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“Feeling that people are happy and the business is humming along”

Context: In the Jan-Feb 2010 edition of the Harvard Business Review, authors T.M. Amabile & S.J. Kramer provided ground breaking research findings into what produces a “good day” in the workplace. Within some 12,000 individual diary entries, “progress” or the sense of ‘moving the dial’, was the vital ingredient discovered in over 76% of participants “best days” at work.

This series explores how leaders promote ‘moving the dial’, whilst balancing overall business performance.

1 Describe a good work day for yourself:

It begins with getting the kids out the door on time. If that train runs on time, I can arrive at KeepCup ready for action! Thereafter, I’ll be making decisions that concern key projects and innovations, as well as helping others to overcome ‘roadblocks’.

Connecting with new customers always brings a great sense of achievement and thanks to the recent ABC series “War on Waste”, we are doing plenty of that right now as our business size doubles. The “re-use” philosophy is dear to the hearts of all staff-members and I, so it’s gratifying to see other businesses like Woolworths, ban non-recyclable plastic bags in support of the cause.

A delight of mine is to escape the confines of the office for a little while and visit the company warehouse. I find it immensely gratifying to see everything that we’ve worked hard to establish in motion.

2 How many good days have you had in the past 3 months?

I manage to take something of value out of most days regardless of what’s happening, so I’d say I average 3 to 4 good days a week.



A good workday at KeepCup

3 Describe a good work day for your business:

On time order fulfillment supported by on-time accounts receivable, keeps our P+L content. However, our privately-owned business is so much more than profit and loss; it's about spreading the merit of sustainable, multi-use products.

We've taken a long-term approach to building KeepCup, which necessitates constant balancing of short term gains with long term brand building. Given our growth people think I must be laughing right now but the truth is I'm totally stressed out! The revenue upside is positive today but with that comes the pressure to maintain our service levels so that our brand integrity is upheld for tomorrow.

4 Do the two days align?

Very much so, but my commitment to our brand values means that I'll prioritize more good days for our people and customers, over those for the P+L. When I get the feeling that people are happy and the business is humming along, I know the right results will follow.

5 Where is value chain leakage most likely to occur in your sector?

In a situation, I term a "Crisis-tunity", i.e. a period which is part crisis, part opportunity, it's always 'communication between functions'. Keeping up with orders; prioritizing customers; maintaining quality and correct deliveries are essential must-do's. We don't have margin for the 'ball to be dropped'.

Furthermore, encouraging staff positivity in the face of extraordinary customer expectations can be difficult. Lapses in morale can exacerbate leakage in the value chain. It's important to encourage staff to remember that demand scenario's such as these indicate that our cause is growing, which is why they choose to work at "KeepCup".