How Leaders Can Address The Lack of Employee Engagement In The Service Industry

Employees are the lifeblood of any organization. This is especially true for service industry organizations. It is imperative that organizations actively cultivate a culture where employees feel valued and appreciated in order to keep them happy and engaged. Leaders should make it their job to foster an environment where employees can do their best work. Employees who feel undervalued or ignored will eventually "check out" from the workplace-and this disengagement can be costly for your business in many ways.

In this article, we'll be talking about how you can avoid this fate!

What Is Employee Engagement?

Employee engagement is a measure of how invested employees are in their jobs, and in the company as a whole. Having engaged workers provides numerous advantages to businesses, including boosts in productivity and creativity, better morale, and higher levels of service to customers. Engaged staff members also tend to be happier with their job choices overall, leading them to stay with a company for longer periods of time.

What's The Current State Of Employee Engagement In The Service Industry?

Within any service industry organization, employees can be said to fall into one of three categories:

Disengaged

Disengaged employees make up [the majority of the workforce at 67%](). They're sometimes hard to identify because they are often content within their roles and rarely complain. However, they're known to do the bare minimum in order to get the job done. If these employees are mismanaged, they can easily become actively disengaged (more on that in a moment). On the flip side, effective leadership can often transform disengaged employees into engaged employees.

Actively Disengaged

These employees make up [18% of the workforce](#). They're characterized by their general lack of enthusiasm for their jobs, responsibilities, and for the organization itself. They're also likely to seek out new opportunities with another employer, and often aren't shy about sharing how they feel about directives and changes.

Engaged

Engaged employees are characterized by being both loyal *to* and invested *in* the organization and its mission. They're enthusiastic about their jobs and often seek out responsibilities that go beyond their job descriptions. Finally, engaged employees are often budding leaders who typically stick with an organization for many years. If they stay engaged, that is!

Even if you don't consider yourself a mathematician, it probably won't come as a surprise that engaged employees represent the minority in the workforce. To quantify it, only [15% of an organization's employees are engaged](#) at a given time. Yup, that's you heard correctly—only 15%.

Why Should Leaders Care About Employee Engagement?

That final statistic represents a problem for all industries—but especially the service industry, which relies heavily on customer service and other interpersonal interactions to drive business. In case you're not convinced that employee engagement is important, let's look at how businesses with good employee engagement stack up against businesses with bad employee engagement.

Businesses with good employee engagement:

- **Score [10% better on customer metrics](#)**
- **Report [17% more productivity](#)**
- **Get [20% more sales](#)**
- **Operate [21% more profitably](#)**
- **Grow [4X more quickly](#)**

It's clear that the efficacy of organizations depends on good employee engagement—and facilitating it falls of company leaders.

How Do Leaders Affect Employee Engagement?

Leaders play an undeniably important role in fostering employee engagement. Good leaders create a more positive, supportive, and engaging workplace for their employees, while bad leaders do the opposite—often inadvertently.

Here are some of the ways leaders directly impact employee engagement:

- **Management Style**: Employees hate being micromanaged. However, oversight is often necessary. Leadership is all about striking a balance, and mastering this balance can make or break an employee's experience with the organization.
- **Communication**: Leaders must be clear, concise, and consistent when communicating new initiatives and changes to their employees. They also need to listen intently to feedback from their employees, as this is a crucial step in taking a proactive approach towards engagement.
- **Rewards and Recognition**: Rewarding good work is important in any industry, but especially within the service industry. Employees value praise more highly than you might expect!
- **Motivation**: Incentivizing growth and development opportunities for employees allows them to take pride in their roles, thus improving engagement levels over time.

How Leaders Can Improve Employee Engagement

Now that we understand the roles of leaders with respect to employee engagement, it's time to get into the good stuff—actionable tips!

Here's how service industry leaders can improve employee engagement:

1) Put Everyone in the Right Role

This seems like a no-brainer, but it's important that the employees you hire will be able to contribute in meaningful ways. If necessary, invest in additional training, so team members can develop new skill sets and grow.

2) Foster Team Spirit

Employees should feel comfortable leaning on each other for support. When everyone feels part of a close-knit group, they'll be more willing to pitch in and help their colleagues through challenging times.

3) Regularly Communicate with Employees

Send regular emails or schedule weekly meetings to make sure every employee knows what's going on and feels like s/he is part of the team. This is an excellent opportunity for leaders to

solicit feedback from employees and find out how they're really feeling about their role, tasks, and team dynamics.

It's also crucial that managers listen carefully and give employees the space to share their thoughts without fear of judgment or reprimand.

4) Encourage Social Interaction Beyond Work Hours

Encourage your team members to hang out after work, so they can build stronger relationships beyond those established during business hours. Leaders should show up at some events as well, so they can get to know each other as people rather than just colleagues.

5) Give Regular Feedback

Whether it's positive feedback for a job well done or constructive criticism to help employees improve, good managers know that giving at least some form of regular feedback is an essential part of keeping everyone motivated. When employees feel as if they're being ignored or their efforts aren't being acknowledged, morale will definitely suffer.

Employee engagement is essential for the success of any organization. Leaders in the service industry can improve employee engagement by creating a more positive and supportive work environment, fostering team spirit, communicating regularly with employees, encouraging social interaction outside of work hours, and giving regular feedback. By following these tips, leaders can help their employees feel appreciated and valuable, which will encourage them to give their best efforts.

Now, get to it!

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