

LGO2222 Human Resource Management in LGO.

Collect and Rearrange By
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Commitment and Employee Engagement

Chapter 14.

Engagement vs. satisfaction

•A satisfied employee might say:

"I'm extremely satisfied with my job. I don't have to do anything, and I make a lot of money."

Three categories of engagement

• Engaged:

- These employees work with passion and feel a profound connection to DHSS. They drive innovation and move the organization forward.

• Not Engaged:

- These employees are "checked-out" – sleepwalking through their workdays. They are investing time, but not much energy or passion in their work.

• Actively Disengaged:

- These employees aren't just unhappy at work, they're busy acting out their unhappiness. Each day, these employees undermine everything their engaged colleagues work to accomplish.

Engaged employees are...

- Committed to the success and the public image of DHSS and have a vested interest in the company's success and are both willing and motivated to perform to levels that exceed the stated job requirements.
- Psychologically loyal - likely to stay with their organization.
- Proud of their workplace and have greater ownership of their contributions.
- Passionate about their contribution to the mission of public health.
- More likely to invest discretionary effort (time, energy and money) in their work, eliciting employees' highest productivity.
- Your best source of new ideas.
- More likely to conduct themselves in a safe, respectable manner and less likely to have accidents on the job, less likely to steal, etc.
- More likely to enjoy coming to work each day.
- Open to change.
- Supportive of their colleagues.
- Focused on the big picture.

5

Times of change = opportunities for "human" resurgence

- Now is a good time for the Department to focus on engagement, because the people who work here are already more aware and more attuned to their changing work environment.
- Some employees are trying to figure out how things will work from here forward.
- Some employees are trying to figure out how to stop the change from happening to themselves or their work group.
- Some employees are trying to effectuate and embrace as much change as possible.
- The "walking dead" may be momentarily outnumbered.

6

How to Improve Engagement

- Provide tools, resources and equipment in abundance.
- Enhance the work environment in any way possible.
- Reward and recognize the efforts of others in a way that's meaningful to the individual.
- Establish fair performance goals.
- Communicate clear expectations.
- Regularly clarify priorities and offer individualized feedback.
- Delegate work to engaged employees according to their interests and talents.
- Support skill development and learn to manage talent.
- Actively help employees build meaningful long-term careers.
- Listen to employees, share your insights and experience.
- Work to increase transparency wherever possible.
- Promote core organizational values and reinforce them through management behaviors.

7

Key Drivers

- Care
- Autonomy
- Connection and interpersonal relationships
- Mastery and growth
- Shared goals and expectations
- Purpose and significance
- Play
- Inspired excellence

8

Common engagement mistakes

Obsessing about objective measurements.

- Surveys can be helpful in identifying pockets of low or high engagement, but they can have the unintended effect of making employee engagement an end, rather than a means.
- Engagement, alone, is like motivation without ability.
- Don't confuse a tool with a strategy.

9

Common engagement mistakes

Focusing on employee engagement as a stand-alone topic.

- Although engagement may be best understood, theoretically, in isolation, it has to be embedded in the context of our daily work, our mission and our strategic planning in order to *do* anything.
- HR professionals work with Department leadership teams now in order to help ensure that adequate human resources are in place at the right time, with the right skills to deliver our desired results. If HR staff are mindful of workforce trends and macro-issues, as well as the concept of employee engagement, they can be very effective at helping to steer conversations and keep engagement in its proper place.

10

Common engagement mistakes

Thinking in terms of "buy-in."

- By not forcing "buy-in," there is less likelihood of unintentionally engaging what we don't want: opt-out from those employees who are disengaged, or push-back from those who are actively acting out their disengagement.
- The most effective approaches at facilitating engagement are those that create the conditions where it can exist and those that somehow attempt to harness its energy.

11

Factors that inhibit improvement

- Old data. Immediate feedback is far superior.
- Compare your results to the best results, not to the average.
- Confusing or conflicting messages about what's most important distracts people and disturbs their focus.
- Anything that threatens or jeopardizes the anonymity of an individual respondent.
- Disinterest among the highest levels of supervision.
- Adopting a "rules" approach to building engagement (don't attempt to foster it through incentives).

12

Actions steps for improvement

- Set goals.
- Develop an action plan.
- Share the plan.
- Monitor, support and celebrate progress.
- Set high standards of comparison.
- Re-survey, refine and repeat the process.
- Share results (increase transparency).

13

Employee engagement in a Government Setting

- It bears mention that the political climate of the last several years (with its 51% vs. 49% elections) has not made it easy to be a public servant.
- Heated rhetoric about the role of government has generated criticism not only of the government, but of the “faceless bureaucrats” that deliver government services.
- This climate has put our Department leaders and managers in a difficult situation, seeking ways to motivate their teams while enduring criticism and suffering the continual loss of resources.
- A proven way to respond to this type of situation is by improving the overall level of employee engagement – those heightened employee connections to the work, the organization, the mission, and the co-workers who help to accomplish it all.

14

Employee engagement in a government setting

Attacks on the state government, and on government employees, negatively affect engagement.

- In response, Department leaders need to aggressively and publicly defend public service whenever possible.
- This includes publicizing agency successes and the resulting benefits to the public.
- Putting a face on the government helps to counteract the “faceless bureaucrat” stereotype, and championing the mission(s) of the Department boosts employee engagement.

15

Employee engagement in a government setting

Political leadership changes frequently, and that can negatively affect employee engagement in the Department.

- Elected / appointed leaders with brief tenures, short-term perspectives and politically-driven policy agendas can block fundamental drivers of engagement, such as:
 - Employee pride in their agencies
 - Satisfaction with leadership
 - Opportunity to offer input on decisions
 - Tools to perform well at work
- Career managers and supervisors have to provide strong, stable leadership – managing not just down, but also up.

16

Employee engagement in a government setting

The goals and the impacts of government work don't always lend themselves to identification and measurement.

- Department managers need to respond by clearly articulating the long-term mission, values, goals and impacts of their agencies, then help employees see the connections between their day-to-day work and those goals.
- That can't be done effectively in the absence of a clearly-articulated mission and organizational values.

17

Employee engagement in a government setting

Complicated, inefficient, rule-bound, irrational decision-making kills employee engagement.

- The political agendas that help to shape government agencies also drive decision-making, creating a complicated and seemingly subjective decision-making process, which constantly works against employee engagement efforts.
- To compensate, managers *must* involve employees in decisions about how to implement policies and improve work processes, and help those employees to understand, to the degree possible, the *why* of politically-based decision-making.

18

Employee engagement in a government setting

The government enjoys a more mature, better-educated, slightly-more "white collar" workforce.

- Compared to the private sector, public entities employ a larger percentage of employees over the age of 45, and a lower percentage of employees under the age of 30.
- In 2010, 52% of government employees in the U.S. had earned at least an undergraduate degree, compared to only 34% of those employed in the private sector.
- Better-educated employees tend to have higher expectations regarding their autonomy at work and their ability (and need) to make a difference. Managers have to work hard to meet their need to be engaged.
- Managers need to understand that different generations of employees have different needs and perspectives. The ability to create an environment conducive to the engagement of all employees is a critical skill now.

19

Employee engagement in a government setting

Government personnel systems are famously inflexible.

- To overcome these barriers to employee engagement, managers need to:
 - Emphasize agency mission and impact, and also provide non-financial recognition.
 - Embrace workplace flexibility, including allowing employees to work remotely and adopt alternative work schedules.
 - Use probationary periods to identify and weed out people who do not fit well with the organization.
 - Be clear about performance expectations and deal with employees who do not perform.

20

Considerations for the department specifically

- Today, in many organizations, training at the manager level is about workforce development: providing managers with essential tools, resources and content to help them engage staff. (And it's also largely about increased productivity, which is one outcome of engagement.)
- Our managers need somewhere to look in order to find help in establishing a culture where employees are encouraged to use their hearts and their minds at work every day.
- More and more jobs are being defined by focusing on their contributions (in our case, that could be to the Sections, Divisions and Department and to the public). It's a subtle shift away from defining the "how" of the job (which focuses on tasks, activities and processes) toward the "why" of it (by focusing on its unique contributions) and the "what" (meaning key areas of accountability). We're in a period of retirement and recruitment.

21

Considerations for the department specifically

- People want to do worthwhile work – particularly those in public service. They want to be a part of something bigger than themselves. And this is true for all generations, but it's at the very top of the list for Millennials.
- The purpose, values, and mission of the Department could help to provide this meaning. A strategic plan should enable people to envision ways to get there.
- To help facilitate higher levels of engagement and a greater awareness of employee engagement throughout the Department, it may be useful to develop some type of communication strategy.

22

Key take-away points

- Compensation is important, but it isn't everything.
- In order to increase levels of engagement, managers need to understand engagement, its drivers and their individual employees.
- There are specific things you can do to help improve the engagement of your employees.
- Supervisors play an active role in engaging the workforce through various non-financial means. Their actions often lead to better performance and happier employees who will advocate for the government and the public both.

23

Things to remember about employee engagement

- It's a personal choice, not something that can be imposed.
- It comes from an emotionally-driven decision to be loyal to an organization.
- The work of leaders, managers and supervisors is to create the conditions in which engagement can occur, then provide people with the opportunity to make the engagement choice – it's about facilitating a *culture* of engagement.
- We begin by engaging leaders – senior managers from the top-down, and peer leaders from the bottom-up. People become "activated" and pass it on.

24