

7 Tips to Improve Employee Engagement

by Dr. Diane Hamilton



1. Communicate Intention to Improve

For people to embrace change, they must understand what is in it for them, and they must believe there is a good reason for the change. This can take some preparation. Being proactive to change is important. Sometimes leaders rush in too quickly, and this can make employees fear change. If leaders want to improve engagement, they must demonstrate an honest desire to improve and communicate that clearly to employees. This can occur through regular correspondence. If the end goal is to have better engagement, it is important to communicate that intention. It is important to provide steps to achieve that goal, and follow-up with employees on a consistent basis to share how everyone is doing at achieving that goal. How have your organizations proactively created communication to prepare employees for any change? What could they have done to communicate that more clearly?

2. Provide Consistent Recognition

Employees must believe what they have done is good and important. If their talents are valued, they are more likely to demonstrate quality work. Millennials might require even more feedback. Some research indicates they would like to receive some form of recognition seven times a day. It can be small things like a positive smile or emoticon. Having positive things to share with employees is critical to their success and will help prevent job hopping. Turnover is a huge expense for organizations; it costs the American economy \$550 billion a year. People are more likely to leave because of their boss rather than their company or job. By providing timely

feedback, problems can be addressed before they become major issues. Positive feedback can provide a positive lift to ensure continued good performance. How have you shared feedback with those who report to you? What could you do on a more consistent basis to improve how you provide that feedback?

3. Listen and Accept Feedback

This continues into communicating, listening and accepting feedback. Communication must go both ways. Leaders must be willing to address difficult or uncomfortable topics. They must demonstrate that what employees say has true meaning and leaders must be able to accept feedback and easily as they provide it. If employees believe their words are not heard, they will shut down, and communication will be impacted. In what ways can you demonstrate that feedback is welcome from employees? What incentives have you put in place to ensure people feel comfortable providing feedback?

4. Create Challenges

Every job can get tedious if nothing ever changes. While many people would state they fear change; however, they also do not want to be bored. There is joy in having a sense of accomplishment. We all strive to be better. By setting goals that are attainable and make us stretch outside of our comfort zone, we can learn new skills, and recognize opportunities for growth never previously considered. What kind of stretch goals have you encouraged people to create? What kind of follow-up procedures do you have in place to ensure they attain those goals?

5. Demonstrate Trust

Employees may need to be given more space to do their job in the way that best fits their needs. Employers who force certain workers, especially younger ones, to meet the older standards of a traditional workday may meet with resistance. If employees do their job and everything is completed well and on time, how and when they accomplished it is not as important. By giving employees some room to show that they are trusted, they will feel less micro-managed and feel a sense of accomplishment. What have you done to find out about the type of schedules that might work the best for your employees? How would they respond if asked about their work/life balance?

6. Treat Employees Like Customers

Many leaders do well at managing up as compared to managing down. They treat those above them in the corporate world with a certain level of respect regarding how they treat customers. Leaders must learn to treat their employees in the same way. By showing employees they are respected, and their sense of dignity is honored, they will respond similarly to a well-treated customer. Employees will want to have a long-lasting relationship rather than moving onto the next company. How have you gone about treating employees as if they were customers? What could you do differently to ensure that your employees' dignity is honored?

7. Consider Corporate Culture

Leaders must have a clear understanding of the corporate culture. Many leaders forget what it was like to be in lower-level positions, or they have had leaders who demonstrated an inappropriate way to motivate people. The corporate culture should be clear. It should come from above and be filtered down through all levels. Leaders need to analyze their corporate culture to see if changes need to be made. This is one of the most important things that leaders should address. If there is a negative corporate culture, engagement will be adversely impacted. How can an outside perspective on your corporate culture, help showcase issues that might be harder to see from within the company?



It can be important to get a baseline measurement to improve engagement. To learn more about what Dr. Diane Hamilton LLC can do to help improve your organization's engagement, soft skills, and culture, please contact diane@drdianehamilton.com.