

STARTING AN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

BY BILL HOGG

We have all heard the importance of developing engaged employees at our workplace, but too often the articles are full of theoretical discussion instead of practical steps to making it happen. Without any claim that this is the definitive list, here are some simple steps to consider when starting your own program.

1. **Build a Business Case:** Build the business case that shows the financial benefits. Studies show that companies with strong employee engagement programs had improved financial performance, reduced attrition and higher employee satisfaction. Each organization has different engagement drivers and every organization needs to build their own business case.
2. **Survey your employees:** Establish a benchmark by conducting an employee survey that measures what matters to your employees. When conducting an employee engagement survey, commit to act on the results or don't bother spending the time and money conducting the survey. Survey as part of planning and 6 months after launching the program to gauge success of your initial planning and execution. External vendors can be used to ensure an objective survey is developed that won't have unintended skewed results.
3. **Make it personal:** Ask people how they perform when they are not engaged versus when they are engaged and consider the implications for the organization. Then dig deeper to determine what contributes to that engagement.
4. **Create a vision linked to company purpose:** Create a mutual vision of what an engaged culture can look like. Ultimately, you want the attitudes of your employees to generate behaviours that contribute to desired business results. It is key to acknowledge that each department or function may have different engagement drivers, so build in flexibility.
5. **Create a strategic framework:** Building from your vision, create a document that is easy to understand and that aligns the organization vision, values, aligns desired behaviours with results
6. **Measure what counts:** Metrics are essential for understanding adoption. Engagement metrics must first be aligned with the organizational goals and then embedded into senior leader performance plans. Build a balanced scorecard that measures business results AND desired behaviours. Incorporate the results into your business planning process and performance plans.
7. **Make Managers a priority:** If the middle managers do not buy-in, the program is doomed to failure. Spend extra time ensuring they understand and endorse the program. Leaders need to see that engaged employees can directly tie to their business results and make a difference for them: attrition, productivity, customer satisfaction, etc. Build engagement into their performance reviews.

187 Willow Farm Lane
Aurora, Ontario L4G 6K5
(905) 841-3191
bill@billhogg.ca
www.billhogg.ca



BILL
HOGG
& ASSOCIATES

8. **Recognize desired behaviours:** Build your recognition programs around desired results -- both behaviours and business results.
9. **Communicate, communicate, and communicate!** This cannot be over emphasized. Make sure that communication is consistent and ongoing.

At the end of the day, how you treat people is what they'll remember. Employee' engagement is build each day.

Performance Excelerator | Leadership Expert | Professional Speaker

*Bill is recognized as the **Performance Excelerator**TM because of his uncanny ability to create profound change and deliver extraordinary results with the most demanding organizations.*

He works with senior leadership teams to navigate change and transform organizations into high performance, customer-focused cultures that create long-term, profitable relationships with your customers and accelerate performance and productivity with leaders and employees.

Bill is passionate about results and works only with clients who share that passion -- ready to take steps to achieve immediate, significant and continuous improvement. Whether working with boards or operations teams and employees, his no-excuse approach breaks down the silos and gains consensus and clarity throughout the organization.

Bill Hogg provides dynamic keynote presentations, transformative workshops, and world class executive consulting.

For additional information email [bill \[at\] billhogg \[dot\] ca](mailto:bill@billhogg.ca) or visit us online at www.billhogg.ca where you can download [Bill's 1-sheet](#).

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