

Actively Engaged

A recent headline in the Los Angeles Times caught my eye, *Most Workers Hate Their Jobs or Have “Checked Out” According to Gallup*. The poll found that of the 100 million Americans who have full-time jobs only 30% are “actively engaged” in their work. The rest either hate their jobs, wish they were someplace else or just don’t care anymore.

Well all I can say is that the Gallup pollsters didn’t spend much time talking to folks at Glenair. I have personally never witnessed a time when our team was more energized and engaged in serving our customers. Visitors to the factory repeatedly remark on the high-morale of the Glenair team and wonder aloud how we do it. Well I’m happy to share three of our secrets.

First of all, we put our customers first. Our team is laser focused on our customers and the marketplace we serve. Now you may ask, isn’t every business? To which I would answer with a resounding no. For many enterprises the focus has shifted to the metrics of their business plan—their forecasts, budget initiatives, quarterly reports and the expanding rules and regulations of their bureaucracy. A quick and nimble response to a customer requirement is a foreign concept to such outfits, many of which have more in common with the business of accounting than they do with the business of manufacturing.

Second, we work hard. We have a simple, flat organization. We don’t go in for a complex hierarchical pyramid like most organizations. Our managers are engaged at the shirtsleeve level. At Glenair you’re just as likely to see an executive crawling under a conference table to fix an Ethernet cable as you are a young product manager giving an important briefing to a key customer. Our team is motivated to step in and get every job done that needs doing without worrying about whose turf it might be on or what their relative rank is in some org-chart.

Third, we believe in trust and “win-win”. Our team operates in an atmosphere of trust because we make it a practice to be straight shooters with every stake-holder in our universe—from employees to suppliers, customers to owners, and the communities we operate in. Some organizations have a “see you in court” approach to resolving problems. At Glenair, one of our mottos is “me and you against the problem.” That’s a big difference, and it sure helps keep our morale and productivity high. Bottom line, sustainability comes from “win-win”.

So like I said, the Gallup people must have skipped our street when they were conducting that survey, because with rare exception our folks are all in that magic 30% who are “actively engaged” in their work. For our country’s sake I wish that were true in every organization. But the way a lot of businesses are run I guess I can understand why it is not.

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