

## Are Your Employees Engaged?

For several years now, 'employee engagement' has been a hot topic in business circles. It's a buzz phrase that has captured the attention of strategic Execs, Corporate Leadership and Boards of Directors.

No wonder. It turns out that all the employee engagement research undertaken over the past few years has defined the term differently, and as a result, came up with different key drivers and implications. Enter The Conference Board, a prestigious, non-profit business membership and research organization located in the U.S. This group provides its members — top executives and industry leaders from the most respected corporations in the United States and around the world — with vital business intelligence and forward-looking best practices.

The Conference Board published "Employee Engagement, A Review of Current Research and Its Implications". According to this report, twelve major studies on employee engagement had been published over the prior four years by top research firms such as Gallup, Towers Perrin, Blessing White, the Corporate Leadership Council and others.

Each of the studies used different definitions and, collectively, came up with 26 key drivers of engagement. For example, some studies emphasized the underlying cognitive issues, others on the underlying emotional issues.

The Conference Board looked across this mass of data and came up with a blended definition and key themes that crossed all of the studies. **They define employee engagement as "a heightened emotional connection that an employee feels for his or her organization, that influences him or her to exert greater discretionary effort to his or her work."**

Here are the eight key drivers:

- Trust and integrity – how well managers communicate and 'walk the talk'.
- Nature of the job –Is it mentally stimulating day-to-day?
- Line of sight between employee performance and company performance – Does the employee understand how their work contributes to the company's performance?
- Career Growth opportunities –Are there future opportunities for growth?
- Pride about the company – How much self-esteem does the employee feel by being associated with their company?
- Coworkers/team members – do they fit into the culture of the organization?  
This can significantly influence one's level of engagement.
- Employee development – Is the company making an effort to develop employee skills?
- Relationship with one's manager – Does the employee value his or her relationship with his or her manager?

But all studies, all locations and all ages agreed that the direct relationship with one's manager is the strongest of all drivers. According the report, employee engagement is a big deal! There is clear and mounting evidence that high levels of employee engagement keenly correlates to individual, group and corporate performance in areas such as retention, turnover, productivity, customer service and loyalty.

### Conclusion:

Here are your action steps. Hire people well suited for the job and your culture. Do this by following our 4-step repeatable hiring process. Then, flatten your chains of command, provide training for first-line managers and improve internal communications. Changes won't happen overnight, but with such significant upside to the bottom line, employee engagement is worth starting today.

Contact us for more information on implementing a successful hiring formula.



*AgRecruiter specializes in leadership level search. Pictured is Terry Lebo of AgRecruiter with Chris Novak, newly recruited CEO for the National Pork Board.*

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