

Wouldn't you be thrilled to hear your employees and colleagues (or even yourself) say these words often and with meaning? Below, some key points from articles featured recently in the Australian Financial Review.

“Companies Where People Want To Work”

Australian Financial Review, Weekend Perspective section, Saturday 4th March, 2006 (pgs 17-19), written by Narelle Hooper, Senior Writer for the Australian Financial Review.

You can also find it here: http://www.amandahorne.com.au/pdf/AFR/AFR_BestCos.pdf (many thanks, Narelle)

The article contains examples and anecdotes from a range of Australian organisations about how “Improving the lot of their workers is one of the best chances [managers] have to increase their companies’ performance and profit”.

Key points from the article:

- it's about hearts, minds and souls
- employee engagement and happiness leads to success, productivity and profitability
- levels of engagement are increasing in Australian organisations
- organisations are actively working on increasing engagement levels, and will lead the way; employees will gravitate towards those kinds of organisations
- “employees are most likely to feel engaged if their managers work on developing their strengths, see them as unique individuals, have open and honest two-way communication and empower them while providing support”
- workplaces should be full of “energy, light and vibrancy”
- the importance of meaning (with reference to Professor Roger Collins, Professor Martin Seligman, and social researcher Hugh Mackay) ... “a craving in the community for engagement and meaning, long fraying from the post-industrial social fabric”
- need to have authentic leadership, employee training, attractive jobs and an environment in which people want to work

“How to Manage the Mid-Career Blues”

AFR, Tuesday 11 April, 2006

“They make up more than half your workforce. They work longer hours than anyone else in your company. From their ranks come most of your top managers. They're your mid-career employees, the solid citizens between the ages of 35 and 55 whom you bank on for their loyalty and commitment. And they're not happy. In fact, they're burned out, bored, and bottlenecked, new research reveals..... Companies are ill-prepared to manage middleage because it is so pervasive, largely invisible, and culturally uncharted. That neglect is bad for business: Many companies risk losing some of their best people or--even worse--ending up with an army of disaffected people who stay.” (Harvard Business Review, March 2006)

- “Middleage – a time of frustration, confusion and alienation, but also one of self discovery and new direction”
- “It's in the enlightened self-interest of your company to remove institutional barriers to individual fulfilment and ambition”
- career revitalisation: “re-engage them by energising their careers now”
- they are looking for ways to find new meaning and direction in their work
- they are solid workers, but not the high performers or Generation Y who seem to attract attention
- can't offer them a prestigious title, but can offer them a fresh start
- identify the next tier below the 'high potentials', and offer internal career changes; training; encourage mobility within the organisation; put them into mentoring, teaching and knowledge sharing roles; offer sabbaticals; widen access to leadership development programmes

“Sick Workplace Syndrome”

AFR, Thursday 20 April, 2006

See also: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4832744.stm>

- “British researchers have challenged one of the orthodoxies of the modern workplace. For more than 20 years there has been a firm belief that some buildings are sick and, as a result, their occupants become sick too.”
- sick building syndrome may have more to do with the psychosocial work environment than with the physical attributes of the building, according to the results of a cross-sectional study reported in the March issue of Occupational and Environmental Medicine
- work overload, lack of support at work, and conflict at work may exacerbate the effects of the physical work environment
- most important factor is stress
- illnesses not related to ‘sick buildings’ but instead to “unhappy workplaces, where people don’t have enough control over what they do, don’t feel supported by management and work long hours”

(thanks to Mark for bringing this article to my attention)

Note: for my North American readers... If you are interested in creating a workplace where people say “We Love Work”, refer to the Positive Workplace Alliance. Jocelyn Davis and Amanda Levy, founders of the Alliance, are consultants, executive coaches and advisers who encourage and support the development of positive workplaces through the application of positive psychology and positive organizational scholarship at work and in workplaces. Refer: <http://www.positiveworkplace.com/>

About this article

Each monthly email aims to provide you and your staff with professional and personal development information. Topics covered are based on areas of interest raised by clients and colleagues, with material drawn from journals, books, articles and shared experiences.

Add / Remove: Please send an email to: info@amandahorne.com.au

Back copies of previous articles: www.amandahorne.com.au/html/resources.html

AMANDA HORNE

Thriving , Positive People & Workplaces
Executive Coach | Facilitator | Adviser | Trainer
P: +61-2-6239 4566 | M: 0402 892 698
info@amandahorne.com.au
www.amandahorne.com.au