

Let's Talk: Employee engagement

Presenter – Lynn Borteck, Clinical Counselor

Hi, my name is Lynn, and I'm here to talk about employee engagement.

When I was a little girl I once asked my father, "Are you happy at work?" And my father said, "What does working have to do with being happy?" Well, times have changed because employee engagement, or making work a happier place is really important these days, and learning how to engage your employees is important. It's really an art; it's not a science.

Engaged employees

Gallup tells us that 33 percent of employees are not engaged at their workplace.¹ That's something to think about. What does an engaged employee look like? How will you know if people are engaged? Well, they are committed and motivated. They are connected to your company, and to your goals. They are passionate. They're into what you're into. They are innovators and they are people who like to solve problems and are happy to do so; find it challenging.

An unengaged employee

How about an unengaged employee? What does he or she look like? Well, just about the opposite. They're really not that happy at work. They're not that happy about coming to work. They might be absent a lot. They are not tuned into the process or the product. Maybe they're not even tuned into safety at your workplace which is important. An unengaged employee is not good for business or for your brand. Not good for the customers, and sometimes an unengaged employee can be hard to spot. Sometimes easy, but sometimes hard to spot because many times they do just enough to get by and that's about it.

Why do we need engaged employees?

So why is engagement something that really matters? Well it's really critical, because it's the engaged people who help you succeed, who are advocates for your goals, who come to work in a spirit of wanting to cooperate and move ahead and they're really ambassadors for you and your brand and your company. Retaining top talent really is important because it just curtails overall turnover.

How to approach engagement

So let's talk about a few ways that you can approach engagement. First, have regular meetings scheduled with your employees. Why? Because this is a way for you to understand them, to get to know their interests, their needs and so forth and to connect with them. If you do an employee engagement survey which a lot of companies do, that's great. Or if you ask for feedback one on one that's great too. But in either case, if you ask for feedback, it's really important that you listen and then you do something.

Doing something

So number two is actually the doing something. And I want to make the point that it doesn't take a whole lot, but it's so critical that if you ask people's opinions that they feel that it makes a difference. So it's actually worse to not ask at all or not do an employee engagement survey than to do them and then do nothing about them. So, take positive steps, even small ones in response to what you learn during feedback or surveys.

Include everyone and share

Number three tip for engagement is to include everyone and to share. Now, this is about getting everybody involved who's on your staff or on your team. And you can do this by having holiday parties, seasonal activities or even a surprise when people come to work; having the office decorated a certain way. Now, even if you're a virtual team and you only communicate via internet, you can still have team activities and icebreakers and other things to make people feel connected.

Recognition

The number four tip is to recognize people. Feeling appreciated can't be underestimated. Everyone wants to be appreciated for their contribution. You can have a prize or an award or a reward that can be something like an afternoon off, a gift card for somewhere -- doesn't need to be big and extravagant but some way of showing appreciation and it's nice to recognize at a team meeting or some other public venue. You know you want your people to feel great about working for you and by recognizing them you can achieve that.

Opportunities

Number five is to give opportunities for people to learn and grow. Without opportunities like this, people get burned out. So what we want to do is we want to promote people taking classes that have to do with your work product and work process. If you give them a chance to develop new skills and learn new things, then people will stay motivated and it'll really generate energy. You can

also delegate work. This is really great because it takes some work off your plate and gives your employees chances to learn new things and new skills.

Takeaways

To summarize, the best companies to work for are where people aren't just tools of the trade. So, take some time and be creative. Invest in your employees to see positive outcomes.

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