

ACTIONS YOU CAN IMPLEMENT TODAY TO BUILD A HIGH PERFORMANCE WORK ENVIRONMENT

BY BILL HOGG

This is the sixth and final article in our series that looks at Building a High Performance Work Environment. The full series will be available for download as a white paper once it is completed.

In the previous article we discussed the [seven steps for creating behaviour and performance expectations that drive employee engagement](#). This article will outline a number of actions that you can immediately implement in your company.

Success starts and ends with the people in your organization. When your team is managed effectively and clearly understand their role and what is expected of them, good things happen. Good leadership shapes behaviour and increases an individual's level of engagement.

Actions you can implement to increase performance in your company

There are a number of actions that leaders can implement to communicate that people are valued and create a high performance environment.

1. Make your team aware of company purpose and goals

People want to be part of something. This is why it is important for you to include the entire organization in what you are trying to accomplish. Share your purpose and goals with the team and make it clear to them the importance of their role in helping achieve your shared objectives.

This should be accomplished through regular conversations with your team. It is not a "set it and forget it" task. Regularly reinforce why people are valuable and how they will be recognized if they demonstrate desired behaviours and results.

You should make your team aware of company goals through daily conversations as well as internal communications, newsletters, during meetings, and when they take part on training activities.

2. Share information openly

Transparency is essential. Answering the question *why* and sharing information with your team about why they are asked to perform certain actions and how their role in the company contributes from a big picture perspective will help them frame things in their own mind. The better understanding a person has of the impact their role has, the more engaged they will be in that role -- especially if they feel they are making a difference.

3. Promote open dialogue

Directing from above and not being open to input from employees will not inspire your team. Be open and actively create a 2-way dialogue about topics, issues, and processes within the company. For this to be

HIGH PERFORMANCE ENVIRONMENTS ARE ONLY POSSIBLE WHEN PEOPLE FEEL THEY ARE A VALUED MEMBER OF THE TEAM.

WHEN THEY BELIEVE WHAT THEY DO CONTRIBUTES TO THE OVERALL SUCCESS OF THE COMPANY THEY ARE WILLING TO GO ABOVE AND BEYOND.

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most effective, the effort must be intentional. It should be planned and not happen by happenstance or in passing.

This can be accomplished by using a comment form on your company intranet, a simple suggestion box, or through informal kitchen table discussions.

4. Build engagement through creative thinking

Engaged employees will deliver better results. They will go above and beyond and will consistently look for new ways to achieve desired results more efficiently. This is why it is important to encourage creative thinking and strategic risk-taking. You need to create intentional opportunities to make innovation part of the organization.

Enhancing engagement, promoting creative thinking and encouraging strategic risk-taking can be as simple as making time to regularly talk to employees about their ideas. Or you could make it more structured by creating a process for submitting new ideas for the company.

5. Encourage and offer feedback and recognition

Feedback is an essential component of a high performance environment. Be willing to listen to what your employees have to say and consistently provide positive feedback to your team about how they are doing. Frequent feedback keeps people engaged. Provide updates about achievements, progress, developments, and reinforce your vision for the company.

Recognition, when done properly, is the most powerful tool for building an engaged work environment. So when you thank your team, make sure that it follows the 4 essential elements of effective recognition; frequent, timely, specific and relevant. Empty *thank you's* come across as insincere and quickly lose their meaning. So make sure that you tell your team why they are being thanked. Be as specific as possible.

Focusing on these actions will assist in the development of a high performance environment. Clearly communicating your company vision and goals, and including employees in internal conversations through feedback channels will give them the incentive to go above and beyond in the role and help your company build a high performance work environment.

See the full set of articles in our High Performance Work Environment series by visiting www.BillHogg.ca/resources/articles/.

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Bill is the "just do it" guy who has walked in your shoes. Senior leaders at organizations like Anheuser-Busch InBev, The Bay, Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, Pita Pit, RBH, State Farm Insurance, Toronto International Film Festival and ServiceOntario hire Bill to navigate change and influence and inspire higher performing teams that deliver exceptional customer service, higher productivity and improve profits.

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