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Employee Engagement: A Key Success Factor in the Workplace

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By Laura Baldwin
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Editor's Note: For additional tools and resources related to this topic, visit the **BSM Café** (www.bsmcafe.com).

What does employee engagement mean? Simply, it means that people enjoy their jobs and are committed to the organization. Fully engaged employees typically have a deep care and concern for their organization and actively seek ways to support its mission and vision.

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Employee engagement does not occur by accident. It also does not happen by controlling and ordering people around. Managers must take ownership of assessing the work environment and identify ways to enhance engagement. Engagement must be developed through the creation of a workplace that fosters connection, meaningfulness, and growth. Consider the following:

- Engaged employees feel connected to the company, their managers, and each other. Good relationships with coworkers tend to drive engagement to high levels. Relationships with managers have a huge impact. It is often the behavior of the manager that most directly influences an employee's level of engagement.
- Managers can promote connection—and thus engagement—by listening to employees, demonstrating genuine care and concern for their issues, and providing tangible follow-up. They can also help employees develop positive relationships with colleagues that will enhance connection.
- People need a sense of meaningfulness. This occurs when employees believe they are working toward something of importance and have a chance to contribute something of real value.
- Managers impact meaningfulness by helping people understand the purpose of their work. Without clarity in the objectives or the "why" of the task, an employee may not see the meaning. Meaningfulness in a person's work creates feelings of pride and dignity which promote overall job satisfaction.
- The opportunity for growth in the workplace is essential in creating employee engagement. People need to feel they are competent and that they have a chance to learn, grow, and advance.
- Managers must help employees understand their own talents and skills and place people in jobs where they can make the best contributions. This allows staff members to experience the feeling of success. Additionally, managers should provide training and learning programs that promote opportunities for advancement within the organization.

Managers must constantly assess level of engagement and use strategies to enhance it within the organization. Here are several ways to assess employee engagement:

1. *Conduct employee surveys to solicit feedback.* Be mindful, however, that when administering surveys you must act upon the information provided by employees and acknowledge any shortcomings. Failure to do so will result in higher levels of employee dissatisfaction and potentially lead to employee disengagement.
2. *Observe employee interaction.* Engaged employee communication is positive and ongoing. If you do not observe this in your practice, underlying morale issues may need to be addressed to re-engage and reconnect staff.
3. *Take note of any employee turnover.* High turnover rates can indicate dissatisfaction.
4. *Monitor absenteeism rates.* An increase in absenteeism may point to issues that need to be addressed.
5. *Evaluate employee participation.* Engaged employees actively participate and seek opportunities to contribute.
6. *Conduct customer satisfaction surveys.* If employees are not engaged, they may not provide a positive experience for customers. This would be reflected in survey results.

Set Your Practice Apart

In today's competitive environment, employee engagement can distinguish your practice from the competition. Studies clearly show that organizations with engaged employees have less turnover, are more productive and profitable, and enjoy greater employee and customer satisfaction.



About the author: Laura Baldwin, RN, is a consultant for BSM Consulting, an internationally recognized health care consulting firm headquartered in Incline Village, Nevada and Scottsdale, Arizona. For more information about BSM Consulting or content/resources discussed in this article, please visit the **BSM Café** at www.BSMCafe.com.

