

Engaging Disengaged Staff

Top 10 Ways To Create An Engaged Workforce

The widely referenced 2013 Gallup Engagement Survey cites an average of 63% of employees are currently disengaged in the workplace, with an additional 24% actively disengaged. This staggering figure proposes 87% of all staff are disengaged according to the study which was conducted upon 180 million employees across 142 countries(1).

What is even more impacting is that the remaining 13% were able to outperform the disengaged majority by a whopping 202%, making employee engagement a vital focus for all progressive organisations looking to succeed both now and into the future(1).

These numbers are extremely concerning, not to mention costly, with Australian research commissioned by Medibank in 2007 averaging presenteeism expenses at \$25.7 billion annually which equates to an average of six working days of productivity lost per year per employee due to presenteeism (2).

Gallup goes on to define engaged employees as "those who are involved in, enthusiastic about and committed to their work and workplace", essentially every employer's dream. Obviously positive engagement requires consistent and dedicated effort and a focused intent from the organizational stakeholders to tie the Vision of the Company into the day-to-day activities of the Staff. With staff disengagement such a widespread issue, how do we work towards improving these shocking statistics?

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Our Top Ten Keys to Fix Engagement

1 Utilise the Culture Survey so your employees become accustomed to being referred to for their feedback and input. Be candid, and ask the necessary questions to produce the most important feedback. Ensure your feedback processes include all organizational tiers and aren't just geared as an opportunity for Management to issue directives. With regularity, humility and a desire for real answers, your staff will quickly feel like what they say matters, which in turn will make them feel more engaged in the workplace.

4 Define the 'Why' by clearly and concisely broadcasting the Vision and the Culture of the organization. Through repetition and message integrity (i.e. leaders must "walk the talk"). A study by TinyPulse of over 40,000 respondents ranked 82% of survey respondents as understanding their individual roles and responsibilities, while only 42% of employees knew their organization's vision, mission or values (4), evidencing that While staff may know the details of their own role, they may not understand how that role fits into the wider scope of the organizational Vision.

2 Redesign your space to focus on developing an inclusive, rather than exclusive office layouts Don't let your organisation chart determine your floor layout and restrict the vital flow of information and collaboration within the workplace.

5 Identify and empower skilled Leaders. Acknowledge that strong leadership qualities are an enviable trait in and of themselves and don't hamper successful leaders through over-tasking. If you need further justification to release leaders to perform this important role, measure their contribution in terms of the forecasted team output.

3 Listen to employees and be intentional about starting authentic conversations. By listening to your staff without one eye on your iphone, you will not just boost engagement levels, but you possibly learn something vital to use in progressing the organisation.

6 Ensure message continuity by setting clear expectations of work, performance and behaviours and applying them with consistency and continuity, regardless of status or role.

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OUR TOP TEN KEYS TO FIX ENGAGEMENT

7 Don't use the big stick to motivate your people. There is emerging evidence that, excessively directive (command and control) leadership styles appear to be correlated with higher levels of workplace interpersonal conflict and harassment(3).

8 Maintain transparency in your dealings with staff. Contrary to belief, staff won't necessarily depart when the going gets tough, with many positive attributes triggered when employees are forced to confront challenges. In TinyPulse's workplace survey, Transparency was ranked as the #1 contributing factor to employee happiness(4).

9 Promote Well being. When an Australian study considered the combined effects of self-rated work performance and absenteeism data they found that the healthiest employees are almost three

times more effective than the least healthy, with the healthiest employees working approximately 143 effective hours per month compared to 49 effective hours per month by the least healthy(5).

Not to be forgotten is the typology of Australia's population, with an increasing representation of workers over 45 years of age who may be more vulnerable to the effects of sedentary or unhealthy workplaces.

10 Don't play political games in an attempt to outsmart, outwit or corner staff. Pretending to be helpless due to the influence of a higher authority, delaying decisions, stealing ideas or reorganising teams specifically to extract an unwanted person is an engagement killer.

The simplest way to activate employee engagement, is to utilise the golden rule. Treat your staff the way you would want to be treated and you are well on your way to a happier, and more excited workplace.

For more information on how you can integrate engagement opportunities into your workplace design, contact one of our Workplace Consultants.

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(1) Gallup State of the Workplace Report 2013

(2) Medibank Private 2005, The health of Australia's workforce, 1 July 2011

(3) Australian Public Service Commission 2010, State of the Service Report 09-10, 15 August 2010

(4) 7 Vital Trends Disrupting Today's Workplace, conducted by TINYpulse

(5) Psychological Injury in the Workplace, InPsych April 2008 Dr Peter Cotton FAPS