company on the Internet forms the basis of their opinion about how they feel about working for this or that employer. Today, a mandatory step when looking for a job is the fact that before an employee goes for an interview with an

organization, the first thing he is likely to do is "Google" it. Today, there are popular sites for employer reviews, which, if properly requested, can be used to analyze satisfaction in the workplace. Thus, focusing on employee satisfaction is not only an internal priority, but also affects the organization's ability to attract talent from outside.

8. Return on investment in employee engagement

It is also important to consider the return on investment with high employee engagement. More engaged employees are more productive and therefore have a higher return on investment. For example, Gallup, conducting a study of a chain of retail stores, was able to accurately determine the value of its most involved employees and their impact on operating income. Gallup found that a 0.1% increase in employee engagement leads to a thousand-fold increase in the annual operating income of a particular store. Gallup research has also shown that organizations that prioritize employee engagement can achieve a 20% improvement in sales [5].

9. Customer satisfaction

Imagine yourself in any scenario when you are dealing with the support service of a company the representative of which is calm, friendly and does everything possible for you.

Remote management requires a high degree of trust, as well as some effective performance monitoring systems for team members.

The right technological choice can help manage a positive and productive virtual team. Here are a few solutions that must necessarily be in the toolkit of a modern virtual team leader.

1. Project Management Software: A collaborative work management platform, such as Wrike, gives the team an idea of tasks, deadlines and assignments. Team members can easily get an idea of what each offers, as well as determine the scope of authority and responsibility to understand what work is being done in the team or throughout the organization.

2. Digital time tracking solution. If a manager is concerned about a sharp drop in productivity when the team is working remotely, a time tracking application can increase accountability and provide the manager and each team member with real data with which the work can be organized as efficiently as possible [7].

3. A video conferencing tool: the importance of personal communication should not be underestimated, even if team members have never met "live" before.

4. Instant messaging platform. The remote team needs a solution that provides operational communications. The instant messaging platform helps the team to unite and establish more meaningful connections with each other.

How to organize a team for long-term remote work?

The following recommendations are a generalization of the existing best practices in the development of remote offices in Russia and are aimed at ensuring uninterrupted cooperation and highly efficient activities [8].

1. Identification of communication channels

When forming a team, it is necessary to immediately establish the rules of communication in it regarding which communication channels should be used and for what purposes. For example:

- instant messages: random conversations and urgent requests;
- video chats: meetings, brainstorming sessions, individual checks, performance reviews;

- scheduling applications (e.g., notion or wrike: project-related questions, status updates and comments);
- email: announcements and updates for the whole team.

2. Optimization of management processes

Planning and distribution of tasks in the remote office mode cannot repeat the sequence of face-to-face practice precisely because of the lack of constant interaction between employees and between the manager and employees. And here modern planners come to the rescue. One of the great ways to create task templates, assign responsibility, identify the resources used and deadlines met is to create templates in the scheduler application, where it is possible to configure an established flow of tasks and actions that can be copied for different projects. This way, employees won't miss a single step and get a predictable, repetitive work process [9].

3. Establishing a flexible but specific work schedule

A decrease in the level of control during remote communication is most often expressed in the fact that the manager cannot take a quick look to see if someone is sitting at his desk and whether he is ready to answer the question that has arisen. It is reasonable to maintain a certain degree of flexibility in your team (especially since the majority of respondents in any research on remote work call flexible hours the biggest advantage of remote work) [10].

However, even if the remote team does not set strict hours when employees must necessarily be present near the computer, several other measures should be included in the template of the remote work agreement that will help increase the transparency of working hours [11]:

- in the rules of remote work, include a clause that team members set the status "absent" when they are not at their workplaces;
- members of the remote team must necessarily update their status in their business profiles, depending on the stage of work on the project;
- ensuring the visibility of the calendars of the team members to all its participants.

These seemingly small changes can make a big difference in terms of transparency and accessibility when managing remote workers [12].

4. Providing access to useful tools

The participants of the virtual team certainly expect that their employers will provide them with the digital tools necessary for faster and better performance of their work. Unfortunately, employers are in no hurry to invest in such useful tools, despite the fact that this fact directly affects employee engagement.

So, the manager of the virtual team, first of all, needs to make sure that the team is equipped with all the software and digital solutions necessary for the effective performance of their work. Such tools may include:

- a collaboration management platform;
- remote time management tools;
- video conferencing solutions;
- instant messaging platforms;
- online project management software;
- a single workspace where remote teams can combine all their knowledge, documents and projects in one place, replacing many other remote work tools;
- cloud storage platforms;
- a corporate wiki application that helps to create an internal knowledge base;

- digital tools for developing ideas.

Of course, among all these business tools and methods, one should not forget about social obligations to team members. In order to unite the members of the virtual team, as well as to raise team spirit, it is recommended not to forget about informal communication. Among such events, the following have gained the greatest popularity.

1. Tim-coffee. A daily time to exchange personal information on any accessible and convenient platform for everyone over a cup of coffee.

2. Zoom-flash mobs and challenges. Employees jointly go through some kind of challenge and share the results in a corporate application or chat, motivating each other. For example, they share their successes in implementing time management practices.

3. Co - creation. There are few things that contribute so much to the unity of people as joint creativity. You can also create online — you can draw common digital paintings with a team or even put on an online performance.

4. Quizzes, trivia and other intellectual duels. Team quizzes and various intellectual contests have taken root well in the online format.

5. Quizzes-dating. The main purpose of such a quiz is to get the remote team members to know each other more closely.

6. Online quests and quizzes. Another way to get a boost of energy and feel the support from the team.

7. Weekly photo sharing, which helps to maintain eye contact and tells a lot about the life of the remote team members to each other.

All these and other events provide an excellent opportunity for members of the virtual team to maintain social connections, ultimately increasing their involvement [13]. Modern digital technologies have taken a step forward, and having the right tools can ensure that a team remains effective, engaged and productive - no matter where it works.

References

- [1] Societal Economics: Increasing value and productivity through social technologies. McKinsey report. [Online]. Available: <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/technology-media-and-telecommunications/our-insights/the-social-economy>.
- [2] S.I. Gorelova. Trends in the development of hybrid offices and office-free enterprises in the Russian Federation, Materials of the XVIII International Congress with elements of a scientific school for young scientists "Sustainable development: Research, Innovation, transformation", in 2 volumes, volume 1, Witte Moscow University, Moscow, Russia, pp. 699-706., 2022.
- [3] A. A. Yuryev, "Staff involvement: a review of methodological tools", Proceedings of the XX International Conference in memory of Professor L. N. Kogan "Culture, personality, society in the modern world: Methodology, Empirical research experience", March 16-18, 2017, Yekaterinburg, Russia, pp. 243-252, 2017.
- [4] Staff Engagement: Gallup Q12 [Online] Available: <https://hurma.work/ru/blog/vovlechennost-personala-oprosnik-gallup-q12-2>.
- [5] Gallup Q12 Meta-Analysis Report. [Online] Available: <https://news.gallup.com/reports/191489/q12-meta-analysis-report-2016.aspx>.
- [6] P. Reilly, D. Brown, Employee Engagement: Future Focus or Fashionable Fad for Reward Management? World at Work Journal, no 17 (4) - pp. 37-49, 2018.
- [7] S. Ivanova. How to remotely manage employees? [Online]. Available: <https://bs-magazine.ru/2020/10/21/kak-distancionno-upravlyat-sotrudnikami>, 2020.
- [8] A. M. Saks, Antecedents and Consequences of Employee Engagement. Journal of Managerial Psychology, vol. 21 (7), pp. 600-619, 2016.

- [9] W. B. Schaufeli, A. B. Bakker, *Defining and Measuring Work Engagement: Bringing Clarity to the Concept*. W. B. Schaufeli. New York: Psychology Press, pp. 5-24, 2010.
- [10] J. K. Harter, F. L. Schmidt, T. L. Hayes, *Business-Unit-Level Relationship between Employee Satisfaction, Employee Engagement, and Business Outcomes: a Meta-Analysis*. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, vol. 87(2), pp. 268-279, 2002.
- [11] P. Reilly, D. Brown, *Employee Engagement: Future Focus or Fashionable Fad for Reward Management?* *World at Work Journal*, vol. 17(4), pp. 37-49, 2018.
- [12] E.V..Kashtanova, A.S. Lobacheva, R.A. Ashurbekov. *Technologies for managing employee engagement*. Monograph. ISBN: 5436562949 ISBN-13(EAN): 9785436562940, Publishing house: KnoRus, Moscow, 162 p., 2023.
- [13] O.L. Chulanova, O.I. Pripasaeva. *Involvement of the organization's personnel: the main approaches, basic principles, practice of use in working with personnel*. Online journal "Science Studies", vol. 8, no. 2 <http://naukovedenie.ru/PDF/127EVN216.pdf> (access is free). Cover from the screen. Yaz. rus., English. DOI: 10.15862/127EVN216, 2016.