

HR in the Gulf Region:**Engaging Your B Team**

By Dave Millner

MR.MILLNER: Hi my name is Dave Millner, and the subject is: Engaging your B Team. One trend that I've noticed over the past few years that I've been fortunate enough to work across the Region is that organisations in the Gulf are starting to become increasingly sophisticated in their identification, development and maximisation of their 'A' Players, their high potentials, their superstars or whatever phrase is used to reflect those individual who are either today's high performers or have the capability to be tomorrows high performers in more complex and demanding roles.

This is great news that organisations are starting to become more sophisticated in their longer term workforce planning; however I perceive that from time to time some organisations are missing the wider perspective here. Not every person can be a senior leader, an 'A' Player or the person who ultimately determines the new go to market strategy. However these key people can't achieve organisational success by themselves, either. An organisation is only as good as its' weakest link though, as irrespective of whether you are an 'A' Player or not, the key point is that everybody matters and everybody counts. It's not about how quickly the leadership team can drive the organisation forward with a new strategy but I believe it's more about how quickly the leadership team can engage with other people to want to drive the organisation forward. The success of an organisation is defined by the collective workforce's performance not just the performance of the leadership team or the 'A' Players.

I guess I'm saying that everyone is important irrespective of their job and the perceptions that people may have about those roles. Success requires everyone to work together, regardless of their status and job in the organisation. If people feel truly engaged in their work and their leaders know how to give them what they need, it's a recipe for success. To my mind for people to truly be engaged in the success of their organisations, they need four things: to be proud about what they do, to feel like they belong, to believe they are doing something that is valuable and finally can see that what they do makes a difference.

These aspects are important whether you are an 'A' or 'B' Player; the whole concept of employee engagement is focused on everyone in an organisation and that means that the views, ideas and opinions of the employees are being sought to help shape an engaged culture. Just looking at the percentages, the number of 'A' Players in an organisation should always make up a very small percentage of the total workforce and so the 'B' Team has an important opportunity to have their say and help shape the way that an organisation needs to evolve to address certain challenges.

There is a whole industry out there focused upon obtaining great engagement scores. To my mind the focus has to be about developing a truly engaged workforce who are operating in a engaging work climate or culture. Less than positive results show not only the areas that need to be addressed but most importantly for me they also show that people still care and as I said earlier, any feedback you obtain is going be driven mainly

by those people that don't fulfill those high profile roles.

I'm constantly reminded by CEO's who tell me that they are always amazed at the passion, commitment and quality of feedback that they obtain when they get the chance to really talk to people across their organisations and the fact that they have really clear insights into what can be done to improve the way the organisation operates. That's no surprise given that they probably interact with more customers, more colleagues and undertake more processes and systems than any of the 'A' Players can ever hope to.

Certainly in every organisation the need to identify and develop 'A' players remains a business critical activity that is crucial for the longer term development of an organisations capability. My plea is not to forget that there are other players in every organisation waiting to be given a chance, to be challenged, to be appreciated and understood by the organisation and to transform and grow their capability to a level of performance that may never hit the 'A' Player level but is nevertheless the very backbone of every organisation. It is when that team of people are neglected that an organisation starts to loose their 'heart and soul' because irrespective of what team they play on they are the people that deliver those strategies, those customer solutions etc. and if they are not valued and engaged there will always be someone else who will value capable people!

Dave Millner is Consulting Director of Kenexa EMEA and Director of Kenexa HR Institute. Follow at http://twitter.com/Kenexa_HR_Inst

Copyright Kenexa®, 2009. All rights reserved.

No quotes from the materials contained herein may be used in any media without attribution to the author. This transcript may not be reproduced in whole or in part without prior written permission. For further information, please contact Andrea Watkins at andrea.watkins@kenexa.com.