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Train to engage

THE L&OD DEPARTMENT HAS A MAJOR ROLE TO PLAY IN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT, SAYS DR SANDEEP GANDHI



>> Sandeep Gandhi

→ The one thing that creates sustainable competitive advantage over a period of time is an organisation's workforce - the people who make a company. In pursuit of competitive edge where employees are the key differentiator, well-engaged employees are a key success parameter.

Investing in employees generates a certain amount of loyalty from them in ways that include commitment to quality work and commitment to both internal and external

customers, which are two indicators of the business' ability to remain relevant. Employees are the brand ambassadors of the organisation. With continuous engagement through insightful and inspiring ways, organisations can mobilise their skills and energies to achieve specific business goals.

In organisations where training is considered a luxury, employees rarely see the value and will resist participating in training sessions. On the other hand, organisations that consider themselves 'learning organisations' have employees who expect them to invest in their development. These

employees also expect to repay that investment by helping the business continue to grow and increase its position in the market. Thus, when training is viewed as a strategic and necessary investment, it is a win-win situation!

If training and development is to make a significant impact on employee engagement, employees must see the benefits to themselves in undertaking training activities. The answer is to link training and development to specific objectives and the only way to make this work effectively is for managers to have one-on-one conversations with their people about the purpose of training and what's in it for them. Asking people what they think they need and setting specific learning objectives is crucial at this stage.

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THERE IS NO 'ONE SIZE FITS ALL' APPROACH AND NO MASTER MODEL FOR SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT. HOWEVER, THERE ARE FOUR COMMON THEMES THAT EMERGE:

- **PROVIDING A STRONG STRATEGY** - EMPOWERING LEADERSHIP, PROVIDING A STRONG NARRATIVE ABOUT THE ORGANISATION WHERE IT'S COME FROM AND WHERE IT'S GOING;
- **EMPLOYEE VOICE** - FOR REINFORCING AND CHALLENGING VIEWS, BETWEEN FUNCTIONS AND EXTERNALLY;
- **HIGH INTEGRITY** - THE VALUES ON THE WALL ARE REFLECTED IN DAY TO DAY BEHAVIOURS. THERE IS NO 'SAY-DO' GAP;
- **FOCUS ON PEOPLE** - ENGAGING MANAGERS WHO TREAT THEIR PEOPLE AS INDIVIDUALS AND COACH THEM. HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IS THE KEY.