

IMAGINE ALL THE PEOPLE

“Imagine all the people living life in peace” sang John Lennon in the 70’s and it’s still being played today. Well, imagine employees working everyday in harmony and peace and happily contributing to a healthy and highly profitable organization. Sounds like wishful idealistic thinking from the 70’s, right? But recent studies show that this is possible. The global consulting group Towers Perrin has published their annual global study of employee engagement, which shows just how motivated people are to perform at their best.

The study showed that for Canada only 23% of employees consider themselves fully engaged in their work. Now if you are a pessimist this may sound awful but on the other hand optimists will see opportunity to convert the remaining 76% to become engaged.

There is good reason to act on this opportunity because the study makes a correlation between high or low engagement and financial results. The organizations that had the highest percentage of employee engagement increased operating income by 19 per cent and earning per share by 28 per cent year to year.

Contrast that with the declines at the companies with the lowest percentage of engaged employees – 33 per cent in operating income and 11 per cent in earnings per share.

So what is required to act on this opportunity and have more of our employees become engaged and highly productive? Before coming up with solutions to problems it is recommended to begin by understanding the cause. According to Kevin Aselstine of Towers Perrin, “...only leadership can build engagement”.

What do leaders need to do to seize this opportunity to build an engaged workforce and improve financial results?

To answer this I will provide information from another study this time done by Gallup, who in the 90’s did a massive study to find out what contributed to the retention of top performers and to employee engagement. They narrowed the list down to 12 keys things that top leaders do well and often.

The 12 Workplace Issues That Matter (according to the employees surveyed):

1. I know what is expected of me at work.
2. I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.
3. At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.
4. In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.
5. My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.
6. There is someone at work who encourages my development.
7. At work, my opinions seem to count.
8. The mission/purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.
9. My associates (fellow employees) are committed to doing quality work.
10. I have a best friend at work.
11. In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.
12. This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.

Even though this study was done in the 90's little has changed today and the list is more relevant than ever. Why? Because people's needs have not changed.

Of course you need to begin by first building the right team and that means hiring and or promoting the right person for the job.

What is very interesting is that the above list does not cost any money. It only requires good leaders who are doing their job properly. If only 23% of the Canadian workforce are engaged the conclusion must be that leaders are not doing their jobs well or do not know how to do the things in the above list. This means that leadership development is a growing need that, if neglected, will cost companies huge amounts in lost opportunities.

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We can assist you with your leadership development through training and development workshops and ongoing coaching. Contact us today to find out more.