

## **6 Tips to Increase Employee Engagement Without Spending a Dime**

According to Deloitte's Global Human Capital Trends 2016, 85% of employers in North America rank employee engagement as a top priority. This figure should be 100% considering that having an engaged workforce is critical to solving most business challenges, but Deloitte reports that only 46% of companies report that they are prepared to tackle the engagement challenge.

The employee work-contract has changed. People expect their organizations to engage them as creative, valuable contributors and provide learning and leadership opportunities at every stage of their careers. Building that kind of workplace is complex, but here are 10 things you can do that don't require a direct outlay of cash. These actions involve attitude and behavior change, so the one thing you will need is the commitment of managers and team social leaders.

### **1. Supply the Tools**

Make sure that everyone has the right tools and easy access to information in order to perform their jobs. Employees need to act quickly and decisively in our changing world. Barriers such as complex security protocols or death by internal forms frustrate workers and delay or derail customer-centric service.

### **2. Focus on the Individual**

Engagement tactics in multigenerational, multiethnic and geographically diverse workforce, may be different for each employee. The simplest way to find out what matters to employees? Ask them. Find ways to increase personal interaction between managers and teams and be ready with some deliberate structured questions about how employees feel their talents would best serve the company.

### **3. Provide Learning**

Training, Coaching, and Mentoring are all forms of learning. Provided in all formats - individual or group, formal or informal - these practices enrich the experience for everyone involved. When employees see that their personal development matters to their colleagues and the company, engagement increases.

### **4. Ask and Listen**

Engagement surveys, no matter how frequently done, are only one-way communication vehicles. Additionally, surveys collect what researchers call an *expressed attitude*. This differs from an *implicit attitude* which is a rapid, automatic response or an *explicit attitude* which is a deliberative and conscious evaluation based on contextual information. To learn what's on the minds of employees, create one-to-one or small group listening opportunities with regularity. Face-to-face exchanges allow for non-verbal communication to inform the conversation. Establish ground rules such as confidentiality in order to build trust. Give employees the opportunity to weigh in on departmental and organizational decisions – then make sure their opinions are communicated to leadership. Give feedback and response in a timely fashion.

## **5. Get Social and Serve Others**

Companies are increasingly adding a social responsibility focus to their core values. Leverage this to increase the emotional connection that employees feel to their workplace and to their colleagues. Deloitte reports that a top driver of engagement is finding purpose, mission, and soul through work. Community service projects of all kinds exist in every nation. Let employees identify one or several that fit the company's mission and organize opportunities to work together in outreach. Nothing builds purpose than serving something greater than self.

## **6. Recognize Early, Often, and Loudly**

There is no better way to communicate to an employee that they are valued than by recognizing their contributions – no matter how great or small. All contributions matter to the health of the organization. Recognition programs provide a visible way to give employees a clear and tangible idea of how they fit into the mission of the company. An expressed “thank-you” is the simplest form of recognition. Make sure the thank-you is visible to others, timely, and sincere. Crafting a well-balanced portfolio of programs may require the assistance of a certified recognition professional, but even running a multi-dimensional recognition program does not have to be expensive. It only requires a little strategy and planning. At the end of the day, people respond to appreciation.