

Building a Workplace Where Workers Know They Matter

Intended Audiences: Business Owners, Supervisors, Operations Managers, and Human Resource Managers

Based on the book: *Doing Good Work Matters* by William H. Murphy, PhD (2010)

Introduction

The success of any organization depends largely on the engagement and spirit of its workforce. Yet too often, organizations unintentionally foster environments where workers feel undervalued, uninspired, and "turned off." *Doing Good Work Matters* provides an actionable blueprint for Human Resource Managers seeking to counteract this trend, by building cultures where workers reclaim pride, purpose, and personal agency.

Key Insights for Human Resource Managers

1. Recognize and Eliminate "The Six Laws of Being Turned Off"

Workers become disengaged when:

- Rework is normalized rather than corrected.
- Obedience is prioritized over initiative.
- Workers are made to feel expendable.
- A sense of purpose is missing.
- Worker insights on quality are ignored.
- Credit for great work is withheld.

Action: Audit your organization's practices and leadership behaviors against these "laws." Leadership development must include training to reverse these patterns.

Examples:

- Host quarterly "Voice of the Workforce" surveys specifically designed to uncover rework, ignored contributions, and morale issues.

White Paper for Being a Change Maker

William H. Murphy; williamhmurphy.com

- Build a "Purpose-Driven Leadership" training series that teaches supervisors how to affirm and empower teams.
 - Review and redesign performance review systems to ensure workers receive credit for contributions, not just outcomes.
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2. Empower Workers to Aim for the "Bull's-eyes"

Murphy identifies seven "bull's-eyes" that lead to self-driven engagement:

- Believing "I am important."
- Understanding "My work affects others."
- Embracing "There is a greater purpose to my work."
- Committing "I can be better despite my boss."
- Practicing continuous improvement.
- Sharing improvements openly.
- Taking ownership of one's future.

Action: Build internal programs that recognize and reinforce these attitudes, such as employee spotlights, "small wins" celebrations, and quality circles.

Examples:

- Launch a "Pride in Work" storytelling series where employees share how their work impacts customers (including internal customers) or community.
 - Establish "Continuous Improvement Clubs" where employees propose small but meaningful workplace changes.
 - Implement a "Mentor the Mission" program pairing new hires with seasoned workers who exemplify the bull's-eye mindset.
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3. Promote Enjoyment of Work as Central to Life Satisfaction

Murphy argues that improving work life directly improves personal life. Workers who feel respected, who see the impact of their work, and who are encouraged to improve, are more productive, loyal, and positive.

Action: Incorporate discussions about work satisfaction into one-on-ones, and ensure mental health and wellbeing initiatives go beyond token gestures.

Examples:

- Train managers to open one-on-one meetings with a "How are you doing?" check-in focused on personal and professional wellness.
- Offer "Personal Growth Days," allowing employees to spend a workday each quarter on skill-building, volunteering, or passion projects.
- Partner with mental health providers to deliver proactive wellness webinars, not just crisis resources.

Conclusion

Human Resource Managers have a pivotal opportunity to reshape workplace cultures by focusing on the principles outlined in *Doing Good Work Matters*. By eliminating practices that "turn off" workers and creating structures that help workers "turn on," organizations can boost morale, productivity, and retention.

But beyond improving the company, there's something even more personal at stake: When you help build a workplace where people are respected, valued, and energized, you don't just make your organization stronger—you make your own days better too. You get to witness people thrive because of your leadership. You feel the pride of knowing your work matters, your contributions are visible, and you are helping create the kind of workplace every great leader aspires to build.

Ultimately, when you lift others, you lift yourself. And there is no greater professional satisfaction than knowing you made a difference that others—and your own leaders—can clearly see and appreciate.

Source: Murphy, W. H. (2010). *Doing Good Work Matters*. Mustang, OK: Tate Publishing.

The book is available at williamhmurphy.com. It is pdf and free of charge!