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Eight Ways to Engage Employees and Power-Up Performance During a Recession

By Roxanne Emmerich



If you've seen the movie *Jerry Maguire*, you'll remember the scene where Tom Cruise asks Cuba Gooding, Jr., "What can I do for you?" Gooding says, "Show me the money."

Many employers think that's the key to employee engagement. But any company that THINKS you have to pour money on employees to get them engaged will write off employee engagement efforts during tough economic times. "We just can't afford to do it right now," they say.

In fact, **you can't afford NOT to pay attention to engagement**, *especially* during a recession when sales are soft. Employee engagement scores regularly account for up to 50 percent of the variance in customer service scores. A disengaged employee can cost you 30 TIMES as much in safety-related incidents. And disengaged employees are over 85 percent more likely to leave.

Engagement comes not from dollars but from more personal factors.

Eight Ways to Keep Your Employees Engaged for the Long Term

1. **Listen to your employees.** Most people want to work for an employer who cares enough to listen. The best way to know what your employees need and expect is to ask them—and to listen carefully to their answers.

2. **Provide clear, consistent expectations.** Vague policies and unclear expectations can make employees feel irritated, unsafe and even paranoid. This leads to your employees becoming disengaged. They click into survival mode instead of focusing on how to help the company succeed.
3. **Give employees a sense of importance.** This has a greater impact on loyalty and customer service than all other factors COMBINED.
4. **Develop opportunities for advancement.** The chance to work your way up the ladder is a tremendous incentive for productivity, bonding, and employee engagement.
5. **Create good relationships with others in the workplace.** If you have a toxic relationship with your employees, you can forget about asking them to put their shoulder to the wheel for the company.
6. **Offer regular feedback.** If you want to keep your employees moving forward, give them the occasional rudder report. And don't forget *positive* feedback, which should ideally outnumber the negative by about 5 to 1.
7. **Celebrate and reward for successes.** Set realistic targets, then reward and celebrate when they are reached. And don't wait for the end of a big project to celebrate. Pick landmarks along the way and go nuts when you hit them.
8. **Move from "the company" to "our company."** The heart and soul of engagement is *ownership*. As long as your employees feel they are working to help YOU make YOUR company succeed, engagement will be low. Once you get them to see themselves as partners in the endeavor—making decisions, staying informed, sharing in the company's ups and downs—everything changes. Engagement soars.

Just imagine a workplace in which employees feel important and listened to, in which expectations are clear and feedback consistent, in which relationships and shared ownership are cultivated, advancement is available, and success is celebrated.

Now stop imagining it and CREATE it!

About the author:

Roxanne Emmerich is renowned for her ability to transform "ho hum" workplaces into massive results-oriented "bring-it-on" environments. To discover how you can ignite the passion of your employees, catapult performance to new levels, and boost employee morale of your company, subscribe to the Thank God It's Monday™ e-zine at <http://www.ThankGoditsMonday.com>

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