

## Leadership to Fuel Sustainable Engagement

Towers Watson's 2014 Global Workforce Study states, "In today's global workplace, leadership is a driver of not only sustainable engagement overall, as revealed in their 2012 research, but also all the components of *sustainable* engagement."

The report exposed that 24 percent of employees were regularly disengaged, 17 percent detached and 19 percent unsupported – they would normally be engaged but lack either enablement and/or energy from leadership. That leaves only 40 percent of the workforce sustainably engaged.

In which category do your employees belong?

### Leaders and managers are the fuel

Those are staggering numbers and leave a lot of room for improvement. Just imagine what productivity would look like in your workplace if you could increase those numbers just a few percentage points, or instead of having 4 in 10 employees engaged long-term, you increased it to 5 out of 10 employees.

The most common causes for disengagement stem from sources such as a lack of circular communication, enablement or not having a physical and emotional environment that actively supports the workforce.

### Three tools to help leaders fuel long-term engagement

Engaged employees can be described as a workforce that is willing to go the extra mile for their betterment *and* that of the company. But engagement, in order to be sustainable, needs more.

**Circular communication is a driver.** Soapbox communication left the corporate arena when the business community said goodbye to the industrial age, or at least it should have. Communication is no longer linear, it is circular. Only when you get feedback from the employee can the leader understand their needs and really connect. Employees believe it is important that they have an opportunity to not only voice their opinions but be heard. And, the only way they know they are heard is if the leader actively pursues feedback and acknowledges and acts upon what was expressed. Create a circular communication action plan.

**Enablement increases efficiency.** The workforce can be enabled by providing new or advanced tools, education, resources and a direct line to leadership. They know if they've been heard through the circular communications process when their needs are met. They feel more connected to management and their leaders when they receive the support needed to improve – hence they are more engaged in a sustainable way. Talk to your employees today and find out what they need to improve and increase their productivity.

**Workplace environments matter.** Have you ever noticed that some days your productive flow really works – you're in the zone — but on other days you aren't really clicking? It's about the way the flow happens. And your environment can enhance what you are doing or throw up obstacles.

The physical and emotional workplace environment can dramatically improve work/life balance or can cause distraction, disengagement and loss of focus. Not only does the environment need to be clean and friendly but free of distracting noise pollution, clutter, and harsh colors on painted walls. It needs to include a flow of movement throughout that is conducive to efficiency and productivity while reducing stress. Your workplace environment affects your employees' moods – think about how it affects their attention. You can engineer your environment to be more productive, to be more focused.

Get leaders and managers involved so they can fuel sustainable engagement and increase both productivity and profitability.

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