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The Business of Business

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Observations from Rural New Mexico A paper by David Jensen



David Jensen is the owner-owner-principal consultant of Johnny Creek Consulting LLC located in New Mexico. Experience includes 20 years a consultant of Personalysis Corporation; an executive consulting firm. A senior level consultant having

attained a Vice President title with the company. He has worked with multiple Fortune 100 companies in various consulting capacities and on a wide range of projects. In his role as a consultant, Jensen works with all levels of teams and individuals, including CEOs of several major organizations.

Prior to joining Personalysis Corporation, He worked for the US Forest Service and then joined the US Department of Labor where he was a bureau chief responsible for organizational analysis. He next served as a consultant to Martin-Marietta and then moved to Sara Lee Corporation where he was the Director of Employee Relations for the company for over 10 years.

David has taught at both Idaho State University and Boise State University.

Jensen is a graduate of Idaho State University where he holds both an undergraduate and master's degree in psychology. His emphasis of study was organizational psychology with his master's thesis being Proxemic, The Importance of Personal Space.

David has been a featured speaker at national conventions and seminars. His ideas on leadership, teamwork and organizational effectiveness have been well received by diverse audiences.



I recently observed a t-shirt with the above phrase. It seems to sum up the current attitude among many regarding work. Clearly the individual is in disbelief that we are to return to work the next day. If you Google the statement, "My Work is" some of the top responses are as follows: boring, makes me ill, is killing me, is stressful. At the risk of sounding as old as I am, I do not understand how the current generation views employment. From my teen years working in my father's store to the present, I have found work to be the source of many important life lessons. So, what is up with this generation? Is it a generation that been "bubble wrapped" to the point that the slightest disappointment is too much? In a current TikTok, an individual was denied requested PTO (paid time off) so he hijacked the phrase PTO to mean "Prepare The Others I am quitting!" Is this a generation of quitters? Is this idea of work life balance gone too far? Recently, an associate of mine was preparing to offer an applicant a job when this would be employee spoke up and offered a list of demands: no nights, weekends off, two weeks' vacation and all federal holidays off. The applicant did not get the job!

Living in rural New Mexico in an agricultural community, nights off and no weekends sounds very foreign. Our livestock operates on their schedule not ours. Although, since only 6% to 8% of the population works in agriculture, maybe "weekends off" is a thing. That said, what is really going on with this generation? Perhaps the researchers who survey worker attitudes and then mark the trends can help provide the answers.

The Gallup Survey

Jon Clifton, CEO of Gallup, in a recent book entitled *Blindspot* suggests that world leaders have missed the level of employee unhappiness (subjective wellbeing). The belief that an improving GDP benefits all is false. The “misery index” which includes among several indicators a measure of employee dissatisfaction over the last ten plus years is trending higher. Regarding worker dissatisfaction, the Gallup researchers found, based on survey questions that workers can be sorted into three categories.

1. Employees who were thriving at work (engaged), who felt they had meaningful employment, equaled 20 % of the population.
2. Employees who were indifferent at work (disengaged), who were “quietly quitting” just enough effort not to be fired equaled 62% of the population.
3. The remaining 18% were miserable and were actively disengaged to the point of working against the goals of the organization.

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If you have 100 employees, on average 62 are slow walking the effort and not significantly contributing to the success of the enterprise! Worse yet, you have on average, 18 who are actively working against the goals of the organization.

Lessons learned! Or relearned! ...The Engagement Check List

So, this current generation is not a lost generation after all. The workers are simply disengaged. Lesson learned by leaders are sometimes forgotten. You may recall what the General Electric classic research into experimenter bias taught us. Simply paying attention to the workers improved productivity and the lights had little to do with the outcome. In a time where competition for skilled a worker is ever increasing, the

challenge and opportunity that organizations face is to move some of those 62 employees into thriving category (engaged).

Below is a short check list for getting started.

- ✓ Item 1. Company culture needs to promote positive assumption regarding their employees. People come to work to succeed not to fail. That assumption allows the company to design programs and processes that work to ensure that success is guaranteed.
- ✓ Item 2. Employees who come to work to be successful deserve quality supervision. Training supervisors in best practices for engagement is essential. Engagement should become the center of the plate for the “employer brand”.
- ✓ Item 3. Work rules that are designed to protect the company from the 18 employees that are seeking to undermine company success should be reconsidered. Any HR policy that communicates a negative value or lack of trust to the 62 we seek to engage, should be eliminated when possible. Fair employee treatment and equal employee treatment are not same. It is important to provide fair and valued treatment to the 62 that we seek to engage.
- ✓ Item 4. Connect and engage the employee’s family to the “employer brand”. Extracurricular company activities for the family. Company logo shirts and caps for the family. Anything that supports a work/life balance can lead to engagement.
- ✓ Item 5. Encourage employees to volunteer in the community. A community volunteer is less likely to be indifferent and disengaged at work.
- ✓ Item 6. Provide opportunities for employees to contribute and learn in their jobs. Skill building and career development is another essential part of “employer brand”
- ✓ Item 7. Encourage employees to recruit a close friend, shared experience between friends can enhance the work environment.

Conclusion: Organizations should develop their own list of actions to enhance engagement. To succeed in a competitive job market with fewer workers, engagement strategy is an essential part of the employer brand. Otherwise; “Prepare the Others” (PTO) I am leaving!

Learning Without Scars



As a third-generation educator, it is easy to say that teaching and training are in the blood for Ron Slee. From his beginnings as a coach, through his time at McGill University, Ron developed a foundation for the work he does today.

Learning Without Scars provides comprehensive online learning programs for employees starting with an individualized skills assessment. These assessments allow us to then create a personalized employee development program. From their assessed skills, the employee is asked to select from classes designed for their skill level which allow them to address the gaps in their knowledge level. This allows the employees to move through four progressive categories of learning: Basic, Intermediate, Advanced and Expert.

Class References

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**The Wärtsilä RT-flex96C is the most powerful engine in the world with 14 cylinders and generates 107,389 HP.
What country was it built in?**



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