

STRATEGIES SHOP TALK

Newsletter of Organizational Effectiveness Strategies: Winning Through People

Employee Engagement



From The President's Desk

Suzanne M. Miklos, Ph.D.

How do you build a stronger corporate brand? A common challenge for many organizations is the financial and time costs of disengaged employees. Research has shown that disengaged employees can be quite costly. A strong external brand can not be built when employees feel that their performance has little affect on their company's bottom line. Many organizations struggle with ineffective employees, high employee turnover rates and inconsistent customer perceptions.

Helping employees become more engaged is an important factor to company branding. When employees are engaged in the organization and reflect organizational values and missions, they actively involve themselves in the forward movement of the company. Engaged employees have developed a bond with the company and care about its future success.

Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), describe employee engagement best. "Positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigor (feeling energetic and resilience at work), dedication (being proud of and happy about one's work) and absorption (being totally immersed in ones' work)". Of course, there needs to be different atmospheres for different companies, but the one thing that the most succesful companies have discovered is that the employee experience needs to match and drive the customer experience.

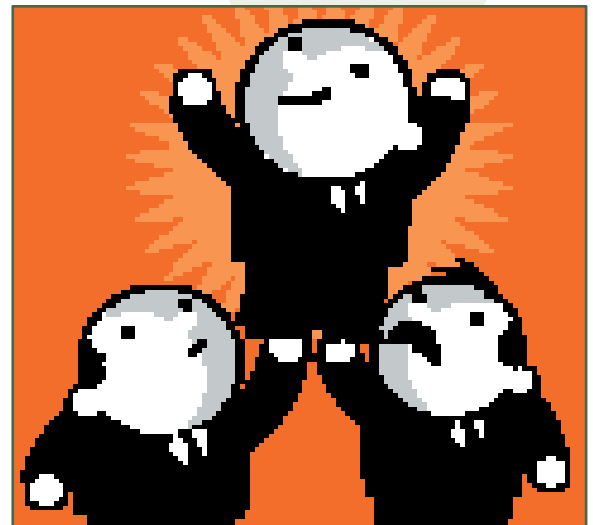
Thus, building a corporate brand begins with

employee engagement, which is aligning corporate and employee values together as well as empowering employees to live core values at work and in their personal lives.

Below are several suggestions to encourage employee engagement:

1. Provide resources necessary to perform.
2. Clear communciation within the organization about goals and responsibility
3. Surveys to to measure engagement.

For further information please see our new white paper at www.oestrategies.com.





Investing in People: Building an Employee Brand

Supervisor's Corner

Whitney Watts

In an environment where it is difficult to gain loyalty from customers, employees and investors, corporations have to figure out how to gain a competitive edge to attract and retain human capital. An important factor for many companies is the significance of employee engagement as a force in developing loyalty.

One of the most important aspects in creating this dynamic is the employee/customer relationship. The most successful companies have mastered the ability to build customer relationships through employee engagement. Introducing meaningful ways to support employee engagement could prove beneficial when considering new ways to enhance company success.

Stage 1: The importance of employee engagement

Studies have provided insight on the impact of implementing practices that promote employee engagement. When employees have an emotional as well as cognitive connection with their position and company, they are more likely to a) perform better by being more efficient and taking initiative, b) make more contributions to the success of the company, and c) outwardly express their enthusiasm for the company to others.

By taking the time to carefully assess what factors are necessary for employees to assimilate into the desired corporate culture, companies can significantly reduce employee turnover as well as increase their bottom line.

Stage 2: Creating an Employee Brand

One way to create an internal employee brand is to first think externally, about the corporate

brand (i.e. the need that you promise to fulfill to your customers). To successfully accomplish the company promise leaders should first embrace the brand. Unbelieving, unhappy employees can be detrimental to the success of the company.

There are numerous ways to get your employees excited about their position. Companies should make sure that employees know what is expected from them and how their contributions are necessary for overall success. Employees need to possess fundamental characteristics that agree with the promise the company is trying to promote. Once employees have a sense of duty and loyalty they will be able to effectively communicate their attitude towards customers.

Employee Engagement Helpful Hints

- Present realistic job previews.
- Hire believers with the right attitude.
- Make employees aware of culture up front.
- Share your enthusiasm for the brand.



Stage 3: Selecting the Right People

A great way to select new hires as well as develop incumbents to relate to the needs of the organization is through assessments, surveys, and aptitude tests. All of these tools can aid in the selection and retention process for establishing a quality pool of employees to represent the company. The use of these tools allow the company to get detailed insight on what the employee is like and what measures impact performance. Making this investment in people enhances their performance and creates an enjoyable environment conducive to success.

Conclusion

By engaging employees, both cognitively and emotionally, organizations will be able to establish a culture where employees are passionate about their career. This passion will show in their performance as well as their interaction with each other and customers. Happy employees deliver good customer service, creating customer loyalty and thereby increasing shareholders profits. An effective value proposition can assist in creating the positive attitudes associated with employee loyalty and commitment that drive business results and enhance public view.

For a full version of this white paper and other white papers, please visit our website at www.oestrategies.com.

New Products From O.E. Strategies

O.E. Strategies is pleased to announce the launching of two new products Staff Smart and Manager's Survival Toolkit available on www.oestrategies.com.

Staff Smart is a proven, time-tested orientation and performance tool kit for new and existing employees. Staff Smart is a simple, easy to use program designed to enable you to boost your retention ration, increase productivity and profitability, and improve customer service.

Staff Smart comes in a workbook format that leads supervisors and employees through the steps necessary to provide direction and focus for the employee's work.

New Manager's Survival Kit contains the information and tools you need to succeed in a new job. It takes the guesswork out of what to do and when to do it. It is designed to help you avoid common management pitfalls and create a solid base of relationships and results on which to build your ongoing success as a manager.



Book Review

The Power of Full Engagement: Managing Energy, Not Time, Is the Key to High Performance and Personal Renewal by Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz

With the help of technology our workday has become longer and longer. The use of emails, voicemails, blackberrys and Wi-Fi permit people to work around the clock, at the coffee shop, in the car and even in the bed. All of these factors lead to a tired, less effective working population. In "The Power of Full Engagement" Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz give insight on an approach to achieving a high quality of energy with a fixed amount of time. This approach, the Corporate Athlete Training System, is based on twenty-five years of scientific findings from some of the worlds' top athletes, helping them perform more effectively under brutal competitive pressures.

The four principles discussed in this book are:

- 1) Mobilize four key sources of energy: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual
- 2) Balance energy expenditure with intermittent renewal
- 3) Train capacity like athletes
- 4) Create and keep positive energy rituals

The back end of the book provides a Personal Development Plan that can be filled out by the reader.



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