5 Self-management strategies to improve your employee engagement

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Self-management is a strategy wherein employees or members of a team have no strongly bound hierarchy. Instead, there are well-placed systems and carefully laid-out processes that are independently executed by individuals working within an organization. Instead of managers, there are leaders in place to guide and support but not micromanage.

Self-managed teams are not a newfangled idea; in fact, many companies in the Fortune 1000 bracket have been known to take this approach since the 1960s. Not only does it cut down costs, but it has been proven to increase business performance.

Self-managed employees are engaged employees.

A team that is given the freedom that self-management provides can perform better because they are shown that they are trusted to hit their goals. When employees can manage their own time and pace, they can gain a sense of control over their work and productivity. If they are given enough freedom to make decisions and power their ideas, they are engaged in their work. They become more invested in their company and their output, and they are more productive.

Here are 5 Self-management strategies to improve your employee engagement:

1. Create the proper systems and processes and provide the right tools

The key to the success of self-management is a set of systems and processes that are dynamic and succinct. They need to be solid enough to address every foreseeable circumstance yet be flexible enough to account for those that are not. Once those are established, you need to provide the right tools to execute those processes. For example, you can put together a list of best practices, provide templates and provide procedure guides set-up in a collaborative cloud space.

Last but not least, finding the right fit for the role is also essential.

2. Explain why, set clear expectations and boundaries to foster agility

For self-management to work, clear expectations and boundaries are key.

Work on specific timelines, people need to be clear on the end goal and the boundaries within which they can take action, so that the how to reach the goal is within the full control of the team. You need to strike a balance between clear expectations and autonomy. For most, that would mean saying X needs to be done, and how is up to you. Some teams might want more support and coaching with potentially having specific steps or order laid out.

Regardless of the expectations you set, always explain the 'why'. Make sure that each team member understands what they need to be doing and why. This leads to more clarity on the task at hand, and people can adjust when needed, which is the hallmark result of self-management: agility.

3. Encourage communication and psychological safety

Communication is crucial to be successful with self-management. Begin when setting expectations, make sure people are free and comfortable to ask questions to seek clarification and assure them that communication is always welcome.

You should also create a feedback system as a way to audit how the task is going, what needs fixing, what is going well and when the task is completed, what was learned to do even better on the next one. Your employees will grow faster and with more direction if their work contribution, ability to collaborate and add value is measured and guided.

4. Foster creativity and innovation

Tap into the human potential of your employees by fostering their creativity and innovation. While you must have your systems and processes in place, you must also leave room for them to use their creativity and expertise to innovate solutions and drive results.

Creating an environment that is collaborative and dynamic will encourage your employees to think beyond what they are simply instructed to do and find creative solutions that will help boost business.

5. Create learning opportunities

Investing in your employees' growth is mutually beneficial. You will give them the chance to further their talents that they will be using to improve and boost your organization.

There are several avenues in which you can create learning opportunities for your employees. You can provide access to online course databases, mentorship programs and self-assessment tools to increase self-awareness. Each task or project they complete can also be a learning opportunity, as mentioned earlier, through feedback from leaders and colleagues.

Self-management will not work for everyone or every company or organization. There are many things you need to consider before you decide to use this strategy. Once you have decided to take this path, your possibilities for growth increase exponentially and your employees will thrive for you.