

Can We Be Happy at Work?

... And will this thing called 'employee engagement' make us happier?

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Session will cover

- Is work good for us?
- What is 'employee engagement' and why is it important?
- What might engage people at work?
- Things currently conspiring to make us *unhappy* at work
- The dark side of engagement
- So - can we be happy at work?

Dame Carol Black: Work is generally good for Health

Galen (129-200)

Employment is nature's physician and is essential to human happiness.



Greek philosopher Galen wrote: "Employment is nature's physician, and is essential to human happiness."

Voltaire (1694-1778)

Work banishes those three great evils: boredom, vice and poverty.

William Osler (1849-1919)

To the young it brings hope, to the middle-aged confidence, to the aged repose: work.

Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919)

The best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.

That work is good for man is supported by evidence and consensus. The physician's role is to encourage work, and return to work, as part of treatment.

Talmage and Melhorn, AMA Press 2005

Dame Carol Black: Work - its value

- Work is an important driver of the social gradients in health.
- Work provides income & material well-being, meets important psychosocial needs, and brings participation in society.
- Work is generally good for health, mental and physical. Waddell and Burton 2006
- **BUT work needs to be 'good work' in good work-places.**



Dame Carol Black: Effects of unemployment



Long-term unemployment can lead to:

- poorer physical health
- poorer mental health
- greater usage of medical services
- poorer social integration
- loss of worth and self-confidence
- less monetary resources
- trans-generational effects.

All highlighted in recession. **ies**

Dame Carol Black: Impact of unemployment on next generation

There is evidence that :

- families with no-one working are more likely to suffer persistent low income and poverty
- lower parental income correlates with poor health in children
- child deaths from injury correlate with low employment status and worklessness
- behavioural and conduct disorders are more likely where no parent is working
- children of workless households are more likely to be workless themselves when adult.



*Working for a
healthier
tomorrow, 2008*

WARNING!!



Dame Carol Black: Is a poor quality job better than no job at all? **NO!**

- A large body of research shows that work lacking in adequate psychosocial quality is associated with poor mental health
(Karasek 1979; Siegrist 1996; Stansfield and Candy 2006; Stansfield et al 2012)
- Those in the poorest quality jobs (combination of psychosocial adversities: high demands, low control, poor security) have similar or higher risk of psychological distress than those unemployed
(Broom et al 2006)
- Transition to poor-quality jobs is associated with greater decline in mental health than transition to unemployment or remaining unemployed
(Leach et al 2010)
- Health benefits of becoming employed depend on the quality of job obtained (higher, better)
(Butterfield et al 2011).

Employee Engagement

What is it, and why is it important?

What is this thing called engagement, anyway?

- Lots of different ways of defining and measuring employee engagement
- Fundamentally, it's about feeling motivated by, involved with, and interested in:
 - the work we do
 - the organisation we work for

Some definitions

- CIPD: ‘Being focused in what you do (thinking), feeling good about yourself in your role and the organisation (feeling), and acting in a way that demonstrates commitment to the organisational values and objectives (acting).’
- IES: ‘A positive attitude held by the employee towards the organisation and its values.’

So what?

Higher levels of engagement are **positively** associated with:

- health, well-being and life satisfaction
- performance, at both individual and team/departmental/organisation levels
- commitment to the organisation
- customer satisfaction/loyalty
- receptivity to change
- employee advocacy

...and **negatively** associated with:

- employee turnover
- burnout
- counter-productive behaviour

Ok, this sounds promising... So what can organisations do to engage people?

Engaging organisations:

- Value and involve their employees
- Give them interesting work with meaning
- Provide satisfying jobs with autonomy to use initiative
- Manage people well
- Give them ways to speak up
- Are genuine about health and safety, corporate social responsibility, equal opportunities, work-life balance
- Develop people, both formally and informally
- Show them how their role matters to the business overall
- Give them the tools to do their job
- Reward them fairly

How do good managers behave?

What do they do to engage and motivate their teams?

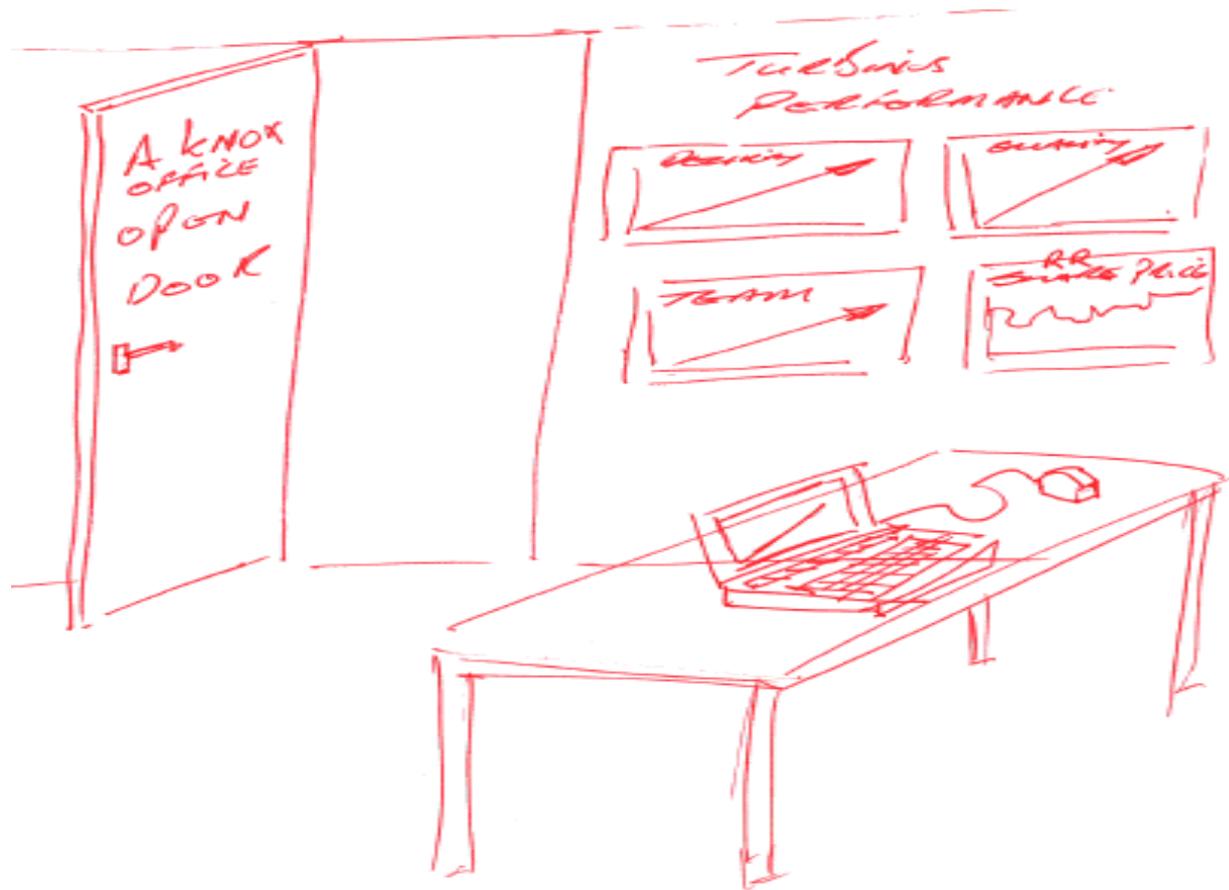
Evidence from IES's research into the behaviours of 25 engaging managers in seven organisations

Communicating and listening



2 way Communication

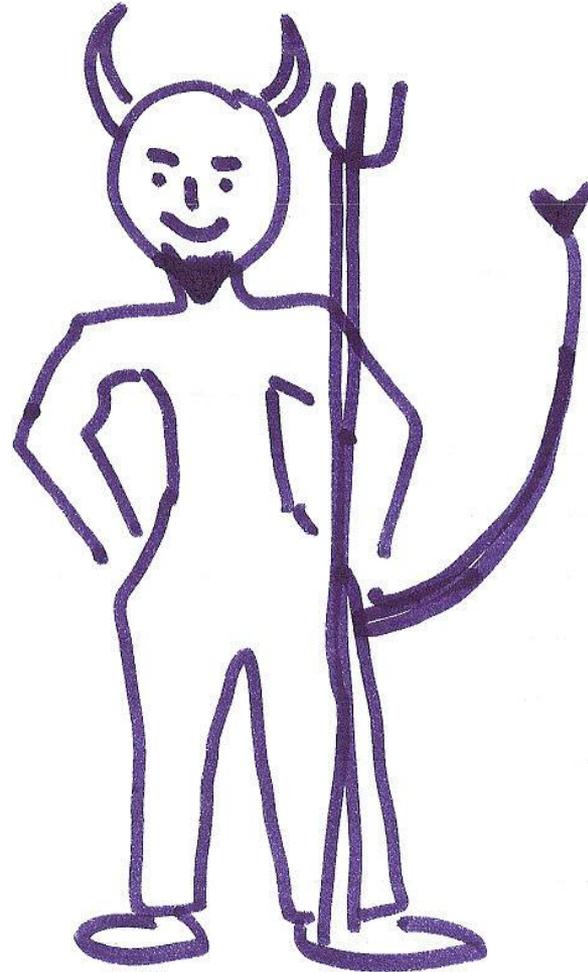
Genuine open door



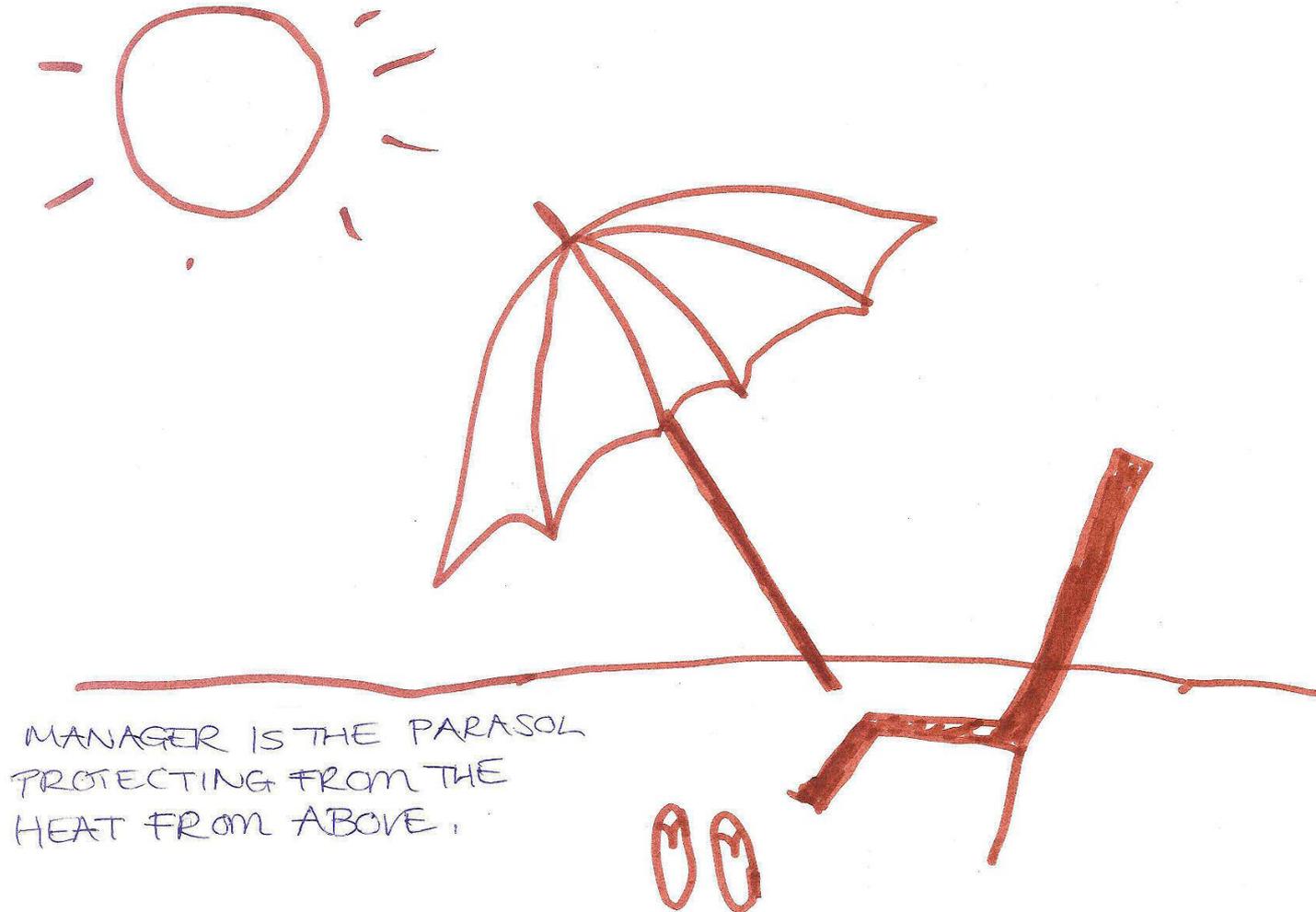
Reliable, dependable and loyal



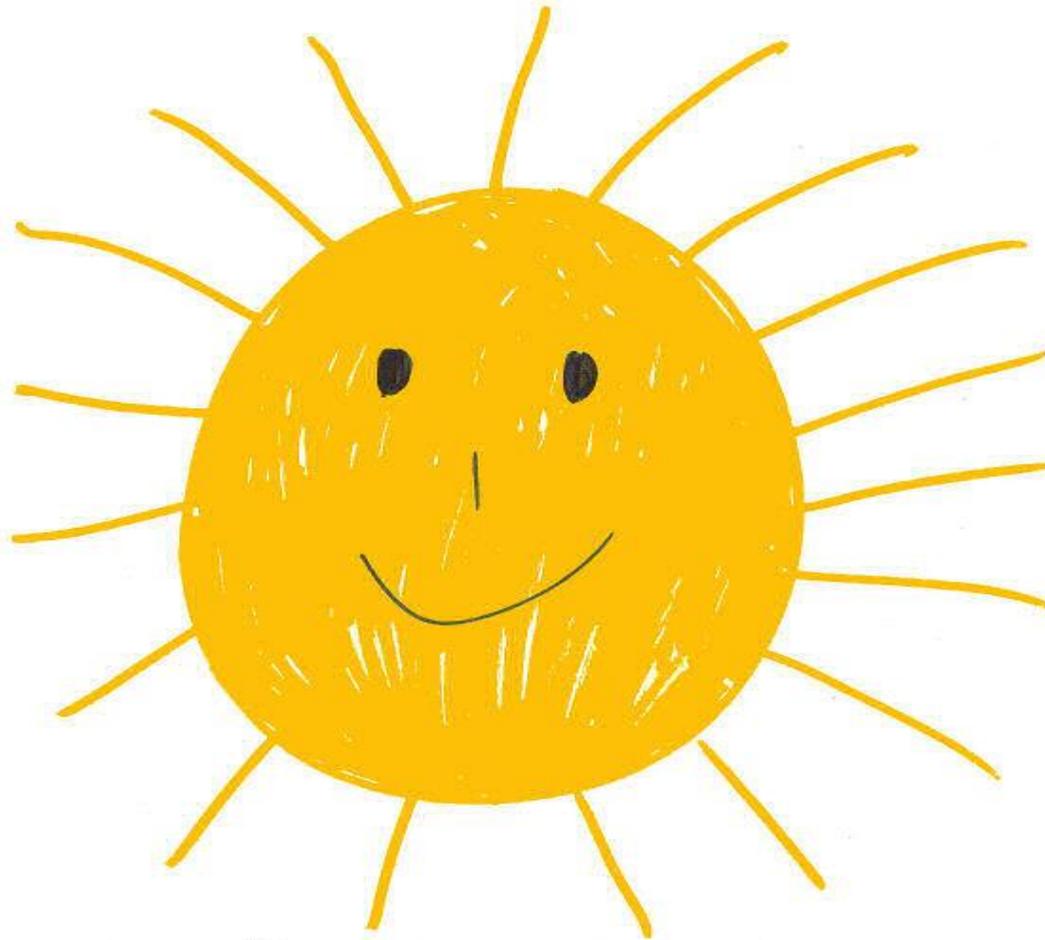
Maverick, not following company line



Protecting team and individuals



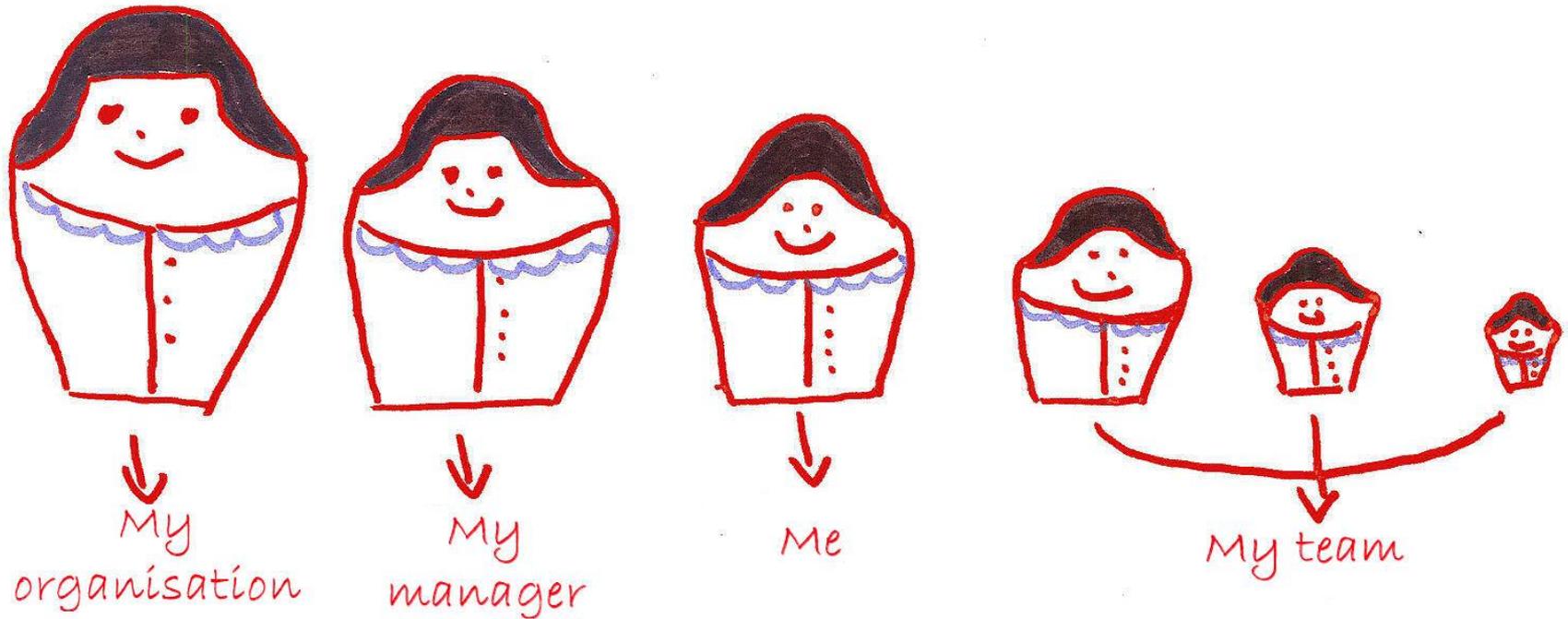
Positive, optimistic and warm



The strategic leader



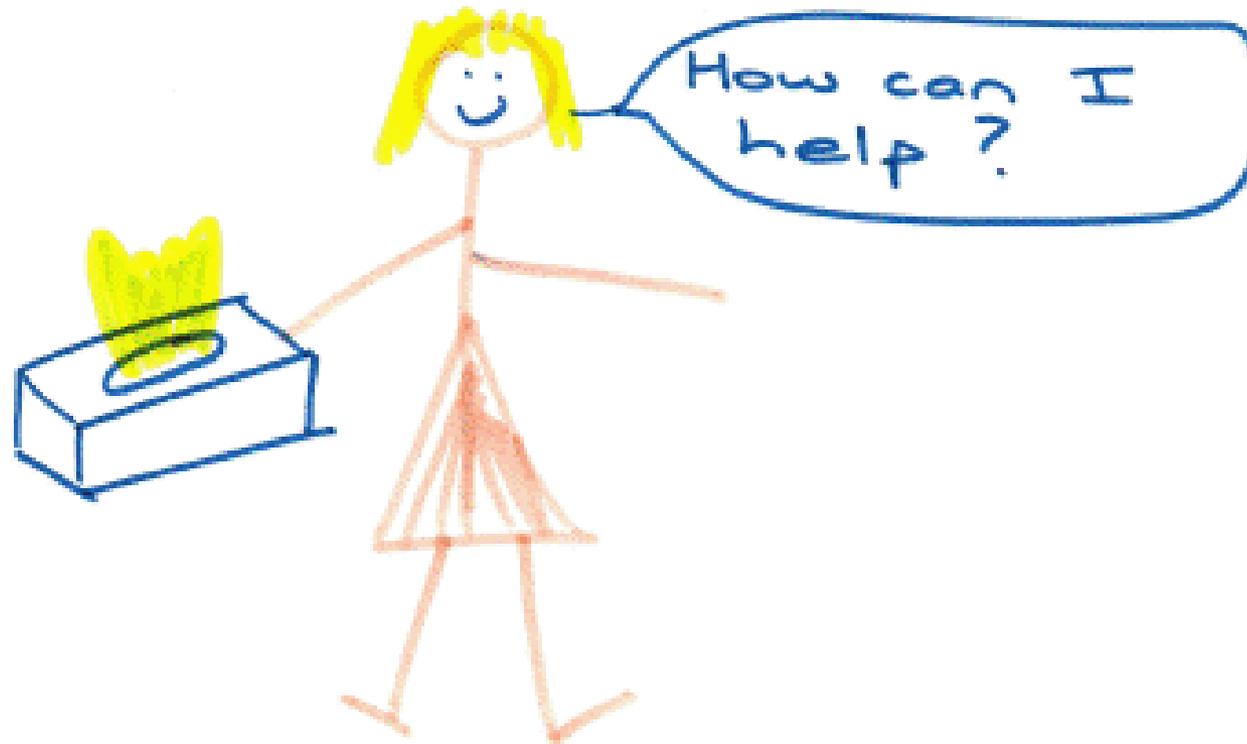
Understands organisation and contribution of self and team



Performance tick



Practical assistance and understanding



Words used by team members



Houston, we have a problem...

- 44% UK workers dislike their boss more than they dislike Katie Hopkins
- 42% have gone so far as to quit their jobs because of their boss

Survey of 1300 employees carried out by B2B marketplace Approved Index, 2015

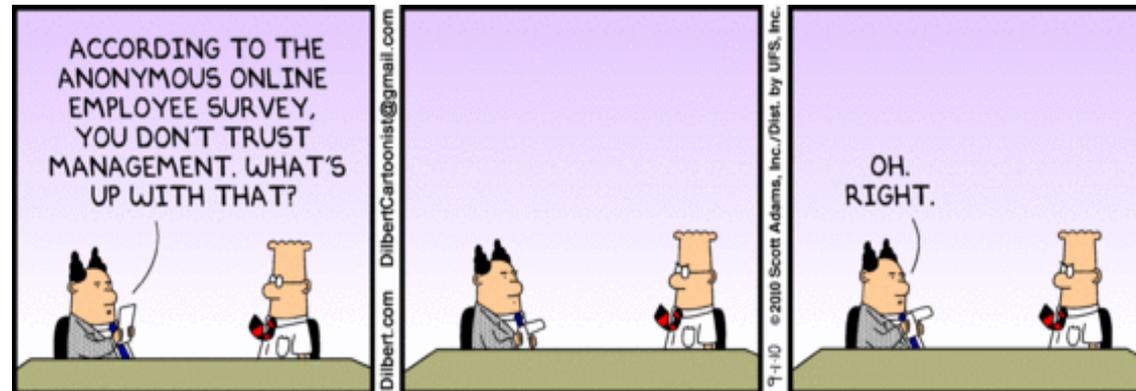


Do managers know how to behave?

- Is there a management guide, including good people management behaviours?
- Do managers receive training in people management?
- Are managers rewarded for being good people managers?
- Do managers receive the support they need, from HR and from the senior team?
- Do people on the senior team lead by example, and provide good role models

What else gets in the way? Trust

- The most influential factor in engagement is **trust in management**
- But it's taken a hammering
- Sense of shared purpose has been lost:
 - senior team must learn to consult and engage genuinely with employees



Voice

- Voice is a prime driver of engagement, but challenges many managers:
 - lack of trust inhibits voice
 - engagement programmes can view employees as passive recipients



Well-being

- Workforce will need to become more and more resilient:
 - cost pressures
 - fewer staff
 - public sector squeeze
- Much more attention to employee well-being will be needed:
 - to achieve more with less
 - to maintain product/service quality
 - to encourage innovation and creativity



Stress has nothing to do with
how many hours you work

And everything to do with how
you feel during those hours

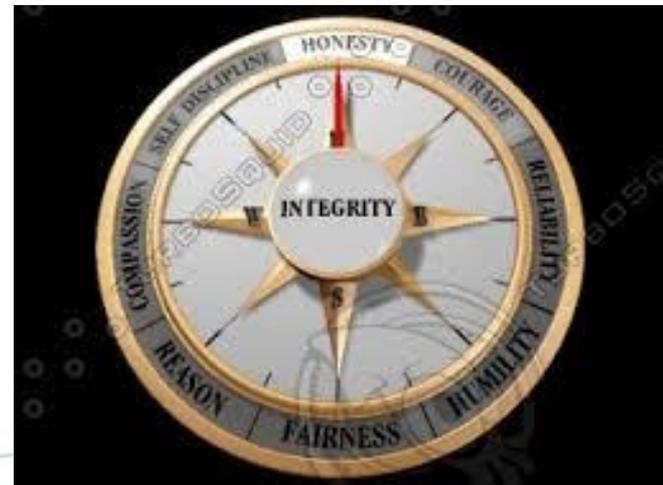
sussexsport
fitness | sport | well-being

Doing the right thing

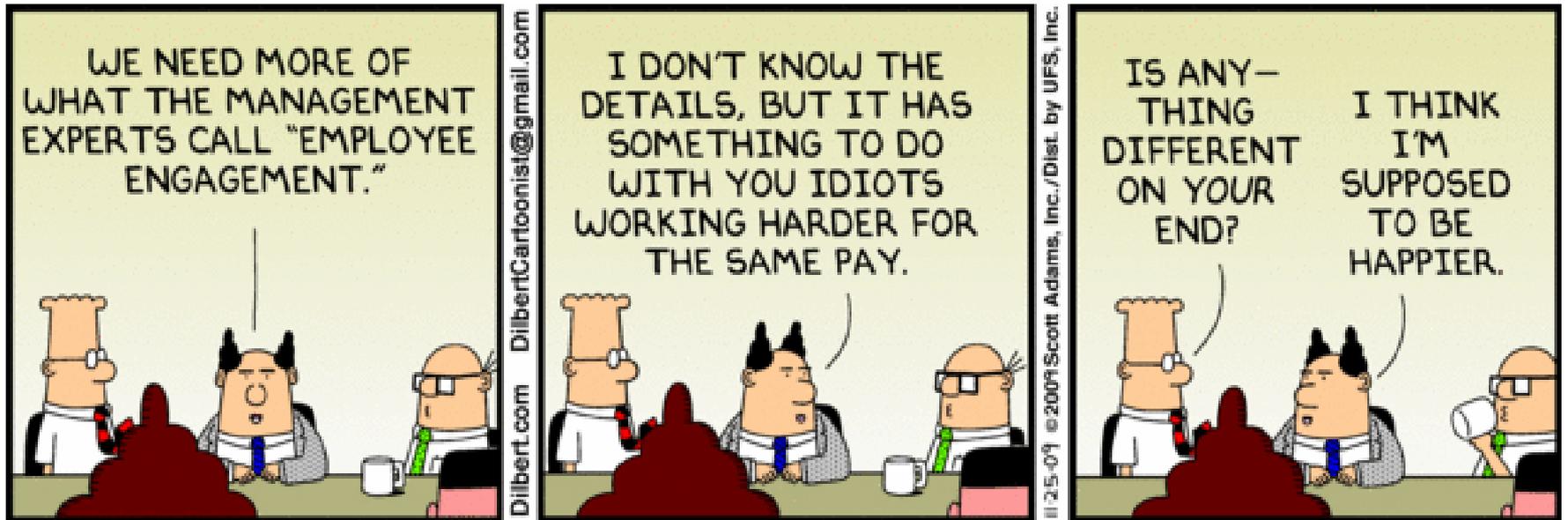
- Widespread revulsion at financial mismanagement, bankers' bonuses, public sector failings:
 - public are hungry for accountability, honesty, fairness
 - social media exposes failings
- Engagement is the **right** thing to do:
 - business benefits (reputation, performance, employee retention) should not be the primary motive



"Make sure everything is done ethically. Within reason, of course."



Engagement: the dark side



Over to you! Can we be happy at work?

What makes you happy (or sad, angry, frustrated, depressed) at work?

- Do you love or hate your boss?
- Does your organisation value you?
- Do you have a 'good' job that benefits your well-being?



IES's research into employee engagement

- Started in 2002 by defining and measuring engagement, and identifying engagement drivers in the NHS:
Drivers of Employee Engagement 2004
- Extended into other sectors and settings to test our early findings:
Engagement: The Continuing Story 2007
- Reviewed all the engagement evidence:
Employee Engagement: A review of current thinking 2009
- Most recently, investigated managerial behaviours:
The Engaging Manager 2009
Images of Engaging Management 2012
Teams and the Engaging Manager 2012
The Engaging Manager and Sticky Situations 2014
The Engaging Manager in Development Mode 2015
- A 360° tool to help managers assess and improve their people management behaviours

Thank you

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