



Janice Orchard, a partner in Thomson Orchard Partnership, is an experienced marketer with 30 years in one of the major management consultancies and working independently. She has experience of market research, market planning, customer surveys (over 100 completed), and customer service training projects. She has also been involved in many business strategy development and change management assignments. Her clients are drawn from a wide range of manufacturing and service industries, and the public sector.

In a previous paper, Raising Organisational Performance, we suggested that the key drivers of organisational performance are Leadership, Customer Focus, Employee Engagement and Innovation, and gave a brief introduction to each of these four topics. Throughout our strategic development work with organisations of all sizes, we focus on these four drivers.

One of a manager's primary responsibilities – and one of the most frustrating – is continually motivating and energising an ever-evolving workforce. Failing to effectively tackle this crucial element of management can lead to an ineffective team that is unable, or unwilling, to meet important business aims. In this paper we give some notes below on fully engaging your employees, and keeping them healthy, happy and energised.

Employees are engaged when they are...

- Committed to the organisation and its values
- Passionate about their work and about making things better
- Aware of the full business context
- Respectful of, and helpful to, colleagues
- Willing to "go the extra mile" for customers – "there are no traffic jams on the extra mile"
- Enthusiastic about developing their careers with the organisation
- Flexible, willing to embrace change and seek continuous improvement
- Willing to learn about new ways of doing things.

Employee engagement requires a two-way relationship between employee and employer

Benefits of employee engagement...

- Gallup survey of 24,000 companies – top quartile on engagement scores had 19% higher productivity and were 12% more profitable than the bottom quartile
- Hay Group study – engaged employees generate 43% more revenue than disengaged employees
- Lancaster University research - every one point increase in engagement on a five point scale = 9% increase in sales
- Bank with 1,407 branches – each branch assigned to a 10 band scale based on overall employee perception scores. Sales increase value of 1.9% per band, worth £47m in sales
- Harvard Business School research – engaged employees deliver 16% better performance, experience 125% less burnout, demonstrate 32% more commitment to the organisation, and 46% more satisfaction with their jobs.

Measuring employee engagement...

Employee engagement can be measured readily through an employee survey, completed every one or two years. Typical questions/statements are:

- Managers involve staff in solving problems
- I know what the company's objectives and plans are
- I am kept regularly informed about how well the company is satisfying its customers needs
- I understand how my job can help to meet our customers' requirements
- My manager treats me fairly and keeps me informed on what I need to know
- My department works closely with other departments to deliver customer satisfaction
- We use the latest ideas, equipment and materials to stay "ahead of the game"
- We encourage all members of staff to come up with ideas for improving the business

Typical actions to increase employee engagement...

- Provide good, effective leadership
- Communicate, communicate, communicate
- Share your strategy, goals and values
- Involve groups in problem-solving & decision making
- Introduce cross departmental activities
- Run a culture change programme
- "Walk the walk" not just "talk the talk"
- Provide appropriate training and development
- Conduct performance appraisals
- Give constructive feedback
- "Praise loudly, criticise softly"
- Arrange team building activities
- Take effective and appropriate actions, do what you say you will do.

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For more information or an informal discussion, please contact:

Ian Thomson Tel: 01937 849167
Email: ian@topconsulting.co.uk

Janice Orchard Tel: 0161 439 5862
Email: janice@topconsulting.co.uk