



## **Human Resource Management – Igniting the passion**

In the work undertaken in both the corporate world and also in small business, there appears to be an increasing number of people going through the motions, dragging themselves into work each day and as a result, their contribution to business outcomes is far less than optimal.

This applies equally to senior management as it does to people at lower levels within organisations. It can also afflict highly successful and driven people. Indeed over the years we have met many highly outwardly successful individuals who have suffered from this malaise.

### **So what is the problem?**

Many argue it is:

- The pace of life
- Unrelenting demands of Head Office or customers
- Email fatigue
- Red tape and compliance
- Long hours of work
- Ever changing advances in technology
- Unrealistic sales targets
- Brutal performance management programs
- Long commutes to and from work
- Leaders not walking the talk
- Etc.

Whilst all the foregoing undoubtedly exist – Why is it in some individuals can't wait to get to work, are positive and seem to enjoy what they do? Think nothing of going above and beyond – building fantastic relationships with their customers and also work colleagues.

In our experience, having worked with hundreds of businesses over many years, the differentiating factor for those that are closely engaged with what they do would seem to be:

They see a strong link between what they do - and something they value at a deeply personal level.

While simple in concept, it is surprising when we ask businesses owners and or employees “why are you doing this?” – they are unable to provide a clear answer beyond motherhood statements or what they think people may want to hear!

And yet given the challenges and demands of business today – if there is no link between what the work one does and a something that is important at a personal level – then it is little wonder drive, motivation and commitment at times can be lacking.

This concept is not new; some leaders over the years have been brilliant at engaging their workforce, or even a country, by tapping into elements that resonate strongly with their audience. Stephen Covey in his excellent book the 7 Habits of Highly Successful people talks about – “Linking purpose to the paycheck”.

Some thought-starters of motivating factors (beyond earning an income) could be:

- To provide a certain standard of living for the family (need to be specific)
- To create a better world through.....
- To help others to.....
- To be financially secure
- To allow children to .....
- To gain recognition
- To obtain power and through this.....
- To care for family members – elderly or suffering an illness
- To generate sufficient income to allow me to....
- To facilitate further studies that will allow me to.....
- To win a promotion that will allow me to....
- To create a business and provide family with employment
- Etc.

The key in terms of tapping into motivating factors is to recognize that they are deeply personal and wholly individual.

However without making this connection – actually asking the question – tapping into something that resonates at a personal level – then the chances of igniting the drive and commitment needed to succeed in whatever you do will be low.

If you find when you ask the question you are unable to come up with an answer – then start by asking – what and who are really important to me?

Be warned however, to really tap into this “gold” is not a five-minute exercise – it takes thought, work and crucially, honesty.

However having identified your driving influencers, you will then be in a position to guide your employees through the process and ignite their passion.

A final point, it is important having identified what motivates you, to then:

- A set specific, measureable, time bound goals, to ensure whatever you are seeking is ultimately realized.
- Record your motivating influences in a place where you can refer to them regularly (at least weekly).

## **Summary**

Connecting what you do each day with things that are truly important to you at a deeply personal level is one of the most rewarding and powerful activities an individual can undertake.

Like many powerful processes, it is simply in concept – but requires work for the full benefits to be realized.

**Bruce Hall**