

have already begun a process, consider asking several questions relating to many categories. Before you know it, the AL²A process has begun.

(I Don't Need No) Satisfaction

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A key to the AL²A process is not only to focus on people satisfaction. If satisfaction is all you are looking for from your people, you are aiming too low. Satisfied people are usually content with their work situation. Getting these people to show-up and contribute is not a problem, and chances are, compensation is adequate. So, momentarily, the relationship is probably fair for both parties. Unfortunately, terms such as *show-up*, *adequate* and *fair* lend more to complacency than satisfaction. Not all satisfied people are complacent people, yet there are similarities.

Now, the number of engaged people you have – rather than satisfied people – is a better determinant to the success of an organization. On average, only 29% of employees are fully engaged at work.² Engaged people have excellent attendance and safety records, outperform others in productivity and profitability, have higher retention rates, and offer greater customer satisfaction. In contrast, more than 50% of employees arrive at work and perform the bare minimum – just enough to sustain employment. These disengaged employees cost companies about \$300 billion a year in lost profits and damaged customer relationships.³ These statistics demonstrate that effectively managing and measuring employee engagement can add value to your bottom line.

Compare a satisfied customer to a completely satisfied customer. A satisfied customer has done business with you in the past and will continue to until a lower price or better incentive from a competitor

comes along. These customers are not *completely satisfied*. If they were, they would know how good the relationship they have is, and give you an opportunity to retain it.

Compare this satisfied customer to a satisfied employee. While these people have been around for a while; if another position comes along, would they take the position without giving you a chance to retain them? This moves the term satisfied people to engaged people to “emotionally engaged people.”⁴ People whose ties to the organization extend beyond compensation and benefits; those with an emotional attachment, a lifestyle, and comfort level with the organization and a belief their work contributes to the achievement of something they believe in.

Chris Berman, world-renowned sportscaster for ESPN, is an example of an emotionally engaged employee. It is reported that in 1989, NBC offered him \$800,000 to leave ESPN. At the time, he was making \$185,000. He asked ESPN if his salary could come close to this offer. ESPN offered \$600,000 and he stayed.⁵ His willingness to stay for a 25 percent lower salary says a great deal about his emotional attachment – not to mention his trust to approach leadership and discuss this with them – without asking to match or beat the NBC salary. This also demonstrates a great relationship between Berman and leadership as he was proactive in approaching leadership to have an open and honest discussion about this.

Satisfied customers are to satisfied people as completely satisfied customers are to emotionally engaged people. The latter groups, completely satisfied customers and emotionally engaged people, are those that stay through the tough times. This is why people are being discussed before customers, because emotionally engaged people are more productive and result in providing customers with better service. This creates long-lasting, completely satisfied customers.