

Good morning, everybody, Dennis Engelbrecht, Digging Deeper.

You know, we talk about this probably in multiple of our video blogs but wanted to really focus on it and talk more and more about it because with our tight labor market, as we have, everybody really needs to make sure there's a major focus on employee connection. And when I say focus, I mean the number one job of every leader is to focus on employee connection. Now, what do I mean by connection? When somebody disconnects from their job, quit, they lose their relationship with people, they lose the purpose of that business. You know, they're no longer involved in the mission, the values, all of those things. They lose the daily connection with their coworkers and all of those things. And all of those things are connection. What we see in the studies is that engagement is generally low, and stress is high in the workplace.

And we know that opportunities for people to change, not just positions within the industry, but to even change industries, those opportunities about, and the number one reason people leave is the lack of connection. If you look at it in a broader sense to include purpose and appreciation, especially. So, what are the elements of connection that you should be working on and can work on? Well, the first one I'm going to mention is camaraderie. So, obviously, each of you has camaraderie with a certain group of people that you interact with and possibly that's inside and outside of work. And what is camaraderie? Camaraderie means we stand side by side and we march together, and we attack the world of our job and all of that together and collegiality, and then you feel camaraderie with that person.

So, there's your smaller sphere, the people you're actually having camaraderie with, and then there's the larger sphere is the camaraderie of your co-workers among themselves and the various teams among themselves that you have in your business. And you want to make sure that all of those are functional and all of those are doing well. You know, COVID and the pandemic threw a bit of wrench in that because there's less of people going out after work and less probably company get-togethers and picnics and all of those things. Well, those are all areas where Camaraderie is established. So, you got to make sure that those are going on again. You've got to sometimes create the opportunities for your people to get together, make sure that the teams have goals that they're working together toward and make sure your other managers are doing that well.

The number one reason cited for leaving a job is generally speaking, a disconnection or lack of appreciation from that middle manager, their direct manager. So, you got to make sure the folks in your chain of command are doing a good job with that camaraderie as well. The next thing I'd suggest is community is an opportunity. Most construction companies are giving back to the community, are involved in their community, their industry, et cetera. Well, that's an opportunity for people to connect as well by getting them involved. In community, it could be that they're involved in proposing who gets the donations from the company, that could be involved in the actual doing of the donation. You know, if you take a team of people out to build a habitat house, for example, easiest thing to think of, or you take the whole group out to work at the soup kitchen at Christmas. When people go out as a group and connect in that way, that builds a real camaraderie.

So, your community involvement is one of those areas that takes that workplace camaraderie and extends it much deeper, deeper in the heart. Sometimes even back to the families who are fervent about a certain donation or cause or something like that. The next thing that each of you can do is make sure your company mission, vision, purpose, and goals are all well communicated and communicated up front. Do people know what the big picture is? It's so easy for your employees to get lost in the day-to-day and forget that there is a higher purpose to what you're doing, and of course, there's a higher purpose, but the higher purpose for what your company's trying to accomplish and what it's about and all of that. And if your people feel connected to that, that's the kind of connection we're talking about that keeps them wanting to be there, keeps your culture solid and strong.

Also connect to the success of the company. I know it's kind of old school to not share any of the results of how the company is doing. And I think that really comes from another world, but it's pretty clear by all the science today and studies that are done, but sharing the results and involving people in the results of their work is really much more effective, but it does take good communication, sometimes a little education, but when people know that they've done a good job and that helps the company be more successful, that again, increases that connection.

It's also important that they understand their role and how that connects to the mission and values and the goals of the company. And it's up to you again, to make that connection, make sure that they understand that. Finally, and again, perhaps foremost, is feedback. And with that feedback appreciation, hopefully. People want feedback on the work they're doing, and appreciation or lack of appreciation is again up there number one or two on the list of why people stay at an organization and why people leave organizations. So, for top employee connection, top employee engagement, you got to make sure that there's good feedback on performance, a lot of thank-yous and all of that.

And with that also a career connection, all right? People want to know that their future is solid and secure. So, part of that feedback has to be about their career and the opportunities that are there for them to learn, develop, and move forward. And hopefully, there's progress on that as well, because you can communicate all you want, but if they're in the same position they were in three years ago with no change and responsibilities or pay, then there's a disconnect. So, you want to make sure that people's career goals are known and that you're working toward them achieving those. Again, employee connection, are you focused on it? And if you are, that's great. Make sure you're doing all of the right things to move that forward. Dennis Engelbrecht, Digging Deeper.