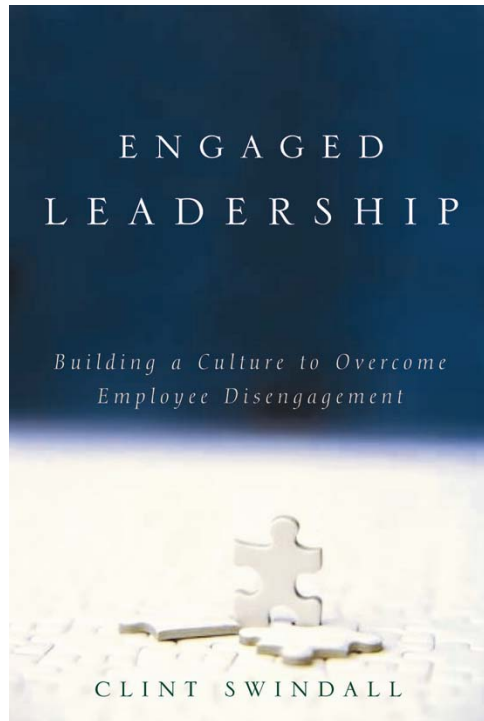


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ENGAGED LEADERSHIP *

BUILDING A CULTURE TO OVERCOME EMPLOYEE DISENGAGEMENT



BY CLINT SWINDALL

* Available for pre-order on Amazon.com now, and on bookstore shelves June 29, 2007.

.....
Published by John Wiley & Sons



OVERVIEW

Imagine you've been tasked with hiring a new employee for your organization. After an exhaustive search, you found the perfect candidate. You've made the offer, but before the person will accept, she's asked to have a quick meeting with a group of randomly selected employees. She says it's no big deal ... she just wants to learn a little about the culture of your organization.

What would a random group of your organization's employees say about your culture? Would they say most employees do the bare minimum to get by, or would they say most employees have a high commitment to the organization and its values?

Before you answer, consider this. According to a survey conducted by The Gallup Organization, only 26% of employees are engaged. Most employees are disengaged. They show up to work each day and do the minimum to get by. They collect a paycheck and go home. These aren't bad people. They simply don't have a passion for their work, and they make up 55% of any organization.

The remaining 19% of employees are actively disengaged. These employees are not committed to the organization's future, and are opposed to just about everything you do. Most are miserable, and want to share it with anyone who will listen. In fact, they're out recruiting new members every day! And in some cases, they are the most vocal and influential leaders in the organization.

While many leaders simply blame disengagement on the employee, progressive leaders are finding a way to build a culture to overcome employee disengagement. The responsibility for productivity and profitability rests entirely on the shoulders of leadership, and so does the responsibility to overcome employee disengagement.

The question then is how we build a culture to overcome employee disengagement. The answer is simple. Employee engagement is a product of strong leadership. In the midst of managing the business, we must focus our efforts on developing better leaders with a leadership model entitled *Engaged Leadership*. Engaged leaders know the importance of providing the following three levels of leadership:

Directional Leadership

When employees don't have a clear picture of the direction of the company, they become disengaged. According to a survey by Right Management Consultants, a career transition and organizational consulting firm, about two-thirds of employees do not know or understand their employer's business strategy. Of the organizations responding to the survey, twenty-eight percent limit such communication to only their leadership teams. How can we ever expect a team of employees to help us realize a vision when they don't even know or understand what it is? To build a culture of employee engagement, focus on Directional Leadership by building a consensus for the vision of the organization.

Motivational Leadership

Once employees know how their work contributes to the bigger picture, an effort must be made to inspire people to want to pursue the vision. Quite frankly, most companies aren't very good at this aspect of leadership, and it leads to an increase in the number of disengaged employees. We have a right to expect employees to come to the table with a certain level of motivation, and quite often they do. However, keep in mind that most employees leave an organization because they felt underappreciated. If you want employees who are truly engaged and eager to contribute, focus on Motivational Leadership by inspiring employees to pursue the vision.

Organizational Leadership

Without a clear vision for an organization, future growth is a constant challenge. Without inspired employees to help the organization pursue the vision, the journey is dull at best. But without the right team in place to make it all happen, the task of building an organization is virtually impossible. Sure, we have our stars. But we also know that employees come and go in any industry. Based on that, there must be an effort to build the organization so the pursuit of the vision continues. If you want to build a culture that lives on long after the stars, focus on Organizational Leadership by developing the team to realize the vision.

The problem of employee disengagement is a source of ongoing frustration for leaders of any organization. Not only does it irritate the management team, it demoralizes the productive employees who carry the majority of the work load. Significant organizational transformation can take place when the middle 55% is engaged, and that's what this book is all about.

Q&A WITH CLINT SWINDALL

Why did you choose to write a book about employee disengagement?

My experiences in corporate America convinced me that employee disengagement is one of the most significant and frustrating challenges leaders face today, regardless of the industry or size of the organization. It doesn't matter how great a product is or how great the market is. If employees aren't engaged, the experience for them, their leadership team, and the customer will be mediocre at best. Also, far too many bosses believe employee disengagement is the employee's fault. The key is not a shift in mindset for the employee. The key is a shift in mindset for the leader.

Isn't "employee disengagement" just another buzz phrase in business today?

According to The Gallup Organization, only 26 percent of employees are "engaged" on the job. With 55 percent in the "disengaged" category and 19 percent in the "actively disengaged" category, a full 74 percent of employees are at some stage of disengagement. That's more than a buzz phrase. That's an epidemic, and it deserves the attention of leaders at all levels.

Why should someone choose *Engaged Leadership* over another business book?

I think what makes *Engaged Leadership* unique is the format. There are many good leadership books available today. Some are written in the traditional, how-to format. Some are written in the popular fable format. As we discussed the layout of this book, the decision was made to provide the information in both formats. As a result, the book is written in two distinct sections. For those readers who learn from and enjoy a fable, the first portion is the business story. For those readers who learn from a more straight-forward approach, the second portion is the traditional, how-to format.

Why did you choose to write a business book in the fable format?

Two reasons. One, people relate to people, and I believe the success of many business fables today has proven that to be true. Readers can take the lessons learned in a story and apply them to their own circumstances. In fact, I have found in the professional speaking industry that people have the best chance of learning a concept and actually applying it in their life if they can combine the theory with a real-life example. And two, a business story gives the reader a reason to want to continue reading the book. Too many how-to books get put down after the third chapter. While some people dedicate the time to read a book from cover to cover, many simply don't have the time or commitment. I wanted to write a book people would be encouraged to finish so the concepts can get applied.

Are there any rats or mice in this fable?

There are no furry critters in *Engaged Leadership!* Although the traditional fable involves animals telling a story, there are no animals in this book and no one is looking for their cheese. This leadership fable is told based on the real-life challenges of a young management recruit who struggles to understand his role overcoming employee disengagement.

Is the fable based on your business experiences?

Yes, to a certain degree. I've had the pleasure of learning so many lessons throughout my career. Some were better than others. I looked at the lessons I learned over the years, coupled it with the concept of *Engaged Leadership* which I began speaking about many years ago, and created a character named Seth Owen.

Can you set up the basis for the fable?

Absolutely. In fact, here is the actual lead-in to the fable taken from the book ...

Seth Owen had it all figured out. He had taken business classes in college, and assumed managing people couldn't be that hard. After all, with his college degree and charismatic personality, employees would love to be on his team.

As he entered into the working world as an employee of a Fortune 500 company, he was looking forward to putting his degree to work. Although Seth was an average student in the classroom, he was a leader outside the classroom. He had a reputation as the one person you could depend on to get things done. Not only would Seth make things happen as the "go to" guy, he could inspire people around him to help, and always did it with a smile on his face.

Now that he was out of school, the time for "learning" was over, and the time for "doing" was here. The dress rehearsal had ended. As he headed through the doors of corporate America, Seth had no idea his education was just beginning. Nor did he have any idea this year would change the way he viewed business, and life, forever.

What was it like writing your first book?

There are way too many words I could use to describe the experience of writing *Engaged Leadership*. I had written probably 80 percent of the book a few years ago, but never seemed to get it done. My plan was to self-publish the book, so the only missed deadlines were my own. It made it easy for the book to be on the back-burner. When a senior editor from John Wiley & Sons approached me last summer about publishing the book, it provided the motivation I needed to finish the remaining 20 percent. Once I signed the book deal and got serious about finishing the manuscript, I threw out much of what I'd written. With about 20 percent in hand, I headed off to a cabin in the woods and came out when it was done. I'm proud of the finished product, and excited to know readers I will never meet will have the opportunity to put *Engaged Leadership* to work in their life.

AN EXCERPT

For a small regional airport, there were quite a few people bustling around. As Seth moved through the crowd of departing passengers, he was trying to look confident in his new blue suit, freshly starched shirt, cap toe shoes and yellow tie. He had been told that yellow was a “power” color, and he needed to look powerful that day.

You see, Seth was meeting his new boss. He had just graduated from college and was going to work for Halifax, a large call center company with offices in central Texas. The company was growing, and had opened a new call center two years earlier just outside Austin. Seth liked the fact it was a huge company with offices all over the United States. He figured it would be a secure place to be, and would provide opportunities for advancement.

Although he had been hired by the corporate recruiting office in New Jersey, Seth was being sent to work in the call center outside Austin, and was meeting his boss for the first time. Her name was Hannah Jaxson. Seth was eager to meet her because the corporate recruiter spoke very highly of her. He told Seth she was considered a rising star in the company, and that she was transferred from another department to take over this call center just two months ago.

Since Seth was entering into a fast-track management program, he considered himself very fortunate to have the opportunity to learn from one of the best for the next twelve months. In fact, to some she was considered a legend. She would arrive to a new assignment, work her magic, and ultimately turn the office around. Company leaders would look at her success from the outside and wonder how she did it. Seth was going to have the opportunity to learn from the inside what this “magic” was all about.

He scanned the crowd as he wandered around the baggage claim area looking for Hannah. He requested a picture from the corporate recruiter so he would know her when he saw her, but his flight left before he could get it. Although he had no idea what she would

look like, he had a picture in his mind. She would be tall, confident, light brown hair, and well-dressed.

As the passengers gathered their luggage and the crowd began to thin, Seth got anxious. He wasn't concerned his new boss wasn't going to be there. He was more concerned that maybe he was being tested. He thought to himself, "What if this is part of the test? What if she's standing around the corner watching me wander around lost? Should I have her paged? Should I start approaching any female standing by herself?" If this was a test, he certainly didn't want to fail.

About that time, he heard the page. "Seth Owen. Please meet your party at the baggage claim information desk. Mr. Seth Owen. Please meet your party at the baggage claim information desk."

As he turned to walk that way, he saw a woman emerge from the small crowd around the information desk. Although she was waving, this couldn't be her. She didn't even come close to matching the picture he had in his mind. This woman was short, and had dark black hair. However, Seth was half right. Dressed in a dark blue suit, she carried herself with all the confidence in the world.

THE TWELVE CHALLENGES

Throughout the fable, Seth learns the twelve lessons related to *Engaged Leadership*. In the how-to portion of the book, each of the following challenges is explained and specific recommended actions provided:

DIRECTIONAL LEADERSHIP

BUILDING A CONSENSUS FOR THE VISION

- CHALLENGE ONE: Recruit support from the Top 26%
- CHALLENGE TWO: Prepare the organization for change
- CHALLENGE THREE: Let them know how they contribute
- CHALLENGE FOUR: Constantly communicate progress

MOTIVATIONAL LEADERSHIP

INSPIRING EMPLOYEES TO PURSUE THE VISION

- CHALLENGE FIVE: Lead with positive motivation
- CHALLENGE SIX: Celebrate small successes
- CHALLENGE SEVEN: Encourage life balance for all employees
- CHALLENGE EIGHT: Create a fair work environment

ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

DEVELOPING THE TEAM TO REALIZE THE VISION

- CHALLENGE NINE: Identify and position the appropriate talent
- CHALLENGE TEN: Build a bridge between generations
- CHALLENGE ELEVEN: Move toward real empowerment
- CHALLENGE TWELVE: Establish a strategy to maintain success

REVIEWS

“*Engaged Leadership* is the best of both worlds: an engaging business story coupled with a primer on the practical skills all leaders need. In the book, Clint Swindall provides many useful tools for successfully meeting 12 major leadership challenges. I recommend it.”

- Mark Sanborn

author, *The Fred Factor* and *You Don't Need a Title to be a Leader*

“This creatively inspiring book not only encourages the leaders of tomorrow, but also inspires the leaders of today to step up and meet the challenges of a changing world. Business leaders will find true substance at the core of each page.”

- Nido Qubein

President, High Point University and Chairman, Great Harvest Bread Co.

“Give this book to anyone aspiring to be an effective leader and you've put them ahead of the curve. Clint Swindall has done a masterful job of bringing leadership to life in a book that's engaging and effective. Create a leadership culture in your company by getting this book now!”

- Joe Calloway

author, *Work Like You're Showing Off!* and *Becoming a Category of One*

“This book is so engaging; you’ll forget you’re learning. If you only have time for one book this year – make it *Engaged Leadership*. You won’t be disappointed.”

- Bradford D. Beldon

President & CEO, Beldon Roofing Company

“This book contains simple yet very effective management techniques that can improve every leader’s ability to inspire and get the most out of their employees. Clint shows us what employees want from leaders and how leaders can motivate employees using practical yet effective stories.”

- R. John Wight

President and CEO, BF&M Insurance Group

“This is a slam dunk by Swindall! What a powerful read for any team member of an organization. A fun, enjoyable, insightful, and impactful lesson on how to apply the key concepts of engaged leadership to move your team forward.”

- Joe Clark

Vice President, Ticket Sales & Services, San Antonio Spurs

CONCLUSION

It took several years for this book to make it from ideas to paper. On occasion I would be encouraged by some colleagues to “just get it out”, because it would add credibility to my career as a consultant, speaker and trainer. I rejected that advice each time I got it, knowing I wanted to be pleased with my effort. I waited until it was right, and am proud of the finished product.

As I travel around the country speaking on the topic of leadership, I am constantly amazed at how receptive people are to learning about leadership. My experience has been that people are absolutely exhausted with being managed, and utterly starved for being led.

I truly believe the concepts presented in *Engaged Leadership* are what people are looking for today. They want to understand, and be a part of, the bigger picture and long-term vision. They want to be inspired to pursue that long-term vision. And they want to be a part of a strong, productive team. You can provide these things with *Engaged Leadership*.

Enjoy!



Clint Swindall

ABOUT CLINT SWINDALL

Clint is the president and CEO of Verbalocity, Inc., a personal development company with a focus on leadership enhancement. These solutions include leadership enhancement programs, training, professional speaking and general consulting.



After a successful corporate career with SBC Communications (now AT&T), Clint chose to use the skills he developed throughout his career to change lives and help organizations enhance their personal and professional leadership skills. As the founder of Verbalocity, he brings a multitude of leadership experience.

As a professional speaker, trainer and leadership consultant, Clint has delivered his programs throughout the United States, Canada, South America, Mexico and the United Kingdom. A small sample of the clients served by Verbalocity and Clint Swindall include: AAA Travel, American Express, DaimlerChrysler, Enterprise Rent-a-Car, Hallmark Gold Crown, Princess Cruises, RadioShack Corporation and The Salvation Army.

Clint has been recognized in the professional speaking industry with the prestigious Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) designation. Less than 10% of speakers worldwide who belong to the National Speakers Association and the International Federation for Professional Speakers hold this designation.



CONTACT INFORMATION

Clint Swindall

President & CEO

Verbalocity, Inc.

P.O. Box 700787

San Antonio, Texas 78270-0787

(210) 637-7900 Telephone

(210) 637-7990 Facsimile

(877) VERBALOCITY (837-2256)

clint@verbalocity.com

www.verbalocity.com

BOOK INFORMATION

Publisher: John Wiley & Sons

Hardcover: 240 pages

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0470135328

ISBN-13: 978-0470135327

Retail: \$22.95

