Elite Leadership

Issue 5   June 2014

The Free Leadership Magazine

The Secret Of Employee Engagement

Get Rid Of The Vampires In Your Life

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Are You Judging People Fairly?

Inspiring people to become better leaders

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FROM THE EDITOR

Thank you for taking time to read Elite Leadership, the free leadership magazine.

My name is Mark Wager and I'm a Leadership Coach based in New Zealand. I'm a firm believer that leaders are made and not born. Leadership is a series of behaviours that when combined with a passion to succeed can take people to a level that they never thought possible. This magazine is my attempt to help people develop into quality leaders.

In this months edition I share a simple secret to the complicated challenge of employee engagement.

I think that people are usually an average of the five people who are closest to them. If we surround ourselves with people with poor attitudes it greatly reduces the likelihood of you becoming successful. This month I look at how you can identify and remove these "vampires" from your life.

Let me know what your think about this magazine by contacting me on Twitter or just email me direct on mark@eliteld.co.nz

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The S.E.C.R.E.T of Employee Engagement

"In simple terms if you want highly engaged employees you need to align their personal ambition to your organisations' objectives."

I was with a business organisation last week that had just received their employee engagement results. For those of you who haven't been exposed to Employee Engagement surveys, it's basically an indicator of how connected the employees are to their organisation. As the Managers went through the results there was a range of emotions ranging from pride to disappointment, even downright depression. The results were not what they had expected and as a result they buried their heads in the mountain of data that the survey produced in the hope that if they analysed each line they would find the answer as to how to motivate their employees. As I watched the flip charts and whiteboards fill up with ideas and suggestions I thought of my very first Manager of many years ago.

When I was eighteen I had started working in retail, a shoe shop to be precise. I had aspirations to be a leader and I asked my Manager for some tips to which he replied 'happy employees make good employees." The Manager was basic in his approach. The motivation of people is a complex subject, more complex than I can place in an article but in essence he was correct. He knew something that is now confirmed by mountains of employee survey data that people don't want to come to work to be miserable and very rarely do they come to work to do a bad job. People want to be happy and Managers seem to unwittingly find ways in order to prevent that happiness. Employee engagement surveys are a vital tool for any business but over-analysing each line of data can steer you away from the simplicity of employee engagement that is make your company a mechanism to help staff achieve their ambition to be happy rather than the barrier

that prevents them from becoming happy.

In simple terms if you want highly engaged employees you need to align their personal ambition to your organisations' objectives.

In order to do this you need to know something that I have developed and that is the secret of employee engagement and that secret is:

Significance
Empowerment
Clarity
Relationships
Engagement
Trust

Now you know the S.E.C.R.E.T of employee engagement let's look at each one in particular along with some of the specific leadership actions that go along with them.

Significance
People need to feel valued and have a sense that there is a reason for their job existing and

there's a reason why they are in that job rather than someone else. They are aware of what value they bring to the table and that value gives them a positive image of themselves.
Leadership actions: Praising staff, rewards, celebrating success, linking tasks to overall organisational objectives

Empowerment
People need the power and belief in themselves to be the makers of their own destiny. I've always believed a sign of a good leader is not only knowing when to stand up and lead but also when to sit down and get out of people's way.

Leadership actions: Ensuring systems are working and manuals are up to date. Delegating responsibility rather than tasks, involving staff with decisions that impact on them

Clarity
This could easily also be C for certainty.
Fundamentally we haven't changed that much
since we were babies. If we get a positive result for
a specific behaviour then we repeat that behaviour
yet if we get negative results then we change the
behaviour. People need to be aware of what is
expected from them and the consequences of their
actions. People need clarity in order to make the
correct decisions
Leadership actions: clear performance plans, job
descriptions, consistent approach to managing
performance.

Relationships
The most motivating factor for people in teams is
their connection to their colleagues. Visions inspire
us but it's our connection with people that turns
that inspiration into constructive action.
Leadership actions: regular team building, people
are aware of each other's duties and their impact
on everyone else.

Engagement
By engagement I mean people learning challenging
new skills, variety in their workplace. People by their very nature
seek out to grow and develop and when that need is not met
motivation diminishes. Employee engagement tends to be high
when a person starts with a new employer and tends to fall with
every proceeding year. An excretion to this is with more mature
staff typically aged 55+
Leadership actions: clear development plans for each staff
member with their career path aligned to the organisations
objectives.

Trust
This is the simplest and most obvious motivating factor but the
most difficult to learn. You can teach people the theory of
employee engagement and you can teach them the basics of
psychological behaviours within teams but it's difficult to teach
someone to be honest. The best you can do is to manage the
consequences of their honest or dishonest behaviour. People
want to believe and trust their leader, if that trust is lost then the
leader is only a leader in name.
Leadership actions: Regular meetings, Transparency of decision
making, introduce "skip" meetings which are meeting between
staff and their Manager's boss once in a while.

This is not a comprehensive list but just an overview of the
complexity of employee engagement and how some simple
principles can motivate a team to reach a level that they never
thought was possible. So remember whenever you are trying to
solve the riddle of employee engagement just remember our little
secret.

**Significance, empowerment, clarity, relationships,
engagement, trust**

Get Rid Of The Vampires In Your Life

The vampire is one of the most iconic images in history from. Bram Stoker's 1897 novel "Dracula" through to Nosferatu leading up to Anne Rice's and Stephanie Meyers' modern day interpretations. The visual image of the vampire has changed during the years but the consistent characteristic has remained; the vampires need to suck the blood from the living and make them undead, a vampire like themselves

The vampire has been used as an analogy for many things throughout literature, whether it's a symbol of guilt, a repressed sexual need or an expression of the wealthy feeding of the poor, the story of the vampire can be a powerful expression. This made me consider just how many of us have vampires in our lives and how we could get rid of them

"Cutting people out of your life can be as brutal as pushing a stake through a heart"

There are people in this world who look and talk like us but they are different. These people have unfulfilled lives. Where there should be self-love there are gaps. Where there should be light there is only darkness and they believe the only way to relieve this darkness is to take the light away from other people's lives. When they see happiness in other people they don't use it as an incentive to what they themselves could achieve but instead they wish to feed of this light. These people are simply modern day vampires and you need them out of your life.

What makes a vampire?

They started off like everyone else and like most people they looked at their lives and didn't like what they saw. Not uncommon but most of us have been there and what makes these vampires different is, when they saw themselves in the mirror, an unfulfilled life, and did not like what they saw, the blame for this life was transferred to everyone else but themselves. They blamed circumstances, they blamed their boss, their partners and, other people but never themselves. This thinking results in failure to take full

responsibility for the state of their own lives, their career and their happiness. They will never ever resolve their issues and will never ever live their life to its full potential. They are not fully alive, they only appear alive. They continue to reinforce this shadow of a life by believing that anyone who achieves success only does so because of luck or chance so they consciously make a decision to put down that person's achievements, they feed off their energy, their success with the sole aim to make the successful person as lifeless as themselves.

How do you spot a vampire?

Don't be fooled and think that the vampires in your life are obvious. The ones that are obvious are likely not in your life and you are keeping them at a distance. The dangerous ones are the ones who may be close to you. They are nice and bubbly and may smile when you share good news but it's in these moments of sharing that you see the difference. They will immediately respond by either covertly diminishing your achievements by saying "you are so lucky" or "how on earth did you do that?" Deep down the resentment is building and so is the desire to suck the energy out of you. Another sign is that they will talk about a personal achievement of theirs which is not related to your topic.

Why get rid of the vampires?

It can come across as a heartless decision to cut or distance people out of your life but remember just how much of an influence the immediate circle of friends have on you. I've heard it said that you as a person are the average of your five closest friends. Looking around and I think this is accurate, we attract like-minded people into our inner circle and they influence us greatly. Despite how complex we are as individuals fundamentally we repeat behaviours that receive positive reinforcement and we stop behaviours for which we receive negative reinforcement. We haven't changed that much since we were babies. A baby cries and as a result receives attention, because they receive attention the behaviour is reinforced and so next time they want attention what do they do? They cry. When the baby's cries are not responded to the baby stops crying, the behaviour was met with negative reinforcement so it stops and replaces this with a different behaviour. We need to surround ourselves with people who will reinforce the positive behaviours in our lives. If we don't we will never grow.

How to get rid of the vampires

Cutting people out of your life can be as brutal as pushing a stake through a heart. To be honest this is something that I personally delayed doing for a long time. I kept a circle of friends who in hindsight never provided a positive environment yet I thought "it's just them" "They don't mean anything by it" and maybe they were completely unaware of the negative impact they had on me and it wasn't until I heard someone say "why do you allow these people in your life?" Until then as strange as it sounds I never realised that how people treated me and my happiness was my responsibility. It was at this stage I made the difficult decision to rid the vampires out of my life.

If cutting people out of your life seems a step too far for you then like in the movies try to get rid of the vampires with light. Make a conscious effort to influence your friends more than they influence you and show them the way with the light in your life. Be ultra positive and be positive about the behaviours they demonstrate that you want to see repeated. These vampires exist because of gaps in their self-esteem. A lack of acceptance of who they are. Shower them with positivity and allow them to accept themselves and encourage them to take responsibility for their lives and their own happiness. Do this and maybe you will get rid of the vampires in your life and those who remain will be your true circle of friends.

"Why do you allow these people in your life?"

Are You Judging People Fairly?

Every day leaders form an opinion of the character of the members of their team. If a leader is asked about a team member they will confidently comment on personal qualities such as dependability, loyalty, responsibility, sense of honour and just how nice the member is. Even if they don't know them very well the majority of leaders will tell you that they instinctively know. They may have never spent any time with that person outside of a workplace setting but ask them and they say "I just know" normally followed by "I'm a good judge of character." Very rarely do these judgements come with any supporting evidence. It is normally just a gut feeling. Is it a gut feeling or are we being influenced by something we are unaware of and therefore making wrong judgements on people without us realising it?

In 1920 psychologist Edward Thorndike first coined the phrase "halo effect." This suggests that a person's judgement on another person's character is influenced by their overall first impression of that person. While not limited to first impressions, judgement is usually associated with a person's view of how attractive one is. This influences our opinions on their personal characteristics e.g. you think someone is a nice person just because they are attractive. It's prudent to mention at this time that the "halo effect" refers to the "bias" being subconsciously applied so people are not deliberately making a judgement based on looks

There have been many studies on the "halo effect" but the one that I found most interesting was a study by the University of Minnesota (Dion and Berscheid) on scoring academic papers. A group of sixty male students had to mark some written essays. A third of them had papers that had photos of an attractive woman as the author attached. Another third had photos of an unattractive woman as the author and the last third had no photo. The essays, unknown to the students, had been prejudged for quality and was evenly split between the students. The results were surprising. The well written essays written by attractive people received an average score of 6.7 while essays of similar quality associated with unattractive people scored a much lower mark of 5.2. The essays without pictures scored 6.6. When they looked at the poorly written essays the differences were greater. The attractive authors received a score of 5.2 yet the unattractive authors scored a low 2.7 while the essays without photos scored 4.7. The students consistently gave higher marks to people who they considered more attractive.

Now before you think that this is just about crazy male students this type of "halo effect" is prevalent in both genders. The key difference seems to be that males are favourably influenced by the attractiveness of both genders while females seem to be only influenced by the attractiveness of the opposite sex. When judging other attractive

females they tended to actually mark them lower than higher.

The "halo effect" can be seen in all walks of society. In schools, with jurors in trials and commonly in the workplace and if you still doubt me then ask yourself when was the last time you saw an attractive homeless person? This "halo effect" is not surprising when you see how obsessed society is with beauty. Turn on the TV, go to the movies, we are bombarded with images of how society wants us to view the world and without us knowing it we are influenced in ways that we are completely unaware of.

As leaders we need to be aware of how the "halo effect" influences our decisions because ultimately our decisions influence the future of our business so when we are talking about the personal qualities of a person whether it's their dependability, their loyalty, responsibility, their sense of humour or even how nice they are ask yourself this question. "Why?" Why have you reached that conclusion. What is the evidence to support that judgement.

Whenever we have a "gut" feeling or just a "hunch" it is us trying to understand a decision that has been made by what we call "pre-cognitive thought." It is a decision made without us consciously considering it. When this occurs it's not always the correct decision. Think about times that you have reacted to situations only to later on regret your actions. This is the same place that your gut feelings and hunches come from. Sometimes they are right but more often than not they are wrong. Never forget that we should always make judgements on people's personal characteristics based on what they are or do and not on what they look like. We will always be drawn to people that we find attractive. It is in our nature but just be aware of what we see as beauty may not be in fact beauty.

Leadership quotes

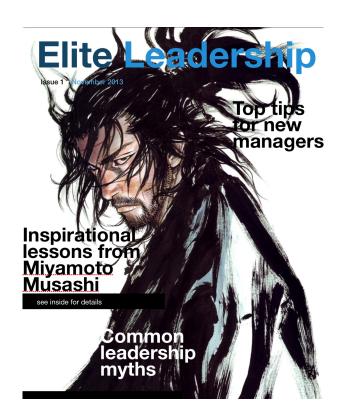*"Change your thoughts and you change your world." - Norman Vincent Peale*

""The first task of a leader is to keep hope alive." - Joe Batten

"The power of imagination makes us infinite." - John Muir

"A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way and shows the way." John C. Maxwell

""No man is good enough to govern another man without that other's consent." - Abraham Lincoln

"You have to think anyway, so why not think big?" - Donald Trump

"I light my candle from their torches." - Robert Burton

"You have to have your heart in the business and the business in your heart." - An Wang
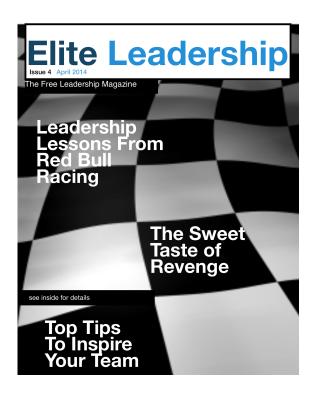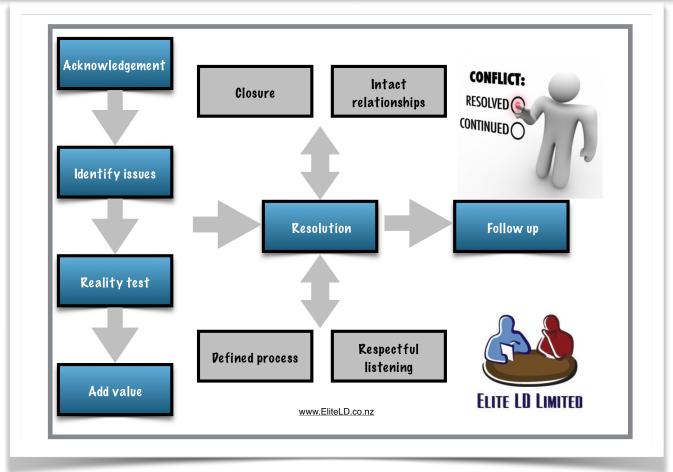
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Inspirational lessons from Miyamoto Musashi

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When did your leadership journey start?

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The search for motivation

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The Sweet Taste of Revenge

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Top Tips To Inspire Your Team

Learn how to manage conflict

Every elite leader needs the ability to manage conflict in a positive way. One of the greatest myths about managing conflict, and believe me there are a few, is that conflict within teams is a negative factor. However, conflict if managed correctly can be a powerful driver for change.

Elite LD provides specialised coaching to provide prospective or current leaders with all the skills they need in order to effectively manage conflict. The coaching varies depending on the participants requirements but the usual format is three two hour one-on-one coaching sessions. The sessions are broken down in order to follow the general principles of accelerated learning.

Session One: Basics of Psychological Type
In order to learn how to manage conflict you first need to know the building blocks of how people perceive and interact with conflict situations in very different ways.

Session Two: The Elements of Conflict
A common mistake that many leaders make is believing that a conflict situation has been resolved when in fact it hasn't.
The next stage is to be aware of the four key resolutions that people want from a conflict resolution.

Session Three: Conflict Tools
Once you have an understanding of how people react in conflict situations you then need the technical skills in order to reach constructive solutions. Learn how to incorporate skills such as summarising, reframing and reality testing.

Contact conflict@eliteld.co.nz to arrange a FREE diagnosis session