

92 - How to Achieve 93% Engagement: the Carglass Formula, with Bart Lambrechts

SPEAKERS

Murielle Machiels and Bart Lambrechts

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Hi there, this is rebel leader with a heart. And today I'm having a conversation with Bart Lambrechts, the HR director of Carglass. And we talk about employee engagement, because employee engagement has a huge impact on your profits. Of course, it's nice to have engaged employees because when you're engaged, you're also happier and more performance. But it also has a direct impact on your performance and your profits. But when we look at Gallup statistics, engagement is only 13% in Europe, and it's not better in the US. And when we look at Carglass, they managed to increase their employee engagement to 93%. 93% of the workers of Carglass are engaged. And this has a huge impact on motivation on the revenues, customer satisfaction, but also on attracting talent, and specifically young talent that really are looking for more value, more profits and a nice company to work with. Now, if you're ready to unlock the secrets of having 93% engagement, be sure to listen to this episode. Hello, Bart. nice to meet you.

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Hi, nice to meet you, Murielle.

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So maybe you can tell us a little bit who you are.

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Yeah, with pleasure. Bart Lambrechts, I'm people director for Carglass, Belgium and Luxembourg.

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Nice, And you've been working there for 18 or 19 years.

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Yeah, yeah. Almost 19 years, yes indeed.

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Yeah, that's great. And I still love it. That's great. And that's very rare in our part of the world to work for this long, for a company. So it probably says a lot about the company. Yeah, we met a couple of weeks

ago. And I was really charmed by some of the things you said. And I felt it would be a great idea to share those on the podcast to inspire other leaders. And then in particular, I wanted to talk about engagement, employee engagement, because when we look at engagement numbers in Europe, and in the US as well, but in Europe, they are very poor. So only 13% of employees in Europe seems to be engaged. So a lot of people are even this engaged, not simply not engaged, but this engaged, but you manage to have, if I remember correctly, 93% of engagement. That's correct. Yeah. And so I was wondering, what is your recipe? That's

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a very interesting question and get the question is, is there one recipe? Or are there a lot of ingredients in it? And I think it's, it's the second part, but that, indeed, if you look at those figures, it's it's really sad to see it, we only have one life. And then spending most of your life in a job you don't like and you're not engaged in, it's a pity. And that's something we we really try to work on to as a company to work on our purpose on Why do we exist as a as a company, and there we don't get that energy from replacing wind screens, but we really get energy from making a difference with real care to the towards our customers, but also towards our people, the environment, and also our shareholders. And that's, for me, really the big screen in which we work and in which we also want to involve our people to really think about, okay, what is my purpose in life? And how can my work at Carglass fit into this and how can I make a difference with real care? And I think that's, that's one of the things that yeah, that makes the most difference, to really to discuss about it, also, and to discuss it openly also, and to invite people if they have the feeling at a certain moment that it doesn't work for a certain reason in their current job to really get behind the steer wheel, and really being responsible, have your own involvement and have your own career and we can support as a company. And we, we do want support, because as a company also, yeah, if you have somebody who is not engaged, sitting on a chair, yeah, it's, it's bad for the person because he or she doesn't feel okay. But it's also bad for the company, because you miss an opportunity to put on that same chair somebody who's who is engaged and who loves to work. Yeah, this is fine.

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And so what you're saying, so it's about the purpose of the company, but it's about purpose of the individual people. Yeah. And the link between them. yeah, and if they don't feel like they, are they engaged or they are motivated any more you even help them in their second or in their next step? Even if it's outside your company? Yeah.

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Yeah, we do. Yeah. Because, yeah, you can say silly guy, you help your people getting out of the company, and you invest time and money in it. But I think it's, it's worth while and, and we also see that that it can be due to circumstances at a certain moment. And that there are also people who left us for another career or another opportunity, and who come back. That's nice.

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And what I also like is that this is not only for the white color people, but also the blue color people. Yeah, I'm wondering how how does it work? How do you help them define their personal purpose?

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First of all, one of the first thing when they come in, we say, okay, you, you won't put windscreens here, but you will help people. So it starts also in the recruitment, that we are also going to look for attitude more than the skills. Okay, we don't want people with two left hands if they are right handed, yes. So they have to have also a feeling or an interest in a car. But more important is that they have interest in people and in helping people and the technical parts we learn from scratch. So everybody who comes into the company as a fitter, starts with a basic training on how to fit the wind screen steps, our core business. We make it even fun, we have a two yearly competition for the best fitter in Belgium and Luxembourg, who can become the best fitter in the world. Which is a play way of keeping your people focused on continuously improving and continuously learning.

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That's nice. And then the personal purpose, do you have a special workshop for people to define it?

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Yeah, and there we have a bit of delay with COVID. Because we started on the exact level, really to have workshops on, okay, what is my personal purpose, also being conscious of how am I feeling today, because one day is not the other and you don't leave your backpack behind at the doors of the company. So it's also important to be aware and to communicate about it. So what we do, for instance, on exact level is, we start almost every meeting with a check in really to be to focus on Okay, how are you today? And not just how are you and not waiting for the answer and but really, how are you really doing today and to listen and to just talking about it creates also an involvement of colleagues also an awareness of ,okay, Bart has already had bad night has already had some problems with his children or I don't know what, which makes that, Yeah, his focus is maybe less today. Yeah, so that's, that's a thing we really want to get down into the company. We started already also with a co worker space. So every year we organize a co worker stage in which every team as a whole comes to different workshops, which are not business related, that are really related to the your, your person and on your well being. So we have had some some workshops on, on sleep hygiene on different topics really do to make people are aware that it all has an influence on who you are and how you how you are in life? Yeah.

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Wow, great, that's great. And that's also what research shows. So research shows that when people are aware of their personal purpose and personal values, their engagement increases more than if they were aware of the purpose and values of the organization. Of course, both, is even better. But if you only want to do one, it's really the personal one that contributes to a higher level of engagement.

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What I think is also important that you have your personal purpose, but that you also find back your purpose in the company's purpose. I think younger people are much more aware of this. And also in hiring, you see that they are more conscious in choosing a company that really fits their values and their purpose and how the company can can support them in this, which is for us. Good news, I think. Yeah.

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And if you talk on that subject, do you think that it's easier for you to hire and to retain talent because of this DNA that you have?

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Yeah. Yeah, I'm, I'm convinced once we have them into our office, they are they are in. The problem that we have today is we are well known as a brand, communication is really strong. People are not always aware what is behind. So we still have to have some work on communicating and on our employer branding, on working on this site. That once they are applying, we'll see that yeah, that's the willingness is there.

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Yeah. And what research from Gallup also shows is that the higher your engagement, the more profits you make. So companies with higher engagement have, on average, 23% more profits, than companies with low engagement? Is this something that you also notice?

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Well, it's also our conviction. And if you think about it, it's a bit logic, I think people who are engaged, they really want to do to do the extra mile for the company. And they, they see their company as part or they see themselves as part of the company that they work for. So yes, I don't want to do the tests to disengage our people and see what is.

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result on our on our on our p&I, that, but I'm also convinced that it has a big difference and also leadership because there are also studies said that leadership has also a big influence, as well also on the engagement of people and on the climate that is created. So that's also one of the crucial pillars on which we work that's on leadership. We do regular 180 degree feedback sessions for our leaders, not to evaluate them, but really as a tool to progress and to get better. Because leadership for me is a is a verb it's something you have previously to work on. It's not because you have a good climate and a good leadership styles today, that you still have it tomorrow. And it's also really personal, if you are new in your job. And I say concretely what you have to do, you will say that I'm coaching. when you are for 10 years in that same job, and I do it the same way. You will say that I'm very directive and you won't be motivated.

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What was the shift that made you invest in people? what What's happened or why?

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I think it's it has always been a belief that, that we can make the difference with our people and working on the engagement. Were we always good at it? no. Because we, we started to measure, we are a company that measures a lot. So we believe that you have to measure to improve. So in the beginning,

we measured a lot, but we didn't communicate about it. And we didn't take the right actions, which may make it worse, because people say, Okay, you asked for our opinion, but you don't do anything about it. So next time, you will see it in your therapy. So and we also did, especially, we took actions on a, on a global level on a company level, where my belief is now that the biggest change you can make is on a team level. Because it's, this is the the habitat of your people. And yeah, those are the colleagues that they see every day. So now we focus a lot on giving feedback on the results on a team level. And we really ask to discuss the results in the team to have an open conversation on okay, this is this something we recognized as a team, are the things that are good, and that we want really to foster and to keep into our team and take actions to, to anchor this, those kinds of actions. And at the other end, other side, are there specific actions that we can take to improve the climate within our team and the engagement within the team? And we see and that's, for me, the the one, the one on one link with leadership, our leaders, who are real leaders of their team, they they really take this with both hands, and and you see the evolution also on this side, yeah.

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yeah, that's, that's really great, because I like that you measure things, but what I don't like and what a lot of companies do, is that they have KPIs, and then they put like, bonuses on these KPIs, and they do everything they can to influence those KPIs, but not by changing who they are, or how they act, but more by trying to influence the people at the high number. And so that's not working, it starts with another way of being and leadership. This is key to that, as you said.

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Yeah, yeah. And you see the same thing on a customer level, with with the Net Promoter Score of which is, which we also use, that we use it as a tool to learn and to listen to our customers. But on the market, I see a lot of companies who use it as a name. And yeah, I even had a bad experience in a company some time ago, but when I left, they said, Listen, we are going to send a questionnaire tomorrow. And it's important for us that you give us a nine or a 10. Then I say, Okay, if you want I can give you a nine on or a 10. But my feeling of not being satisfied stays. And you as a company, you may say we are great, we have great customer satisfaction, but you're lying to yourself. And that's that's effectively the same with with engagement scores were where some companies use it as not as a tool, but as a KPI. Yeah, yeah, that's a that's a pitfall. I know

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which company you're talking about, because they do the same with the KPI of customer satisfaction, and the number of tickets closed. And what happens then is if you call them as a customer, they open a ticket. If they can't answer you, and they have to send it to a second line. They close your ticket. So I always say please don't close my tickets because then you don't get helped, but it's simply because they have they want to show great KPI have the customer service DNA, not at

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all. For them. It's a check in the box. Yeah.

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And so imagine now that you would start in another company where engagement is really low, and profits also. What would you do? Where would you start? Well,

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well, one of the first things I did when I came into Carglass was I stopped with the yearly evaluations of people. And we started really a process as well on a team level as on an individual level process of improvement and development. And we really called it progress together, because it's, it's for, for me, it's a Progress Program. It's not an evaluation program, because we do a lot of assessments at the moment that our people come in. So we know that our people are good people, and they are skilled, and that they have the right attitude. So why should we evaluate it? Year after year after year?

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It's so boring. People hate yearly evaluations. Yeah,

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yeah. And, and also there is I think it's a US study that I don't have the figure by heart, but I think it was 60, or 70% of your people believe that they belong to your top 10 performers of your company. Yeah, good luck in your evaluation.

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So I did the same as a CEO, I stopped the yearly evaluations for the same reason, because everyone was waiting for the score. And it wasn't the discussion about what went well. And the objectives, they changed way too much to only evaluate them once or twice in years. So yeah. So you would start with that? And then yeah,

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yeah, as well on individual level as on a team level, to really create a feedback culture within your company. Because I think that's also an important one, really, to, yeah, to learn, to look at your figures, and the example we gave on engagement. There is no manager who likes to have a bad engagement score in his team or her team, and especially if your boss is looking at it and say, Hey, guy, your engagement isn't good. So, for me, the focus is really on learning. And I'm saying, okay, yeah, we see, or we get the signal that there is something wrong, let's go into it, and look how we can together, improve it. And that's also for me, an important one, to go really, within the organization, as low as you can. Really to involve people in thinking and thinking about progress thinking about new ideas. And that was, yeah, one of the first things that when we introduced it, we had big discussions with, especially our branch managers, who were convinced that you have a federal isn't interested in being involved and being asked for his or her opinion. And then my, my answer was, was always the same. I said, Yeah, how does it come done? And then when he gets home, he is president of the Football Association of his children, or is organizing a party for 30 or 40 People at home? How can he do it at home, and being interested to take responsibility there and not wanting to take it in our company, then we as a company have a problem? And yeah, I think that we've proven that, that people if you involve them, they want to be involved. And well, 98% of your people want to be involved. And that's, for me, also a crucial one. Also, when you're putting rules in place in your company, are you putting in place and that's also something I see with a lot of companies? Are you putting rules in place that is not engaged in not

wanting to contributory to your company. And this engaging the 98% that really wants to make the difference together with you? And I think that there is, yeah, still quite some work in a lot of companies. And that's also for me, with COVID, and home working, where you also see that there is a demand from people to work more from home. That if you go into depth with in discussions with companies that that completely turn that around again and say, no, no, they have to be here five days a week. If you go and discuss with them, then most of the time, it's about control. It's about trust. Okay, while you're talking, talking now with me, they are sitting at their desk, maybe they are buying shoes in Zalando. And you don't know. So? Yeah.

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So what I also like, what I hear now is that it's a lot about a way of being more than, yes, you do great things. But it starts from a level of being it starts from a level where you believe in people and believe they can grow and believe it's possible. And that that's a mindset also, that's,

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yeah, yeah, it is it is. And, for instance, what we also do and, and I think that also helps in the awareness, and in the personal purpose, we work a lot for the community. But we, as a company, we have taken the choice, not just taking a part of our revenues and giving it to good causes, but really to involve our people into it, and really choosing projects that are at the heart of our people and in which they are involved. And that's Yeah, and you will see that it also makes people happier to do something for the community. And that's also a way of being.

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yeah. So really nice, really inspiring. I hope that a lot of leaders will listen to this and be inspired to do the same. I've, I've written some points. So first of all, you recruit based on attitudes and not skill, then you teach the skills and make it fun. And that's also so important. I often say it's not about hard work. And I think it's Adam Grant, we said it, it's about deliberately, deliberate plays, so that you build those skills and become really an expert. You really work on leadership with starting meetings with a check in with the 180 feedback and giving the responsibility of that engagement to the leader and his team and not at the company level. Because of course, yeah, every team might have different needs. You measure KPIs, but use them as a tool, not as an aim. Like a lot of companies, unfortunately, do. You stopped yearly evaluations, which I really love. So that you go through the progress together and the feedback culture, and you involve people and do community work. And of course, purpose, company purpose and individual purpose is really important. So you really put the people first, and then profits follows.

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Find out our customers, thanks to our customers.

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Yes, and I am a customer and I really love it because there is like this personal touch where your car is cleaned completely. You have this little note if there is any issue, you can come back whenever you want. And you can really feel like the personal touch and you can work while you wait. So yeah, really. Congratulations and thank you for sharing this.

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You're welcome. It was a pleasure.

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Yeah, you finished another episode of rebel leader with a heart. If you want more, go to rebel leader with a heart.com For show notes and past episodes. If you love the show, subscribe, leave a review and share it with your friends, the more the merrier. Thanks for tuning in and have a great week, you rebel leader with a heart. Hello there. How adapted are you to the fast and busy times? Before diving into this subject? Let me ask you a question. Do you see yourself working like this? until you retire? If yes, congrats you probably find a way to thrive in today's fast and busy times. But if your answer is no, don't worry, because this five minute quiz on how adapted are you to the fast and busy times might help you. Because if you're still working with the slower time habits and mindset, you might end up working really hard for too little impact. This quiz will show you how adapted you are to today's crazy fast times. And it'll give you your score on the five principles you need to master to better navigate your heavy workload while still having a life. So go to Qileader.com/fast times to start the quiz. Maybe it's time to kickstart your slower and more impactful life. Qileader.com/fast times q i leader.com/fast times. Now let's dive into today's podcast episodes.