

Happy, Engaged Employees are the key to a Profitable Business

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It is a truism that in the physical security industry your workforce and your reputation are the business's largest and most important assets. Managing your workforce with empathy to ensure happy, engaged employees can be a balancing act. However, providing flexible working practices that are still profitable for your business is achievable, and something that every security business should be aiming for.

SmartTask CEO, Paul Ridden discusses the hidden benefits of an engaged workforce and the role that good workforce management has to play.

The importance of an engaged workforce can't be stressed enough because motivated employees are what makes a business successful. According to Gallup(i), disengaged employees are a drain on any business. On average, they have 37% higher absenteeism, 18% lower productivity and 15% lower profitability. When the impact to the bottom line is calculated, you're looking at the cost of 34% of a disengaged employee's annual salary (ii).

Conversely, highly engaged staff show a 40% reduction in absenteeism, and almost 60% less turnover. Engaged employees show up every day with enthusiasm and purpose. They tend to work harder, treat customers well (leading to more business), and, are more likely to remain with the company.

What makes an Engaged Employee?

Employee engagement is determined by factors such as feeling clear about your role at work, and having the right tools to enable you to do your job to the best of your ability. Being recognised for your hard work and diligence is also a key factor.

Workforce management, when done well, can make a significant difference to all of these factors, and therefore help to foster an engaged workforce, which is good for business.

How Workforce Management helps

Traditionally, workforce management and time & attendance (clocking on and off) systems may have seemed a bit 'big brother', however, this is no longer the case. In a world where almost everyone carries a smartphone, people are quite used to the idea of constant connectivity. This can be harnessed to enable security businesses to run more smoothly and efficiently, benefitting everyone. Indeed, being able to prove that a contracted service has been delivered is not only good for customer service, and invoicing, it also provides recognition for hardworking staff.

Three significant benefits for Employees

1. Providing Flexibility and Work/life Balance

While we all know that contracts are contracts, and security businesses must deliver, ditching paper based systems in favour of an electronic workforce management solution, can provide additional flexibility to workers, supporting work/life balance. For example, shifts and rosters, which can be designed in a fraction of the time with a purpose-built solution, can be published further in advance,

giving employees enough notice of work patterns to plan their lives around their shifts.

People are more easily able to swap shifts or sign up for additional work, and the control room still has oversight to see exactly who is working where and when. In addition, staff can see their accrued holiday entitlement more easily, and request leave from their smartphones.

Staff feel more in control of their lives when they can discuss their work patterns and holidays with family while at home simply by referring to an app on their device. Staff that feel empowered in such a way are more likely to feel happy and engaged with the business.

2. Convenience and Duty of Care

Using an app to deliver work schedules and assignment instructions provides your employees with the tools and information they need to do their job while removing the stress of dealing with paper-based forms. Task lists for completion while onsite sent directly to their mobile device is convenient for all, and helps to prove compliance with any regulatory requirements, including Duty of Care.

Check calls are part of daily life for security workers. Remembering to make them can be cumbersome, but with an app, they can be built into the employee's Actions for the day/shift, with an automated prompt to make the call.

3. Payroll Visibility and additional Services for Staff

With an online time & attendance solution where people clock in and out electronically, they are able to check their hours accrued and see what their salary will be. If a shift is missed, for example, they are able to query with the payroll department much sooner, leading to more accurate and timely pay.

Additional services can be provided, such as 'pay in advance' schemes, where workers are able to draw down a percentage of their earned salary before payday. This enables staff to manage their finances better and avoid taking payday loans.

Workforce Management – Return on Investment

The benefits to the business of a workforce management solution are many. Saving time on back office processes such as designing rosters, managing shifts/attendance/service delivery, holidays and absence. Reducing reliance on manual systems, keeping electronic records provides audit trails, proves compliance and streamlines invoices for all work completed.

Having detailed records also means better analysis of the business. Managing rosters and schedules is one thing, ensuring that every shift is profitable is much more complex. However, with electronic workforce management all the variables, fixed costs, recurring costs, salaried people, hourly people and the cost of equipment required, that go into costing a shift can be analysed to ensure every shift is profitable.

The future of Work - Keeping your people happy

In a post-COVID world, people have embraced technology at a pace not previously imagined. Technology has enabled us to keep in contact with loved ones, enabled those that can, to work remotely, and provides better safeguards to key workers that cannot work remotely.

Providing people with the right tools to do their job is a major step forward in empowering your

workforce to do well. Electronic systems that reduce paperwork, also reduce the drudgery of form filling. At head office that frees people up for more proactive, strategic and customer facing work, that really makes a difference to your business. Out in the field, electronic systems keep people safer, more informed and helps them to manage their work/life balance. A winning combination for everyone.

Paul Ridden is CEO of SmartTask

Paul has spent most of his working life in the computer industry, with the last ten years spent focusing on software solutions for the security, cleaning, FM and logistics sectors. Part of Paul's role is to use his passion and entrepreneurial approach to build a technology team that can develop and deliver affordable software solutions that take advantage of the latest technologies and help deliver value to all SmartTask users, large and small.

SmartTask (<http://www.smarttask.co.uk>)

Editors contact:

Andreina West

PR Artistry

+44 (0) 1491 845553

andreina@pra-ltd.co.uk

(i) Gallup (<https://news.gallup.com/reports/178514/state-american-workplace.aspx>)

(ii) Reference

(<https://learning.linkedin.com/blog/engaging-your-workforce/how-to-calculate-the-cost-of-employee-disengagement>)