

## **“Your Mission Statement, the all Important First Step to an Engaged Workforce”**

Over the past several years there have been literally thousands of articles written about the benefits of employee engagement. Over the next few minutes we are going to briefly define employee engagement, map out some of the benefits to having an engaged workforce, and discuss the correlation between a good mission statement and an engaged workforce.

Over the span of my forty year career in business, I have heard many definitions of employee engagement; however by far the simplest definition of engagement is the degree to which employees care about their job, their company, and their customers. One of the foremost subject matter experts in the field of employee engagement is Gallup, INC. Their website describes the benefits of employee engagement as follows: “Engaged employees are involved in, enthusiastic about and committed to their work. Gallup's extensive research shows that employee engagement is strongly connected to business outcomes essential to an organization's financial success, such as productivity, profitability and customer engagement. Engaged employees support the innovation, growth and revenue that their companies need.” The article goes on to say, companies with engaged employees average 10% higher on customer ratings, 22% higher in profitability, and 21% higher in productivity. At the same time they experience other benefits such as lower absenteeism, turnover, and workplace accidents. Simply put an engaged workforce makes for an awesome and profitable place to work. .

So what are the prerequisites to establishing employee engagement? While there are many steps in the journey, the first and most logical step toward engagement is for leadership to clearly convey the mission of the organization. A well-defined mission statement answers questions such as **who do we serve? What do we do for them? How do our solutions or products improve customer’s lives on a daily basis?** As well as, **why do we feel our product is important?** If you are able to answer these questions clearly and concisely, you are on your way to creating an effective mission statement for the organization. Mission statements are not just nice words suitable for plaques or websites. Mission statements are often described as the roadmap, the blueprint, and fundamental reason for existence. Effective mission statements are a necessity; however it is imperative that they be supported with a comprehensive strategic plan that aligns all company and individual goals to the accomplishment of the mission.

Successful organizations share a uniform desire to win in the market place. Winning in the market brings energy and positivity to the organization. **When employees know how their job connects to the broader mission, a winning culture develops within the organization.** The more employees know about how their actions and behaviors fit into the success equation, the more engaged they will become. Engaged employees typically do the right thing for the organization and the customer, share ideas on process or product improvements, and treat one another with respect and dignity.

In closing, if your organization has a mission statement, take another look at it. Is it a living document that is the foundation to success? Do your employees know how they fit into the organization's mission? If not, re-evaluate it and don't hesitate to get your employees input.

If you don't have a mission statement, take the time to formulate one. Make sure that the statement is clear, concise, and embodies the desired future state of the organization.

In closing remember to ask these questions when formulating your mission statement:

- **Who** do we serve?
- **What** do we do for them?
- **How** do our solutions/products impact their lives?
- **Why** do we feel our product is important?

Once the statement is completed, take the necessary time to communicate and discuss it with your employees. When employees can easily connect the dots regarding how they fit into accomplishing the mission, an engaged workforce emerges and rapidly becomes the primary source of competitive advantage.

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