

# Improving Results

September 2010

Volume 7 Issue 9

*By Facing Our Challenges, We Discover Our Potential*

**STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS 510-432-7596**

## ***Does Employee Disengagement Cost Your Company?***

**D**isengaged employees cost your organization money – but how much, and where does it show? Here are several areas where you can, and should, measure these costs.

Disengaged employees do less work per day; they waste time by procrastinating or griping. An outside firm can survey your workforce, anonymously, to determine the level of engagement. One example: in 2008 Staffing World reported that, on average, American workers wasted 2 hours in each work day. To annualize this, multiply those lost hours by the number of working days in a year (about 200 days). To determine the annual cost, multiply that by the number of employees, times the average hourly wage in your organization. (Another approach to this calculation is to determine the wasted fraction of a work day.



In the Staffing World report, this would be about a ¼ of the work day. Multiply that by your organization's annual payroll: was 25% of your payroll wasted last year?)

Disengaged employees accomplish less with the opportunities they encounter.

*Continued on page two – Disengagement*

### **INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

- ◆ ***Does Employee Disengagement Cost Your Company?***
- ◆ ***Strategic Planning & Leadership***
- ◆ ***One Minute Ideas***
- ◆ ***Dealing, Deadline, Dawdling***

## ***Strategic Planning and Leadership***

**Are you focused on a successful future?**

**W**ell-managed, competitive companies have accepted the leadership challenge of creating an effective strategic plan for their business and sharing it with everyone in the organization. In doing so, they position themselves to respond to opportunities rather than react to market conditions and competitive pressures.

Too many business people view weak market conditions or a poor economy as the reason for their lack of success. However, even in the worst economy, leaders in every field emerge victorious. Why? Because they realize that success is not based on the conditions of the world, but on the decisions they make and the goals that they choose to set and achieve. Success doesn't just happen. It happens because you predetermine your success, plan, set goals, and make it happen.

### **Planning the future of your business entails four stages:**

1. Understanding the current condition both inside, as well as outside the company,
2. Visualizing and identifying the future as you want it to be,
3. Determining the goals you must achieve and planning their achievement, and
4. Implementing the plan.

Leaders who take the time to create and communicate a vision, a strategy, and a plan, find that they are able to create a level of motivation and commitment that fuels continuously higher levels of achievement. They are also able to attract highly skilled, motivated, and innovative people and have the ability to propel an otherwise mediocre business into one of power and respect.

Adapted with permission from *Executive Strategic Planning* Copyright © Resource Associates Corporation – Sorrell Associates





# One Minute Ideas

## How does controlling one's attention contribute to safety in the workplace?

One of my favorite quotes from Tom Peters is his statement that after 25 years of consulting, everything he's learned can be boiled down into five words: **"Attention is all there is."** What you put your attention to is what you get. Try to wake people up to the fact that all of us have attention patterns that are somewhat restrictive, that are useful in certain circumstances but mismatched in other kinds of situations.

Generally people who are very good at focusing their attention and blocking out distractions also miss things in their environment. When you're driving, for example, you're looking straight ahead and you don't see things on the side. On a safety level, that can be dangerous. Try to show people where they're good and where they need improvement, and give them some specific exercises and techniques for broadening their effectiveness.



Hank Sullivan is President of Strategic Solutions in Hayward, CA and a Nationally Certified Business Coach. He provides processes to assist individuals and businesses in improving results. He concentrates on leadership development/coaching in areas such as Management, Sales, Customer Service, and Strategic Thinking and Business Planning. In addition, he offers a program for youth leadership called America's Rising Stars.

Strategic Solutions  
25985 Clausen Ct.  
Hayward, CA 94541  
(510) 432-7596  
[hsullivan@stratsolutions.net](mailto:hsullivan@stratsolutions.net)

## Continued from page one – Disengagement

It may be most obvious in a sales organization. Disengagement may be as easy to measure as a loss in year-over-year sales.

Disengaged employees do not initiate or innovate. They become satisfied to do the same old things in the same old ways. This is an obvious problem in a marketing organization, where it is critical to attract new customers by generating new campaigns. But most very successful organizations thrive on employee suggestion programs, where front-line workers contribute to improvements on the assembly line, to innovations in products, or to streamlining processes.

Disengaged employees are more likely to resign or to be terminated. They resign because they hope to have more fulfilling careers elsewhere. They are terminated because their performance did not measure up. What did your organization spend on severance payments last year? Were those disengaged employees? Consider the lost productivity from the time an employee resigns to the time the replacement worker becomes a fully-functioning member of the team. Ask your Human Resources department what it costs to recruit, background-check, interview, and finally hire an employee. Then annualize the cost: how many employees were hired last year?



Disengaged employees lead to disengaged customers. Your organization is a rare and endangered species if it does not depend on repeat business. Your organization also benefits from favorable word-of-mouth to attract new customers. Your customers will notice poor or slow service; lack of attention to detail; or anything that says "I don't care." Have you lost customers due to intangible issues? Has the number of customer referrals gone down, over the last year? What did that cost your organization?

Now you can build your business case to invest in employment engagement. We have the tools necessary to increase employee engagement. **Contact us today!**

## Dealing, Deadline, Dawdling

If a co-worker often fails to deliver what you need to complete a project on time, try to correct the problem with these approaches:

**Assign the person** an earlier deadline than you give others. But even though you've built in a time cushion, don't treat this deadline any differently than others. *Example:* Send reminders if that's what you usually do.

**Send the procrastinator** a memo saying you plan to use his or her old facts or figures unless you get new ones by a certain date.

**Mention the name** of a third party and ask if that person could supply the information you need. You might get what you want — when you want it — because the dawdler would rather not involve anyone else.

**Give the person** a copy of an updated report — complete except for what the procrastinator owes you. Attach a note that says "I'm sending this out 'as is' unless I hear from you by X."

Source: *Office Hours*, The Economics Press Inc., 12 Daniel Road, Fairfield, NJ 07004. As seen in *Communications Briefings*

