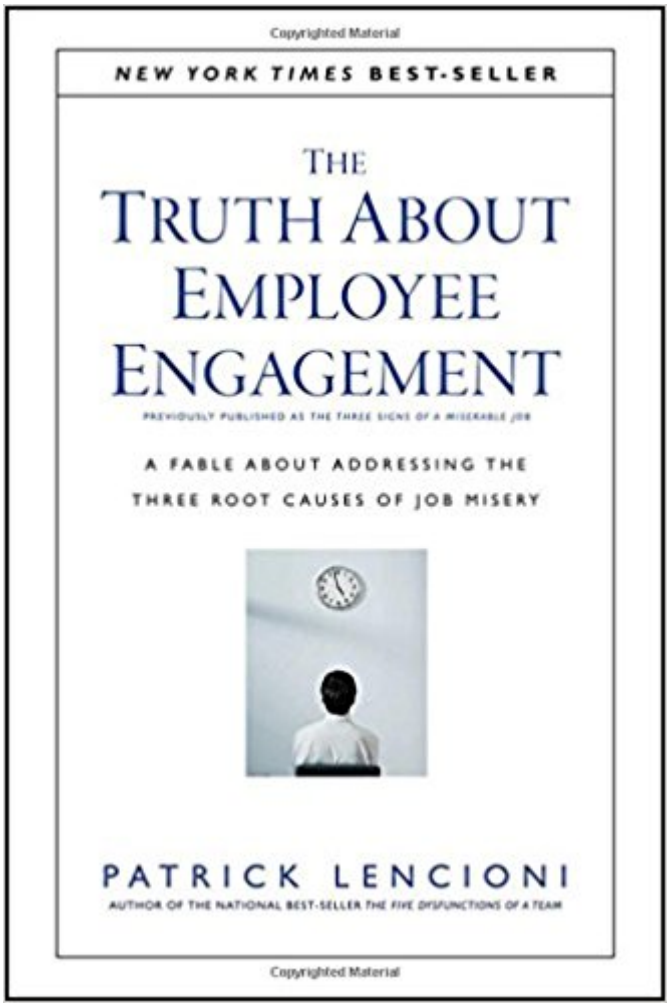
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The Truth About Employee Engagement: A Fable About Addressing The Three Root Causes Of Job Misery



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Synopsis

The Truth About Employee Engagement was originally published as The Three Signs of a Miserable Job. A bestselling author and business guru tells how to improve job satisfaction and performance. In his sixth fable, bestselling author Patrick Lencioni takes on a topic that almost everyone can relate to: job misery. Millions of workers, even those who have carefully chosen careers based on true passions and interests, dread going to work, suffering each day as they trudge to jobs that make them cynical, weary, and frustrated. It is a simple fact of business life that any job, from investment banker to dishwasher, can become miserable. Through the story of a CEO turned pizzeria manager, Lencioni reveals the three elements that make work miserable -- irrelevance, immeasurability, and anonymity -- and gives managers and their employees the keys to make any job more engaging. As with all of LencioniÃ¢â ¬â„¢s books, this one is filled with actionable advice you can put into effect immediately. In addition to the fable, the book includes a detailed model examining the three root causes of job misery and how they can be remedied. It covers the benefits of managing for job engagement within organizations -- increased productivity, greater retention, and competitive advantage -- and offers examples of how managers can use the applications in the book to deal with specific jobs and situations. Patrick Lencioni is President of The Table Group, a management consulting firm specializing in executive team development and organizational health. As a consultant and keynote speaker, he has worked with thousands of senior executives and executive teams in organizations ranging from Fortune 500 companies to high-tech startups to universities and nonprofits. His clients include. AT&T, Direct TV, JCPenney, Microsoft, Nestle, Northwestern Mutual, Southwest Airlines and St. Jude ChilrenÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Research Hospital. Ã Â Lencioni is the author of ten bestselling books, including The Five Dysfunctions of a Team and The Advantage. He previously worked for Oracle, Sybase, and the management consulting firm Bain & Company.

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Customer Reviews

Patrick Lencioni, renowned business consultant and bestselling author of The Five Dysfunctions of a Team, is on a critical mission: create widespread job satisfaction in a world full of workplace misery. His latest book, The Three Signs of a Miserable Job: A Fable for Managers (And Their Employees), tells the inspiring tale a high-flying, but deeply dissatisfied Chief Executive Officer who ditches the power and perks for career bliss as the manager of a pizzeria! In this unusual and inspiring story, Lencioni convincingly demonstrates how career happiness (or misery) is the direct result of the manager--employee relationship. Patrick Lencioni took the time to tell us about his life-long "obsession" with job misery, shatter some myths about workplace satisfaction and offer some real advice on how to turn that daily grind into daily fulfillment. --Lauren Nemroff Some Questions for Patrick Lencioni Q: Why did you decide to write this book? A: As a kid, I watched my dad trudge off to work each day and became somewhat obsessed with the notion of job misery. Somewhere along the line, I came to the frightening realization that people spend so much time at work yet so many of them were unfulfilled and frustrated in their jobs. As I got older, I came to another realization--that job misery was having a devastating impact on individuals, and on society at large. It seemed to me that understanding the cause of the problem, and finding a solution for it, was a worthy focus for my career. Q: What exactly is a miserable job? A:A miserable job is not the same as a bad one. A bad job lies in the eye of the beholder. One person’s dream job might be another person’s nightmare. But a miserable job is universal. It is one that makes a person cynical and frustrated and demoralized when they go home at night. It drains them of their energy, their enthusiasm and their self-esteem. Miserable jobs can be found in every industry and at every level. Professional athletes, CEOs and actors can be--and often are-- as miserable as ditch diggers, janitors and fast food workers. Q: How prevalent is job misery? A: Attend any kind of social gathering, anywhere in the country, and talk about work. The stories and anecdotal evidence confirming job misery are overwhelming. Misery spans all income levels, ages and geography. A recent Gallup poll found that 77% of people hate their jobs. Gallup also contends that this ailing workforce is costing employers more than $350 billion dollars in lost productivity. Q: What is the root cause of job misery? A: The primary source of job misery and the potential cure for that misery

resides in the hands of one individual--the direct manager. There are countless studies confirming this statement, including both Gallup and The Blanchard Companies. Both organizations have found that an employee’s relationship with their direct manager is the most important determinant to employee satisfaction (over pay, benefits, perks, work-life balance etc). Even employees who are well paid, do interesting work and have great autonomy, cannot feel fulfilled in a job if their managers are not providing them with what they need on a daily or weekly basis. Q: What are the three signs? The first is anonymity, which is the feeling that employees get when they realize that their manager has little interest in them a human being and that they know little about their lives, their aspirations and their interests. The second sign is irrelevance, which takes root when employees cannot see how their job makes a difference in the lives of others. Every employee needs to know that the work they do impacts someone’s life--a customer, a co-worker, even a supervisor--in one way or another. The third sign is something I call "immeasurement," which is the inability of employees to assess for themselves their contribution or success. Employees who have no means of measuring how well they are doing on a given day or in a given week, must rely on the subjective opinions of others, usually their managers’, to gauge their progress or contribution. Q: Why don’t managers do these things? A: As simple as the three signs are, the fact remains that few managers take a genuine interest in their people, remind them of the impact that their work has on others, and help them establish creative ways to measure and assess their performance. There are a number of reasons. First, many managers think they are too busy. Of course, the real problem is that most of those managers see themselves primarily as individual contributors who happen to have direct reports. They fail to realize that the most important part of their jobs is providing their people with what they need to be productive and fulfilled (a.k.a. not miserable) in their jobs. The second reason that managers don’t provide their employees with the three things they need is that they simply forget what is was like when they were a little lower on the food chain. They somehow forget how important it was to them when a supervisor took an interest in them, talked to them about why their work really mattered and gave them a means for evaluating their progress. Finally, many managers don’t do this because they are embarrassed or afraid to try. They fear that their employees will see them as being disingenuous or manipulative, or that by taking an interest in their personal lives they will be stepping into inappropriate territory. It’s almost as though they fail to understand the difference between the interview process (no personal questions allowed!) and the actual work experience (treat people like a full human being). Q: What can a miserable employee do to improve his or her situation? A: The first thing they can do is assess whether their manager is interested in and capable of addressing

the three things that are required. And they have to realize that most managers really do want to improve, in spite of the fact that they may seem disinterested. The second thing miserable employees need to do is help their managers understand what it is they need. If they have a strong relationship with their manager, they can come right out and say it ("You know, it would mean a lot to me if you knew more about who I am and what makes me tick." or, "Can you sit down and help me understand why this work I’m doing makes a difference to someone?"). Finally, employees would do well for themselves if they turned the tables and started doing for their managers what they want for themselves. For instance, employees who take a greater interest in the life of their managers are bound to infect them with the same kind of human interest. Similarly, employees who take the time to tell their managers (in a non suck-up kind of way) about the impact they have on their job satisfaction, will likely inspire them to respond in kind. However, if an employee comes to the conclusion that his or her manager is indeed completely disinterested in helping them find fulfillment in their work, it may well be time to start looking for a new job. Q: Why do so many professional athletes and entertainers seem miserable in their jobs? A: In spite of the money they make and the attention they receive from fans and the media, many athletes and entertainers experience one or all of the three signs of a miserable job. Most professional athletes feel anonymous in their jobs because their coaches and managers dedicate little, if any, time or energy getting to know them personally. I’ve had coaches tell me "Hey, these guys are professionals and this is a business. They don’t need anything special from me." Keep in mind that they are referring to young men in their early twenties who are living on their own for the first time and feel surprisingly alone--even with all the fan attention. Entertainers are in similar situations, but for them, it is often relevance that suffers. Many actors cannot reconcile their celebrity and wealth with the fact that they see their work as being somewhat unimportant, in terms of impacting the lives of others. Perhaps that’s why so many of them get involved in charitable causes or politics--it gives them a sense of purpose. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Lencioni, a consultant, speaker and bestselling author (The Five Dysfunctions of a Team), pinpoints the reasons behind and ways around what many consider a constant of the human condition: job dissatisfaction. According to Lencioni, job-fueled misery can ultimately seep into all aspects of life, leading to drug and alcohol abuse, violence and other problems, making this examination of job misery dynamics a worthy pursuit. Through the "simple" tale of a retired CEO-turned-pizzeria manager, Lencioni reveals the three corners of the employee unhappiness

pyramid-immeasurability, anonymity and irrelevance-and how they contribute to dissatisfaction in all jobs and at all levels (including famously unfulfilled celebrities and athletes). The main culprit is the distancing of people from each other (anonymity), which means less exposure to the impact their work has (immeasurability), and thus a diminished sense of their own utility (irrelevance). While his major points could have been communicated more efficiently in a straightforward self-help fashion, his fictional case study proves an involving vessel for his model and strategies (applicable to managers and lower-level staff alike), and an appendix-like final chapter provides a helpfully stripped-down version. Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Patrick again makes something that appears complex easy to understand. In this case, employee engagement is clarified to three simple truths without leaving the reader in a theoretical realm with no actionable tools. The underlying symptom of job misery is a great place to start since managers are responsible for the work environment and culture. With the consequences of employee engagement (newest buzz phrase for creating an environment where human beings can flourish at work) being so important, managers will benefit greatly from reading this book. The restaurant context for this fable is fantastic for making his points! The quality and service dilemmas presented are a common experience for most of us. Great and easy read with a real return for your investment!

Whether you manage a team that is large or small, there are many challenges you'll face as a leader. As I reflect back on the many challenges I have faced supervising and managing teams in contact centers, there are a number of challenges that I couldn't quite put words to until I read 'The Three Signs of a Miserable Job: A Fable for Managers (and their employees)' by Patrick Lenconi (Jossey-Bass, 2007).'The Three Signs of a Miserable Job' is a leadership fable. The main character of the story is Brian Bailey, CEO of JMJ Fitness Machines. Brian loves his work at JMJ and his world suddenly changes when JMJ is sold. Now Brian must make a new life for himself in retirement. While Brian tries his best to enjoy retirement, there is something nagging at him. He wonders if the culture he created at JMJ was a fluke or something he could do again. Much to the surprise of his family and friends, he buys into a local pizza joint (Gene & Joe's) and takes on the role of assistant manager.Brian spent a lot of time thinking through what it was that created the culture at JMJ and narrowed it down to the following:*"People cannot be fulfilled in their work if they are not known." (anonymity)*"Everyone needs to know that their job matters, to someone. Anyone."

(irrelevance)*"Employees need to be able to gauge their progress and level of contribution for themselves." (immeasurement)Much of the story chronicles the ups and downs as Brian puts his plan into action at Gene & Joe's. Once Brian has things moving along at a good pace at the restaurant, he excitedly finds himself thrust back into the C-suite as the new CEO of Desert Mountain Sports. Now Brian has the opportunity to take what he put into action at Gene & Joe's and apply it on a much larger scale. The story makes for a fast and enjoyable read, so I'll end there with the spoilers.I highly recommend this and every other leadership fable written by Patrick Lencioni. As leaders, we need to always be ready to learn and grow, so we can be better equipped to help our employees to find fulfillment, relevance, and success in the place that they spend nearly half of their waking hours Monday through Friday. 'The Three Signs of a Miserable Job' offers a reasonable framework to make that happen.

First, the book has a conversational tone that makes it easy to read. Mr. Lencioni recognizes that managing people is a gift from God. Serving people is a great responsibility. The well-being of many people depends on managers (of people) doing their job with love and care.

Lencioni is a great author and has a way with words that leaves you feeling inspired and motivated. This book is a bit light on content and over simplifies the issues a bit but it's a quick and easy read and would provide a good primer for first time managers or people who are struggling to get their teams engaged.I have been involved with an experience very similar to the restaurant experiment that Lencioni uses as his story line for most of the book and the results (unlike the outcome in the book) were actually quite damaging. To come in and begin the process of inspiring people with very simple "first steps" and then leave without continuing to build the culture leaves a culture that feels disillusioned and less likely to buy into future initiatives. The former CEO come part time manager leaves the actual business owner destined to both fail and to look like the villian. Any corporate culture initiative needs to be followed through and continually built upon for long term success. People will quickly outgrow and get bored with the management 101 experience and look for more meat.Bottom line, this book is a great place to start. But don't stop here or you'll end up in a worse place than where you began.

This book chronicles the career experiences of Brian Bailey, a seasoned manager who identifies three work satisfaction elements that best motivate workers in both large and small organizations. The lack of these three elements is the root cause of miserable jobs - worker misery can be traces

to a combination of anonymity, irrelevance, or immeasurability. The first 75% of the book is a narrative of Brian's successful experiences leading companies then the last 25% describes the model. I enjoyed this order of presentation - story first then the model and theory. Brian was an excellent motivator of people.I enjoyed the book. It gave me good insight into why I had difficulty in a recent job.

I enjoyed this book very much. Being in the military, I've seen over my career a lot of individuals thrown into leadership positions that have no business being there and haven't the slightest idea how to perform that duty. The book breaks it down, makes it very simple to understand, how to by a good manager; which I personally think has some part in being an effective leader. I will definitely recommend this book to others, just as one of my leadership instructors did for me. Whether you're a CEO or a parent, you will walk away with something from this book.

I enjoy Lencioni's style. The book makes some good points about the importance of leaders knowing their people, and using that insight to help employees measure success in the workplace.

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