

## About the Author



Brad Federman is the president of Performancepoint, LLC, a client-driven management consulting firm specializing in Employee Engagement. Having spent over 20 years focusing on the human impact in organizations, Federman has become a recognized leader in the corporate world and the performance improvement industry. He has traveled the globe consulting in North America, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East working with organizations of various industries and types. Federman has spoken at international conferences such as the American Society for Training and Development, and has been quoted in publications such as Fortune Small Business, HR Magazine and the Los Angeles Times.

Get more information about the author and his works at <http://www.engagemntleader.com/>.

# Employee Engagement

A Roadmap for Creating Profits, Optimizing Performance and Increasing Loyalty



**Author: Brad Federman**  
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## ■ The Big Idea

Each employee within an organization puts forth discretionary effort; they come to work with a choice of how much effort they are willing to give their company. An engaged employee is a person who is fully involved in, and enthusiastic about, his or her work. These employees care about the future of the organization and feel a strong emotional bond to the business.

How can an organization create an environment that truly engages its employees in order for the company to flourish?

Employee Engagement outlines a comprehensive framework, language, and process that genuinely helps CEOs, business executives, and managers connect their overall “Business” Strategy with the human resource, OD, and performance improvement professionals who are responsible for developing the organization’s “People” strategy.

Written by Brad Federman – a leading expert in the field of performance improvement – this research-based book clearly shows how top-level executives and HR professionals can work together to enhance employee performance and ultimately help their organization reach its goals.

## Why You Need This Book

This important book offers step-by-step guidance for putting in place an effective Employee Engagement program that will create a workplace with more committed employees, a more meaningful environment, build stronger relationships with employees, and ultimately outperform the competition.

## THE CASE FOR EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Even when we hire great employees, the complexities that come with managing today's diverse workforce can create difficult retention challenges. In the board room, executives talk about the new generation lacking in work ethic and the desire of some employees to move up in the organization without paying their dues.

To compensate, companies spend a great deal of money looking into the implications of generational differences in their organizations, sometimes forgetting that, while these generalizations can be productively made across larger populations, they cause problems when applied on an individual level.

We must remember that each employee is an individual, and these individuals do not necessarily conform to generalizations.

On the other side, employees are tired of being taken for granted. They do not feel respected and included. Many employees want more transparency and question senior leadership's choices. Young, old, male, female; it does not really matter, everyone wants to feel more connected. But we have grown to lack trust in our organizations.

We have either been laid off ourselves or know someone who has or we have been asked to be a good corporate citizen, only to watch as some of our fellow citizens are mistreated.

For many organizations that has meant lower profits, lower revenue, reduced stock price and higher turnover. It is time to reclaim your competitive advantage with a real strategy that works.

## ENGAGEMENT DRIVERS

So what should be a part of any organizational assessment? What is important to the success of an entity? After reviewing numerous studies and doing some of our own research, we have come up with the following systems, processes, and factors that serve as drivers of employee engagement.

### ***Culture***

Culture is derived from the Latin word colere, which means to cultivate. In our work organizations, we cultivate certain types of behavior patterns or shared norms.

### ***Success Indicators***

Every organization should have a clear way to measure success that translates to all its key stakeholders, and especially to its employees. Metrics are a toll for measuring success.

### ***Priority Setting***

Goal setting is a natural part of every operation. Some organizations do it well, and others struggle. How engaged your people are depends greatly on how priority setting works in your organization.

### ***Communication***

Communication systems are an integral part of a daily operation. Organizations have formal and informal communication systems and structures.

### ***Innovation***

Innovation is often viewed from the lens of “invent.” We should embrace innovation as a way of working in which every day each of us are advancing, progressing, and building upon our past successes.

### ***Talent Acquisition***

We live and die each day based on how we work with our clients and what we deliver to them. In the end, our products and services are created and delivered by our associates – our talent.

### ***Talent Enhancement***

Growing our people and increasing organization knowledge are vital ingredients to staying competitive. We can work very hard learning a job for five years and become obsolete, or we can work very hard at growing our skill sets and we can be more valuable.

### ***Incentives and Acknowledgement***

Countless times, we have seen compensation structures that incent the wrong behavior, or at least a different behavior than intended. Acknowledgement is different from recognition. It is, in its purest sense, more authentic.

### ***Customer-Centered***

Businesses start out by focusing on a customer need and providing some value along the way. The customer interface should always be sacred and driven by the customers’ preferences and buying cycles.

### ***Global to Local Lenses***

Each of these business structures/systems can be viewed from a number of lenses. Employees connect to broad ideas and to people.

## THANKS FOR THE GIFT

Take time to reflect on what was shared, including possible solutions. This conversation should be focused on acknowledging where the employees are, but most importantly, where they want to be and how to get there. Above all else, thank them. Thank them for their candor, honesty and the strength to help the team and organization move forward.

### *Tips to Remember Regarding Feedback*

- Once you ask for feedback, employees expect positive change.
- Ignoring feedback will decrease the engagement of your employees.
- Neither accept feedback completely nor denounce it completely; find the balance.
- If you want a change, you must believe in it.
- Perception is reality. Others will see the organization differently than we do.
- To change the view of our employees, we must first make changes in our organization and in ourselves.
- To truly accept the feedback, you must analyze the data. Think, think, think!
- Watch yourself. We tend to focus on the negative.
- Leverage your organization's strengths. They can be most helpful.
- If you look hard enough, you will usually find themes or patterns in the feedback.
- Recent events can color the data, such as a layoff, stock price fluctuations, or a merger.
- Involve others. Share with others. Get help from others. It helps create success.

## HOW MUCH CAN YOU BENCH?

The Leadership Readiness Matrix looks at two axes – trust and impact. These two axes have a direct correlation to self-interest and fear. The more self-interested you are, the less trust you will have in your relationships. The more you let fear influence your decisions and actions, the less impact you will have.

Your ability to develop trusted relationships with impact will land you in one of four categories.

### **Confidant**

A Confidant is a person who can be trusted with information, but will not challenge another's thinking. This person is like a vault. You can tell them anything or vent to this person. But he or she will not necessarily help you achieve more or succeed. They provide half of the equation when it comes to leadership.

### **Pretender**

Pretenders act as if they are ready to lead. They are often not self-aware or concerned with their own deficiencies. People at this point in their development look at events and analyze them based on how they are impacted. Not only are such people self-interested, but they also focus on minimizing risk.

### **Guru**

Gurus are experts. These are smart people who know their stuff. We need these people for advice, solutions, innovative ideas, and their basic technical expertise. However, we will probably get a second opinion. We know that a guru sometimes has agendas, distractions, and an ego. Their advice can be colored at times, and they do not always make us smarter. Sometimes they just want us to accept their perspectives.

### **Engager**

An engager is ready to lead. This is an individual who is able to temper his or her self-interest. Engagers are curious about others and their needs. Engagers do not worry about how decisions will impact them. They focus on growing other people and helping others succeed. Engagers are motivated by creating opportunities for colleagues and work in an open manner. They are more than willing to challenge us, but in a professional way.

## EYE OF THE CUSTOMER

There are three core ways that an organization can ensure that they are customer-centric and support their employees' ability to focus on customers:

### **Sales**

The way we treat potential customers before they do business with us and the way we treat customers and potential customers during the buying process. Is the sales process about them or about us?

### **Service**

The way we take care of our customers on a day-to-day basis. Is it rote service or are we curious about them? How well do we know our customers?

### **Consistent Culture**

How consistently does the culture behave when it comes to customers? Is the treatment different between service and sales? What about research and development or product fulfillment? How about in a distributed work environment?

## FOUR LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

### **Level 1: Employee Engagement Is Ignored**

Many organizations do not pay attention to employee engagement. These organizations simply ignore it altogether. In fact, only 27 percent of organizations have a formal engagement process and 19 percent do not have it on radar at all. This is of course an easier road to travel in some ways. Organizations that do not focus on engagement have less to measure, less to think about, less to change, and set little to no expectations with their associates.

### **Level 2: Employee Engagement Is An Event**

The second level is viewing engagement as an event. Typically, this is triggered by a change in the organization such as a new president or a request by someone in the organization, or because an organization has come out of difficult times and wants to do a survey because it seems safer now to make the effort. The trouble with this approach is that it typically lacks a champion and a reason to keep going. Because the original exertion was situational, the future of the event will most likely diminish.

### Level 3: Employee Engagement Is A Process

The third level of organizational engagement is treating engagement as a process. This seems realistic and proper at first glance, and it represents a significant improvement over the first two levels. Organizations that treat engagement as a process typically see engagement as a “people” effort, and the champion of the effort is human resources or a subset thereof.

### Level 4: Employee Engagement Is A Strategy

The fourth level is engagement as a part of an organization’s strategy. This assumes that either the organization has indirectly or directly made the connection between and the success measures for the organization. When an organization sees engagement as central to its success, the entire process is treated extremely differently.

## A NEW DEFINITION OF ENGAGEMENT

Three central aspects of high employee engagement levels are:

**Clearer Connections:** Individuals fortify commitment based on increasing the number and strength of the connections or mutually beneficial bonds with their work and environment.

**Improved Trust:** Employees are able to be more present and focus on the needs of others, causing them to build high-trust relationships with internal and external customers.

**Increased Resourcefulness:** Employees are able to see opportunities, as opposed to just managing risks, causing them to drive themselves and the business forward as they feel a sense of ownership.

When we try to live up to a workplace that allows this definition to come to life, there really is not much we can’t accomplish. Our people will be passionate and successful as will our business.

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