

HOW IS YOUR EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT?

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Did you notice all the talk about employee engagement lately? My suspicion is employers are anxious to keep the staff they have as the economy begins to recover. The costs associated with training in new staff can really hurt a small company. You don't want your employee looking for greener pastures, so what do you do? Many would say you need to evaluate your employee engagement level as a higher employee engagement rating tends to equate to higher performance, employee satisfaction and increased retention.

Where do you start? Often the employee engagement process starts with a survey of the key areas which affect staff retention. This usually includes a number of questions such as if the employee has the tools and training to do the job, if they are aware of the company's purpose or mission and how their job contributes, personal development such as if they have had the opportunity to learn or grow in their work, their relationship with their immediate supervisor or management in general, and the communication process, if they feel heard, recognized for their effort, their opinions valued, etc. If your workforce is fairly stable, you will want to conduct the same or similar survey at least every other year. However if you find your survey results are lower than expected, you will want to consider conducting a survey yearly until you see significant improvement.

So how do you do this? There are thousands of websites with information on what employee engagement is and how it should work. In addition, depending on how you want to approach employee engagement there are many consultants willing to work with you. Regardless, if you do something very elaborate or very simple the outcome should be to see your company's performance improve.

My personal bias is that the relationship employees have with their manager is key to not only retention but how they feel about their work and company. I venture a strong guess that at the core of the reason most employees voluntarily leave their current employment has to do with their manager, in one way or another. It could be any number of things that put the ball in motion, something small that just seems to gather momentum or one significant issue. Whatever it might be, managers impact an employee's satisfaction level on the job. Engaging your managers will go a long way to improving your employee engagement scores.

Once you have conducted the survey, it is very important that you respond to the results. If employees trust that what they share is confidential and will be used to improve the workplace you will receive valuable information on areas you can improve. However the next question is "Now what?" Knowing is only part of the equation, responding to what you learn is the other and often even more important part. What you say and do will either work towards improving engagement and retention or hinder your progress. I am an advocate of honest communication following an engagement survey. Acknowledge what you learned and choose a couple of areas to concentrate your efforts. Engage the employees and management on what might improve these areas and communicate what you want to do and how. You might be surprised with the results. Once you have a plan and work it together you will make progress.

It would be great if there was a secret formula you could apply that ensured results, but when it comes to engagement and satisfaction the answer always depends on the group of people. When

it comes to managing people there is some science but it is the art of applying the science that makes all the difference.

If you are interested in learning about your employee engagement, give me a call at 763-370-4280 as I would love to have a conversation with you about your needs and how I might be able to help.