

Strategies for Creating and Maintaining Employee Engagement (1,109 words)

You have probably heard a lot about employee engagement. Employee engagement is the result from creating a workplace that has fostered conditions for members of an organization to have the genuine desire to give their best effort everyday. The process is to identify the behaviors, recognize the benefits, acknowledge others' contributions, and become an engaging leader.

Identify the Behaviors: Employees are committed to the organization's values and goals. Members are motivated to contribute to organizational success. Coworkers have an enhanced sense of their own personal and professional well-being. In engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role and task activities.

Employee engagement is about understanding one's role in and organization and being excited and energized on where and how that role fits in the organization's purpose and objectives. Employee engagement is about being all in. Being and feeling included fully as a member of the department or team. Engagement is supported by participating in setting clear goals, feeling trusted and empowered, receiving positive and constructive feedback, acquiring new knowledge, developing new skills, and feeling appreciated and recognized for contributions. Take a look around and find a copy of those mission statements and value statements. Maybe reading those will light the fire.

Defining and describing what employee engagement is all about is a good start. Once people know what it is, then they will recognize it when they see it. Then they will know how to do it and it will make it easier for them to appreciate other's efforts. Hey, we are getting paid for our time...let's make it a great time.

Recognize the Benefits: You may have great benefits at work such as health, dental and disability. Depending on your job or industry, it may seem hard to really see or measure the benefits of employee engagement. It may just be a feeling we have. However, this is what we do know. An engaged employee is a person that is fully involved in, and enthusiastic about, his or her work. They are attracted to, inspired by, and committed to their work. Engaged employees believe they can make a difference.

A Towers Perrin Global Workforce Survey, involving 85,000 people working full time, had some interesting results: Eighty-four percent of highly engaged employees believe they can positively impact the quality of their organization's products and services, compared to only 31 percent of the disengaged. Research shows that employee engagement does not merely correlate with bottom line results; it drives those results. So, it appears that the benefits of employee engagement are somewhat measurable. One can conclude that organizations that do a better job of engaging their employees can outperform their competition. It can separate the great organizations from the good ones.

The benefits at work aren't just health, dental, and disability. When it comes to employee engagement, there are mutual benefits, for the individual, the customer, and the

organization. It's a win, win, win! When we get employee engagement in place, it is easy to see how happy employees, spills over to happy customers, spills over to loyal customers, spills over to successful organizations, spills over to engaged employees, and that's how it goes.

Acknowledge Others' Contribution: Most people agree that this employee engagement thing is a good idea. What can a person do to improve employee engagement? Well, you don't need a title to be a champion for employee engagement. There are a number of things you can do to help improve employee engagement.

The first thing you can do is decide that you like your work. Do a minor attitude adjustment and convince yourself that it is kind of nice to get paid for your time, to do work you are already good at, and to have a chance to continue your growth personally and professionally. Simply being happy rubs off on others. Acknowledge the contributions and efforts of others. Be the person that says thank you; that sprinkles gratitude around the workplace by complimenting coworkers, suppliers, vendors, customers, and clients. Celebrate the successes of others. Attend the recognition activities and events of others. Ask if you can be on the recognition committee or the sunshine committee, and assist in celebrating achievements and milestones weekly, monthly, and annually.

Enhance the environment in your team, department, or division. Take it upon yourself to create a culture where employees want to be, not have to be. Build the reputation as being a compassionate coworker. One who is present, authentic, has a sense of dignity, and shows empathy. You can be enthusiastic about your work and take positive action to further the organization's reputation and interests. So, compliment coworkers more often, get on a committee or two, be more compassionate and more committed. It is important for every employee to be aware of options for supporting engagement. Help create a menu of options and distribute it, and contribute to it, enthusiastically. Encourage coworkers to participate in celebrating successes, both big and small. Take a risk and recognize the rewards.

Become an Engaging Leader: Leaders play a big role when it comes to creating, maintaining, and maybe even promoting employee engagement. What can leaders do to improve it? There are a number of things leaders can do. Leaders need to consider and sincerely communicate the value of the activities and tasks coworkers provide. The perception of the importance of the job has a significant impact on loyalty, customer service, and engagement.

Leaders need to be clear and concise when describing job expectations. Leaders need to make sure the expectations are clear and the necessary materials and equipment are provided to guarantee success. Leaders need to approach feedback with confidence and genuine concern. Giving coworkers a sense of where they are, where they are headed, and how great they are doing, has a lasting impact on engagement. Leaders also need to be the role models of personal and professional improvement. Leaders need to lead by example when it comes to taking classes and courses, attending seminars and workshops,

and struggling with new skill development.

Sharing information freely and assisting others graciously can go a long way in improving the working relationships with peers, superiors, and subordinates. Many researchers claim that employee engagement is a direct reflection of how employees feel about their relationship with the boss. Continue your education and build effective work relationships. Leadership is not just positional; it's personal. Never forget what an honor it is to be a leader. And leaders need to honor their staff by supporting each employee's success and growth.

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