

What It Takes to Be a Great Employer

Categories : [EMPLOYER HOT TOPICS](#)

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“Employment engagement” is essential to the success of any business and is one of those “hot” terms talked about in workshops, webinars, blogs and other forums. But what is it? Quite simply, employee engagement has been globally defined as an employee’s degree of positive or negative emotional attachment to his/her organization, job and colleagues. It measures an employee’s commitment, passion and willingness to put discretionary effort into his/her job.

Employee engagement is not the same as employee satisfaction. Satisfaction only indicates how satisfied or happy employees are; it does not address their level of motivation or involvement. Employee engagement stems from workplace experiences perceived to be controlled by management, and it is what every company wants, but very few companies get.

But what is the makeup of engaged and disengaged workers in the U.S.?

According to a recent Gallup poll (conducted during the Fall of 2011), 71% of American workers are either “not engaged” or “actively disengaged” from their work. This means that they are emotionally disconnected from their workplace and are less likely to be productive. One-third of American workers are “engaged”. They feel enthusiastic about their work and contributing to their organizations in a positive manner. This trend has remained relatively stable since 4th quarter of 2010.

Hundreds of studies have shown that there is a strong relationship between employee engagement and a company’s overall performance. For example, a [Towers Perrin study](#) conducted in 2007-2008 found that companies with the most engaged employees had a 19% increase in operating income, while those with the lowest levels had a 32% decline. Gallup also found that engaged employees are twice as likely as those who are actively disengaged to proactively recruit for their employer.

So what most influences employee engagement? The answer to that question is not a simple five step list. Each company is different, and for each employee, engagement is different. It is individualistic, and every employee is the best advocate for their version of engagement. Start by communicating with your employees. Ask them about engagement and what it means to them. However, be prepared to act on that communication stream, in order to reach consensus and buy-in from the employees. One of the fastest ways to damage morale is to ask employees for their opinions and then ignore (or be perceived as ignoring) their replies.

Employee engagement starts with companies trying to help their people find meaning in their work

and then leveraging that meaning to motivate. Companies need to think about what they can do to unlock people's desire to be engaged, whether that means to give them opportunities to lead projects/task forces or to simply recognize their accomplishments or ask for input.

If you would like more information on how to increase employee engagement and other workplace issues, visit our [website](#) for our [Workplace Research](#) articles. This new section of our website highlights the different trends and changing environments within companies across America. New content is added monthly, so bookmark our the section and visit often. Or contact your [local Snelling office](#), and one of our talented staff members can assist you with your needs.