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Employee Engagement; What is it and how is it Achieved?

Employee Engagement Defined

“Employee engagement” is definitely one of the most recognisable HR buzz words of the last few years, but what does it mean? In the most basic terms, when someone is engaged with a subject they are interested in it, concerned about it, dedicated to it, passionate about it, and motivated to work for it. Who wouldn't want an employee who felt that way about their company? In a number of theoretical studies and practical company examples it can be seen that engaged employees are the employees who are willing to “go the extra mile” by offering that elusive discretionary effort most people save for interests outside of the workplace. Some people would describe it as commitment, others as dedication, but it all comes down to the same thing; a sense of interest and connection.

Why is Employee Engagement So Sought After?

Many employers strive to achieve an engaged workforce because engaged workforces tend to have higher levels of productivity and a higher quality of work. Due to engaged employees being passionate about their job roles, committed to their employer, and willing to put in any necessary extra effort, they tend to provide a higher level of customer service. This good quality of customer service then enables a company to be more successful and garner a good reputation amongst competitors and potential clients.

The overall happiness of current employees also helps the company to create a strong employer brand, something which will make them much more desirable to other potential employees. Employees who are happy in their workplace are likely to share this information with friends and family, and when this happens a company can quickly become known as a good and desirable employer. Once this reputation is created it is more likely that higher quality candidates will apply to the company, which will again help the company to deliver high levels of customer service and maintain a competitive advantage and industry success.

How Do You Foster Good Levels Of Employee Engagement?

What engages one employee may have less of an effect on another, so therefore it is better to have a multi-pronged approach to employee engagement rather than relying on one aspect of the workplace.

One of the ways in which engagement can be fostered is by the regular training of employees. If an employee feels as though their employer is invested in their future and willing to invest in their training, then the employee is more likely to become committed and invested in the company in return.

Another way to raise the level of employee engagement is to provide employees with an element of autonomy and flexible working. There has been plenty of evidence to show that when a company allows employees to work flexibly they are happier and more likely to be engaged out of gratitude. Some employers

are wary of increased flexibility, but a recent article in the Telegraph has shown that companies such as Pentland, Swiss Re, and Holiday Extras have had nothing but success from the introduction of their flexible working schemes.

Creating a community-like company culture is another proven way to raise levels of employee engagement. By regularly scheduling work outings or social activities you are encouraging your workforce to form positive bonds. Employers who schedule workplace charity events or fun runs etc. are more likely to have happier and more engaged employees due to the increased sense of team work.

Finally, the development of an employee voice is a fantastic enabler of employee engagement. Many employees don't have any say in their working conditions and plenty of companies operate in a top-down fashion where decisions are made at an executive level, however there has been evidence to suggest that a more inclusive approach fosters employee engagement. If an employee feels that their voice is heard and valued they are more likely to feel respected, and when an employee feels respected they are more likely to feel engaged.

How Can We Help?

If you have any queries relating to any of the subjects raised within this newsletter, or you would like some more detailed information, then please do not hesitate to contact us at hradvice@hasslefreehr.co.uk

For clarification of any of the above updates or for advice and guidance on any HR and/or Health and Safety Concerns contact us by emailing hradvice@hasslefreehr.co.uk or by calling 02476 664092.

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