

EVLN Model

Home Depot Canada, Xerox, Sears, Roebuck and Co., and a flock of other organizations are paying a lot more attention to job satisfaction these days. In some firms, executive bonuses depend partly on employee satisfaction ratings. The reason for this attention is simple: Job satisfaction affects many of the individual behaviors. A useful template to organize and understand the consequences of job dissatisfaction is the **exit-voice-loyalty-neglect (EVLN) model**. As the name suggests, the EVLN model identifies four ways that employees respond to dissatisfaction:

Exit: Exit refers to leaving the situation, including searching for other employment, actually leaving the organization, or transferring to another work unit. Employee turnover is a well-established outcome of job dissatisfaction, particularly for employees with better job opportunities elsewhere. Recent evidence also suggests that exit is linked to specific “shock events,” such as a conflict episode or an important violation of your expectations. These shock events produce more than just dissatisfaction; they generate strong emotions that energize employees to think about and search for alternative employment.

Voice: Voice refers to any attempt to change, rather than escape from, the dissatisfying situation. Voice is often researched purely as a positive or constructive response, such as directly trying to solve the problem with management or actively helping to improve the situation. However, voice can also be more confrontational, such as by filing formal grievances. In the extreme, some employees might engage in counterproductive behaviors to get attention and force

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changes in the organization. Thus, voice might be more correctly viewed as either constructive or destructive.\

Loyalty: Loyalty has been described in different ways. The most widely held view is that “loyalists” are employees who respond to dissatisfaction by patiently waiting—some say “suffering in silence”—for the problem to work itself out or get resolved by others.

Neglect: Neglect includes reducing work effort, paying less attention to quality, and increasing absenteeism and lateness. It is generally considered a passive activity that has negative consequences for the organization. Research clearly establishes that dissatisfied employees tend to have higher absenteeism; the relationship between satisfaction and job performance is more complex, as we will discuss below.

Which of the four EVLN alternatives do employees use? It depends on the person and situation. One determining factor is the availability of alternative employment. With poor job prospects, employees are less likely to use the exit option. Employees who identify with the organization (organizational commitment) are also more likely to use voice rather than exit. Personality is another influence on the choice of action. People with high conscientiousness are less likely to engage in neglect and more likely to engage in voice (as are people high in extraversion and low in neuroticism). Some experts suggest that employees differ in their EVLN behavior depending on whether they have high or low collectivism. Finally, past experience influences our choice of action. Employees who were

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unsuccessful with voice in the past are more likely to engage in exit or neglect when experiencing job dissatisfaction in the future.

Job dissatisfaction doesn't always result in lower job effort (neglect). Instead, some employees continue to work productively while they complain (voice), look for another job (exit), or patiently wait for the problem to be fixed (loyalty).

Reference: McShane–Von Glinow, Organizational Behavior. (2004).

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