

AS SEEN IN
enLIGHTenment
MAGAZINE
JANUARY 2016

How to Keep Employees Engaged



Employee engagement is a trending management concept all over the world, but what exactly is it, what does an “engaged employee” look like, and what is the benefit?

BY MARK OKUN

Employee engagement is a blend of some familiar management concepts with the addition of some new and essential components. My simple definition of “Employee Engagement” is that there is an emotional commitment that the employee and employer share towards attaining the goals of the company — and it’s built on mutually beneficial intrinsic rewards that go beyond wages and benefits.

However, “Employee Engagement” is not a directive from above; in order to have mutual benefit for both the employee and the employer, it must be a

two-way street. Here are some of the foundational aspects:

- ▶ **Show Respect.** Besides the common courtesy that all people want in their workday, a much larger part of respect is being honest and caring. Respect each other as valued partners with the same goals, and listen/have an open dialogue between leadership and all staff in a 360-degree format.
- ▶ **Transparency.** This is the sharing of pertinent details of what is happening in the business and includes marketing, advertising, and the promotions. These meetings include everyone from the front line salespeople to the back office staff. This type of communication is two-way and can be told by either the employee or the employer. The key is to create a conversation that both parties can participate in, contribute to, and learn from.
- ▶ **Instill Confidence.** Believe it or not, many leaders and staff do not know how well they perform their jobs. The action of purposefully acknowledging and appreciating the positive efforts of people will produce confidence. Share their successes and applaud the actions they take. Even when those actions don’t achieve the exact result, it is the effort beyond the mandatory minimum expectation that is the benefit of engagement. This goes beyond a slap on the back during a company meeting; I’m talking about publicly recognizing the individual’s efforts in a way that lets the public and industry peers know about these accomplishments with a press release or a company Facebook post. Even if the release is limited in distribution, the emotion and bond that is created by putting thoughtful words of appreciation out for all to see is a huge confidence-builder.

DON’T MISTAKE SATISFACTION FOR ENGAGEMENT

Satisfaction alone does not create an “engaged employee.” Just because an employee is satisfied with his/her job does mean they are “engaged” in the fullest sense. Employee Satisfaction is considered to be “the level of acceptance” a person has with their job and working environment. Sure,

satisfaction plays a part in creating engaged employees — but not on its own.

HOW TO SPOT A DISENGAGED EMPLOYEE

The industrial economy that most of us grew up with set the foundational expectations that employees were hired to fulfill a need, perform a task, and essentially become a cog in the wheel of the business and nothing more. This has resulted in employees that show up only for a paycheck, known as ABC, Attendance-Based Compensation. Many times the disengaged staffer is less productive and regards customers as an interruption in their day.

Have you ever experienced a time when you encountered a totally disengaged salesperson? According to a Gallup poll taken in 2014, only 30.6 percent of salespeople are engaged. This explains why some salespeople are determined to complete a side task as if it were more important than the customer in front of them. The same poll compares the current four generations: Traditional, Boomer, Gen X, and Millennial. As time has passed, the level of employee engagement throughout our economy has decreased from 42 to 29 percent. This decrease says more about our society and desire for uniformity, (think cog) and immediate satisfaction than it does about any of the generations.

In identifying engaged employees’ qualities, several distinct points come to mind; first of all, the person is committed and will always go “above and beyond” the minimum expectations of the position in every aspect. For the salespeople I have worked with, they are always maintaining showroom

THE BENEFITS OF HAVING ENGAGED EMPLOYEES

- **Satisfaction:** The staff and management are happier and less stressed in their workday.
- **Productivity:** Engaged employees are usually top performers, always committed to going above and beyond the norm.
- **Retention:** Having good employees stay is foundational to the success of every business. Employees who are engaged have a lower the risk of seeking new jobs. As a result of employee engagement, excellent customer outcomes become consistent and repeatable.

AS SEEN IN
enLIGHTenment
MAGAZINE
JANUARY 2016

Regardless of the position, engaged employees share a positive image of the place they work in and the industry they represent. The engaged employee is always recommending their company, their products, and the services they offer to others.

appearance and replacing burned-out lamps, maintaining display pieces, and doing whatever they could in their power to make the customer's experience an excellent one. The passion these salespeople present towards their customers, their products, and their company is at a very high level. They take personal ownership of their work.

Do you have a staffer who customers often assume is an owner of a business because they take personal ownership for the quality of all aspects of their work? That person is engaged. Regardless of the position, engaged employees share a positive image of the place they work in and the industry they represent. The engaged employee is always recommending their company, their products, and the services they offer to others. Engaged employees clearly demonstrate how their daily actions at work contribute to meaningful outcomes for their customers and their company.

HOW DO I GET ENGAGED EMPLOYEES?

The chief principles that drive engagement seem "simple" yet each one must be planned and implemented with the same deliberate actions of planning a budget. Think of these actions and activities as deposits made in each employee's emotional bank account. The goal is to build a seamless partnership between the leadership and the staff; this will provide the best outcome and experience for customers.

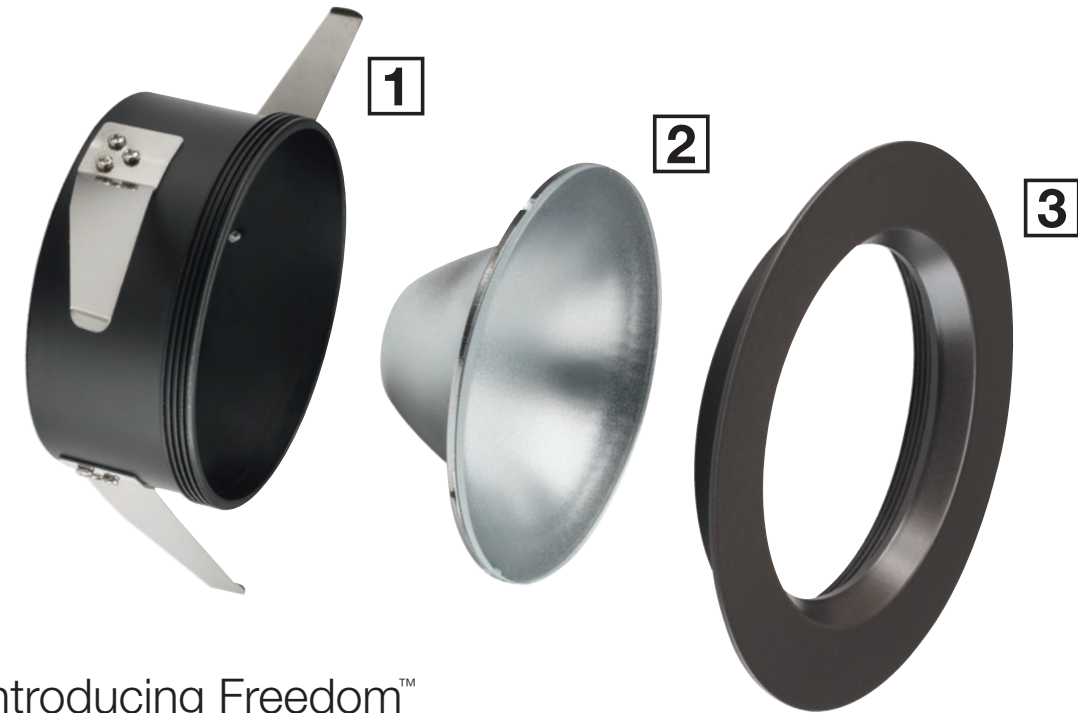
There are three bedrock principles of engagement. **Trust** – or should I say, lack of trust – impacts employee engagement. Trust is demonstrated by the company's leadership through the absence of micromanaging. Allowing employees to operate with a level of autonomy that is equal to their position builds trust. By doing so, management is trusting that the delegated work will be completed in an appropriate and timely fashion. When trust is given, the employees must also take responsibility for their actions. This is not a one-sided equation; employees must trust that the plan that leadership is implementing will move them down the correct path to success.

Communication is critical for creating an environment that fosters engagement. The same care and thought that is put into creating customer communications must be put into employee communications. If "engaged employees" are partners in the business, then make sure they are the first group in the communication line. There should never be any workplace surprises when it comes to a new marketing initiative, sharing of the business climate, or a product launch. Communication must be scheduled and consistent. This type of interacting encourages the staff to take pride and ownership. Engaged employees need a sense of meaning, purpose, and empowerment. Remember to start all communications inside the company first with the staff; they must have this "insider knowledge" to proceed as a partner.

Acknowledgement means an expression of appreciation that permits value to be created between the employee and employer. Letting

The bedrock principles of engagement are: Trust, Communication, Acknowledgement, and Development

Creating hundreds of recessed LED fixtures is as easy as...



Introducing Freedom™ architectural LED downlights. One brilliant concept. Hundreds of possibilities.

Now, you can cover virtually all of the lighting requirements in most any room – new construction, remodeling, or retrofit – and do it with consistent design. Start with the Freedom housing size in your choice of color temperatures including warm dimming, add the beam angle, then add the trim ring. It's that simple.

- 1** 4" and 5" / 6" New install or retrofit housings in 2700K, 3000K, 4000K, 5000K and 2700K-2200K warm dimming at up to 90CRI.
- 2** 4" Reflectors with 30°, 40°, 60° and 95° beam angles available. 5" / 6" Reflectors with 35°, 40°, 60° and 95° beam angles available.
- 3** 4 trim finishes – White, Bronze, Brushed Nickel, Polished Nickel.

- Unique right hand twist blade installation
- Dimmable
- Supplied with E26 socket adapter
- Damp location listed
- ENERGY STAR Certified



See Freedom and all the new Satco products at The Dallas Market, Suite 4942



©2015, Satco Products, Inc.

National Toll-Free:
800.43.SATCO
(800.437.2826)
www.satco.com

Distribution Centers:
New York, Florida,
Texas, Washington,
California, Puerto Rico

Satco Products Inc.
110 Heartland Blvd.,
Brentwood, NY 11717
631.243.2022
Fax 631.243.2027

AS SEEN IN
enLIGHTenment
MAGAZINE
JANUARY 2016

ON THE MARK

employees know that you are aware of their efforts, wins, and losses satisfies the need we have as human beings to be recognized. Take advantage of the digital age we are in. Today, people of all generations have become compulsive about checking their smart phones. This lets the art of employee acknowledgement go beyond an announcement at a morning meeting or a bulk email. We can tweet it out, share it on the company Facebook page, or on LinkedIn.

Personal Development is one of the leading contributors of engaged employees. Presenting staff members of all levels with internal growth and development opportunities is one of the most important ways to foster employee retention. At the same time, it provides skills that create a better customer experience.

Our human nature keeps us on the outlook for opportunities to learn – and learning can happen in many ways such as interesting projects that stretch current limits and skill level or tasks that may not fit a specific job description, but fit the working environment. People thrive on learning new skills and being stimulated to learn.

There are even more benefits to keeping your staff highly focused on learning. Employees who are effectively trained and continually communicated with become better at their work, are less likely to leave the company they work for, and perform to significantly higher standards than their counterparts who are not engaged.

Do you have a plan within your company that promotes personal development? Remember, instituting such a plan benefits all members of the company, including the owners and managers. The start of a new year is an ideal time to start creating or enhancing your employee engagement strategy. ❖

MANAGEMENT TIP: Want to increase workforce engagement? Purposefully look for them doing something right and acknowledge it immediately to the world with enthusiasm.



Mark Okun is a Business Contributor to enLIGHTenment Magazine and President of Mark Okun Consulting & Performance Group. He has more than 30 years of hands-on retail experience training and coaching sales associates in the lighting and furniture industries. Mark@bravobusinessmedia.com



ULTRALIGHTS

LIGHTING WITH THE HUMAN ELEMENT

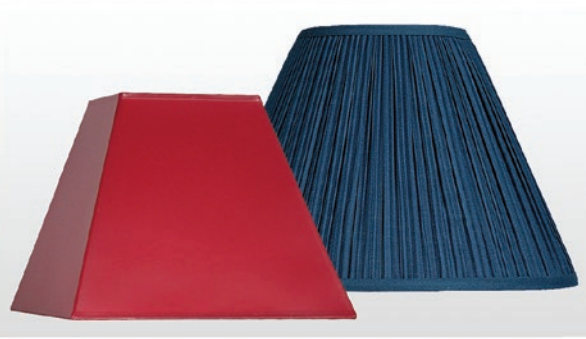
Interior • Exterior • Pendants • Wall Scones • LED • Custom • Modified • Made in USA

WWW.ULTRALIGHTSLIGHTING.COM

Famous Quality Hardback Lamp Shades



OEM and Replacement Shades Made to Specification



Spectacular Service with Quick, Reliable Lead Times



New Brunswick Lamp Shade

www.nbls.com
7 Terminal Road
New Brunswick, NJ
08901 USA
732-545-0377



Made in the USA Since 1943