

Elevating Employee Engagement

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

With the boom of social media, it is tempting to jump on board without rationally thinking about why, as a business, one should pull the social media trigger. Yes, social media provides businesses with a unique, low cost (if not free) opportunity to reach a large audience, but if you can't answer the question "Why am I doing this?" your success will be less than satisfying.

CONNECT THE WHY We all know what employees need to feel engaged – because every one of us wants the same thing! We want to feel valued, in the loop, supported and counted on. We want the company that we work for to have similar values to our own. We want to work for people we respect and, in turn, be respected. Has your company defined its Core Values? If not, do they have a Mission and/or Vision statement? Start there. Weave those elements into your communications to give employees a compass for how their attitudes and behaviors impact company outcomes.

PLAN FOR SUCCESS Marketing, Communications and Public Relations experts are great at planning. While we all know we need a detailed strategic marketing plan, sometimes we don't spend the same amount of time creating a plan for Internal Communications. Think about the basics. Who should the messaging come from? In which ways should the information be distributed? Who are your internal audiences? Put yourself in your employees' shoes and learn how to make it easy for them to stay in the loop. Meet with employees from all levels – front line to upper management – and ask for their feedback.

EVERY EMPLOYEE MATTERS While you can't ensure that every manager has an open, engaging relationship with each of their direct reports – you can arm them with the most effective communication tools possible. Each employee needs to know that they truly impact the success of the company. Whether you're the CEO or the janitor, a receptionist or a department head, you need information about the direction and the needs of the company before you can contribute.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

WRITE IT ONCE – LEVERAGE IT EVERYWHERE If you have multiple internal audiences and several tools for engaging them, you should really only have to write something once. You might want to use longer or shorter versions depending on the method, but it will save you time and ensure consistent messaging. Remember to tie in your core values and connect to purpose.

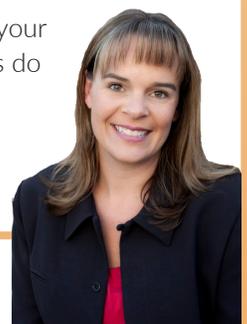
TRANSPARENCY IS KEY Employees want to know the latest information and receive it in a timely manner. Good, bad or ugly, giving it to them straight helps build trust and ensure they feel a part of the team. If there's a problem, empower them with things they can do to help fix it. If the company is doing great, thank them sincerely and reinforce what they're doing right.

GIVE EMPLOYEES A VOICE Building a relationship of trust requires two-way communication. Don't just tell employees what they need to know, give them avenues to reach out to the leadership team with great ideas, concerns or questions about the business. Above all, listen. Thank them for their comments and make sure they know they're sincerely appreciated – even if they tell you something you don't want to hear.

EVALUATE YOUR PROGRESS Surveys are cheap and easy these days. Once you've established your regular communication tools, send out a quick survey and ask employees for feedback. Which tools do they rely on the most to get information? Which tools do they never use? What areas are missing? Take that feedback, fill in the gaps and survey again in another year to evaluate your progress.

Tips Courtesy of

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EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Connect the why
Plan for success
Every employee matters

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Write it once
Transparency is key
Give employees a voice
Evaluate your progress

**See Reverse for full handout*

JULIE HOLLAND

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& Communications

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