

The journey of employee engagement leads to success

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When it comes to growing and maintaining a high performance company, Max d'Unienville, Director: Talent at TNS South Africa has the philosophy that the key is for employees to be highly engaged. TNS has a history of high staff engagement scores, making it an employer of choice for talent in the market research industry.

The important question is what engagement is, in real terms. D'Unienville explains that he sees it as a journey; when employees come on board they cannot immediately be engaged, instead it is about different elements the company provides over time.

According to d'Unienville, there are specific areas that drive employee engagement at TNS. Firstly, employees need to have trust and confidence in the company's rewards system. Linked to this is a working environment in which they are also recognised for great work, as well as that they are provided with many avenues for career development - whether horizontal or vertical - in what is a particularly dynamic work environment.



Max d'Unienville

Part of what makes the work environment at TNS so dynamic is its culture of learning - so much so that d'Unienville calls it a "university for market research and a place where we want our employees to feel like they never stop learning and growing". Not only does this make the company's employees highly sought after, thus requiring TNS to continue to create an engaging and satisfying work experience, but it also aids in employees seeing how they fit into the big picture, and the impact of their individual contributions. D'Unienville shares the example that one of TNS's key strategic drivers is providing market research expertise for clients, so with that in mind there is a drive towards the developing of the company's employees into experts through accreditation programmes in order to fulfil this goal. This not only further develops each employee's skills, but also directly links them to, and allows them to engage with, the company's strategy.

However, engagement is not solely about the actual work, says d'Unienville, but also about employee happiness. He points out that employees spend an average of 50% of their daylight hours in the workplace, so it is important that they are happy in this space. This speaks to the type of environment employees work in, which should be one in which each person feels energised, inspired and involved. It is equally about the type of relationships that exist in the workplace, which d'Unienville explains are the backbone of its success and based on mutual respect at all levels at TNS.

With this in mind, d'Unienville emphasises that perhaps the most important factor influencing employee engagement is that employees' personal values are aligned with the company's values. He shares that TNS's core values are passion, partnership, simplicity, trust and celebration, each of which in their own way link back to the idea of engagement. He adds that in the recruitment process at TNS, while it remains essential that potential employees possess the right skills, it is equally if not more important that their personal values fit with the company's core values. This is in an effort to ensure that future employees are able to engage fully at all levels to experience job satisfaction and overall happiness. D'Unienville comments that this can only result in successful employees and thus a successful company.

D'Unienville concludes that as a result of this vision of engagement, which encourages constant learning and mutual respect, and which drives the development of inspiring leaders and dedicated employees, while developing talent and core values at its centre, TNS will continue to grow as the leading experts in the market research industry, with the right people in the right roles to offer the best service to clients.

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