

Employee Satisfaction – A Critical Element in Fostering Organizational Excellence

By Marcel Faggioni

Recent newspaper articles reported employee work satisfaction is waning. A January 25 survey by a large consulting firm confirmed Canadian employees were becoming “disengaged” or disconnected from their work. The survey suggests, particularly among longer term employees, that attitudes towards work are eroding.

The survey, with only 43 % of the respondents rating their place of employment as a good place to work, reflected a reduction of 12% in comparison to a similar survey undertaken two years ago.

With the increase of globalization in the private sector and of fiscal constraints in the public sector, these survey results are worrisome on a number of levels. Firstly, employee dissatisfaction erodes attempts to gain worker productivity in achieving a competitive edge – an edge required to maintain a Canadian presence in an already competitive global marketplace. In both private and public sectors, faltering productivity also translates into increasing costs and lack-lustre service delivery. Secondly, decreasing employee satisfaction leads to a myriad of workplace issues and concerns, such as increasing absenteeism, reduced motivation/initiative, higher employee turnover, increasing training costs, higher benefits costs, more employee complaints and grievances and overall poor employee morale. Thirdly, if employee satisfaction continues a long term, downward spiral, the organizational culture suffers severe and often times irreparable damage. This in turn adversely affects customer/client service on a permanent basis.

Employers and organizations should pay special attention to their employees’ satisfaction quotient. We live with a workforce that is better educated and more sophisticated. Employees generally want to be involved in some level of decision-making and problem-solving, especially when dealing with an issue directly related to their position within the organization. Employee empowerment offers a very positive remedy to reverse workplace dissatisfaction. Through team work and participative management, many organizations that have committed themselves to a broad-based employee empowerment program have reaped the benefits associated with a more satisfied and stable workforce. There is ample evidence on a worldwide scale that organizations with an employee empowerment regimen have witnessed real gains in productivity, decreased absenteeism, lower turnover rates, and increased employee morale.

In this day and age, organizations are become increasingly more aware of the importance of their human capital (i.e., people). For this very reason, employers with commitment to their workforce have achieved organizational excellence.