

Management and Performance Associates – September - October 2017

Why employee engagement matters?



“There are only three measurements that tell you nearly everything you need to know about your organization’s overall performance: employee engagement, customer satisfaction, and cash flow.” –Jack Welch, author and retired chairman and CEO of GE.

Highly engaged employees consistently deliver beyond expectation, thereby increasing performance, company profitability, and retention, in addition to creating a high energy work environment, which can in turn be contagious to all team members.

You don’t have to take our word on it. For evidence, please refer to “Enhancing Performance and Retention through Employee Engagement,” a paper published by the International Journal of Scientific and Research Publication in August 2015, where the authors compile massive evidence from an extensive list of studies on the topic.

Gallup introduced the results of a study covering more than 80,000 managers in the book “First, Break all the Rules.” The authors talk about 12 questions to ask employees. They can be part of a conversation every manager should have with their employees, and can also be used as a survey (The Gallup Q12 Employee Engagement Survey).

Below you will find the 12 questions and some recommendations for managers to make them work:

I know what is expected of me at work

Go beyond telling them what the task is. Clarify what the outcomes should be. Also, don’t stick to procedures and numbers/objectives. Clarify behavioral expectations.

I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right

How frustrating can it be if technology at home is better, faster, and more efficient than at the office? As a manager, are you aware that their poor performance may have nothing to do with their competence? Check with the employees who are actually doing the job.

At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day

One of the great ideas from “First, Break all the Rules” is that managers should leverage employees’ unique strengths, instead of trying to *fix* their weaknesses.

In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work

Constant recognition is critical to keep engagement up. Don’t wait for the next performance appraisal to recognize great performances. Timely recognition is the rule.

My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person

Wait, aren’t they here just to work? [Sarcasm]

There is someone at work who encourages my development

Talented employees have the expectation of being developed. Millennials (as well as everybody else) need to have a sense that their potential is being developed. Be clear that development does not equate to promotions or increased compensation.

At work, my opinions seem to count

Inclusive leaders work with employees' ideas. Remember that exploring their ideas does not mean that we have to accept them all. Listen. Drill down. Understand what they mean. Why hire brilliant, creative and smart people, only to tell them what to do?

The mission/purpose of my company make me feel my job is important

Sometimes employees, especially more junior ones, cannot make a connection between the tasks they perform and their contribution to the strategy and mission of the company. It is our job as their manager to connect the dots for them.

My co-workers are committed to doing quality work

Employees thrive when they recognize that they are surrounded by talented colleagues. Pay attention to your hiring and performance management style. It impacts the engagement and performance of not only individuals, but of the whole team.

I have a best friend at work

That sense of belonging has a direct impact on engagement. People feel that they can be themselves. They have a buddy they can talk to when issues arise--not necessarily management.

In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress

Engagement is also connected to people knowing where they stand and how much they have advanced toward personal and corporate goals. They may have a sense of where they are, but they may not be sure about it. Worse, they could be going in the wrong direction.

This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow

Instead of delegating tasks to people that have already mastered the job, try the exact opposite. Delegate with the intent of developing people, so

they can learn on the go. Also, remember that a task which is perceived as "boring" by one employee can be seen as exciting by another. Pay attention to what motivates them.

Finally, for those of you wondering why there is not a question about compensation, here is another quote:

"Paychecks can't buy passion." –Brad Federman, author and employee engagement expert.

To learn more about why money does not impact engagement check our October 2010 article titled "Motivating without Money." To access our library, click on www.mapa-way.com. The article can be found under the "Breaking Leadership Paradigms" tab.

MAPA Consulting can help you and your team to develop these competencies.

See you next time. As always, we welcome your feedback.