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STUDY EXPLORES DRIVERS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

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A recent study by MSW Research and Dale Carnegie Training explores key drivers of employee engagement – and reaffirms the critical role of an employee’s relationship with his or her direct manager. Employee engagement is important because “engaged employees” are more committed and productive. The study, *What Drives Employee Engagement and Why It Matters*, also has some disturbing findings, noting that “only 29% of employees are fully engaged while 26% are disengaged.”

Released in October, the research surveyed 1,500 employees nationally. Its conclusion: “Although there are many factors that impact employee engagement, there are three key drivers:

- **Relationship with immediate supervisor**
- **Belief in senior leadership**
- **Pride in working for the company.”**

This focus on the central importance of the direct management relationship – that often can make or break an employee’s feelings about work and therefore performance – is consistent with what management experts have long contended.

The study stated, “**The attitude and actions of the immediate supervisor can enhance employee engagement or can create an atmosphere where an employee becomes disengaged.**” In addition, employees said that believing in the ability of senior leadership to take their input, lead the company in the right direction and openly communicate the state of the organization is key in driving engagement.”

This emphasis on positive managerial relationships, trust and honest communication is nothing unexpected, but does add hard data reinforcing sound practices for all leaders to bear in mind if they hope to motivate their work force.

US businesses lose approximately \$11 billion annually due to employee turnover, according to the Bureau of National Affairs. “With recruiting costs running approximately 1.5 times annual salary,” the study noted, “the ability to engage and retain valuable employees has a significant impact on an organization’s bottom line.”

Employee engagement is often viewed as a “soft” HR sort of subject, but the hard reality is that flawed management practices contribute significantly to employee disengagement – and disengaged employees are unproductive *employees*.

With a vast financial impact.

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