



CUTTINGS

Number 69 August 2007

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Employee Engagement

A subject that is top of most manager's list of priorities – how to ensure employee engagement, that seemingly illusive quality where employees feel positive about their work, are motivated and prepared to invest their discretionary effort on the job?

A survey in Britain by the CIPD starts to give some of the answers – as well as posing more questions!

In the survey, conducted in 2006 with over 2000 respondents, the CIPD define engagement as having three dimensions: being very involved emotionally with one's work; focusing very hard while at work; and being willing to 'do extra for your employer.

What emerges from this survey – in common with other research by organizations such as Gallup – is that what turns them on, makes them more engaged and intending to stay working for their organisation is the broad experience of effective relationships and behaviours, not just their experience of HR practices. It is the quality of management, especially, but not exclusively, the front-line manager that is crucial.

The research draws the following main conclusions:

- three in ten employees are 'engaged'
- engagement is significantly lower among the under-35s than in older age groups
- engaged employees perform better than others, are more likely to recommend their organisation to others, take less sick leave, and are less likely to quit
- engaged employees experience higher job satisfaction and more positive attitudes and emotions towards their work, suggesting that engagement is also of benefit to the individual.

The main drivers of engagement are:

- having opportunities to feed views upwards

- feeling well informed about what is happening in the organisation
- thinking that your manager is committed to your organisation.

Some of the detail makes for interesting reading and reflection:

- Women are more engaged than men; they are more positive about their senior management team and are more loyal.
- Nearly half of employees feel they are not well informed about what is going on.
- Employees on flexible contracts are more engaged with their work than those not working flexibly.
- Around a fifth of employees overall and more women and minority groups have experienced some form of bullying or harassment and are, understandably, more likely to be depressed, less satisfied with their work, to have a low opinion of their managers and senior managers and to want to leave their organisation.
- People are generally unhappy with the way they are managed, and with the senior leadership of their organisation.
- A third say that their manager rarely or never discusses their development needs with them or gives feedback on performance, and a quarter do not feel their work counts.
- Managers are less likely to believe senior managers have a vision.
- Two in five employees get feedback on how they are performing; those who get more feedback tend to perform better.
- Those with positive views about their managers and senior managers are most engaged with their work, perform better and are less likely to quit.
- Engaged employees take less sick leave than disengaged employees.
- Engaged employees are less likely to leave their employer than disengaged employees.

Given the clear association between engagement, job satisfaction, advocacy and performance, there is every incentive for managers to seek to drive up levels of engagement among the workforce. The survey findings lead to the following recommendations for organisations and managers:

- Allowing people the opportunity to feed their views and opinions upwards is the single most important driver of engagement. This goes beyond just formal channels and consultation schemes – it needs to be real with clear evidence of being listened to and views acted upon.
- Having fair and just management processes for dealing with problems is important in driving up levels of performance.
- Employees need feedback on their performance on a regular basis .
- People need to feel their work counts in order to perform well.
- Consultation and involvement are critical managerial skills that require more development for a substantial proportion of managers.
- Keeping employees informed about what is going on in the organisation is critical – a significant improvement is needed in strategic involvement and communication.
- Employees need to see that managers are committed to the organisation in order to feel engaged. The high level of distrust in the public sector is worrying.
- With around three in ten dissatisfied with the opportunities they have to use their abilities, that managers are missing out on the chance to enhance organisational performance and create jobs that people enjoy.

How Engaged Are British Employees, CIPD Report – download summary:

www.cipd.co.uk/subjects/empreltns/general/_hwngdbrempt.htm

Download podcast:

www.cipd.co.uk/podcasts/_articles/article6.htm

Snippets

A collection of thought provokers and quotations ...

- ✂ "I find the great thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving: To reach the port of heaven, we must sail sometimes with the wind and sometimes against it, but we must sail, and not drift, nor lie at anchor." *Oliver Wendell Holmes*
- ✂ "The question is not what a man can scorn, or disparage, or find fault with, but what he can love, value and appreciate." *John Ruskin*
- ✂ "Acceptance is such an important commodity, some have called it "the first law of personal growth." *Peter McWilliams*
- ✂ "Let no one ever come to you without leaving better." *Mother Teresa*
- ✂ "The greatest discovery of our generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind. As you think, so shall you be." *William James*
- ✂ "Everyone wants to be appreciated, so if you appreciate someone, don't keep it a secret." *Mary Kay Ash*
- ✂ "If you love something, you'll bring so much of yourself to it that it will create your future." *Francis Ford Coppola*
- ✂ "My grandfather told me that there are two kinds of people; those who do the work and those who take the credit. He told me to try and be in the first group; there was less competition there." *Indira Gandhi*
- ✂ "So much of what we call management consists in making it difficult for people to work" *Peter Drucker*
- ✂ "Listen to the people who actually do the work" *Jack Welch*
- ✂ "If you are leaping a ravine, the moment of take-off is a bad time to be considering alternative strategies" *John Cleese*
- ✂ "First learn the meaning of what you say, and then speak." *Epicetetus*
- ✂ "The clever man will tell you what he knows; he may even try to explain it to you. The wise man encourages you to discover it for yourself, even although he knows it inside out. But since he seems to give you nothing, we have no need to reward him. Thus the wise have disappeared and we are left in a desolation of the clever." *Re g Revans*

Sir Alan Sugar on Leadership

Sir Alan Sugar is famous for his pioneering electronics enterprise, Amstrad, and more recently for fronting the UK TV version of *The Apprentice*. These are his thoughts on Leadership delivered at the Leaders in London Summit:

ON NEGATIVITY

I've seen negativity grow in business over the past ten years. I have a virtual baseball bat in my mind and when people put obstacles in front of me I bat them away with it. So, people tend not to be negative in front of me.

ON AGGRESSION

They edit what you see on TV. Don't believe it all. My core organisation — the people around me — is about 80-90 strong. Some of them have been with me for thirty years. They wouldn't stay if they didn't like working around me.

ON MORALS, ETHICS, HONESTY

To be in business for a long time you have to have an ethos. Mine has always been good value for money. You have to be honest to stay in business.

ON INNOVATION

Today I find too many layers between the manufacturer and the end-customer. It gets in the way of your gut instinct when it's not so easy to touch the market because of all the bureaucracy in the way.

ON ENCOURAGING PASSION

It's like an epidemic really. There are times when you have to inspire them — picture a room full of engineers. So, I have to review the game plan with them, to engage them with the objectives, the commercial reality. Equally, there are times when you have to divert or dampen passion: they can get too enthusiastic about ideas that I know don't have legs so you need to give them a soft landing and steer them at what will deliver value. Face-to-face contact helps you make that kind of connection.

ON LEADERS HE ADMIRES

Rupert Murdoch. Philip Green. The late Arnold Weinstock. Richard Branson: What I admire about him is how he keeps his eye on the bigger picture and recruits lieutenants to manage detail. I'm a bit envious of that, in fact. One of my biggest faults is I know where the last nut and bolt is on what shelf or in what drawer in all the factories. It's not clever, but I can't help myself.

Reported in Bits and Pieces, PALS (Peer Assisted Learning Systems) newsletter

CSR Contributes...

...to a company's bottom line, to its employees' pride and engagement, and to customer loyalty. But despite this over half of organisations do not have or implement a comprehensive Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy

In a recent survey by Sirota Survey Intelligence, 71% of respondents felt that CSR should be a top priority, but just under half felt they were not tapping the potential with a comprehensive and effective programme.

Picking up the theme of the lead article in this edition, 86% of employees who are satisfied with their organisation's CSR commitment have higher levels of engagement than others, with other spin-offs in ratings of senior management — their integrity (71%) and sense of direction (67%)

Add the benefits of improved bottom line results (87% of respondents), increased customer loyalty (84%), attracting new customers (80%) and minimising the costs and consequences of regulatory and activist pressures (65%), and there seems to be a pretty overwhelming case...

HR.com July 2007

PUBLIC PROGRAMMES

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In company programmes are also available — please call for advice.

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To discuss any ideas and to access the network, please call me direct:

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