

How to Achieve an Engaged Workforce (and Get Better Results Faster)



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If you think about it, when someone joins your company, they're already highly engaged. They're excited to be there, they want to prove themselves, and they want to make a difference.

Therefore, as leaders, we don't need to work so much on how to engage people, but rather on how to keep people from becoming disengaged!

A team (or an organization) that is disengaged is simply compliant. And a compliant team produces mediocre results. When someone is compliant, they simply obey – doing what's asked of them but no more. Typically, they're doing just enough to keep their job.

However, if people are engaged and committed, the results are very different. Someone who's committed will spend time and effort outside of normal business hours thinking about work, solving problems, finding better ways to get the job done, seeking out new insights, and taking action.

So, the question is:

“Why does disengagement occur?”

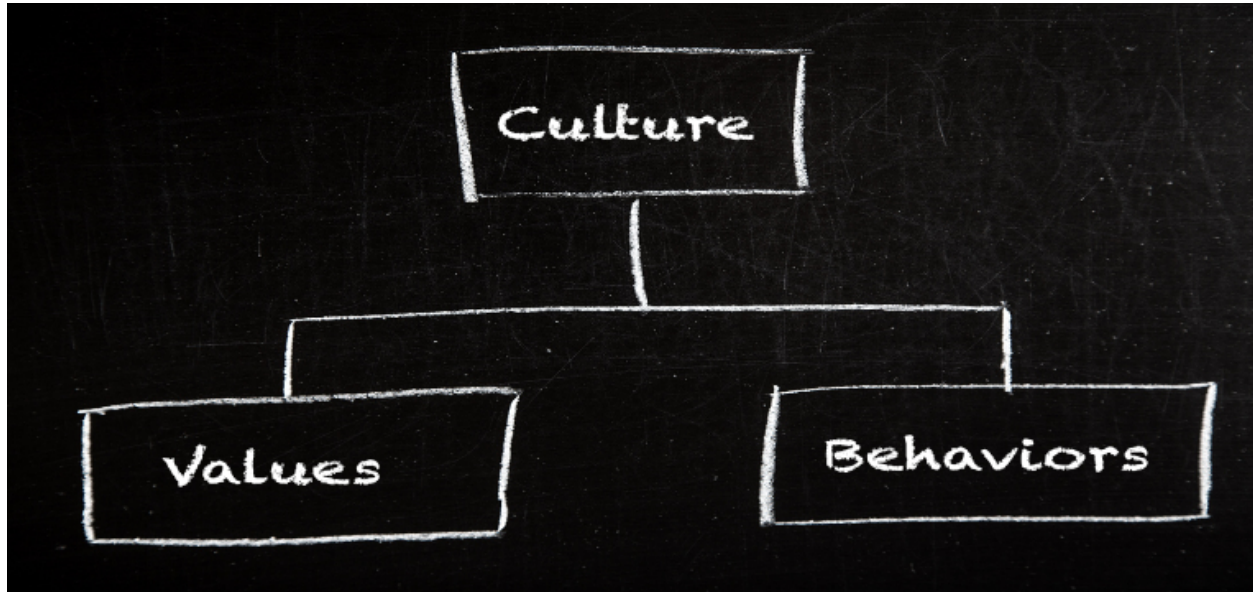
There are three areas that will either drive engagement or cause disengagement:

- **Company Culture** •
- **Leadership Effectiveness** •
- **Strategic Initiatives** •

This whitepaper explains how to enhance each area to drive engagement, reduce turnover, and generate better results.

How to Achieve an Engaged Workforce

Improve Company Culture



A company's culture has a significant impact on boosting engagement and achieving a strong bottom line, as well as attracting and retaining good employees.

Most people think that a company's culture is defined by the values and behaviors it aspires to. That sounds great and makes sense. Except it's not true...

A company's culture is defined by the values and behaviors the company tolerates.

And who does that tolerating? The leaders do.

The values and behaviors that the leaders tolerate become the company's culture.

A strong culture needs to be defined. A culture that exists by default is always inferior and leads to lower engagement. Additionally, although a defined culture is superior to a culture by default, it only works when the leaders, along with the rest of the organization, live by those values and behaviors.

A positive, well-defined culture that people live by will result in stronger engagement and improved profitability.

Improve Leadership Effectiveness

➤ Treat People Like People Instead of Like Things

When we interact with people without compassion, empathy, or understanding, we're treating them as things. And the consequence of treating people like things is that you'll get compliance, but not commitment.

In contrast, when leaders treat people like people, they recognize that everyone - regardless of position or title - has hopes and dreams, needs and desires, goals and aspirations, fears and stress, and strengths and weaknesses.



A leader who treats people like people enhances engagement and improves profitability.

➤ Treat Adults Like Adults Instead of Like Children



If you want to bring out the best in people, you also need to treat adults like adults. Unfortunately, many leaders often fall into the habit or pattern of treating adults like children. What does treating adults like children mean?

A leader treats someone like a child when they micromanage them. It demonstrates a lack of respect and trust. It sends the message that they don't trust them to do what needs to be done and they don't trust their judgment.

In contrast, leaders who treat adults like adults communicates that they trust people to be professional, hardworking, and responsible.

A leader who treats adults like adults enhances engagement and improves profitability.

➤ Earn Trust and Show Respect

The impact of showing respect is powerful, but not nearly as powerful as what happens when a leader does not show respect for others. When people feel they're not respected, they become disengaged.

The most effective means of showing respect for others is asking good questions of people and then listening to their answers. Even if their ideas are misguided, it gives us the insights we need to help coach and mentor them.



A leader who earns trust and respect enhances engagement and improves profitability.

➤ Show Appreciation



In order to bring out the best in people, they need to feel valued. Being taken for granted is disheartening and demotivating. Unfortunately, some leaders adopt the attitude that people are paid to do a job and therefore the payment of a salary is sufficient appreciation and recognition for their work. And while it's true that people have an obligation to do good work in exchange for fair pay, people are still people. They have emotions, pride, fears, self-esteem, and a desire to please.

Recognition, however, is not the same as appreciation.

Recognition is typically offered as a reward and acknowledgement for an *accomplishment*. Public recognition boosts a person's stature within an organization and enhances their self-esteem. Appreciation, on the other hand, is generally shown in response to someone's *effort*, rather than for an accomplishment. The impact of showing appreciation is immediate and long-lasting.

A leader who shows appreciation enhances engagement and improves profitability.

Developing Compelling Strategies

➤ **Platitudes**

Platitudes are nice sounding phrases that accomplish nothing. A typical platitude might read, “*We strive to be the recognized leader in our field and meet our customer’s expectations of excellence.*” It gives no direction, isn’t actionable, and addresses no particular issue. There’s no way to execute on it and it can’t really be measured.

A platitude is not a strategy.



➤ **Goals**

A goal is just a metric to measure progress in the execution of a strategy. A strategic-sounding goal might be, “*Our strategy is to double revenues over the next three years.*” No matter how detailed the plan is to achieve that goal and regardless of the fanfare with which it is rolled out, this non-strategy is simply a goal to double sales – nothing more. The only people who will be enthused about this non-strategy are the ones who set the goal.

A goal is not a strategy.



➤ Tactics

Tactics are simply the mechanics of how things will get done. If a tactic is developed as a “strategy”, it’s usually addressing a symptom rather than the underlying problem.

And “solving” a symptom usually makes matters worse.

Just as in pursuit of a goal, executing a tactic in the absence of a strategic objective doesn’t generate enthusiasm. There simply isn’t a compelling reason to achieve it.

A tactic is not a strategy.



➤ Strategies



A good strategy, in contrast to platitudes, goals and tactics, addresses an issue or problem, and provides a direction for the company to move. It also provides the reason for the initiative, creating a desire to achieve it.

Developing a true strategy enhances engagement and improves profitability.

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