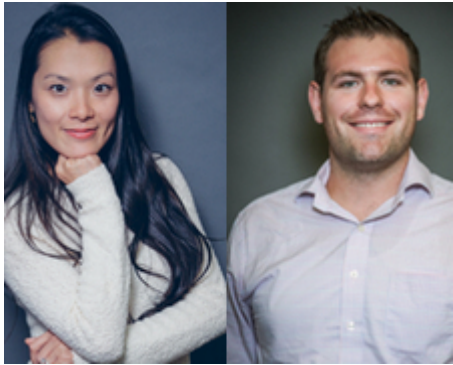


Employee Engagement is Important, But How Do You Get the C-Suite Engaged?



By Moon Kim and Ryan Walker, [M Booth](#)

The benefits of an engaged workforce as well as the economic cost of disengaged employees are widely understood by CEOs and company leaders. And yet, [two-thirds of U.S. employees](#) are not engaged or are actively disengaged.

Disengagement is both costly and has negative impacts on a company's overall performance. In fact, the estimated cost of disengaged employees in the U.S. is between \$450 billion to \$550 billion annually. But more importantly, disengaged employees are far less likely to advocate for their companies, take risks at work, and optimize their productivity. Simply put, these are the employees who lack passion, energy and diligence. To make matters worse, your customers can notice the difference.

Despite these significant implications, poor [employee engagement](#) remains an issue for companies of all shapes and sizes. In our experience, highlighting the engagement problem with senior leadership is often not enough because the connection between investment and result isn't crystal clear.

Getting senior leaders on board and actively participating requires boiling down the most important aspects that will

move the needle on employee engagement, and creating turnkey ways to involve them in the execution.

We've summarized the following guiding framework that will help communications leaders secure the necessary support and participation from the corner office:

1. *Share more transparently.* A leading driver of employee engagement is hands down transparency with senior leadership. Employees generally crave more – not less – communications from the C-suite. So pitch your CEO to either pen a monthly/bimonthly employee letter or host a quarterly lunch session to share with employees what is on his/her mind.
1. *Listen more openly.* A strong feedback outlet is another key ingredient of an effective employee engagement program. Without one, employees turn to gossiping or airing their issues on social media and Glassdoor. So consider having your CEO hold informal meetings with employees on a regular basis to solicit their ideas and rotate who is invited.

If your organization is divided by floors, encourage leaders to regularly walk a different floor and informally chat with employees to learn what they are working on. If your organization is dispersed geographically, consider polling employees on various topics and matters.

When leadership shows an interest in receiving feedback from employees, employees will feel heard and in turn develop a more positive view of the organization.

1. *Celebrate more regularly.* Recognition from supervisors and managers can supercharge employee engagement for better productivity and performance. Work with your CEO to recognize outstanding teams and employees on a monthly basis, and spotlight these achievements on internal communications channels.

At the same time, encourage your employees to share moments of fun and pride at work. For instance, Brooks Running (an M Booth client) created #BrooksLife for its employees to celebrate their running and work experiences on social. Ultimately, turning employees into ambassadors can be infectious in boosting morale.

Small recognition that is public and sincere can go a long way in employee satisfaction and doesn't require much time or financial investment.

An effective employee engagement program does not need to be laborious and expensive. Instead, try simplifying your program into the above framework to get senior leaders on board and engaged. Plus, it's often the little things that matter most. Getting senior leadership buy-in on these small steps can be the most effective first approach.

About the Author: Moon Kim is Vice President and Group Manager and Ryan Walker is an Account Supervisor at [M Booth](#), an integrated and award-winning communications agency helping companies enhance and protect their brand reputation.