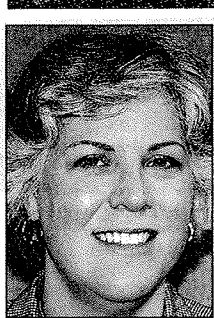


## WORKPLACE MATTERS

# Workers who are engaged, not just satisfied, are more productive

**“B**eware of the satisfied work force”, says Ken Dychtwald, author of “Workforce Crisis: How to Beat the Coming Shortage of Skills and Talent.” Dychtwald says



**Robin Onaclea**

employee satisfaction and employee engagement are separate concepts.

Satisfaction relates to having adequate pay and benefits and no major problems in the workplace.

Engagement is about passion, commitment and a connection to the company that inspires greater effort. A high

level of employee engagement correlates with significantly higher productivity, better customer service, reduced turnover and increased loyalty.

“Employees who feel appreciated and valued respond with increased output, efficiency and loyalty” observes local business owner Ken Koenig. Ken and Patrish Koenig, owners of Wise Woman Herbals in Creswell, have nurtured a high level of engagement in their employees by offering ongoing training and development opportunities for their staff.

“Our employees know we value them because of our investment in their professional development,” Ken Koenig said.

Aside from regular formal training opportunities, Wise Woman Herbals offers a monthly “Lunch and Learn” with a catered lunch. The Koenigs also

credit a variety of perks such as birthday gift certificates, on-site massage, and regular potluck lunches for keeping employees happy and connected.

At Umpqua Bank, one of the keys to employee engagement is a culture of empowerment, said Gary Pierpoint, chairman of the Umpqua Bank Lane County Advisory Board. Every employee is empowered to assist any customer. Umpqua supports a fun, innovative work environment and begins each day with a “Motivational Moment.” A different employee prepares a one-to-two minute motivational presentation daily, and it really helps everyone start each day truly focused, Pierpoint said.

Linda Dagg, director of the Eugene Contact Center for Enterprise Rent-a-Car, emphasizes the importance of a strong employee-manager relationship. Enterprise provides formal training for its managers on how to keep employees actively engaged. Each management trainee learns best practices to recognize signs of disengagement.

“Managers take the time to learn about and share personal information with each employee, such as spouse and kids’ names, hobbies, interests, personal goals,” Dagg said. “Our managers are held accountable for their employees’ development, and may offer up to four hours of classroom training to improve their skills and job knowledge.”

Enterprise also believes that employees need to receive clear communication of managers’ expectations and goals. Managers have monthly performance meetings with each team member and discuss progress towards achieving career path metrics and

goals. Regular coaching and feedback happens daily.

Given the state of the current economy, the good news is that increasing engagement in your organization doesn’t have to be an expensive proposition. Based on numerous studies in recent years, common elements in companies with high levels of employee engagement include:

- ◆ A positive relationship with a manager or supervisor. This was consistently ranked as one of the strongest drivers of engagement.
- ◆ An atmosphere of trust and integrity.
- ◆ Mentally stimulating work.
- ◆ An understanding of how an employee’s work contributes to the company’s performance.
- ◆ Clear career growth and advancement opportunities.
- ◆ A feeling of pride in working for the company.
- ◆ Positive relationships with co-workers or a team.
- ◆ Regular opportunities for skill development.

To find out more about employee engagement, check out Dychtwald’s book or other books on the subject including: “Love ’em or Lose ’em: Getting Good People to Stay” by Beverly Kaye and Sharon Jordan-Evans and “Employee Engagement: The People First Approach to Building a Business” by David Croston.

*If you have questions about training your work force, contact Robin Onaclea, business service coordinator at Lane Workforce Partnership, at [robino@laneworkforce.org](mailto:robino@laneworkforce.org) or (541) 682-7224.*