

## Measuring Employee Engagement and Winning the Hearts and Minds of Employees

*In good and bad economic times, maximizing the contribution from every employee is vital to your organization's success. Engaging the hearts and minds of employees — creating an environment in which employees feel energy, passion, and commitment to their employer and their jobs — is a proven key to innovation, productivity, customer satisfaction, and profitability. Uncovering the factors that make your workforce willing to go the extra mile is the central challenge of day-to-day management. But do you know what engages your employees and what turns them off? Which factors are table stakes and which will tip the scales in your favor?*

Most organizations know that a highly skilled, focused, and committed workforce is one of the few remaining sources of competitive advantage. Yet employers frequently fall short when it comes to aligning employee behaviors and interests with the employer's vision, securing employees' commitment, and inspiring them to achieve and exceed business goals. Research consistently shows that not only are the majority of employees disengaged, many of them are disgruntled, and more than half of workers intend to pursue other employment when the economy improves.

The effects of the economic downturn on the workforce will be felt for some time. Most companies took actions that were perceived negatively by employees. Whether these actions were dramatic, such as bankruptcy filings, plant closings, and workforce reductions, or more modest, like reduced hours, frozen salaries, and discontinued 401(k) matches, employers have ground to make up.

### BUCK CONSULTANTS CAN HELP

Buck Consultants has developed a comprehensive Employee Engagement Survey that can help you determine the extent to which engagement is a problem for your organization. Understanding your workforce and any potential issues will help you retain top performers, reduce distractions that have a negative impact on

productivity, enhance employee loyalty, and rebuild employee morale.

### OUR APPROACH

We tailor our survey approach to your business strategy, human resource strategy, and employee population. Our goal is to provide data-driven, action-oriented recommendations for increasing the engagement of your workforce in a way that improves your bottom line. With that in mind, we focus on:

- Surveying your workforce to determine the level of engagement
- Identifying the specific drivers of engagement that are most important for you — those high-leverage factors that can drive higher and higher levels of employee engagement
- Helping you set priorities for actions that will have the greatest impact

Buck's employee engagement model measures eight organizational factors that can drive high levels of engagement:

**Leadership** – Leaders who show confidence and trust, articulate an appealing vision, set strategic direction, and demonstrate concern for employees' well-being

**Rewards** – Rewards that are perceived by employees as fair relative to the market, to the rewards of others in the organization for the work they do, and to their performance

**Communication and Involvement** – Two-way communication that is open, honest, and timely, keeps employees informed, and creates a “web of cognitive involvement” for employees

**Advancement and Development Focus** – An expressed concern for employees’ learning, growth, and development and their opportunities for advancement and promotion, and a commitment to fair decisions about advancement and promotion

**Immediate Supervision** – The relationship between employees and their immediate supervisors, especially elements of trust and support

**Co-worker Relations** – Positive co-worker relations and perceptions of co-worker competence, informal collaboration, friendliness, and even having some fun at work

**Job Characteristics** – Jobs that have variety, provide appropriate challenges, fully use employee skills and help develop new ones, and provide a sense of importance, accomplishment, and achievement

**HR Policies/Practices** – HR practices that balance employer and employee needs, value employees as people, and recognize the contributions they make to the organization

## **BUCK’S SURVEY PROCESS**

In addition to a sound conceptual framework, Buck has survey consultants who have considerable expertise and experience in the “nuts and bolts” of the survey process:

**Research design:** We design the research to get you the answers you need, from cross-sectional, longitudinal, and panel surveys, to pre- and post-survey focus group and structured interview research designs.

**Sampling design:** We make sure the right people are surveyed. The choice of sampling design depends on the objectives of the survey, the need for precision in overall and sub-group results, and the most efficient use of your resources. We have experience in simple probability sampling designs and more complex sampling designs, such as proportionate and disproportionate stratified sampling, cluster sampling, and two-stage designs.

**Questionnaire design:** We design questionnaires primarily using quantitative response scales and a few open-ended questions. In addition, we can design questions using rating scales, item rankings, discrete forced-choice questions, hierarchical choice models, paired comparison techniques, and trade-off-matrix exercises — all to identify opinions, preferences, priorities, options, and choices that will be the most useful to you.

**Survey administration:** We help ensure that you get the highest response rates with the highest quality data. We have extensive experience with all survey data collection methods: Web-based surveys, onsite group administration, mail surveys, and telephone surveys. We can handle all fulfillment activities related to mail surveys (e.g., printing, handling, mailing), provide trained facilitators to conduct onsite group administration, provide trained telephone interviewers, and develop and host secure single-use, password-protected, Web-based surveys.

**Data processing:** To optimize the integrity and quality of your survey data, we manage all aspects of data processing, including handling and tabulation of quantitative responses in printed questionnaires, automatic data capture from online surveys, and compilation of verbatim responses from open-ended questions.

**Statistical analysis:** We use a client-friendly system for producing statistically reliable results — in graph and tabular formats — that can summarize question-by-question and aggregate results for a particular topic. We routinely provide statistical results for the survey

population as a whole and for sub-parts of the population relevant to the purposes of the survey (e.g., by position or job, by location, by business unit). And, our consultants apply the necessary statistical expertise to your unique needs to ensure our analysis helps you draw the right conclusions.

### **PUTTING THE SURVEY RESULTS TO WORK FOR YOU**

Unlike many survey research firms, Buck has expertise in all areas of organizational and human resource consulting, expertise that can be brought to bear on interpreting the results and developing recommendations for you. We have consulting expertise in human resource management, organizational behavior, organizational communications, compensation planning, benefits planning and program design, change management, talent management, and more — expertise that can be leveraged to help you implement specific action plans that will improve employee engagement and help drive organizational success.

### **CONTACT US**

To learn more about Buck's Employee Engagement Surveys, or any other surveys in our suite, contact Don Strickland, Ph.D., at 314.560.0320 or [donald.strickland@buckconsultants.com](mailto:donald.strickland@buckconsultants.com), or Kate Van Hulzen, principal, at 713.658.3420 or [kathryn.vanhulzen@buckconsultants.com](mailto:kathryn.vanhulzen@buckconsultants.com).