

Do Your Employees Feel Engaged?

By David Nour, Founder – Relationship Economics

Do your employees have a sense of the bigger picture?

There is a Persian story that goes something like this: A group of villagers is weaving a basket together. A wise man walks by and asks them what they are doing. The first says, “I am pushing one straw against another.” The second says, “I am making a basket.” The third answers, “I’m helping a family carry food to feed his family.”

Though they were all three working on the same project, they each saw their jobs very differently. How do your employees see their jobs? Is it as the same mundane pushing of one woven strip against another, or do they see a little bigger than that – which is the basket itself – or do they see a *purpose* for *why* they are doing what they are doing?

The difference is that the last villager was *engaged*. And similar to our notion of Corporate Relationship Deficit Disorder, for some reason, when we walk into our corporate offices, we leave behind many of the notions about personal relationships that we hold dear while we’re at home. Most people are more engaged in the Super Bowl than they are with their company’s results.

A very real sense of engagement is possible. We’ve seen several clients that have a very natural, sustainable, and incredibly magnetic manner in which they draw incredible talent. When employees feel engaged, they are captivated and mesmerized. They feel a strong sense of connection to not just what they are doing, but the purpose in which they are doing it.

There are four common traits/ingredients that enhance a leader’s ability to truly engage his or her team:

1. **Making a Difference.** People want to genuinely believe that they are playing an important role. Some 10 years after the very early Internet success stories of the late 1990s, many people still talk about “back then” when some administrative assistants were transformed into multi-millionaires. People want a sense of belonging, connecting, and ultimately being attached to real results.
2. **The Journey is as Critical as the Destination.** The journey must be meaningful. It has to *matter*. It is an innate trait for people to aspire to do more and be more. The journey, through its ups and downs, drives us to take risks and find ways around barriers. Even if we crawl across that finish line, the journey is what many will ultimately remember.
3. **Sense of Belonging.** I can’t go on that journey if I don’t feel like I belong. I can’t engage unless I am accepted by others and feel like I am part of something. That common desire (or common enemy), by definition, bonds us.
4. **Being part of something Big.** Last, but certainly not least, is the importance of being part of something *big*. Big matters – big successes, big endeavors, and overcoming big obstacles. “Normandy,” “Allied Forces,” and “Shock and Awe,” all give you the sense that you are as big as the effort. *Big* carries a sense of substance, pride, importance, and that which many desperately seek – direction. There is a Grand Canyon-sized difference between telling people and truly engaging them in their work. Those who want to be there will seldom have to be convinced that it is not just a basket, but a family’s livelihood.

David Nour is a social networking strategist one of the foremost thought leaders on the quantifiable value of business relationships. A native of Iran, David came to the U.S. with a suitcase, \$100 cash, limited family ties and no fluency in English! Fast forward 25 years and he has built an impressive career of entrepreneurial success, both within large corporations and early stage ventures. David is the author of Relationship Economics (Wiley, 2008), a senior management advisor, and a featured speaker for corporate, association and academic forums, where he shares his knowledge and experience as a leading change agent and visionary for Relationship Economics® - the art and science of relationships. To learn more, please visit: www.relationshipeconomics.NET or call 1-888-339-1333.

