

Engagement:

Does
it

REALLY matter?



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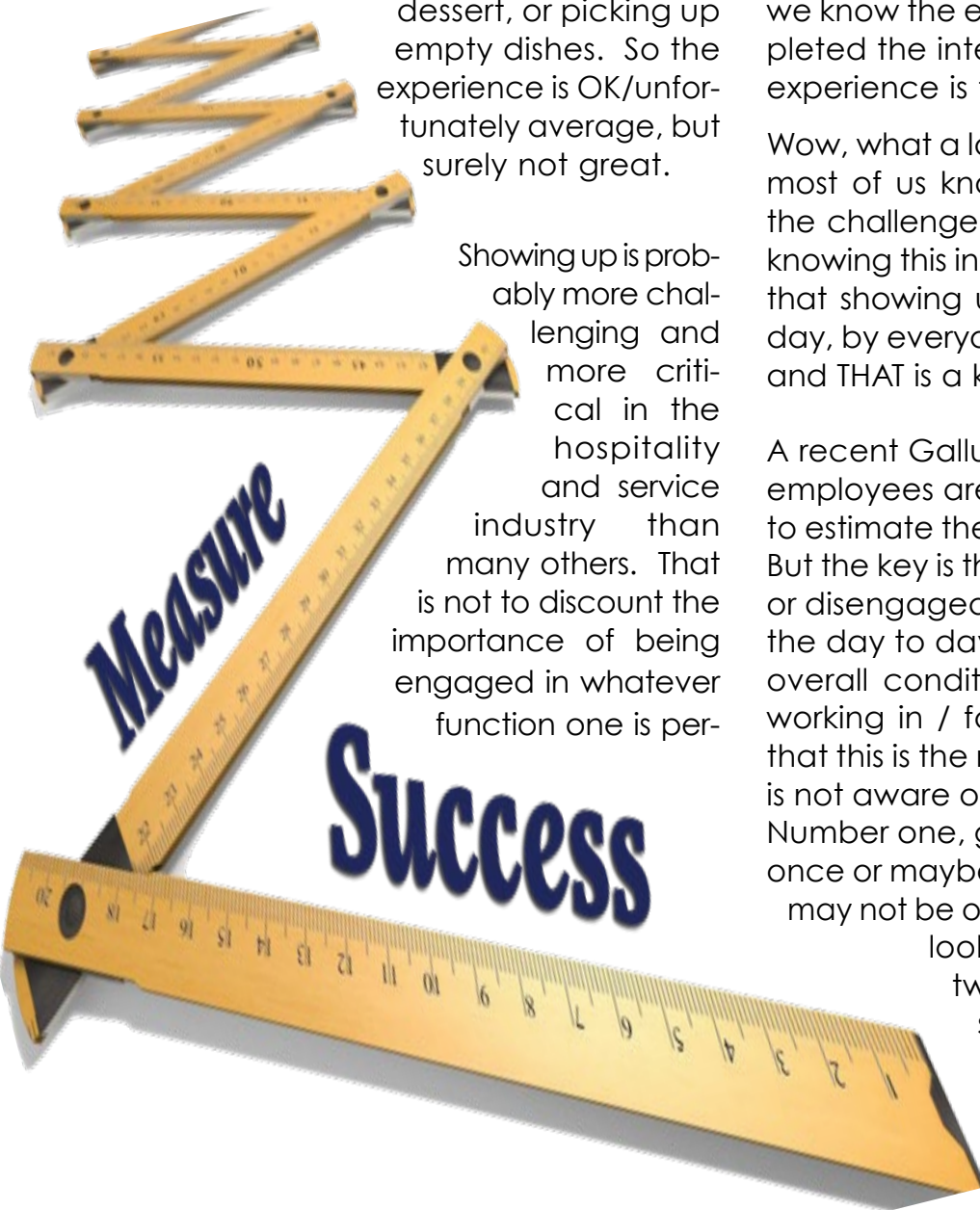


The simple answer is ABSOLUTELY. Well, that says it all, so do we really need to continue? From one perspective, it might be nice to say since the answer is yes we can stop here, but there is more to be said.

Intuitively, we all recognize that an engaged individual, in any task, is going to create a better outcome than an unengaged or fully disengaged individual. Doesn't matter what is being done, what is required or how relatively simple or complex the task / activity, engagement matters. Another word I frequently use for engagement is "showing up." And I don't mean just physically, but more importantly, mentally, because that is what shows at the end of the day. One of the keys to excellence is showing up.

No doubt there are other aspects that contribute to excellence, but you can't get there without fully showing up (being fully engaged). You can achieve the average, or in other terms mediocrity, without being engaged, and unfortunately that probably happens more often

that we would like to think. As an example, I am now on a flight and the flight attendant is clearly more engaged in her conversations with her associates than showing up for her job. She has missed simple things, like a napkin with dessert, or picking up empty dishes. So the experience is OK/unfortunately average, but surely not great.



Showing up is probably more challenging and more critical in the hospitality and service industry than many others. That is not to discount the importance of being engaged in whatever function one is per-

forming, especially where safety comes into play. Let's be honest, however, the human interaction that is the service business demands engagement if the "product" is to meet and exceed expectations. The best food, the most beautiful room, the arrival experience, all demand

that the individuals involved with the preparation and delivery have shown up. Great food without great service is frequently forgotten. Beautiful rooms that are not properly cleaned don't get the guest to return. Conversely, when we know the employee who did the task, completed the interaction was fully engaged, the experience is frequently memorable.

Wow, what a long introduction to confirm what most of us know: Engagement matters! But the challenge in the service industry is not just knowing this intuitively, it is explicitly understood that showing up is occurring each and every day, by everyone associated with the business, and THAT is a key challenge for management.

A recent Gallup poll suggests that only 30% of employees are engaged. The article goes on to estimate the costs of this to the US economy. But the key is that 70% of the staff is unengaged or disengaged. What impact is that having on the day to day experiences of guests and the overall condition of the assets that they are working in / for? Interestingly, I would guess that this is the number that most management is not aware of or does not want to recognize. Number one, generally we only survey a team once or maybe twice a year and engagement may not be one of the key metrics that is being looked at. Secondly, is once or twice a year sufficient to understand the level of engagement? The answer is definitely not. And most importantly, what can be done to increase the level of engagement?

A few things jump to mind. Management walking around surely helps, but it cannot be mechanical. It has to be sincere and the interaction should be engaging. More frequent evaluations of the team's level of engagement should be done and can be

done in today's technological environment very cost effectively. But even if both of these actions / activities are done, the key is to respond and take aggressive steps to focus on constantly improving the level of engagement of all individuals.

It is easy to see on a guest survey when there is a positive comment about an employee, that that individual was engaged (remember memorable experience). But how many interactions are just mediocre and could be memorable? Maybe that's a good and simple measure. How many on your team get named per month by your guests? We have accident prevention programs that keep track of accidents per month. Measuring the number of guests who experienced an engaged team member may be another means of assuring exceptional experiences, possibly even more

so than a total monthly rating. You can mark this one up to "food for thought".

The key though is clearly that the organizations with higher levels of staff engagement are going to be the ones that continually succeed in the market. More guests will return / recommend. Operating costs will be reduced in a variety of ways. The bottom line will be measurably healthier. I hope you enjoy the articles in our latest edition of FocusED as we further explore the importance and impact of ensuring that your team is engaged. 🇺🇸

Thanks,



Mark



Engaged Employees
Are the Foundation for
Exceeding Customer
Expectations