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Management Keeps Destroying Enthusiasm Of Newly Hired Employees, Says New Book

PURCHASE, NY — With companies beginning to hire more employees in 2005, they're being given an opportunity to stop something they've been doing for years – destroying the enthusiasm of newly hired employees, according to a new book, *The Enthusiastic Employee: How Companies Profit By Giving Workers What They Want* (Wharton School Publishing/Pearson, February 2005, \$26.95).

The findings are based on 30 years of experience by **Sirota Consulting**, experts in attitude research – including a survey of about 1.2 million employees at 52 primarily Fortune 1000 companies during the years 2001 through 2004.

According to Sirota's research:

- There is a significant decline in employees' overall job satisfaction after they have been working with their employers for an average of six months or more.
- Employees' overall satisfaction with their jobs continues to decline as employees add more years working for their employers.
- While there is some improvement in the overall job satisfaction of employees with more than 10 years experience with their employers, their enthusiasm never recovers to what it was when they started their jobs.
- This dramatic decline in new employees' overall job satisfaction as they gain tenure has been ongoing for many years. Results from the 2001-2002 survey were remarkably similar to 2003-2004. These trends can be attributed to how management treats its workers.

2003-2004 SURVEY RESULTS

Category	Job Satisfaction (out of 100 points)	Decline (points)	Percent decline
Employees with average of 6 months with employer	80	–	–
Employees with 1-5 years working for employer	69	(11)	14%
Employees with 6-10 years working for employer	68	(12)	15%

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- In the 2003-2004 survey, employees with an average of six months with their employers had an average overall job satisfaction rating of 80 out of 100.
- At the same companies in 2003-2004, the average overall job satisfaction rating of employees who had between one and five years experience with their employers measured only 69 out of 100 – an 11-point (or 14%) difference between them and those with an average of six months with their employers.
- Employees with between six and 10 years working for their employers reported an average overall job satisfaction rating of 68 in the 2003-2004 survey – a 12-point (or 15%) difference.

The book's authors – **David Sirota, Louis A. Mischkind, and Michael Irwin Meltzer** – attribute the decline in the enthusiasm of new employees to the following reasons:

- **Most management policies are not geared toward the 95% of employees who are good workers, but toward the 5% of employees who are “allergic to work.”** These employees “should never have been hired and, while at work, can be managed only with continuing close supervision. A major problem is that, in many organizations, management generalizes the behavior of this small group to just about every worker, which makes the work environment oppressive for all, and suppresses the natural enthusiasm most people bring to their jobs.” Some examples of poor management policies include invoking disciplinary codes for minor offenses, policing 10-minute coffee breaks, and generally behaving as though employees have to be made to work.
- **Many managers fail to show appreciation and concern for their employees, and are indifferent.** “Indifferent managers are not cruel and abusive. They are simply unconcerned with workers other than as replaceable economic entities.”
- **Management is often too quick to respond to adverse business conditions with employee layoffs.** “Although companies can preach forever that ‘our people are our most important asset,’ that means little when dismissing workers in times of economic difficulty is the *first* thing a company does, instead of the *last*. What’s even worse is when people are laid off despite the business being successful.”

“It’s hard for people to be enthusiastic about an organization that is not enthusiastic about them,” said David Sirota, the book’s lead author.

Instead, management policies need to satisfy the three things that matter most to all employees:

- **Equity** – to be treated fairly
- **Achievement** – to be proud of one’s job and company
- **Camaraderie** – to have good, productive relationships with fellow employees

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“There are no goals more prevalent or important than these,” says Dr. Sirota, the book’s lead author. “These three goals fit in very well with what management wants. Doesn’t a company want people to want to be proud of their work? Doesn’t it want employees who want to work collaboratively with their fellow workers? For enthusiasm to reign, *all* three goals must be reasonably satisfied. One is not a replacement for another. Money does not substitute for pride in a job well done, and pride in a job well done does not pay the grocery bills.”

To sustain employee enthusiasm, management needs to stop believing that employees are expendable and require constant supervision. Instead, it needs to:

- Recognize that most employees are reasonable people with realistic expectations who come to work in partnership
- Acknowledge that people must be treated with a fundamental fairness, need to feel valued as people, and require social contact and the bonds of friendship to be productive
- Build a real partnership culture for the long-term, a culture in which individuals and groups cooperate to beat the competition rather than squabble among themselves

Please visit www.enthusiasticemployee.com for more information and to read an excerpt.

About The Authors

The lead author, **David Sirota, Ph.D.**, an industrial psychologist, has been engaged in behavioral science research and its applications in organizations for over 40 years. Since founding Sirota Consulting in 1972, he has established an international reputation for improving the performance of individual executives, senior management teams, and total organizations.

Co-author **Louis A. Mischkind** is Senior Vice President of Sirota Consulting, and has been engaged in organizational effectiveness research and applications for over 35 years.

Co-author **Michael Irwin Meltzer** is Chief Operating Officer of Sirota Consulting, having joined the firm in 2001 on a full-time basis, after representing the company as its legal counsel for more 20 years.

About Sirota

Founded in 1972, Sirota Consulting (www.sirota.com) specializes in attitude research. Headquartered in Purchase, NY, Sirota has conducted thousands of attitude surveys around the world that have helped organizations build strong, productive relationships with their employees, customers, communities, opinion leaders, investors, suppliers, and other publics.