



HRxaminer

*Examining practical HR issues business owners
and managers encounter every day*

Employee - Employer Re-Engagement

February 2010

What the Numbers Tell Us

Here are some **job satisfaction** statistics on our employees, from The Conference Board:

Only 46% of employees are satisfied with their jobs.

▶ 35.7% are under age 25

▶ 47.2% are age 35-44

Love the One You're With

I know I'm not the only one who has songs playing over and over again in her head. And, yes, the title of this article is not politically correct, but I thought I'd share the HR message behind it and tell you how this odd title came to be.

I was driving in my car thinking about what to write for my February HRxaminer and heard a commercial on the radio about sending roses to the one you love. It was, of course, February. My warped HR mind translated the Valentine's message into whether and/or how employers are showing their gratitude to their employees – and how employees are showing their gratitude to their employers.



Although Valentine's Day has passed, just as we should show our appreciation to the people we love more than one day each year, we should show how much we

▶ 46.4% are age 45-54

▶ 45.6% are age 55-64

▶ 43.4% are over 65

These rates of job satisfaction are down 18% since 1986. So, are our jobs and companies less satisfying or are people more demanding of what they get out of their work experience? Of course there are a multitude of factors impacting these statistics.

The real issue is whether these statistics are accurate at your organization and what you're doing about it, if anything.

According to Taleo, who surveyed "American Job Thankfulness," 70% of workers are thankful for their jobs. 30% of

appreciate our employees and employers more than...well, more than whatever we're doing now!

The song that immediately started playing in my head was Stephen Stills' 1970 song "Love the One Your With." The irony of the inappropriateness of the song and my message made me laugh out loud. The key lyric is "if you can't be with the one you love, love the one you're with, love the one you're with."

So what does this mean from an HR perspective? It takes effort from both the employee and employer to create a real workplace partnership.

- Even if the employee isn't perfect (you can't be with the one you love), it's still important for managers to show how much they appreciate the contributions of the employee (love the one you're with)
- And even if your company or manager isn't perfect (you can't be with the one you love), it's also your responsibility as the employee to make sure you communicate to management how much you "love the one you're with."

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"They Should Be Grateful They Have a Job"

This past year, how many times have you heard someone say "They should just be grateful they have a job!" I've said it myself! So what does it mean, and why is it only sometimes wrong?

There are those who think that employees have no right to whine or complain about their work since there are so many who are unemployed who would love to have their job. Let's look at this from two perspectives.

employees are not thankful and they:

- ▶ may leave their current jobs after their next salary review or bonus
- ▶ are failing to give their best effort at work, or
- ▶ are actively seeking a new position.

Ask Yourself the Following Questions

- ▶ Do you really know how satisfied your employees are? Have you asked them directly?
- ▶ If only 54% (TCB) of “your” employees are dissatisfied, how effectively are they producing?
- ▶ If 30% (Taleo) of your employees are disengaged and on their

1. If you're a great employee and you know that your employer isn't allowing you to contribute, isn't open to new ideas and improvements, isn't seeing or appreciating your commitment, should you stop sharing your ideas out of fear and/or just be grateful you have a job?
2. If you have a poorer performing employee who isn't committed, whose performance is lacking and slacking, does that person still have the right to complain? Should they just be grateful they have a job? From an HR perspective, I'll ask, why do they still have a job?

Each one of us as employees, managers and business owners get to create our work experience. Yes, there are some things out of our control. But if the work experience isn't what you want, what are you doing to create a better work experience for your coworkers, your employees, and yourself?

A big part of creating the right workplace is the act of being grateful – not merely for the “job” but also for the people and opportunities around us. The more we show our appreciation of the people around us to the people around us, the better they feel and the better we feel. And it has a natural contagious effect. The more fun we have at work, the more fun the people around us will have, which creates a better work environment for us all. Enjoying our jobs isn't always or only about what we do, it also includes who is around us and how much we all appreciate each other.

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About Arlene Vernon

Arlene Vernon, PHR, partners with small businesses as their Human Resource Xpert to create their HR systems and solve their HR problems.

way out, now prepared are you for their exit and/or what are you doing to retain your top talent?

- ▶ If you've reorganized, restructured, or down-sized your company or department, what are you proactively doing for the "survivors"?
- ▶ There's a lot of strategizing and planning necessary to turn this around. Are you taking the time to proactively ensure that your work culture really is all that it can be?

Call me if you want some assistance in making sure your statistics are better than these gloomy ones.

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Arlene@ArleneVernon.com

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