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Increase Employee Engagement Through Training

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Numerous studies have shown that engaged employees are highly valuable assets to an organization. Engaged employees display a level of commitment and involvement towards the organization that provides tangible results. Awareness surrounding business goals, training programs and performance opportunities creates a positive attitude towards their organization that influences collaboration, productivity, creativity and problem solving. Therefore, implementing employee engagement initiatives that include training programs as central components are proving to be an attractive, trackable workforce investment. Research shows a steady increase in businesses using online training and learning management systems (LMS) to provide the velocity and scalability to train employees quickly on required knowledge and skills. In addition, eLearning can help retain employees, increase their productivity and successfully help team members prepare for leadership roles.
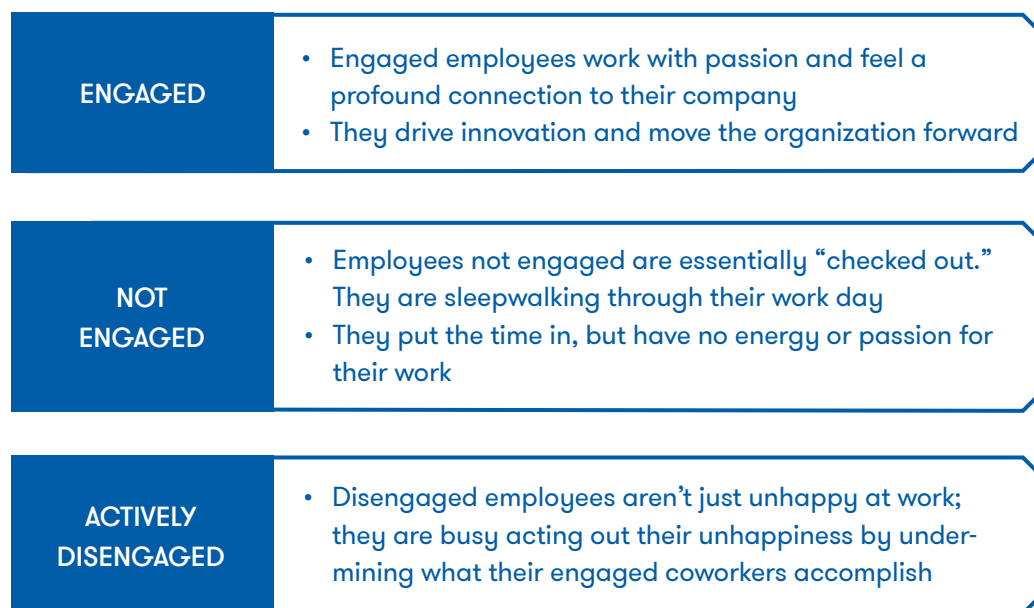
Although research indicates organizations recognize the importance of employee engagement and its contributions to business success, how the company approaches and implements employee engagement ideas requires further evaluation. Gallup reports employee engagement has stagnated in the U.S. recently. With half of all employees being cited by Gallup as "not engaged" and another 17% as actively disengaged, organizations can greatly increase the quality of their workforce through tools that bring employees value as a professional, a team member and a well-rounded person. Utilizing eLearning to enable a well-constructed training plan offers the employee professional development as well as the opportunity to feel informed and valued as part of the organization, potentially with a greater career path than before. Employee surveys commonly indicate when training is relevant to their day-to-day functions, an upsurge in employee motivation occurs. Engaged employees become better contributors to the company's growth, customer satisfaction and brand identity.

TRAINING OR eLEARNING PROGRAMS HELP:

Retain Employees

Increase Productivity

Prepare Team Members for Leadership Roles

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Research suggests evaluating employee engagement strategies by examining Gallup's three employee types. Recognizing the employee's beliefs, skills, goals and experiences drives his or her performance.

ENGAGED	• Engaged employees work with passion and feel a profound connection to their company • They drive innovation and move the organization forward

NOT ENGAGED	• Employees not engaged are essentially "checked out." They are sleepwalking through their work day • They put the time in, but have no energy or passion for their work

ACTIVELY DISENGAGED	• Disengaged employees aren't just unhappy at work; they are busy acting out their unhappiness by undermining what their engaged coworkers accomplish

Business success depends on an engaged workforce. Companies with engaged employees achieve better business results. The Hays Group New Rules of Engagement Report, administered among millions of employees, concludes that companies scoring highest for engagement achieve 2.5 times the revenue growth of those that rate lowest. A similar report published by AON Hewitt found that each 1% increase in employee engagement would result in an additional 0.6% growth in sales for an organization.

A study on relationships between training experiences and attitudes, as well as attitudes about perceived job proficiency, finds a direct relationship between one's positive training experiences, attitudes and proficiency. The sample consisted of 237 full-time salaried/exempt and hourly/non-exempt employees from one academic institution and three businesses. In this study, 86.8% of those who had updated training had the most positive attitudes toward training (Truitt, 2011).

Employee performance is a crucial measurement by management. Employees are concerned about their own productivity and environment. By effectively instilling measurement within training and development, employees receive career growth alignment which enhances personal motivation and success.

With consideration to Gallup's definition of the three types of employees, this white paper takes a closer look at strategies for improving employee engagement and ways in which training tools can help accomplish these goals:

- Measuring Employee Engagement
- Leadership and Management Responsibilities
- Engagement Training Tools and Rewards

Measuring Employee Engagement

Whether an organization is looking to improve employee engagement or is implementing employee engagement activities for the first time, measuring the engagement in a meaningful way is a crucial part of the process. Once the various employee training needs and business goals are identified, employee engagement strategies can successfully leverage training as a core component to be effectively developed and measured. Collecting and presenting consistent data to gauge employee engagement effectively keeps management close to the initiative through methods such as employee survey questions at the end of each course.

Gallup developed an Employee Engagement Index which is based on worker responses to 12 actionable workplace elements with proven linkages to performance outcomes, including productivity, customer service, quality, retention, safety and profit. Businesses can use this or a similar system to score the employee base, however it's imperative that when a company asks employees for their opinions, employers need to manage expectations of follow through. It's also critical for businesses to use employee surveys that are relevant and actionable. Data should be proven to influence key employee engagement metrics (Reilly, 2014).

To measure engagement, the organization should create survey questions around key categories complete with numerical rating scales to evaluate and collect quantifiable data. Ideally, these scales should utilize an even number of choices to prevent non-committal or "middle of the road" choices. The following lists guide the creation of categories and employee engagement questions:

OVERALL SATISFACTION

- How satisfied are you with the work you do?
- How satisfied are you with the overall working environment and company culture?
- Do the goals and mission of the company make you feel like your job is important?
- Are you meeting your career development expectations?
- Would you recommend others to work here?

VALUE AND APPRECIATION

- Do your opinions seem to count?
- Do you feel you can speak up without consequences to address new ideas, processes or current challenges that impact your job performance?
- Have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?

TRAINING, DEVELOPMENT AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Do you know what is expected of you at work?
- Do you have the materials and equipment needed to do your work efficiently?
- Have you had opportunities this year to learn and grow? If so, are there training resources that meet your learning needs?

SATISFACTION WITH SUPERVISORS/MANAGEMENT

- Have you received direct praise or recognition from your supervisor?
- Does your supervisor care about you as a person?
- Does your supervisor encourage performance development and training opportunities?

Leadership & Management Responsibilities

Leaders within an organization often set the tone and expectations of employee engagement but more to the point, individual managers must understand the benefits and drivers of employee engagement. Success of the organization relies on achievements from all employees. Companies realize the most benefit from engagement initiatives when leaders weave employee engagement into performance expectations for managers and enable them to execute on those expectations. Managers and employees should feel empowered to make a significant difference in their immediate environment (Reilly, 2014).

One way to accomplish this ultimate goal relies on leaders embracing their own training needs to communicate new strategies and developing or enhancing employee engagement.

> **Professional training providers offer training courses on corporate communications including:**
>
> - Techniques to influence
> - Deliver with confidence
> - Discover powerful communication techniques
> - How to handle conflict
> - Methods to engage the various types of employees (engaged, not-engaged, actively disengaged)

By using management and leadership training courses, seminars and classes, businesses may find this is the first necessary step to improve employee engagement—delivering messages that make a powerful impression on employees.

Engagement Training Tools & Rewards

Best-in-class training tools keep an employee aware of development opportunities, support best practices in the functional disciplines of the organization and reinforce company values. An LMS is unique in the fact that it can help educate new employees immediately, at nearly any scale, by effectively teaching them how to successfully operate as part of an immediate and broader team until they feel comfortable or show adequate competence, thus reducing new hire frustration (Chaffe, 2016). Starting with an engaged employee will always be easier than the contrary and offering the right training from the start is key.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT TOOLS RETAIN EMPLOYEES

Organizations successfully deploying and managing training programs improve employee engagement and in turn retain employees. Training provokes a sense of investment in the company from employees. Research suggests organizations believe that employee retention stems from opportunities for improving their learning opportunities and confirms a strong relationship between employee training and development and employee retention (Jehanzeb and Bashir, 2013).

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To generate the best results possible, assess learner and company needs from the standpoint of building training opportunities that specifically aid in retention:

- **MAKE IT EASY:** diversify training options for learning preference with in-person seminars, online quizzes, videos, webinars and e-books

- **KNOW WHAT'S BEING USED:** demand advanced administration features including single-click reporting, assignable training, employee tracking and goal measurement

- **KEEP IT MOBILE:** provide accessible learning across PCs, laptops, tablets and smartphones

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

Twenty-four percent of employees say the most memorable recognition comes from the CEO (Mann and Dvorak, 2016).

Today, organizations and leaders are focused on attracting and retaining top performers by offering new perks and designing flexible workplaces. However, organizations could be overlooking one crucial and easily executed strategy—employee recognition.

Data from a performance plan supported to an LMS training solution can be directly tied into employee incentives and recognition. Industry experts suggest taking a holistic approach. Look beyond pay and the usual benefits to the intangible rewards offered, such as career progression, learning and development, team spirit activities and flexible working arrangements (The New Rules of Engagement, n.d.). Organizations are encouraged to provide recognition that comes from leadership, managers and peers to improve overall employee engagement and satisfaction.

Summary

"Engaged workers clearly stand apart from their unengaged and actively disengaged counterparts through the discretionary effort they consistently bring to their roles. These employees willingly go the extra mile, work with passion and feel a profound connection to their company. They are the people who will drive innovation and move your business forward." (Reilly, 2014). Organizations that address engagement needs, such as flexible, relevant and timely training, can leap ahead of competition through the quality of their workforce. Embrace leadership responsibilities for the staff development, individual and communal, beginning with a strategic process that can be succinctly measured. This stands the best chance to lead to a powerful employee engagement initiative with a superior return-on-investment.

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About Pryor Learning Solutions

Fred Pryor Seminars and CareerTrack, divisions of Pryor Learning Solutions, Inc., create one of the most respected international providers of professional training. Since pioneering the one-day seminar in 1970, our organization has built a reputation for high-quality, convenient and practical business-skills training around the world, in every industry and sector. Our recent name change to Pryor Learning Solutions, Inc. better represents our full line of training which includes live seminars, online training and enterprise solutions.

Today, with more than 11 million satisfied customers, we continue to pride ourselves in providing the superior training you've come to expect. Our cutting-edge research and course development are designed to meet the adult learning needs of your employees and your organization.

At Pryor, we offer training for any learning type— in-person and through live seminars, online with videos, quizzes, e-books and webinars. Every learning style is an option based on the company and employee needs. As a cloud-based LMS, learning is three clicks and three days away from adoption of a learning plan.

Tracking and measurement can be cost-effective and simplified. Drive accountability and ROI with Pryor's advanced admin features. Admins can assign, track and report on training in real-time with single-click reports or export to Excel®. Learning objectives can be tied to professional development goals to more accurately gauge employee performance around review time.

With the Pryor LMS turnkey solution, businesses can be up and running quickly. Ongoing support and maintenance is covered. You can save money on resources and manpower to launch and train employees on how to use the system. Built-in custom marketing campaigns are available to aid in the launch and roll-out of company directed business goals. Pryoritize learning. Anytime, anywhere.

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