



Are Your Employees Committed, Compliant Or Complacent?

By Bob McKenzie

Gaining commitment from employees should be the primary goal of every company. Once a spirit of allegiance is achieved, employees become motivated to fulfilling the organization's mission while working towards achieving its vision. What better competitive advantage is there than employees who are devoted to the company and work toward attaining or even surpassing the company goals and objectives?

Trust is the most important ingredient to gaining commitment from employees. Employees must feel that top management has the ability to continually balance the best interests of all of the stakeholders of the organization. Stakeholders include customers, employees, vendors and shareholders. Truly good leaders understand that trust is a two-way street – it must be earned and it must be shared.

Conversely, distrust of the leadership also causes distrust among co-workers. Instead of cooperation and teamwork, competition between departments becomes the primary focus. In this environment, employees become compliant. They do what they are told in the manner in which they were told to do it. Over time, compliance turns into uncaring complacency as employees see no purpose to their efforts. In this stage, they come to work and go through the motions just to collect a paycheck every week.

Another important ingredient is employees must truly believe they are providing a worthwhile product or service to the customer. They must know that their work is vital to the overall success of the organization. In this way they will have a sense of accomplishment and feel that what they do matters.

It is also critical that employees trust each other. Trust in the other employees and performing work that matters are the two things that must be accomplished to gain employees who are committed to the cause. This, in turn, results in employees who are hard working and passionate about their work and their employer. Other benefits include lower turnover, fewer employee problems or issues, a higher degree of teamwork and cooperation, lower operating and labor costs, higher customer satisfaction and the ability to attract and retain the best and the brightest talent available.

Committed, compliant or complacent - which type of employee do you want in your organization?



Author

Bob McKenzie has 25 years of Human Resources Management experience. His background includes a wide range of hands-on HR practices including training and development, Equal Employment Opportunity, Affirmative Action Plan Development, development of compensation programs, performance management systems, recruitment, employee relations, union avoidance and labor contract negotiation. His working experience encompasses the manufacturing, banking, financial services, transportation, government, managed care, information technology and theme park industries.

He is president of McKenzie & Company, a human resources management firm specializing in the implementation of effective employee relations practices and management and supervisory development. He relies upon his experience in human resources and knowledge of a variety of industries in the development of employee effectiveness programs and delivery of training programs.

Bob is a graduate of Rider University where he received a Bachelor of Science in Commerce Degree and double majored in Industrial Relations and Organizational Behavior. He currently is a member of the Society for Human Resources Management, World at Work and serves on the board of directors of the Northeast Chapter of the Easter Seals. He formerly was a board member of the Jacksonville Quality Exchange and the Human Resources Association of Broward County (HRABC), Florida. With HRABC, he facilitated the Human Resources Certification Institute study group that prepared participants for the PHR and SPHR certification examinations.