

DRAKE Business Review

HELPING YOU MEET THE CHALLENGES IN YOUR BUSINESS — RIGHT NOW

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**FOCUS ON
DRAKE CANADA
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THE INVISIBLE WORKFORCE

HOW DO YOU LEAD A TEAM
YOU CANNOT SEE?

THE FINANCIAL
REWARDS OF
EMPLOYEE
ENGAGEMENT

THE SIX HR
COMPETENCIES
THAT MATTER
MOST

CN Tower & Royal Bank Plaza
Toronto, Canada

DRAKE
INTERNATIONAL
OUTPERFORM

A photograph of three business professionals (two women and one man) sitting at a wooden table. They are all smiling and holding up white signs that display the number '10'. The background is a wood-paneled wall with recessed lighting. A solid orange horizontal bar is positioned at the top of the image, above the main title.

10 WAYS TO KEEP YOUR STAR EMPLOYEES

1. Empower your employees to shine by helping them own their gifts at work.

As you interact with employees, see each one as unique and gifted, especially the star employees. Your role is to find their innate gifts — creativity, facilitating, listening, intelligence, intuiting, writing, leading, researching, teaching, developing, strategizing, motivating, evaluating, and so on. Work with your employees to identify their top two gifts and help bring them to the projects they are working on.

2. Identify exactly what tasks or responsibilities bring your top stars career fulfillment.

Meet with your employees to identify the three aspects of their work they find most fulfilling. You want to understand not only what tasks but also which elements of the tasks and responsibilities are most satisfying. Next, help them bring more of this type of fulfilling work into each day.

Spend time with your employees to understand the things, other than money, that fulfill them at work. Select two areas through which each employee can cultivate more fulfillment in their current job — mentoring relationships; freedom to create; making a contribution; learning and developing on the job; working with intelligent, creative, and passionate colleagues; participating in the organization's direction and overall vision; or anything else you would like to add.

3. Encourage your employees to focus more on what's right with their jobs and less on what's wrong.

Highlight the accomplishments of your employees and help them leverage their areas of success. Not only will this improve their profiles in the company and potentially

lead to a promotion or a raise, but it will promote a positive view of themselves and their capabilities.

Meet with every employee to discuss and review what is going right on the job. By not always focusing on what is wrong with their work and seeing it as a challenge, employees can focus on and appreciate the many opportunities for making their jobs work for them.

4. Communicate effectively for great relationships at work.

Guide your employees to accept the co-workers who challenge them, helping them look for the positive instead of the negative in those people. They can learn to step back, detach from their own agenda and viewpoint, and look at the challenging co-worker with new eyes. This new viewpoint can occur when an employee tries to truly understand their co-workers, what they think and feel, and why they behave as they do. After stepping into others' shoes and viewing things from their perspective, the question becomes: "How can I accept this individual's imperfections and shortcomings as well as their strengths and talents?"

Encourage managers and supervisors to be more accessible to their employees, especially the stars, so they can better ascertain their primary needs. This way your employees will feel that you genuinely care about them. They will feel listened to. This open communication allows employees to feel comfortable sharing what is on their minds. By responding to employee needs immediately and directly before they become real issues, you eliminate the danger that they will need to find another workplace to get those needs met.

5. Improve your employees' morale by showing them how to work smarter instead of harder.

Spend time with your employees and help them make a list of all their daily roles, responsibilities, tasks, and activities. Help them become aware of how they can simplify their workday: Do more, do it faster, work smarter, and be more fully committed. Then eliminate as much as possible from the list until it reaches a point at which they can't do it any faster and smarter. Employees need to help their employees look at their entire worklife and all that it encompasses, and learn to simplify. When we don't simplify, our lives become too complicated, and we become powerless.

Help your employees prioritize their activities. Ask them to write down their most important tasks and then rank them in order of priority. If employees need help finding the most important tasks, have them ask themselves: If I could complete one activity/task today, what would it be? Is this activity the best use of my time, knowledge, creativity, and experience? Have them focus on the most important task until it is finished, then recheck the priority list and focus their efforts on the next most important activity.

6. Besides more money, offer quality life programs to help your employees maintain balance between professional and personal life.

Help your employees create flexible time (flex-time) for work and their own personal well-being. Teach them how to create a working environment that brings their work and life together in proper balance. This can include making sure your employees have enough hours each week to enjoy non-work activities. Facilitate proper balance by helping

employees understand how to use flex-time or other creative scheduling alternatives to spend more time on non-work activities that bring proper balance into their lives.

Many employees have difficulty in properly balancing their lives because their worklife is so consuming. When employees begin to gain self-control and equanimity in their worklives, they will have made space for other parts of their lives. To create balance in their work/personal lives, you can help your employees to:

- keep their self-expectations and those of their manager at a reduced level;
- “under promise” and “over deliver”—promising far less than they know they can do or less than the person is asking them to do;
- learn to say no to nonessential tasks and to people who might be inappropriately monopolizing their time;
- take breaks throughout the day to revitalize themselves;
- realize the importance of not taking work home with them on a regular basis to separate their worklife from their homelife.

7. Ask employees to identify and focus on what is enjoyable.

Have your employees get together to select and discuss the most enjoyable activity or project in their jobs. Then ask them to make a list of all the activities or projects they need to complete that day or the next. Have them select the one they find most enjoyable and begin the day working on that one. Once every couple of weeks, encourage your employees to select an “enjoyable” task as their focus for an entire day. Help your employees identify the work they

find most enjoyable, those tasks that excite them or that they find themselves repeatedly drawn to doing. Once they have identified two elements that they enjoy, have them create new projects that incorporate those activities.

8. Improve your employees’ overall relationship with their jobs through active involvement and constant praise.

Give your employees the opportunity to make a difference and become more actively involved in the organization by having them volunteer their time to support and help run some of the company’s internal functions and take part in off-site company volunteer efforts.

People need to know that their efforts for the company are recognized. Lack of recognition for performance can cause a lack of involvement and even disengagement. You can greatly help your employees by encouraging them and showing them how to ask for positive feedback and recognition from their managers. They shouldn’t have to wait for their annual review to get positive feedback on the work they are doing. After all, you can’t be proud of yourself until somebody’s been proud of you.

9. Open your employees’ minds to the possibilities and reality of loving their work.

Without a clear-cut understanding of what they have to do to advance or succeed, people quickly become de-motivated. Explain what’s required for your employees to move forward in the organization based on the company’s or department’s plans for the next one, three, and five years. Provide clear career paths to encourage employees to explore

new career possibilities in-house so they can make a lateral shift within the company. A lateral move can help them enjoy their jobs and stay engaged.

Help your employees discover new and exciting opportunities (new projects and new activities) that lie within their work that will bring them a greater sense of love for what they currently are doing.

10. Establish a mentoring or coaching program.

Encourage your star employees to spend time mentoring other model co-workers who enjoy their jobs and are performing well. This allows your employees to observe, study, and shadow the person they most identify with so they begin to understand what they do that helps them enjoy their work so much.

Designate senior employees who will act as impartial, unconditionally supportive guides who ask evocative questions to draw out your star’s wisdom.

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©2005–2012 Joel Garfinkle, all rights reserved. One of the top 50 leadership coaches in the US, Joel Garfinkle has worked with many of the world’s leading companies, including Google, Amazon, Starbucks, Deloitte, Cisco Systems, Oracle, Ritz-Carlton, Citibank, and Microsoft. He has written seven books, including *Getting Ahead: Three Steps to Take Your Career to the Next Level*. To subscribe to his Fulfillment@Work newsletter or receive the free e-book, *41 Proven Strategies to Get Promoted Now!*, visit www.GarfinkleExecutiveCoaching.com or email joel@GarfinkleExecutiveCoaching.com.