UNDERSTANDING THE DISENGAGED EMPLOYEE

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11 4 WAYS MANAGERS MAKE OR BREAK CAREERS

There are more than 12 great leadership articles in this week's pullout. However, we have some 50 new articles each month, plus a library of 4,000 great videos, podcasts and articles at www.leaderonomics.com

Don’t miss out on greatness. Surf the site and grow as a leader today!

If you would like your organisation to be featured in this pullout, contact us at editor@leaderonomics.com
WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO KEEP EMPLOYEES ENGAGED?

WHEN someone mentions the word ‘engagement’, most of us would likely associate it with finance and wealth. And naturally, that train of thought would lead us straight into the next phase: returns.

But, as we all know, investment comes in various forms – time, energy, emotions, effort and others – and to be invested, an individual or group should first discover, and believe in, a reason to do so. While wages have long been the trade-off for employment, it is the employee’s full involvement and belief in the organisation that come without a definitive price tag. This involvement is known as ‘employee engagement’. Money aside, recognition, values and a sense of purpose encourage participation, enthusiasm and action, among others – although they are intangible and subjective attributes.

Engagement enables people to be more involved in their roles at work and know the value of the returns they seek. People want to have their contributions recognised, acknowledged and appreciated. But, what about employees who are disengaged – a word defined as ‘separate or release (someone or something) from something they are attached or connected to’?

A disengaged employee is quite likely an individual who, while still performing the necessary job functions, may be disengaged, removed from the direction, core values and culture of their team or organisation, or both. This employee would stick to specific points in their job descriptions and avoid the extra mile where possible, merely because they find no good enough reason to perform beyond expectations. They believe there is no worthy return on their investment of time and effort. So, how do leaders of organisations identify symptoms of disengagement? And, are visions and missions of companies relevant to an employee who has tuned out of the organisation’s ambitions?

This week, Leaderonomics looks into the psychology of the disengaged employee as well as the root cause of this problem in the workplace. Kenneth Kwan writes about delving into complaints, recognising the wish behind each grouse and understanding what can be done about it. Also, discover the symptoms of disengagement and how you can become more involved in your role and organisation. Jerome Parise-Brasses lays out six things that an individual feels as he or she becomes disengaged and what leaders and employees can do to overcome this fatigue in enthusiasm. Read these on Page 3.

Employees who become disengaged are likely to leave their jobs. Seven people tell Leaderonomers lauiza Devadason and Tamara Jayne what drove them to become frustrated at the workplace and quit their jobs. Leaderonomics Good Monday’s Joseph Tan chips in to give a clearer picture of what employees truly seek from the workplace, and how encouragement and a sense of purpose can go a long way. This story is on Page 6.

Read what it takes to be more assertive at work – how to make your voice heard in a clear and constructive manner – and ways to defend your thoughts and beliefs at the workplace. Prema Jeyabalan gives her take on this on Page 9. Also in this issue: the seven best and worst habits at work; the emotional elements of employee retention and the four things that keep employees motivated.

If you have gone through a period of disengagement – or are a leader who has successfully brought about higher levels of engagement in your organisation – share your stories with us; drop us a note with your views at editor@leaderonomics.com.

In the meantime, we hope you enjoy this week’s offering.

Lydia Gomez
Editor
By KENNETH KWAN
editor@leaderonomics.com

A senior project manager once invited me down to his office to talk about a training programme for his staff. He introduced me to his company and the type of engineering work that they were involved in.

When it came to his team of people working on the project, he shared about how the team lacked communication. Even though they were sitting next to each other, they sent emails instead of talking openly. He continued to share about the level of politics within the team as well, especially how some people didn’t like another group of people.

He shared about the lack of ownership as well. Team members were just doing enough but did not want to go that extra mile.

When you hear someone complain about things – whether at workplace or elsewhere – listen, and find out what is it they really want. Be solution-focused, listen to the wish behind the complaint.

For the next 20 minutes, I was hearing all the things that didn’t work out well in the team and how dysfunctional it was. In fact, he was focusing on team problems and lamenting on the state of condition that they are in.

Rather than focusing on what happened and the unhappiness that he is experiencing, I made this powerful assertion: “What you are telling me is that you want a team that is able to work very well together and deliver the project on time and safely.”

He stopped complaining and sat upwards. “Well Kenneth, you seem to know what I want, tell me more about what you can do.”

I turned all my energy to ask him what were his best hopes for his team, what he preferred instead on what is currently happening.

This is an important question because all of a sudden, he smiled and began talking about the ideal state that their team could have been. He started painting a clear picture of the behaviours needed to succeed in their work while bearing in mind the project deadlines.

When he was sharing, I noticed that the atmosphere moved from one of despair, into one of hope and possibilities. The best part is that he stopped complaining and started to focus on what he wanted rather than what he didn’t want.

In our business solution, Small Steps to Big Changes conversations, this is how we move people from a state of despair and complaining into one that is resourceful and full of hope.

We focus on listening to the wish behind every complaint. Remember, they are complaining or unhappy because they have a wish that is unmet. From my observations with people, they are much happier talking about what they want, rather than what they don’t want. They want to move towards a better future, rather than constantly staying where they are.

We make a deliberate attempt to ignore what are the “symptoms” of the problem and focus on what can be done. In my experience working with many people, if you focus on problems, you will get tangled up with more issues and be a lot more emotionally affected by the situation.

So, the next time you hear someone complain about things – whether at workplace or elsewhere – listen, and find out what is it they really want. Be solution-focused, listen to the wish behind the complaint.

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HR NETWORKING SESSION, PENANG
HR: AGENTS OF CHANGE

Leaderonomics, together with The STAR Penang, brings you a complimentary HR networking and learning session with Lee Lung Nien, CEO of Citibank Berhad and Roshan Thiran, CEO of Leaderonomics. This session is designed for HR leaders in Penang and the Northern area to gain insights on how they can become ‘Agents of Change’ for their respective businesses, as shared by Roshan. Well-known for his dynamic leadership and passion for transforming the HR space across Asia, Lee will address the CEO’s perspective of how HR leaders can move from functional and administrative roles into business leadership roles.

11 MAY 2017 (THURSDAY)
1:00PM TO 5:00PM
VENUE: The Star Media Group,
202, Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah,
11900 Bayan Lepas, Pulau Pinang.
WHEN LEADERS LEAVE AN ORGANISATION

MANAGING THE IMPACT OF LOST KNOWLEDGE

When you leave an organisation, you leave behind the balance sheet, but you carry with you the stories behind the balance sheet.

Managers leaving or moving to new assignments always take with them valuable stories which are not always shared. In 2004, a study of 240 organisations in the United States found that the greatest impact of employee turnover was lost knowledge, and not profitability!

Even in a country where knowledge management practices have been around, lost knowledge had negatively affected a staggering 78% of these organisations.

Using stories is one of the more powerful knowledge management practices.

Stories transform tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge; and stories are great vehicles to share that knowledge.

Today Nasa’s Academy of Programme and Project Leadership (APPL) uses storytelling as a primary vehicle for transferring project management expertise. This is done using a series of story-based knowledge-sharing meetings that are supplemented by ASK, a bimonthly based knowledge-sharing meetings that are supplemented by ASK, a bimonthly.

Project Management (APPL) uses story-telling as a primary vehicle for transferring project management expertise. Here is a beautiful example of the impact of lost knowledge.

Once you learn the art of storytelling, you become empowered to get your point across with greater impact and forge a deeper emotional connection with your listeners. Leaderonomics loves engaging storytellers or businesses that have powerful ideas to get across. We have internationally renowned faculty whose passion and expertise lie in helping businesses tell their story in the most fun and engaging manner.

To connect with or to learn more about similar programmes, please visit www.leaderonomics.com.

By BHARAT AVALANI
editor@leaderonomics.com

I was in Jakarta a few weeks ago and my visit coincided with me attending a farewell party of a colleague and a very dear friend whom I have known from my early days in the working world.

Prior to the farewell party, my colleague Dedy Sadrach spoke on Leading with Heart. She spoke about how she had refused a promotion, thinking that she was not ready for the responsibility. She was subsequently promoted to the board with another role and told that she was given an “A team” to work for her.

The business was transformed under her leadership. She was humble enough not to mention the numbers but credited her A team. She also spoke about her leadership style, her life’s purpose and her bosses.

After she spoke I asked some of the people if they had heard the stories before, all of them said: “Never”. This is the tribute I wrote on Facebook:

“I remember reading somewhere about a teacher who asked her student why she thought she was doing much better now. She said, “It is because I like myself when I am with you.” I have no doubt that there are hundreds of Unileverites who would genuinely echo that sentiment when asked about Deby Sadrach. They liked themselves better when they were with her. They felt good, felt loved and felt they could do more!”

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Here is a beautiful example of the benefit of storytelling about knowledge management at Nasa taken from David DeLong’s seminal work Lost Knowledge: Confronting the Threat of an Ageing Workforce.

“One example of how storytelling can effectively pass on knowledge that influences decision making, was reflected in the experience of Roy Malone, head of logistics services at NASAs Marshall Space Flight Center.

Shortly before attending an APPL forum for master project managers, Malone was told his budget had been cut by 12%. He spent a month trying to find other ways to deal with the US$1.1mil budget cut, but in the end Malone knew this meant he would have to lay off personnel.

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During the masters’ forum, Malone heard a story told by Judy Stokley, a program director in the US Air Force, who described how she had handled a similarly painful downsizing challenge.

The logistics manager returned to Marshall inspired by the storyteller’s “humanitarian” approach, and he proceeded to adapt a number of the actions she used to his own situation.

For example, he began working with his key managers to find money from other sources to reduce the number of layoffs.

Malone also told employees about the cuts the department was facing, giving those who would be let go a three-month warning.

Finally, he held a series of open meetings with employees to let them vent their anger at the cuts and to educate them as best he could about the centre’s financial situation.

In the end, Malone attributed the success of the layoffs to the key managers’ help in minimising the impact of the layoffs he had to implement.

Storytelling is something almost everyone in an organisation indulges in, but mostly unconsciously. It is the way people make sense of the world around them and make meaning out of their experiences.

It is through the stories that we tell that we share knowledge every day.

Stories have the ability to communicate knowledge that can’t be represented as rules or best practices.

The only question is how to use stories consciously and in a concerted manner to capture and transfer knowledge.

When you leave an organisation, you leave behind the balance sheet, but you carry with you the stories behind the balance sheet.

Here is what you can do to elicit stories:

Ask questions like, “What are the occasions when you miss his or her presence the most?” or “What kind of problems do you know he or she will have the solutions for?”

Some of the questions that can be addressed directly to the individual are:

“Have some of the failures or failed projects during your tenure, and what have you learnt from them?” or “What are the things you wish you knew about this job when you started?”

Having identified the areas concerned, you would now need to get the person to tell you stories about these areas.

While all of us are born storytellers, most of us freeze when asked, “Tell us a story”.

It’s even worse if we are asked, “Tell me a story about market research process errors.”

However, it isn’t very difficult when we follow a process we call story listening. This process of narrative enquiry uses questions that get the person back to moments in time and once we can take people back to a moment in time, we most certainly get a story.

Two powerful questions we use in story listening are the “when” question and the “where” question. The other questions include questions with emotion words like elated, disappointed, frustrated, proud. Memories are triggered with these emotions and those memories contain the stories we are looking for.

So, go ahead and elicit those stories and stop knowledge from walking out of the door.

Bharat Avalani with Dedy Sadrach.
COMMUNICATING AND CONVERSING ARE TWO DIFFERENT ELEMENTS THAT MAY EITHER DRIVE AWAY OR KEEP YOUR EMPLOYEES

By JOSEPH TAN

ONE IN TWO EMPLOYEES HAVE LEFT THEIR JOBS TO GET AWAY FROM THEIR MANAGER — STATE OF THE AMERICAN MANAGER, GALLUP 2015

I t used to be that retaining employees is as simple as raising salaries and providing job security. A few decades ago, most people would have been grateful to just have a stable job which leads to predictable income and benefits. The concept of employee engagement, emotional well-being and work-life balance was foreign to the minds of most managers and leaders of an organisation.

The employees of today are no longer driven by the same emotions as their predecessors. Have the elements of emotions and empathy now become the holy grail of employee engagement, retention and loyalty?

Could it be true that managers now need to embrace the “soft” side of people management, emotional well-being and work-life balance was foreign to the minds of most managers and leaders of an organisation.

The employees of today are no longer driven by the same emotions as their predecessors. Have the elements of emotions and empathy now become the holy grail of employee engagement, retention and loyalty?

The Gallup study revealed that employees who feel as though their manager is invested in them as people are more likely to be engaged.

THE EMPATHY OF EQUIPMENT

It has to do more with job expectations than the behaviour of the manager has a more significant effect on retention than the manager has a more significant effect on retention than the manager.
**WHY PEOPLE QUIT THEIR JOBS**

SUBTLE FACTORS EMPLOYERS OVERLOOK, THAT MAKE EMPLOYEES TICK

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Do your employees perform because they care? Do they work to the best of their ability because they love what they do? Or do they show up to do just enough to get by? Understanding the subtle factors that make employees leave their jobs and question their work experience is crucial for any organization that wants to thrive. This article delves into some of the underlying reasons why employees might be dissatisfied, providing insights into how companies can improve their workplace culture and employee retention.

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Loretta, Media

I think we are always trying to figure out why our employees work so much of the time. It inevitably becomes part of our identity. I left my job because I felt our team (and the company’s) productivity was off the charts. I was in the position where I was speaking the truth but no one else was. I tried my best to make it work but it just didn’t work. I left because I felt my work wasn’t respected. The company didn’t seem to care about my well-being or my success. I felt like I was just another number.

Sarah, Corporate

I was with a company for two years. It was a very fast-paced environment. There was always a sense of urgency and expectation from the employees. Personal weekends were rare, and the company seemed to be running 24/7. I felt like I never had a chance to relax. I left because I didn’t feel valued or appreciated for my hard work. I was always being told what to do rather than being given the opportunity to use my skills.

Barry, Consumer

I was a team lead for five years. The company had a strict hierarchy, and there was little room for innovation or creativity. The work was repetitive, and I felt like I was just following orders. The company didn’t seem to care about my growth or development.

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**Core Values**

**Career**

Culture guru and chief executive of Leaderonomics, Gooday Louis Monday showed a list of ten statistics, “If we want our employees to deliver an exceptional customer experience, it is our responsibility to ensure that those employees have a great employee experience in the workplace. A data-driven understanding of your employees’ workplace experience will reveal patterns and insights as to why employees leave, even the high-performing ones.”

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**Do the VALUES OF YOUR ORGANISATION SPEAK to the HEARTS of your people? Are they just GATHERING DUST on the WALL?**

The performance of an organisation depends on the ability of its leaders to translate its vision and values from aspirational statements into actualised behaviours that are practiced in everyday situations – from the biggest transactions to the smallest interactions. When Core Values are thoughtfully designed and internalised at the workplace, employees act, think and behave in alignment with the purpose and direction of the organisation. Partner with us and witness your organisation’s Core Values transform from aspiration into actualisation.

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**DO you know what your employees think about your organisation?**

Email info@leaderonomics.com to set up a Core Values Audit conversation.

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**1. CAREER PROGRESSION**

People want to be in a dead-end job – unchecked, under-utilised and undervalued. Average is often the support factor we find unacceptably disillusioning but in reality, a highly motivating, unique and elegant form of management. Employee need explicit signs that they are valued. At the very least, they also need to earn a living, and it is important that any compensation employees earn help them to get what they earn.

**2. ASTF, Food and beverage industry**

I was a produce manager at a local university and took on a part-time job at a café. I was good at it. One thing led to another and I found myself holding a full-time position as assistant manager at the café. The pay was good. Slightly better than the average pay for a graduate. I was doing what I liked. I was good at it and I was getting paid for it – but that was in the beginning. Fast forward a year later and I was feeling burnt out from my job. I barely had any days off. My producer didn’t care who did the work as long as it was done. At one point, we lost a potential client because our team had ‘conveniently’ forgotten to stock the products.

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**-Core Values**

**Business**

“We need to look at the bigger picture. We need to consider the overall impact of our decisions on the business, not just the immediate results.”

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**-By LOUISE DEYendonk and TAMARA LAYING**

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**editor@leaderonomics.com**

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**Visually heard the saying “You can teach a horse to drink water but you can’t make it drink.” You can provide all the right benefits, but the costliest loss in terms of employee retention and performance comes with low team morale and coffee referees, yet get us working, we will change any company. Why?**

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**Saturday, April 27, 2019**

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**The Science of Building Leaders**
HIGHLY MOTIVATED LEADERSHIP

Highly motivated leaders can only keep their teams engaged when they have good working relationships with them. Leaderonomics offers customizable training programs that will help those in supervisory roles enhance their interpersonal, empowerment and delegation skills, while keeping their staff engaged.

LEADERONOMICS ONLINE TRAINING

Learn how to influence your team effectively to work towards a common goal, values, beliefs or vision.

By ROB WYSE
editor@leaderonomics.com

YOU may have read my comments on workplace issues and many others. He is a top commentator and a PR and marketing firm that will help those in supervisory roles enhance their interpersonal, empowerment and delegation skills, while keeping their staff engaged.

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By ROB WYSE
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Placelessness & The Need To Belong

So, dealing with these in order – what is placelessness? It seems like a contrived word. But, it is not. Placelessness is what is says, it is a sense of not belonging – not knowing your place perhaps in your company, your family – or in your life.

Placelessness is accelerated by our virtually and globally connected society and work world. First, virtual is not in person. Think of all the relationships in your life where you have never spoken to a person that you have never connected with and then think of relationships you have with many executives you have never met in person.

Now, think about times when you had an assignment lobbied over you via e-mail. How often have you worked on your piece of a project not understanding the entire project – or members of your immediate team?

Think about getting an assignment virtually, mostly working in virtual teams. Then think about doing just your part of the project and not understanding the whole. Each activity (1) virtual assignment, (2) virtual teams, and (3) virtually just getting your piece done – all are displacing. They do not make a person feel like they are a part of a team. This is one dark side of the virtual work life.

I have worked with CEOs who insist on face-to-face meetings on a somewhat regular basis. They are right. It gives people a sense of place and of team. In 2013, Marissa Mayer of Yahoo banned its 12,000 employees from working from home. It was controversial and not well received by many. However, it was an attempt in creating face-to-face interactions between people at work.

THE NEED TO BELONG

Through a sense of place comes a sense of belonging. And humans have a basic need to belong. Belonging as a basic human need, was documented by Roy F. Baumeister of Case Western Reserve University, and Mark R. Leary of Wake Forest University in a 1999 study called “The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motive.”

However, even those that show up physically at work each day can feel as if they do not belong. They are not part of a team, or do not feel as if they are.

Regardless, if you are at a company, and there is no sense of belonging – it is a strike against you being engaged at work.

MUST WORKERS ARE DISENGAGED FROM THEIR JOBS

Disengagement is a symptom, not a root cause of employee dissatisfaction. Culture plays a huge role in determining your level of engagement at work.

By ROB WYSE
editor@leaderonomics.com

OW many of you reading this think, “My boss has no clue about me, or my co-workers.” And, how many of you just say it silently? In fact, you think this many times a day – under your breath.

If you say nothing and just show up at work disengaged, you are in the majority. According to Gallup, just 13% of employees are engaged at work. Engaged employees like and look forward to coming to work. So, chances are that you probably belong in the 87% of employees who either are not engaged, or actively disengaged. The not engaged are the silent majority. They account for more than 50% of the workforce – at least in the United States.

Disengagement is a symptom, not a root cause of employee dissatisfaction. About a decade ago was the first time I saw a CEO really engaged in employee engagement. Funny to say that isn’t it – “engaged in employee engagement.” She was giving employees pedometers and encouraging 10,000 steps per day – even before I had ever heard of it. This was part of creating a culture of health. Plus, she was busy implementing team-building exercises.

To see if they improved on employee engagement, the company queried employees’ engagement scores based on survey data. I thought this was ridiculous. How was 10,000 steps a day, or even building exercises going to improve employee engagement?

I am not totally right. These exercises were starting points in creating a supporting culture. But in the end, after the team building is over, and the exercise is banned its 12,000 employees from working from home. It was controversial and not well received by many. However, it was an attempt in creating face-to-face interactions between people at work.

LEADERONOMICS

Learn how to influence your team effectively to work towards a common goal, values, beliefs or vision.

By ROB WYSE
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The 100 Best Companies to Work for This year’s top 10 include: Google, Wegmans Food Markets, The Boston Consulting Group, Baird, Edward Jones, Genentech, Ultimate Software, Salesforce, Acuity, and Quicken Loans.

While these are the best, I guarantee that you will not be happy with the culture that all of them practice. In fact, chances are that you could thrive at one and suffer at the next.

The issue is culture. I have worked for 25 years with leading head-hunters and watched the ones that are the best. They can understand the culture of an organization and find the leaders who are the right fit.

Remember, many successful people failed before they succeeded, including Walt Disney, Oprah, Dr. Seuss and others. Read about 29 of them in Business Insider. So, culture plays a huge role in determining your level of engagement at work. Do you want to work at a start-up, or a big corporation? Are you a leader, or a follower? Do you like a highly structured environment, or one that is more free flowing? So, even a company that creates great teamwork may not be the team for you.

THE AWFUL BOSS

Having the wrong boss supersedes all. You could work at any of the top 10 best companies, and if you have a terrible boss – it simply awful and you will disengage.

I have written about passive-aggressive bosses, coward bosses and more. But, an awful boss will create a culture that is toxic, and will make you feel displaced. Even if the rest of the organization is perfect. I do not have to research this. It is the number one reason people disengage from work.

So how do you avoid working at a place where you are disengaged? The answer begins at your job interview stage. While there are no guarantees, you should ‘actually interview’ your future boss. Ask your potential boss about the people he or she has managed who went on to do greater things. A good case in point is Jon Stewart – the comedian who was the host of the Daily Show for years. He had to be an incredible boss. The proof is in the people and careers he launched.

Here is a partial list;

1. Stephen Colbert
2. John Oliver
3. Steve Carell
4. Larry Wilmore
5. Samantha Bee
6. Ed Helms
7. Rob Riggle
8. Wyatt Cenac
9. Jessica Williams
10. Rob Corder
11. Mo Rocca

Can your boss produce a list of even three people? And do you feel that you are on track to be celebrated as one of your boss’s greatest successes? If not, you are probably part of the 87%, and it is time to engage with yourself and find your right fit. When you do, you will likely end up with a boss who has a clue about you.

COMPANY CULTURE

A company can create an atmosphere that serves as a place of belonging. Every year, Fortune publishes a list of The 100 Best Companies to Work For. This year’s top 10 include: Google, Wegmans Food Markets, The Boston Consulting Group, Baird, Edward Jones, Genentech, Ultimate Software, Salesforce, Acuity, and Quicken Loans.

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Stand Your Ground

Assertiveness is a Social Skill that Can Take You Far in Your Career

By PREMA JAYABALAN
prema.jayabalan@leaderonomics.com

A re you someone who stands by your principles and voices them out when the need arises or are you someone who goes with the flow and keeps mum, but regrets it later? If you fall in the former, then good for you! But if you find yourself quiet and縲_bill me bating as the latter, then it’s time to sit up and be assertive!

Assertiveness is about standing up for your rights, expressing your thoughts, feelings and beliefs in a direct, honest and appropriate way.

An important point to note is that when being assertive, we should always respect the feelings, beliefs and thoughts of others.

An important personal and interpersonal skill – assertiveness enables you to express feelings, wishes, opinions and wants in an appropriate manner.

When interacting with family members, friends, colleagues, employers, or customers – assertiveness helps you express yourself in an open, clear and reasonable way, without undermining others. Acquiring this skill enables you to act in their best interest, to stand up for yourselves without anxiety and to express thoughts and feelings honestly.

There is a Difference

Now, being assertive is one thing but you do not want to come across as dominating and aggressive. There is a huge difference between being assertive, aggressive, and assertive communication. Passive people do not state their opinions and tend to accept the decisions of others even though they are unfavourable to them. Aggressive people tend to attack and ignore outside opinions – usually forcing their opinions and thoughts on others. Assertive people state their thoughts in a respectable manner and are willing to listen.

Assertive Communication

Communication is key when learning to become skillfully assertive. When faced with any situation, know the right words to use, and the proper way to speak to convey your message effectively.

Use the word ‘I’ in your statements

To convey basic assertiveness, use phrases like I want, I feel or I need. An example would be: “I strongly feel that the ideas presented earlier will be beneficial for our upcoming event.” It shows that you are confident in speaking out your thoughts and opinions.

Change your Lingo

• Instead of saying can’t, say won’t
• Instead of saying need, say want
• Instead of saying have to, say choose to
• Instead of saying should, say could

Ask for Time

In difficult situations, you might get too emotional and say things that you would regret. Be honest and tell the person that you need some time to compose your thoughts. It helps you analyse the situation and come up with a favourable response.

Empathy

This needed mainly when working in a team as some of them may not get along with the rest. If you need to get the work completed, you will need to be assertive in your words. Firstly, address how the other person views the situation and then go on to express what you need.

Mindful coaches watch what they say so that they do not talk too much like an expert; they would choose to listen more, with humility and genuine interest in the other person. Older coaches to younger clients or subject matter coaches to those seeking their knowledge, tend to show off their expertise, under the misconception that their position would give them the mandate to go on an ego trip of non-stop rambling. In my experience, this pattern of talking and increasing the listening is perhaps the hardest part of learning to be a good coach.

The act of listening says much about the coach – he is interested in me, he is humble, and most of all, he is a nice guy!

The third one is making people feel valued and respected.

As a coach, I know that it is easy to lose this perspective as we can quickly get tempted to chip in, interrupt, disagree, offer another viewpoint when we hear of something that doesn’t jive with our values, beliefs and knowledge.

We jump into autopilot mode of correcting the person. Instead of solving the problem, it creates even more problems, such as: interrupting the client’s flow, building bridges and unnecessary arguments.

The end result: the client switches off from the conversation, and ultimately this destroys the relationship. Related to this, is the final one of starting the relationship on a deep slate, with no filters, prejudices or egos.

In our coaching circles, we jokingly remind each other that we should not forget to park all these outside the coaching room before we get past the door.

Whenever I remember to do this, I feel so light as I’m no longer burdened to find the best solutions for my clients.

In my thoughts flow freely, isn’t this the what the young and the old want to have?

By MICHAEL HEAH
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When I was 18, I took on a coaching role for Ashram, who was only 17 at the time.

I spent six months together, working on building his social confidence, as his mum wanted me to get him ready to face the world outside.

It was one of my most successful mentoring roles and we have remained friends until today. Another case in my coaching experience was Richard, who at age 72 got me to become his mentor or coach; I was 53 then. Generation gap aside, we have stayed friends until now.

On the other side of the coaching fence, I am now being mentored and coached by a Turkish man who is in his 40s, while I am in my 60s. I also have a social media coach in his 30s – a young guy whom I am constantly learning.

In over 14 years, I have been in many coaching roles for a wide range of people; they come from different age groups, backgrounds, social statuses; religious and others. All these people have offered me so many forms of learnings that continue to enrich my life and my coaching skills.

My career would have been so boring, frustrating and difficult had I been restricted to ‘Who could coach well’, and ‘Who to avoid coaching’ This was because I do not have separate personality traits, differing values and skills sets that are needed for this or that generation of clients.

So, I quickly shrugged off this hotly disputed topic of ‘Who can coach who better’, or what ‘an older coach needs to do, or not do’ to coach someone younger because I am strongly convinced that we can coach anyone and everyone without any reservations.

I feel so light as I’m no longer burdened to find the best solutions for my clients.

In my thoughts flow freely, isn’t this the what the young and the old want to have?

Michael is an ICF master certified coach with Corporate Coach Academy and a faculty trainer with Leaderonomics.
4 WAYS TO MAINTAIN HIGH MORALE AMONG EMPLOYEES

TIPS TO KEEP THEM HAPPY AND SATISFIED AT WORK

By KWAN-ANN LIM
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The familiar sound of a new e-mail arriving in my inbox momentarily distracts me from my task at hand. A box at the bottom right hand corner of my screen pops up with a familiar title. “Not again,” I think to myself.

The first time this happened, I didn’t think too much about it. But when it happened for the fifth time in three months, my mind could not help but wonder why people were leaving.

Is it the company culture? The way employees are being treated? Should I start looking for something else too?

WHY EMPLOYEES LEAVE

Employee turnover rates come at a high cost to an organisation – additional training, onboarding, interviewing and advertising expenses; impact employee morale and engagement. For that reason, every time someone leaves I try to ascertain the reason for their departure. Here are some of the sentiments I have received.

I left because of changes in personal circumstances, I still think the pros outweigh the cons on the job and I am saddened to leave, but I am excited about the change and potential opportunities that will come out of this.

I left because I was fed up of the way my manager treated me. I am used to getting full autonomy when managing projects and dealing with stakeholders but now I feel suffocated as she micro manages everything I do. This is not how I envisioned I would spend my working life.

I left because once I asked to be sent on a self-improvement conference but was flat out refused. Every time I try to take the initiative to make the company a better place, my boss not only doesn’t appreciate it but he dampens my efforts.

I wanted recognition for my work. There doesn’t seem to be a system that rewards performance in this company, so it doesn’t motivate me to want to do more and better for the company I knew it was time to move on.

Natural attrition is healthy in an organisation and is a way to prevent disengaged employees from overstaying. But when you have top performing employees leaving, this is a cause for concern, and employers must consider and review their management practices.

There are two reasons people leave: their personal circumstances have evolved and they have no choice but to move on; or they have past the point of merely tolerating the current environment and want change.

WHAT MOTIVATES EMPLOYEES?

There is a saying in the bible, for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Different things motivate us all and this is dependent on one’s values and priorities. Here are four important things that will help your employees feel belonged and appreciated.

1. Trust and autonomy – being given responsibility

Nothing empowers a person more than being entrusted with something important, a responsibility that they know is bigger than what they are qualified for.

I remember the first time I was asked to lead a small team; I was taken aback that they thought me fit enough to be a leader of this group of 20 people. While I was thrown in the deep end, it made me want to give my 110% and pushed me to rise to the occasion.

One of the best ways to keep a good employee is to give them the freedom to do what is needed while ensuring they have a good support system.

2. Purpose and impact – being able to make a difference

In every human being is the innate desire to make a difference in the world. Doctors are held in high-esteem because they save lives.

Every year thousands join the military to serve their country despite the apparent risk and danger. The way to motivate someone to be passionate about even the most mundane tasks is to connect them to the why.

I do not naturally enjoy repetitive or mundane tasks but when I focus on the why, it helps me build the endurance to last the distance.

3. Recognition and commendation – being shown appreciation

Whether this comes in the form of monetary rewards or verbal affirmation, being appreciated means being valued. In one of the organisations I worked in, there was a good recognition programme, but the problem was that it had become a check-the-box exercise.

Employees, including myself became aware of that, and it lost its effectiveness. Recognition is important, but it must be in the right means and way. Some like cash bonuses, others simply like to be told they had done a good job.

Employers must create an honest culture of effective recognition in order to engage their best employees.

4. Flexible working – being able to work life balance

As a soon-to-be mother, work life balance is not just as a concept but a reality that is becoming especially dear to me.

This includes having the option to work from home, flexible hours tailored to my lifestyle and parking projects that do not require travel. But this no longer just applies to mothers. Millennials nowadays want to be their own boss; it is rarely about the money but about passion and what is fulfilling.

In a world where opportunities are so numerous, one can get lost in the entrepreneurial culture of success. Employers must continually strive to provide a good environment for their employees before it is too late. What if they leave, you ask? But what if they stay?

The cost is too high to ignore. Employers leaving may be part of the work lifecycle, but we must not be the reason for it.

On the flip side, as an employee, we must stay engaged and passionate about our jobs. We can take the initiative to help our employers get better by maintaining a feedback loop and establishing a healthy work culture from the bottom.

When we find, ourselves losing passion, and dread starts to sink in on Sunday nights – perhaps we are better off looking for a new job than wasting our employers’ time and money.

Both employers and employees are equally responsible for maintaining a great job experience. Both must work in tandem to make the working world a better place, that starts with proactively building a culture of trust, recognition, flexibility and purpose from the top down and bottom up.
CRITICAL WAYS MANAGERS MOTIVATE OR DEMOTIVATE EMPLOYEES

WORKERS DON’T LEAVE JOBS, THEY LEAVE BOSSES

**By TRAVIS BRADBERRY**

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**F**ew things are as costly and disruptive as a manager who kills morale. Demotivated employees underperform and then walk out the door at the first opportunity. The scariest thing is how prevalent this lack of motivation is. Gallup research shows that 70% of employees consider themselves to be disengaged at work. Organisations know how important it is to have motivated, engaged and loyal employees, but most fail to hold managers accountable for making it happen. When they don’t, the bottom line suffers.

Research from the University of California found that motivated employees were 31% more productive, had 37% higher sales, and were three times more creative than demotivated employees. They were 87% less likely to quit, according to a Corporate Leadership Council study on over 50,000 people. Gallup research also shows that a mind-boggling 70% of an employee’s motivation is influenced by his or her manager. It’s no wonder workers don’t leave jobs; they leave managers.

**BEHAVIOURS THAT MUST GO**

Before managers can start creating motivated, engaged employees, there are some critical things that they need to stop doing. What follows are some of the worst behaviours that managers need to eradicate from the workplace.

1. **Making a lot of foolish rules**

   Companies need to have rules – that’s a given – but they don’t have to be short sighted and limit attempts at creating order. Whether it’s an overzealous attendance policy or taking employees’ frequent flyer miles, even a couple of unnecessary rules can drive people crazy. When good employees feel like big brothers are watching, they’ll find somewhere else to work.

2. **Letting accomplishments go unrecognised**

   It’s easy to underestimate the power of a pat on the back, especially with top performers who are intrinsically motivated. Everyone likes kudos, none more so than good employees who are intrinsically motivated.

3. **Hiring and promoting the wrong people**

   Good, hard-working employees want to work with like-minded professionals. When you hire the back of the room, especially with top performers who are intrinsically motivated. Everyone likes kudos, none more so than good employees who are intrinsically motivated.

4. **Treating everyone equally**

   Managers need to communicate that you’re paying attention. Managerial communication is something you earn by inspiring a loyal following.

5. **Following the platinum rule**

   The Golden Rule of treat others as you want to be treated has a fatal flaw: it assumes that all people want to be treated the same way. It ignores the fact that people are motivated by vastly different things.

6. **Being a role model, not a preacher**

   Great leaders inspire trust and action through their actions, not just their words. Many leaders say that integrity is important to them, but great leaders walk their talk by demonstrating integrity every day.

7. **Being transparent**

   Good managers are transparent and forthright about company goals, expectations, and plans. When managers try to sugar-coat, mask, or euphemise to make things seem better than they are, employees see right through it.

8. **Harping on people all day long about mistakes**

   Nothing burns good employees out quite like overworking them. It’s so tempting to work your best people hard that managers frequently fall into this trap.

9. **Overworking employees**

   Overworking good employees is pernicious to them; it makes them feel as if they’re being punished for their great performance.

10. **Treating employees as though they’re better than you**

    One person loves public recognition, while the other loathes being the centre of attention. The Platinum Rule (treat others as they want to be treated) corrects that flaw.

**The scariest thing is how prevalent this lack of motivation is.**

Gallup research shows that 70% of employees consider themselves to be disengaged at work.
For an organisation, being able to identify and understand your people (even potential talent!) is valuable information. It allows the right people to be hired and utilised in the right way to achieve organisational goals.

Leaderonomics’ Talent Assessment team works with organisations to better select, assess, identify and develop people to their full potential. Using both traditional and innovative means, our Talent Assessment solutions deliver insight into the strengths, competencies and development gaps of your workforce.

We understand that demands for talent differ from one organisation to another. As such, our Talent Assessment solutions are crafted to best suit your company’s needs.

KNOW WHO TO HIRE AND HOW TO DEVELOP:
THE LEADERONOMOMICS TALENT ASSESSMENT APPROACH

Our Talent Assessment team can help your organisation:
- Increase the probability of selecting the right candidate for hiring
- Assess the job and culture fit of an individual
- Go beyond an interview to evaluate behavioural capabilities and personality
- Determine internal talent readiness to be promoted to new roles
- Determine internal talent readiness for succession planning and talent pipelines

- Better understand the strengths of individuals and groups, and leverage on them to maximise returns from the talent pool
- Identify gaps to direct targeted development plans
- Understand the bench strength of employees within the organisation
- Identify key talent and high potentials
- Provide objective feedback of performance to employees from a third-party perspective

Contact Elizabeth at elizabeth.lim@leaderonomics.com to schedule a free consultation.