Employee engagement – Igniting passion through purpose, participation & progress

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who is voice project?

- Voice Project specialises in surveying engagement, leadership and service quality
- We have grown out of a research programme at Macquarie University and our team of 17 people are based on campus at Macquarie University
- We have now completed 420 surveying projects across 180 clients, collected benchmarking data from over 2,500 organisations, and “given a voice” to over 500,000 employees and clients
agenda

• Engagement
  • What is it? Why does it matter?
• Drivers of Engagement
  • Purpose
  • Participation
  • Progress
• The Ps in practice
understanding employee engagement

• What does it mean to you?
Strongest predictors of organisation performance

consequences of engagement

- Our research shows 5% higher employee engagement is associated with:
  - 1.5% lower employee turnover; for a 1000-person organisation that’s 15 fewer people leaving per year, and $1m lower turnover costs for the organisation per year
  - 2.5% higher productivity; $2500 higher productivity per person per year; for a 1000 person organisation that’s $2.5m higher productivity for the organisation per year
  - Even if you achieved no other gains (eg, safety, absenteeism, workers comp, reduced fraud & risk, customer loyalty, innovation), that’s a benefit of $3,500 per employee per year

Assumptions behind above calculations: Average salary A$66K; turnover costs 100% of salary; SD of productivity = 32% of mean output (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998); mean output per employee of A$100K; correlation of .31 between engagement and productivity; correlation of .27 between engagement and turnover (means of Voice Project’s observed correlations).
drivers of engagement?

rewards?

work-life balance?

my career?
believe, belong & achieve

purpose
organisation direction
results focus
mission & values
ethics
role clarity
diversity

progress
organisation objectives
change & innovation
customer satisfaction

participation
leadership
recruitment
cross-unit cooperation
learning & development
involvement
reward & recognition
appraisal
supervision
career opportunities

passion / engagement
organisation commitment
job satisfaction
intention to stay

I believe in the purpose, work and values of this organisation"
NFP versus corporate organisations?

• Approx 10 employees from 53 NFP and 53 for-profit organisations, 1159 respondents, 2004-2006

• Key drivers of passion are the same across sectors:
  • Purpose, Participation & Progress
  • Mission & Values, Change and Innovation, Career Opportunities & Involvement

• Not the money - rewards less important for engaging employees in NFPs

a higher purpose?

- “This organisation has a positive impact on society & the community”
- “This organisation plays a role in society that goes beyond the mere generation of profits”
- 2008: 3079 employees in 302 organisational units
  - 79% commercial
  - 14% gov
  - 7% NFP

all types of staff?

8 universities

5564 academic staff
1. achieving organisation objectives (.59)
2. mission & values (.57)
3. change & innovation (.53)
4. leadership (.53)
5. career opportunities (.52)

8388 general/professional staff
1. role clarity (.51)
2. career opportunities (.51)
3. achieving organisation objectives (.51)
4. mission & values (.48)
5. rewards & recognition (.47)
purpose fires people up!

- Even in Australia
- Even in commercial corporations
- Regardless of the ‘nobility’ of the cause
- In both ‘delivery’ and ‘support’ staff
your experience...

- What is the purpose of your organisation?

- What are your core values?

- How strongly do you agree with those purpose and values?

  
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- How many staff in your organisation could recall your mission/vision/values? _____ %

- How many staff would strongly endorse them? _____ %
purpose in practice

- purpose
- organisation direction
- results focus
- mission & values
- role clarity
- ethics & diversity
“Building a visionary company requires 1% vision and 99% alignment”

Collins & Porras (1996) HBR
drivers & gaps for engagement

Gap analysis based on over 100,000 employees across more than 2,000 of Voice Project’s research & consulting clients

participation: trust in leadership

Levels of Trust in Co-Workers and Management (% Favourable)

- Senior Executives: Impact .53, 57%
- Senior Managers: Impact .50, 61%
- Middle Managers: Impact .42, 70%
- Supervisors: Impact .35, 74%
- Co-workers: Impact .35, 90%

Low 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100% High
participation: trust in leadership

- Demonstrate trust in employees
- Increase visibility and accessibility
- Communicate common identity
- Role model integrity and fairness
- Create a supportive workplace
participation: involvement

- Empower employees for decision-making
- Guide through clear organisation direction
- Consult and communicate on change
- Educate and train managers
- Create processes for evaluation and feedback
progress leading passion

• Communicate goal progress and achievement
• Champion continuous improvement
• Provide a product/service that staff are proud of
questions for discussion

1. Do you have an engaging purpose that is clearly articulated throughout your organisation?

2. How do you measure progress against your core purpose and toward your vision?

3. Do you recruit people based on their beliefs and values?

4. How do you reinforce the connection between job roles and organisation purpose for your support staff?

5. How do you measure alignment of your systems, practices, processes and people with your purpose and values?

6. How have you seen leaders most effectively build trust and communication?

7. Is change in your organisation driven top-down by management, or bottom-up by passionate employees? Why do you think this is?