

Employees who share the same goals as their manager are more likely to contribute ideas

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Employee's that share similar motivation for achievement with their managers are much more likely to speak up and share their ideas, concerns or feedback, according to new research by Durham University Business School.

The researchers also found that if an employee is well-aligned with their manager, they are more likely to feel a connection to the organisation and its identity.

These findings come from research by Dr Janey Zheng, Professor of Leadership at Durham University Business School, alongside her colleagues, Michele Williams from the University of Iowa, and Christina Wang and Jian Liang, both from Tongji University.

The researchers wanted to examine how an employee and their manager being aligned on achievement goals and working standards on how likely employees were to speak up to management when they had ideas, feedback or concerns.

In order to do so, the researchers conducted two separate studies, which was a collective sample of over 800 employee-supervisor pairs in Chinese firms. The participants were asked about their own personal goals in their role, as well as how likely they were to voice their ideas, concerns and feedback to their own supervisor.

By matching employee's answers with their leaders, the researchers were able to identify that if an employee has similar goals and working standards to their supervisor then they are much more likely to speak up.

Interestingly, the researchers did find that the motivation for achievement and to be excel did not have to be high for workers to speak up. In fact, employees would share their thoughts even if they did not want to be the best at work, as long as their supervisor was on the same page. However, if an employee had high motivation for achievement, and a leader did not – or vice versa – then employees were less likely to speak up.

"Employee's feeling as though they have a voice is highly important to an organisation.", says Dr Zheng. "Not only does it mean new perspectives, ideas and insight for the wider team, which can improve the organisation, but also employees who feel they can share feedback safely are more likely to be happy in their roles. Therefore, aligning the motivations of managers and workers should be a key goal for any organisation."

The researchers say that an employee can only be aligned to their manager's goals if they are made aware of what these are of course, therefore organisations should look to pair supervisors with employee's who share similar goals to ensure the whole team has a collective voice.

Another approach, the researchers say, could be ensuring that from the outset managers share their own

vision with employee's so they are on board. Whilst if this is not possible, organisations should look to host team-building programs, motivational speakers, and other activities in an attempt to align the team's goals.

Employee's feeling as though they have a voice is highly important to top managers because it generates innovative solutions to complex issues and enhances organizational effectiveness. Therefore, organisations should stress the importance of managers aligning their goals, for the good of the wider organisation.

If you would be interested in this research paper, or speaking to the researchers, please contact Peter Remon at BlueSky Education – peter@bluesky-pr.com +44 (0) 77 235 228 30.