



Nastja Raabe (Coachdynamix): "In former times, working relationships had an underlying psychological contract that promised certainty and stability for engagement."

Management style

“Creativity and honesty”

Employee engagement is a key to success. Unfortunately, too many staff members are demotivated. The management style can improve the situation.

Vincent Ruck (interview), Olivier Minaire (photo)

Nastja Raabe, why is employee engagement so low? Is it really a management problem? “There is no easy answer to your question. Employee disengagement is solely a management problem. In work and organisational psychology, scientists have determined a number of reasons: fundamental changes in workplace stability that have occurred over time and further accelerated by the crisis is one. How employers and employees manage career development is another one. Nevertheless, disengagement is a phenomenon that is heavily influenced by a company’s management approach... and definitely one that companies must take a deep interest in. Several studies try to calculate the costs of employee disengagement, and we see a huge impact on the bottom-line. Therefore, we firmly believe that employee engagement needs to be a priority topic on the management agenda.

Has the recent crisis changed the employee behaviour? In hard times, you could get more committed to your company, to help it survive... “Crisis is a state of uncertainty and instability. People as much as companies in a crisis situation are


looking to find a position of stability again. Now, looking at your career and your workplace – what do you do? Yes, I agree, it is a perspective that one can take and probably many of the already engaged staff does. However, one crucial prerequisite is that one feels empowered to do so on the one hand, and sees a balance of what one gives and what one gets on the other hand. With the recent crisis, we entered a new era of working environments to which the old definitions of stability and certainty do no longer apply. And here we see a real challenge for managers. In former times, working relationships had an underlying psychological contract, as organisational psychology names it, that promised certainty and stability for engagement. It is obvious now that companies and managers can no longer guarantee such a thing and so a new engagement contract has to be defined.

Is it easy to make managers understand that their own behaviours must change to increase result? Aren’t they reluctant to look at their management style? “Has it ever been easy to understand that the only thing that we can change is our own thinking and behaviour? Once we understand this, we realise that it applies to every

aspect of our life. I believe most managers do understand that management behaviours and style need to be in line with company culture and defined values. And they do understand, that buy-in from everyone in a management position is needed as well as a clear and open communication.

To make this scenario work, we need managers, on all levels, that are willing to develop their soft skills as much as they are developing their technical skills.

In our experience from working with managers at all levels, over the course of many years now, we see that there is in general a willingness to work on or fine-tune their leadership behaviours and style. But people don’t know where to start and how to do this... and where to find appropriate support within their organisations. So it can imply a lot of ambiguity, depending on the environment. But it is a process that organisations will have to go through, starting with those individuals looking at their own behaviours and leadership style. Basically, I believe we need a lot of creativity and honesty in the way that we interact in workplace relationships.” ●

 You can read the full version of this interview on www.paperjam.lu

paperJam Business Club

Employee engagement

Research tells us that only a small number of employees are fully engaged and care about the future of their organisation. Managers need to develop their own leadership skills with the objective to positively impact the people around them to create and promote an atmosphere based on engagement. ●

Workshop: 11 October 8.30 a.m-1 p.m.

Registration: www.club.paperjam.lu

Speaker: Nastja Raabe (Coachdynamix).