

## On Fire at Work

Eric Chester

### SYNOPSIS

“What’s new in employee engagement?” is a question many organizations are asking these days. In this book, Eric Chester provides seven pillars that organizations can use to build more than an engaged workforce, but rather a workforce that is *on fire*! When employees are *on fire*, their energy level increases, sparking similar increases in productivity, motivation, creativity and performance.

While this book is a little older than those we normally review, the ideas presented are right in line with much of the research we see and the questions we hear from organizations today.

Chester reflects on the unmistakable link between employee experience and customer experience. Every organization has a culture and while leaders may not be able to define it, customers always can, based on their experiences.

Extraordinary employees want to work in an organization that fosters an impactful work culture, and customers want to experience extraordinary service from loyal and committed employees. When this cycle is completed, everyone wins!

Chester proposes that if employees were asked to make a list of the things they expect from their organization to truly motivate them, the list would likely include the following:

- **Compensation** – money, perks, benefits and work/life balance (This need is a basic satisfier, and once it is met, it will no longer motivate.)
- **Alignment** – meaningful work at a company with values that mirror their own
- **Atmosphere** – a workplace that provides a safe, upbeat, enjoyable experience
- **Growth** – opportunities to learn new skills and advance in their careers
- **Acknowledgement** – feeling appreciated, rewarded and sometimes even celebrated
- **Autonomy** – encouragement to think and act independently and make decisions
- **Communication** – being informed about relevant company issues and knowing the company is actively listening to their ideas and wants honest feedback

Chester also notes that organization has needs, too. They want to hire and retain employees who have a positive attitude, are reliable and professional, show initiative and respect, have high integrity and exhibit gratitude. These traits are most often found in employees who are part of a culture that is *on fire*. The company invests in the employees’ market value and employees in return go all in and invest in the company’s success and everyone wins!

Review by Chris Gay, Bridge Consulting

### Communication on Fire

Lack of effective communication can be a culture killer. No matter what the situation, employees feel a stronger connection to their leaders and their company when they believe they are kept accurately informed and continually updated on developments.

The following are Chester’s tips for communicating to create an *on fire* culture:

- Communicate early and often
- Identify the reasons why your company does or does not generally share information
- Ask yourself what would happen if you were more transparent
- Talk with employees about what’s trickling down to the front lines and really listen to what they say
- Be sure your door is truly open when you implement an open-door policy
- Consider stand-up meetings for quick, timely communication
- Determine proactively what information should and should not be shared and then ask why
- Keep content flowing to feed the information loop or employees will fill it for you
- Recognize that employee satisfaction is clearly linked to transparency—it’s proven
- Create a culture of “Intrapreneurialism” to spur innovative thinking, passion and growth