

How Good Leaders Engage People

The other night I was chatting to a wonderful young professional who has been charged with the responsibility of increasing engagement at her workplace. No doubt she will develop a fine program in due course, but this conversation had me reflect on my experience with workforce engagement during my 40 years of work life,

- as a worker seeking to make a contribution,
- as a supervisor seeking to coordinate the efforts of others,
- as a manager seeking to determine the best path to take and define the resources needed for success,
- as an executive seeking to set the overall strategy and continually clarify the purpose of the entity
- and as a director seeking to ensure that organisations are well governed and sustainable

I realized that I have learned a thing or two about the successful engagement of a workforce for the benefit of the individual, the team and the organisation.

Managerial leadership is key and, in my experience involves:

- continuous clarification of one's own role and those that we seek to manage and lead
- clear accountabilities for the outcomes of the role and "room" for the incumbent to exercise those accountabilities
- constant monitoring, enquiry and learning about what resources are required for success
- commitment to be open to possibilities and different ways to achieve outcomes.

Contrast this approach with what many engagement programs look like:

Gimmicks, prizes, ra-ra speeches, workshops about engagement, bonuses for attendance, on site massages, performance management for the disengaged, nights out and dinners, retention payments, etc etc etc.

While there is some fun and a brief moment of excited engagement, there is little evidence of these approaches creating sustained engagement.

Engaged workers want good jobs, good leadership, resources to do what they have been asked to do and the knowledge that we as leaders have belief in their skills, knowledge and judgment.

It is our responsibility as leaders to create this environment to encourage engagement, so what are we willing to do to create it on behalf of those we lead?



We at The Leadership Foundation work with those courageous leaders who want to take responsibility and build their personal effectiveness as an 'inner' journey to achieve 'outer' gains.

We consult with, coach and support leaders on the personal and design requirements necessary for good leadership in all kinds of workplaces and life circumstances.

We work with individual leaders and leadership teams.

We work through public events, group sessions and private consultation.

Contact us through the website: www.theleadershipfoundation.com.au for more details.