

-- Speaker 0 00:04 They can write manufacturing podcast. Are you working and living within your theme? Do you feel aligned with what you do every day to earn a living? Do the people you lead and work with feel engaged and excited by the work they're doing and if not, why not? I'm Janet Eastman. Welcome to the makeup right podcast. Last week on the show, my guest was Cal Meisner and he described the kind of results people who are working within their theme and who felt aligned, brought to accompany. He discussed the impact it has on the corporate culture and he outlined the approach he's taken with companies to help them to achieve alignment. It takes a bit of twisting and turning, but with companies and leaders that do it, they gain the business advantage of a truly engaged team. This week I'll make it right. We continue our conversation on the hows and whys of getting people into the right roles so they can do the work they're truly excited about.

Speaker 0 01:11 What you're describing to me is it's a bit like having a Ruben Rubik's cube. You're trying to twist things around so that you can find those matches for people. And it is a great big puzzle when you have, well, a small company or even a large company trying to find those things that people align with. So here's my next question for you. What do you say to business leaders who say they can't be creating jobs to make people happy at work? This whole thing is just too airy fairy. How do we fund it? How do we measure success? What do you say to them?

Speaker 1 01:45 Well, it's funny and I hear that a lot. And when, when we embarked upon this journey and I had created this role and we really wanted to take the culture of our team to the next level, we made a significant investment, not just by having myself dedicated in this role, but you know, in all areas we invested in people's learning and development. We really took succession planning and career planning seriously. And, and I remember one of my peers asking me at the time, they said, why do you invest so much in culture? What does it do for you? And my response was very simple. I said, it does everything for us, right? If, if we've got the right people in the right roles doing work that they're excited about, you can solve any business challenge. Like whether you're having customer service issues, whether there's financial challenges, it's your culture and your people that you typically get you through that, right?

Speaker 1 02:39 And again, if you've got people where you have taken the time to align them to work, they're excited about, in my experience, they will go to the ends of the earth for you. Right? So, so I would suggest it's not airy fairy by any means. It's the <inaudible>. And to your other question, like how you measure it, this can be the challenge sometimes, but what we have done is I've created what I call a people and culture scorecard. And when you're measuring things around people, it may not be as tangible as say, measuring your revenue targets. But there are a number of things that are indicators as to whether or not people are happy working with your company, right? So things like we do an engagement survey, so we measure people's engagement. And there are six specific questions that we ask around and that's designed to be an index again to measure how people are happy at your work with their work.

Speaker 1 03:31 We measure things around recognition, around communication, we, and then there's some other, there's other measurements that are part of that index. Things like productivity, things like churn, things like absenteeism, things like presenteeism is a new term, right? How many are your team members showing up? Are they present? Are they giving it their all? So you can definitely measure this stuff. It is tangible, but here's what I often say to leaders as well. In addition to the people in culture scorecard that we can help you create to measure all the benefits of having happy workers. Here's probably the best measurement, right? As intuitive leaders do. You just know, I worked with one company in Melbourne, Australia and the gentleman that owned the company was, he's an engineer and also very analytical and, and we were talking about this idea of the value of having happy, aligned, engaged team members.

Speaker 1 04:26 And he asked me the same question you did Jenna, how are we going to measure this? And so I talked about the scoreca --

-- rd, et cetera, but then I just asked him a question. I said, Gary, do you, and he had a small firm of 20 people, so 30 small team. And I said, when you go in Monday morning and you see people around the water cooler, do you feel in your heart that at least maybe one or two people from your company there? They're collecting a paycheck but they're not really giving it their all. And he thought about this and he came back and said, Kyle, I actually, I think I have four of those people. Wow. So four people out of 20 is a pretty big percentage. And that, again, I think that is the measurement, right? You just know when you can feel it. It's about the vibe you, you can tell when someone's coming in and punching a clock versus genuinely excited about their work they're doing and icing. That is the best measurement.

Speaker 0 05:23 Well, and I think if people are doing the work that they love, they give more of themselves in their job. And if you look at it from a business perspective, if you, if you have to let someone go because they're not happy in their job and they're not really getting the job done to the way you would like the standard that you would like, you have a choice. You can get rid of them and then spend how many thousands of dollars and months trying to find somebody to fill their shoes only to find that maybe that person took the job too because they liked the salary and then you, you still have kind of the same problem, don't you?

Speaker 1 06:06 You totally do. And the cost, the, you know, one of the biggest benefits of having happy employees is retention, like I mentioned, or reducing churn. And you know, there's estimates by HR organizations in Canada that it costs roughly a hundred thousand dollars to replace an employee. And of course if your leaders or executives, the number goes up significantly. So I mean there is a cost. But having said that, you know, I'll tell you another quick story. So we're going through this journey with our team and I was able to transform the work that I did and I was able to facilitate it for a number of people and Michael being one of them. And, and those stories to me were, were great. The story or the situation that really impacted me is I had a gentleman on my team, I supported him for three years and for three years straight, I kid you not, I did not see this gentleman smile once three years.

Speaker 1 07:05 And so, and it got to the point where he was so negative in the workplace and as a, as a leader who considers myself a people person, I wasn't very proud of this fact, Janet. But I actually got to the point where I asked him to not share in our team meetings. Right? His, his negativity was having a serious impact on our culture and on the rest of the team. And so after having four months of these, what I call alignment conversations, we sat down and his name is Tim, and I said, Tim, I really feel like as your leader, I'm failing you here. Like I'm trying desperately to find you something that you're even semi excited about and I just don't know what that is. So what are we going to do? And this was interesting, you said to me Calwell after four months of these conversations and thank you, um, I realized there's nothing left here for me.

Speaker 1 08:02 And Tim had actually been with the company 32 years. He was eligible to retire. And I think what he needed is permission almost to move onto the next chapter. And he needed these kinds of conversations to get clarity on what he wanted to do. So he said to me, there's nothing left for me here. I'm, I'm, I'm, I've decided to leave. And I said, no problem. I will do my best to help make that transition as smooth as possible for you. And, and so we did that and we had a retirement luncheon for Tim. So I've got my entire team together at this small restaurant, downtown Vancouver, and we're waiting for Tim to show up. This gentleman walks through the door, he looks like he's 10 years younger and he's got a grin from ear to ear on his face. And, and again, just hit me like a Thunderbolt.

Speaker 1 08:57 I thought, wow. Like, you know, my story, again I thought was inspiring and Michael's story. But when I looked at Tim and looked, and I, and I don't want to be overdramatic here, but I feel like I helped save Tim's life, right? Here's a guy that was going every work drudging into everyday, sorry, drudging into the office and gone from totally unhappy. I haven't seen him smile for thr --

-- ee years to looking like an entirely different person. And what I realized at that particular point in time is this by far, again, I think as leaders we are obligated to help people ensure they're happy with their work. And in the case of Tim, help him figure out that that wasn't within our organization, he needed to move on to his own chapter. So it was important. I think for him as an individual it was important, and I hate to say this as well, but it was selfishly, it was important to me because I didn't have to deal with the negativity any longer.

Speaker 1 09:56 But the benefit Janet was for everyone else on the team, right? When you think about your culture, there's going to be people that just don't fit. And as leaders, that's, that's kind of scary I think to admit sometimes that may be the, you know, I ask another question and it's a little bit of a, perhaps a harsh question, but I, when I'm working with leaders, say, think about the people on your team and that's one simple question. Is the team better off with that individual or without any, and that's kind of a harsh question, but often or I shouldn't say often. There are cases where the team is better off without that individual any, and again, in this situation it was a win, win, win for everybody involved. So

Speaker 0 10:40 <inaudible> when you look at, uh, um, business today and I mean, I guess it's happened, it's, it happens all the time and it's happened for centuries, but we have right now we have a lot of people who are nearing retirement age. There are a lot like Tim, they're like, I'm just going to hang in there until the pension kicks in or, or whatever. They're totally disengaged. They can't find their passion, they don't want to be there anymore. And then we have millennials who are coming up who to me seemed to want something different from work. They want meaningful work. They want to be doing something that's good. Yeah. They want that thing that lights them up. So we have to be changing our business cultures if we want to benefit from the millennials contribution. But we also have to figure out how to keep those people who we might, unlike Tim, not have to see to the door, but might be able to say here, why don't you just do this for the next three years to retirement and we'll get all of that, you know, experience and knowledge you have and still have that within the company.

Speaker 0 11:41 How do you bring that all together?

Speaker 1 11:43 Well, and I think it goes back to something we discussed earlier and that is really understanding what motivates individuals, right? Every team member is an individual and, and you're right, like so someone who's maybe in the latter part of their career, what I have found often the theme or the passion or the thing that they want to contribute is around legacy, right? So what excites them is often just sharing their expertise and being a mentor and, and helping other people. You know, there may be starting out their careers so they can share that knowledge so often that excites people. And then to your other point about millennials, you know, and I just love millennials to pieces. And it's, it's funny, I've read so many articles about millennials and this generation of entitlement and, and you know, you're, you're right, they want good pay, stability, benefits, contribution.

Speaker 1 12:37 They want it all and work that's fulfilling. And there's a lot of people that that looked down upon that I say good on them, who doesn't want to be happy in life and happier with your work. Like I just think it's fantastic. Now of course the, the key I think is marrying those passions and fulfilling work with needs of a business. Right? But that's the key part. Like we have to do that and we're in business for a reason, but, but again, I applaud someone who, who is not going to settle and who is really wants to be fulfilled in their work because again, I'm as a leader, I'm going to reap the benefit of that as well. And so are our customers. So I say bring it on, do more of that. <inaudible>

Speaker 0 13:23 you have a tool in your, in your book that you talk about, it's called the people plan. So just explain to me, you know, what it is, who it's for, why it's important and why and how it works.

Speaker 1 13:32 Sure. Well, what I found, and again this is just from years of experience leading my own teams and then working with other companies and leaders, is m --

-- any of us have a sales plan, a marketing plan, a business plan, an emergency ops plan. But we don't have a people plan. And when I ask most business leaders and owners, if they have a people plan, they look at me like I have three heads and say what? What does a people plan? And so we also hear often this mantra on some, in some cases it's very cliché, but our people are our greatest asset. And I truly do believe that, like I mentioned earlier, I think any challenge we're experiencing in our business the way through that challenge is typically by having the right people in the right roles that that are going to get you there. But what is our plan to intentionally support the people that work for us?

Speaker 1 14:25 Right? So this idea of alignment, when you think about culture, workplace happiness or whatever term we want to give it, I think alignment is 85% of the equation. Just having people excited about their work. But once you have the right people in the right roles, how do you as a leader not become complacent? Right? How do you ensure? The other thing is some leaders are very people focused just naturally and some are not. And that's okay because again, we all have our theme and our strengths, but how do we consistently support our people and give them the things that they need to grow and flourish? So in our people plan structure, we have, we have a framework with six pillars and it's really what I believe are the six pillars required to support a great team. So things like communication, recognition, health and wellness, and when you have this, this more strategic view of how you support your team, then what I found is is you just deliver exceptional results by doing that. Right? Often many businesses I've been involved with, the operational fire of the day takes precedence over meeting with your team. Or for example, if leaders have scheduled one on one conversations with their people and a big customer issue comes up or some operational issue comes up, often the first thing to get rescheduled is that one on one. And so what I'm really passionate about is say how do you have a framework in place that's going to ensure that you're consistently focused on your people and giving them the support that they need.

Speaker 0 15:59 So yeah, that's the people plan. So we have time for one more very quick question, but as a key takeaway of somebody who's listening to this conversation and going, okay, I kinda like this idea. I kind of liked this themes idea. How, how do I, what's the first step you take to get a conversation about any of this going with your team members? What's that very first step or, or is the first step saying to yourself, wait a minute, let me see how aligned I am in doing the things that I want to do. So that trickled down is, is there, right?

Speaker 1 16:37 Yeah, it's a great question and I would agree it has to start with us as leaders, right? If you, if you're not excited about the work that you're doing, how can you possibly facilitate this idea of alignment for someone else? Right? It's just, it's incongruent. I don't think it works. So it really is just checking in with yourself and saying, what is it that I'm focused on and are there things that I, you know, I'm less passionate about that I can get help with. And you asked me earlier, you know, what tools are available and, and like I mentioned, we have some tools available, but often it's just a simple conversation. I was working recently with the company and was talking with the leadership team and we were talking about this idea of alignment for leaders, first of all. And then we'll talk about how to facilitate that for your team members.

Speaker 1 17:29 And so one of the gentleman I was speaking with, and he's also I think very analytical and he was aware of StrengthFinders, which is another one of the tools I mentioned. And so I'm talking about this idea of online and he's like, yeah, that's a great idea. We can take StrengthFinders and we can, we'll take the results and we'll correlate them and then we can analyze them and put them into pivot tables. And I said, yeah, yeah, we could do all that. Or I said, what do you like to do? And he said, well, I really see myself as the behind the scenes guy supporting strategic programs that are going to enable other leaders. And I said, great. I see myself as the guy out front being the spokesperson, building relationships. Are we cool? Like can I just do mo --

-- re of that? And you do more of the behind the scenes support.

Speaker 1 18:09 And it's that simple, right? It's, it's often just saying, and I think the reason, and I'm not trying to be flippant because it's a simple concept, it's just we don't often do it in my experience, but you're right, it's really checking in with your heart saying, what are the things I'm focused on? Another thing that we do, um, as one of our exercises and working with leaders as the top 10 exercise and say, okay, as a leader, just list the top 10 things that you focus on on any given week or month. And then out of the top 10, what are the two that like you, would you, would you love the most? And then what are the bottom two where you say, you know what, if I never had to do those two again, I'd be very happy. And can you, and this is, this is sometimes the art of all of this approaches.

Speaker 1 18:57 Can you delegate those bottom two or can you find someone who's passionate about those bottom two as, as passionate about the bottom two as you are about the top two. So that would be another example. And then just to wrap up, like I agree with you 100%, John, it's looking at ourselves as leaders first of all, trying to get the sense of alignment and then it's having conversations with team members. And like I mentioned, it's really, it can be as simple as just a different kind of conversation, right? What are, what are the things that excites you? What lights you up? What, or here's another one. What, what pisses you off? Like what, what, when you hear it, when you hear the thought of that your skin crawls. So, okay, that's probably not the thing for you to do. Right? And it's just really having that conversation more around what deeply motivates people and then trying to find a way to align their passions with the work that they're doing within your team.

Speaker 0 19:54 Yeah, I have, I'm somewhat, I know who works in a, in a toxic environment right now and as a manager it's like, you know, she, people are calling in all the time saying I'm taking today off. Yesterday was a mess. I'm sick, I can't do it. And then, you know, she finds herself doing the exact same thing and it's just a nightmare. Like the entire organization is a toxic environment that people just are hanging in there until retirement so they can get out. And that honestly is no way to live. So not to take a look inside and start figuring out what's gonna make you get you aligned. Maybe a is a good step forward. So I'm Cal, I really appreciate this conversation. It's been very enlightening and really interesting.

Speaker 1 20:38 Well thank you so much. I've enjoyed it. As you can probably tell I get pretty passionate on the topic, but I do believe, like I said, life is short, you know, do what you love. If you're a leader, help other people do what they love and the world will be a much happier place. And again, the bit that the benefit to your business is also exponential. So, um, if people are interested in learning more about what we do, they can certainly check us out@wwdoothighperformanceculture.ca.

Speaker 0 21:08 I think we're all here to, to make a contribution in life, not to just get through it. So a really great conversation, Cal. Thank you so much.

Speaker 1 21:17 Thank you Janet. Enjoy the rest of your day.

Speaker 0 21:19 Cal Meisner is the chief happiness officer and high performance culture and he is the author of the freedom framework, the business owner's guide to earning more and working less. And Cal has kindly agreed to give away a copy of his book. So if you're interested, please send me an email at brightpodcasts@gmail.com and the first listener who gets in touch will receive the coffee

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