

Talent Management

Employers That Stop at Engagement May Fail to Foster a Passionate Workforce

When employers focus on engagement and related metrics, they can overlook the value of employee passion, according to an Oct. 8 report from Deloitte's Center for the Edge.

"Passion at work: Cultivating worker passion as a cornerstone of talent development," which featured survey responses from approximately 3,000 U.S. workers, reveals that only 12 percent of the U.S. workforce exhibits all of the attributes of a passionate employee, or what the report refers to as a worker with the "Passion of the Explorer."

"Passion of the Explorer," as defined by the study, means an employee is committed to having an increasing impact on the industry or profession; embraces challenges as opportunities to learn and get stronger; and seeks to build strong, trust-based relationships, Deloitte said.

John Hagel, director at Deloitte Consulting LLP and co-chairman of the Center for the Edge, told Bloomberg BNA Oct. 8 that one of the challenges in talking about employee passion is that organizations don't understand what it is.

"I think the core challenge is getting executives to realize that in a world of mounting performance pressure, passion is critical to driving sustained extreme performance improvement, and I don't think most executives believe that at this point. If anything, they are suspicious or at least ambivalent about passion," Hagel said.

Researchers found that passionate employees are significantly more likely to take risks to improve their per-

formance versus workers without passion. They also report innovating twice as frequently (37 percent) as non-passionate workers do (18.5 percent).

Hagel said although it's helpful for organizations to have workers who like what they do, like the people they work with and respect the company, he finds that a lot of organizations' mantra of "worker engagement" will only achieve a bump in performance. "There's no sense that those engaged workers are going to be continually driving to that next level of performance improvement the way passionate workers are," he said.

HR professionals need to understand that in order to be change catalysts, they have to help change the organizational environment to one that becomes "much more supportive of that kind of worker passion."

According to the report:

- Passionate workers come from all age groups, educational levels and backgrounds.
- Employers should take risks to cultivate passion, and passionate workers will take risks for the employer in return.
- Employers should evaluate their work environments to understand where they cultivate or discourage passion.

By CARYN FREEMAN

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For more on the report, go to <http://dupress.com/articles/worker-passion-employee-behavior/?id=us:2el:3pr:dup825:eng:tmt:100814>.

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