

Your Real Work: Management as More by Dan Kennedy

According to a recent Career Builder survey, here in 2014, fully 21 percent of employees are planning to quit their jobs and find new work. (Last year the number was 17 percent.) And Bloomberg.com reports that more people are quitting their jobs now than at any time since 2008. With so many people getting ready to bolt, you have to wonder what that means for your own workplace. The cost of replacing an employee can easily be as much as his or her first year's salary. That's too much to pay. Luckily, you don't have to.

Fortunately, we know that engagement makes people want to stay with their organizations even in the good times, and perform in ways that allow their teams and their organizations to succeed. The numbers back this up. Gallup has found that organizations where most of the employees are highly engaged are:

- 56% more likely to have higher customer loyalty
- 38% more likely to have above-average productivity, and
- 50% more likely to have lower turnover.

So, engagement is essential, but what does that mean, exactly? I see engagement as the experiencing of one's values and strengths. Values have been called the emotional paycheck of work. They are the positive feelings we have when we do our work in ways that matter to us. Values can't be taught. They're a part of who we are. Experiencing feelings of creativity, expression or accomplishment are examples.

And whereas values are feelings-based, strengths are defined more by innate talents and activities, specifically things we do without effort like being able to stay on task without supervision, or deliberate well, or to see the bigger picture. Gallup's wide-ranging and in-depth research shows that in organizations where leadership focuses on strengths, employees are over eight times more likely to be engaged in their work than workers with managers who do not focus on strengths.

Therefore, I suggest that if you are a manager, your real work isn't making sure that the job gets done. Your real work is something more. It's helping those you manage to be *engaged* while the job gets done. That means that your real work includes helping them to discover and leverage their values and their strengths. There are many ways to do those two things. I can assist with advice and workshops, and then help you learn how to have powerful coaching conversations with your people to support their engagement over time.

When you start having those kinds of exchanges you will start to see what I mean about management being more, because what this kind of conversation does is lift you and your employees up and out of how work has always been done. Up and out of the kind of work where you're waiting for the end of the day, for Friday, for your vacation, and finally, retirement. This, then, becomes work worthy of you and your people. It becomes work where you all get paid to be yourselves because when you are, your organization and your customers win as well. This truly is management as more, and if you want it to be, it can become what your real work will be from now on.

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