

CAN YOU DRIVE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE & ENGAGEMENT THROUGH SELF-SERVICE?

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Report Highlights

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Half of companies are vested in offering self-service tools for their HR services.

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More than 80% of organizations think that HR service delivery is important to employee satisfaction and engagement.

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45% of companies have a process in place to gauge the satisfaction of employees with HR services.

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61% of companies have three or more HR systems in place.

This Research Report explores the impact of efficient, accessible HR self-service tools on the employee experience and, ultimately, employee engagement. The report also addresses action points to consider when diving into self-service, employee experience, and engagement.

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50% of companies indicated that improving access and empowering employees through self-service tools is a top priority.

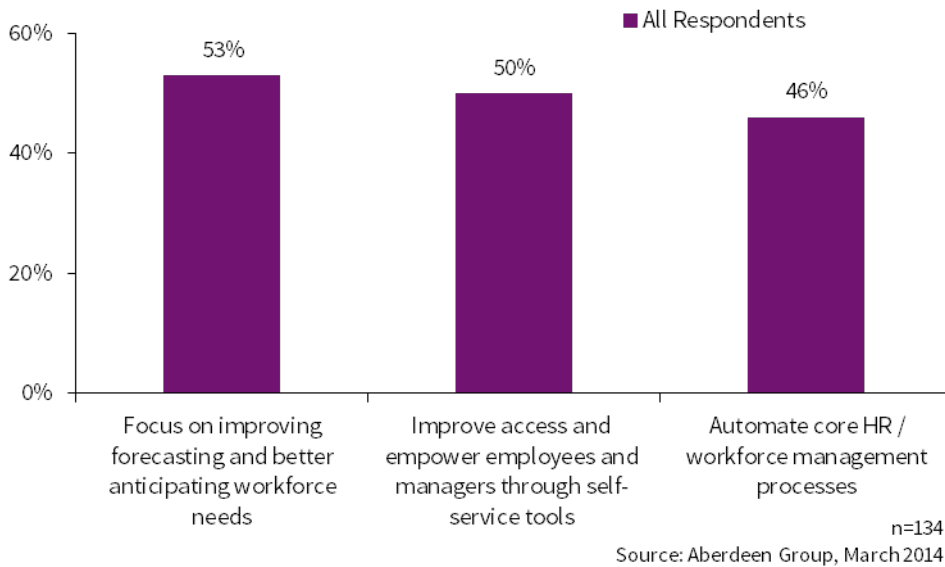
Employees are the lifeblood of companies; they support customers, their actions lead to revenue and improved performance, and they can develop into the leaders of the future - and companies benefit tremendously because of them. However, in order to be that lifeblood, employees must know that they are appreciated and are of the utmost importance to their business's success. A great starting point can be as simple as providing employees with easy access to their personal and professional workforce data; but allowing employees to access, alter, and update their personal and work-related information on their own can lead to better employee engagement and satisfaction, as well as improved data accuracy. Such an approach, often known as self-service, continues to grow as companies strive to enable their employees to make changes on their own, and empower them to be in charge of their own information.

Prioritizing Self-Service

Keeping employees engaged and motivated with their work is paramount to their productivity as well as to their general satisfaction. But keeping them satisfied with their employer is a bit more multifaceted. Notably, half of companies from Aberdeen's recent Core HR / Workforce Management survey indicated that one of their top priorities for 2014 is to improve access and empower employees through self-service tools (Figure 1).

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Figure 1: Self-Service is a Key Driver of HR Investment



This is a marked improvement from just two years ago, as companies are now more than twice as likely to cite focus on employee self-service as a top priority (50% vs. 22%). Making information accessible online makes much of the information-gathering process significantly easier for employees. Instead of needing to contact an HR representative or even feeling like they are bothering their managers to get the information, self-service tools empower employees. So whether it's updating their healthcare coverage, checking their remaining vacation time, or seeing how many hours they worked the week before, the ability to obtain all of that information is important to employees and many companies think that such accessibility also has an impact on their employees' overall experiences. Yet despite such an increase in attention to employees' ability to access vital information, there's still work to be done.

Understanding Self-Service for You and Your Employees

Improving employee access to self-service tools is a high priority for many companies, which bodes well for employee satisfaction and engagement. But just how important is the method of

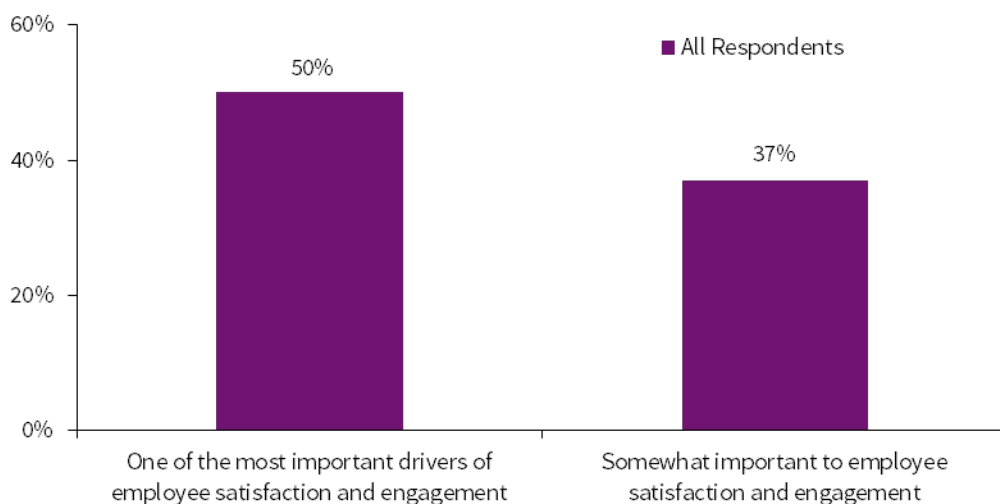
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delivery to companies? To begin with, self-service tools benefit the company, just as they benefit the employee. Self-service can reduce costs associated with printing and sharing necessary documents for HR services. Putting access in the hands of the employee also cuts down on the amount of time spent by other employees, whether that is HR personnel or managers, to obtain those necessary records. Even further, companies likely experience fewer errors in data entry and recording when employees are in charge of their own personal information.

Considering the potential value-add of using self-service for both the company and employee, how important do companies think HR service delivery is to employee satisfaction and engagement? Turns out that over 80% of organizations think that HR service delivery is important to employee satisfaction and engagement, and half of organizations think it's one of the most important drivers (Figure 2).

Figure 2: HR Service Delivery's Role in Employee Engagement



n=134

Source: Aberdeen Group, March 2014

Note: a combination of 13% of companies indicated plays minor to no role

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There certainly are other major factors that drive employee satisfaction and engagement, including salary, benefits, work-life balance, challenged by / interested in work, and beyond. But no matter how engaging the work, when HR services go awry, it can be an engagement killer. The first time your healthcare benefits are not implemented correctly, or there's a payroll error, it begins to affect trust, which can ultimately erode the employer/ employee relationship. But despite its importance, just 45% of companies have a process in place to gauge the satisfaction of employees with HR services, while 36% plan to establish a process, and 14% have no plans to do so. Companies that seek out the opinions and general satisfaction of their employees with their HR services can more easily determine whether they need to make further investments or make changes to enhance the employee experience.

No matter the industry, the value of a high quality employee experience is well known. But when it comes to driving engagement and satisfaction with HR service delivery, there are certainly a few gaps. In Aberdeen's recent workforce survey, 60% of companies indicated that they believed their employees' impressions of HR functions were 'somewhat efficient' (on a scale from 'very efficient' to 'very inefficient'), while only 15% indicated that HR service delivery was considered to be 'very efficient.' To have a ranking of 'somewhat efficient' dominate employees' perception of HR functions is certainly not where businesses want to be. Companies looking to bolster their overall employee experience, which can assist with retaining top employees and appealing to new ones, must rethink their methodology for HR service delivery.

What's the Game Plan?

So what can companies do in order to improve employee experience and enhance HR service delivery? As of Aberdeen's

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Only 56% of companies have an employee self-service portal available to employees in order to manage their information and benefits.

recent workforce study, 56% of companies have an employee self-service portal available where employees can update records, enroll in and modify benefits, check pay-stubs, view hours / time worked, request personal or paid time-off, and more. Such a resource can ease the accessibility and use of HR services and make for more engaged employees. It can also reduce the need for HR's or a supervisor's assistance, which provides such personnel more time to focus on other responsibilities. Allowing employees to use online accessible tools / portals to conduct such activities on their own is becoming more popular than the manual, more traditional process of contacting HR or a supervisor. In fact, 61% of companies indicated that they've enabled their employees to view hours worked online instead of requiring them to contact their managers or HR to get that information (Table 1).

Table 1: Transitioning HR Services Away from HR

Tasks accessible via current HR systems	Available online via browser	Manual - must contact HR / supervisor
Viewing hours or actual time worked	61%	31%
Updating employee records	60%	42%
Viewing schedules	58%	38%
Requesting leave / paid time-off (PTO)	56%	46%
Enrolling in or updating employee benefits information	54%	42%
Accessing retirement account balances and information	54%	28%

As depicted above, having these popular activities, such as requesting PTO, updating benefits, and their engagement, such as viewing work schedules and actual time worked, available online instead of through HR or an employee's supervisor, ensures that employees can remain up-to-date on their

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information, which can have an impact on their satisfaction. Notably, viewing hours or actual time worked has an effect on how much employees get paid on a week by week basis; updating employee records determines where paychecks and new health insurance information is sent, as well as who to contact in case of emergency; finally, being able to view schedules determines when (and possibly where, as applicable) employees need to be at work.

But this expectation of accessibility and ease of use in the enterprise isn't a random occurrence. Instead, it coincides with an increasing trend wherein employees expect their companies to offer similar services and accessibility to their professional data that they have at home with their personal information. This consumerization of enterprise technology is here to stay as employees begin to expect IT accessibility and quality in the workplace. Companies vested in the employee experience benefit from being proactive and offering employees self-service, as opposed to having to rely on HR representatives or managers. It's not just about making these resources accessible online either; the ability to view and update personal and professional records on mobile devices has become increasingly available.

While making such resources self-service accessible goes a long way for the employee experience and engagement, remember that it takes just one straw to break the camel's back. One way to definitely hinder the success and impact of HR self-service is to make the resources inaccessible. Notably, 61% of companies have three or more HR systems in place. This means that in order to find out hours worked, request time off, view benefits information, see the upcoming work schedule, and to update personal records, most employees need to sign into multiple systems just to have the necessary information. This kind of

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rigmarole doesn't empower employees; instead, it can be that metaphorical straw that hinders employees.

Key Takeaways

With self-service access for HR services in place, companies empower employees to control their own schedule and better track their own personal information. What's more, on the employer end, self-service access means higher efficiency and improved accuracy for updating and tracking employee information. Don't make the process harder than it needs to be - enable employees however possible to easily access their information on their own.

For more information on this or other research topics, please visit www.aberdeen.com.

Related Research

[*Translating High Potential into High Performance*](#);
April 2014

[*HCM Trends 2014: Developing a Critical Eye for Talent*](#); January 2014

[*Employee Performance Management: Creating a High-Performance Culture*](#); June 2013

[*Workforce Management 2012: Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Engagement*](#); July 2012

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