



THE WELL-BEING OF EMPLOYEES

Speakers Ana Aymerich and Bettina Gallego will offer EMEC attendees ways to help employees be more engaged and less stressed.

BY JASON HENSEL

Only 15 percent of employees are engaged with their companies, according to Gallup, a U.S.-based analytics firm.

That number needs to be higher, though, because as a Deloitte report says, employee engagement is the most important business essential for success in today's ever-competitive business market.

Engagement is defined as the level of emotional connection an employee has with his or her organization, and more engaged employees mean better financial results.

"Engagement, productivity and profitability are part of the same, and it is in positive environments where people achieve well-being and give the best of ourselves," says Ana Aymerich. "Gallup's research states that the way in which leaders manage their employees significantly influences the commitment of their employees."

Aymerich is a licensed coach with Engage & Grow, a training company for organizations, and will be presenting at the MPI European Meetings & Events Conference (EMEC) in Sevilla, Spain, Feb. 9-11, 2020.

Her session focuses on challenging the norm of employee engagement, as understanding the brain and heart of a workplace and how companies that make a difference in the heart of their business multiply their results. Attendees will learn six steps to employee engagement and 12 keys they can implement in their organizations to change the habits and behaviors of employees and make them happy to be part of growing companies.

"Strategy is a key for companies to survive and grow, but who implements the strategy?" Aymerich asks. "Your people. Without engagement, you cannot implement the best strategy ever."

Aymerich says research by McLean & Company states that the cost of disengaged employees is 34 percent of their salary. This means that for every \$10,000 paid, \$3,400 is wasted. However, companies with high employee engagement obtain 21 percent greater productivity, 10 percent greater commitment to the client, a 65 percent reduction in staff turnover and 37 percent less absenteeism.

"A company with a highly engaged workforce comprises of activated people who know that their efforts make a difference," Aymerich says. "They are passionate, purposeful, compassionate



PUSH YOUR BOUNDARIES

We invite you to join us this February to gather with colleagues from around the world to follow in the footsteps of great explorers as you push your boundaries as a meeting and event professional and design the next generation of astonishing, world-changing events.

Learn more and register at mpi.org/events/emec.

and totally invested in reaching their full potential in alignment with the company vision.”

A company’s vision is tied to its culture, and a positive workplace culture improves an organization’s well-being. Workplace culture is essentially the “character and personality” of an organization, Aymerich says.

“It refers to the environment in which employees share ideas and interact and the collective social behavioral standards of the organization,” she says. “Workplace culture takes into account values, traditions, beliefs, leadership, habits, attitudes and interactions, which collectively impact the emotional environment.”

Culture can strengthen or weaken an organization’s objectives. It attracts talent, nurtures relationships, drives engagement, increases job satisfaction, improves retention and impacts performance, Aymerich says.

Every growing company needs its employees to be engaged, to be aligned and connected with its vision and objectives. This happens best through connections within an organization. And connections drive the meeting and event industry, too.

“Why is it necessary for people to participate in meetings and events?” Aymerich asks. “Because they need connections. The same for workers with their companies.”

Stress and Motivation

Another issue widely affecting workplaces is stress. All sorts of questions are asked about this topic: What is stress, and what causes it? How do I transform negative habits into positive ones and increase our energy level? How do I become motivated? Who wants to be successful?

“Stress and lack of motivation affect most of the population and are the main reasons for sick leave causing economic losses and instability within companies,” says Bettina Gallego, an executive coach and entrepreneur who will also present at EMEC.

Gallego’s session will offer attendees techniques to manage

stress and increase concentration and motivation, which will lead to a higher level of performance, efficiency and creativity at work.

“Stress is a physiological and chemical reaction of the body toward a threat or challenge,” she says. “When we are stressed, the fight-or-flight system takes over.”

At times, Gallego says, we cannot influence or modify our personal or work environment; however, we can control how we react toward it.

Striving for perfection leads to high stress levels, and Gallego suggests that we should celebrate our achievements.

“This gives energy and motivation to continue,” she says. “Not being able to trust others and delegate work is another factor that increases our workload. Again, if we focus on increasing our energy first, we will be able to cope better, and by replacing our negative thoughts with positive ones, we will transform our stress into focused action and efficiency to get things done.”

Negative stress, Gallego says, makes us lose concentration, creativity and productivity, but positive stress stimulates our motivation and empowers us.

She recommends three ways to help make your life less stressful.

1. Focus: Apply mindfulness exercises in order to reduce stress and leverage our energy level better. Increased attention and focus will improve our decision making under pressure.

2. Trust: Let’s map out what success

means and how to motivate us to get things done. How can we trust that we are on the right track and heading in the desired direction?

3. Act: Elaborate our mission statement in order to contribute in allowing success to come to us. What is my declaration of intention?

“The idea is to focus less on the things/people/surroundings we cannot change and bring our attention more toward our reactions and what we can influence for good,” Gallego says. ■

“Engagement, productivity and profitability are part of the same, and it is in positive environments where people achieve well-being and give the best of ourselves.”