Employee engagement in practice: examining the implementation of iMatter

Dr Sarah Pass: Sarah.Pass@ntu.ac.uk

Research Team: Derek Watling, Dr Nadia Kougiannou, Dr Maranda Ridgway, Catherine Abe

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Who are we?

- Engage for Success
  - Line Manager Thought and Action Group (TAG)
  - Behavioural Science Thought and Action Group (TAG)

Focus of the session

- Thoughts and feedback
- Next steps

Focus of research

- *Who* is responsible for developing and implementing engagement initiatives?

- *What* role do key stakeholders have in implementing and sustaining employee engagement initiatives?

- *What* are the challenges to implementing and maintaining engagement initiatives?

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What we have done so far

- Conducted **interviews** and **focus groups** with almost 70 respondents across the public sector

- 33 interviews conducted at NHS Scotland (so far!):

  - SAS (10)
  - GJF (8)
  - Operational Leads (8)
  - NES (5)
  - NSS (2)

- Semi-structured interviews with **key stakeholders** (Senior professionals, HR professionals, Line managers, Employees, Unions and Engagement Champions)

Initial Findings

- Everyone's responsibility

- Different stakeholders have different roles

- Relationship and interactions not an equal balance

- Where are the unions?

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Engagement is Everyone's Responsibility

- **Senior Management - catalyst**

  'unless the person at the top are fully engaged and visible and motivating in their own right, and leading by example, then you will find it very difficult to get right down and to reach the people who matter...there has to be a level of physical buy in.'

- **HR – facilitator**

  'support and provide skills, provide encouragement, and share learning'

- **Unions - enabler**

  'wouldn't be able to take this forward without their input, or their support in it'

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Engagement is Everyone's Responsibility
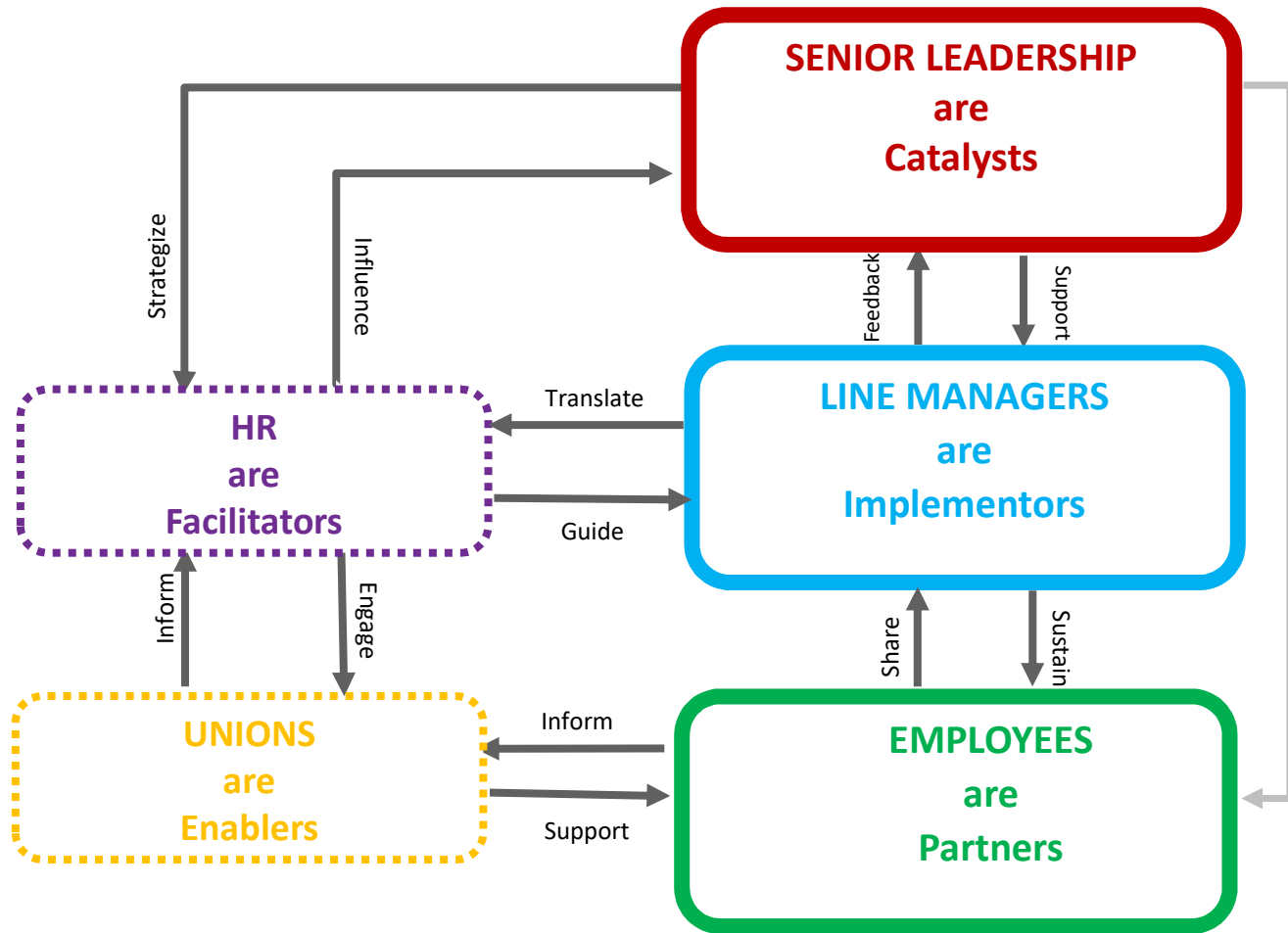
- **Line Manager - implementor**

  'senior managers might be sitting there and designing or talking about how they're going to do things, [it is] ultimately [line managers] who are left to actually drive that change forward and drive and engage with the staff'

- **Employees – partner**

  'Managers need to engage their staff, but staff need to engage with the managers to actually get a good working relationship'

  'you can't force someone to be engaged'

Roles and Relationships in the successful implementation of engagement initiatives

SENIOR LEADERSHIP
are
Catalysts

Strategize

Influence

Feedback

Support

Inspire

HR
are
Facilitators

Translate

LINE MANAGERS
are
Implementors

Guide

Inform

Engage

Share

Sustain

UNIONS
are
Enablers

Inform

EMPLOYEES
are
Partners

Support

Pass et al., (2019)

Everyone has a role

- **Line managers** were the medium between different stakeholders, and the implementers of engagement initiatives.

- **HR's** role was to facilitate the process and transactional aspect of employee engagement

- **Senior management** need to be the advocate of engagement and are accountable for leading and driving it.

- **Union** representatives supported and encouraged engagement between front-line staff and organisational initiatives.

- Engagement required **employees** to be partners and engage in initiatives.

If roles are not fulfilled…

- 'Becomes a **tick box**'

- 'Not taking **ownership** or taking **accountability** or managers being responsible'

- 'I don't know that culturally some senior staff in the organisation understand fundamentally what this project is about'

- 'We say that everybody matters and then our **actions do not underline** that. Everybody becomes busy-bee-busy and perhaps that's even worse than never having tried to do it at all'

- Lack of 'action', results in **lack of engagement** with iMatter

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Going forward…

- **Limitations:**
  - Limited interviews with front-line staff involved in iMatter
  - Focus on Special Boards not Geographical

- **Going forward:**
  - More interviews and/or focus groups with front-line staff?
  - Interviews with staff in Geographical Boards?
    - » OR
  - Write up final report and feed into large scale project involving behavioural science?

Thank You

Sarah.pass@ntu.ac.uk