

## **Is Hope on the Way?**

In a tough economy, hope and communication in the workplace are more important than most executives might think.

by Steve Crabtree and Jennifer Robison

### **Hope is critical to effective management**

The U.S. recession officially ended in June 2009, according to a recent announcement by the National Bureau of Economic Research. But that's little consolation to the countless American businesses -- and their employees -- that are still reeling from the consequences of the economic crisis. Hope may sound like an airy concept, but it's critical to effective management.

### **Optimize human resources by engaging employees**

Some businesses emerged better off than others, however. And Gallup research suggests that for many, the ability to optimize their human resources by engaging their employees and customers made a big difference. Organizations with high proportions of engaged employees were less likely than others to see a decline in earnings per share in 2008, the year after the recession officially began, according to Gallup's recent report on the State of the American Workplace: 2008-2010.

### **How important is hope in the workplace?**

The connection between employee engagement and financial performance is easy to understand: The report notes that "employees who are well-supported and who feel valued are emotionally connected to their workplaces and have greater intrinsic motivation to be productive." But Gallup has also measured relationships between engagement and factors that are less commonly accounted for but particularly relevant to employees' resilience under such stressful economic circumstances. Among these are levels of hope in the workplace.

### **The Gallup Hope Index**

Hope may sound like an airy concept, but it is critical to effective management -- it helps employees remain positive and productive in the face of adversity. After analyzing a range of question items addressing workers' feelings of hope in their workplaces, Gallup researchers identified three items that explained most of the variance in the other items tested. They comprise the Hope Index used in Gallup's employee engagement approach:

- I know I will be an important part of this organization in the future.
- At work, I set clear, meaningful goals and accomplish them.
- I can figure out a way to solve almost any problem at my workplace.

The 2009 study of more than 20,000 employees asked respondents to rate their level of agreement with each statement on a five-point scale in which "5" meant they strongly agreed and "1" meant they strongly disagreed. Overall, 15% of employees strongly agreed with all three items -- suggesting only a small minority were completely free of doubts about their current and future contributions to their organizations. However, that figure was almost double (29%) among employees who were emotionally engaged in their workplaces. By contrast, 5% of employees who were classified as "not engaged" strongly agreed with all three hope items -- and just 2% of those who were actively disengaged did so.

Results for individual question items indicate that engagement levels are most strongly related to the item that directly addresses employees' sense of security in their organizations. Just one-third of employees overall (33%) strongly agreed with the statement "I know I will be an important part of this organization in the future." However, a majority of engaged employees (56%) strongly agreed, versus 17% of those who were not engaged and 7% of those who were actively disengaged.

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[http://gmj.gallup.com/content/143408/Hope.aspx?utm\\_source=email&utm\\_medium=10OCT-B&utm\\_content=titlelink&utm\\_campaign=newsletter](http://gmj.gallup.com/content/143408/Hope.aspx?utm_source=email&utm_medium=10OCT-B&utm_content=titlelink&utm_campaign=newsletter)

What about you?

How engaged are you in your workplace?

How would you score on the Gallup Hope Index?

What motivates you the most in your workplace to be fully engaged?

What de-motivates you the most?

Share your responses with [timlifecoach@gmail.com](mailto:timlifecoach@gmail.com)