How to gauge employee commitment at work

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Sit quietly in a restaurant and take notice when managers who work together in the same firm come in and eat lunch. Invariably, discussion will shift to stories about the office and complaints about employees.

Supervisors often grumble that staff members display lazy behaviour and only work when they watch them.

However, managers across the globe do not realise that they cause most employee glitches. Problem workers do exist as a disgruntled employee, or a fraudulent pair, or a destabilising gossiper dragging down morale. However, when executives notice a trend of multiple employees or most staff displaying worrying trends of minimal work ethic and low motivation, then the
source of the problem typically lies with either their manager or the organisation and not with the workers who merely react to their superiors.

Such situations encompass what researchers call low organisation commitment. Employees hold varying degrees of low to high commitment to their organisations in the following three ways.

First, workers can hold emotional affection for their jobs known as affective commitment.

Second, staff might feel a sense of obligation to stay with their employers called normative commitment. Third, employees may fear the loss of employment with their organisation known as continuance commitment. Workers can feel commitment to either their organisation or to their occupation profession.

Prolific researchers John Meyer, Natalie Allan, and Catherine Smith detailed the following eight questions to gauge employee affective commitment. You can request your employees to rate their attitudes in a confidential anonymous SurveyMonkey, Google Forms, or Survey Gizmo online questionnaire.

Ask them to measure the following first four statements on a five point scale with 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) neither agree nor disagree, 4) agree, 5) strongly agree.

I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organisation. I enjoy discussing my organisation with people outside it. I really feel as if this organisation’s problems are my own. This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me.

Total their ratings for each of the above first set of four statements and divide by four to get an average rating. Now, ask your staff to answer the next grouping of four statements.

I think that I could easily become as attached to another organisation as I am to this one. I do not feel like ‘part of the family’ at my organisation. I do not feel ‘emotionally attached’ to this organisation. I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation.

Next, total the second grouping differently. Take their ratings for each of the above second set of four statements and divide by four. Then subtract their second grouping average rating from five. So, if they rated an average of 1.5 on the second group of statements, then subtract it from 5.0 thus getting a 3.5 end result.

Now take the average for the first grouping of four questions and their end result for the second cluster of four questions and add them together. If their combined score falls between eight and ten, then your employees are deeply emotionally committed to your organisation and gain happiness through working for your firm.

If their average rating lies between six and eight, then they exist as moderately committed with decent but not outstanding work output. If their combined score fits between four and six, then your workers subside in working for your organisation without much thrill or excitement and
would prefer to work somewhere else. If your employees’ average rating falls below four, then they are miserable and desperately want out of your firm.

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