

The Herman Trend Alert

May 25, 2005

Disengagement

Employees who are not fully engaged with their work are costing employers a considerable amount of money. This tendency toward disengagement is growing across the globe. The absence of full-strength, enthusiastic dedication to work will cause challenging problems for corporate leadership in the years ahead.

Being engaged in one's job leads to high productivity, job enjoyment, excellent customer service, and unquestioned long-term loyalty. According to recent research, an estimated 17 percent of today's employees demonstrate this attitude. When workers feel and act with a strong sense of engagement, profits and opportunities are high.

Before we get excited about the 17 percent who feel engaged, we must note the trendline. In 2002, the Engagement Study found that 23 percent of workers were committed to their jobs. The trend is going the wrong direction, suggesting that conditions could be worse in the future.

The most recent Gallup survey discovered that thousands of workers are actively disengaged from their jobs, costing the country more than \$3.6 billion a year in lost productivity. This phenomenon of being "actively disengaged" leads to people being less productive, less loyal, and less likely to offer excellent customer service. Profits are down, employee turnover is up, and the employers are in a vulnerable and fragile situation. At its worst, disengagement causes people to be disruptive at work, bothering co-workers, and causing them to be less productive.

Workers unhappy in their jobs are often outspoken about voicing their negative attitudes.

Actively disengaged employees are less likely to stay with their employers, with only 23 percent of them planning to remain over the next 12 months. Those who do stay may be more of a liability than an asset. Gallup's research also found that disengaged employees are significantly less likely to recommend their company's workplace, products, and services.

Expect more employers to call upon consultants and advisors to measure, educate, and intervene to reduce workplace toxicity.

Emphasis will be placed on workgroup leaders who exert the greatest influence on employee attitudes and performance.

The Engagement Study referenced in this message was conducted in the Fall of 2004 in New Zealand.

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