

PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Raise Your Employee Engagement Score***

Author: Richard P. Finnegan, author of *The Stay Interview*

Publisher: American Management Association

List Price: US\$14.95

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Introduction

Employee engagement is a business metric of the extent to which, Finnegan writes, “employees are fully committed each day to help their organizations succeed.” Organizations with the top employee engagement scores see improved turnover (65%), safety (48%), quality (41%), attendance (37%), profitability (22%), productivity, (21%) and customer ratings (10%), according to Gallup polls.

However, Gallup also reports that employee engagement has remained flat in the United States for 15 years. Finnegan tells us that engagement programs don’t work by themselves. Instead, it’s up to frontline managers to raise employee engagement.

Structure

After presenting the challenge of engaging employees, managers are encouraged to rate themselves on their ability to promote employee engagement.

In the remaining chapters, Finnegan discusses how to:

- use referral recruiting to attract great talent
- interview to ensure commitment
- conduct “stay interviews” to build trust and provide coaching opportunities
- resolve common issues that come up in “stay interviews”
- manage performance
- leverage engagement programs
- establish engagement goals and tactics
- lead supervisors to better engagement
- measure quarterly

Highlights

Herb Kelleher, co-founder of Southwest Airlines, said “You don’t hire for skills. You hire for attitude.” Finnegan’s book reflects this philosophy by focusing first on providing managers with concrete advice on how to attract and hire the people who are most likely to be engaged.

Recruits who are hired after being referred by engaged employees work harder and stay longer (page 18), so it behooves every manager to set team goals for bringing in top talent, through friends and professional networks, social media and conferences. Most referral programs are quiet disbursements of referral bonuses, but Finnegan suggests that you visibly celebrate successful referrals, perhaps with an event involving presentation of a bigger-than-life-size check.

Managers are faced with disengaged employees who want more money, promotions, less work, and so on. Finnegan’s scripts lean toward coaching these employees to learn skills that position them for better opportunities.

“Finnegan’s Arrow” is presented as a sustainable framework for raising an engagement score with the resources at a manager’s disposal.

Highlights: What I liked!

The most valuable passages in this book include:

- the self-rating questionnaire on pages 13-14
- suggestions for what to include on your Employee Value Proposition on page 24-26
- realistic job interviews on pages 34-36 and the job offer script on pages 37-38 to cut turnover
- the coaching script on page 48 for stay interviews.

Who might benefit from the Book?

This book is principally written for operations managers. Dramatic examples come from fast food restaurants, call center floors, and retail sales teams. *Raise Your Employee Engagement Score* elaborates on a topic that is not fully covered in a book like *Skills for New Managers*. Finnegan provides concrete solutions for issues that employees uncover as impediments to better engagement.

Project managers in a matrix environment often need to negotiate with the managers in the target audience for scarce resources; such project managers may find this book enlightening on the challenges operational managers face and the actions that are available to them. Scrum masters and agile coaches are tasked with resolving performance issues and removing impediments; unfortunately, this book has very few examples that may help to coach self-organizing teams.

Conclusion

Raise Your Employee Engagement Score is a quick read of two to three hours. In the inspiring first half of his book, Finnegan presents valuable advice for attracting, interviewing, and hiring employees who are most likely to be engaged. When it comes to handling disengaged employees, however, the scripts do not appear to reflect the Employee Value Proposition that Finnegan promoted earlier in the book.

For more about this book, go to:

<http://www.amacombooks.org/book.cfm?isbn=9780814438626&page=BookExcerpt>

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TereLyn Hipple, MS, PMP, PSM has 25 years of experience in eCommerce, eMarketing, and eLearning in cross-functional project management and analyst roles in telecommunications, business products, printing, and education. She recently helped OSP International update the PM PrepCast, PM Exam Simulator, and CAPM Exam Simulator to align with the 6th Edition *PMBOK® Guide*, and volunteers with the PMI Dallas Chapter as Web Director.