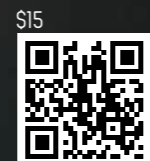


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JON SHANAHAN,  
PRESIDENT & CEO



## CXO INSIGHTS

# EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IS A MOVING TARGET

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### New Game, New Rules

There is a funny cartoon with a picture of a suggestion box that says “this is where the good ideas come to rest in peace!” It reminded me 25 years ago I was a new HR Manager bolting a box to the wall under the direction of the CEO. Overtime the suggestions became more irreverent and less than professional about what management should be doing. Ten years later I was administering an attitude and culture survey under the edict of a new CEO. I recall a couple leaders departing after those results were published! Fast forward to today. Should I administer a pulse survey on a mobile device for immediate feedback? Do I really need to know the minute-by-minute mood of my employees?

What I do know is that employee engagement is more than a box, a survey or a pulse. It is a moving target that needs to be monitored and cultivated. Here are my top 5 suggestions to keep yourself from becoming the next funny cartoon:

### One Size Does Not Fit All

From Baby Boomers to Gen Z, building meaningful engagement will vary from employee to employee. Think in terms of human beings rather than human capital when it comes to employee engagement. What creates loyalty and trust are individualized, not generalized. We have different needs more than ever with all the different generations in the workforce.

One on one communication is the new rule especially in larger organizations where the connectors between individual contributions and impact to the organization are often blurry.

### Make it Actionable

In the day of Amazon and Yelp reviews, everyone is focused on the customer experience. Are you? Your employees are the face of your business brand. Dedicate focus, energy, and resources on the employee experience because the customer

experience is the direct result of the employee experience. Employee engagement programs impact your bottom line and must be a line item in your budget.

Here are some 2017 statistics on employee engagement/retention and related costs

- 51 percent of the U.S. workforce is not engaged (Gallup)
- Disengaged employees cost organizations between \$450 and \$550 billion annually (The Engagement Institute)
- It can cost 33percent of an employee's salary to replace him/her (HR Dive)
- 75 percent of the causes of employee turnover are preventable (HR Dive)

power of a good story in connecting people to the work or constant heart-felt recognition.

### Think out of the Box

Employees recognize feel-good initiatives from a mile away. Be original, relevant and follow through. There is only one you and you know your employees and your business. Be confident in your own good ideas.

One employee relayed a simple yet remarkably impactful engagement program, “I was involved in an “idea hackathon” – employees grouped themselves in small teams and spent a day solving a real problem the company was facing. Each team presented a 2-minute pitch of their

be difficult to sustain. One thing for certain, when organizations have it employees can feel it. Departments in the same organization may have different levels of engagement. There is a balance of what you need today and what your future looks like.

### Specific Do's for the CIO

There is big business behind the science of a highly engaged workforce. As they say, the more things change the more they stay the same. One thing that is changing in today's global economy is the work. As we transition from the industrial economy to the knowledge economy we need highly energized and creative employees to solve the problems of the future.



**USE REAL-TIME  
DATA FOR SELF-  
CORRECTING  
TOWARD THE LONG-  
RANGE THINKING**



### You Are Not Too Small to Worry

Small business owners have to step up and fully understand how to engage employees. How will you compete with the talent pipelines created by those companies that make the “best workplace” list, have cool workspaces and awesome technology? Instead of getting caught up in the “can't do” find the “can do” in connecting with employees. Don't underestimate the

idea. It was a huge hit as everyone worked together in a fun way and ended up solving a real problem. Our efforts made a real impact!”

### Real-time vs. long-range thinking

Use real-time data for self-correcting toward the long-range thinking. Engagement will not be solved with a one-shot program. You should expect it to ebb and flow. Sometimes it may

Whether you adopt one of the new technologies or find an old-school way to take the pulse with frequent check-ins and conversations, the most important thing to remember is that real-time engagement matters and you can't fine-tune what you don't measure. Measure frequently but remember measuring isn't improving - make insights, tell employees what you are going to do and most of all, take action! **CA**

