

from
the leadership

A recent study
showed that
employee
engagement is
at a record low.



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The series of crises of the last decade clearly have cast a shadow on employee trust and morale. Engagement scores can be low for many reasons — some within the company, others more external.

There are many definitions of employee engagement. A speaker at the WorldatWork 2011 Total Rewards Conference and Exhibition defined it as 'energy' or $e=mc^2$. However, that doesn't express who gets to benefit from the energy. I prefer to define engagement as sustained identification and commitment. Those elements determine if you are willing to go the extra mile in principle. It is also clear that nothing happens without energy.

Identification starts early: It's after the contract is signed, when the marketing stops and reality kicks in. Beyond, it's about how you fit into the company and

can make meaningful contributions. And how management communicates and behaves when it really matters to you.

Like reputation, identification has to be earned. It's about transparency and authenticity, about understanding the company's strategy and how you can add value in a way that serves your personal needs and the company's. We all observe and judge continuously. That's where sustainability comes in, as it is easy to do well for a day, week or month, but much harder to do so over longer periods.

When energy, identification and commitment coexist over time, they can boost company performance and ultimately create competitive advantage. So it is well worth investing in a positive company culture and inspiring work environment. This includes developing role model leaders. Only then will staff be willing to put in discretionary effort and time when needed.

Sincerely,

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