



Article

The Engaged Employee – Why We Need Them NOW More Than Ever

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There is an often quoted account of President John F Kennedy's visit to the NASA space centre in 1962, whereby the President meets a janitor and asks, "What is it that you do?". The janitor replies "Mr President, I'm helping to put a man on the moon".

This apocryphal story underscores one of the characteristics of an engaged employee – someone who has a sense of purpose that is aligned with the organisation's mission.

It makes sense to us intuitively that truly great customer experience can only be delivered by fully engaged employees. In our last article my colleague Betty wrote about CX – the Customer Experience; As consumers we can tell when a smile is forced or whether or not a "thank you" is genuine. A mark of great service is "going the extra mile" – it's that element of service that makes the customer feel special and appreciated.

But today, with the current crisis, many employers are struggling to look after the customers they have, whilst trying to engage and motivate their employees who are forced to work from home. When we come out of the crisis, as consumers, we will remember those organisations that have helped us – and if that is what we as employers wish to see, then for both ethical and business reasons we need to redouble our efforts on employee engagement now.

So What Does Engagement Mean?

What do we mean by employee engagement, and what is a "fully engaged" employee?

At Invisio we have been measuring employee engagement for our clients for over 15 years, and we use a range of tried and tested techniques to gather information to help our clients increase the level of engagement, ultimately delivering happier customers and a healthier bottom line.

A widely used model of engagement is that a fully engaged employee:

- Speaks positively about the organisation
- Is committed to the organisation over the long term
- Is motivated to go the extra mile

This is known as the "Say, Stay, Strive" model of employee engagement. It's just one of the standard measures of engagement that our clients use in their employee surveys. And as the story of the NASA janitor reminds us, it's also important that people understand how their efforts contribute to the organisation's goals.

Not every employee is fully engaged at any one time in any organisation. However, with a structured approach to measuring and managing employee engagement, our clients have seen consistent (and sometimes dramatic) improvements over time.

Why Employee Engagement?

Positive outcomes associated with improved employee engagement include reduced employee turnover, increased profitability, and of course the delivery of a superior customer experience. The Temkin Group (recently acquired by Qualtrics*) reports "Companies that outpace their competitors in CX have 50% more engaged employees than those with CX that lags their peers". When this dynamic is set up a virtuous cycle is established – an engaged workforce delivers a better customer experience, creating a stronger and more profitable organisation, which can in turn invest further in its workforce and customer experience.

Employee Experience Drives Engagement

At Invisio we help our clients measure their levels of employee engagement and the wider employee experience through our employee surveys. It's important to differentiate between employee experience (EX) and employee engagement. All of the elements of employee experience – communication, learning and development, manager feedback, and many others – combine to produce the outcome that is employee engagement.

A **baseline survey** to establish measures around the current employee experience is an important first step. However this is just the beginning of the process. Our analytical methods allow us to identify what the key drivers of employee engagement are – these are the EX levers that management need to understand in order to increase engagement in their organisation. We work closely with our clients to help them on their journey towards improved employee engagement. Over the longer term we then reiterate the survey process to see in quantitative terms what the effect of management's interventions have been. Through our structured and consultative approach, we have seen hugely positive results for clients in many sectors, large and small.

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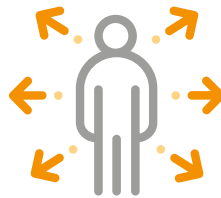
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