

COACHING FOR ENGAGEMENT

A STUDY ON HOW RELATIONSHIPS
INFLUENCE ENGAGEMENT

WHITE PAPER
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RESEARCH ABSTRACT

Throughout 2018 we leveraged our proprietary digital assessment platform to conduct an in-depth study on what managers need to do to create great relationships with their direct reports. Hang tight for the solutions we uncovered.

Before we get to these key data points, let's go back a couple years. In 2016 a similar study we facilitated on workplace engagement identified three key influencers of employees who said they were engaged in their workplace. We studied over 1,000 leaders within large companies (1,000+) middle sized companies (250 to 999) and small companies (2 - 249). Despite the industry or the company size, the top three results were conclusive:

3. Pay & Benefits
2. Belief in Senior Leadership / Company Vision
1. Relationship with Immediate Manager

So what we found is exactly what we expected, more (good) data on the importance of the immediate manager in catalyzing employee engagement. So what do we do now? It's time to reverse engineer how to build an excellent relationship with our direct reports.

Our most recent research gave us more information, because we made the feedback more open-ended, seeking to understand the key drivers of excellent employee-boss relationships. Initially we found over twenty consistent data points, and as we narrowed the analysis, our research participants gave us eight key takeaways for what an immediate manager must do to create a great relationship with their direct reports.

The findings are below:

- SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS
- PRAISE YOU FREQUENTLY
- CARE ABOUT YOU AS A PERSON
- PROVIDE CAREER ADVANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES
- TALK ABOUT YOUR PROGRESS
- EQUIP YOU TO SUCCEED IN JOB
- YOUR OPINIONS COUNT AT WORK
- ENCOURAGE YOUR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

INTENTIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Every organizational culture is unique, and our experience suggests a few key focus areas are connected to successful professional relationships which ultimately leads to enhanced retention and improved productivity. But first, you do the math. Which one of those eight items (above) stands out to you as being the most significant driver of great workplace relationships?

If you said, "they care about you as a person" - you would be correct. It's not rocket science, but it matters to your employees. And I'm sure it matters to you, too. So what do we do about it? Below we've highlighted four practical execution items to help you reignite employee engagement with those in your sphere.

4 Methodologies for Catalyzing Intentional Engagement

1. Ask better questions and ask them more frequently. Here are a few to get started:

- What drives you to bring your best every day?
- What do you enjoy most about your life?
- Where do you see yourself in five years? How can I help you get there?
- What can we do to collaborate more effectively as a team?

2. Invest one-on-one, face-to-face time with each direct report (at least bi-weekly).

Our coaching for engagement process has been designed for you to keep your pulse on your greatest assets, and is to be used with all of your direct reports every two weeks. This is not a check-list approach to leadership, this is a paradigm-shifting mindset we must maintain as servant leaders. Forget to make time for your people and they will forget about you.

3. Craft a custom development plan for each direct-report.

If you really care about the people on your team, it is imperative that we invest time in creating a custom development plan. Average managers coach to a quota but great ones coach to potential. Make time to craft a plan with future career aspirations and reasonable timelines. Create a list of monthly deliverables so you can look back over the year and identify milestones to celebrate.

4. Individualize how you reward progress.

If we want to be different than every other leader on the planet, let's start to personalize our recognition systems. It is true that our team members perceive their value to the organization largely through the feedback we provide them. Let's make sure we highlight the positive progress and create a unique reward system that honors each individual's dominant motives.

S U M M A R Y

We can all agree that employee engagement, enhanced retention, and improved productivity won't happen through osmosis. The real results will come from an intentional focus on serving, supporting, and caring for those we serve.

Many leaders struggle with combining the results-driven approach to leadership with the relationship-driven approach to leadership. Yes, the numbers are important and we all know the significance of them, but it's clear - if we want extraordinary results we must first build extraordinary relationships.

In order to engage our employees, we must showcase genuine interest, care, and concern for their well-being. And yes, most companies offer a unique mosaic of personalities, backgrounds, generations, and motives. That's why coaching for engagement must happen consistently, intentionally, and individually.

The key identifiers of employee engagement rely heavily on emotional intelligence skills that build trust, demonstrate care, and execute proven processes. If nothing else, our research has proven that these skills don't come easily, and many of the most well-intentioned leaders miss regular opportunities to coach for engagement.

Whether you invest in formal or informal training for your team, our transformational talent development will help your key influencers effectively execute the coaching model with timeliness and tact. Maximize Value exists to serve you in not only comprehending these core leadership concepts, but implementing them in your day-to-day business. Together, we can confidently build a more engaging culture and a more productive team.