

Engaging Leadership

WHY?

- Engagement relates to the degree of discretionary effort employees are willing to apply in their work in the organisation. Whatever their level or role, every employee can choose to do the minimum or to go beyond this and offer outstanding effort. Leaders can affect people's response by their own behaviour and in developing the right conditions for this to flourish.
- Research has shown that effective engagement can increase employee effort and productivity, reduce turnover and absence, without increasing salary costs (*Watson Wyatt study of 115 companies, 2006 & 2008)

WHAT?

- **Engaging others means**
 - Improving the quality of our relationships with each other
 - Surfacing and testing attitudes and beliefs – our own and others
 - Engaging in frank, open and authentic conversations
 - Creating an environment where information is fully shared
- **It takes a change of mind**
 - From:
 - Assuming there is one best way to understand complex problems
 - Regarding your point of view as a fact that should be obvious to others
 - Proposing options in either-or win-lose terms
 - Discounting criticism and considering it as a threat
 - To:
 - Assuming there are different ways to understand complex problems
 - Regarding your viewpoint as a hypothesis to be explored with others
 - Searching for integrative possibilities that meet competing interests
 - Using criticism to continually improve

HOW?

- Do it face-to-face, make it interactive
- Share the thinking and context (the 'why', the history)
- Model the behaviours in the way you engage – the most believed communication is behaviour
- Make it safe to speak, invite/ask questions, allow offloading
- Match your communication to the way your employees listen
- Telling employees once does not engage them
- Make the connections with people's realities by using examples and language that resonates in their world
- Be clear about what is top down v freedom to act

RESOURCES?

1. *Engaging Leadership*, CIPD Research Insight, 2008
2. *The Drivers of Employee Engagement*, Institute for Employment Studies