

Maximize Employee Potential

Creating more satisfied, engaged and productive workers by
redefining the role of the manager

Too many people hate their job... and it's costing us

85% of American workers report not being engaged at work. Many say they hate their job. When asked why, atop their list of reasons is the way they're treated by their manager. Workers feel unappreciated and disrespected. As a result, our personal productivity, measured as GDP per capita, is suffering. Gallop calls it "declining economic dynamism" and say it's the greatest current economic threat our country faces.

And killing us

This lack of engagement also leaves us facing a humanitarian threat. Disliking or hating the thing you do 40+ hours a week, feeling bad about your boss, bad about the way you're treated, creates stress. The National Institutes of Health say workplace-related stress affects 83% of workers and can cause significant mental and physical health problems.

But we have the solution

Most people have come to accept tension between workers and management, and that workers are often unhappy, so these statistics probably don't come as a surprise. What may surprise you, however, is that we've had the solution for over 20 years. "Strengths-based" management methods are proven to produce more satisfied, engaged and productive workers. They do so by directing managers to build upon an employee's strengths rather than correcting their weaknesses.

Unfortunately, we don't use it

Unfortunately, most managers have trouble accepting them. Human beings are wired to see problems first – it helps keep us alive. We see a strong person as one who looks right at a problem and calls it out. When we're asked to focus exclusively on the positive, as strengths-based methods do, we see the tactic as weak and we reject it. I teach these methods and countless clients have said to me, "You want me to ignore problems. I'm not going to do that. If someone makes a mistake, I call it out. That's my job."

But with a slight sight adjustment... we can

The actual job of a manager isn't to identify problems, it's to help workers do their best work and achieve their goals. People do their best work when they feel their manager supports them, cares about their well-being and their development, recognizes their strengths, and is there to help them put their strengths to work.

Note that disrespect is demotivating

Conversely, people don't usually do good work when they feel disrespected or undervalued, or when they're fearful or stressed. They don't often realize it, but managers possess great power. The manager holds the worker's livelihood in their hands. When a manager makes a negative comment it weighs heavy on the worker, often creating hurt feelings, ill will and resentment. It's this resentment that festers, leaves people hating their manager and their job, and causes the pervasive lack of engagement that *is* the problem.

And that worker success is manager success

As a Counselor, Coach and Consultant, my job is to help my clients achieve *their* goals. My success is achieved only through their success. It's the same for the manager. The strengths the manager should work to display are not their own, but those of their workers. The strengths in "strengths-based management" are those of the worker. The most effective manager works to identify, cultivate and utilize the strengths of the employee.

Now adopt the New Role of the Manager

The effective manager understands that strengths-based management methods work. These methods work because they help us demonstrate respect for every man and woman who rises each day, makes their way to work and offers their service. These methods work because they help us empower people in the ways proven to be most effective. The research is clear: command-and-control management methods that focus on weaknesses, on bringing weaknesses up to par, are inferior. They're based on antiquated ideas about leadership and strength, and they often kill motivation and productivity. Strengths-based approaches are more effective and more likely to give you the results you want from your employees. And if your managers can see their own strength as their ability to identify and cultivate strengths in those they manage, they'll be capable of adopting and utilizing these methods.

And implement the solution: Strengths-Based Management

#1 Meet your workers where they are - allow them to tell you how they see their role and their goals. And gain an understanding of their concerns – the problems they have with how things have been.

#2 Uncover their desires and their strengths. Help them see their strengths, and the possibilities for success in the application of those strengths.

#3 Collaborate with them to develop a strategy and tactics that will address their concerns and apply their unique strengths to their role. Then support, encourage, coach and reward them as they work.

*Always use Strengths-Based Communications techniques (article to come soon!)

**And reach out to MDM&A if you need any help!