

## Members Quarterly

Fall 2015 Edition

### Feature

# Bring on the Passion — It's Easier than You Think

*Build a culture where passion is essential*

Have you ever observed a colleague and wondered what makes them work long hours, why are they driven to be the best? Some will label them as competitive, a workaholic or having obsessive compulsive tendencies. Some may even label them as trying too hard because of insecurities or a fear of failure.

Strip away the labels that are used to place people in a nice neat box and you will find individuals who have a **PASSION** for what they do in life, both at play and, most importantly for us employers, at work.

A workforce that is driven by an intrinsic passion to be the best and to outperform the competition, whether internal or external, sets a company apart from all others. Google, Disney and Apple immediately come to mind when asked to name companies that employ a passionate workforce.

So what can we learn from colleagues and companies who are fuelled by passion? We can learn how to create an environment where passion is recognized and nurtured. We can learn how to unleash an individual's potential, a team's potential, a company's potential.

#### **Hire the right people:**

An experienced recruiter can discern a candidate who is motivated by passion for their career from one who is motivated by other forces such as money or ego. Remember the simple example of a winemaker. Why does a person become a winemaker? Because they have a passion for wine! Make certain the next person you hire has a passion for the job you are considering them for.

#### **Establish strong connections during Onboarding:**

A person's passion for their company grows exponentially when their employer demonstrates a passion for them. Show a new employee how vested you are in their success by forging many relationships during the Onboarding period. Organize an office social to welcome the new employee and invite as many key partners and stakeholders as is possible. Schedule support team information sessions with HR, IT, Finance and Sales & Marketing. Provide them with job guides, manuals and work aids as well as a Peer Mentor to guide them through their first 90 days. Most importantly, have as many passionate colleagues, partners and stakeholders reach out and connect with a new employee early and often.

#### **Reward and Recognize:**

We are human and one characteristic of most humans is the need to know that our contributions are valued. What differentiates us from each other is what type of acknowledgement we each prefer. A diversified reward and recognition program will provide you the choices and variety you need to ensure your employee receives the right recognition. For some it's as simple as a kind word and/or award nomination from their manager or a gift of branded company clothing. For others it can be as extensive as a special work assignment, career advancement or the op-



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portunity to manage a corporate wide project. Acknowledge an employee's contributions and watch them grow, prosper and ultimately perform. It's a win-win!

#### Train & Develop:

There is a sense of accomplishment we all feel when we complete an educational program. Earning a degree or completing a certificate or accreditation program takes time, money, effort and focus. Employees who have a desire for continuous learning will contribute significantly to the future growth, progress and rejuvenation of your organization. Provide a clearing so the employee is able to take on a program. That could mean time away from the office to attend a class or a personal development session or the funds to pay for the program, or both. Monitor progress and celebrate the completion by publicly acknowledging the accomplishment or certification. Lastly, put your money where your mouth is and show your employee that you recognize they are now more valuable. Offer to frame their certificate so they can proudly display it in their workspace. Offer business cards that include the new accreditation initials. If your payroll budget will allow, offer them a one-time increase in salary to demonstrate you are as passionate about their accomplishment as they are. It's the gesture that is most important to an employee not the size of the gesture.

Building a culture where **PASSION** is essential, encouraged, recognized and rewarded takes commitment and energy from all levels of the organization. It takes recognition that your greatest asset is the passion your people have for their job and the company they work for. It means your brand is very important and must be marketed to current and future employees by associating it with being known for such positive works as legacy, innovation, research, training & development or support of volunteering contribution. Most importantly, it takes strong leadership. Tapping into the passion that each employee has for their job will take patience, creativity, structure and last but certainly not least, regular contributions to each employee's emotional bank account so they trust they are safe to unleash the passion within.

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