

THOUGHT PIECE - "EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT"

Do you have employee engagement as a priority in your organisation?

Research is highlighting Engagement as a source of competitive advantage and a key to performance and retention. An international survey of more than 50,000 employees from 59 organisations, in 30 countries and across 14 industries by the Corporate Leadership Council (CLC) in 2004 revealed that some organisations have 10 times as many highly committed, high effort employees as others. Further, highly committed employees try 57 per cent harder, perform 20 per cent better, and are 87 per cent less likely to leave than those with low levels of commitment. How do you think your organisation would compare?

In their model of engagement, the CLC research considers two particular aspects, "discretionary effort" and "intent to stay".

What are some of the key insights?

- A high-performing workforce depends on the recruitment of high quality talent
- Once in place, engagement accounts for roughly 40 per cent of observed performance improvements. This will be a mix of:
 - the attitude and support from the executive team,
 - compensation that is linked to performance
 - a clear benefits programme
 - factors that engage the individual's emotional effort. Simple but critical things such as "Tell me why my job matters as soon as I walk in the door", "Help me build my skills to become more effective in my job", "Give me job relevant information, the opportunity to innovate and a sense of pride", can all make a positive impact.

Even when all of the above are in place however, discretionary effort and long term commitment may still not be present for all staff all of the time. It is our observation that it is only when:

- people are really clear about their own life direction and
- their talents are being fully utilised in their lives, either in or outside work
- with a long term view for their future direction

that, that additional "something" which is full engagement occurs.

When people achieve a match between profound and sustainable commitment to their own direction, and available organisational roles, we begin to see exceptional performance and

engagement. This enthusiasm then rubs off significantly on colleagues and the teams that these people manage and have influence over.

In Creative Metier we have designed a structured mentoring process that focuses specifically on long term future direction. The process provides the individual with time for reflection, and brings in each individual's unique qualities, interests, experiences and potential and an assessment of their current position and opportunities. When used as part of senior management mentoring, or at the beginning of leadership development programmes, Creative Metier supports the transition to self management, making best use of development and self managed learning resources. The result will be best fit between individual and role. In leadership roles these individuals are better able to guide the performance and career development of their team members as they align their own skills, talents and aspirations. As an increasing number of people in the organisation achieve this fit:

- The potential of the organisation's human capital is more fully developed
- The workforce becomes more focused and more fulfilled
- HR and development input can be used more productively

In conclusion, organisations that improve commitment will see significant returns in discretionary effort resulting in higher performance across the workforce. The CLC Survey also concluded that those companies with above average employee commitment had greater one-year revenue growth relative to their industry than those with below average employee commitment. Investment in Engagement has to make sense. Quality mentoring for senior management provides an avenue to achieving it.

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To find out more about the Corporate Leadership Council's resources and research:

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