Creating a Culture of Engagement: Strategies to Engage Your Employees

White Paper

TalentKeepers® is celebrating 15 years of providing award-winning employee engagement and retention solutions to help companies around the globe increase their performance. We provide employee engagement solutions, leader development programs, on-boarding processes and standardized or customized surveys, and other key talent management services to address critical business issues and enhance stakeholder value. We help you respond to industry and market factors that create uncertainty and organization exposure. Let us help you build a culture that keeps your best talent, boosts productivity and delivers outstanding performance.

Please direct questions, comments, and press inquiries to solutions@talentkeepers.com, please access our website at www.TalentKeepers.com or call 407.660.6041.

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Does Engagement Really Matter?

How to successfully engage employees is perhaps one of the greatest challenges facing organizations today. The concept of engagement, like many abstract concepts, is simple to understand, yet more difficult to define and measure. Some definitions of engagement include emotional and behavioral components, such as how employees “feel” about their employer, its leaders, and working conditions. More importantly than agreeing on a definition for engagement, however, is understanding the significance of employee engagement.

Employee engagement is tied directly to performance and profitability. In a 2003 research study conducted by the Institute for Social Research using data from over 360,000 employees from 41 companies, those companies described as having low overall engagement lost 2.01% operating margin and were down 1.38% in net profit margin over a three year period. During that same period, high engagement companies gained 3.74% operating margin and 2.06% net profit margin. Engaged employees, the study argues, clearly contributed to the bottom line of their companies.

In early 2008, TalentKeepers conducted a study that linked employee engagement and satisfaction to store results in a large, North American retailer. Those stores with highly engaged employees had more high performers across the chain (34% vs. 24%), fewer low performers (40% vs. 50%), and significantly increased average monthly revenue over the low engagement stores.

Employee engagement also is directly linked to employee retention. It seems quite obvious that highly engaged employees are more likely to stay with an organization than those who are moderately engaged or not engaged at all. But how important is retaining employees to the success of an organization?

Let’s use an example from the healthcare industry, in which turnover has been significantly increasing over the last few years. Based on results from the 2014 Workplace America research study, the direct costs, including recruitment, on-boarding, training, uniforms and the like, of losing a frontline employee in the healthcare industry exceeds $5,000 for 49% of healthcare providers. When you add the indirect costs of turnover, such as lost productivity, poor service, and low employee morale (those things often linked to low engagement), the costs skyrocket to over $15,000 for losing a single frontline employee.
In the 2015 Workplace America research study conducted by TalentKeepers, 63% of employers responded they are at least moderately effective in engaging employees.

![Bar Chart]

Cutting employee turnover is just one defense against low engagement, but can be an important one, particularly for generation Y workers who value the social relationships associated with work.

**Tactics for Improving Engagement**

It is obvious that employers should be concerned about engaging their employees. But the bigger challenge is figuring out *how* to engage employees. Your organization’s culture, the nature of the work employees perform, the strength of your leaders, and the diversity of your workers must all be considered.

One fundamental component to developing strategies for employee engagement is recognizing the critical role of the front-line leader. Based on extensive research of employee engagement, several leader behaviors have been found to boost engagement:

- Building trust between themselves and their team members. A trusting relationship frees employees to be more creative, be more open to coaching and feedback, feel more comfortable offering ideas, and communicate more openly.
- Focusing on building esteem and pride in team members
- Being flexible in recognizing, understanding, and adapting to individual needs and views
- Providing training and coaching that allows employees to develop new skills
- Conducting performance building exercises to reinforce high levels of team member performance
- Gathering information from employees about what skills and behaviors they value most in a leader and using this information to coach leaders in developing positive working relationships with their team members
- Conducting commitment-building “handshake” meetings between team members and their leader in which both indicate what they will do to foster a positive working relationship
- Ensuring that employees are given the opportunities to use their talents by giving them varied and challenging work, as well as additional responsibilities/projects

- Recognizing the need for greater flexibility in the workplace, such as offering flexible work schedules or allowing team members to work from home

These tactics all contribute to creating an environment in which employees see the value of their work and a connection between their success and the success of the organization. The key to creating a culture of engagement is employees recognizing that their performance and contributions really “matter” to the organization.
To create a culture of engagement – retention and engagement must be viewed as a broad organizational and cultural strategy involving all levels of the organization.

In TalentKeepers’ 2015 Workplace America research study on employee engagement and retention trends just 62% of employers agree their front-line leaders are consistently and effectively explaining changes within the organizations to their teams—while an overwhelming 91% of Best-In-Class employers agree.

To create this culture of engagement, retention and engagement must be viewed as a broad organizational and cultural strategy involving all levels of the organization. Leaders at all levels in the organization must become trust-builders, in order to combat employee disengagement and unwanted turnover. To do this, they must be equipped with the leadership retention and engagement competencies critical for creating committed workforces.
To ensure that leaders “own” the retention and engagement mission, they must be held accountable and be incented for this responsibility.

But retention and engagement are not just the domain of the leaders. All employees, including front-line employees, need to be retention and engagement advocates, encouraging colleagues to remain with the organization, communicating frustrations to their leaders and helping to build a strong climate of trust and performance.

Keeping ahead of demographic trends and generational differences will require new and imaginative ideas, as well as a strong commitment to making retention and engagement a top priority. In short, we must innovate. We cannot expect to continue use the same methods with an adapting workforce and achieve the same positive results.

The future will require creativity and inventiveness to combat the ever-present concerns of turnover and lack of engagement.
Talent Management Solutions

TalentKeepers® is celebrating 15 years of providing award-winning employee engagement and retention solutions to help companies around the globe increase their performance. We’re a recognized leader in innovative onboarding tools, employee engagement surveys that drive growth and accountability, HRCI and SHRM certified training for HR professionals, unique eLearning leadership programs, teambuilding tools and much more. Twice we have won HR Executive Magazine’s Product of the Year award. Re-energize your efforts and expect more from your engagement and retention partner. Contact us today at solutions@talentkeepers.com.

Leadership Training Programs
All of TalentKeepers training and development programs are built around critical competencies and designed to give leaders the skills they need to be increasingly effective in their careers. Leaders learn talents including Trust Builder, Flexibility Expert, Talent Developer & Coach and High Performance Builder in a total, blended learning approach including e-learning modules, reinforcement workshops and off-line practice activities.

Employee Engagement Solutions
Retaining and actively engaging high-performing employees builds strength in an organization’s culture and improves overall performance. TalentKeepers offers several tools proven to increase commitment and positively impact engagement and productivity.

Surveys/Assessments
TalentKeepers’ surveys and assessments can help you measure and report the impact of critical factors that contribute to engagement and the degree of influence those factors have on employees’ decisions to join, stay or leave your organization.

For details on our Talent Management Solutions or to get more information on TalentKeepers’ full range of products and services:

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