

## The 10 Rules of Engagement



Steve Jobs has famously been quoted for saying “The only way to do great work is to love what you do.” Central to this is the concept of engagement – a concept that has been the focus of many research studies by both academics and consulting houses. Reason being the multitude of benefits organisations can reap should their employees be engaged – improved revenue, higher profit margins, increased productivity, lower absenteeism, better innovation etc. A quick search of any search engine will direct you to the plethora of available research.

Informed by numerous studies, models and our own experience over the years, we would like to share 10 factors with you that will help you increase your employee engagement levels.

### 1. Clear criteria

Employees need to understand what is expected of them in their roles. Not only is it important to clearly articulate the expected outputs, but it is also important to communicate and clarify what success look like. Managers need to spend time with their employees to help them understand what they need to do, what metrics will be used to monitor their contributions and what the targets

– informed by organisational objectives.

## 2. Meaningful impact

Not only do employees need to know what they need to do (as per the above), they need to understand how their contribution impact the success of the organisation. Leaders and managers need to translate the organisational strategy into objectives and clearly communicate to every single employee how important their outputs are and how it is significant to the success of the organisation.

## 3. Fair remuneration practices

The key word here is 'fair'. Employees need to receive fair compensation for their contributions. People talk amongst each other and your employees know what market related salaries are. Be sure that your remuneration practices are fair and be willing to be fully transparent – if your practices are fair and market related, you have nothing to hide.

## 4. Challenging work

Employees' engagement levels increase if they are challenged at work. Engaged employees prosper when work is exciting and enhancing their skill set. The emerging concept of a career map and horizontal expansion instead of a career path and vertical progression allows for untapped opportunities that will stimulate and engage employees to always grow and develop whilst delivering their best performance.

## 5. Inspirational leaders

Employees need someone that can not only create a vision for the future, but that can also motivate them to rally behind this vision and direct all their efforts and energy into achieving this vision.

## 6. Relationship with direct manager

You have probably heard the saying "people don't leave companies, they leave people". This is only partially true as there are also your relationship with yourself, your team and the organisation that impacts engagement levels. A person's relationship with their direct line manager is however a critical relationship and it is important for manager's to know their team members holistically and treat their team members as a 'Workforce of One'.

## 7. Extreme pressure

People like to work hard and do challenging work – they however don't like last minute instructions

accompanied by increased workload and unrealistic expectations that put them under extreme pressure. You are guaranteed to find disengagement in environments where there is poor planning and people are expected to work overtime as a result of that.

#### 8. Recognition and appreciation

People are more likely to be engaged when they know that their efforts and contributions are recognised and appreciated. Organisations and leaders need to ensure that their practices recognise individual contributions. Environments where there is no direct link between individual contribution and recognition are likely to have lower morale and productivity levels.

#### 9. Autonomy and freedom

People are more likely to prosper, be innovative and produce their best efforts in environments where they are empowered, free from being micro managed and from constant interference, and where they have the opportunity to come up with their own style of working.

#### 10. Personal fulfillment

An organisation and leader who creates an environment where a person can pursue other important, non-work related interests are likely to have employees with higher engagement levels. People are likely to apply discretionary effort if they know it is ok to go for a dentist appointment without applying for leave – we unfortunately have come across clock watching organisations like that. Their engagement levels are rock bottom and their business performance are also not what it should be.