



The NDTs of NDT • Part 4: Never Disrespect Technicians

So far in this series we have discussed some of the problems that we are facing in this industry, discussed the importance of training and mentoring, and provided some insight on how to ensure we have the best team players. We are well on our way to begin the shift that is needed to face the future. Now we are aware of the situation and have an action plan. How do we make sure it is sustainable and that all our work has not been futile? How can we be sure that the team we have worked so hard to build stays together?

Never Disrespect Technicians

Look around at the companies we know- some pay top dollar while others offer lower wages. Some have high employee turnover and low engagement and some have long lasting, stable, and highly engaged employees. Is there a connection? There certainly is. A survey conducted by GRH Training Solutions came to a startling conclusion: employers and employees are not on the same wavelength. The table below shows the five top things employees rank as important and the 5 top things employer rank as important. Both groups are not on the same wavelength. It is not just MONEY that keeps employees. Furthermore, items 2 and 3 for employees are actually ranked 10 and 9 by the employer respectively.

But what does this have to do with respect? Respect goes a long way in developing a harmonious work environment. Communication is clear and appropriate among individuals who respect each other. If a person is respectful, it shows that he has a positive attitude. A person who is courteous,

EMPLOYER PERCEPTION	EMPLOYEE PERCEPTION
Good salary	Recognition for work accomplished
Job security	Being part of a group
Possibility of advancement	Empathetic attitude when faced with personal issues
Interest for the job	Job security
Good working conditions	Good salary

listens to others and treats people fairly is respectful. People who show respect for others often gain respect in return.

Respect is needed in the modern workplace to foster peace and kindness between all people and all levels. When managers and employees respect one another, they are able to communicate well and collaborate to reach business goals.

What it boils down to is that employees will leave one employer for another when their values are not respected and when they are no longer engaged.

The key to keeping employees is by keeping them engaged. And that leads to the Engagement Equation:

$$E = \text{fit} + C3$$

Fit: This is what the employee brings to the Engagement equation. How does the employee “fit” in the organization and the role? If a DISC assessment was used (as discussed in Part 3 of the NDTs of NDT) we are pretty sure we have the right person. . . .but we have to be cautious because they can also be the right person for our competitors.

C3: This is the employer’s contribution to the Engagement Equation. It is made up of three important components that are intertwined and related to each other. It is easy to see that the employer has a great impact on this equation!

Congratulate: Appreciation and recognition is a fundamental human need. Employees respond to appreciation expressed through recognition of their good work because it confirms their work is valued. When employees and their work are valued, their satisfaction and productivity rises, and they are motivated to maintain or improve their good work.

Praise and recognition are essential to an outstanding workplace. People want to be respected and valued for their contribution. Everyone feels the need to be recognized as an individual or member of a group and to feel a sense of achievement for work well done or even for a valiant effort. Everyone wants a ‘pat on the back’ to make them feel good.

Exceptional leaders give recognition, and they do so a lot.

Collaborate: Studies show that, when employees work in teams and have the trust and cooperation of their team members, they outperform individuals and teams that lack good relationships. Relying on other people builds trust and teamwork establishes strong relationships with coworkers. Despite occasional disagreements, an effective team enjoys working together and shares a strong bond. When you put your trust in a coworker, you are establishing the foundation of a relationship that can endure minor conflicts.

Trusting your teammates also provides a feeling of safety that allows ideas to emerge. It helps employees open up and encourage each other. Open communication is key when working on a team and produces effective solutions in difficult group projects. Great teams build each other up and strengthen individual members to create a cohesive group. By working together, employees learn that wins and losses affect everyone on the team. Teamwork necessitates confidence in each other's distinct abilities

Great leaders are team builders; they create an environment that fosters this trust and collaboration. Surveys indicate that being cared about by colleagues is a strong predictor of employee engagement. Thus, a continuous challenge for leaders is to rally individuals to collaborate on organizational, departmental, and group goals.

Credibility: Leaders should strive to maintain a company's reputation and demonstrate high ethical standards. People want to be proud of their jobs, their performance, and their organization. Good leaders help create confidence in a company by being exemplars of high ethical and performance standards. Would you go "above and beyond" for a leader who didn't routinely keep their word?

- Make it a point to keep your commitments. Overpromising and failing to deliver are surefire ways to destroy credibility quickly.
- Always tell the truth. Of course, there will be times when you aren't able to share information with others due to confidentiality concerns, but it's better to say "I can't discuss that" or "I can't answer that question", than it is to lie or make something up. The first time you're caught in a lie, your credibility will be in question forever.
- Treat people fairly. In order to gain trust, you must have the best interests of the team at heart and treat everyone fairly and equitably. Be careful that you are not showing favoritism toward anyone.
- You are human – be upfront and honest about your mistakes. You don't have to be perfect. Make it okay for your team to make small mistakes as well and move forward.

NDT technicians are proud of their work and their profession. They

understand the impact their work has on society's safety and the environment, and this is deeply rooted in their values. And they take their job seriously every day. It is very damaging when a technician's findings are disregarded or not taken seriously, or worse yet when asked that the inspection be done by someone else. It is true that we all make mistakes, but if a technician finds an indication and we suspect that they made a mistake, they should be involved in the reinspection. It should not be done behind their back. There is no better way to demoralize or disrespect a technician; no better way to make them feel like they are not contributing and are not valued than by overruling their work without valid explanation.

So far in my career, I have yet to come across a technician who did not appreciate learning from a false call when they were involved and their side of the story was listened to.

We are putting in a lot of effort to take this profession out of the dire times we are in. We have identified a key issue and are working on giving the proper training and mentoring, ensuring that we put the right people in the right spot so we can build the team that will do the best job, the pieces are falling into place, now let's **Not Disrespect Technicians!**

In the next issue, we will discuss the tools of the trade, and how they are an important piece of ensuring that there will be **No Down Time.**



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Fulvio Mini holds a Bachelor degree in Physics from McGill University, and holds CGSB Level 3 certification in PT, MT, ET and RT. He has over 20 years experience in NDT related to the aerospace industry: from manufacturing aircraft to the maintenance, repair and overhaul of airframe, engines and components of commercial and private jets. His latest project has been the development of an inspection facility with the aim to provide a real world inspection environment to those entering the field and seeking experience.