



Regional Network Meeting: Scotland

Host: Mott MacDonald

Date: 25th September 2018

Facilitator: Jacqui Martin

This meeting was hosted by Mott MacDonald at their Glasgow office and attended by 15 people. Companies in attendance included Alterity, Bentley Shopfitting, Black Light, Highland Home Carers, Lindsays, Novograp, Thincats and WCF.

We were also joined by Oliver Smith from the EOA and Nigel Schofield from Mott MacDonald.

EOA Update

This was given by Oliver Smith who talked about;

- The Ownership Dividend – over 100 EO companies gave evidence for this report. Main purpose is to increase awareness of employee ownership. Wish to see a minister of EO.
- Scotland for EO
- EOA Annual Conference – only 100 of 700 tickets still available. Encourage shop floor workers to attend as it increases engagement.
- EOA 40 – Will be celebrating the fact that EOA is 40 years old next year. Get in touch if next year is also important for you and “tell your story”
- EO Hub Forum discussions – some examples provided of discussion threads

Further details can be found on the attached presentation.

Oliver also requested that people complete a short form to provide input for a session at the conference looking at what companies do with profit.

Nigel Schofield – Employee Engagement and EDI at Mott MacDonald

Nigel started his presentation by stating that the ownership model isn't the only way to engage staff.

Mott MacDonald is a global engineering, management and development consultancy.

- Employ 16K staff worldwide
- Global T/O of \$2Bn
- 150 years heritage
- Work in 160 countries

Employee ownership started in the late 80s when two consultancies came together.

Employee ownership means;

- No pressure from external stakeholders
- More freedom to determine future and take a longer-term view

In terms of pitching for business they highlight the experience of their staff and how they can solve clients' problems. EO isn't necessarily the biggest part of their pitch.

Mott MacDonald are the second largest employee owned company in the UK according to the EOA League Table.

¼ of employees are shareholders and staff who don't own shares are rewarded through a Group performance bonus and discretionary personal performance bonus to reward excellent performance.

Engagement Survey was rolled out to all employees. Data collected was then analysed by consultants and action plans were developed.

Engagement means "emotional and intellectual involvement"

What people SAY about the company encourages people to STAY and they then STRIVE to do their best.

Engagement Drivers;

- Brand / Leadership/Performance
- Company practices/ The Basics / The Work

People were categorised as;

- Disengaged
- Passive
- Moderately engaged
- Highly engaged

Aim is to get those who are moderately engaged to become highly engaged. Those who are disengaged are potential leavers.

Engagement levels were found to be fairly similar to the last survey but they have gone through a lot of change in this period.

A key action from the survey results has been greater visibility of, and access to, the senior leaders. Executive meetings are held in regional offices allowing the exec team to hold more discussions with staff.

Nigel's updates to staff are now broken down into Grade Talks with a greater emphasis on discussion around their particular concerns.

Just giving staff a share in profits doesn't necessarily engage them!

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Mott MacDonald

Reasons for focusing on EDI:

- Diverse teams perform better
- Broader perspective
- Avoids group think
- Good idea to recruit people who are different from yourself

Background;

- Investors in People
- Focus Groups formed in 2015
- Advancing Groups 2016 – looking at disability, gender, LGBT+, sunshine parents and carers
- Advancing Globally 2017 – Champions/ Exec Sponsor

Nigel then continued by giving examples of what had been done within company to advance EDI;

- Policy document then became picture and quote then became video
- Reverse Mentoring- e.g. younger member of staff mentored senior member of staff on how it feels to be LGBT – more meaningful and engaging. 15 pairings in year 1 and 55 in year 2.
- Training on unconscious bias
- Appointed EDI Champion

Nigel finished his presentation by saying that employee ownership leads to better engagement and client service, but you still need to work on it.

Finally Nigel provided a list of resources which will be distributed to attendees.

Questions;

- **How do you become a shareholder?**
Nigel explained the grading system within the company e.g. Grade D when you become qualified. Shareholders are from Grade E. Once a year you are invited to purchase shares. Shareholders Trust holds Board to account and acts as a warehouse for the shares. Shares are allocated by your manager. Most people will take up the option to purchase shares and schemes are in place to enable you to borrow the funds
- **How is responsibility split between the Board and Trust?**
Shareholders Committee holds Board to account in terms of rewarding staff. There is a challenge with recruitment of senior staff – how do you get share ownership to them? Replicate the way that they would benefit as if they were a shareholder. Management of the company uses shares as a means of motivation and recruitment.
- **Were a high percentage of those who were disengaged in the lower levels?**

No. Tend to find that new staff and senior staff are those who are in the highly engaged category. Graduates accept that they won't have shares initially.

- **Does geography play an issue in terms of lower levels of engagement as you move further away from the Head Office?**

Not necessarily. May have an overseas office with low levels of engagement but this may just be down to the manager.

- **Has the focus on EDI changed the culture – has it been led or is it growing?**

Need people from the majority to lead it and need Board to lead it

- **Could talks aimed at different grades create a “them and us” culture?**

No – helps to cover issues specific for that level and people more likely to speak up if manager isn't present. Used a collaboration consultancy in these meetings how gave feedback to senior staff

Employee Engagement Workshop

The workshop began with thinking about what is meant by employee engagement. Jacqui suggested that it means;

Motivation and commitment to positively contribute to the company's vision and purpose

She then asked how engagement differs in an employee owned company. Expectation is that this will be higher as many of the benefits attributed to EO are down to higher engagement levels. Employee ownership is employee engagement +.

Participants were then asked to discuss characteristics of employees who are engaged as far as ownership is concerned.

- Share information with colleagues
- Ensure they understand information they are given (including financials!)
- Provide input when requested and put forward ideas for improvement
- Consider the bigger picture
- Are happy to assume additional responsibility
- Will do tasks outwith their job description
- Are proactive in terms of learning and development

Jacqui then moved on to talk about Intrinsic Motivators. So often people think that money is a motivator and therefore shares and bonuses are likely to increase engagement but people are actually motivated by intrinsic factors such as;

- Autonomy, mastery and purpose which are put forward by Dan Pink in his book "Drive"
- Progress, social interaction and authenticity

Attendees were then asked to take a few minutes to prioritise these factors for themselves and discuss these with a partner.

We need to understand what these motivators are for ourselves and our colleagues and design a system that satisfies these.

Jacqui then mentioned a recent book called "Alive at Work" by Dan Cable that was published earlier this year.

- He argues that humans aren't made for routine and repetition but instead we crave exploration, experimentation and learning
- In fact there's a part of our brain called "the seeking system" that rewards us for taking part in these activities but the way that organisations are run means that this part of our brain is shut down
- He puts forward a number of ideas and examples of things that can be done to stimulate this part of the brain and thereby enable people to achieve their full potential

Finally, Jacqui asked everyone to reflect on these two questions;

- *What can you do to increase your own level of engagement at work?*
- *What can you do to increase your colleagues' engagement levels?*

Nigel Schofield – Wellbeing and Mental Health

Nigel started this presentation by presenting a few statistics;

- 62% of Scots are overweight or obese
- 60% have direct experience of suicide
- 1 in 4 have a mental health issue

Good health is good for business; Improvements in wellbeing lead to an increase in engagement.

Industry study conducted showed that the effect of lowered productivity on payroll was 10.7% in the least supportive workplace compared to 5.9% in the most supportive.

Stress is a growing issue as is “presenteeism” – showing up for work when not really fit.

The Mott MacDonald wellbeing vision is to create an environment where people are happy, healthy and safe allowing them to achieve their full potential.

They have a Wellbeing Framework which is a Board issue that is continually monitored and reported on.

Examples of actions they have undertaken include;

- Seasonal vaccinations
- Providing fitness trackers
- Health check clinics e.g. blood pressure

Wellbeing is embedded into leadership programmes.

They offer an Employee Assistance Programme through an external provider;

- Completely confidential
- Also able to offer practical help
- Provide specific service for line managers who may be concerned about a member of staff

Various initiatives include;

- Health and Safety Week – focus has shifted from safety to health
- Stress Awareness Day
- Time to Talk day
- AGM
- Mental Health Day

They have signed a Time to Change Pledge to change the way we think and act about mental health at work

“Elephant in the Room” post it notes provided feedback.

“Be in Your Colleagues’ Corner” workshop – spotting the signs of people who are struggling and provided tips on how to intervene.

Once again Nigel provided a helpful list of resources which will be distributed.

Open Space

There was time for a short Open Space section in the afternoon when people had an opportunity to put forward their own topics for discussion and were able to choose 2 different topics for a 10 min discussion. Topics included;

- How to engage seasonal staff and those who are geographically dispersed
- Communications
- Losing control
- Advice given to potential employee owners

Wrap Up

Our next network meeting will be in Edinburgh on Thursday 13th December.