

IMPROVING ENGAGEMENT & WELL-BEING THROUGH FOCUSED LEADERSHIP

Summary: Learn how using focused leadership can improve engagement and well-being at your company in this article.

I came across a shocking statistic today. According to a recent Gallup Panel Web Study, only 32% of American workers feel fully engaged in their jobs. I thought about my personal workplace observations over the years across my various jobs, and I can see how that is true. In a profit driven business, it is easy for workers to feel like just another number, and they act accordingly.

This engagement figure is costly to business, the economy, and to the community. Engaged workers perform better across several performance indicators: They have lower turnover, are less likely to be absent, have fewer accidents, and produce better quality work.

In addition to high engagement, Gallup has defined a strong sense of well-being as another top key to employee success and performance. Studies have shown that happy, healthy workers, similar to highly engaged workers, are more productive at work. They are also more active and take on more positive roles in their communities. Interestingly, a sense of well being tends magnify the effects of high engagement.

You've heard the saying, "one bad apple ruins the bunch," but as a leader, you are in a unique position of influence. A leader can, metaphorically speaking, be a good tree and develop good apples. Imagine the benefits in your business and your community if you could foster well-being in your workplace and turn the 32% engagement statistic around!

What to do?

Deepak Chopra has said, "As a leader, you are the soul of a group consciousness, and you are the catalyst for transformation." This transformation requires conscious effort. Like any successful goal, you should clearly define your desired results, announce your intentions publicly, seek out help from your staff and those around you, and actively pursue your goal through consistent, well-defined actions each day.

Just knowing you want a more engaged staff with a better sense of well-being is not enough. You need to evaluate



your current position. Consider these questions:

- Do your employees feel like they have a stake in the success of the company through the job they do?
- Can you improve the level of meaningful communication and cooperation between departments; between managers and staff?
- Do employees feel like their opinions count and that their good ideas will be taken seriously?
- Do employees feel their contributions are recognized and rewarded?
- Do employees have balance in their work-home lives; do they have time to be successful at work and also be engaged in their social lives and communities?
- Are your employees healthy and energetic?

Your answers will guide your specific goals and actions. Involve your staff by creating an engagement and wellness committee to evaluate current conditions compared to where you would like to be, and formulate plans with measurable actions. Develop team value statements specific to your team and their needs, and post them formally.

Take action.

If your goal is to improve supervisor-employee communication, perhaps you could set up regular forums where employees can speak openly and share opinions on the direction of the workplace. You should also lead by example by making a daily effort to engage each employee under your watch, even if it is just a quick visit to say hello.

Encourage employees to participate.

Of course, you can do this by being an example, but you should also recognize and reward behavior that is in line with your team's engagement and well-being goals. On the other hand, be swift to discourage negative and detrimental behavior.

Repeat and be consistent.

You are trying to develop a culture, a long-term change in the way your company or, at least, your department behaves. It is not an overnight thing. Remind yourself that your engagement and well-being goals are important, and they should be treated as a priority. After all, the benefits are clear. You and your staff will be more successful and productive, both at work and at home.