

# The role of the manager in employee engagement

Technicians join companies but quit managers. Learn how to prevent disengagement.

If you have ever lost a good employee and wondered what you could have done to prevent it, I suggest you keep reading this month. There is a tremendous amount of information out there on hiring and recruiting but very little on how to hold on to them for decades. As if that wasn't bad enough, the Millennials who represent almost half of the workforce need to be treated very differently than Generation X and Y associates. This month, I'll tell you about training I had recently that I believe will help every shop owner in North America and Canada. I tried it out on my very first 20 Group I created 15 years ago, and they agreed unanimously.

## Engagement vs. disengagement

Actively engaged employees represent only 5 to 15 percent of our workforce, engaged typically run at 20 to 25 percent of employees, somewhat engaged 35 to 50 percent and actively disengaged 5 to 15 percent of your employees. The last category are the ones who have already quit, but they haven't told you yet!

Disengagement looks like no focus,

tardiness, low productivity and initiative. Engagement looks like people loving what they do and looking forward to coming to work. Highly engaged shops have 40 percent less turnover, 21 percent more profitability and average 20 percent annual revenue growth. You cannot afford to lose any of the good ones.

**MANAGERS MUST CREATE THE CONDITIONS WHERE PEOPLE WANT TO COME TO WORK BY CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT TO COMMUNICATE.**

## Culture vs. engagement

Many have realized culture is a very important asset to help people want to work at your business. The problem is that your people can be culturally aligned but not engaged! Culture is how things are done around your business. Engagement is individual, between each person and the company.

Also, employee satisfaction does not necessarily mean engagement. Employee satisfaction is just an attitude, but employee engagement is a behavior!

## New models for confronting disengagement

Most management theory was developed around companies that were built and prospered in an era of labor abundance. Leadership 101, I will call it, placed emphasis on the role of the leader within a workplace hierarchy, with specific regard to rewards and punishment. Leadership 201 was more focused on relationships, but still relied on hierarchy, and the leader came across more like a disciplinarian than a trusted colleague. Leadership 301 now is more focused on the whole workplace ecosystem, including the quality of social interactions necessary to create a positive, safe and productive work environment. Does the leader do things *to* employees or *with* employees?

## The role of the manager on engagement

Owners should drive culture while the managers drive engagement. While a shop might have a great culture that owners have worked years to create, if your employees work under a manager who is not using Leadership 301 skills, your people are not going to feel the positive impact of the shop's culture. Managers must create the conditions where people want to come to work by creating a safe environment to communicate. They must give validation and recognition while listening well. They

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need to lead by example while encouraging and mentoring others.

The ATI model is to first help you understand what employee engagement looks like. Next, you need to measure it, because if you can't measure it you can't manage it.

So start aligning your people by two-way communication, not one-way. Quite often surveys suggest employees want more communication while owners feel like they are sharing their vision and goals completely. The problem is you are not always letting your employees communicate what they want and need.

Then there is the subject of growth and development. Do your employees feel you're investing your time and money in helping them grow? Are you interested in helping them get where they want to be in their life? If you are not, there is a shop owner or manager out there willing to put forth the effort.

Are you and your manager delivering the recognition needed to continually motivate them to succeed? Recognition is much more than monthly or annual awards! It needs to occur daily when your people are doing things right and succeeding in their job.

It's time for your managers and you to build relationships with all your people and create trust so they can accomplish their goals by working for you over decades, not just a few years. I realize they are not all like us, and that makes it more challenging than befriending the

ones that are like us!

To help you along, you could follow some advice from me: "Where your mind goes your ass will follow!" I am sure I will take some heat for that famous quote; however, simply begin focusing your mind on two-way communication, growth, recognition and trust with your people.

If you would like a few sample questions to help you deliver better one-on-ones with your people that will help you deliver better employee engagement, simply go to [www.ationlinetraining.com/2019-03](http://www.ationlinetraining.com/2019-03) for a limited time. Give it a try — you'll be happy when you see 40 percent less turnover and 21 percent more profit! **ZZ**

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**CHRIS "CHUBBY" FREDERICK** is the CEO and founder of the Automotive Training Institute. ATI's 130 full-time associates train and coach more than 1,500

shop owners every week across North America to drive profits and dreams home to their families. Our full-time coaches have helped our members earn over 1 BILLION DOLLARS in a return on their coaching investment since ATI was founded.

[chubby@autotraining.net](mailto:chubby@autotraining.net)



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