

Building Team Resilience by Helping Employees Find Meaning in Their Work

Overview

Five ways managers can build team resilience by helping employees find meaning in their work.

- Help employees understand the connection between their own work and business outcomes.
- Let employees know that their work matters and that you notice and appreciate all that they do.
- Remember that building resilience is related to working toward goals that you value.
- Recognize that there are many factors employees value and that give meaning to their work
- Offer ample and ongoing learning opportunities

Research shows that to be truly resilient, we need a sense of meaning and purpose in what we do and what we spend time on. In this article, you'll read about five ways to help the people you manage feel valued and find purpose at work. This material is based on a presentation given by Arlene Johnson, a vice president at WFD Consulting and an expert on workplace resilience.

1. Help employees understand the connection between their own work and business outcomes.

Employees need to see the connection between their work and the company's success -- how their work fits into the business plan, what they are contributing, and how their work makes a difference to product development or clients or whatever part of the business they are in. Make it clear how people's work fits into the whole.

2. Let employees know that their work matters and that you notice and appreciate all that they do.

That means recognizing people for the results they deliver at all stages of a project. You can never say too often, "Thanks, great job." By thanking and acknowledging employees' contributions and by helping people at all levels see how their work contributes to the team's goals and the organization's success, you are building both individual and team resilience.

3. Remember that building resilience is related to working toward goals that you value.

Ensure that the values of the team members -- such as friendship, integrity, and achievement -- are reflected in the way the team works together. It's also your job as a manager to communicate how the shared goals and visions of your work group relate to those of the organization.

4. Recognize that there are many factors employees value and that give meaning to their work.

Work-life balance, the opportunity to learn and grow, job security, flexibility, and a measure of autonomy are all important, in different degrees for different individuals.

5. Offer ample and ongoing learning opportunities.

To continue feeling committed to our work -- and resilient as well -- we need to use our talents and skills and keep using them. Provide employees with work

2 • Building Team Resilience by Helping Employees Find Meaning in Their Work

opportunities and challenges that allow them to keep growing and to keep using their personal talents and skills to accomplish new goals. That's key to keeping people resilient and engaged.

The content in this article is based on a January 2006 presentation given by Arlene Johnson, a vice president at WFD Consulting. Ms. Johnson has over 20 years of experience working with business organizations to identify and address workplace issues and assist in developing strategies for effective change. WFD Consulting (www.wfd.com) provides research and consulting services to dozens of companies in the U.S. and globally on how to build a resilient work force, implement flexibility, and create an inspiring and engaged workplace.

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