

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Note: *This communication provides general information about human resources and employment practices issues. It is not a legal opinion or legal advice. Readers should confer with appropriate legal counsel for their particular situations.*

According to a recent Gallup poll, more than half of American workers (56%) are “not engaged,” meaning that while their bodies are at work, their minds are somewhere else. Even worse, 16% of workers are “actively disengaged,” that is, they’re purposefully undermining the accomplishments of their co-workers.

The financial benefits of an engaged, connected workforce cannot be overstated. Companies with engaged employees have lower turnover, less absenteeism, and fewer accidents. Engaged employees encourage customer loyalty, boost profitability, and help increase overall market value of the company. For good reason, many organizations strive to engage employees; unfortunately, many fail because they don’t understand how to accomplish that goal.

Hint: employee engagement does not revolve on the annual bonus, or the lavish holiday party. As revealed by numerous studies, employees who feel appreciated and respected at work by their immediate supervisors and teammates are the most likely to be engaged and productive.

To connect with employees, you need a well-designed strategy and action plan that makes employees feel appreciated and respected. Here are three steps you can take to get started:

- **Get out!** The best way to get to know employees and make them feel valued is to interact with them in person. There’s a certain convenience in e-mail, but it diminishes the power of face-to-face contact.
- **Encourage continuing education.** Many employees feel that if they want to change career paths or be promoted, they have to leave their current employer. Ask great employees to stay put while they seek training and then work with them to find the position they want within the company. Also, get employees excited about industry developments: sponsor an onsite speaker series on relevant industry topics or purchase trade magazine subscriptions for everyone, regardless of position.
- **Give employees more input.** Having say in a decision makes people far more likely to buy into it. Inviting employees to participate in upper-level discussions regarding systemic or industry-wide challenges, for example, not only gives them insight into the troubles facing their supervisors; it emboldens them to help fix them.

BottomLine

By any metric, companies and managers who engage employees see more positive results than those who don’t. First and foremost, the key to increasing the bottom line through engagement involves teaching all managers how to become – and stay – more connected with their teams.

If you would like more information about this or other human resources and employment practices issues, please contact Praxis HR via email at info@praxis.com by phone at 206.262.8133 or visit our website at www.praxishr.com.