



## TenStep Supplemental Paper

---

24 June 2008

### **The Great Disconnect**

Employees losing their zeal to work and becoming more 'disengaged' is quite common. Once an employee starts to feel disengaged his morale and performance slows down drastically. Absenteeism, pessimism, and lethargy are some symptoms of this syndrome. Eventually, the employee might even quit the organization.

#### **Disengage: dreaded word?**

Employee turnover is not a lone event-it is a chain of events. The process of disengaging from work can start from the day of joining, some months down the line or maybe after years of working. The journey from the point of disengagement to actually leaving the organization is upsetting. The disengagement process can be a result of a negative blow to the employee's morale. Incidents like:

- Disillusionment with the job
- Long overdue promotion or reward
- Fear of dislocation
- Dissatisfaction with the compensation system
- Harassment at work
- Apprehensions of bias

There could be many others ranging from personal issues, family matters or organizational matters.

The turning point phenomenon: An incident or happening when an employee comes to a decision that he is quitting the organization is known as the turning point. Some refer to it as the 'last straw'.

#### **Interesting disengaged facts**

Findings of Thomas Lee, a business professor, on why employees get disengaged and quit

- 63 percent quit after a "shocking event"
- About 20 percent leave without landing another job
- Part-time employees decision to quit is more impulsive
- Determined employees look out for other jobs while working
- Exit interviews don't reveal the shocking event that moved the employee's decision to quit

#### **The two phase process**



## TenStep Supplemental Paper

---

Two phases typically stretch from the journey of disengagement to departure. The initial phase is the first time contemplation of leaving. The second phase is the concrete decision to quit. Once the employee has moved into the latter phase, the organization can do little to prevent his departure. Managers who are alert notice the signs of “I am bored” or “It is awful” quickly. Once this is noticed the managers should begin attempts to stop the employee moving into the second phase.

It is imperative that managers are alert and promote healthy communication with their staff. This can trace underlying threats to the organization’s very essence-its people.

### **On the right note**

Managements are growing increasingly aware of the fact that employees who quit within a few months of joining can affect the organization tremendously. Apart from the costs involved in recruiting, providing training and replacement, the morale of the co-workers takes a dip. The first few months are indeed critical to ensure retention. A new recruit who is provided with training, clarity in job, career development and other such amenities is most likely to be happy.

### **Mentoring as a strategy**

Mentoring is a helpful way of developing strong work relationships. An accolade for any employee is having a top performer mentoring or being guided by the CEO or a revered leader. This acts as a big retention device as it shows the organization’s concern for the employee.

### **Employee engagement is when the employee moves from ‘I’ to ‘We’**

An effective retention plan would essentially focus on the engagement factor. Making sure that ‘the right man is in the right job’ can ensure happy working hours. Moreover, motivations keep changing. Organizations must ensure employees are duly challenged to do better. The reasons for an 18 year old to join the armed forces may be very different from that of a 35 year old major, who chooses to continue in the army.

Positively speaking employee engagement eventually benefits all. Whether it’s increased efficiency in the workplace and higher productivity or gains, the result are higher returns for all.