

CHAMBERLAIN AMONG THE MUTINEERS

A LEADERSHIP ALLEGORY ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

According to recent surveys by Gallup, backed up by Dale Carnegie and others, 65% of the people who have a job in America are **disengaged at work**. The cost of this disengagement – which can range from a simple lack of enthusiasm to downright sabotage – is estimated at \$1.2 trillion a year. What are the other costs? Compared to engaged workers, those who are disengaged:

- Produce just 40% of the work output;
- Have 70% more safety incidents;
- Quit their job twice as often, costing the U.S. economy \$500 billion per year.

What drives disengagement, and what can organizations do to more effectively engage their people?

Questions around engagement are not new, and history is full of leaders who successfully re-engaged their followers and achieved great things for their organization. One such example is offered by Civil War commander Joshua Chamberlain. In late May of 1863, 120 mutineers – **disengaged employees** – from the 2nd Maine Regiment were transferred to Chamberlain's 20th Maine. Authorized by his superiors to execute the entire lot if necessary, Chamberlain instead orchestrated one of the greatest interventions in the annals of disengaged employees and, in so doing, saved the mutineers, strengthened his own unit, and became a decisive factor at Gettysburg, the war's greatest battle.



Drawing on extensive research from **Gallup**, **Dale Carnegie Training**, the **Federal Viewpoint Survey**, and half a dozen other sources, we begin this session by exploring the **status of engagement in America today**, and what **drives employee engagement and disengagement**. We then go back to the story of the 2nd Maine, revealing the causes that turned them from willing volunteers into hostile mutineers. After discussing what today's leading experts say **we can do to re-engage employees**, we examine the specific actions Joshua Chamberlain took that resulted in **99% re-engagement** by the 2nd Maine mutineers.

We conclude with the story of the Battle of Gettysburg where Chamberlain's hard work paid off. Substantially outnumbered but holding the critical left flank of the Union army, the 20th Maine would have been unable to maintain their position – thereby ensuring Union victory – had they not been reinforced by the former mutineers of the 2nd Maine. In 1864 many of these former mutineers would *reenlist* in the 20th Maine, evincing the sustainability of Chamberlain's actions.

As a concluding exercise, participants draw upon the day's insights to create action plans to boost engagement within their own teams and larger organizations.

With the combination of small and whole group discussions, Hollywood movies, 150-year-old documents from the National Archives, and cutting-edge theories and studies from today's leading thinkers on employee engagement, this session is both fun and impactful.

