EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Engagement is a key driver for the acceptance of change and the reduction of resistance to change, both of which are critical to the success of Mosaic.

So, what is employee engagement?

Employee engagement is the extent to which employee commitment, both emotional (heart) and intellectual (mind) exists relative to accomplishing the work, mission, and vision of the organization. Engagement can be seen as a heightened level of ownership where each employee wants to do whatever they can for the benefit of their internal and external stakeholders, and for the success of the organization as a whole. Employee engagement involves..

- Acceptance
- Understanding
- Willing participation
- Enthusiasm

How does engagement show itself in employees?

An "engaged employee" is one who is fully involved in and enthusiastic about their work, and thus will act in a way that furthers their organization's interests. It's a measurable degree of an employee's positive or negative emotional attachment to their job, colleagues and organization that profoundly influences their willingness to learn and perform at work.

What are the influencers of employee engagement?

Two way communication, motivation, performance clarity and feedback, organizational culture, rewards and recognition, relationships with managers and peers, career development opportunities and knowledge of the organization's goals and vision, are all influencers of employee engagement.

How can you influence greater engagement leading to adoption of change and lessened resistance?

The following are the findings from a 2006 study by Canadian university professors Gerard Seijts and Dan Crim.

* Employee perceptions of job importance - "...an employee's attitude toward the job's importance and the company had the greatest impact on loyalty and [customer] service than all other employee factors combined." *Make your colleagues and stakeholders feel that their roles and insight are important to the success of Mosaic by relating how, why and asking for their input wherever possible.*

i) Employee clarity of job expectations - "If expectations are not clear and basic materials and equipment are not provided, negative emotions such as boredom or resentment may result, and the employee may then become focused on surviving more than thinking about how he can help the organization succeed."
This is where fundamental two way communication, articulating what is changing and what is not, providing training and stating expectations of what you need others support to do, is essential.

ii) Career advancement/improvement opportunities - By stimulating thought in stakeholders around how workflow and business processes can become more effective and recognizing employees for their supportive suggestions and actions, heightened engagement can result.

iii) Regular feedback and dialogue with superiors - "Feedback is the key to giving employees a sense of where they're going and changes that are occurring but many organizations are remarkably bad at giving and providing it."

"'What I really wanted to hear was 'Thanks. You did a good job.', or 'I'd like to hear your thoughts on this', but all my boss did was hand me a cheque and tell me what was happening rather than asking for my input.
The moral of the story? Ask for input, thank people for the good job they did and what they specifically did so that they will repeat it.

iv) Quality of working relationships with peers, superiors, and subordinates - "...if employees' relationship with their managers is fractured, then no amount of perks will persuade the employees to perform at top levels. Employee engagement is a direct reflection of how employees feel about their relationship with the boss."

v) Perceptions of the ethos and values of the organization - "'Inspiration and values' is the most important of the six drivers in our Engaged Performance model. Inspirational leadership is the ultimate perk. In its absence, [it] is unlikely to engage employees."
Lead the way for your team members and stakeholders and model the behaviours of integration and innovation described in 'Forward with Integrity'.

vi) Reward to engage - Acknowledge the role of incentives. "An incentive to reward good work is a tried and tested way of boosting staff morale and enhancing engagement." It is also critical to incenting employees to reach the next milestone of a large, long term or complex initiative. *There are a range of tactics you can employ to ensure your incentive scheme hits the mark with your workforce such as:*

- *Setting realistic targets*
- *Selecting the right rewards for your incentive program*
- *Communicating the scheme effectively and frequently*
- *Have lots of winners and reward all achievers*
- *Encouraging sustained effort*
- *Presenting awards publicly and evaluate the incentive scheme regularly.*

vii) Effective Internal Employee Communications – Communications that convey a clear description of "what's going on" are critical. "'If you accept that employees want to be involved in what they are doing then this trend is clear, for both small businesses and large global organizations. The effect of poor internal communications is seen at its most destructive in organizations which suffer from employee annexation - where the head office is buoyant because they are closest to the action, know what is going on, and are heavily engaged (e.g. Mosaic project team) but its annexes who are furthest away from the action and know little about what is happening (e.g. affiliates or more remote locations) are disengaged. In the worst case, employee annexation can be very destructive when the head office attributes the annex's low engagement to its poor performance, when its poor performance is really due to its poor communications.

Effective communication is two way, not just a top down dissemination of instructions and information. It is also soliciting and listening to workforce questions, concerns and suggestions. It is a shared responsibility. Be open, invite employee participation and communication. Equally, if not most importantly, get back to people about what you've done with what they've provided and why.