



CUTTINGS

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Compiled and edited by Geof Cox

Engaging with your Organisation

It's not (just) about the money, money, money.....!

An HBR article in 2009 talks about a 'rewards remix' that some organisations seemed to have missed when thinking a little more creatively and systemically about leverage the best value from their benefits packages. There are too many workplaces where performance is still measured by inputs and not outputs. As Generation Y moves into their 30s, with the increasing likelihood of having two full time workers in the family, flexibility becomes paramount. And the demand is for total flexibility, not just the ability to buy-back holiday or opt for a nine day fortnight. HR policy makers have not caught up with this reality yet.

Engagement for any worker who is doing cognitive work, according to Dan Pink's research, demands autonomy and purpose as well as mastery over what they are doing. However, many managers lack the skills, confidence and/or technology to effectively manage the performance and accountability of a mobile workforce who are increasingly working remotely, taking sabbaticals and looking for work based opportunities to 'give something back'.

Mary Ann Masarech of BlessingWhite even estimates that even 50% of her readers of their regular eNews are not fully engaged themselves. Many of these will be working in HR leadership roles where they are responsible for the policies of their organisations in this area, and are more likely to be engaged than the workforce at large.

Surveys are not the answer. Time and time again organisations spend a significant amount of investment as well as resources on surveys which produce tons of data and have very little impact. Surveys are an important phase on an engagement journey, however the emphasis and investment should be on using the data to make real changes in HR practices throughout the organisation. Research confirms that organisations are in danger of actually reducing engagement levels when they run a survey without visible action afterwards.

What to do:

Recognise that engagement is not static, and it requires continuous effort. Just like performance management, managers must accept that it is a year long activity and it IS their job, not just another task

Many things can influence whether or not staff are fully engaged: Organisational changes, situation at home, behaviours of managers and colleagues, challenges in projects, even local or world events. You can't stay fully engaged without effort. In fact, you can feel totally engaged one week only to be hanging on by a thread the next. Things can change pretty quickly.

Also recognise that engagement is also not all-or-nothing. Not being engaged is not the same as being disengaged. It's a continuum where the goal is always to move staff up to experience the highest levels of contribution and satisfaction. Someone who is not engaged is still of value, but could be of even greater value to the organisation by moving to a higher level.

1. Staff need to know what matters to them. Staff need to be able to align their personal aspirations and values with the organisation's purpose or mission. If actions, personally, are misaligned with what you believe, you'll be miserable before you leave home. If values are front and centre, they are powerful fuel for great days at work. A sense of purpose, and knowing that what you do is making a difference, is one of the greatest engagement drivers

2. Staff need to know what matters to their employer. Engagement is not just about job satisfaction – staff need to be able to perform as well. So constant feedback, coaching and joint target setting is essential - real performance management. Market conditions and strategies can change overnight, so there needs to be constant dialogue on what are top priorities on the long to-do list.

3. Build on strengths. People are much more successful if they develop their strengths than try to fix their weaknesses. Working in strengths is the fastest route to success for individuals and organisations. Developing mastery in an area that has meaning for you is motivational. Staff need gel to find out what their strengths are, and jobs need to be realigned to make the most of strengths.

Surveys alone don't change anything. BlessingWhite webinar programme 10/2013

4 Steps to Improve Your Engagement, BlessingWhite eNews 9/2013

Talent retention requires ever more innovative benefits packages, Lucinda Carney, HRZone 9/2013

How Gen Y & Boomers will reshape your HR Agenda, HBR 7/2009

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A collection of thought provokers and quotations...

- ✂ "A competent leader can get efficient service from poor troops, while on the contrary an incapable leader can demoralize the best of troops." *John J. Pershing*
- ✂ "Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy." *Thich Nhat Hanh*
- ✂ "To be upset over what you don't have is to waste what you do have." *Ken Keyes, Jr.*
- ✂ "If you are not willing to learn, no one can help you. If you are determined to learn, no one can stop you" *Author Unknown*
- ✂ "If one tells the truth, one is sure sooner or later to be found out." *Oscar Wilde*
- ✂ "Generosity is giving more than you can, and pride is taking less than you need." *Kahlil Gibran*
- ✂ "Genius is the ability to reduce the complicated to the simple." *C.W. Ceram*
- ✂ "The pursuit of happiness is the greatest feat man has to accomplish." *Robert Henri*
- ✂ "Give what you have. To some it may be better than you dare think." *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*
- ✂ "It is wisdom to believe the heart." *George Santayana*
- ✂ "When you reach the heart of life you shall find beauty in all things, even in the eyes that are blind to beauty." *Khalil Gibran*
- ✂ "The man with insight enough to admit his limitations comes nearest to perfection." *Johann von Goethe*
- ✂ "True wisdom lies in gathering the precious things out of each day as it goes by." *E.S. Bouton*
- ✂ "How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world." *Anne Frank*
- ✂ "The world is not yet exhausted: let me see something tomorrow which I never saw before." *Samuel Johnson*
- ✂ "There is no great genius without a mixture of madness." *Aristotle*

BOOK REVIEW

Conversational Intelligence

By Judith E. Glazer

ISBN 978-1937134679

The subtitle to Judith Glazer's new book is: "How Great Leaders Build TRUST and Get Extraordinary Results", and like all good titles it tells you exactly what you are about to get inside.

I have always appreciated the 'a-ha' moment in understanding the 'how and why' behind something that we know works in practice - I don't want to know the whole theory and evidence, just the explanation. This book provides that 'a-ha' moment in explaining why some conversations and interactions work better than others.

The secret, Judith explains, lies in our growing knowledge of neuroscience. Conversations (even those one sided or time-disrupted conversations such as presentations and email exchanges) contain triggers that either engage the lower, more primitive brain (amygdala) which is prone to distrust and paranoia, or activate higher-level intelligences (prefrontal cortex) such as trust, integrity, empathy, strategic thinking and good judgment.

Judith not only makes the links between our conversational clues and the neuroscience to explain why some conversations are more productive than others, she provides a guide to how we can harness this knowledge that can elevate conversations to the highest level. She does this with examples, exercises and tools.

We are often disappointed at the outcome of our conversations, especially at work, when we get mere compliance rather than the commitment we hope for. By understanding why this happens and what we can do about it, we have a clear guide to more productive conversations and - as a result - better and more productive organisations.

This book is an essential for all business leaders, executives, coaches and anyone who wants a good outcome to a conversation.

To read more and access Judith's other work at the *Creating WE Institute*, go to www.conversationalintelligence.com and www.creatingwe.com

Public courses

Coming up in the next months:

Getting Results Without Authority

A two day course in positive influencing skills aimed at people working in project or matrix structures where they need to get results without having any formal authority

5-6 December (London)

Focus on Influence

A 3.5 day residential programme that engages participants in exploring how they interact with others and develop their skills in different situations. (Run through partners Learning Consortium)

21-24 October (Belgium / English)

18-21 November (Belgium / Dutch)

Human Competency and Capability Development

A four day programme aimed at HR and L&D professionals (in particular in the Oil and Gas sector) which explores the processes and strategies for developing people. (Run with partners Strategies for Training and petroEDGE)

22-25 October (Kuala Lumpur)

International Oil & Gas Executive Development Programme

A five day programme on strategic business skills covering financial management and leadership topics. (Run with partners Strategies for Training and petroEDGE)

28 Oct. - 1 Nov. (Kuala Lumpur)

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To discuss any ideas please call me:

Geof Cox

New Directions Ltd,

26a Downleaze, Bristol BS9 1LZ, UK

phone: +44 (0)117 968 1451

mobile: +44 (0)7753 626284

email: geofcox@newdirections.uk.com

web: www.newdirections.uk.com

www.learningconsortium.eu

www.gettingresultswithoutauthority.com