

Seven Insights into Employee Engagement



1. **Employee engagement is a three-way process** which calls for responsibility, accountability and ownership from employer, employees and the organization. We talk about employee engagement as what employees need to feel engaged and what the managers and leaders can provide.

Managers, leaders and employers have an active role in harnessing the best of their talent and creating a rich culture that people want to be part of and enjoy coming to work. There is certainly a lot that can be done at the level of leadership engagement behaviours.

However, employees aren't mere passive receptacles of these initiatives but are also active players who have a role in shaping a great workplace.

2. **What managers and leaders can do** is to provide the right cultural context and levers to create and enhance employee engagement. They can foster a positive culture, which is a fun and energizing place to work. A culture where people feel they are doing something meaningful, are challenged and can see how their contribution fits into the bigger picture of what the organization is trying to achieve; a culture

where people are supported, where they can learn and develop and its okay to occasionally make mistakes.

Managers need to be very clear in outlining their expectations for the role so employees don't experience confusion and can deliver accordingly. As one CEO said his conversation with his senior executives focuses on "this is what we can offer you here and this is what we would like from you."

3. What employees can do is to take responsibility for providing the best service they can in their roles while also learning, developing and forging their careers and or other needs they may wish to have fulfilled through the job.

Employees can ask themselves, "What am I doing in making this a great place to work and or how am I helping my customers have a great experience and increase their engagement?"

Creating positive relationships with one's colleagues, peers and manager also helps in feeling more engaged at work. Employees also need to be able to have those courageous conversations with their manager and or trusted colleagues if there are issues presenting as roadblocks to the above.

4. Managers and leaders need to be engaged themselves in order to engage others! It is very hard to engage others when you are disengaged yourself. Managers and leaders need to know and understand themselves well including how their brain, physiology and emotions work.

You may wish to ask yourself the following questions: What is the source of my inspiration and vision, which makes it worthwhile, getting out of bed every morning? What is the legacy I want to leave? What gives me a real sense of satisfaction and fulfillment? What are my most important values and signature strengths that I need to be able to express? What gets me unplugged and how do I get myself plugged back again?

5. To be an inspiring and challenging leader, you have to be "walking the talk,"and "**talking the walk**" as you are role modeling what the cultural norms are through who you are being and your daily behaviour. What we know intuitively is now backed by research – our emotions are contagious and they catch on like virus. As a leader, you have a significant role in setting the thermostat.

6. The missed opportunity for managers is in their failure to connect. Too often, managers and leaders start driving for results without first making any emotional connection with their people. For example, the simple acts of getting to know your people including their core drivers and development needs, being fair, respectful and caring can earn you their trust and emotional investment. Engagement grows when there is some degree of emotional connection.

7. Happy satisfied employees doesn't mean greater employee engagement.

A happy satisfied employee does not automatically translate into greater employee engagement. Just because an employee is a satisfied does not necessarily mean that they would give the extra discretionary effort and go all out in making it a great work place.

Pleasurable and satisfying experiences alone do not sustain one's attention, focus and commitment. There has to be other higher order values, which are being tapped into and expressed e.g. one's deeper sense of meaning and purpose or alignment of values and vision.

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