Employee Engagement
Posted by pgalen - 2010/11/30 09:46

"Employee Engagement... reflects a fundamental change in thinking. It is a shift from providing employees with a lot of disconnected chatter, to creating a true conversation and voice that impacts what employees think, and more importantly, what they do in order to drive business outcomes."
-Carreen Winters, Executive VP, MWW Group

Do you agree, is it all about the conversations?

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Re:Employee Engagement
Posted by tomhoff - 2010/11/30 14:40

I agree that one component of employee engagement involves providing employees with an active voice and a sense that their opinions and contributions matter to senior management.

But employee engagement is much more than that. In a nutshell, it's about staffers who feel enthusiastic about the organization they work for, including its mission and leadership. And going the extra mile for the company based on those motivations and drivers.

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Re:Employee Engagement
Posted by epearlman - 2010/12/01 14:01

Employee engagement is about more than the conversation, it's also about a sense of trust that comes from feeling the company you work for cares about you. It's not enough for management to say the right things, the actions of its executives are more important than the words they use. So if the message is, "We care about our people," but then the company demonstrates through its actions that they don't, that trust is shattered. And if you lose the trust of your employees it is gone forever.

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Re:Employee Engagement
Posted by yoonsie - 2010/12/01 14:12

I agree with both Tom and Ellen that engagement is about more than conversations. I do, however, understand the essence of Winters's remark. Engaging with employees isn't just being the "cool" boss and talking to them. The conversations have to have a purpose, with the employee coming out feeling valued.

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Re:Employee Engagement
Posted by srw134 - 2010/12/07 20:25

I for one think it is a good thing that this discussion is at least being had. I have found few companies which are good t truly engaging their employees and the bigger the company the worse it seems to get (typically). It is about time that American companies figure out that having your employees want to work for you it quite different then having employees who must work for you.

-sean

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Re:Employee Engagement
Posted by sediga - 2010/12/09 09:56

I believe this is another case of chicken and the egg. Employees engage when they feel that their voice is being listened to and the employer essentially cares, and the employer wants a good relationship with employees that actually are engaged. Having said that, conversation is the first step towards building trust and getting folks involved. This situation is not that easily remedied in very large organization: first level manager cares, but upper level managers are disconnected from the individual contributors (management by spreadsheet)

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Re:Employee Engagement

Posted by searley - 2010/12/10 10:44

This is a great topic and one that will come to the forefront as we come out of recession and into the next phase of growth.
Unfortunately the trend in our capitalist society has been more toward individualism, with seeing the employee as a individual contributor of labor, which can be added, removed or relocated as needed. I think Karen Winters last point is key - and more importantly, what they do in order to drive business outcomes.". I am not sure that that is well understood and definitely not well communicated by senior management.

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Re:Employee Engagement

Posted by srw134 - 2010/12/10 23:28

Art is exactly correct, many companies first tiers of management do have a better track record when it comes to engagement with employees with higher management losing track of this ability. This I think is something that must be trained into the management at all levels. While it may not be the direct job of a middle or senior manager to deal with day-to-day employee issues it is still their job to engage with them. I have seen this work well with informal gatherings once a month or once a quarter to solidify the relationships between the employees and their higher management, of course this must be more then lip service by the management and they must actually care about the thoughts of their employees.

-sean

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Re:Employee Engagement

Posted by searley - 2010/12/18 14:02

Agreed srw134, sincerity by upper management is a key component in employee engagement. I feel that corporate america is not developing senior management internally but rather hiring from the street. These managers tend to appear insincere and tend to move on quickly rather than develop any relationship with the employee base.

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Re:Employee Engagement

Posted by srw134 - 2010/12/26 00:06

I remember I wrote a one of my Masters papers on how many of the worlds business schools still teach this older style of management where the employee is just a cog in the business. When managers learn this at their management schools it is doubtful that they will change their style going forward. The point of the paper was to point out that the issues that we see in companies must be resolved at the ground level at educational institutions.

-sean

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Re:Employee Engagement

Posted by yoonsie - 2011/01/03 20:07

I have to agree with Sean's point. I've read and had consultants and professors tell me that anything employees do beyond the bare minimum is voluntary. It's up to management to engage the workforce so that people do volunteer to do more than the minimum job requirements. Make them, to borrow Sean's phrasing, want to work for you.

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Re:Employee Engagement

Posted by searley - 2011/01/11 09:55

Correct yoonsie, and as employees become disengaged they begin to realize that they get the same pay and same accolades whether they do the minimum or not. Interestingly, management's reaction has been to implement problem management and change management systems that foster complacency. Employees get so frustrated and exhausted by these systems that they have little energy left for creativity.

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Re:Employee Engagement

Posted by srw134 - 2011/01/11 20:42

This thread is heading in the same direction as a couple other posts. In order to make the employees want to work for you and perform more than the bare minimum they must have buy in to the company and how it performs. This includes engaging the employees in both emotional and financial ways. A good combination must be found for each company.

-sean

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Re:Employee Engagement

Posted by searley - 2011/01/31 12:12

In another example of corporate underhandedness, companies are giving portions of what where once cash bonuses as stock incentives that vest over a period of three to five years. This gives the impression of employees having a stake in the business, but really is used to limit and or defer bonus payouts.

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Re:Employee Engagement

Posted by jimfinnan97 - 2011/07/20 12:49

I agree you can not pay your bills with stock options that vest over three years. It really comes down to leadership within the organization and making the employee want to remain loyal and productive.

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Re:Employee Engagement

Posted by Bill Wilson - 2011/07/25 10:14

Research shows that engaged employees are more productive. They are more profitable, more customer-focused, safer, and more likely to withstand temptations to leave. The best-performing companies know that an employee engagement improvement strategy linked to the achievement of corporate goals will help them win in the marketplace. So why then do not more companies implement such a strategy?

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