The notion of increasing levels of employee engagement in determining or at least influencing work activities and organisational decision-making is not a new idea. The history of EIP in general terms is worth considering, as is the history of particular techniques, and analyses of the contemporary context shaping EIP research. Finally, perhaps the ultimate question – the effect of EIP schemes on organisational performance and employee well-being indicators – also demands attention. Rather less explored are the factors that distinguish effective schemes from ineffective ones. This is our focus in this chapter.

The chapter proceeds as follows. We begin with a short summary of the definition debate over EIP before setting EIP within the wider strategic HRM agenda. Next, we expand upon Glew and colleagues' framework for understanding the factors impacting upon EIP schemes, to help us order the literature in a coherent fashion. In so doing, we advance the idea that EIP schemes can be studied according to life-cycle effects. Accordingly, the rest of the chapter covers the factors that determine the 'birth', early development, final design, longevity and the ultimate effectiveness of EIP schemes.