

Dissolve your business stress – build the enthusiasm in your people and your team...

Research (and common sense) strongly suggests that an enthusiastic workforce will out-perform a less than enthusiastic workforce. Given the profitability improvements you can gain from having an enthusiastic team in your business it pays to ask yourself the following question:

On a scale of 1 to 10 (where 10 is perfect) how would you rate the genuine enthusiasm your people have for your company and the work your company does?

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STOP seeing your people as naturally lacking in enthusiasm

START by owning responsibility for the levels of enthusiasm in your team

1. The one 'BREAKTHROUGH' question you must ask to assess the level of enthusiasm in your company

On a scale of 1 to 10 (where 10 is perfect) how would you rate the genuine enthusiasm your people have for your company and the work your company does?

Research (and common sense) strongly suggests that an enthusiastic workforce will out-perform a less than enthusiastic workforce. 13.6 million employee surveys by The Sirota Group and thousands of group and 1-on-1 discussions shows the value of creating an environment and working practices that nurture and build enthusiasm.

Given the profitability improvements you can gain from having an enthusiastic team in your business it pays to ask yourself the question above. If you can ask the question of your people, in a way they can answer in a confidential way you'll get an even more accurate idea about enthusiasm levels in your business.

For another way of looking at this, if you want to raise profitability and other aspects of business performance you should consider strategies for improving enthusiasm across your workforce.

IMPORTANT: The research suggests that enthusiasm is a source of stronger business performance. However 'enthusiasm' requires a complex blend of factors.

The Sirota research elegantly shows that 3 elements have to show up for enthusiasm to show up – a sense of fairness – a sense of achievement – and a sense of camaraderie. The authors make it very clear though that all three have to be present.

It pays to understand the elements of each of the three and what's needed to ensure that you can build a genuinely 'enthusiastic team'.

2. How does greater enthusiasm deliver greater business performance and results?

Does pursuing a strategy of enthusiasm really pay off? Is it worth the effort?

Sirota's research and references to other studies, including the performance of organisations that do well in the 'Best Places To Work' studies by The Sunday Times and others, shows that an 'engaged' or 'enthusiastic' team deliver results.

This graphic from the Sirota website visually shows the connections that deliver the improved performance you want for your business:



What does this graphic show?

Referencing the massive research done by Sirota it shows that employees want to experience a sense of fairness (equity), a sense of camaraderie and a sense of achievement.

And that the behaviour of your leaders and managers – what they do – determines the emotional response of your people from anger and indifference up to satisfaction and enthusiasm.

This in turn determines how well your business performs:

- Enthusiastic people tend to stay – lose fewer of your good people and business performance goes up
- Enthusiastic people tend to deliver better customer satisfaction than indifferent or angry employees
- Enthusiastic people are driven to improve and innovate and drive your business results up
- And as a consequence of these 3 business wins the financial performance of the business improves

3. Evaluating The Effectiveness of Your **EMPLOYEE VALUE PROPOSITION (EVP)**

Researchers have estimated that losing a team member costs a company from 90 to 200 percent of the exiting employee's salary. Which means that a £25,000-a-year employee that leaves your business will cost your business anything between £22,500 and £50,000. This alone suggests you should develop a compelling employee value proposition – a working environment and management processes that keep employees in your business.

There's more evidence and more insight about building an enthusiastic team on the Sirota website.

Quoting a different study of analysed data from over five million employees working in 149 organisations and 172 countries, four main findings reveal valuable insights too. Consider these 4 questions to find a way to build the enthusiasm across your employees:

- a) **Is your total rewards strategy broad enough?** The emphasis of this question is on the TOTAL rewards your team receive. Organisations should ensure that their employee value propositions offer a mix of financial rewards, development opportunities, support for health and wellness, and fulfilling work experiences. Focusing narrowly on just one element—particularly extrinsic motivators like compensation—may not be effective.
- b) **Are career paths in your organisation clear?** This survey's results emphasize that career development is particularly important to employees. But based on a Global Talent Trends report, few organisations are focusing on career path. For example, when senior HR professionals were asked to evaluate 16 aspects of their organisation's employee value proposition (ranking the extent to which each was compelling and differentiated), they ranked their organisation's learning and development offerings dead last.

Considering the looming skills gap that many companies face as they prepare for the future of work—as well as the strong correlations found between employees' perceptions of career development and their motivation, satisfaction, advocacy, and commitment levels—this is a critical place for company leaders to focus their time and resources.

- c) **Do your employees think they are doing meaningful work?** Researchers like Herzberg, Hackman and Oldham discovered the importance of meaningful work decades ago, and the pattern of results provide strong evidence that it is still critical for today's workforce. Based on Sirota's findings, experience and research, they have found that leaders and managers can make work more meaningful through their actions and behaviours.

Hiring managers should also place a heavy emphasis on purpose and meaning when selecting and screening job candidates: Sirota have found that when employees see their job as their personal vocation or calling, they are significantly more engaged and committed.



Profitable Enthusiasm

Support tools and resources

- d) Is there a strong sense of community in your organisation?** In recent years, a growing number of researchers have focused on the causes and consequences of loneliness at work. According to former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy, an epidemic of loneliness is emerging within many organisations. When employees feel lonely at work, researchers are finding that everything from their physical and psychological health to their commitment and performance may decline. At the core of these studies is a common theme: workplace loneliness undermines both employee wellbeing and organisational effectiveness. Sirota have found that when employees feel a sense of belonging at work, they are more likely to be motivated, satisfied, and committed. In light of these findings, leaders, managers, and HR professionals should ensure they are building a workplace where employees feel supported, accepted, and welcomed.

4. The criteria for an enthusiastic (fair) pay plan

Amongst the depth of statistics The Sirota research also flags up comments by employees to reflect the learning and insights they have uncovered.

Here's two opposing views of the compensation packages, as quoted by employees. These quotes suggest that relatively small differences impact on the emotional reaction your people have:

"The worst thing is working and doing so many tasks at work and not getting compensated for it. The pay here really sucks in that regard. It's at least 5 percent below what other companies pay."

"I like the pay that I receive here. It is the highest, although by a slim margin, among other companies in the same field. The company shows it values its employees."

Money alone is not the fix but it is an important and unavoidable part of the sense of fairness your people feel about working for your business.

Only by building a sense of fairness (which includes a sense of job security, fair pay and basic human respect) can you access the four business wins (retention, innovation, customer satisfaction, financial performance):

You can assess your pay plan for your people against the criteria suggested by the Sirota Group.

The pay plan in your organisation should:

- steer employee performance to the achievement of important organisational goals
- allow employees to see the impact of their performance and to see that impact in a timely way
- promote optimal achievement of the goals, requiring teamwork as well as individual effort
- provide performance measures which are clear and credible
- provide a financial return to employees which is, in their eyes, substantial
- serve to satisfy employees' equity, achievement, and camaraderie needs
- enhance employees' identification with the organisation

Costco's (the wholesale retailer) stock performance shows a 122% cumulative gain over 11 years, compared with WalMart's 27% gains over the same period. And yet Costco consistently pay more and have a more valuable benefits package than WalMart.

For certain, higher/'fairer', pay is not the silver bullet to success, senior management's business competence and business strategy are crucial amongst many other aspects of business. However, this story points to the fact that higher than average wages does not mean lower business performance, in terms of profit, far from it.

For a detailed explanation of each of these criteria and specific examples on how to build a fair and enthusiastic pay plan check out chapter 4 of the book – [The Enthusiastic Employee](#)

5. A sense of fairness is built on job security and respect

A number of quotes from the book The Enthusiastic Employee are instructive on job security:

“...the need for people to feel that they are being treated fairly is basic, and nothing is more basic for most employees than job security.”

“...workers express anxiety about their job security, it is because their jobs are insecure!”

“What’s the point of working hard? Whatever you do, you’re just as likely as not to be out on the street tomorrow.”

“Don’t believe for a moment that stable employment - the predictability, not just the size, of a paycheck - is ever a trivial issue for workers.”

The research points to the need for a fundamental sense of fairness to exist if you want to build an enthusiastic team. And the base level of fairness is a feeling of job security.

The researchers acknowledge that in an unpredictable world job security is a tough ask but what’s clear from the research is that even when companies need to reduce worker numbers through redundancy some companies handle this well whilst others handle it badly. It is still possible to handle such difficult decisions and processes ‘with grace’ through effective communication and fair treatment of everyone involved.

The book’s new edition adds a chapter relating to the impact of the 2008 recession and the increased importance of job security during this period. This shows that a sense of fairness is a mix of issues – respect, compensation, job security – and the that the emphasis and importance of each changes depending on the general economic conditions. As we return to ‘full employment’ job security will play a lesser role and compensation may well pay a more important role.

One stable and vital element is that of ‘respect’. One quote from the book encapsulates the importance of respect:

“The respect we have in mind—and that has such profound implications for worker morale—does not come from deference to power or the expectation of reward, but from a sense of the intrinsic worth of workers as human beings.”

Respect is one of THE foundations for an enthusiastic team – and equality is at the heart of respect:

“Equality is at the heart of respect—the treatment of each individual as important and unique without regard to any other characteristics, such as gender, race, income, or even perceived performance or contribution to the organization.”

And one story from the books explains how equality is a respect issue not a pay grade or use-of-power issue:

“To take a simple-minded example, do passengers on a plane see it as illegitimate for a pilot and crew to be in command and give orders? Of course not. But, in manner and attitude, how are passengers treated by the crew? Do they feel themselves treated as welcome guests of the airline, or rudely as necessary evils, or, perhaps most commonly, indifferently, as “seats?”

The same applies to your people – are your people treated as welcome ‘volunteers’ or as ‘necessary evils’?

6. Winning – the six sources of achievement for your business

For any individual performing their specific role in their company, Sirota's research points to six primary sources of achievement. All six sources can be influenced by the way you lead and manage your people:

1. **Challenge of the work itself.** To what extent are you making sure that everyone's job uses an employee's intelligence, abilities, and skills?
2. **The acquisition of new skills.** What are you doing to actively promote the knowledge and skill improvement of your people – no matter what their role or level in your business?
3. **The ability to perform.** Having the training, direction, resources, authority, information, and cooperation needed to perform well. Are you aware of what's needed to help all your people perform at their best?
4. **The perceived importance of the employee's job.** To the organisation, to the customer, and to society. How clear to your people is the importance of their job, are you doing enough to share this with them?
5. **Recognition received for performance.** Both non-financial (such as a simple "thank you" from the boss or a customer) and financial (compensation and advancement that are based on performance). How well do you and your managers acknowledge good performance and effort, and how 'fair' does your compensation and reward programme appear to your people?
6. **Working for a company of which the employee can be proud.** People can be proud of working in your business because of your business's purpose, its products (their quality and their impact on customers and society), its business success, its business ethics (treatment of customers, employees, investors, and community), and the quality of its leadership.

What about asking the right questions to see if your business is winning...

In order to create a working environment that nurtures and builds enthusiasm, The Sirota Group use these **four key questions** as part of their survey. These questions show up in the 13.6 million surveys they've conducted and are a great way to assess how well you and your management are doing – you can ask yourself these questions and/or you can ask your team also:

- a. How would you rate [*company name*] in taking a genuine interest in the well-being of its employees?
- b. Do you agree or disagree: 'my job makes good use of my skills and abilities'?
- c. How would you rate the cooperation and teamwork within your work unit?
- d. Considering everything, how would you rate your overall satisfaction in [*company name*] at this time?

Other factors worthy of your attention...A sense of pride and achievement doesn't just come from the work an employee does. Sirota's research points to four other big influences of pride and achievement:

1. The company's financial performance
2. The efficiency of the work the company does
3. The company's products, such as their usefulness, distinctiveness, and quality
4. People also want to work for a company that does well but also does good

Building an environment that nurtures and builds enthusiasm is complex. Enthusiasm happens because of a blend of three core commitments – commitment to fairness, achievement and camaraderie. Each of these breaks down into many elements which is why it makes sense to delve into the book published by The Sirota Group – see below.

Where do you start?

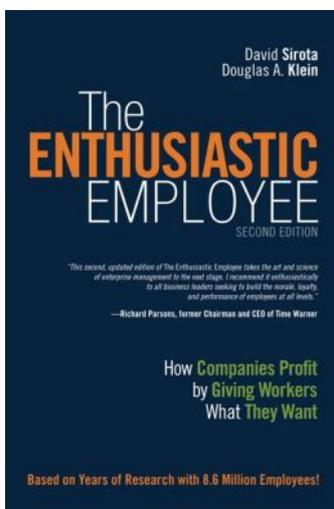
What's clear from the research is that all three elements support each other – fairness, achievement and camaraderie.

However, without a sense of fairness your efforts to build achievement and camaraderie are likely to appear like techniques to line your pocket and get what you want, whilst not delivering what your employees want.

Start with building a sense of fairness. Section 3 of these tools – building an effective employee value proposition goes a long way to helping you do this.

7. The book and other resources to help your business ONLY have enthusiastic employees

Check out the book by David Sirota, Douglas Klein et al called 'The Enthusiastic Employee'. There is so much more in this book than can be squeezed into 4 pages or these tools. Because of the depth of research, you can be confident that the insights, when applied, will improve the sense of fairness, sense of achievement and sense of camaraderie in your business.



Richard Drezen of the Washington Post writes about this book:

“If you’ve ever wondered why an employee says, ‘I love my work’, or ‘I love my company’, or why some companies are so profitable, you will surely find answers in The Enthusiastic Employee...”

...The authors, all consultants, have written a book based on extensive research looking into what motivates employees in the workplace. ... this is a valuable book containing practical advice for both managers and workers. Highly recommended.”

Here’s the the link to purchase the book: <http://bit.ly/enthusemply>

Please also check out this Keynote address from one of the authors of the book Douglas Klein. The videos cover the basic themes of the book - what employees want out of work – their goals, the relationship between employee morale and business success, culture, partnership, leadership and many other topics. Here is the link. 10 minutes well spent! <http://bit.ly/kleinvideo>

