

## Five Reasons the Term "Employee Engagement" Makes Me Feel Disengaged



By [Simma Lieberman](#)

1- Employee engagement has become a buzzword with no meaning in some workplace. What some managers really mean, is that they are engaged in theoretical discussions.

They seem to think that if they loudly declare that their whole workforce is engaged, even if few people are, they will be considered a great place to work.

Research has proven, what many of us have known for years; engaged employees are more productive, but it is all too common for organizations to have no idea what that means, in terms of organizational and employee behavior.

2- Too many consultants promise to create employee engagement, when they mean they'll conduct management training in active listening, and changing lexicon. Ask an employee if they've increased their participation, or feel more appreciated, or what they think about the "new" efforts to "engage" them, and they'll look at you as if you are speaking Martian.

3- Organizations measure employee engagement through an in-house survey, asking employees if they're happy. If I worked in one of those organizations, no matter how much confidentiality management, or HR promised me, there is no way that I would be comfortable being completely honest.

4- The term "employee engagement" has become like the term "diversity" in many organizations; someone gets hired as manager of diversity, or employee engagement, but they're not given any authority, or a budget to do anything, except attend a conference and hear speakers.

5- Organizations still resist developing a new kind of culture where employees are given opportunities to use talents, and genius that no one knew they had. You can't "engage" employees unless you ask employees for their ideas. What a concept!

Instead of talking about employee engagement, let's talk about discovering, utilizing, and leveraging employee genius at every level. Let's talk about creating a sense of

community in organizations, where every day employees, can be integral members of that community, and develop their own passion to help the "workplace community," be successful. This is how we develop ETO, or Employee Talent Optimization.

**Instead of employee engagement, let's use the term ETO, Employee Talent Optimization.**

**Here are three steps that employers can take to create Employee Talent Optimization**

1- Identify the characteristics of a participatory workplace culture, by asking employees what they need in order to be able to demonstrate their skills and talents.

2- Determine the skills and talents that are needed in order to dramatically improve your products and services, and provide that information to employees with incentives for contributing their "personal genius."

3- Where possible, create systems and processes to solicit employee success ideas at every level. Ask for suggestions that would make it easier for them to do their jobs so they could be more productive, ways to provide more distinct customer service, and best practices to save money, time, and resources.

You might discover that some of the work you were outsourcing like social networking strategy, or external technical training, could be done by people in your organization, who not only have the talent and experience, but also have the passion for it.

*Simma Lieberman helps organizations become more profitable by creating inclusive cultures where people do their best work. Leaders contact her when they want to develop and implement a strategy that leverages the skills and talents of employees at every organizational level. <http://www.simmalieberman.com> <<http://www.simmalieberman.com/>> Contact Simma at 1-510-527-0700 or [Simma@SimmaLieberman.com](mailto:Simma@SimmaLieberman.com)*