

Melcrum's Employee Engagement Newsletter

A free monthly e-newsletter for internal communicators

By Chris Gay



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Six critical success factors for engagement

Leaders are ultimately accountable for engaging employees. HR and communication can facilitate the process and provide support, but the successful engagement of employees depends on leaders clearly understanding their role and being active participants in the process.

Our research shows that there are six critical success factors for leaders to successfully engage employees.

The first three components involve the content of the leader's communication:

1. **Articulate a clear vision and business strategy.** Employees need to clearly understand *where* an organization is headed and see clear evidence that the leaders of the organization are clearly aligned around that direction.
2. **Provide focus.** Each employee in an organization should know the three to four things that are most critical to the organization's success, and these should be consistent over at least a year.
3. **Create a line of sight.** Ensure that each employee understands how his or her role fits into the business strategy and what he or she can do to most effectively contribute to the organization's success. Storytelling is a key component of this work.

The next three components involve skill sets for leaders:

1. **Listen.** Leaders should spend approximately 60% of their time listening and 40% of their time talking when you combine their formal and informal communication with employees.
2. **Recognize.** Leaders need to continually recognize those people who are exhibiting behaviors and attitudes that they want to reinforce. This recognition can be as simple as "thank you".
3. **Walk the talk.** It's not enough to say the right things. Leaders need to keep close track of the commitments they make and the messages they send and ensure that their actions are in alignment. What they do must match what they say.

Organizations where leaders focus on these six things will see higher levels of employee engagement.

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