The WCC 'Engaging Manager'

The 'engaging manager' research

Purpose	To understand what WCC managers do that helps their team to feel engaged at work.

Research	Conducted by OD team across 3 Groups - July - Sept 2016 with:
	    - 3 line managers - varying levels of seniority
	    - 2 senior managers
	    - 13 direct reports

Outputs	Themes and examples identified to:
	    - support managers with their Your Say results
	    - use in employee engagement communications
	    - integrated into design of e-learning modules
	    - embed into/align with relevant OD and L&D activities

Benefits	• Helps make engagement relevant to the WCC context • Employee engagement has been found to link to improved organisational performance * • Involves real life examples across teams and individuals • Recognition of the teams and managers where high engagement is being fostered • Helps to embed and bring to life the engagement strategy

* MacLeod report *Engaging for Success*

Themes

Having analysed the data from the research process, the following 9 themes emerged from the feedback.

Trust	**Makes time for you**	**Recognition and appreciation**
Tackles challenges head on	**Treats us as individuals**	**Communication style**
Values and integrity	**Develops the team**	**Provides links to the wider organisation**

Examples provided

The respondents provided examples of what their manager did to help them feel engaged at work which can be categorised under each theme.

Trust

- Display a high level of trust and respect in their team members - fosters positive relationships
- Makes you want to keep it that way
- Heaven help if you break that trust
- Feel valued and confident
- Empowered, have clarity of expectations
- Not micromanaged, don't need babysitting, doesn't check in too much

Makes time for you

- Makes time for you - if you ask for 5 mins, they will never say no - if someone is asking, they need your help / it may take courage for someone to ask
- Available, approachable
- Visible
- Sits with the team
- Values our needs
- Frontline workers are happy to approach them

Recognition & appreciation

- Says thank you
- Gives specific parise
- Celebrates successes e.g. at team days, replies to email compliments/comments from others to say well done, will cc in senior leader.
- Celebrates good practice / outcomes
- Supportive and encouraging
- Nomination for STAR award
- Understands the importance of recognition from senior managers
- Talks about the team success to senior managers

Examples provided (part 2)

Tackles challenges

- Not afraid to challenge head on / tackle things that are difficult
- Non judgmental
- Encourages you to be honest if you've made a mistake
- Plans for change together with the team. Makes decisions with you, people feel involved in the direction of travel
- In times of change - appreciates and understands your pressures, discusses changes in the open
- Conveys difficult messages in a respectful way
- Wants outcomes and holds you to account
- Recognises the team's workload and the importance of what they are doing
- Will go through the performance management process when needed
- Lays groundwork in the 1:1s
- Is clear re the capacity of their staff
- Focuses on what they need to change / focuses on the facts / shines a light on the situation to see what can learn

Treats us as individuals

- Genuinely interested in us as individuals
- Understands/asks what motivates us
- Promotes work life balance
- Puts you as the person first
- Changes management style according to needs of team member
- Aware of our triggers/recognise they have different pressure points
- Adapts communication

Communication style

- Open and honest
- Even if can't tell you the information, will tell you this
- 1:1's - hold these as regularly as needed by the individual, focuses on wellbeing, work and development
- Team meetings - work together to come up with ideas
- Weekly team updates - to review challenges and identify areas to support each other/capacity
- Remotes workers - are kept involved through emails, texts, phone calls,
- Keep you updated on what's going on it the team
- Spends time on the ground and knows the names of all the team

Examples provided (part 3)

Values and integrity

- Has integrity and there is no say, do gap
- Takes being a manager seriously - doesn't see it as an add on to their role
- Authentic - customers are at the centre of what they do

Develops the team

- Encourages development - wants the team to develop and outgrow their roles
- Gives scope to the team to perform to their ability and to develop further
- Encourages training (internal and external courses) and other ways to develop e.g. chance to step up, shadow, learn from others, work alongside more experienced colleagues
- Manages talent - e.g. work with less experienced colleagues
- Uses coaching sometimes (although may not recognise it as coaching) through asking questions, listening and letting us talk

Provides links to the wider organisation

- Clear about what are achieving and why we are here
- Displays a passion for our purpose
- Advocate of the team
- Gives direction - is real about what we need to do
- Encourages cross working with other teams/services
- Cooperates with other managers so our work feels joined up
- Shares feedback from senior manager meetings
- Streamlines processes for us - what would make their job easier e.g. equipment
- Knowledgeable about processes/systems/how to get things done e.g. dealing with politicians
- Helps us to see links to WCC through appraisals, business planning, performance monitoring, setting targets, budget responsibility.

Questions to consider

- Which of the themes are a strength for you?
- Which of the themes would you like to develop?
- What examples do you have of when you have demonstrated the themes?
- How do the themes relate to your 'Your Say' survey results and employee engagement index?
- How could you gain feedback on your performance against the themes?
- Which examples could you take action on?
- What impact could this have on your team?