

Employee Engagement: Measuring What Matters

by

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What's Not Working

Bob Kelleher, well-known employee engagement specialist, commented, *"You can't always throw money or offer perks to boost employee satisfaction levels. The last thing any employer wants or needs is a satisfied but underperforming employees or satisfied employees working in a business that is underperforming.* Kelleher's comment strikes home with employers who think an annual employee satisfaction survey is a sound approach in determining the extent to which employees are happy or content with their jobs. In reality, an underperforming employee is very content to respond positively to a satisfaction survey. It keeps the "boss" from identifying performance issues and work results. How can the "boss" be unhappy with high marks on the survey? Unfortunately, satisfaction surveys fail to measure the level of passion employees have for their jobs or commitment to the business. Satisfaction surveys also fail to measure the discretionary effort employees put into their work and their ability to think boldly with innovative actions that inspire others.

What Will Work

Surprisingly enough, the levels of employee engagement, mentioned below, invites the need to further examine the need to measure what matters. With the low level of employee engagement, there remains concern about lost productivity, profitability and out of control cost.

- **25% of employees are fully engaged** and work with passion and feel a profound connection to the business. They drive innovation and move the business forward.
- **57% of employees are disengaged**, essentially "checked-out." They're sleepwalking through their workday, putting time – but not energy or passion – into their work.
- **18% of employees are actively disengaged** and unhappy at work. They're busy acting out their unhappiness. These employees undermine what their engaged co-workers accomplish. *Gallup, 2003.*

Creating Your Own Employee Engagement Survey

Measuring the level of employee engagement in the workplace is not a difficult task. There are numerous generic and user-friendly engagement surveys available. Most of them consist of 12- 25 questions and can be implemented online or face-to-face with little time needed to complete the survey.

Although utilizing a commercial survey works, it might but not fit the needs of *every business.*

Careful consideration should be taken to create a survey that identifies the drivers of employee engagement in your business. The drivers will provide you with direction and help you generate questions for your survey. The following possible employee engagement drivers are often found in both large and small companies successfully utilizing measures and survey results:

- **Know Me** – Take time to know me, know my aspirations, know how I work best, and know my strengths.
- **Grow Me** – Show me what success looks like, make the path forward clear for success, help me master job skills, and commit to my growth.
- **Inspire Me** – Know what inspires, understand how to motivate me, and challenge me to do better than I ever thought I could.
- **Involve Me** – Give me ownership to solutions, provide me with coaching as needed and resources for success
- **Recognize Me** - Be my biggest fan, bring me to the attention of others when I succeed and celebrate my success. (Taken from *Closing the Engagement Gap, 2008.*)

Summing It Up

Measuring what matters is more than measuring employee satisfaction. It's taking the time to identify what drives employee engagement and using the best method to measure engagement based on the drivers that determine the content of survey questions. Identifying the level of employee engagement in your business is the key to success and a means to maximize the potential of all your employees.