



OMT GROUP GRASPS THE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT NETTLE



Given the times we live in, it is now more important than ever that everyone in your organisation is fully behind what you are trying to achieve. Whether you are focused on new product introduction, customer retention or simply trying to ensure the survival of your Business, engaging your employees will always be central to these achievements. Worryingly however, Employee Engagement is on the decline worldwide. It is a mistake to think that fewer job opportunities mean your People will be automatically engaged with their current job. In fact, anxiety over job security and increased pressure to perform can lead to disengagement which in turn leads to poor performance and lower productivity.

Now is not the time to abandon efforts to keep Employees motivated and engaged, now is the time to focus even more on ensuring your People are getting and giving the best. So, Grasp the Employee Engagement Nettle! Refresh your own and your Management Team's thinking on the role of Employee Engagement, how it can be generated and the benefits it will bring to your Business in 2010.

Knowing

Read and absorb this Grasp the Nettle Issue. Aim to appreciate the concept of Employee Engagement. Consider educating your Managers/Business on the What, Why and How.

Doing

Start by gauging the existing level of Employee Engagement in your Business. Assess Organisational effort and outcomes across the key contributing factors. Develop a plan for addressing the shortfalls.

Living

Embark on an ongoing effort to raise awareness of Employee Engagement, increase Management understanding of its contributing factors and consistently address these factors in all areas of Organisational Life e.g. Strategic Vision & Values, Recruitment, HR Policies, Process Management, Leadership & Management Development and Performance Management.

'More than 50% of Managers have become less effective at engaging their employees since the start of the recession.'

2009 Keep Britain Working Survey

Why Engage Employees?

Considerable empirical evidence to support engagement-related benefits, driving increases in:

- Customer Satisfaction
- Productivity
- Innovation
- Profits
- Turnover
- Safety Records



What is Employee Engagement?

Employee Engagement was first defined during a study of Employee Burnout, where it was identified as its exact opposite state. Engaged Employees are considered to be fully psychologically present, give their all to their jobs, are willing to go the extra mile to achieve success and focus consistently on extra-role activities such as Innovation and Organisational Citizenship. Employee Engagement can be summed up in three key words:

Vigour → Possession of real energy to do one's job well

Dedication → Pride and enthusiasm in one's job and company

Absorption → Complete focus on the task at hand



A high level of Engagement is referred to as a 'State of Flow'. A state regularly experienced by musicians or sports people. When were you last so completely absorbed by your work that you forgot where you were?

From 'The Measurement of Engagement & Burnout'. Schaufeli et al, 2002.

What does an Employee Engagement Initiative look like?

Driving Engagement involves a broad range of areas from an **Employee's Role**, to how they are **Managed** to their level of **Trust** in the Organisation. It is important to realise that Engagement will come about for different Employees in different ways and one can never expect to have everyone engaged all of the time. However, there are key elements which, if worked on over time; will encourage and promote Engagement.

Clarity of Purpose	Convey the Message	Connect with your People
Review your Vision, Values and Goals regularly. They should be Clear and Realistic. Sense-Check them against day to day activities. If your Vision doesn't make sense anymore you can supplement it with a local vision. These are not just posters on walls, this is a real message to your People, so keep it real.	Now get the message out there! This is not an Internal Marketing Job. This is ongoing, consistent effort on the part of HR, the SMT and Middle Management. The old basics of the Performance Management Review and On The Job/ On The Spot Coaching is critical but it is the everyday connection with your People that brings Engagement to life.	Real Engagement is Personal! Review your Top 50 Managers. Build on their Leadership Qualities within their Personal Development Plans. Employ Mentoring/Coaching where needed. Develop Leadership-Based Development Programmes. Highlight Role Models and 'attend to' repeat offenders as appropriate.
Build Careers not Jobs	Congratulate Consistently	Opportunities to Contribute
People enjoy Meaningful Work that leads to Career Advancement. But that will mean different things to different groups. REAL Personal Development Plans. Assignments to Stretch Projects. Action Learning Projects. Job Rotation. Flexible Working should be in the mix.	Coach & Convey all the time! Ongoing, real feedback is vital. Managers need to be comfortable with highlighting strengths while conveying genuine concern over negative issues then moving on to resolve them. HR is a key player in giving feedback to the Core Team.	Employees want to be part of the Bigger Picture both within your Business and within their Communities. Good job design should include this element. On-the-spot feedback highlights People's contribution. Cross-Functional Knowledge by the SMT is key to appreciating all contributions.
Allow Personal Control	Collaborate	Build Confidence & Credibility
Personal Job Control is important to People. Autonomy should be encouraged and facilitated. Your Employees should have a Voice in how decisions are made, processes designed etc.	A Sense of Team is vital. A Sense of Caring should be a given. Teams out-perform individuals every time. Remind People of the importance of human relationships. Weed out and deal with Toxic Relationships. The SMT should be Role Models.	Finally, but most importantly, your People should trust the Organisation. Authentic Leadership and High Ethical Standards should be at the core of everything that you do. Your Values should provide your Moral Compass.

Adapted from Seijts & Crim. The Ivey Business

Engagement Starts at the Top

Differences between Organisational and Employee Engagement

Organisational Engagement	Employee Engagement
Driven by the Organisational Environment and the Characteristics of the Organisation's Leadership	Driven by the Individual and the Characteristics of their Job
Culture Climate Vision & Values Relationships Ethics Justice	Interesting and Challenging Work Full Appreciation and Recognition Control Social Support Fairness Values

Management's Role



Positive, Supportive Relationships:

Allow your People to Focus Energy on the Job and not on Inter-Organisational Conflict

Work-Life Balance:

Strike the right balance, keep People Energised and Focused but not 'over-worked'

Values:

Ensure your People feel 'Safe' and have a Meaningful Role within the Business

Consistency:

Keep the Leadership 'Mood' consistent, despite the Ups and Downs of Business – Avoid a Jekyll and Hyde Management Style

33% of Employees say they do not trust Management

28% of Employees do not receive 'On the Job' coaching from their Manager

Winter 2010, Employee Survey, Chartered Institute for Personnel Development

Top 5 Behaviours that drive a positive view of Leadership and influence Employee Engagement

1. Being interested in Employee Well-Being
2. Communicating openly & honestly
3. Trying to be visible & accessible
4. Communicating reasons for business decisions
5. Acting consistently in line with values

Der Mann mit dem Klappstuhl

Urban Legend has it that a Sales Manager in Siemens used to carry a folding stool to meetings. When asked what the stool was for he replied that it represented the Customer and therefore anything that was said in the meeting should be good enough for the Customer to hear. If one were to apply the same principle to Organisational Life, do your Management and HR Meetings have a folding stool representing your Employees? What would your Employees think of Management discussions were they to be present at every single one?



How Engaged are your People right now?

Your Business, Your Management Team and your Managers need to ask themselves some significant questions. Better still, ask them of your Employees!

1.	Do you really 'throw' yourself into your job?
2.	Does being a member of your Organisation make you 'come alive'?
3.	Does your job permit you to decide on your own how to go about doing your work?
4.	How significant or important do you think your job is to your Organisation?
5.	To what extent does your Manager let you know how well you are doing?
6.	How much variety is there in your job?
7.	What is most important to you; job security, promotion, freedom, praise, respect, challenge or development?
8.	Do the outcomes you receive from your Organisation reflect the effort you have put into your work?
9.	Are your Organisation's procedures applied consistently?
10.	Have those procedures upheld ethical and moral standards?
11.	Do you think your Organisation really cares about your well-being?
12.	Does your Organisation consider your goals and values?
13.	Does your immediate Manager show concern for you?
14.	Does working at your Organisation have personal meaning for you?
15.	Do you defend the Organisation when others criticize it?

This survey is a sample of questions from a more comprehensive Employee Engagement Survey which OMT Group regularly use with Clients. Should you be interested in finding out more about conducting an Employee Engagement Survey within your Business we would be happy to provide you with more details about how to go about it.

Adapted from 'Antecedents and Consequences of Employee Engagement'.
2006. Alan M. Saks. Journal of Managerial Psychology. Vol. 21. No. 7.

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A Final Thought....

Tackling an issue as all encompassing as Employee Engagement may seem a daunting task.

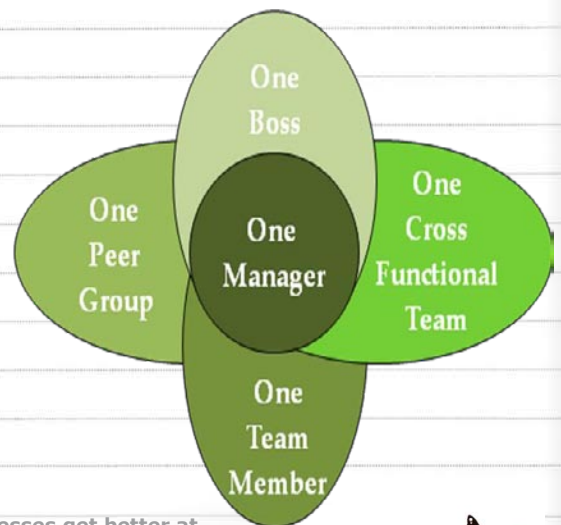
However, when you consider the impact that just changing your own Approach/Management Style can have on those around you, it is easier to appreciate that Employee Engagement is not out of reach for any Organisation.

"You must be the change you want to see in the world."
Mahatma Gandhi

OMT Group is an Organisational Development Firm that helps Businesses get better at leading, organising and managing their People to achieve better results.

If you would like to know more about our Clients, our Solutions and our People you can visit www.omtorgdev.com or call us in Ireland on +353 61 333 640

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