

Addressing Apathy Among Managers and Key Employees

Building a successful business is a labor of love. Whether it's the love of creating something, profit, legacy, or otherwise, your business is most likely your passion. But what if your management team doesn't seem to share your passion, or worse, doesn't seem to care about the business at all? While the knee-jerk reaction may be "Get rid of them," consider some of the reasons why it may seem like your managers and key employees don't care.

Put your ambition in context

As a successful business owner, you have next-level ambition. Your managers and employees may also be ambitious, but their ambition may not be as high as yours. When the people you hired to grow your company don't have the same fire as you, it can look like they don't care at all.

This is a dangerous mindset. It's also more common among business owners than you'd think.

Some managers and key employees are perfectly happy in their roles. Pushing them to do more—especially when the work they're doing is already exceptional—can create a bevy of negative effects, such as burnout or apathy.

Consider the causes of apathy

If you have managers or key employees who seem less engaged and more apathetic, it's important to ask yourself, "Why might this be?" It's unlikely that you or a manager would hire someone who came to the company with an apathetic attitude.

You may discover that someone who's feeling apathetic is actually frustrated. They may feel as though the company's actions don't align with the company's stated values, for example. (This is becoming more evident, as younger workers tend to take a more activist bent.)



**Michael Wildeveld, CEPA, M&AMI,
CM&AP, CM&AA, CBI, CBB**
michaelw@veldma.com

Veld Mergers & Acquisitions
www.veldma.com
1 Park Plaza, 600
Irvine, CA 92614
[310-652-8066](tel:310-652-8066)

If you notice less commitment from people you typically count on, it's important to figure out the reason why before it's too late. Though this can be challenging when you're running a business, it's crucial to retain your top talent.

Act on warning signs

If you have a sense that an important manager or employee has begun to disengage, you're likely right. At this point, there are several things to consider so you can act properly.

1. Money may not solve everything. When important managers or employees want to leave, it may be tempting to throw money at the problem. However, if pay isn't the issue, offering more money may exacerbate the problem, as it could show a lack of understanding of the core problem.

2. Resetting expectations. Employee disengagement can sometimes boil down to misaligned expectations. Examining and properly defining what you expect from employees is only one half of the puzzle. You should also consider what the employee expects from the business, and then determine whether those expectations align with your overarching goals.

3. Emotions matter. Hard, effective workers crave tangible acknowledgment of their good work. If your managers and key employees do exceptional work (Which you must define for them!), they want you to not just tell them but also show them that you care about it, via career advancement opportunities, bonuses, and so on.

Above all else, next-level managers and key employees want a chance to do their best in the context of your business. It's in the interests of your business, your future, and your success that you position them to do just that.

We strive to help business owners identify and prioritize their objectives with respect to their businesses, their employees, and their families. If you are ready to talk about your goals for the future and get insights into how you might achieve those goals, we'd be happy to sit down and talk with you. Please feel free to contact us at your convenience.

The information contained in this article is general in nature and is not legal, tax or financial advice. For information regarding your particular situation, contact an attorney or a tax or financial professional. The information in this newsletter is provided with the understanding that it does not render legal, accounting, tax or financial advice. In specific cases, clients should consult their legal, accounting, tax or financial professional. This article is not intended to give advice or to represent our firm as being qualified to give advice in all areas of professional services. Exit Planning is a discipline that typically requires the collaboration of multiple professional advisors. To the extent that our firm does not have the expertise required on a particular matter, we will always work closely with you to help you gain access to the resources and professional advice that you need.

This is an opt-in newsletter published by Business Enterprise Institute, Inc., and presented to you by our firm. We appreciate your interest.

Any examples provided are hypothetical and for illustrative purposes only. Examples include fictitious names and do not represent any particular person or entity.