

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: SATISFACTION IS NOT ENOUGH

Have you been trying to keep your employees happy, in an attempt to keep them engaged? Equally as important, do you suspect unsatisfied employees aren't engaged? Think again...

Engagement can create satisfaction, but satisfaction doesn't guarantee engagement. In other words, you can have a completely happy & satisfied employee who is NOT engaged.

Why is that?

- Satisfaction measures an employee's happiness with *the current job and conditions*; Engagement measures an employee's emotional commitment to *the organization*, including how much effort an employee is willing to put into the work. It's the difference between "what's in it for me?" and "what can I do to help?"
- Engagement creates an emotional investment, and making a difference in things you care about creates personal satisfaction.
- Receiving fair compensation for work is expected, so while it satisfies employees' basic needs, it produces little emotional investment. Even compensation increases or bonuses are often seen as deserved, and produce little investment on the part of the employee.
- Likewise, an employee can be satisfied that the compensation received is commensurate with the workload, but it's not until the work becomes meaningful that an employee will be engaged.

Think of it this way, *energy in and energy out*. Employee Satisfaction initiatives are the organization's efforts to have the employee feel satisfied, or the energy invested by the employer. Employee Engagement is the employee's efforts to contribute above and beyond what is required, or energy received by the employee.

Measuring both Employee Satisfaction and Employee Engagement can be useful benchmarks for your organization; however, if you have to choose one or the other, measure Employee Engagement. It is far more likely that an engaged employee is happy, than it is that a happy employee is engaged.

And if you're wondering whether engagement really matters, consider this: organizational-motivation [researchers found](#) that [more motivated employees produced more satisfied customers](#).



Here are a few other research findings about engagement:

- Help employees do the work they want to do: pay increases are nice, but removing the obstacles to an employee completing a pet project is far more valuable compensation.
- Engaged doesn't mean happy: your most engaged employees might irritate you a bit by pushing for wild ideas or getting frustrated when favorite projects are put on hold. They may never seem satisfied – because they're not. You want these people and their distaste for the status quo to permeate your whole organization!
- Personalize your [engagement strategies](#): Importing programs that worked elsewhere doesn't guarantee they'll work for you. And what will work are projects localized to your environment.
- Tell it like it is: avoiding discussion or hiding information breeds distrust and lowers engagement. Trusting them to be adults when you communicate bad news can engender greater engagement when done the right way.
- Ask for feedback – only if you actually want it. Leaving decision making in the hands of those affected by the decision increases engagement. But if you don't act quickly on feedback, it can have the opposite effect.
- Focus on development: change only happens if leaders are actively engaged in self-growth and effective communication. Employees increase engagement, as well, when they're offered ways to improve themselves.
- [Accountability](#): Report to your employees what you're doing to address their work needs. This will make them more accountable for the work they're doing for you. And rather than dictate orders, be open to learning from your employees. Listen to them and be sure to let them know you hear what they're saying. This increases their investment in the work.
- Describe the road ahead: Explain long-term planning and the vision for the future. Even if things are bleak now, express hope. Helping employees feel prepared for what's to come increases determination and motivation, while reducing knee-jerk decisions that can cripple an organization.

Would you like a partner who can support your Employee Engagement initiatives? That's what we love to do! Call us at 512-989-2230 for a [Discovery Session](#) today.

About Alicia Marie

Alicia Marie, Founder and Managing Director of [People Biz, Inc.](#), has become a national leader in the field of leadership development. She founded People Biz, Inc. in 2000 with the intention of providing total personal and professional development solutions for individuals, teams and organizations. She specializes in creating customized programs based on desired outcomes that include learning vehicles such as training, professional coaching and consulting.

People Biz, Inc. is a [leadership development](#) organization that focuses on transformational leadership initiatives for individuals, teams and organizations. Their award winning leadership program "[Leading Change](#)" uses the fundamental principles of Transformational Leadership to not just talk about leadership, but to develop powerful leaders.

