

## WHAT TRULY ENGAGES

### What motivates and engages?

Motivation is intrinsic, meaning we are all attracted and energized by some grander vision or dream. It varies from individual to individual and what motivates one person would not interest another. Engaging your people requires that you understand each individual's motivator, vision and goals.

As human beings, there are some obvious commonalities though:

- Fear; all of us experience it. Does your environment encourage taking risks, conversations that include candor and allowing people to make mistakes and learn? Providing a safe place for people to learn and grow supports courage versus fear.
- Most of us are motivated by work that creates tangible results, especially if those results are out of the box, a new approach or a great idea. So as leaders, the ability to connect your employees to the outcomes being realized in the business is key. We all need to feed ourselves, our families and take care of our basic needs. Therefore, money is never a motivator. However, lack of money is a de-motivator.
- No one wants to do poorly or feel like they can't do their job well. People are motivated by applying their abilities to the fullest. Not being able to use our talents, skills and basically be underutilized is a de-motivator.
- We all want to be involved in strategy and decision making, especially around the choices of how to do our work. Letting people manage their work flow is a great way to engage others. Telling, micro-managing and controlling through fear which is far too common, will at best yield compliance at worst low morale.
- All of us are motivated by doing work that aligns with our values and beliefs. How do you determine what is important to those around you?

### An environment of engagement

Three conditions must be met for you to be successful at engaging others and finding motivation.

1. You are a leader, formally or informally, and you are willing to give up the mindset of a "know it all" for the mindset of "a curious team player."
2. You are aligned to the business, organization or team values. This is very important. If you don't "buy in" yourself, no one else will.
3. You have a reasonably good relationship with the majority of people you want to engage. If you don't, start with listening and see condition number one above.



## What to start now

- Encourage vision based action and reward results, not the time, effort and output. Too often, leaders believe that their job is to just generate action; it isn't just action, it is aligned action that leads to results.
- Focus on the talented people around you, look for the people who smile, have goals, take action and ask questions. These people are your key to building engagement across the team.
- Be engaged and take notice of where you aren't engaged. Confront your own ability here. Expanding your ability to be engaged will engage others.
- Think and BE big. Take courageous actions and have courageous conversations. Playing it safe is all about you and others just won't be interested in playing in that sandbox.
- Learn to translate needs and the vision of the broader organization into tangible results you can deliver or facilitate.
- Get an external professionally trained coach. A good coach will support your growth and ability to keep a broader perspective. In addition, you will learn to model engagement from your coach who is trained to engage you.
- Ask and discover the needs and visions of everyone, even if they're not explicitly stated. Learn to state people's vision back to them. Show them you were listening.
- Pay attention to resources. Do people around you need a plan, new software or a better way to measure their results? Lack of resources kills motivation.
- Put your head up and find out what is happening with industry trends. Go to industry conferences, utilize marketing data, and talk to your competitors.
- Organize your work life so that you spend time on what's important, not what just landed in your inbox. Model "time used well" to others around you (they know if you were on email all day). Make direct and bold requests in all directions every day.
- Ask your team members to bring you solutions to problems, not the problems themselves. The former motivates and empowers them; the latter encourages victimhood and turns you into the rescuer.
- Ask for everyone's input when possible. Even the act of asking itself is motivating, and you will see a high degree of engagement when it's time to execute the common vision.
- Allow your team members to decide how to go about their work within the guidelines and expectations you define together.
- Set up regular communication with your team members frequently and openly. Create a standard agenda for working on the business not just transactional items. Talk strategy more than actions. Creating a working document that allows your team to pick up conversations where you left off at the last meeting.
- Reward and acknowledge new ideas and practices that others bring and take action on.



- Ask yourself and others challenging questions. Emphasize questions versus having to have an answer.
- Toot others horns. Talk about and acknowledge the people contributing to others in your organization. Learn to translate goals of the business or organization into bold requests of those around you.

### What to stop immediately

- Stop complaining or blaming. No one wants to engage with a “victim.”
- Stop telling, controlling and directing.
- Stop complaining about time. You will never get more time by complaining about it and others will stop involving you.
- Stop being so attached to your systems, processes and tools. Challenge them instead. What if they are outdated?
- Stop censoring ideas. What if the bad idea when discussed, leads to a great one?

### How will you know that you have succeeded?

- You will be sought after for dialogue.
- You will be talked about. This is okay.
- Your people will be sought after inside and outside of organization. This is okay.
- Underperformers will leave or step up their game.
- You will see your employees engaged and genuinely interested in their work.
- Your people will look forward to meetings and complain if they are cancelled.

