

Employee Engagement – What You Need to Know Now

Imagine you're the Captain of a commercial fishing boat with 10 fishermen trawling for tuna. Just three fishermen are busy deploying the outriggers, hauling in the nets and chilling the catch, five are taking in the sunshine, talking with friends and waving to other boats as they pass by and two are at work trying to knock a hole in the bottom of the boat and sink it. Hard to catch many fish this way – much less build a sustainable fishing business. Yet, this is the dilemma that most businesses and this Sea Captain are confronted with today.

According to Gallup's research touching 150,000 workers – people in all states and industries:

- **Only 30% of employees are actively engaged in their work**
- **50% are not engaged**
- **and nearly 20% are actively disengaged**

Said another way, 70% of workers are disengaged from their employers at work.

They go on to categorize employees into three main groupings:

The Three Types of Employees

- 1) ENGAGED (30% of US workers)** employees work with passion and feel a profound connection to their company. They drive innovation and move the organization forward.
- 2) NOT-ENGAGED (52% of US workers)** employees are essentially “checked out.” They’re sleepwalking through their workday, putting time, but not energy or passion into their work.
- 3) ACTIVELY DISENGAGED (18% of US workers)** employees aren’t just unhappy at work; they’re busy acting out their unhappiness. Every day these workers undermine what their engaged co-workers accomplish.

Employee Engagement: *the level of commitment and involvement an employee has with their work and their company*

The lack of *employee engagement* translates into a half-a-TRILLION-dollar problem in just the US alone.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR ACTION

As the remnants of the “great recession” and the fight to just “survive” continues to fade in the minds of corporate leaders, attention to building a stronger, more profitable and resilient company is once again front and center. At the core of this attention is the chorus of 78% of corporate leaders saying that employee engagement is both an “urgent and important priority” (Deloitte). Employers want growth and employees are the main drivers.

Contrast today's thinking with that of business leaders a decade or so ago, who dismissed the notion that there are clear links between employee engagement and an organization's overall success. These leaders of old, paid a lot of attention to process and very little to people.

RESEARCH CONFIRMS

Well respected research firms like Blessing White, Deloitte, Gallup and many others conclude that most core business measures including: productivity, profitability, safety incidents, customer satisfaction, quality, employee retention, and absenteeism are **all positively impacted by higher levels of employee engagement**. Gallup's recent polling demonstrates that the impact on these key measures is not just marginal but huge!

Engagement effect on Key Performance Indicators:

- **Productivity 21% higher**
- **Profitability 22% higher**
- **Safety Incidents 48% lower**
- **Customer Satisfaction 10% higher**
- **Defects 41% lower**
- **Employee turnover 25% - 65% lower**
- **Absenteeism 37% lower**

*median outcomes between top and bottom quartile teams

“Employee engagement is not a “program” but rather an organizational culture that values the intelligence, experience and advice provided by the people that do the work.”

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

Genuine employee engagement is more than a flavor of the month initiative that fades slowly in the sunset or when money gets tight. In fact, employee engagement is not a “program” at all but rather an organizational culture that values the intelligence, experience and advice provided by the people that do the work. And companies considered to be the “best of the best” have learned how to unleash this wellspring of talent, experience and innovation in a structured way that produces incredible results.

So you ask, what do these “best of the best” do to create and nurture this culture of engagement? Based on experience at over 3000 work sites where Competitive Dynamics International has launched employee engagement initiatives through their MDW program, they tell us : “we’ve seen huge successes and yes, the occasional failure, and what we have come to learn is that there are essentially 5 key elements in establishing and sustaining a culture of genuine employee engagement” They are:

1. **Leadership:** Employee engagement requires strong leadership. Leaders across the business need to understand that engaging employees is not an option but a key component of their corporate strategy and ultimate success. Developing a culture that values and listens to its employees takes time, patience and commitment. Leaders must walk the talk.
2. **Goal Alignment:** A clear line of sight between the business goals of the organization and the work employees perform must be established. Employees want to contribute and yearn to understand what the organization needs from them. Alignment requires good communications and business specifics to enable employees to make good decisions.
3. **Accountability:** Employees desire feedback. They wish to know how well they are doing and how their work impacts the overall results of the organization. Employees want and need goals and measures and the support to achieve them.
4. **Recognition:** People in every organization wish to be appreciated for the good work that they do. This is not about money but recognition for work well done.

5. **Personal Growth:** Engaged employees long for the opportunity to use their skills and develop new ones. Providing opportunities for growth and learning significantly enhance worker's commitment to their employer. "Anyone can buy machines, people make the difference. "
*(*CDI's first-hand experience is broadly supported by research of Blessing White, Gallup and others)*

When all is said and done, the unyielding truth is that people want to work in an organization where they are respected, valued and engaged. Create that culture and you will tap the unlimited potential that employee engagement has to offer.