How to Improve productivity in the workplace

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When you take most managers aside and asked them what they'd like to do with their workers over the next year, one of the responses will have something to do with efficiency in the workplace. Without high performing employees who care about the job they do, businesses cannot thrive. Sadly there are many factors that can lead to low productivity. Some of those components are managers related while others are workers themselves at the core. Every successful company knows how important productivity is in a work environment. The efficiency of an employee will help the company to maximize the ability of its available workforce. Many businesses that concentrate on productivity generally have healthy and happy workers, which also makes them profitable organizations.

According to research statistics from Gallup pertaining to workplace performance and productivity, it was found that:

- High-performing employees have three things in common: talent, high engagement, and ten-plus years of service with the company.
- 85 percent of employees are disengaged in their work globally, and a lot of this is due to a lack of human capital development.
- Employees who exercise their strengths on a daily basis are eight percent more productive and six times more likely to be engaged.

From the above research findings, one can see that engagement is a crucial factor in determining productivity. In fact, employees who are engaged are 27 percent more likely to report excellent performance. Thus, if leaders want to improve productivity in the workplace, they need to increase their focus on engagement and find out how they can improve it among their employees. According to research done by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in America, it was found that between 2011 and 2016, employee productivity grew 0.3 percent, and whilst this is a significant increase, there is still a lot of work today's leaders have to do to increase workplace productivity across the board.

Common Challenges to Increasing Workplace Productivity

Most of the challenges related to increasing workplace productivity have to do with human capital development and engagement. Every worker is different, and leaders have the problem of trying to determine how best to motivate and inspire employees regardless of personality.

1. The Problem with Email

Email can be a helpful resource in workplaces. It sends information quickly and efficiently. The only issue is that most employees and leaders do not know how to use this tool efficiently. Approximately 28

percent of the workweek for employees is used to check email. This keeps workers from getting to the work they are assigned to do.

2. A Lack of Adequate Communication

Numerous signs point to the detrimental impact of poor communication in the workplace. If managers are not clear in how they assign duties, or projects are not explained then productivity can lack. According to data from Salesforce, 86 percent of corporate executives, employees and educators felt ineffective communication is a big reason for failures in the workplace.

3. Poor Management

Leadership development is crucial in creating a productive workplace. Sound managers can provide the guidance, training, and direction to employees they lead. Without capable management, workers can flounder in productivity. According to the Society for Human Resource Management, 58 percent of employees felt that poor management is the most prominent obstacle to productivity.

4. Disengagement

Workers can become disengaged for a lot of reasons: lack of autonomy, poor management, and lack of challenge in their work, unclear direction, and workplace conflict. This disengagement takes employees away from their tasks and decreases their motivation to get things done. According to Gallup, disengaged employees costs the U.S. $450 to $550 billion per year in lost productivity.

5. Task Overload

Staff is now expected to have the ability to handle multiple duties at one time. The issue with this is that it can end up overwhelming employees to the point where they cannot get anything done efficiently. Also, in this new technology age, employees may feel compelled to check email, take phone calls, send text messages, and to work on more projects then they may have time for. This can keep employees from grasping the information they need, and it can also contribute to stress.

6. Workplace Stress

57 percent of employees who said they were very stressed at work felt less productive and engaged, while only 10 percent of low-stressed employees felt the same way. When employees are stressed, they are less likely to be productive, and they are more prone to make mistakes.

So having the aforementioned statistics and challenges in mind a lot of questions arise. These include questions such as: So how can you increase productivity in the workplace? Do you want to improve your workplace productivity but you don't know how, where to start and what to do? In trying to attempt to address those questions it is important to note that trying to approach every employee with the same approach will most likely fail because one might not easily understand everything. Knowing the method,

you can use for each employee would offer a better solution and can create a happy and healthy environment for both employee and the company. And it would be easier for employees to achieve their goals.

8 Ways to Increase Productivity in the Workplace

1. Determine Where the Lack of Productivity Is Occurring

Before addressing a fall in productivity, managers should sit with leaders and determine where productivity can improve. A department could be equally worse than another, or low morale could lead to low productivity due to budget cuts and layoffs.

2. Develop a Plan for Addressing the Productivity

Once the low productivity trigger has been identified, leaders will develop a plan to tackle every one of them. Is email taking up too much of the time of employees and causing them to delay other duties? Is it a lack of communication? Understanding which factors lead to productivity declines will help leaders collaborate with departments to develop a plan to tackle it.

3. Establish Leadership Development Programs

Some managers might use some additional development to help them develop the leadership skills they need to direct their employees toward success. Communication preparation, project management, helpful employee input, and conflict resolution can provide managers with the tools they need to be effective in keeping track of themselves and their employees.

4. Develop an Efficient Employee Feedback System

Employees cannot improve if they are not receiving feedback respectfully and effectively. If a certain employee makes a certain number of mistakes then they should be advised on how to change better. Employees may not know how to improve their performance, and it may be helpful to give them information on what they can do differently.

5. Give Employees a Sense of Ownership

Repetitive tasks can create disengaged employees. Differentiation of the duties will inspire workers to engage in their jobs. It can reduce burnout and disengagement by giving employees the ability to work on solutions to client problems and partner with others to spur innovation.

6. Get Feedback from Employees

No one knows their workday better than they do. Constant interruptions, internal conflicts and duplication of responsibilities are issues administrators may not be explicitly entitled to. Distributing

workplace surveys and setting up focus groups that value openness can get leaders to the heart of what's happening with respect to efficiency.

7. Create a Rewards System

Rewards and appreciation will increase motivation and commitment among employees. Many workers may feel that they do not appreciate or notice their work, which can contribute to disengagement. Developing a program of incentives for workers who go beyond and beyond, or those who develop new and innovative systems can let employees know that their work is important and appreciated. Also, simple words of encouragement and a "thank you," can go a long way.

8. Check the Equipment

Nothing is more frustrating than that an employee cannot use a device or the software on it because it is obsolete or non-functional. Problems that are blamed for the lack of productivity of an employee may be caused by outdated technology. Employees must be equipped with all of the resources they need to perform at a high level. Failure to ensure this could contribute to product shortages.

Improving efficiency in the workplace should not be a one-time move. It should be something administrators engage infrequently to keep their workflow on the positive side. This coupled with the establishment of best practices such as providing work-life balance, leadership buy-in and participation, clear goals and objectives, and teamwork within organizations will have a positive effect and encourage increased productivity.

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