

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND EAP

Much is written and discussed about employee engagement with scores of books, blogs, discussions groups and assessment tools. High levels of engagement are associated with a healthy bottom line, a satisfying work environment and continuous growth and development.

Engagement factors include; overall job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover, customer satisfaction, relationships at work, unit and organizational performance, supervisory relationship, autonomy, decision making influence, communication, trust, clear understanding of mission /vision, recognition, and decision making influence.



Engaged employees are proactive and expand their skills and their thinking as the job expands. Employees also connect with the intrinsic value in their work and the personal meaning derived from the work. The connection of employee self fulfillment and organizational goals is an important building block in the engagement process. When these factors come together employees adapt well to change, demonstrate resilience and are less likely to leave the job. As a result, the bottom line grows while turnover, absenteeism, and illness decline.

Studies have shown that these intrinsic workplace factors are nearly **twice** as important as extrinsic rewards (e.g., pay, benefits)! The role of management is clear in establishing the trust, recognition, direction, asking for employee input and establishing a healthy culture.

The Data

A Towers Perrin study found that companies with high level of engagement out performed companies with lower level of engaged employees in the following parameters:

- Operating income
- Net income growth
- Earnings per share

In addition, the Canadian research found a strong link between these implications and the role of EAP. Companies with an EAP showed the following:

- 9% lower levels of employee anxiety, dissatisfaction, and turnover;
- 8% higher levels of fair compensation
- 5% higher levels of growth and development opportunities; and
- 4% higher levels of meaningful work.

An employer's bottom line is significantly affected by disengagement. The *100 Best Companies to Work For in America* have dramatically higher operating performance, return on assets, and cumulative stock returns. Costs associated with disengagement increase with the emergence of stress and mental health issues – in fact, **depression accounts for more absences than back pain**,
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cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes, and other mental health conditions. EAPs are available to address the mental health issues that will ultimately build employee awareness of stress, burnout, disengagement, and depression. Addressing these concerns **early** prevents burnout and disengagement from becoming the established workplace norm.

Implications

Employers who create **engaging workplaces are also highly likely to provide EAP benefits to their employees.** The presence of an EAP as an available option contributes to employee involvement, increases performance and satisfaction, and retention. By enabling employees to care for themselves inside and outside of the workplace, a healthy bottom line is achieved.

In this difficult financial climate engaged employees are vital in navigating through this period of change and challenge. They will be the more resilient and committed employees who will remain involved and committed. **High levels of engagement can only occur when employees are not distracted by personal, work/life and health concerns.** An effective full service EAP and medical care advocacy program can provide the information, support and resources to help employees resolve these issues so they don't affect their performance and engagement.

In addition, the role of management in establishing the climate that allows engagement to take root and flourish is an integral part of the equation. Studies show that non-engaged employees most often cite their manager as the reason for their disengagement. **A full service EAP helps the organization by assisting managers at all levels with performance management concerns and providing the consultation to help them manage effectively.** Consistent performance by managers that supports their efforts to provide a trusting workplace providing clear vision, direction, listens to employee input and provides recognition will ultimately lower turnover and contribute to higher levels of engagement.

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