

## **Employee Engagement – It’s Not Rocket Science**

**Information Managers Webinar – January 30, 2014**

**With Jean Eaton (Information Managers) and**

**Paula J. MacLean (Silver Creek Press)**

**Here are a few key points for participants to take away from today’s webinar interview with human resources consultant and author Paula J. MacLean.**

- ☑ Employee satisfaction is a passive state (like after you’ve had a great meal). Employee engagement is an active state. Engaged employees are happy (satisfied) but they are also involved, care about quality service and practices and want both the organization and themselves be seeking out improvements.
- ☑ It costs 1 to 1.5 times a person’s annual salary to attract, screen, interview, reference check, hire, orient, train and support a new employee. Add to this the cost of lost productivity, overload on other employees after someone resigns, decreased service quality, miscommunication and decreased client/patient satisfaction.
- ☑ Turnover is REALLY expensive in both monetary and human terms. An estimated 70% of all turnover is avoidable. Meaning, people make a choice to leave and if things were different (inside the organization) SOME of these folks would likely stay.
- ☑ Research has also shown that disengaged (or unhappy, dissatisfied) people who remain on the job can have contagious attitudes that negatively affect other employees, impact on patients/clients satisfaction and decrease overall quality of service.
- ☑ On the flipside, engaged employees are more likely to stay with your organization for the long term, providing quality service and make great members of the team!
- ☑ Employee engagement is not only about recognizing employee contributions or rewarding people with “stuff” (although it can include both these things). Engagement is the RESULT or OUTCOME of a set of management practices. Engagement is essentially the result of a bunch of good stuff done by managers who are intent on creating a climate that supports engagement.
- ☑ Engagement need not be expensive either. You may want to spend a bit of money on rewards and recognition of employees. This can be simple things like thank-you cards, small gifts or gift cards, food treats (lunch ordered in, a box of yummy donuts) to recognize a job well done or extra effort. These things are nice and are usually appreciated
- ☑ Research shows that what employees need and want most are (in approximate order of importance):
  - Fair compensation in relation to the expectations, duties and stress of the job.
  - Workloads that are manageable.
  - Genuine and sincere positive feedback from management (clinic manager, physicians, immediate supervisors) for work that is well done, extra effort during peak periods, good ideas, solving problems, providing quality service to clients/patients.
  - Rules or policies that are reasonable, necessary and not excessive or that present major barriers to effectively or efficiently doing their jobs.
  - Open communication, timely sharing of needed information, involvement in solving problems, sharing ideas for improvements and on decisions that affect them.
  - Help with new or difficult tasks (training, coaching, on-the-job support).

- Constructive (helpful) and direct (in-person, face-to-face) feedback when they make a mistake or when work quality needs to be improved.
- Company sponsored (paid) professional development and learning opportunities.
- ☑ The 7 Strategies that will get you started on the road to employee engagement:
  1. Survey current employee engagement and do this every year or two. Make the survey anonymous and confidential. If you are not sure how to do this, send me a note at [service@silvercreekpress.ca](mailto:service@silvercreekpress.ca) and I can give you a few tips. If you have a large clinic or organization, contracting out your survey can be much more cost-effective than doing it yourself. This also helps with employee concerns about confidentiality and anonymity.
  2. Review the results of your survey and decide what your priorities are for making improvements over the next year or so. What problems do employees have concerns about? What can you do to make improvements in how things are functioning? Does training, feedback, or communication need to improve? What are the priorities among these things?
  3. Increase the amount of sincere, spontaneous, positive feedback provided by those in leadership roles to employees. Make it a habit. Kind words are NEVER thrown away.
  4. Look carefully at communication and how information flows. Is the right information getting to the right people, at the right times, and in the right ways?
  5. Deal with problems and barriers to engagement. Identify them, fix them and evaluate the end results. Unsolved problems and road blocks can undo all the good and positive things you've done to improve engagement.
  6. Train anyone who supervises others (including physicians) in the art and science of giving constructive critical feedback to employees who are underperforming, have "bad or negative" attitudes or who don't have the skill to do their job properly.
  7. Engage people in conversations about how to make improvements. Share the responsibility for solving problems broadly and deeply inside the organization. When possible and appropriate, extend these conversations to employees and clients or patients. Two heads are better than one, and 10 heads can create some darn brilliant ideas on how to make improvements!
- ☑ Get started today by:
  - Doing some more reading and learning about engagement.
  - Order the free 40 page ebook (Taming Turnover) from Silver Creek Press. Send a note to Paula directly at [service@silvercreekpress.ca](mailto:service@silvercreekpress.ca).
  - Sign-up for the regular newsletter from Silver Creek Press at [www.silvercreekpress.ca/newsletter](http://www.silvercreekpress.ca/newsletter). The current edition deals with employee engagement.
- ☑ Remember, creating engagement will be a multi-year journey. It is rewarding and not rocket science and does not require deep pockets. It just requires a bit of thinking and planning and some creativity plus a commitment to do things better and differently!