



TALENT JOURNEY

Navigating in the Sea of Potential

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Discovering Untapped Potential: The Key to Increased Success

As organizations seek new ways to increase success, it might surprise some that employee disengagement costs businesses in the US more than \$300 billion each year. Although the figure might be a bit shocking at first, after further consideration it makes perfect sense. The cost of unfocused, unmotivated and unhappy employees takes a ridiculous toll on business. In assessing your own staff, you hope that the majority of your workforce fall outside of that camp. In reality, that is likely not the case. Gallup Management Journal found that more than 2/3 of the workforce is not fully engaged in their work .

The effects of unengaged workers can devastate an organization over time. The interesting study captured in "Creativity on the Job," provides one glaring example of the negative effects. Some of the other devastating downfalls of disengagement include:

- Marginalized Performance

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Are You Marketing Your Company to Get Great Talent?

Courting Job Candidates . . . in This Economy

Unfortunately, there are some officials who believe that there's no need to market their companies in economic times such as these. After all, with the unemployment rate as high as it is and open positions as scarce as they are, there should be no problem getting candidates to want to work for your company. Right?

That philosophy might apply to the majority of candidates. However, when it comes to wooing the best of the best and the cream of the crop, basing a recruiting

strategy on that philosophy won't produce the kind of hiring results that will separate you from the competition. In fact, it could actually hurt your efforts in that area.

A sensible investment in the future

Even if you don't have any open positions at the moment, every company would benefit from having the best talent in the industry on their team. And if not all of that talent is currently on your team, then it's somewhere else, on somebody else's team. According to a well-used business adage, a recession is the perfect time to take market share away from your competition, and making sure that the best talent available is part of your company is the perfect way to do that.

If you do have open positions at the moment, there's a good chance that you're swimming in applications. But do they represent the type of candidates you want to attract? Is the sheer number of applications slowing down the hiring process? Despite all of the interest shown in your open position, do you feel like you're still at "square one" in terms of finding viable candidates?

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- Conflict and Resentment within the Team
- Lack of Productivity
- Loss of Customer Satisfaction and Retention
- Decreased Employee Satisfaction and Retention
- Decrease in Profitability

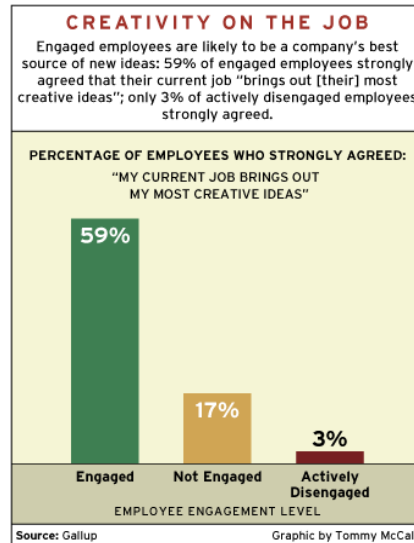
Let's drive this news home. One study compared highly engaged business units to un-engaged units and found that the engaged groups rated 86% higher in customer satisfaction, had a 78% higher safety record, maintained a 70% lower turnover rate, delivered a 70% higher productivity rate and scored 44% more in profitability (Source: Follow This Path, C. Coffman and G. Gonzalez-Molina, 2002). The good news for leaders is that untapped potential of disengaged employees can be turned around. In the rest of this article, we will highlight key strategies to increase the engagement of your staff and the success of your organization.

KEY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES:

- ✓ Hire Right – The most important decision leaders make is bringing the right talent through the doors of the organization. The right talent means finding a fit between what the job, team, and organization needs and what the employee brings to the table. Too often, leaders hire people they “like” in the interview. The “like” factor creates a personality fit, but commonly misses several other important success factors. We recommend utilizing a comprehensive performance assessment to help objectify the hiring process. An assessment that measures personality, motivation and competency provides the highest level of superior job performance predictability.
- ✓ Honor Whole Person – Employees don't want to be used simply as a vehicle for corporate success. Engaging leaders truly care about workers as unique people. Employees engage when you demonstrate that you authentically care about and are interested in them, their family and their career.
- ✓ Honor Competency – In the 21st century, almost all jobs require some level of individual creativity, leadership and decision-making autonomy.

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An engaging leader understands that employees often have better answers to their own work issues than the boss does. As a leader, honor the competency of your employees by slowing down and asking them to share their opinions and ideas. Teach and coach them to think and create solutions themselves.



- ✓ Establish a Partnership Environment – Employees typically want to experience the success of achieving a cause bigger than themselves. However, most organizations miss opportunities to include employees in achieving the vision, mission, and values of the company. Employee meetings are good vehicles for sharing information, but not sufficient. Information and dialogue must flow freely through all levels of leadership to the most entry-level employee. We also recommend transparency of an organizations financial status when possible. Engaging leaders treat employees as partners in the business.

- ✓ Encourage Healthy Dialogue – One of the most difficult skills to master in any relationship is healthy dialogue. The majority of people tend to shy away from disagreements and conflict. Engaging leaders master the art of facilitating respectful and open dialogue that honors and encourages differing views. This type of environment not only fosters engagement, it also produces healthier business decisions and increased profitability.
- ✓ Resource Properly – Once employees are motivated to perform, it becomes critical that engaging leaders provide all the resources employees need to be successful. These resources include; systems infrastructure (such as IT), financial funding, tools/equipment, information, and skills/abilities. An engaging leader makes it a priority to help employees obtain the resources they need to get the job done.
- ✓ Ensure Accountability - When performance or interpersonal issues are not addressed, the team's morale suffers. The impact of just one un-engaged employee can be devastating to the overall engagement of a department or team. High performance teams within organizations operate just like a winning sports team.

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When People Hurt You At Work

By Rick Warren, author of "The Purpose Driven Life" (2003)

As long as you work with people, the odds are high that you will be hurt by them at different times...

- ...customers will abuse you
- ...competitors will lie about you
- ...associates will betray you
- ...bosses will not appreciate you



Sometimes people hurt you intentionally, sometimes unintentionally. It doesn't matter – it still hurts! The typical response to hurt is to become resentful. Resentment is holding onto a hurt. Rather than letting it go, you remember the hurt by reviewing it over and over in your mind. But rather than making you feel better, resentment only intensifies the hurt. Every time you review it, the hurt seems to get bigger and seem more unfair.

Resentment is self-defeating for three reasons:

- **It's unreasonable!** "To worry yourself to death with resentment is a foolish thing to do." It won't change the past or correct the problem. It just causes you to act in foolish ways.
- **It's unhelpful!** "You are only hurting yourself with your anger." It always hurts you more than it does the person you resent. You're miserable while the offender goes on his way unaffected!
- **It's unhealthy!** "Some men stay healthy until they die... others live and die with bitter hearts." Doctors say that resentment is the most unhealthy emotion. It poisons your system.

HOW SHOULD I HANDLE A HURT?

1. **REVEAL YOUR HURT.** Admit it to someone you trust. Don't repress it, confess it! If you swallow your anger, your stomach will keep score. I say; "*Revealing your feeling is the beginning of healing.*"
2. **RELEASE YOUR OFFENDER.** Let them go. Forgive them – for your own peace of mind. You'll never stop hurting until you've forgiven them. Just remember how much God has forgiven you and trust God to settle the score.
3. **REFOCUS YOUR LIFE.** As long as you focus on someone you hate- you allow them to control you. When you say: "*He makes me so mad*" you are admitting that he controls your emotions. Don't resist the resentment, replace it with other thoughts.

"The goals you set for yourself and the strategies you choose become your blueprint or plan. Strategies are like recipes: choose the right ingredients, mix them in the correct proportions, and you will always produce the same predictable results."

~ Charles J. Givens



One Minute Ideas

Book of the Month

Integrity

It is more than simple honesty. It's the key to success. A person with integrity has the – often rare – ability to pull everything together, to make it all happen no matter how challenging the circumstance. In *Integrity*, Dr. Cloud explores the six qualities of character that define integrity. He shows us how people with integrity:

- Are able to connect with others and build trust
- Are oriented toward reality
- Finish well
- Embrace the negative
- Are oriented toward increase
- Have an understanding of the transcendent



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Those that win are working together as a cohesive and engaged team. Losing teams may have a few individual stars, but no one performs at their best – not even the stars. Great leaders deal with performance issues to ensure the entire team is functioning at its full potential.

✓ In implementing new strategies as leaders, you might encounter some initial resistance. We encourage you to persist. It takes time for employees to understand, embrace, and adapt to change. Engaging leaders continually seek business improvements and ways to maximize the potential of those they lead. Just think – your “star” employee may be the next leader. Additionally, your least engaged employee, once fostered, may end up being your next “star”. Engaging leaders see the untapped potential in their employees and deploy strategies to bring out the best in every person/team.

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Marketing your company for the purpose of finding the very best talent in the industry should not be considered a cost, despite current economic conditions. Quite the contrary – it’s a sensible investment in the future. After all, the economy will rebound eventually, and when it does, top talent will be seeking better opportunities to advance their career. You want those candidates to see your company as an attractive option.

Those companies that are positioned correctly once the rebound begins will also be better able to take the most advantage of it. Marketing yourself not only ensures that the best candidates will want to work for you now, it also ensures that they’ll feel the same way once they have more options at their disposal.

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The Spirit of Leadership Column

Leadership – The Challenge

People everywhere continue to look for the secret to becoming a better leader. Thousands of books and articles have been written on the art of leadership all claiming to have the “answers.” The fact is there is no one answer, no “secret.” However, some guiding principles and skills are fundamental to successful leaders everywhere.

These skills, principles, and traits can be developed. Rate yourself in each area below, identify areas of weaknesses, and then create some goals and action steps to help you develop the successful leadership traits.

• **Leaders are grounded.** They know who they are and where they are going. They set the direction and pace for the organization/department and lead by example. An effective leader helps to create an organization where everyone feels free to be open, innovative, and alive to possibilities.

• **Leaders provide the vision, values, and strategies to transform** their organizations to higher levels of sustained success. Leaders take the company to where it has not been. Leaders are visionaries, coaches, mentors, teachers, students, and more. They are

constantly seeking, learning, improving, and stretching their capabilities. They set the example, establish the environment, and implement the processes for everyone in the organization to adhere to the same standards.

• **Successful leaders have personal and organizational values, which govern their**

behavior. They lead by values. Balancing the needs of the individuals with the needs of the company by aligning the vision, values, and resources of all concerned. Organizational values are an integral part of your Strategic Plan and the cornerstone for the actions and decisions of everyone in the organization. Those values are driven throughout the organization by your behavior and your example.

As a leader, if you engage in behavior which conflicts with your values, you will sacrifice your credibility. The end does not justify the means.

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