

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

The value of engaged staff

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Engaged employees speak highly of the company, are proud to tell others that they are part of the company, feel inspired, keep abreast of new developments in their area, make suggestions for improvement and volunteer to do things outside of their jobs.

Blessing white's Employee Engagement Report of 2011, indicates that engaged employees plan to stay for what they give; disengaged employees stay for what they get. In his results, 31% of employees were engaged, 17% were disengaged and the remainder were neutral.

In an ideal world we want employees to take charge of their engagement but it has been suggested that most people leave their employment because they are unhappy with their bosses and are not recognised as individuals. Organisations that care about employee engagement utilise personality systems to understand individual recognition needs.

The Enneagram is a complex and comprehensive system for understanding different personalities and recognition needs. It is a personality system of nine types. The Enneagram is represented by a nine point star – each point bearing a number that represents a specific personality type.

No one type is better than another, but each wears different 'coloured glasses' to perceive the world and approaches the job differently. By understanding the different perspectives of the types it is possible to enter their world and to understand and predict their behaviour and perceptions types, and what recognition feedback is appreciated by the individual.

Type one – the Reformer

Reformers are highly disciplined, perfectionistic, opinionated and idealistic. They hold strong views on the things which they value and can be quite critical of those who do not agree with their opinions. They need to be recognised for their accuracy and logical application of their contribution.

Type two – the Helper

Helpers are caring, warm, thoughtful and generous. They are keen to flatter others with compliments and are openly affectionate – often physically. They are motivated to satisfy others' needs and may in the process neglect themselves. They need to be recognised for their generosity and the good relationships they forge with others.

Type three – the Achiever

Achievers are energetic, competitive, competent and adaptable. They are often ambitious, either for themselves or for those nearest to them. They avoid failure at all cost. Type threes are conscious of how others see them and need to make a positive impression on others. They need to be recognised authentically in front of peers for their achievements.

Type four – the individualist

Individualists are sensitive, experience their feelings deeply and often perceive themselves as different to others. They usually have some creative outlet and may at times be moody and introspective. They are highly imaginative and intuitive. They need to be recognised for their creativity and their original contributions.

Type five – the Observer

Observers are private, analytical, often preoccupied in their thoughts and focused on what holds their attention. They are keen to find out how things fit together and are motivated to gain deeper knowledge of the things that interest them. They need to be recognised for their ideas and prefer sincere private feedback.

Type six – the Loyalist

Loyalists are reliable, organised, cautious and prepared for the unexpected. They usually keep friends for life. Type sixes can spend much energy worrying about things which never happen and may see negatives more easily than positives. They need to be recognised for seeing what can go wrong and affirmed for their loyalty to their team.

Type seven – the Enthusiast

Enthusiasts are impulsive, outgoing and optimistic, and seek adventure and variety in life. They easily respond to stimuli and may be seen to be superior to others in the views they hold. They can overindulge in the pleasures of life and may become scattered. They need to be recognised for their contributions in seeing new possibility and positive outcomes.

Type Eight – the Challenger

Challengers are assertive, resourceful, strong, straight talking and at times willful. They can inspire others to buy into their vision and are the natural leaders of the Enneagram. They are shrewd in finding answers to problems and will not easily be defeated. They show their anger easily and may intimidate more reserved people. They need to be recognised sincerely for their staying power and taking care of the vulnerable.

Type Nine – the Peacemaker

Peacemakers are easy-going, patient, diplomatic and serene. They may at times zone out on a day dream and are happy to wait for an outcome rather than push their own agenda. They will carefully check out the facts of a situation before reacting. Although they do not show their anger directly, they may at times get back at those who annoy them in subtle ways. They need to be recognised for their mediation skills and enjoy a celebration where all are included.

The primary value exchange between most employers and employees today is time for money. It is a thin, one dimensional transaction. Each side tries to get as much of the other's resources as possible, but neither gets what it really wants. It is only when employers encourage and support employees in recognising them as individuals that they can cultivate the energy, engagement, focus, creativity and passion that fuel great results.

Adopting a system such as the Enneagram demonstrates to employees that the organisation is invested in their emotional well being. The system encourages open conversations between the managers and their teams to reveal more about themselves in a non-obtrusive way which builds trust and mutual engagement to the business objectives of the organisation.

Dr Lee Kingma is HR Executive for Juta & Co and has authored a book on the Enneagram "What's your Tribe"

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