

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Employee Engagement is described as a fundamental concept in the effort to understand and describe, both qualitatively and quantitatively, the nature of the relationship between an organization and its employees.

Improving employee engagement is an ongoing topic within the business world. When people thrive, so do the organisations they work for. Therefore crafting an effective employee engagement strategy is critical. Conversely, demotivated employees can hold businesses back. When people lack motivation, they are less productive, unlikely to do their best work and are more likely to leave – increasing overall turnover and its associated costs.

Let's look at Maslow's Theory of Needs starting with basic needs of physiological (breathing, food, water, sex, sleep, homeostasis, excretion). Then safety (security of: body, employment, resources, morality, the family, health and property). Then love/belonging (friendship, family, sexual intimacy). Then Esteem (self, confidence, achievement, respect of others, respect by others). The self-actualization (morality, creativity, spontaneity, problem solving, lack of prejudice, acceptance of facts).

If we expand this into the work place one can say basic needs of physiological (rest breaks, physical comfort on the job, reasonable working hours). Then safety (security of: job, working conditions, base compensation and benefits). Then love/belonging (friendly co-workers, interaction with customers, pleasant superior/boss). Then Esteem (responsibility of an important job, promotion to higher status job, praise and recognition from boss). The self-actualization (Creative and challenging work, participation in decision making, job flexibility and autonomy).

Herzberg's two factor theory states two separate sets of factors cause job dissatisfaction and job motivation. Hygiene factors (policy, work conditions, remuneration, status and security) cause dissatisfaction. Only when these conditions are met, can employees be effectively motivated.

The number one take away from these theories is pay employees enough so that money is not a concern and the safety factor is met. However research suggests that money is a poor motivator for tasks that require cognitive skill. Remunerate your employees fairly and you have the opportunity to motivate them. Remunerate them more and there is little improvement on motivation and productivity.

Employees seek psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety and psychological availability. Meaning they have tasks that are worthwhile, useful and add value. They feel safe to express themselves in their workplace and lastly they have the resources to perform the job.

You can begin to look at ways to motivate employees through motivational factors such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement and personal growth. Motivate employees in the workplace is essentially about treating people more like individuals. It is important to recognise each person's intrinsic desire to contribute, develop and self-direct.

To find out more about our employee engagement surveys and organizational culture audits or simply to find out more about how we can support your people contact Executive Coach Michelle Cronje at michelle@one-solution.co.za.