

Employee Engagement: A Roadmap

**Creating A Culture of Participation,
Performance, & Profits**

by David Bator



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You can't afford employees that are not engaged. They are less efficient; simply going through the motions rather than working to their full potential. They also have higher absenteeism and turnover rates. This all comes with a steep price tag. In the U.S. lost productivity costs organizations as much as 300 billion annually.¹ A significant portion of payroll also becomes pure cost – with no return on investment – since disengaged employees give less while still receiving 100% of their salary. What about finding a replacement for an employee who chooses to leave? It can cost upwards of twice the departee's salary.² All of which directly impacts business outcomes.

Employee participation and performance leads to profits, as demonstrated by companies with high levels of engagement. What follows is our road map to help your organization join their ranks. It's based on the work we do everyday to build engagement within leading companies. It's not about annual surveys, reward catalogues, or initiatives that circle engagement but don't deliver. It's about results.

Two-thirds of the workforce are not engaged.³

To what degree are your employees invested in the success of your organization? Are they willing to do great work, contribute to the culture of the organization, grow with the company and celebrate its successes – and not just because they are paid? That's engagement.

Notes:

- 1 Blacksmith, N; Harter, J: (2011, October). Majority Of American Workers Not Engaged In Their Jobs [Electronic version]. Gallup Wellbeing, Retrieved January 17, 2012, from www.gallup.com/poll/150383/Majority-American-Workers-Not-Engaged-Jobs.aspx?utm_source=email-a-friend&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=sharing&utm_content=titlelink.
- 2 How To Reduce Employee Turnover [Electronic version]. Wall Street Journal, Retrieved May 22, 2012, from http://guides.wsj.com/management/recruiting-hiring-and-firing/how-to-reduce-employee-turnover/.&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=sharing&utm_content=titlelink.
- 3 Ayers, K. The High Cost Of A Lack Of Engagement [Electronic version]. Retrieved May 22, 2012, from www.gallup.com/poll/150383/Majority-American-Workers-Not-Engaged-Jobs.aspx?utm_source=email-a-friend&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=sharing&utm_content=titlelink.

Be Social

“*Traditional corporate communication must give way to a process that is more dynamic and more sophisticated. Most important, that process must be conversational.*”⁴

— Harvard Business Review

There is value in two-way dialogue. It brings your organization together, provides insights, and transforms employees from passive recipients to active participants. Conversations lead to relationships, and relationships lead to affinity.

Pfizer saw this first-hand. By encouraging online participation among their workforce they moved from a broadcast to dialogue style of communication, and brought their community strategy of ‘Connect, Listen, Educate’ to life. They involved their employees in conversations about work and the company as a whole. This has created “...deeper connections between colleagues and the company’s purpose,” says Nicholas Patrick, Senior Manager, Corporate Communications. No small feat given that Pfizer has approximately 100,000 global employees.

Talk with your workforce, rather than at them. Give them a voice, and you all win.

Conversation builds bridges. It can help large, unwieldy companies function like a smaller one in all the best ways, facilitating the collaboration, flexibility, and alignment with company values that have made so many start-ups outperform more established competitors.⁵



Notes:

- 4 Groysberg, B; Slind, M: (2012, June). Leadership Is A Conversation [Electronic version]. Harvard Business Review, Retrieved May 30, 2012 from <http://hbr.org/2012/06/leadership-is-a-conversation/ar/1>.
- 5 Groysberg, B; Slind, M: (2012, June). Leadership Is A Conversation [Electronic version]. Harvard Business Review, Retrieved May 30, 2012 from <http://hbr.org/2012/06/leadership-is-a-conversation/ar/1>.

Trust Your Employees

The idea of an open intranet where employees can share ideas, comment on discussions, and recognize each other publicly is something so many organizations shy away from. Yet these same employees have the keys to the office, login to the network, and have face to face contact with customers. Outside of the office they are parents, baseball coaches, and community leaders who are empowered by the value others place on their views and feedback. To deny this in the workplace undermines employee confidence and morale.

A true social enterprise is more than leveraging online media and networking tools. It's about trusting your workforce while providing purposeful programs for them to be heard – whether it's to ask a question, give an opinion, or pat a colleague on the back.

MWV (formerly MeadWestvaco) did just that. They traded their very traditional internal communication channels for an online platform that provides their 17, 500 employees worldwide with a discussion space, regardless of their place on the org chart or geographic location. “We’re building a global community of conversation,” says Susan Cleveland, Director of European Communications. As a result MWV is better able to share news, create enthusiasms, and harness employee insights to advance new initiatives.

Don't just tell employees their voice matters. Prove it.

A good conversation gets repeated. It builds community and culture. The promise of social software is to make this type of conversation as frequent and as effortless as possible.



Engage The Individual

'United we stand' is the goal. But how do you get a diverse group of people on the same page, aligned with the organization's goals?

This was a question Kodak faced. For the last decade the company has been in the midst of a transformation and today they have a workforce that includes a mixture of long-time employees, new employees, and employees who had left the company but returned. Online dialogue has helped this group of individuals understand how they each fit into the overall scheme of an organization moving in a new direction. "[It's] been a way to educate employees about the products, strategy and heritage of Kodak as well as help them feel a part of something larger – the big picture," says Jeanne Eason, Corporate Communications. It's built knowledge, and strengthened community.

When it comes to engagement strategies one size does not fit all. Individual needs must be met – whether it be for transparency, recognition, opportunities to collaborate or learn new skills. But there is a truism that applies to all. Employees must feel valued to add value. The easiest and most effective way to do this is through relevant and timely communication.

Provide employees with a platform where they can share information, recognize a colleague's contributions, collaborate with and learn from each other.

Create opportunities for your employees to feel valued and they will deliver value.



Success Depends On A Company's Ability To Rally Their Workforce

What would your organization look like if you involved employees in decisions that effect their life at work and the welfare of the company at large? What if you empowered employees to connect with each other, recognize one another for great work, and truly collaborate?

It would be a place where there is fluid communication, and an active exchange of ideas and experience. A place that drives business success, because when employees believe their voice counts, energy and innovation follows. It would be a place that attracts and retains the best employees and customers.



Managing Generational Differences

Although each individual will follow generational patterns to a greater or lesser extent their worldview and experiences tend to influence what motivates them.

Boomers (ages 47 to 65) are typically success-driven and value vertical control. Recognize their individual accomplishments and help them track their progress toward key goals.

Gen X (ages 30 to 46) tend to value breadth of experience most. Projects matter more than moving up the ladder. Don't expect to motivate them by dangling the 'carrot' of a new job title. Instead, recognize their project milestones and clear the way for them to develop new skills and innovate.

Millennials / Gen Y (ages up to 29) are often ambitious, highly networked, and team oriented. They have no qualms about messaging anyone, at any level, for the information they need. Access, transparency, feedback, and recognition are their main motivators.

About David Bator



David Bator is Director of Customer Strategy & Marketing at TemboSocial (formerly PollStream). He is passionate about programs that move people, as is the team of Conversation Consultants that he leads. This group is responsible for helping clients leverage TemboSocial tools to

interactively engage and share knowledge with employees and customers alike. For the last 13 years David has worked with the senior management of global companies to build marketing and communications programs that deliver extraordinary value for customers, employees and partners. Prior to joining TemboSocial, David was the Director of Partnerships & Alliances for Info-Tech Research Group and launched IDC Canada's national conference business as Manager of Marketing and Sales Operations.

About TemboSocial

TemboSocial enables the social enterprise for some of the world's most progressive organizations, such as TD Bank, Macy's, Pfizer, Cleveland Clinic, and the US Navy. Leading companies turn to TemboSocial's hosted suite of tools to foster collaboration, conversation and recognition among employees, customers and prospects.

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