

## Using Training to Support Employee Engagement Initiatives: 7 Keys for Success

Engaged employees demonstrate three characteristics: commitment, involvement and enthusiasm. Employees become engaged when their employers meet their basic needs, create meaningful opportunities to contribute, foster a sense of belonging, and provide chances to learn and grow.\* Employee training is likely to be a key factor in the implementation of any organizational strategy aimed at improving employee engagement.

As a trainer, how do you create trainings and learning environments that create involved and enthusiastic employees? Here are some important keys:

**Key 1: Just ask.** Before you start developing the training consider surveying your participant group. Ask what topic areas or skills they want to learn, how they prefer to learn this new information, and how they would like to be evaluated. If you can match the training to participant preferences the learning from the training is more likely to be sustained.

**Key 2: Match training design to personality style.** Considering the personality types of your participants is fundamental if you want your training to have a broad impact. Creating a learning environment that creates a balance for all styles will leave employees feeling valued and connected with the you, the trainer, and the material you are presenting.

**Key 3: Don't stand and deliver.** Build interactivity into your programs. This may seem like a rudimentary point, but there are employees everywhere falling asleep or daydreaming in class because they are not encouraged to participate. Even if you're training employees on organizational procedures, you can try to make it fun and enjoyable.

**Key 4: Unify generational divides.** The looming gap in the workforce is no secret and the conflicts between each generation can create a divisive workplace. Design activities with generational components to persuade individuals of each generation to shift perspectives and recognize the strengths and weaknesses of the other.

**Key 5: Connect vertically.** Trainings that involve higher- and lower-level employees can help build communication and trust and cultivate employees to think systemically. Effective communication is a leading indicator of an organization's financial performance.\*\* Opening up communication between employees vertically throughout the organization can contribute to the bottom line.

**Key 6: Make learning personally relevant.** This goes beyond personality and conveys to the participants that you care about them as individuals and not just as contributors to the organization. Applying the learning to a context outside of the scope of the organization will encourage participants to think creatively and allow them to express themselves as unique individuals.

**Key 7: Use technology.** Think outside the concept of e-learning modules. Blend classroom learning with interactive tools such as: participant discussion forums for post-training dialogue, online assessments for testing competence related to the topic, or on-line development plans that provide a follow up system can help support the ongoing independent learning of the participant.

[TrainManagers.com](http://TrainManagers.com) delivers off-the-shelf management success training programs with an emphasis on going beyond the surface and taking participants deeper into what it means to be a successful manager from the inside out. Our programs support efforts of employee engagement and seek to engage participants in focusing attention on their own choices and how they impact those around them. Additionally, TrainManagers.com offers management success training programs to corporations, government agencies, and not-for-profits throughout the country and around the world.

### Notes

\* Harter, James K., James W. Asplund, and John H. Fleming. *HumanSigma: A Meta-Analysis, The Relationship Between Employee Engagement, Customer Engagement, and Financial Performance*. (Gallup 2004).

\*\* Watson-Wyatt Worldwide. *Effective Communication: A Leading Indicator of Financial Performance - 2005/2006 Communication ROI Study*.

### About the Author

Kris Kiler is an experienced consultant and entrepreneur who brings his training and publishing expertise to [TrainManagers.com](http://TrainManagers.com). Kris has partnered with Deb Dominguez to create TrainManagers.com, a management success training company that offers inspiring and high impact, off-the-shelf training programs for use by corporate trainers and management consultants. He has worked extensively with corporate trainers and management consultants creating customized training programs and developing and implementing innovative corporate training initiatives. Kris' background includes running a successful training and publishing company for six years. In this capacity, he designed and implemented an e-commerce system for selling products, training services, and corporate services. Through his company, he has also published more than twenty-seven training support

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