

## Engagement Guidebook

### *Ideas for Improving the Engagement of Your Employees*

#### **Conduct a Stay Interview with Your Great Performers**

Send an invitation to have a discussion about what will keep them on the team. Below is an example Stay Interview invite.

**You Are Invited to Attend...**The next step in your continued development. You make a difference and I value your contributions. Let's discuss some things that are important to you and me.

- What will keep you here?
- What might entice you away?
- What is most energizing about your work?
- What is your dream job?
- If you changed your role completely, what would you miss the most?
- What did you love in a previous position that you're not doing now?
- Are we fully utilizing your talents?
- What is inhibiting your success?
- What can I do differently to best assist you?

#### **Listen Deeper to Understand**

Communication is critical to keeping your valued employees. If they feel heard, understood, and valued by you, they will work harder and produce more. They will *want* to stay and work for you. And if they don't – they will disengage or depart. It's important to listen for:

- **Input** – Talented people want to have an ear for their great ideas and solutions. They want to be heard and recognized.
- **Motivations** – What do they want from this job and from you? What gets them up in the morning and looking forward to their work?
- **Challenges** – You need to know about your employees' problems and challenges.

#### **Other Listening Tips**

- Invite employees you don't know well to have lunch with you. Ask them about them and their interests. Practice listening.
- Listen and act on ideas your employees bring to you. When they see that you have implemented one of their ideas, they will feel heard.
- Notice little things. Go to your employees' work spaces and take note of the family pictures or sports trophies. Ask about them.
- Slow down and listen. Sometimes leaders are just moving too quickly (mentally and physically) to get to know and understand employees.
- If employees bring you personal problems that are outside of your expertise or boundaries as their leader, brainstorm with them to come up with a list of potential resources.

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#### Foster Team Bonding

How do you create a bond among the employees in the department and increase the chances of deepening their loyalty? There are many ways.

- Have open forum meetings on a regular basis. If employees feel they are being heard, they will feel a stronger connection to you and the team. Don't be afraid of grievances, either. Even if you can't do anything to fix a problem, people feel better just having the opportunity to talk it out.
- Give employees time to talk. Leaders are often so worried about work not getting done that they discourage personal conversations among their staff. What they don't seem to understand is that these conversations help employees feel connected to each other.
- Host informal breakfasts or lunches. Your department needs to make informal connections occasionally.

#### Encourage Passion

*Choose a job you love, and you'll never have to work a day in your life. – Confucius*

Most leaders need a little help in building passionate teams. Here are a few passion igniters to consider.

- **Hire for Passion** – Find out if the candidate has a passion for making a difference. If you build a team of passionate people, they'll not only produce for you – they'll help retain each other.
- **Show Your Passion** – Share the passion you have for the work with your team. Your actions model what you expect from each other.
- **Share a Meaningful Mission** – Share the Banner mission with employees, then clearly link their work to the mission. Tell them how their work contributes to our mission. Tell them how critical they are to you, to the mission of the team, and to the overall organization.

#### Ask Questions That Demonstrate Commitment

Engagement implies commitment. Commitment can be reflected in the thoughtful questions you ask. Below are ten questions that will show, and generate, engagement.

- How can I help you right now?
- What else do you need from me for this project/situation?
- Who can I introduce you to in order to help make this happen?
- When can we get together to discuss our progress?
- What can we do to make this just a little bit better?
- How am I doing based on our agreement for this?
- Who else can we include?
- What other information can I provide?
- How can I best support the others in the group?
- What else would be helpful to discuss?

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#### Learn How Employees Want to Be Recognized

Rewards need to match your employees' needs and wants. Many leaders wrongly assume everyone likes or wants the same types of rewards and recognition. Instead of assuming, ask your employees how they would like to be recognized. Below is a sample form you can ask your employees to complete. You can also utilize the **Employee Recognition Preference Sheet**.

Check which forms of recognition, other than money, you might appreciate. Also note which ones might *not* matter to you using an "x" mark.

- |                                                                                    |                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> An award, preferably given in front of my peers           | <input type="checkbox"/> A chance to go to lunch with senior management                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A plaque to hang on my wall                               | <input type="checkbox"/> An opportunity to work with people from other parts of the company |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A thank you, in writing, from my boss                     | <input type="checkbox"/> A chance to be on one of the important steering committees         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Covered parking                                           | <input type="checkbox"/> A promotion                                                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food                                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> A change in my title                                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A note to my boss' boss about my excellent performance    | <input type="checkbox"/> A small memento or gift                                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent pats on the back                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Some flexibility in my schedule                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My boss actually implementing one of my ideas             | <input type="checkbox"/> More freedom or autonomy                                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A chance to be on a really exciting, cutting-edge project | <input type="checkbox"/> A seminar or training class                                        |
|                                                                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe):                                           |

#### Low to No Cost Recognition Ideas

- Hand write a thank you note
- Honor employee by having the entire team give a standing ovation at the start of the next staff meeting
- Highlight employee in a facility or department newsletter or on Yammer
- Recognize publically during a meeting
- Send a birthday card to home address
- Provide special/additional training
- Create special office high five
- Ask each employee to write something positive about the person on a piece of paper, and present to the person
- Create an employee of the month program or wall of fame
- Send a note home to spouse and/or family describing the employee's accomplishments and impact on the team, manager and Banner
- Send a special article that would be meaningful for that employee
- Celebrate hire date anniversaries
- Provide mentoring
- Perform a task that they normally do for a day or week
- Print certificates of achievement
- Create a brag board and use stickers
- Wash the employee's car in the parking lot during the lunch hour
- Make work fun (e.g. baby picture guessing game, song of the day, etc.)
- Create a scrapbook of accomplishments
- Offer a front (or great) parking spot
- Tell them thank you and be specific in your recognition (i.e. what they did, how it impacted the team, manager and/or organization)

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#### Be Meaningful When Praising Employees

Praise your employees in the following ways:

- **Spontaneously** – Catch people doing something right and thank them then and there.
- **Specifically** – Praise people for specific (rather than generic) accomplishments or efforts.
- **Purposefully** – Take an employee to lunch to show your appreciation of work well done.
- **Privately** – Go to your employee's work area to give a personal thank you and praise (*verbal* thank you's are critical).
- **Publicly** – Praise employees in the presence of others (unless this makes them uncomfortable). Add **Recognition/Appreciation** as a short agenda item in all staff meetings and huddles.
- **In Writing** – Send a letter or email. Possibly send a copy to team members or higher-level management. Don't forget...*written* thank you's are one of the most powerful ways to recognize employees, especially when sent to the employee's home.

#### Ten Sentence Openers That Will Help You Retain Your Best Employees

- ✓ You really made a difference by...
- ✓ I'm impressed with...
- ✓ You got my attention with...
- ✓ You're doing top quality work on...
- ✓ You're right on the mark with...
- ✓ One of the things I enjoy most about you is...
- ✓ You can be proud of yourself for...
- ✓ We couldn't have done it without your...
- ✓ What an effective way to...
- ✓ You've made my day because of...

#### Build Trust with Your Employees

As a leader, you are trusted only to the degree that people believe in your ability, consistency, integrity, and commitment to deliver. The good news is that you can earn trust over time, by building and maintaining eight key strengths:

- **Clarity** – *People trust the clear and mistrust or distrust the ambiguous.* Be clear about your mission, purpose, expectations, and daily activities. When a leader is clear about expectations, she will likely get what she wants.
- **Compassion** – *People put faith in those who care beyond themselves.* Think beyond yourself, and never underestimate the power of sincerely caring about another person.
- **Character** – *People notice those who do what is right ahead of what is easy.* Leaders who have built this pillar consistently do what needs to be done when it needs to be done, whether they feel like doing it or not.
- **Contribution** – *Few things build trust quicker than actual results.* At the end of the day, people need to see outcomes. You can have compassion and character, but without the results you promised, people won't trust you. Be a contributor who delivers real results.

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- **Competency** – *People have confidence in those who stay fresh, relevant, and capable.* The humble and teachable person keeps learning new ways of doing things and stays current on ideas and trends. There is always more to learn, so make a habit of reading, learning, and listening to fresh information.
- **Connection** – *People want to follow, buy from, and be around friends—and having friends is all about building connections.* Trust is all about relationships, and relationships are best built by establishing genuine connection. Ask questions, listen, and above all, show gratitude—it's the primary trait of truly talented connectors.
- **Commitment** – *People believe in those who stand through adversity.* People trusted General Patton, Martin Luther King, Jr., Mohandas Gandhi, and George Washington because they saw commitment and sacrifice for a greater good.
- **Consistency** – *In every area of life, it's the little things—done consistently—that make the big difference.* The little things done consistently make for a higher level of trust and better results. The great leaders consistently do the small but most important things first. They make that call and write that thank you note. Do the little things, consistently.