

# Employee Engagement White Paper

An abstract graphic design featuring flowing, wavy lines in shades of green and grey. The lines sweep across the page from the bottom left towards the top right. In the lower right corner, there is a pattern of light grey dots arranged in a grid-like fashion, partially obscured by the wavy lines.

Moving Past the Corporate Catch Phrase - Delivering On -Target Results

### **UNIQUE FACTORS**

Establishing and strengthening emotional bonds between the organization and employees is not a new concept by any means. It goes without saying, today's marketplace is extremely competitive. Strategic advantages that set one organization apart from another are hard to come by. However, one unique factor every organization possesses is its employees with their unique backgrounds and personal experiences. Whether or not an organization embraces this strength is a separate issue altogether. Employees can be a company's greatest asset. It has been proven time and time again that investing in the recruiting, development and retention of these assets provides exponential returns.

### **EVERYONE PARTICIPATES: FROM THE GROUND UP**

It is important to note that employees alone do not drive engagement. The entire organization, its managers and its employees comprise the level of engagement. For engagement to truly "work" employees must both feel satisfied and produce quality work. In other words, employees need to be happy and productive. Managers must communicate and lead their employees toward the goals of the organization. Surveys have shown that managers do not feel communication is a job responsibility, but this is not the case. Organizations and leaders must set forth clear visions and goals. They need to encourage the spread of this vision throughout the company.

“The sum is greater than  
the sum of its parts.”  
- Aristotle

### **ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH OR CORPORATE BUZZ WORD**

“To capture the hearts of our employees, it is essential that we tell them what we stand for and where we are going,” according to Jim Harris in his book *Getting Employees to Fall in Love With Your Company*.

Perhaps the companies of old were on to something; long live the life long employee. Employee engagement is not a new buzz word or an old adage that is being revisited. Simply stated it is an approach to business and employees that is producing exceptional results.

Simply having a mission statement or employee program does not constitute change. Mentalities and attitudes must be altered for the better in order for this belief of employee engagement to take hold and thrive within an organization. Proper training, marketing and support are mandatory for engagement to thrive in any corporate culture.

TRADITIONAL MANAGEMENT	EMPOWERING LEADERSHIP
<b>From: Directing and Doing</b> 1. Solving it; “answer man” 2. Doing it yourself; “If you want something done right...” 3. Over-directing and micro-managing 4. Arbitrarily mandating goals 5. Experting it: “You can’t do it without me” 6. Being the quality judge and jury 7. Playing the “God” role 8. Protecting turf 9. Over-dependence on detailed policies	<b>To: Developing and Leading</b> 1. Facilitating problem solving 2. Effective delegation 3. Helping others learn from mistakes 4. Providing leadership for goal setting 5. Developing technical confidence capability: “You can do it” 6. Being a quality coach 7. Supporting as a helpful resource 8. Linking team to broader organization systems; bridging barriers 9. Being tough and clear about a few key directions and principles

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT**

Go beyond catchy slogans and shallow efforts to keep employees on-target. True employee engagement not only requires, but demands a comprehensive, strategic approach that creates positive, lasting results when implemented effectively. Employee engagement encourages productive and dedicated team members with vested interest in the company, managers motivated by positive results and a bottom line that benefits from increased employee retention and efficient operations. Simply stated, employee engagement is vital to building and maintaining a successful organization.

## **BREAKING DOWN THE LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT**

According to the Gallup Organization, employees fall into one of three levels of engagement:

**Actively Disengaged-** employees who are fundamentally disconnected from their job. Disengaged employees are not only unproductive, but their attitudes and perceptions spread through the company, resulting in poor performance, lowered job satisfaction and decreased productivity from others.

**Not Engaged Employees** - employees who simply come to work for a paycheck and complete their perceived job or function for the company. Day in and day out, these employees are not cheerleaders for the company or its objectives; however, they are not obstacles either. In some instances, these employees are referred to as the “blind followers” or “sheep”. Who will they follow?

**Actively Engaged** - employees who stand out among the others. Actively engaged employees are strongly aligned with the organization’s objectives and goals and care about the company’s success. They are always looking for ways to improve the company, as well as themselves.

## THE 6 ELEMENTS OF EMPOWERMENT

Employee Engagement is a pressing topic present in every industry. Engaged employees have a direct correlation with an organization's bottom line. Employee engagement is responsible for improved financial results, increased customer satisfaction rates, higher productivity, and better employee retention rates. Companies can no longer choose whether or not to engage employees; it is simply a vital element for survival.

# ELEMENTS OF EMPOWERMENT

**1. Role description:** The first thing that people need is a definition of the responsibilities they will assume.

**2. Boundary conditions:** What should be the parameters within which people fulfill their responsibilities? These include:

- **Expectations/results** can be qualitative or quantitative.
- **Non-negotiables** define givens or limits that cannot be crossed in fulfilling a responsibility.
- **Authority** is the level of autonomy that one has in carrying out a task. There are five levels of authority, and how much authority one has depends upon their experience and capability.
  - Level 1: Act when directed
  - Level 2: Act after approval
  - Level 3: Act after consultation
  - Level 4: Act and report
  - Level 5: Act autonomously
- **Time guidelines** are any and all time constraints that guide the task (milestone events, project completion, length of time a person assumes a role, etc.).

**3. Knowledge and information:** People must have knowledge and access to information if they are to take on additional responsibilities.

**4. Skills:** People also need additional training and skills to be successful with new responsibilities. For example, they may need to learn how to read a budget or enter data into a computer.

**5. Resources:** These can include tools and equipment as well as reports, technical experts, etc.

**6. Support:** Support is emotional and psychological. It is letting people know that you trust their ability to handle a task. It is okay for them to make mistakes; and you will be available to talk with them as necessary.



## **ENGAGEMENT IN ACTION**

To address the many needs of employee engagement, 360Solutions has developed a hands-on approach to addressing each of the involved aspects.

The first step is gaining an understanding of the current level of employee engagement. This is attained through employee feedback. This can be done formally or informally; however, we suggest a more accurate approach through a well-structured employee engagement survey, focus groups and employee assessment instruments. The results of employee assessments help identify specific problem areas, allows us to tailor your employee engagement program to the unique needs of your organization.

Program buy-in needs to occur at the senior level first. This is achieved and delivered through a half or full day interactive briefing with executive management to outline the program purpose, the key elements of employee engagement and success factors, and to build a support structure to ensure successful program results.

The core of the employee engagement program is facilitated in group sessions, with your managers, through a two to three day professional development training series. Participants engage in an interactive learning environment to help them develop the skills and give them the tools needed to foster the development of more highly engaged employees.

Employees also play a key role in the program – they learn, through a one to two day seminar, about the value of personal responsibility and accountability, and how their contributions impact engagement, others' performances, and the organization's success. Company leaders are responsible to their employees for employee engagement. However, each employee is ultimately responsible for his or her own engagement.

