



Helping Employees Engage Themselves

How to encourage employees to engage themselves in what they do!

By Andrew Cooke, [Blue Sky GPS \(Growth & Profit Solutions\)](#)

There is a problem with employee engagement. And I am not talking about the reports decrying the low levels of employee engagement in business globally. The problem is deeper and more profound. It is that the whole premise of employee engagement is based on a flawed assumption.

The Flawed Assumption

Virtually all the reports, publications and articles are based on the flawed assumption that it is the business' responsibility to engage its employee. This is wrong. Engagement, like motivation, comes from within. Just as businesses cannot motivate people so they cannot engage people. All they can do is create the environment within which it might happen. The employer/employee relationship is a two-way relationship, not one way. Employees have to take responsibility and engage themselves in what they do.

Changing Our Questions

Almost all work in studies on employee engagement has involved asking passive questions. The problem with this is that it leads to a focus on external causes of problems. For example:

- Are you happy?
- Is your work meaningful?
- Are you engaged in your work?
- Do you have positive relationships at work?
- Do you have clear goals?
- How are you progressing towards achieving your goal?



Asking these questions leads our employees to look outside themselves to find the causes of problems. In doing so they abdicate taking responsibility for themselves. So what do we do?

Ask active questions.

Asking active questions helps people focus on internal opportunities for improvement. They take responsibilities for themselves. Does it work? YES!

The following six questions were sent to employees very day for ten days. All they had to do was score themselves on a score of 1 to 10. One being low, ten being high.

The questions were as follows:

Did I do my best to:

- 1. Be happy?**
- 2. Find meaning?**
- 3. Be fully engaged?**
- 4. Build positive relationships?**
- 5. Set clear goals?**

The Results¹

- 1433 participants – 19 different studies
- 30% reported positive change on all six items
- 60% reported positive change on at least four items.
- 86% reported positive change on at least one item.
- Almost no-one reported any negative change.

¹ Source: Marshall Goldsmith
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Next Steps

If you want your employees to engage themselves quickly and with impact then try this for yourself. If you use employee engagement surveys already, then look at including some of these active questions and then ask further questions to ask them how they did it. This will give you ideas and insights as to how you can create an environment which encourages and allows your employees to engage themselves in their work. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain!

About Andrew Cooke and Blue Sky GPS (Growth & Profit Solutions)

Andrew Cooke

An experienced executive coach, business facilitator, and management consultant Andrew has more than 25 years' national and international experience, working across a range of industries and businesses. He is passionate in helping people, teams and companies to unlock their individual and collective potential, enabling them to achieve their personal and business goals and, in turn, to help them unlock the potential of others.

Andrew has extensive experience in dealing with both blue-chip and start-up companies, and has had extensive international experience in the UK, the Middle East and Ireland across a range of industries.

He has post-graduate business qualifications with a Master's in Business Administration (MBA) from the London Business School. He is an accredited associate coach for Marshall Goldsmith Stakeholder Centered Coaching in coaching executives and leaders.

Blue Sky GPS (Growth & Profit Solutions)

Andrew runs [Blue Sky GPS \(Growth & Profit Solutions\)](#), working with individuals, teams, groups and corporate so they can unlock their potential, that of others, and create a life and a job they love and choose to lead.

Through customized development programmes using experiential learning, backed by group workshops, individual one-to-one coaching and on-going support the individual and group development needs are addressed, the skills and capabilities are unlocked and the people can grow and achieve both personal and business outcomes on a sustainable basis. His blog, Growth and Profit, can be found at <http://growthandprofit.me>.

To find out more about this visit the [Blue Sky GPS website](#) or contact Andrew at andrew.cooke@business-gps.com.au or on +61 (0)401 842 673.

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