3 Conditions To Keep Employee Engagement Soaring

TemboStatus

So your organization is finding it difficult to keep employee engagement high? Join the club.

It's one of the most pressing issues in the corporate world, and it's a problem that the majority of organizations are dealing with today.

However, the reason so many companies are struggling to keep employees working hard is because they have simplistic and outdated engagement programs. Many businesses believe they can motivate employees simply by throwing money and tangible perks at the issue.

While everyone enjoys a pocket-bulging bonus and vacation in Hawaii, these are only short-term fixes for low engagement. Because guess what? Workers still have to come back to the office after that tropical trip or the run to the bank to deposit that big check. Instead of focusing on fleeting engagement initiatives, companies should strive to create more powerful, lasting programs. The best ones are all about taking action, retaining top talent, and understanding the return on investment that more engaged employees can have on an organization.

1 Take action in the wake of surveys

Employee surveys are not a new tool in the corporate world. Rather, they are some of the most frequently deployed strategies to help HR professionals gain insight into the office environment.

The problem is many companies don't apply the results of such surveys into their operations. While this may seem mind-boggling, it's a trend that far too many C-suite leaders are enabling. Most tenured professionals—even those in HR—can think of at least one occasion in which the results of an employee survey were largely ignored.

Avoid Employee Frustration with Real Actions

In an article for Lead Change Group, HR author and founder of Trailblaze Inc. David Dye highlighted this troubling fact. He talked about one company where employees were frustrated when a new survey came to their desks.

This company's staff felt that their input was ignored on multiple occasions, and the only changes that came from employee surveys were trivial, such as changing desk arrangements and creating a task force to redecorate the office.

Employees want to enhance productivity and boost efficiency just as much as executives or managers. However, when their input is not valued their engagement levels are more likely to decrease.

To combat this, managers and executives need to take action in the wake of surveys. This means finding detailed, useful insights that can have positive returns. Here are a few tips for getting the most from employee feedback:

Center change on business results: Try to focus on only making changes that will drive business results. Restructuring departments, adapting how a service is delivered or overhauling how the sales team generates leads are all positive changes that can be derived from deeply analyzing the results of a survey.

Focus on what can be changed: It doesn't make sense to ask a question about an aspect of the workplace that a business can or simply won't change. This will provide false hope to employees that a better method will be coming, when legal, financial or other constraints might make change impossible.

Put data front and center: Making the case for investing in engagement programs can be challenging for HR managers, so it's important they have the data to support their plans. Executives are much more likely to approve a program if they have hard numbers to look at when deciding whether or not to give a program the green light. Also, quality performance and engagement data can help HR teams create more informed strategies.

Keep it relevant: Some teams or certain professionals may not know enough to answer niche questions. For example, a query about the sales process will have little relevance to an IT support employee. If they are forced to answer such questions, they will not only become disenchanted with the survey, but results will be skewed.

2 Retention and time management:

a match made in the HR department

Enterprises with a high turnover rate are more likely to spend time and money to hire new talent at the expense of investing in employee retention. So one department is experiencing managerial issues that has led to low engagement and lagging productivity? That manager is on his own; the HR team has more important things to worry about, like hiring a new employee to fill a vacancy that has had to be filled three times in the last year.

This rat race can have a significant, negative impact in any enterprise. Despite this fact, some C-suite members will still push back when HR leaders bring up employee engagement investments. Some believe their organization's are heading in the right direction and maintain that retention worries are a thing of the past. Big mistake.

Why Employee Retention is More Important Than Ever

The economy is improving, sales are increasing and the problems for organizations are slowing going away. Right? Not so fast.

While it's hard to argue that better economic conditions are a bad thing for businesses, these will certainly provide many challenges for today's HR teams. This is because turnover rates are expected to spike, as increased certainty surrounding the job market will convince more employees to look for new jobs in 2014. A recent survey from CareerBuilder conducted by Harris Interactive found 21 percent of full-time professionals in the United States will look for a new job this year. That's the highest post-recession mark recorded.

That means businesses will be forced to foot-the-bill for more turnover-related costs in 2014 than any point in the last five years. Still think a booming economy means it's all rose petals for your bottom line?

3 The financial return on investing in engagement

Quantifying positive returns on engagement and employee development programs is essential for today's HR professionals. Show this data to your CEO and see how long it takes him or her to tremble with financial fear:

- Average rate of voluntary turnover: **2 percent** (Bureau of Labor Statistics, Nov. 2013)
- Average annual salary for American worker: **$45,790** (BLS, 2012)
- Average cost to replace an employee: **21 percent of salary** (Center for American Progress)

If those numbers are crunched, the average private company with 100 employees spends about **$19,000 each month** finding replacements for employees who look for greener pastures.

That number doesn't even include the cost of turnover related to layoffs, and with more employed professionals set to look for new jobs in 2014, voluntary turnover could spike significantly. Also, the latest BLS salary numbers are from two years ago, and salaries are likely higher today due to inflation. This shows the sobering reality of why a quality employee engagement strategy is important to any company.

Non-tangible Return on Engagement

While the C-suite may be more concerned with the monetary benefits of boosting engagement, not every aspect of engagement can be measured by dollars, pounds, euros or yen.

Some of the best programs simply bring employees together and turn them on to the idea of how powerful they can be as a tight-knit unit, rather than a loosely connected group of individuals looking to get that paycheck and get home. These collaborative approaches to engagement can have the biggest impact as well. They will facilitate a willingness for team members to work together, and your organization will benefit from diversity of thought and a collaborative spirit.

RBC Royal Bank and TemboSocial Example

When the Royal Bank of Canada wanted to increase employee engagement levels, it decided to create a program to encourage workers to embrace sustainable projects in their community.

In partnership with TemboSocial, RBC saw great success with its Blue Water Project designed to find clean water solutions for global communities. More than

18,000 employees actively engaged with the program and registered more than 300 unique projects across the world.

This highlights one of the often ignored truths about engagement: involving employees is one of the best ways to keep workers interested. Also, it shows that engagement shouldn't be a solo effort on the part of the HR team. Instead, engagement programs should be inclusive and bring the entire workforce together for a common goal.

While HR leaders and executives might attempt to measure return on engagement with defined metrics, it's not always possible or necessary. Rather, simple numbers, such as the fact 18,000 employees participated in RBC's program, are more telling about return on engagement.

Taking this approach will help businesses establish a team mentality and enable employees to realize what's possible when they come together to accomplish a task. This, undoubtedly, is the best possible result that can come from creating a custom engagement strategy.

Sources:

americanprogress.org/issues/labor/report/2012/11/16/44464/there-are-significant-business-costs-to-replacing-employees

yourhoustonnews.com/courier/news/audit-turnover-for-government-workers-up-in/article_267543e9-906e-5d4a-98ec-b4ccc67af070.html

leadchangegroup.com/why-your-employee-survey-is-a-waste-of-time

hr.com/en?t=/network/file/file_deliver&mode=open&file=1373565195269

slideshare.net/gmorris1974/hrm-employee-value-proposition-survey-results

tlnt.com/2011/10/11/employee-engagement-surveys-how-much-value-do-they-really-have

careerbuilder.com/share/aboutus/pressreleasesdetail.aspx?sd=1%2f9%2f2014&siteid=cbpr&sc_cmp1=cb_pr797_&id=pr797&ed=12%2f31%2f2014

about-monster.com/content/tmp-worldwide-survey-finds-employees-value-advancement-opportunities-most

hrmagazine.co.uk/hro/news/1141047/employees-unsure-vision-values-survey

cdn2.hubspot.net/hub/158704/file-280759042-pdf/RBC-Case_Study_-_Community_Makeover.pdf

bls.gov/news.release/pdf/jolts.pdf

bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm#00-0000

docs.google.com/a/brafton.com/file/d/0BzWRCv66uEJnRzZWdmxyTy1ma29XamUwSTg3WENkVFlNUGpv/edit

TemboStatus is all-in-one employee engagement software for HR professionals. We take you beyond survey results and recommendations and offer the actual tactics you need to move the needle on engagement.

Let us help you do the right things. Talk to a **TemboStatus** expert about your program and discover how you can measure and reduce disengagement costs in 90 days with a solution that fits your current budget.