

## **Socialising and Corporate Events a Trend in Employee Engagement at Workplace**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*In today's competitive world, 'all work and no play' at workplace have become an obsolete concept. The single most important factor in employee engagement is an employee's relationship with his or her direct manager. The matter of fact is that the employees don't intend to leave the company; they leave their managers. And they're willing to do this despite the tough economic conditions. According to the recent research, engaged employees have 20% superior performance and are 87% less likely to leave an organization. So, managers and team leaders need to become expert relationship builders and they need to learn how to nurture and sustain these relationships with their subordinates over time. Organizations should create new opportunities for the employee in learning, cooperation and leadership, and help to break down boundaries. Workplace celebrations, social get-togethers, a bit of humour and gatherings are important reasons that bring the staff together, allow them to socialize with one another more informally, and often help build and strengthen relationships. They enhance the culture of a workplace, making it fun and enjoyable. Humour, fun and social events provide a means of recognizing individual's workplace achievements, milestones and showing appreciation for the employees in a public domain. These events can be for large audiences through conventions and conferences, or smaller events such as retreats, holiday parties, private concerts and team building activities. The aim of this paper is to understand the employee's perception about the Socializing activities in terms of corporate staff events and its significant impact on the employee at the workplace, especially with reference to the Information Technology Industry in Secunderabad and Hyderabad.*

**Keywords:** Employee Engagement, Workplace Engagement, Corporate Events, Socializing Activities, Corporate Social Gatherings, Team Events, Humour.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Nobody likes the idea of going to work if there is no room for fun. It is rightly said, "All work and no play, makes jack a dull boy". An office environment doesn't make it easy for employees to feel comfortable if it invites boredom. If employees aren't comfortable at their job, they will not become engaged or go above and beyond at work. There should be a way carved out to utilize the human capital for the benefit of the organization.

It is important to understand that employee engagement activities if properly planned and executed in the office will always keep the employees relaxed and refreshed. Many researchers believe that having fun at work will increase team building, bring togetherness, relieve stress and make the employee emotionally attached to the work place, which is the essence of employee engagement Strategies and at the end of the day will reduce attrition. Employee engagement activities are absolutely essential when the employers want their employees to truly engage in what they do.

**Significance of Humour And Social Events:**

For the purpose of the article, we are using the following definition of the term "Event" - The term 'event(s)' will cover the broad range of functions such as exhibitions, conferences, awards ceremonies, Annual General Meetings, festivals, fundraisers, outdoor concerts and local community street fairs organized for the employees.

It is important to work towards improving the organization's levels of employee engagement. CEOs and senior managers need all the help they can get, in order to ensure that their staff is on the right track, especially as businesses begin to grow. After all, everyone wants to lead their team to success, and sometimes all it takes is a few fresh ideas to help rejuvenate the employees and increase the productivity to a large degree. Humour and social get-togethers as a part of employee engagement strategies can help to bring the teams together and encourage empowerment, engagement and improved performance as shown in figure 2.

**Figure 2**



**Source:** Workplace Fun Ideas, "Happy people are productive people" by David Koutsoukis (2006)

Employment engagement activities foster team spirit, increase connection between colleagues and help them interact and understand each other better. These could involve picnics where the family also takes part, social get-togethers like office parties, movie outings, or sports and cultural roundups. Other activities that foster engagement could be intra office newsletters or blogs, monthly staff awards or recognition programs etc. A little humour and social events at workplace can take employee engagement to a newer level, and give teams the motivation to go that extra mile!

**LITERATURE REVIEW:**

Roberts (2014) found that social events can increase engagement through a research conducted at Office suppliers Viking with 50 employees. The research indicated that, there was an overall 22% increase in the employee's performance when the training was combined with social events such as karaoke and bowling. Christine M. Riordan(2013)People in organizations need to work together. So, managers and employees need to foster collaboration, trust, personal relationships, fun, and support A survey by Aon Hewitt (2013) showed that employee engagement had correlation to employee satisfaction or the employees' happy quotient. Employees who were cheerful and content with the organization demonstrated good performance, created value, or had an interest in the ultimate success of their company.Frost (2013) suggested that celebrations gave the employees recognition for their accomplishments at personal level and milestones at a business level. Being recognized forthose accomplishments showed employees that companies paid attention to what they were doing at work and valued their contributions. By having celebrations for personal events, or high performance or appreciation at the client level, company showed that they took personal interest in their staff. Most people liked to be recognized for their accomplishments, and the workplace celebrations gave them a platform for providing the appreciation. Raghavan (2011)suggested that companies were striving for ways to create an emotional bond to

the organization in the employee's mind. However, for the employees every day excitement was getting diminished. For them there was no time to be wasted and were rolling along with the chain of busy life in office by attending the conferences, meeting the targets, convincing the clients etc. Formal office routines during the day would slump under tremendous work pressure. But companies who had a consistent employee engagement activity kept their workforce incredibly active all the time. It has been a well-accepted fact that an engaged employee is a productive employee. There is a direct relationship between employee engagement and employee motivation, productivity, satisfaction and retention. Hamblett & Kerrigan (2010) stated that employees should attend social gatherings with fellow workers, whether it was a company holiday party or informal get-together. Such gatherings were an opportunity to get to know the fellow workers in a more casual setting. Fluegge ER (2008), fun at work can be described as the involvement of any social, interpersonal, or task activities at work of a playful or humorous nature which provide an individual with amusement, enjoyment, or pleasure. Trulaske (2007) stated that humor - particularly joking around about things associated with the job - actually had a positive impact in the workplace. He also added that occasional humor among colleagues enhanced creativity, department cohesiveness and overall performance.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To explore the various corporate event practices adopted by the Modern HR to engage the employees.
2. To understand the employee's perception and awareness on corporate events practiced at their organization.
3. To analyze the impact of the humor and corporate events on the employee at the workplace.
4. To make suggestive recommendations to the organization in taking appropriate decisions.

### Hypothesis:

**Null Hypothesis H0:** There is no significant relationship between of humor and corporate social events and employee engagement.

**Alternative Hypothesis Ha:** There is significant relationship between of humor and corporate social events and employee engagement.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The sample is drawn from small and medium level software companies with less than 250 employees and the total population approximately amounting to 2300 employees. These companies were situated in the regions of Secunderabad and Hyderabad. Population consisted of the software company employees both technical and non-technical. The demography of the population included both male and female- team leaders, software developers, software programmers and administrative staff. The age of the population varied from 26 years to above 52 years. The Random sampling method was used to select the sample respondents. A structured questionnaire was designed with 21 items and was circulated to around 200 people both through mail and in person. However, we were able to collect around 108 complete sheets back. A structured questionnaire in a close ended format with the Likert scale was administered to identify the humour, social events and get-togethers adopted by their companies as a modern human resource approach in employee engagement at workplace. Only few generalized fun and social events were included in the questionnaire. Analysis of the study was done by identifying the major factors by using the factor analysis.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

**Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test**

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.721
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2.195E3
	df	107
	Sig.	.000

**Inference:** In this study, the factor structuring of the scale items have been identified using the principal components analysis for the extraction of the principal components. Further conducting Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy test we have tested the measure of sampling which is .721 as shown in table 1. It is indicative that there is adequate data and sample to continue the result analysis and there is significant degree of correlation among variables.

**Table 2: Principal Component Analyses**

SI No	Initial Eigen values			Total Variance Explained					
				Extraction Sums of Squared			Rotation Sums of Squared		
				Loadings			Loadings		
				Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.61	17.19	17.19	3.61	17.19	17.19	2.647	12.607	12.607
2	2.833	13.488	30.678	2.833	13.488	30.678	2.551	12.145	24.753
3	2.466	11.742	42.42	2.466	11.742	42.42	2.484	11.828	36.58
4	2.108	10.04	52.46	2.108	10.04	52.46	2.192	10.436	47.016
5	1.748	8.322	60.783	1.748	8.322	60.783	2.006	9.554	56.571
6	1.438	6.848	67.631	1.438	6.848	67.631	1.938	9.226	65.797
7	1.279	6.093	73.724	1.279	6.093	73.724	1.665	7.927	73.724

**Extraction Method:** Principal Component Analysis.

**Inference:**

A principal components analysis with Varimax Rotation was conducted as shown in table 2. Since the principal components analysis (PCA) is a technique for simplifying a data set, by reducing multidimensional data set to lower dimensions for analysis, it is appropriate to use this techniques in this study as shown in table -2. Out the 21 items tested, 17 items have reported to higher loading (factor loadings above 0.50) and 7 extracted factors. The total variance percentage for the extracted factors is 73.723 %.

**Table 3: Rotated Component Matrix**

Rotated Component Matrix"							
	Component						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Picnics or staff outing programs at regular intervals	.738						
Potluck parties, celebrates employee's birthday	.659						
Festivals and cultural events	.618						
Family get-togethers'	.501						
Celebrate theme days, dress code day, ethnic day, traditional day		.792					
Stress management programs and workshops		.882					
Indoor or outdoor games between individual and teams		.511					
Organizing charitable camps or social responsibility events			.930				
Health checkup in interval basis, gym member ship for its employees			.583				
Best employee for the month or best performer's award			.994				
Company annual meetings and enablement programs				.835			
Host conference, colloquium, conclave				.716			
Celebrate milestones				.697			
CEO spending time in face to face communication with staff				.513			
Promote and sponsors training program outside the organization					.653		
Release internal magazine/ newsletter on intranet					.858		
exhibiting contribution of teams and its members							
Invites and encourage employee suggestion / quick responses					.590		
Builds bonding between colleagues and peer group						.773	
Helps to experience participation, recognition and growth						.831	
Builds social networks, sharing knowledge and confidence							.876
Morale boost, motivation belongingness and contended with job							.616

**Extraction Method:** Principal Component Analysis.

**Rotation Method:** Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 12 iterations.

**Inference:**

The factor loadings are presented in Table 3. The factors with factor loadings 0.50 were considered as significant under each dimension. Coefficient Alpha is the basic statistic for determining the reliability of a measure based on internal consistency (Churchill, 1979). The Cronbach Alpha values were calculated for logical group of factors with factor loadings 0.50 in each component. The Eigen values of selected factors were close to 1. Of the 21 items tested, 17 items had a high loading (factor loadings above 0.50) and 7 extracted factors. Out of these factors 5 factors that denotes lower loading (factor loadings near to 0.50). They are Family get-togethers', Indoor or outdoor games between individual and teams, Health checkup in interval basis and gym member ship for its employees, CEO spending time in face to face communication with staff, Invites and encourage employee suggestion / quick responses. Hence we can denote that majority factors are related to the study.

**Table 4: Correlation**

		Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Family get-togethers',	Pearson	1	-.015	.139	.234"	.228"
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N					
Indoor or outdoor games between individual and teams,	Pearson	-.015	1	.415"	.191"	.072
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N					
Health checkup in interval basis, gym member ship for its employees,	Pearson	.139	.415**	1	.424**	.116
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N					
CEO spending time in face to face communication with staff,	Pearson	.234'	.191'	.424**	1	.018
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N					
Invites and encourage employee suggestion / quick responses	Pearson	.228*	.072	.116	.018	1
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N					

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Alternative Hypothesis Ha:** There is significant impact of corporate social events and employee engagement.

**Inference:**

To check for discriminant validity we conducted a correlation matrix as shown in table 4. An analysis of the correlation matrix indicates that whether the factors correlate with selected questions are found to be slightly or moderately correlated. Table 4 shows that Factor 1 shares slightly significant correlation and is negatively correlated with Factor 2, e Indoor or outdoor games between individual and teams. Factor 2, has slightly significant correlation with Factors 3, 4, and 5 I, e Health checkup in interval basis, gym member ship for its employees, CEO spending time in face to face communication with staff, Invites and encourage employee suggestion / quick responses. Hence the organizations need to introspect on factor 1. Hence we denote that factors 2, 3, 4, and 5 are slightly correlation with the other 17 mentioned factors.

**T-Test:**

T test is suggested to find out the most significant factor among the extracted factors.

Null Hypothesis:H0: Accept the hypothesis analysis if the calculated value is less than the table value (factor is more significant which is having higher loading value)Alternative Hypothesis: Ha Reject the null hypothesis.

**Table 5: T-Test**

	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	<b>Mean Difference</b>
Family get-togethers',	0.6894	108	.5521	4.97222
Indoor or outdoor games between individual and teams	0.7968	108	.2871	5.92593
Health checkup in interval basis, gym member ship for its employees.	0.5589	108	.0326	4.86322
CEO spending time in face to face communication with staff.	0.5343	108	.5219	3.98148
Invites and encourage employee suggestion / quick responses	1.8033	108	.6829	4.76333

**Inference:**

The following can be denoted from observing the above table that Factor 1 (T value is 0.6894 ~ calculated value .5521), Factor 2(T value 0.7968 is ~ calculated value.2871), Factor 3(T value is0.5589 ~ calculated value .0326), Factor 4 (T value is 0.5343 ~ calculated value.5219), Factor 5 (T value is 1.8033 ~ calculated value .6829). Here we denote that factors: Family get- togethers', Indoor or outdoor games between individual and teams, Health checkup in interval basis, gym member ship for its employees, CEO spending time in face to face communication with staff, Invites and encourage employee suggestion / quick responses share are moderate correlation with the other factors.

**FINDINGS:**

The study reveals the following findings-

1. Out of the 21 factors designed to find the impact of humour and social events on corporate IT professionals as a modern human resource approach in employee engagement at workplace, we denote that 17 factors received higher level significance at employee's outset and 5 factors needs to be introspected by the officials for improvement.
2. It can be implicated that Family get-togethers were occasional and received less prominence.
3. It is found that there was less emphasis on conducting Indoor or outdoor games between individual and teams as a part of employee engagement.
4. It is found that initiative on Health checkup programs, gym membership for its employees also was underplayed.
5. Most CEO's efforts to spend time communicating face to face with staff were also less evident.
6. Management practices to invite and encourage employee suggestion / quick responses were given less weightage.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

1. It is suggested that family get-togethers have to be incorporated as an essential part of the engagement strategies where ever possible. It gives morale boosting to the employees, when they share the joy with the families.
2. Though most companies usually have regular social gatherings and parties to encourage informal meetings within colleagues, group sports activities and outings must also be encouraged. These outings and participating in sports together helps employees to connect and communicate better.
3. Organization should consider that their employee's health and safely are also a priority for them, they can conduct Health Checkups, provide Gym Member Ship for its employees to keep the employee fit and healthy.
4. A word from CEO of the company is a matter of honour and tons of motivation for an employee. It is suggested that even if company CEOs are unable to spend time in face to face communicating with staff; they can address them through the channels of a note in the employee's mail box, encouraging, recognizing their contributions or token of appreciation or projecting the organizational milestones.
5. Inviting and encouraging Employee suggestion / quick responses on a regular basis will create a feeling of participative spirit in an employee. Recognizing the best suggestion in public can boost the morale of the employee.

**CONCLUSION:**

John Cleese said that "If you want creative workers you must give them enough time to play".It must be remembered that there is no 'one best way' to have fun, as every organization, and every individual within that organization, will have a different concept of what fun is. It is important to remember how best getting to know the people you work with makes the job enjoyable. It stimulates a healthy work culture and cultivates trust within the group. People enjoy working with those who are familiar or comfortable to work with. The

productivity and performance level increases in a friendly workplace, generates better networking opportunities for employees and accelerates the understanding of work dynamics within different divisions of the company. Unfortunately, in a time when most employees feel the need to belong in order to perform their best, many organizations do not value or encourage informal networks. Encouraging your employees to develop relationships within the organization will not only go a long way in creating a social, fun atmosphere, but also make your employees feel as if they belong to something more than a 9 to 5 job. Management or HR personnel can put forward a few proposals on social outings and get-togethers to the employees and see which activities they enjoy the most. With cultural diversity increasing in all workplaces it is important to be sensitive to the employees' culture and liking.

#### **SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDY:**

IT industry is dynamic in nature with new updates, new technologies and new developments. IT professionals as observed, tremendously goes through stress, work pressure, client delivers, meeting target lines. The Challenge before the HR is to incorporate Humour and social events in a more significant manner and innovate new strategies to engage the employees at workplace.

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