Employee Focus Abstracts

What We Have Learned: Five Elements That Drive Engagement

David Dye

Employee engagement is a business imperative for leaders at all levels – and no longer something to be measured just once a year by taking a look in the rear-view mirror. Why? Today's workplace is rapidly shifting- the workplace, the worker, and the actual work itself have changed significantly over the past few years in the Federal government.

Our research suggests we need a new approach to engagement, a focus on teams supported by real-time and continuous "pulsing" to learn when and where people feel engaged or disengaged. We have uncovered five major elements (and 20 underlying strategies) that work together to make organizations and agencies "irresistible." In this session, we will highlight how these 20 factors fit together in a whole system of engagement – one that is held together through culture. Building a simply irresistible organization requires three things: to **think big, start small, and act now.**

As we convene to produce a research agenda to guide future studies and policy, we must ask ourselves new questions:

- How do we shift so engagement adopts an "always on" approach?
- How can federal agencies build a "simply irresistible organization"?
- What will happen if we continue to only measure engagement once a year?
- Where can federal agencies start to refine engagement?

Understanding the Drivers of Employee Engagement among Federal Employees: An Analysis of FEVS data

T. Lorraine Latimore Jones

The importance of developing and sustaining an engaged, innovative, and productive Federal workforce has been widely recognized. For example, one key objective of the People and Culture Cross Agency Priority (CAP) Goal of the President's Management Agenda is to improve employee engagement Government-wide, as measured by the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey's (FEVS) Employee Engagement Index (EEI), to

67 percent by 2016. Additionally, as part of their annual performance plans and appraisals, members of the Senior Executive Service (SES) are being held responsible for improving employee engagement within their organizations. Since research on both private- and public-sector organizations has consistently shown engagement can affect employees' attitudes, levels of absenteeism and turnover, productivity, as well as organizational performance (Corporate Leadership Council, 2004; Shuck & Rocco, 2011; Soane et al., 2013; Taylor, 2012), the emphasis on strengthening employee engagement across the Federal workforce is not only understandable but also crucial. The work of Federal employees touches upon the lives of millions and impacts the Government's ability to efficiently and effectively meet the needs of the American public, ranging from providing basic services to protecting the nation's security.

While employee engagement is especially important for the Federal government, few empirical analyses have been conducted that would help guide and inform agency leaders about which actions to take to strengthen engagement. Using multiple regression analysis of FEVS data, we analyzed the effect of nine different factors on the EEI. These nine factors were: 1) Performance Feedback; 2) Collaborative Management; 3) Merit System Principles; 4) Employee Training and Development; 5) Work/Life Balance; 6) Job Resources; 7) Performance Recognition and Reward; 8) Performance Rating; and 9) Supportive Coworkers. We also examined the factors that drive the EEI for different groups that make up the Federal workforce. Our findings and their implications for policy are discussed.

Turnover Intention and Actual Turnover: Who Follows Through and Why?

John Marvel

We examine whether federal employees who intend to leave their jobs actually follow through. We combine individual-level data from the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) with data on employees' individual-level turnover behavior 1 year, 2 years, and 5 years after their response to the FEVS' turnover intention survey item. We then estimate parallel models of turnover intention and actual turnover and explore how they differ. Comparing these between-model results helps us identify factors that push individuals to follow through on their turnover intentions.