

## People leave managers not organisations – Truth or myth?



“People leave managers not organisations” is considered wisdom, however is it actually a case of enough people have said it enough times, so it must be true? This has largely been advocated by Gallup, a management consultancy. Could it be that they have fallen prey to “if all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail”?

Culture Amp decided to test the validity of this statement by doing their own research. After combining existing data and analysing 175 teams to assess why people wanted to leave or were not committed to their organisation, these were the results.

- People do leave bad managers; however, it is not the number one reason why they leave;
- In “good” organisations, managers make a difference; and
- In “bad” organisations, either having a good or bad manager makes little to no difference to a person’s decision to leave.

This is a demonstration of the Differential Susceptibility Hypothesis. Some people are naturally more susceptible than others to environmental influences in a for-better-and-for-worse manner.

That is, susceptible to both the adverse effects of negative environments and positive effects in more supportive ones. Thus, these types of people are likely making the adage look true, when in a toxic organisation.

It has been shown that, in terms of employee engagement, drivers differ according to factors such as tenure or being part of a particular group. Quantum Workplace's 2018 Employee Engagement Trends Report illustrates this well. The longer an employee works at an organisation, the more engagement is driven by feeling valued. Newer employees, on the other hand, are more driven by professional growth and career development opportunities. Thus, tenure is a defining factor when looking at drivers of employee engagement. The survey also found that employees with a high school diploma or less education were the only groups with the item "The leaders of this organisation demonstrate integrity" as a top five driver of engagement, while an interesting and challenging career was most important to those with a bachelor's or master's degree.

In another study where employee engagement was assessed in the National Health Services in the UK, feeling valued and involved is the key driver for employee engagement in every job group except for one — Pharmacists, for whom job satisfaction is the most important factor. Another interesting observation is that the importance of equal opportunities and fair treatment as a driver varies considerably. For healthcare assistants and nursing auxiliaries it is the fourth most important contributor to engagement, whereas for community nurses and therapists it is eleventh and seventh highest respectively.

Drivers are also dependent on what level of engagement the individual sits at that moment. The image below illustrates Maslow's hierarchy of needs applied to employee engagement and demonstrates that for disengaged people, their drivers look completely different to a highly engaged individual.

Thus, providing a disengaged employee meaningful work is not likely to be as effective when compared to an engaged employee.

### References

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