



Engaging the Workforce

A Journey Without End

Author: Roderick M. Kelsy, Vice President, Riley, Dettmann and Kelsey

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A WorldatWork Workspan article entitled “Enhancing Employee Engagement” referenced a 2005 Towers Perrin study that suggested that only twenty-one percent of the U.S. workforce considers themselves fully engaged in their jobs. In the article, the authors outline the affects that a disengaged workforce can have on business including, but not limited to, poor employee morale, lack of loyalty, poor customer service, difficulties with recruitment and retention and an adverse impact on a company’s “bottom line”. The authors contend that when employees feel valued their loyalty will strengthen and performance will improve.

Making someone feel valued can be tricky. Feeling valued is highly individualized and personal and can be influenced by many factors, some real and some imagined. The effectiveness of tools to reinforce workforce engagement depends on the predictable and normative behaviors that characterize the business climate. Business climates that do not intentionally take steps to engage employees may operate satisfactory, but not much more. To excel in engaging employees, members of the supervisory/management team must intentionally manage, and continually evaluate, their actions to create and sustain a business climate that enables each employee to feel valued thereby fostering a commitment of loyalty and a desire to perform.

Key behaviors that begin with the supervisory/management team include demonstrated willingness and abilities to:

1. Model and reinforce the integrity, ethics and excellence in work performance expected from everyone in the organization.
2. Develop and sustain work relationships characterized by respect, dignity and trust.
3. Provide enthusiastic, positive, persuasive and compelling leadership that engenders the necessary levels of confidence and commitment to consistently fulfill and sustain the organization’s mission.
4. Support policies, protocols and work practices that engender trust, respect and successful collaboration.
5. Manage in a manner that creates and sustains a work environment characterized by collaboration, involvement, mutual respect and successful outcomes.

6. Mentor and coach in a manner that contributes to staff development and additional opportunities for learning, growth and advancement of the collective mission.
7. Strongly advocate and actively support continual learning and growth on an individual, group and organization wide basis.
8. Lead and follow through on initiatives that strengthen the chances for successful collaboration and consistent achievement of the organization's annual objectives and longer-term goals.
9. Anticipate change, prepare for change, recognize change, accept change and facilitate change.
10. Seek, develop, test, refine and implement creative solutions that strengthen and reinforce the integration and effectiveness of kindred functions in the organization.
11. Develop and maintain the breadth and depth of knowledge required to be a resident expert and reliable authority in the organizational areas for which accountable.
12. Quickly identify, mitigate and/or remove barriers to effective teamwork.

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