

Ed 14 June 11 – How awesome is your workplace?

Many of us experience lots of workplaces - the bad, the good, and the great. But what makes a truly awesome workplace?

The common factors usually go something like this. There's a positive work environment, great teamwork, satisfaction with managers, career and development opportunities, empowerment, good communication, inspiring top management, reliable HR practices and processes, and rewarding remuneration and benefits all producing that elusive engagement.

To test this we recently implemented the inaugural AWESOME workplaces survey.

We invited people from a range of workplaces – Senior Managers, Managers/Team Leaders and Team Members - to participate and tell us how they see the importance and their workplace's performance on these same common factors.

What's important?

In terms of importance, we found that being satisfied with Managers and Top Management is at the top of the priority list. Managers see Communication, Top Management and HR Practices as being most important; Senior Managers identify Management and HR Practices; and Team Members see Management, Top Management and Remuneration & Benefits as top factors. Career and Development factors are seen as least important overall, though more important for staff at lower levels; and even more important ultimately because everyone agrees workplaces perform badly at this.

What's going well, and not so well?

Overall, our group is most satisfied in the categories of Engagement (being passionate about work and happy to tell people their workplace is a great place to work) and least satisfied with Top Management, Teamwork, Career/Development, and Communication.

Senior Managers are the most satisfied, Managers/Team Leaders next, and Team Members least – though with many people overall saying their workplace is indeed awesome.

Team Members are least satisfied with training, career planning or the lack thereof, teamwork across the organisation, and knowledge/information sharing. Managers are least satisfied with senior management team performance, and Senior Managers are least satisfied with conflict management and innovation/change being handled well.

For Senior Managers, their highest "satisfaction advantage" (where they're relatively more satisfied than other staff) is for Communication and Remuneration/Benefits.

Managers/Team Leaders sit close to the average, with a slight "satisfaction advantage" in the area of Remuneration & Benefits. Team Members have their greatest "satisfaction disadvantage" with Career & Development and Remuneration/Benefits. Perhaps surprisingly, their "satisfaction advantage" is particularly in being happy with their own Managers (whereas Managers/Team Leaders are less satisfied with their Managers). Team members, again surprisingly, are more satisfied than their managers and senior managers with Empowerment. Illustrating this, Managers feel less empowered of any group to make daily decisions and are more concerned about micromanagement in their organisations. Of the three groups Managers report being the least inspired, motivated and coached by Senior Managers and their own Manager.

Very positive results are that the highest ratings are for a match between the organisation's values and 'my values', along with feeling empowered to make daily decisions. Other high raters are staff being passionate about their work and tending to tell friends and associates that their workplace is ... awesome!

What this survey shows is that the best way to give organisations a boost is to have all managers better able to inspire, motivate and coach their teams, to improve communication/knowledge sharing, help with career planning, and improve teamwork between teams and not just within them.

It comes down to great leadership, enabling great performance.