

Is engagement contagious in the eyes of the employees?

“High engagement leads to new ideas and more innovation. Engaged employees are more active and positive ambassadors when representing the company externally, just as they will show ownership and responsibility internally. This again has a spill-over effect on other colleagues since the engaged employees can act as role models internally, thereby helping to spread the positive vibes.”

*Imran Hassan
Customer Services Coordinator,
Damco, Supply Chain Management
Karachi, Pakistan*

“To help spread engagement, we need to constantly communicate with colleagues at all levels in the organisation, not just by sending out a notification of change but by describing ‘what’s in it for me’. This will work to positively drive the engagement. When you’re included in the decision-making process, you feel empowered, which again drives your performance and engagement!”

*Sanjeev Trilochan Biswal
Assistant Manager, Global Service Centre
Pune, India*



“We are working in an industry where it is easy to work in a specific way because it ‘has always been like this’ so it is sometimes easy to forget that continuous improvement is a must. Engaged employees will challenge the way things are done, and try to improve current processes and ways of working. Their engagement will motivate them to seek new ideas, new ways of doing things.”

*Mouna Miaad
Assistant Manager, Customer Service
Maersk Line Brazil*

Keep customers happy – by keeping the employees happy

Customer satisfaction | A new study works to wipe out all possible doubt about the links between organisational engagement and external customer satisfaction.

BY CHRISTINE DRUD VON HAFFNER

Treat your employees exactly as you want them to treat your best customer. This is the recipe for committed employees and better end-of-year results, a new Maersk study concludes.

The new study shows that 35% of the customer satisfaction measured in the Group's logistical arm Damco is explained by the engagement among Damco's employees.

Head of HR in Damco Karsten Breum is happy to see this result:

"It is the first time Damco sees such a high statistical correlation. This study really works to wipe out all possible doubt about the links between organisational engagement and external customer satisfaction," Breum says, underlining that every time a Damco region goes up 5 points on engagement, you can expect that customer satisfaction will likewise go up by 0.20 points.

Engaged employees have a different energy

The result is consistent with a similar study conducted three years back in Maersk Line, which showed a correlation between engagement and customer satisfaction of 22%.

"At Maersk Line we are intent on improving engagement for a number of reasons. But a simple one is definitely that committed employees mean happier customers and better profitability," Chief Commercial Officer in Maersk Line, Hanne B. Sørensen says.

The same is the case in Damco.

"Highly engaged employees will greet the customer with a different energy and motivation which translates into an increased service level. Happy employees are a real differentiator for us in the market. This is evident when reading the new study," Head of Global Sales in Damco, Steve Sienkiewicz says.

Consider employees an asset

External research also shows that employee engagement has an impactful and visible effect on customer satisfaction. In his book "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People," Stephen R. Covey, the internationally recognised American author, offers insight into how to achieve this. He stresses that a company should focus on maintaining and growing its people assets, which translates into

cultivating the employees just as one would cultivate a garden. "If you are treating your employees as well as you do customers, then you are growing your human assets," Covey concludes.

Internal and external research provides an even greater incentive for the Group to raise the overall engagement in all business units. Is the Group doing enough to maintain the engagement of its employees?

"We are very close to becoming a top quartile organisation on employee engagement. By creating an engagement culture in the organisation we can deliver our strategy through motivated employees who want to go the extra mile. This also ties in with what we expect of our leaders: to have a plan to win in the market place, to be a good and inspiring leader and to live our values," says Bill Allen, Head of Group HR. "We still have room to improve on the quality and continuity of follow-up discussions with employees, a leadership behaviour we encourage," Allen concludes. ■

SPILL-OVER EFFECTS OF ENGAGEMENT

Internal Maersk studies show that increased employee engagement will lead to...

...higher customer satisfaction

- 35% Damco
- 21% Maersk Line

...better team performance

- 7% over the whole Group

...retention of high performers

- 7% over the whole Group

Percentage figures show the statistical correlation between the engagement measured in the Group's annual Employee Engagement Survey and a number of other survey indices, including customer satisfaction surveys.