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In principle, "Employee engagement" has been part of management thinking for a long time, often under different names. It has always been an important element in our "One Page Strategy" work. However, following publication of a report written for Government, "Engaging for success", there has been a significantly increased focus on the subject with much accompanying activity. Our paper follows on from a previous one "Fully engaged employees" published six months ago and available on our

website, detailed below.

The Government report covers four enablers of successful employee engagement:

- Strategic Narrative
- Enabling Managers
- Employee Voice
- Organisational Integrity

Strategic Narrative

Visible, empowering leaders must provide a strong "Strategic Narrative" about the organisation, where it comes from and where it is going.

This should have depth and breadth, not necessarily length! The narrative must have a beginning, middle and a future, and outline how the organisation will get there, to bring meaning, inspiration and purpose to people's working lives. It needs to be compelling and believable to ignite people's passion for the organisation and its future.

It should be developed by the senior team, and spoken about regularly by the leaders of the organisation, not just the chief executive. Managers must be visible around the organisation and in regular, meaningful contact with staff.

Enabling Managers

Managers must focus their people and give them scope, coaching and stretching them to succeed. They must ensure employees are clear what success in their roles looks like – and give staff the opportunity to release their creativity and energy.

Managers should treat staff as individuals and so get more out of them, regularly coaching each member of staff with informal sessions to reinforce good, and address bad, behaviours.

They should make people feel part of the team, agree clear objectives and show people how their work contributes to the organisation's success. They need to give regular, thoughtful, honest and constructive feedback, thank people for their work, and ensure successes and achievements of individuals and teams are fully acknowledged.

Employee Voice

Employees need to be heard throughout the organisation, reinforcing and challenging views, across and within functions.

People should be seen as central to the solution, not as the problem, to be involved, listened to, and invited to contribute their experience, expertise and ideas.

Mechanisms need to be in place to enable an ongoing conversation with staff, in different ways, to ensure every voice is heard. The application of LEAN and continuous improvement principles empowers people to redesign and simplify work processes.

People should be encouraged to talk across silos generally and in regular briefings, face-to-face meetings, through suggestion schemes, "graffiti walls", employee forums etc.

Remember - someone in the organisation always knows when something is going to go wrong – they need to be encouraged to come forward. Don't "shoot the messenger".

Employee surveys are an effective measure of employee engagement.

Organisational Integrity

Clear values and behaviours should be established for the organisation. Day-to-day behaviours need to reflect these values. A gap between what you say you are and what you are leads to massive mistrust. Promises made must be kept or an explanation given.

You should reward desired behaviour, and not reward those who don't exhibit the desired behaviours, and exit perpetrators.

An organisation needs to build a culture where all staff tell the truth, share information, are open-minded, and respond positively when ideas or suggestions are made.

People should be encouraged to share the credit with others who deserve it. Regular ongoing feedback is needed on goals and priorities, where leaders discuss issues and changes honestly.

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