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Positive Organizations: Offering Positive Psychology in Organizations

Workers today want more than a job and a mere paycheck, even during this pandemic. They want meaning, purpose, growth, and to feel good about their work. A Positive Psychology Program helps organizations realize these goals—transforming them into inspiring, purpose-driven workplaces that employees are excited to be a part of.

When you wake up in the morning and get ready for work (perhaps at your kitchen table nowadays), how do you feel?

Do you feel excited, energized, and eager to start your day? Or do you feel anxious, a sense of dread, and/or deflated?

No doubt you didn't have to think long about your answer, but it's an important question. We spend most of our waking hours at our job, and as workloads and workdays increase, we spend more time with our co-workers than with our families.

Having a demanding job that we dislike can negatively impact every aspect of our lives:

- **We have no time or energy for those who matter most to us. And when we do, we're not present, harming our marriages and relationships with our children.**
- **Our stress levels skyrocket, creating chronic stress. This severely impacts our mental and physical health, ranging from depression to heart problems.**
- **We have little time for enjoyable activities and interests that could provide some stress relief.**
- **Working excessive overtime causes burnout, fatigue, and reduced productivity.**

A Peek into Work Satisfaction

Given that our work directly impacts our quality of life, a survey of employee satisfaction is instructive.

In 2019, Gallup found that 52% of employees surveyed were "not engaged," meaning they were satisfied but not mentally or emotionally connected to their work or their workplace. They showed up and did the minimum amount required, but were looking for other opportunities and would jump at a better offer.

Meanwhile, 13% of employees were "actively disengaged," miserable, unproductive, and venting while at work.

Now, if you're in senior management or human resources, these findings should alarm you.

Here are the top reasons why employees are disengaged and unhappy:

- Stunted professional growth. Frustration sets in when employees see no further advancement or development opportunities— they're no longer challenged or gaining new skills.
- Bad leadership. Tyrannical or unqualified leaders kill any incentive employees have to show up for work.

- Over-managed. Micro-managers with no boundaries undermine morale and employee initiative.
- Poor work-life balance.
- A toxic work environment. When dissenting viewpoints aren't tolerated and staff cut each other down to get ahead, employees feel alienated.
- Feeling unappreciated. Staff who work tirelessly with little recognition feel demoralized.
- Under-paid. If employee workloads are increasing but their pay remains stagnant, it's hard not to feel resentful.
- A mismatch between personal and company values.

Even though unemployment rates have hit historic levels due to the pandemic, feeling lucky to have a job won't be enough to retain high quality employees. Moreover, enticing benefits won't inspire employees in the long-run.

High Performers with a Purpose

So, what is an "engaged" employee?

Employees who are enthusiastic, committed, and deeply connected to their workplace.

These employees drive productivity and innovation and attract new customers, significantly increasing company profitability. These individuals are also overall healthier and avoid burnout.

High performers are continually pursuing purpose and professional development. Any company willing to invest in their future generates loyalty and attracts other talented professionals, exponentially increasing profitability.

Engaging Moves

Thankfully, companies with poor employee engagement are not doomed!

Several organizations have taken deliberate steps to boost employee enthusiasm and commitment to their work and workplace, fostering high achievement.

The most critical factor is to create an organizational culture that emphasizes employee growth and development.

Yet, organizations fear that once they invest in their employees, they'll leave for another company. It certainly happens. However, organizations that undertake this culture shift—outlined below—encourage employee commitment and mitigate turnover.

Be the Change

First, the culture shift must be endorsed by top leadership. The process begins with defining the organization's purpose and brand. Employee development is then designed to align with both so that staff see how their contributions impact the company and customers.

Leadership must drive the initiative through action. It must develop a short and long-term development plan, commit resources to its execution, and demonstrate the new, engaged culture in behavior and attitude. Other employees will model this comportment, helping to drive the change.

Strength Training

Research has found that direct managers play the greatest factor in whether employees are engaged. Specifically, they determine whether staff use their strengths in their work activities, provide recognition for good work, and give performance feedback.

During the culture shift, managers are therefore trained to become mentors, identifying their subordinates' strengths and providing coaching.

Ultimately, having the opportunity to understand oneself, discover strengths, and develop and use them puts employees in a position to thrive. In turn, they are engaged, achieve higher performance, and are unlikely to leave.

The Positive Psychology Approach

The steps we've discussed reflect the work of positive psychology. This science addresses individual well-being, happiness, and fulfillment. And when applied to the workplace, it's called positive organizational psychology. It enables companies and employees to grow and succeed by understanding how staff thrive and what creates work environments that support optimal outcomes.

A Positive Psychology Program

A Positive Psychology Program provides the framework for senior leadership and human resources to transform their company into a positive organization that maximizes employees' growth, fulfillment, and performance.

There are a few programs that specialize in this area. They employ positive psychology's emphasis on self-awareness to reveal employee strengths and interests, purpose and meaning to find fulfillment, and mindfulness to be aware of the emotional environment that leaders create.

A Positive Psychology Certificate Jump-Starts Transformation

Positive organizations are created from the top down. This means that everyone from senior leaders to managers are integral in transforming your workplace into a positive organization. A Positive Psychology Certificate will empower your team to plan and implement each step of the transition.

The School of Positive Transformation's certificate program is rooted in scientifically-tested methods and tools taught by the world's leading scholar in positive organizational psychology, Kim Cameron, PhD.

A Positive Psychology Certificate trains you in three important practices (and more!) that create positive organizations.

1. Positive Leadership. Leaders are in powerful positions of influence and significantly affect a working environment through their attitude, behavior, and emotions. Positive emotions are a contagion that leaders can spread, which improves cooperation, reduces conflict, and enhances team performance.

By equally focusing on the strengths and abilities of their staff, leaders inspire a positive, optimistic environment that makes everyone feel good about their work and how they contribute to the organization's mission.

2. Positive Energy. Positive energy is described as vitality and good feelings that predict an organization and employee's success. Leaders and managers can use positive energy to motivate their team, unlock their potential, and create the space to blossom.

Research has also shown that high energizers are high performers. In fact, it is a significant factor in employee performance and can be cultivated through meditation, compassion, gratitude, and prayer.

Positive energy is shared, building close relationships, and is nurtured through positive feedback during coaching sessions.

3. Mindfulness. Like leaders, managers must remain aware of the emotional atmosphere they are creating and take time to recoup if they are feeling stressed or anxious.

Employees also benefit from a mindfulness practice. They are an active participant in charting their career path by reflecting on what they are passionate about and what activities energize them.

Having It All

Building a positive workplace takes concerted effort throughout the organization. Yet, gaining buy-in is simple when leadership clarifies the organizational mission and brand, leaders exude positive energy, and managers become supportive coaches, nurturing talent.

A strength-based development culture gives you the best of both worlds: creating a deeply fulfilling personal life and a vibrant, effective organization!

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