Leadership Matters

Why Being Accessible and Appreciative Can Make or Break the Employee Experience

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Presented by Rymax

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Executive Summary

According to the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM), "employee engagement" is a term that relates to the level of an employee's commitment and connection to an organization, which is considered a critical driver leading to higher levels of productivity and overall business success in today's competitive marketplace.

While employees may appear engaged in what they do daily, that does not necessarily translate to job satisfaction, overall happiness or long-term commitment to the organization, all factors that can impact productivity, turnover and return.

Our studies have revealed a correlation between leadership that regularly provided employees with feedback, recognition and appreciation, and a greater level of satisfied, engaged and committed employees.

This report highlights the key findings of the surveys conducted and further analyzes this link between leadership and a positive employee experience. This link is critical to a company's retention rate and ultimately, its bottom line.

Survey Background

200 respondents from across the United States participated in two separate surveys conducted by Rymax. These surveys were designed and performed to measure the correlation between employees' view of leadership in their current organizations and how accessibility and recognition from management impacted employee engagement and satisfaction levels. **Millennials and Gen-Z** made up the majority of the respondents, with **over a third of all participants** indicating they were between the ages of **18-29**, followed closely by the **30-44** age group.

Key Findings

When it comes to employees feeling engaged at work...

Nearly ¼ of respondents **complained** about the environment, saying that their job had an **unfriendly** or **unfulfilling** atmosphere. While **⅓** of respondents said that what they **disliked most** about their job was the **senior leadership** and **upper management,** showing that leadership and communication matter.

When asked what they **admired most** about their boss, **almost half** of respondents said that they admire that their boss is **collaborative, appreciative, and honest.** This includes things like saying 'Thank you' and providing input and feedback.

When asked what they **disliked most** about their boss, **52%** of respondents indicated that their boss **provides no direction or objectives.** This shows how clear communication and feedback is important to employees.

When asked, **41%** of respondents said that they feel like upper management is **accessible** and that it makes a difference in how engaged they feel at work. Engagement with management is critical and employees want to the shared feedback and input.

When asked to choose the **three traits valued most** in a leadership team,

94% of respondents said **honesty**,

93% said **clear communication**

73% said **gratitude** and **appreciation** for employees.

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There is an obvious connection between a strong leader and a positive employee experience. Employees seek management that is accessible. Further, leadership that is honest, collaborative and provides clear goals, directives and feedback, is a priority for today's employee.

But, when it comes to recognition...

More than a third of all respondents indicated that **receiving verbal or public recognition** from their manager **would motivate them** to work hard, while **half of all respondents** indicated that receiving verbal or **public recognition** from their manager and **frequent merchandise rewards** of their choosing **would motivate them.**

76% of people who don't remember when they last were recognized find it important to hear their boss say "thank you."

31% of people who find it important to hear "thank you" don't remember the last time they were recognized.

87% of all respondents said it's important that their managers say, "thank you". More than ½ of those respondents said "thank you" was critical to their happiness at the company.

25% of respondents **don't remember** the last time they were **recognized** in some way by their **manager or peers.**

15% of respondents say that after the work day they feel **valued** and **respected**, with **more than a ¼** saying that they feel **"deflated"** after the work day.

When asked how they liked to be recognized, almost **85%** said they prefer receiving either verbal affirmations and/or rewards of some kind.

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69%

of respondents said that if they were rewarded at work for their efforts they would feel more appreciated and motivated.

Along with **accessible and honest leadership,** many respondents also indicated that management that encouraged an interactive work environment with peer-to-peer recognition that bolstered comradery was important to them in their both their current and future roles. This further drives the point that **employees value personal connection and interaction with management and peers.**

When asked **what they loved most about their job**, **48%** of respondents said the **friendly, fulfilling atmosphere** and **36%** answered **their colleagues**. This shows how much **employees value people and connection in the workplace.**

When asked **what they looked for in seeking their next role, 72%** of respondents indicated they are looking for an environment where **employees are respected, valued and rewarded.**

> “...employees value personal connection and interaction with management and peers.”

Conclusion

Strong leadership and accessible management that cultivates a supportive, collaborative environment is not only something employees crave but is also what they need to stay engaged and motivated to perform. Leadership that is visible, available and frequently provides clear direction, feedback and recognition is what makes or breaks an employee's engagement level, productivity and overall happiness while at work. Without management that is available to employees and leadership that promotes recognition and appreciation, employees lack motivation and feel deflated which can lead to higher turnover and have a negative impact on a company's bottom line. Ultimately, employees today are happy to work and eager to contribute, but poor leadership and lack of recognition proves to be the disconnect between engaged and disengaged employees.

About Rymax:

Rymax is a full-service loyalty marketing organization that has created and executed award-winning recognition and incentive programs for over 20 years. Rymax provides strategic, customized programs and events designed to maximize business growth, engage employees, motivate sales teams and increase customer retention, through brand name rewards. As the largest direct brand manufacturers' representative in the country, Rymax offers more than 15,000 premium reward options, from over 400 of the world's most sought-after brands.

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