

12.10: Why Do Engagement Efforts Fail?

Learning Objectives

- Describe the reasons most engagement efforts fail

It is important to understand that employee engagement is a long game, not a short game. Engagement cannot be established overnight and cannot be developed as a quick and easy company initiative. As we have discussed in this module, there are a large number of components that contribute to engagement and it is important to carefully foster each one in order to see desirable results.



Most companies understand the importance of employee engagement, however, many have been unsuccessful in their efforts to improve engagement. So where is the disconnect? According to Bill Fotsch and John Case, *Forbes* contributors, there is one big missed opportunity: “There is no connection between engagement and results.”^[1] Fotsch and Case compare engagement to a sports scenario, explaining that if a team practices every day, knowing they will never play a game, they are less likely to be engaged. A team sport is appealing because each player competitively works together towards the same goal. If companies could harness this competitive spirit, instill it in the workplace, and work with their teams towards greater profitability, they would inevitably improve employee engagement. Most companies fail to focus on “winning” as a team and instead fall back on the idea that engagement is solely determined by employees’ perceptions of how they are treated.

In addition, Fotsch and Case argue that many companies place too much pressure on managers, holding them solely responsible for engagement. While it is accurate to say that managers directly impact employee engagement, it is not practical to put the weight of engagement all on their shoulders. Instead, it is important to consider policies and procedures in place that may need to be altered in order to more efficiently run daily tasks and processes. Many managers fail to paint a bigger picture for their team, which can scramble overall team goals and objectives, creating a confusing working environment, and having a negative impact on



engagement.

Incentive programs are also common practice at many companies. While incentive programs and competitions are great ways to spark interest and motivation, they oftentimes fizzle out. More times than not, incentive programs are short lived and lose their gusto sooner rather than later. Incentive programs are great for reaching short term goals but fail to improve long-term objectives, like engagement. Finally, engagement initiatives may fail because they are not properly vetted or supported. Having a pulse on the company and understanding the shortcomings of current company operations is essential to implementing an effective engagement plan.

? Practice Question

<https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/18194>

So, if engagement initiatives fail, what impact does that have on a company? Although some employees may appreciate the effort of implementing new initiatives, it can also lead to frustration when initiative after initiative fails. What happens when engagement is absent in the workplace? For starters, it can create a negative and pessimistic working environment. This leads to unhappy employees with low job satisfaction and lackluster productivity. A lack of employee engagement may result in higher turnover, lower profitability, and a poor organizational culture.

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1. Fotsch, Bill and John Case. "[Why Engagement Fails and What to Do About It](#)." Forbes. November 14, 2017. Accessed October 29, 2019. ↵

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