

How to Add Meaning in the Workplace for Your Employees



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How To Add Meaning In The Workplace For Your Employees

Written by [Nicole Lipkin, Psy.D., M.B.A.](#) – 3/6/19

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We all want meaning in what we do. We feel our work is meaningful when it feels like a natural extension of our personality.

Far too often, due to the demands of living, we find ourselves in jobs and positions that have nothing to do with our true nature.

That's when we start reading "how to create work / life balance" blogs. In a perfect world, these two [work/life] wouldn't be on opposite ends of the spectrum; they would be interwoven, natural extensions of each other.

When we leave our house to go to work, we should be heading to a place that makes as much sense to our lives as does the bed we sleep in. After all, we spend a great deal of time at work, so it should ideally relate to who we are.

For the sake of argument, let's make some very general assumptions about the average worker during the five-day workweek.

Accounting for a forty-six-week year (allowing for a two-week vacation, ten sick days, and ten public or floating holidays), he or she:

- Works for approximately forty-seven years.
- Works forty hours a week, or 1,840 hours a year.
- Sleeps forty hours (eight hours a night) during the workweek, or 1,840 hours a year.

This means a worker spends about a third of his or her time sleeping and a third of the time working.

Psychology and personal experience teach us that when we don't feel fulfilled, or can't find meaning in what we spend one-third of our life doing, our feelings of despondency and disappointment poison every other part of our lives, including a good night's sleep.

More and more these days, people demand fulfilling work and a balance between that work and the rest of their lives.

If you find it, you benefit from more than a paycheck; you enhance your pride, your self-esteem, and your sense that what you do makes a real difference in the world, all important aspects that contribute to physical and emotional well-being.

Organizations that strive to fulfill that desire automatically generate engagement.

How Can An Organization Help To Fulfill This Desire?

By creating opportunities for people to spend part of their time working on projects outside the scope of their jobs.

I'm not promoting exploitation; I'm promoting utilizing the other skills an employee might have in the interest of creating more meaning for this person when they are at work.

It can be the difference between a disengaged and an engaged employee. It creates meaning for them because they are able to fuse their interests to their job. They will more likely feel like going to work is a natural extension of who they innately are.

When we feel like we are being our innate selves we are happier, more engaged, and connected.

Not to mention the fact that it lets the people in your organization know that you care about them. You can't underestimate the power of social connection.

Getting to know your people and learning about their interests creates engagement; it retains employees; it creates a sticky workplace culture.

Relationships make work cultures sticky; they make people want to stay.

In fact, The Gallup Organization did a study on employee engagement and came up with the twelve factors that universally engage employees across industries. Two of the twelve factors have to do with social connection:

1. I have a best friend at work

2. My supervisor and other people care about me as a person

Leaders should try to relate to their people and to help them get to the next level in their lives. When you develop your people, you create a spokesperson for your company, no matter where this person ends up in their career.

We have a personal responsibility to ourselves to find work that relates to our passions, but leaders can help too.

Promote individuality so people feel like their specific existence plays a valued role in the organization/company.

Such gestures mean the world to people because they show respect for the whole person and the whole person's life outside of work. Employees will often brag more about these sorts of meaningful benefits than the formal package of pay, bonuses, and health care.

If your company loves you, you love your company. And you'll lay down your life for what you lov

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