

A *White Paper*

Getting more of what you want and less of what you don't want

"It's wake-up time. "

This Is It – The Mother Lode

You cannot create great success, you cannot have

"More of what you want and less of what you don't want"

without the active engagement of all who look to you for leadership. Yes, if you are to create great success you have to make great decisions and you have to effectively marshal resources. But the big pop is all about your people engaging, giving their very best and that is driven by your leadership.

Do you lead by example? The answer is YES. That's because followers are always watching their leader for direction. Followers pick up on both gross and subtle cues from the leader that scream messages, for example, about the leader's level of caring about their followers and those messages are crystal clear. All of that is to say, you lead by example; the only question is whether you do so intentionally.

Multiple studies have shown that the leader's caring, demonstrated in various ways, is the most powerful driver of employee engagement. Further, it is the engagement of the people who look to you for leadership that drives the most successful results. It isn't the only driver, but it is by far the most powerful, so focusing there gets the best bang for your leadership buck.

The leader's style can be nearly anything and that style will set the tone, the style, the music for the organization. The key is that embedded in that style is a message that declares the leader's caring about followers and followers read that leader and his/her caring about them with ultra-sensitive, 20-20 vision.

We are human beings first; everything else comes after that, including being an employee and following our leader. It is fundamental to human nature to want others to care about us and that is especially powerful when the other is an authority figure. When others care about us, we care about them and the last thing we would want to do is to let them down - so we give our best. We're engaged.

To make the point, let's turn this concept upside down and listen to the message. It sounds like this:

"If you don't care about me, boss, then the heck with you - I don't care about you, either. And I don't care about what is important to you. I only care enough to do what is necessary to collect my paycheck."

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The point is that the engagement of followers is driven by the leader fully engaging him/herself and demonstrating care about those who look to him/her for leadership. These folks come to work to meet their own needs, not those of the leader, so the leader's job is to meet the needs of followers, needs like being cared about. In the process of that, followers will want to give their best. Ultimately, great success lies in being of service to others.

The old saying, supposedly humorous, goes this way: "The beatings will continue until morale improves."

That sentence is emblematic of a kind of reactionary, authoritarian mindset and it is suicidal in today's culture. If employee morale is poor, the cure lies in the leader taking a look at him/herself to find how s/he is contributing to poor morale, because the leader has a part in everything that happens.

It may be that s/he tolerates bad situations, like failing to confront employees who cause trouble for others. It may be that some are unaccountable and they dispirit everyone else. To change those situations or, really, nearly anything, requires that leaders turn off their autopilot and become mindful that the quality of results s/he drives comes about through how they treat others. A leader wandering around brain dead to the needs of others screams the message to followers that s/he is self-focused and that s/he doesn't care much about those who look to him/her for leadership. It's wake up time, leader, if you want different or better results.

Employee engagement is powered by the leader demonstrating care about those looking to him/her for leadership. An elegantly easy way to do that is to follow the ***Fully Alive Leadership Principles***.