The Manager's Employee Engagement Toolbox

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MANAGER'S EMPLOYEE ENGAGMENT TOOLKIT

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What's in the Manager's Employee Engagement Toolbox?

The Manager's Employee Engagement Toolbox is designed to help you better understand what the benefits of Employee Engagement means to you and provide you with the tools needed to create greater employee engagement in your organization.

Tool #1
Get More Players in the Game at Work

- Imagine that you were the coach of a sports team and you suddenly had the ability to put more players in the game than the regulations allowed

- Employee engagement gets more players in the game at work

No Penalties for Having too Many Players on the Field

- The really good news is that there are no regulations or officials dictating how many players you can have actively involved at work at any given time. The possibilities are endless. You can have all of your employees as active engaged participants.

Making Everyone Feel Part of the Team

- Employees who work on a job regularly are going to have the most knowledge about how to make their job more efficient and productive, as well as having many other valuable insights.

- This is perhaps one of the greatest untapped resources in most organizations today. Your goal should be to more fully utilize the talents and abilities of your employees .

- Employee engagement gets employees off the bleachers and onto the field of play in your organization or workplace.

Tool # 2
Make Work More Interesting

- One of the greatest benefits of employee engagement is that it makes work more interesting for everyone.

- Employee engagement can challenge employees in ways they never experienced in the past. This concept can be applied to virtually any job or workplace.

- This can make a supervisor or manager's job easier because she doesn't have to be the only one trying to motivate the employees—they are self-motivated by the challenges which being engaged can present to them.

What Makes Sports Fun?

How can you make someone's job more interesting?

- To answer this question, let's first think about some things people do away from the workplace that they enjoy, such as their hobbies or favorite pastimes.

- What makes these activities interesting or fun?

GOLF

- Think about the game of golf. When you think about it, this game really involves someone trying to propel a tiny round object in a straight path forward toward a specific destination, using the force of a special device they must swing in a very specific manner, repeating this process hopefully as few times as possible in specially designated areas.

- Engaging in this activity is often a very frustrating experience, as it requires a special skill and expensive training to improve performance, and it is not unusual for participants to get extremely angry, sometimes throwing these expensive pieces of equipment around, and even using profanity when their performance does not meet their expectations.

- Perhaps the most curious thing about this activity is that people are not paid to perform these tasks but rather pay to participate in it!

What Makes Golf Fun?

- What makes a golfer enjoy being engaged in something that can sound more like something to avoid rather than seek out? Let's examine some of these elements of the game that make it fun to play for golfers:
  - Challenge
  - Motivation
  - Maintaining Skills
  - Support
  - Scoring
  - Recognition
  - Camaraderie

Tool # 3

Help Employees Understand How Their Job Fits Into the Big Picture

Employee Engagement Mission Statement

Our mission is to create a more engaged workplace for all employees of the organization. To achieve this goal, we must establish positive work relationships between all levels of employees, sustaining clear, honest, and reliable communications for everyone. We will strive to provide every employee the opportunity to be successful in his career and provide fair and meaningful rewards and recognition for everyone. Employees will be allowed greater control of their personal development and careers and we will encourage everyone to provide input into how their jobs are to be performed.

Discretionary Performance

- Discretionary performance can best be described as that extra effort employees put into their jobs to ensure they are doing everything they can to meet or exceed the requirements of their job and ultimately the customer.

- This discretionary effort can make all the difference when it comes to the success of most organizations.

Discretionary Effort Examples

- Can you tell when an employee is engaged in her job when you purchase goods or services in your personal life? A highly engaged employee will put forth this discretionary effort to try to ensure that you are completely satisfied as a customer.

The Discretionary Difference

- Think about what a difference this discretionary performance can make in the jobs of those employees who report to you.

- Imagine how this could affect the ultimate performance of your area of responsibility as a supervisor or manager.

Tool # 4
Dealing With Conflict at Work

- Differences in opinions at work are not necessarily a bad thing, despite what some people think
- Some conflict is inevitable in any situation in which people work together
- Conflict can lead to a positive outcome if managed in a constructive manner, and can actually be productive at work by allowing different views but can become a problem if not managed
- As a Manager, you should ensure that conflict is managed and doesn't become counterproductive at work

Thinking Win/Win

- You probably have heard of these conflict strategies but may not have thought very much how to achieve the optimum objective of achieving win/win solutions as frequently as possible.

- Although all four may be commonly used, some may be more counterproductive to developing and maintaining a workplace culture based on employee engagement. The other strategies are sometimes used more out of frustration than about trying to use the most effective conflict resolution strategy.

Internal Competition v. Collaboration

- In many situations, different departments in an organization seem to compete for limited resources such as budgets, resources and even, people.

- "I'm not going to let my best workers go to another part of the organization because I need them working in my department" thinking may ultimately cause your organization to lose your most talented people to the real competition-those companies you compete in the marketplace for customers.

- These mindsets actually can reduce collaboration and create competition within an organization even when it is definitely not in the best interest of everyone.

- These different functions mistakenly view those who they should be collaborating with as the competition. The result is a less effective operating organization.

What Type of Workplace Mindset Do you Create?

- As a manager or supervisor, you should constantly be thinking about what type of working environment you are creating for those who work for you.

Tool # 5
Getting Employees More Involved

- Many employees simply come into work each day and just put in their time. This is not to say that they don't take pride in their job or do good work, but many times their heart just isn't into it.

Consider the following sequence of changes in employees' overall engagement with their jobs:

Involvement→Commitment→Accountability

Decision-Making

- Think about how much time you currently spend answering questions from those who report to you, when they most likely already know the answer.

- Think about how much time and energy this potentially wastes. Consider too, that in some organizations, the person working closest to the issue or problem is probably the best one to make such decisions.

- Think about how much time you could save yourself by allowing employees to make these types of decisions, and how much more involved they would feel as a result.

Traditional Responsibilities of a Supervisor

Supervisor
Assign jobs
Sets schedules
Prepares plans
Obtains resources
Makes adjustments
Corrects
Monitors quality
Deals with customer issues
Disciplines

Employees
Performs tasks as assigned

New Responsibilities of an Engaged Leader and Engaged Employees

Engaged Leader

Provides direction
Coordinates
Supports
Enables
Trains
Clarifies
Listens
Plans
Delegates
Reinforces
Communicates

Engaged Employees

Plans work
Sets schedules
Makes adjustments
Updates plans
Makes corrections
Ensures quality
Makes decisions
Reports progress
Makes commitments
Gives input
Takes ownership

Which list of responsibilities is more strategic for the leader and of most value to the organization?

Tool # 6
Develop Your Employees' Strengths and Abilities

Performance v. Potential

- Performance is measured by how effectively an employee performs his or her current job

- Potential is measured by the ability of an employee to perform at a higher level than his or her current position in the future

Which do you think is most important?

Setting Performance Standards

As a manager, you have the right to expect nothing less than excellent performance from employees. There are two basic rules about managing performance:

- Always expect excellent performance.
- Never let poor work go unnoticed or performance issues go unchallenged.

Engaged Leaders Still Enforce the Rules

- Employee engagement doesn't mean there are no rules or consequences for not following the procedures in an organization

- Part of becoming an engaged leader is to ensure the rules of the organization are followed by everyone, and when necessary, you take the appropriate actions to correct problems when they exist

Tool # 7

Employee Engagement Leads to Better Solutions to Problems

Turning Good Ideas Into Great Ideas

- Getting the right people working on the right things is critically important to the success of any endeavor.
- Engaged employees can often solve problems or provide better advice than anyone else, regardless of his position.
- Engaging your employees may be one of the best ways to turn good ideas into great ideas.

The most expensive lesson you may learn is when you hear an employee say:

"I could have told you what the problem was and how to correct it if only you had asked me!"

Tool # 8
Establish Better Communications

Communication is the key to solving virtually every problem at work

- Engaged employees feel that based on their experience and expertise on their jobs, they have something important to say and others, especially their supervisor, will listen to them.

Different Perceptions of the Job

Sometimes there are different perceptions of what is important in the performance of a job between a supervisor and an employee resulting in expectations not being met. More effective communications between employees and supervisors can help prevent this from happening
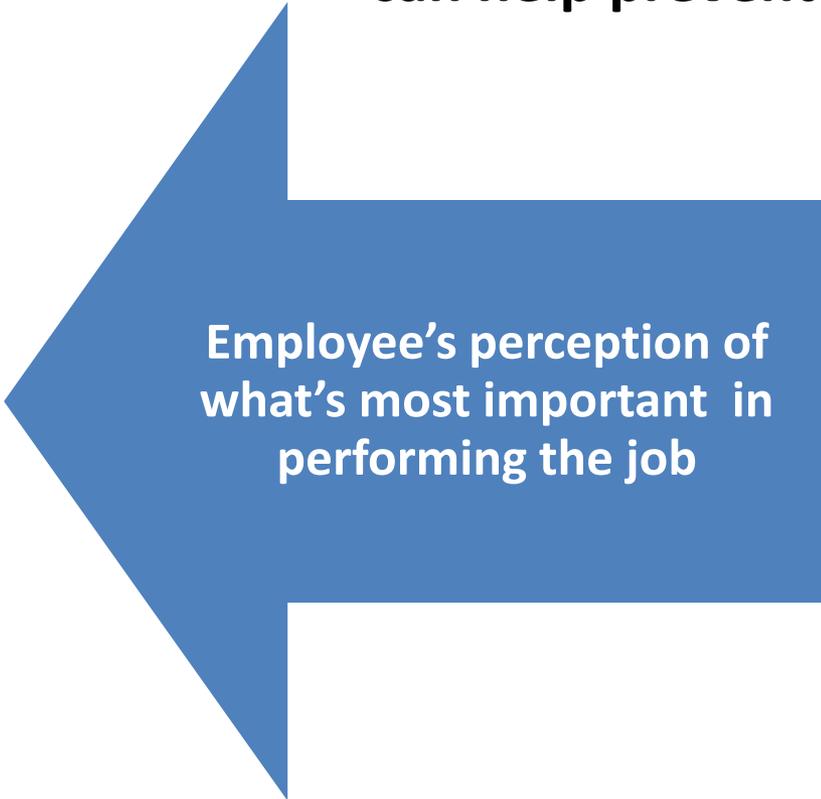
Employee's perception of what's most important in performing the job
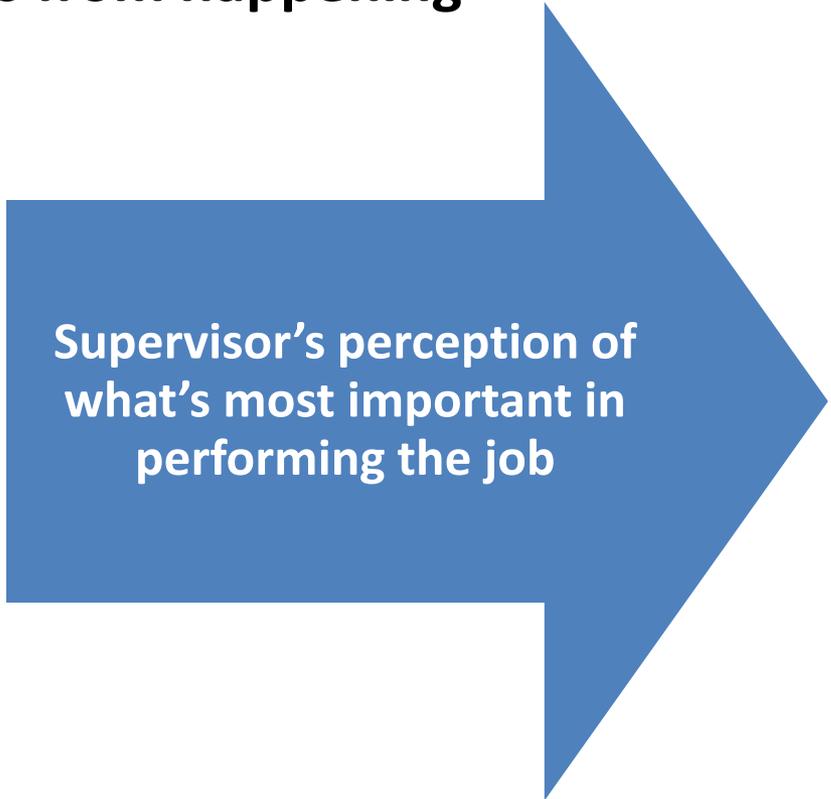
Supervisor's perception of what's most important in performing the job

3 Levels of Leadership Communications

Nice

Should

Must
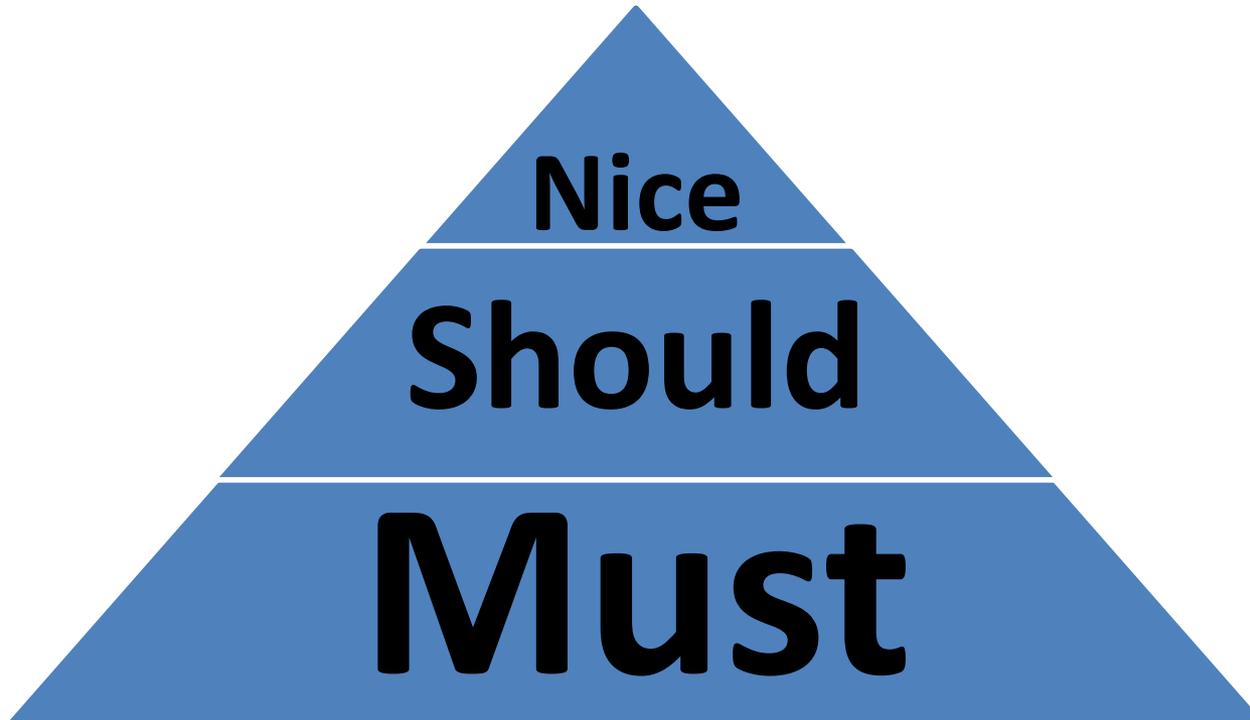
Feedback for Continual Learning

- Feedback is important to growth, development, and continual learning in life. The purpose of feedback is to promote learning and thus enhance performance.

- Coaching is a process which gives employees feedback and helpful suggestions that will allow them to grow and develop on their jobs.

- There are four levels of feedback that an employee might receive from her supervisor. Each of these four levels is better than the previous one, with the last one as the ultimate level and what you should strive for:

No Feedback

- Think about some of the many problems created if an employee receives no feedback at all about her performance. Unfortunately, this is all too common in many workplaces, and often becomes the default performance feedback system.

The Default Performance Feedback System

"If you don't hear anything, you are doing just fine. But if you screw up, we'll let you know!"

Only Negative Feedback

- What happens if an employee only receives negative feedback?
- This is also a common occurrence in many workplaces.
- This situation creates problems, such as negatively affecting the employee's self-esteem, creating a negative work environment, lacking reinforcement to motivate the employee, and creating a poor working relationship between the employee and supervisor
- This type of work environment would most likely disengage employees

Only Positive Feedback

- What if an employee only receives positive feedback, assuming that there are negatives to be discussed?
- If employees don't hear about those aspects of their job performance that are lacking, they won't be able to address these problems and grow in their jobs and careers.
- In many ways, a manager does an employee an injustice by not communicating where the employee needs to improve and by only telling her the positives about the performance.
- Often, it is this type of feedback—the one that is hardest to hear—that can ultimately be the most beneficial to the employee's growth and development on the job.

Balanced Feedback

Balanced feedback, which is an appropriate amount of both positive and negative information provided to the employee, is the optimum level of feedback an employee should receive from his manager

- Balanced feedback means that the person receives both positive and constructive feedback on how he can improve performance.
- The ratio of positive to negative should be determined by the employee's actual performance, but there should typically be much more positive than negative feedback presented to the employee.
- Usually an employee's strengths are first presented, and then any areas that he could improve upon should be reviewed in a constructive developmental way.

Formal and Informal Feedback

- Formal: Documented annual/semiannual performance review

- Informal: Day-to-day communication and feedback about performance

Which do you think is most important to performance?

Recognition

An important part of creating a more engaged workplace is providing recognition to employees.

- The goal of recognition is not only to acknowledge someone for his significant contributions and good work, but also to reinforce these behaviors so they will be repeated in the future.

- You need to understand what your employees perceive to be reinforcement. Sometimes, we think we are reinforcing or rewarding someone, when we are actually doing the opposite.

One person's reward may be another's punishment

Tool #10
Make Your Workplace a More Satisfying Place to Work

It should be obvious by now that creating a workplace based on employee engagement creates a better place to work for everyone, including you as the leader. Every process and system in the organization potentially will be improved by the introduction of employee engagement in a workplace.

- With the help of employee engagement, better decisions are possible based on expertise and the input of more people who have a stake in the outcome because they are now involved more directly in these decisions.

There is an old saying in business:

"How you treat your employees is how they will treat your customers"

Accept the Leadership Engagement Challenge

- Creating a workplace based on employee engagement is not just something nice to do; it can produce remarkable results.

- Learning to become a more engaging leader can not only help you as a manager become a more effective leader today, but can also help you reach your future career goals.

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