



## Why is Employee Engagement not Improving?

Have you ever wondered why employee engagement levels measured by The Gallup Organization are so low? It seems to us that having only 29% of the American workforce *Engaged*, 55% *Not-Engaged* and 16% *Actively Disengaged* is very costly to the economy, not to mention to the organizations that are average or below average. And these figures have not changed in the past three years despite Gallup adding hundreds of thousands of surveys to their data base each year.

### **Almost Everyone Starts Out Engaged**

What should be of greater concern to business leaders is the following statement from Curt Coffman, co-author of *FirstBreak All the Rules*, and *Follow This Path*, who in an interview published in the Gallup Management Journal says: "...almost everyone joins an organization as an engaged employee".

And that makes sense doesn't it? How did you feel on your first day with your present organization? You applied for the job because it interested you. You believed you had the talents, skills and creativity that the job required, even if you didn't have the experience, and that you could really make a difference. On day one, you were ready to go.

So what happens? According to Gallup's research by the time employees have been with an organization for six months, less than 40% are engaged. And the longer the employee stays with an organization the lower that figure gets, until only 20% are engaged after 10 years of service.

Just think about that. What is happening to result in more than 60 % of employees switching off and becoming disengaged within six months? And lack of engagement is not only a problem on the front line. A recent Gallup report in USA Today states that only 49% of senior executives are engaged.

### **The Process of Disengagement**

Author Leigh Branham describes a Process of Disengagement in his book *The 7 Hidden Reasons Employees Leave*. He describes the steps a new employee goes through to become disengaged. The first five steps are:

1. The Process of Disengagement
2. Question the decision to accept the job
3. Think seriously about quitting
4. Try to change things

## 5. Resolve to quit

The choices they make at this point can go one of two ways... they start looking for another job and ultimately leave, and may become *Actively Disengaged* while they are looking. What is more damaging to the organization is those who quit and stay, emotionally switched off, or *Not- Engaged*.

What causes people to start down this path to *disengagement*?

The seven reasons that employees become disengaged and ultimately leave are not obvious, especially to managers. Saratoga Institute research found that managers believe that more than 70% of employees leave for more money... but 88% of employees say they leave for *reasons other than money*.

This fits with Leigh Branham's seven hidden reasons which are:

1. The job or workplace was not as expected.
2. The mismatch between the job and the person.
3. Too little coaching and feedback.
4. Too few growth and advancement opportunities.
5. Feeling devalued and unrecognized.
6. Stress from overwork and work-life imbalance.
7. Loss of trust and confidence in senior leaders.

Not one of the top seven reasons has to do with money! Of course when an employee leaves, they have usually found a job that pays more money... they have used their current package as a bargaining tool. So of course they will tell you they are leaving for more money. And it is much easier to tell their manager that than to give any of the real reasons above.

### **Leadership is the Key to Increased Engagement and Profitability**

There is no shortage of evidence that organizations with great leadership and engaged employees are significantly more successful financially than their competitors. *Built to Last* by Jim Collins and Jerry Porras, *Good to Great* by the same Jim Collins and *Hidden Value* by James Pfeffer and Charles O'Reilly III are just a few of the many books that provide compelling research.

If you are serious about having a fully engaged workforce that can really differentiate you from your competitors, you need to get serious about making sure that everyone in your organization who has leadership responsibility has the *emotional intelligence* and *leadership skills* needed to switch your employees on. You can't afford to have anyone in a leadership role that turns people off.

Can anyone learn to be a leader? Our experience says they can... but only if they want to be. There are people in your organization who can make a significant contribution to your organization and they really don't want to manage people.

Isn't it time to rethink the notion that to advance in an organization you have to manage people? What is that idea costing you in terms of a lack of engagement?

Click on the link below to learn how to...

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Sincerely

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