

Employee Engagement 2.0: How to Motivate Your Team for High-Performance Kevin Kruse

SYNOPSIS

Kevin Kruse, author of *Employee Engagement 2.0*, describes it as a “real-world guide for busy managers.” The book lives up to this claim, eschewing academic theory and complicated frameworks to offer simple, practical techniques for engaging teams. Written in plain language (with a dose of humor), the book is a quick read and can be easily understood, regardless of the reader’s level of familiarity with employee engagement concepts.

Kruse defines engagement as “the emotional commitment an employee has to the organization and its goals.” After sketching out the benefits of engagement and emphasizing the manager’s role, the book offers a “secret recipe” for making people feel engaged. (This formula is also described, albeit more abstractly, in *We*, a book that Kruse co-authored with Rudy Carson.) The recipe’s four ingredients are Communication, Growth, Recognition and Trust.

The remainder of *Employee Engagement 2.0* instructs managers on how to activate the above four drivers within their teams. The book even offers an eight-week, step-by-step implementation plan, which breaks down as follows:

- **Day 1:** Read the book and commit to giving it a try
- **Week 1:** **Build a team survey to measure engagement, based on a “quick and dirty”** questionnaire provided in the book
- **Week 2:** Conduct the survey (or alternatively, do “stay interviews” with team members based on the provided questionnaire)
- **Week 3:** Analyze the survey results and assess the team’s engagement based on benchmarks provided in the book
- **Week 4:** Communicate the survey results and facilitate dialogue
- **Week 5:** Establish a rhythm of communication, including annual, quarterly, weekly and daily routines, based on tips provided
- **Week 6:** Hold one-on-one career meetings to understand team members’ growth goals and develop plans for action
- **Week 7:** Begin to develop recognition habits that can be practiced daily and sustained over time
- **Week 8:** Begin to strengthen trust and confidence by clarifying goals and communicating them in open and memorable ways

Some solutions in *Employee Engagement 2.0* border on “cookie cutter,” and parts of the suggested implementation timeline may be too aggressive for some busy managers. However, the book effectively demystifies engagement and provides tips and tools that can be easily adopted. Kevin Kruse attributes his own company’s Best Place to Work award to the practices outlined in the book. Perhaps other organizations can apply them to achieve similar results.

Review by Keith Cucuzza, Bridge Consulting

SAMPLE LEARNINGS

Employee Engagement 2.0 describes communication as the backbone for all other engagement efforts. The book offers a variety of ideas for managers to improve their day-to-day communication, which include:

- **Practice active listening** and then paraphrase the other person to make sure you got it right
- **Use a variety of communication tactics**, both to accommodate team members’ communication preferences and to get your message noticed
- **Specify “what” not “how”** by clearly stating your goals, but letting your direct reports figure out how to accomplish them.
- **Call people out in meetings**, asking not just for general input, but calling on individuals for ideas
- **Host “lunch and learns”** to promote knowledge sharing among your team members and with others departments
- **Use a suggestion box** if you have a large team, review the input regularly, take action on employees’ ideas, and communicate openly about the process
- **Use “parallel thinking” in meetings**, inviting everyone to come up with risks, benefits and key steps to implement a project, creating a sense of shared accountability