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Ways to assess staff engagement at work

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Managers should involve their subordinates in day-to-day decision-making to boost innovation.
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A relatively new area of organisational behaviour that researchers currently explore within companies entails the degree to which employees can express their voice.

Business researchers have long understood that staff engagement must occur in order for companies to reap rewards of organisational effectiveness through innovation and greater competitiveness. Now, researchers uncover that emotional employee engagement occurs when workers feel they possess sufficient opportunities to give upward feedback to their superior and executives within their firms.

Managers often rate employee satisfaction by the absence of dissent. No complaints? Then everyone must be happy. However, nothing can represent an organisational falsehood quite like such a mentality.

Workers may lodge dissent, but also innovative new thoughts, creative initiatives, and other profit making and cost cutting ideas only if they feel that they can register their opinions upward in the entity and that senior management will not just listen but actually utilise the feedback.

Social scientists Kevin Ruck, Mary Welch, Barbara Menara in the UK and Pelin Kanten and Funda Ulker in Turkey developed the following declarations to ascertain employee voice. Now, please take out your smartphone or pen and paper and in the following two groups of proclamations, rate each statement whether you 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neither agree nor disagree), 4 (agree), and 5 (strongly agree).

Regarding the following four statements, think of whether you can communicate upward within your organisation: You have opportunities to feed your views upwards. There are ways for you to pass on criticisms upwards at work. There are ways for you to communicate ideas to senior management. You feel safe to express opinions honestly at your workplace.

Next, for these four statements, think of whether senior managers are receptive to you speaking up at your organisation: Senior management seeks the views of employees or staff representatives.

Senior management responds to suggestions from employees or staff representatives. Senior managers allow employees or staff representatives to influence final decisions. Senior management makes employees feel safe to suggest solutions to direct supervisors.

Next, please total the numbers you scored for each statement and divide by eight. If your average rating fell between four and five, congratulations! You work in an environment that values your voice, your input, and you feel safe to share and make suggestions.

If you scored yourself on average between three and four, you work in an organisation with mediocre employee upward communication and senior management receptiveness.

If you scored less than three on average for your eight questions, then you feel as if your voice is stifled and you might consider alternative employment where you feel listened to and valued.

On the supervisory side, if a manager fails to create a workplace environment that fosters employee voice, then he or she risks languishing in corporate mediocrity for the foreseeable future.

Build open workplace environments that champions and rewards employee upward communication so that firms benefit from treasured employee emotional engagement.

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